

SATAN'S POWER TO TEMPT,

AND

CHRIST'S LOVE TO AND CARE OF HIS PEOPLE
UNDER TEMPTATION.

IN

FIVE SERMONS,

PREACHED AT ST. MARGARET'S, NEW FISH STREET,
A. D. 1646.

ON TEMPTATION.

SERMON I.

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—HEB. II. 18.

THE scope and drift of this epistle, is to raise and strengthen the faith of the Hebrews, and so the faith of those that are weak in grace. Our apostle Paul, therefore, whom I take to be the penman, labours to discover the transcendant excellency of Jesus Christ, with his love and good-will to the children of men. And because his excellencies were either such as relate his person, or such as relate his offices, of King, Priest, and Prophet; he tells us, in the 1st chapter, that for the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, "He is the Son of God, heir of all things, by whom were the worlds made: being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," in the 2nd and 3rd verses of that chapter. "That he is far above the angels," at the 4th verse. That he is God himself, at the 6th verse. And as for those excellencies that relate his offices, he tells us at the 1st verse, that he is the Prophet of prophets. That he is the great King, at the 8th verse. That he is an High Priest, in the 10th chapter and the 17th verse. And therefore who would not trust unto him, and take heed unto such things as he shall speak unto them. And as for the love and good-will that he bears unto the children of men, the apostle speaks it out in all this 10th chapter.

The greater condescension in the person loving to the person loved, the greater is the love. Now though Jesus Christ be heir of all things, and had all things put under his feet; far above all angels; yet notwithstanding, at the 7th verse, "He is made a little lower than the angels, takes our nature upon him," &c.

The more profitable any love is to the person loved, the greater is the love. Such is the love of Christ, for his love

is such, that "by him many sons are brought to glory," at the 10th verse. "Sanctified while they live," at the 11th verse. Satan, their deadly enemy, subdued for them, at the 14th and 15th verses.

The more distinguishing any love is, the greater is that love. Now Jesus Christ, as the great load-stone, passes by the golden metal of angels, and draws unto himself the iron metal of mankind: at the 16th verse: "For verily, he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

Again, the more the person loving does suffer for the person loved, the more and the greater is the love. Christ suffered death, and he was while he lived subject to our infirmities, and unto our temptations. "He was in all things made like unto us," at the 17th verse. "And he was tempted as we are tempted, that he might succour those that are tempted," at the 18th verse.

And would you have an account or a reason of all this? It is that he might show mercy unto the children of men: verse the 17th: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." If he were not made like unto us, in regard of our infirmities, he could not so experimentally pity us under our infirmities. If he were not tempted like unto us, he could not so *feelingly* succour us under our temptation; and so he had not been so fit to have been our High Priest: but our High Priest he is gone into the holy of holiest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto us, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest: "for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

I will not hold you longer in the coherence, or division of the words, or further explication: I shall open the words, God willing, more particularly and distinctly, as I shall come to the observations that shall be raised from them. And I begin with the last, being made the reason of the former. "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Tempted twice: he tempted, and they tempted.

This word *tempted*, or *tempt*, it is given in Scripture phrase sometimes to God, sometimes to man, and sometimes to the devil; and accordingly it is used three ways. Sometimes it is used for to prove; and so God is said for to tempt, in the xiiith of Deuteronomy. Sometimes it is used for to try, to make experiment of a thing, or a person, whom or which we did not know before; and so it is given to man, as I take it, in the vith of Judges. Sometimes it is used for a solicitation, and drawing unto what is evil; and so it is given unto the devil, in the ivth of Matthew, Christ “was led into the wilderness to be tempted.” If ye look into the Scripture, ye do not find in all the Old Testament, that the word temptation is given to Satan, that Satan was said to tempt any: Satan did frequently tempt, we read in the Old Testament; but, I say, the word tempt is not given unto him. Satan tempted Job, but Job’s afflictions in the Old Testament are not called Satan’s temptations. As our Lord and Saviour Christ in the Old Testament was veiled, the Old Testament was full of Christ, yet Christ was hidden there: so was Satan and his temptations masked. Now when the light of the glorious gospel shined more clearly in the coming of Jesus Christ, as Christ’s vail was taken off, so Satan’s mask was taken off. Satan’s temptations are no longer called afflictions, but bare temptations, throughout the New Testament. Indeed, this word temptation, in the phrase of the New Testament, is used sometimes for affliction, sometimes for Satan’s suggestions, sometimes for our own sins. Temptation used for our afflictions: in the 1st of James, 2nd verse, “Rejoice when ye fall into divers temptations;” that is, afflictions. Sometimes for the devil’s suggestions—solicitations to evil: so in the ivth of Matthew, Christ is “led into the wilderness to be tempted.” Sometimes for our own sins: Galatians the vith chapter and the 1st verse, “If any man be overtaken with an infirmity, you that are spiritual, restore him, considering that you also may be tempted.” Now though our Saviour Christ is said to be tempted, in the two first respects, and not in the third; yet when it is said here in the text, “He himself hath suffered being tempted;” I take it to be meant in the second way, not the first, for otherwise there would be an identity thus: He himself hath suffered, having suffered: that would be the

sense of it else. And though we ourselves are said to be tempted in all three respects; in regard of afflictions, Satan's suggestions, and our own corruptions and sins; yet when it is said in the latter end of the verse, "He is able to succour them that are tempted;" I take it to be meant especially in the two last respects, and not in the first: for it hath relation unto that which goes before, the last verse being a reason of the latter end of the 17th verse: "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Hence the observation that I shall present unto you is only this.—

That God doth suffer his own servants, and dearest children, to be sorely tempted; yea, even to suffer by the hand of the temptation.

Our Lord and Saviour Christ, the Son of God, the only beloved Son of God, yet, saith the text, "He himself hath suffered being tempted:" not only tempted, but suffered being tempted. And it is said of his brethren, (for so his people are called in the beginning of the 17th verse,) that they are tempted. "He is able to succour them that are tempted." Succouring pre-supposeth suffering.

For the opening and clearing of this truth, I shall deliver myself these three ways.

First, That there is a suffering, afflictive dispensation in every temptation, though it does not prevail.

Secondly, That the saints and people of God do thus suffer, and why?

Thirdly, Answer to an objection; and so come to the application.

First, There is a vexing, corroding, afflictive disposition in every temptation, when it takes least, though it do not prevail. These granadoes, fire-balls, fire-darts of Satan, have a danger with them; though they do not burn down our spiritual building to the ground, they are afflictive, there is somewhat of a suffering with them. Paul calls his buffetings, a thorn, or a prick in the flesh: a buffetings and therefore afflictive: a thorn, or a prick in the flesh, and therefore afflictive. Notable is that expression which our Saviour Christ useth in the xxiind of Luke, at the 31st verse, to Peter. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you

that he may sift you as wheat," There is never a word here, but carries a suffering with it. It is some affliction, to have so great an adversary as an angel is, who is great in power; the devil is called an angel, and he is called Satan, that is an adversary. Satan hath desired: the word that is used there, desired, it is not used again in the New Testament, as I remember. But in other authors that use it, it signifies such a desiring, as when one man does challenge another into the field to a duel: or such a desiring as when a man comes and calls for open, and public punishment upon a man: and all this is suffering and afflictive. Or, as your translation hath it: Satan hath desired to have you; he does not say thus: Satan hath desired to sift you; but Satan hath desired to have you. Is it not an affliction to a child, to hear a beggar stand craving and begging of his father to have him away, to carry him away from his house? there is never a temptation, but in that temptation Satan desires to have you, you that are the children of God, Satan desires to have you. Then again, "He hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." Now though in sifting there is a separation between the chaff and the wheat, yet it is not without a concussion, and a shaking of the wheat: the wheat and the grain is shaken, though the chaff be blown aside, and laid on heaps. And though through the skill of the sifter, the wheat may be so kept, as it does not fall into the chaff-heap; yet notwithstanding there is some danger in sifting, that the grain should fall over into the heap of chaff, and be burnt with the chaff: so here. Especially where Satan, the great destroyer of mankind, hath the fan in his hand: saith Christ, "Satan hath desired to have you," and hath desired to have you, "that he may *sift* you as wheat;" and I tell you there is so much danger in it, that nothing but my prayer can secure you, "But I have prayed for you." So that you see, there is something of a suffering in a temptation. You know it was a law in the Old Testament, that if a woman were abroad in the fields, and there met her some that offered violence to her; if she cried out, and did not consent, she was not guilty: but now, though she were not guilty, but innocent, if she were abused, it would be a continual affliction to a modest good woman. So it is here, Satan comes to meet us, and though we do not consent to him, yet a gracious heart cannot but look upon it

as an affliction, to be thus followed, and hunted with a temptation. And the Holy Ghost alluded to this practice, when he saith here in the text, Jesus Christ is able to succour: the word succour, *ρηθῆσαι*, signifies such a succouring as brings in help unto those that cry out; to come in, and run in with help upon one's crying out. In the xiith of the Revelations, it is said, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth; for the devil is come down with great wrath, for he knows that his time is short." There is a woe in it, where the devil comes down with great wrath. Now he looks upon all the saints, as having their time but short, and he comes down upon them in great wrath with his temptations: and there is a woe in it, although the temptation takes not: and for aught I know, upon this account, the New Testament may so promiscuously use the word temptation, both for affliction, and Satan's suggestions, even because seldom any affliction comes, but it does bring temptation with it: never any temptation but brings affliction: always something of a suffering in every temptation, even at that very time when it does least prevail. This is the first thing.

Secondly, Doth God suffer his own children thus to suffer?

Yes, And many times the best, most tempted; the best men meet with the worst temptations; those that are most eminently godly, are most foully assaulted. David, Job, Peter, Paul, and Christ himself was. Yea, God doth not only suffer Satan to come, and present evil objects before his servants, but suffers him to go so far, as to solicit, to press, to follow on his temptation. And therefore it is said concerning David, "That Satan stood up, and provoked him to number the people." He did not only present an evil object to him, but he followed his temptation, he solicited, he stood up and provoked David to number the people.

Yea, God doth not only suffer this: but at that very time, when the saints have had most of God, then they have suffered by the hand of temptation. When Paul had been taken up into the third heaven, then a messenger, Satan, was sent to buffet him: And when Jesus Christ had heard the voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" Then, (says the text in the ivth of Matthew 1,) "was he led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." And so with the saints now: when they have been, as it

were, in the third heaven with God, when they have had most of him, when they have heard the Lord saying, This is my beloved child ; after special manifestations of his love, then most tempted : Oh ! who would be secure, after manifestations of God's love ?

Further, God doth not only suffer it thus far : but sometimes he suffers his children to be so far tempted, as they seem to have the worsen, Satan the better ; Satan taking the wall of them, the upper hand. In the third of Zechariah, it is said concerning Joshua : "That Satan stood at his right hand : " Satan took the wall of him, took the upper hand of him.

Lastly, God suffers this to be, and to continue a long time with some of his children. Paul saith, he had prayed thrice : that is, often ; and all the answer he could get was this, "My grace is sufficient for thee," Paul ; I do not say, I will deliver thee, but thou shalt have grace enough to uphold thee : my grace shall be sufficient. Thus God suffers his own dear children to suffer under the hand of temptation.

And would you know the reason ? Good authors say, That God suffers his own dear children to be tempted, that they may be more enlightened. Temptation enlightens the tempted ; thereby they are more experienced, and so more enlightened : God is pleased to answer them by this secret of thunder.

God suffers his children thus to be tempted, that they may be cleansed. This is God's usual way, he does wash us from our own filth, by the dung and excrement of these unclean spirits, and scour off the rust from his chosen vessels by the messengers of Satan : these are God's scullions to make his golden pots of the sanctuary the brighter.

God suffers his own children to be tempted, that they may be conserved or kept : he preserves them from one sin, by being tempted to another. And Paul says, That he received that messenger of Satan twice, that he might not be exalted.

God suffers his children to be tempted, that their graces may be increased. As the fire is blown up by the wind of the bellows ; and the strength of an argument draws out the strength of the answerer : so does these temptations draw out the strength of the tempted.

God suffers his children to be tempted, that they may be

discovered to themselves and others, what their sins and graces are. You do not know what the liquor is, until the vessel be bored, then you know it. And the word that is here used for temptation, *πειρασμο*, originally signifies to bore, as a vessel is bored. The love of a woman is never more known, than when her husband is from home, and she is solicited to folly, then her love is tried to her husband.

God suffers his children to be tempted, that occasionally they may be made more fit to receive the fulness of Christ as a Saviour. A man not tempted may receive the fulness of Christ as the head: but unless a man be tempted, not fit to receive the fulness of Christ as a Saviour.

Hereby they are made like unto Jesus Christ. Christ was made like to us, that he might be tempted; and we are tempted that we may be made like to him. He was made like to us, that he might be tempted, and so become our High Priest: and we are tempted, that we may be made like to him, and receive of the mercy of that office. He was made like to us and tempted, that he might have communion with us in the evil of our temptation: and we are made like to him and tempted as he was, that we might have communion with him in the benefit of his temptations. For these and other reasons, God suffers his children to be tempted. But my design is not to fall upon the argument of temptation at large; only to speak of the suffering part of it: "For in that he suffered being once tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted."

And upon the same reason or account, that God suffered the children of Israel to be vexed, and to suffer by the hands of the Egyptians, he doth suffer his own dear children to be stung and vexed by these temptations. Give me leave a little in that.

God suffered the Israelites to be vexed, and to suffer much by the hands of the Egyptians, that so he might make his glorious power the more to appear for them and in them. For when men saw that the Israelites increased and prospered, the more they were oppressed, and the more the Egyptians laboured to cut them off: then who would not say, oh! what power and what mercy is here? So now, when as men shall see, that the graces of the saints increase by temptation, and by spiritual oppression; who would not say, oh! what mercy and what power is here?

God suffered the Israelites to be vexed by the Egyptians that the Israelites might not learn their manners, and their superstitions. They were very apt to drink in their manners, to imitate, to follow them. Notwithstanding all the ill usage that the Israelites had at the hand of the Egyptians, they were very apt to learn their manners : had they had better usage, how would they have drunk them in much more then? Beloved! God would not have us to learn the manners of Satan, we are apt to drink them in too much notwithstanding all the hard dealing that we have from our temptations that do come from Satan : had we better entertainment, how should our souls mingle and incorporate with those temptations.

God suffered the Israelites to be vexed by the Egyptians, that so they might be provoked against them, to cut them off, and destroy them utterly. We never cut off an enemy, and destroy him utterly until we be provoked; and we are provoked by the ill usage we have at their hands. God would have Satan destroyed : for this cause was Christ manifested in the flesh, that he might destroy the works of Satan; and what Christ did for us, he doth work in us : and we will not destroy him till we be provoked; and therefore God is pleased to let us have such hard dealing, and suffering work from the hand of temptation, that we may be the more provoked against him.

God suffered the Israelites to be vexed by the Egyptians, that so they might long for Canaan the land of rest. And why doth God suffer his people to suffer thus by their temptations, but that they might cry out for help, and for the land of rest? as David, "Oh that I had wings like a dove for then would I fly away and be at rest."

If the children of Israel had not suffered thus from the hands of the Egyptians; in all likelihood they would have returned to Egypt much more than they did. They made them a captain to return again, notwithstanding all the hardness that they underwent in Egypt : but had the children of Israel had good usage in Egypt, how would they have returned again thither; beloved! we are apt to return again to folly; you that are the servants of God, too apt to return to folly, notwithstanding all the hard usage that you have from the hand of your temptation, how apt and ready are you to return to folly; now God loves you, and would not

have you to return again; and therefore that you might not return to your garlic, onions, and flesh-pots again, he suffers this spiritual Pharaoh thus to follow you, and lie hard upon you in these temptations. And thus you see what a glorious design of love God hath, even in the suffering part of his children's temptations: God's own children do suffer thus by the hand of a temptation.

But you will say, in the third place, (to answer the objection) If God's own people, his dearest children, be sorely tempted, yea, suffer under the hand of a temptation: how is that true, which you have in the 1 Epistle of John, the vth chapter, and the 18th verse: "Whosoever is born of God sins not: he that is begotten of God, keeps himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;" the devil toucheth him not: and if the devil does not so much as touch him, how can this be true, that he suffers thus by the hand of his temptation.

For answer hereunto, ye must know that this word touching, in Scripture phrase, besides the literal sense, sometimes notes an hurting, or harming of one. So in the cvth Psalm, and the 15th verse. "Touch not mine anointed." Which is explained in the following words, "and do my prophets no harm." We read of Christ's touching, and the devil's touching. Christ touching those that were sick, and he cured them with his touch, it was an healing, curing touch, the touch of Christ. And we read of the devil's touching: so he speaks unto God that he would touch Job; that is, that he would break him, and break all his estate; Christ's touch is an healing touch, a curing touch; but Satan's touch is a destroying touch, a breaking touch. Now though God suffers his own children to be tempted, yea, and to suffer by the hand of a temptation, yet notwithstanding, the evil one touches him not, so as to harm him, to hurt him; but in the conclusion, so as to heal and to cure him, which is not touching.

Again, this same word touching, in Scripture phrase, sometimes notes fellowship and communion; and so when the apostle forbids the Corinthians fellowship, and communion with idolaters; saith he "Be ye separate, and touch no unclean thing." Touching there noting communion and fellowship with them in their worship: do not in the

least measure have any communion with them. So now although it pleases God, to suffer Satan thus to vex his children with temptation, yet notwithstanding, they have not fellowship or communion with him. Satan knocks at their door, but they do not frequently, and ordinarily open and let him in, so as to sup with them : Christ stands at their door and knocks, and they open and he comes in and sups with them, and they with him : they have fellowship with the Father, and they have fellowship with Jesus Christ, but they have not fellowship with the devil ; they do not delight in him, they do not converse with him, they have not this fellowship with him : and therefore though they meet with temptation, yea, and though they suffer under temptation, yet in this respect the evil one touches them not, but suffer they do. And so I have cleared the point : God suffers his own dear children to be sorely tempted, yea, and to suffer under the hand of temptation.

I come to the application.

If this be so ; Then why do you that are the servants of God question God's love to you, and call your own condition into question because of your temptations, or because of the hard things that you meet withal from the hand of your temptation ? Oh ! says one, if God loved me, I should never be thus tempted, I should never suffer such hard things by temptation as now I do : was there ever any of God's children tempted thus ? Surely this cannot stand with grace. But was not Jesus Christ tempted ? Yes, but I am tempted many times to doubt of my childship, whether I be the child of God, son of God, aye or no. And was not Christ thus ? There were two special times of Christ's temptation ; once when he entered upon the ministry ; once when he went out of the world ; and you shall see, how at both these times he was followed with this temptation. In the ivth of Matthew, there you read of the first, and in the combat, twice, If thou be the Son of God, says the devil, putting an *if* upon his Sonship : and again, If thou be the Son of God ; putting another *if* upon his Sonship. So when he was upon the cross ; the devil's instruments speak his own language, they had not forgotten it : If he be the Son of God, let him come down ; putting an *if* upon his Sonship again. The devil follows this close. Oh ! but I am tempted many times to use indirect

means to get out of trouble, out of mine affliction. And was not Christ so? when he was an hungry, says the devil to him, "Command that these stones be made bread." Oh! but I am tempted, I am loth to say what it is, sometimes even to lay violent hands upon myself. And what said the devil to Christ? Throw thyself down off the pinnacle of the temple. Oh! but I am tempted to horrid and blasphemous things that I am afraid to name, and my heart trembles to think of. And was not Christ thus tempted? says Satan to him, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." What? worship the devil! Oh! horrid blasphemy! Blush, O heavens, and be astonished: "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Oh, but I am tempted to despair: sometimes, I confess, I am able to read God's love, and to say, that God is with me, and I think I can say, I know that God is with me: but at another time, Oh, how unlike am I unto myself, and I say mercy is gone, and Christ is gone, and hath left me as an orphan. And I pray consider how it was with Christ in this respect; he went as near to it as could be, without sin. It is Musculus's observation. In the xvth of John: "Behold," says Christ at the 32nd verse, "the hour cometh," speaking of his suffering hour, "yea, it is now come, when ye shall be scattered every one from his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me," (speaking of his suffering hour.) And yet when he was upon the cross, he says, Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How diverse does he seem to be from himself: says he, I am not alone, because the Father is with me. And yet when he comes into the hour, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Oh, but I have suffered as much as ever any did, I have suffered by the hand of my temptations, they have been a continual torment to me, and I have suffered much from them. Well, but have ye suffered more than Christ suffered? It is said in the text, "For in that he suffered being tempted." What a mighty suffering was it, for the glorious God of heaven and earth to have such temptations thrown in upon him; any one temptation to be lodged in his mind, what a mighty suffering was this! Thus you see how Christ suffered.

And, beloved, He suffered and was tempted, that he might

succour you that are tempted. Will you question his love then, because of your temptation or your own condition? do ye know what ye do? Suppose that your Father should leave you a great estate, and give you good evidences; and a cunning lawyer comes and writes upon the back side of your evidence, Naught, naught: will ye because of that, join with him and say, that your father hath given you nothing? Christ hath given you in a great estate of mercy, and hath given you good evidences for it; and Satan now comes and writes upon the back side of your evidence, and says, This is naught. Will you join with him against God and Christ? what wrong is this to his love: think of it, I pray, you that are the saints and people of God: Be humbled under every temptation, though it be never so small; but never question your condition, though your temptation be never so great.

There is indeed, something of a suffering, a malignant quality, an affliction in every temptation when it takes least; and therefore, look how you would walk under an affliction, so walk under your temptation. In your affliction, you will walk humbly; so under your temptation do. In your affliction, you will examine the cause, especially if your affliction lie long upon you; so in your temptation do. In your affliction, you will seek God early; so in the morning of your temptation do. In the day of your affliction, you will engage to God; the day of affliction is the day of engaging, and you say, Oh, if the Lord will deliver me, through his grace I will do so and so: so in your temptation do. In your affliction, you will take heed of those sins that you are most apt unto in the time of affliction; so do in the time of your temptation: for example thus: in affliction, a man is very apt to be discouraged, to have his heart sink, and to die within him; so in temptation, take heed of that. In affliction, a man is apt so to mind his present burden, as to forget all his former mercy; so in the time of temptation take heed of that. In the time of affliction, a man is very apt to be froward, and impatient, to break out into frowardness and impatency, though he did not so before. As the wood that is laid upon the fire, sends forth filth which you did not see in the wood before it came upon the fire: so men are apt to send forth filth, and much frowardness and impatency in the time of affliction, when you took them for good natured people

before, and thought there was no such frowardness in them, and no such impatency; so in the time of temptation, also, take heed of that. In the time of affliction, men are apt to make an evil construction and interpretation of things; affliction raises passion, and passion puts other colours upon things than formerly: and so in time of temptation, we are apt to make strange constructions of God's dealings, and Christ's dealings with us; take heed of that. In time of affliction, men are apt to change their behaviour; David did so, he let fall his spittle upon his beard, and feigned himself mad; he changed his behaviour: and so are men apt to change their behaviour in times of temptation; take heed of that. In time of affliction, men are apt to stint and limit God, and say, Can God provide a table now? and can God deliver now? and so also in the time of temptation, men are apt to say, Can God provide now? and can God deliver now? and so stint and limit the Holy One of Israel; take heed of that. In the day of affliction a gracious heart does rather rejoice that he hath any opportunity to exercise his grace, than mourn for his present burden: so do you now. In the day of affliction, a gracious heart doth more desire to be cleansed than to be delivered; wishes rather that his heart may be sanctified by his affliction, than that his affliction may be removed. There is something of a suffering (ye have heard) in every temptation: now then, does a temptation arise and press in upon you; go to the Lord, and say, Lord, though I meet with hard things from the hand of my temptations, and these temptations have lain long upon me: yet I do rather choose grace than peace; rather to be cleansed, than to be delivered. Oh! my beloved, how well it might be with us, if we did but improve our temptations: what a gaining day, what a learning day might the day of temptation be; yea, what an harvest day unto us, when Satan desires to winnow us.

But you will say unto me, We are greatly unskilled in this matter; temptations I have, and great temptations, wherever I go, in every business: but oh, how should I so order things and manage my thoughts, and my heart, as that I may be able so to walk under these temptations, that I may have peace and comfort in the latter end?

Beloved, the next point tells us, that Jesus Christ is a

succouring Christ to all his tempted people : and I intend, God willing, to show you how Christ succours, and how we should draw succour from him under temptations. But for the present, give me leave to give you some rules and directions against these suffering temptations, and so I will wind up all.

First, Take heed that you do not yield to anything, that you may be rid of ; that you do not yield to any part of the temptation, that you may be delivered from. It is more easy to keep the enemy out of the town, than to get him out when he is come into it ; if he get into the town, and get into the market-place, it will be a more hard thing to get him out again. It is an easy thing to keep a stone on the top of an hill while it lies there ; but when it once begins to roll down, it is a hard thing to stay it, and you cannot say how far it shall go. How many are there that say when they are tempted, I will yield but once, I will yield but a little, and I will never yield again, this is the last time : oh ! but your once yielding, and your yielding but a little, engages your heart to the whole work. You should watch and pray against temptation ; “ Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation : ” he does not say, Watch and pray that you be not tempted ; but watch and pray that ye *enter* not into temptation. It is one thing for temptation to knock at the door, and another thing to come in : when temptation enters you, you enter into temptation ; take heed of that.

Again, Take heed that you do not carry the sin and the guilt of your old condition into a new condition. See your call into a new condition, before you leave your old condition. Never count yourself safe or secure in any condition ; but as soon as ever you come into any condition, observe what are the snares and temptations of that condition. Some there are that carry the evil of their former condition into an after condition, into a new condition ; and then, as Rachel carrying away her father’s idols, tempted Laban to follow after.

Some again, they do not much mind their calling to a condition, nor do not go in the strength of their call ; whereas you shall observe, that when Peter was called to stand before the princes and rulers, he did boldly profess Christ, because his call did lead him thereunto ; but when he was not called

into the high priest's hall then he falls before a tempting wench. Others again there are, that think their condition will secure them. Oh, says one, if I were but in such and such a condition, then I should be safe and free from Satan's temptations; whereas, several conditions, have several temptations, and the devil does use sometimes to tempt a man to alter his condition, so that by your very avoiding a temptation you fall into it. Take heed of this.

Thirdly, If temptation do arise, observe the temptation; and know that there is some suitable disposition of your own wherein the devil does lay that temptation, and labour to file and pare off that disposition. Beloved, the devil observes the situation of our hearts, and accordingly does plant his ordnance: he seldom tempts, but he lays his temptation in our own disposition, something suitable unto the temptation. So when David had a mind to number the people, then the devil stands up, and provokes him to number the people, suitable to his own disposition. When our Lord and Saviour Christ was an hungry, then he comes and tempts him to turn stones into bread. When, again, he cried out and said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" then says the devil's instruments, If thou be the Son of God, then come down and show thyself. He does usually lay his temptation in our own disposition that is suitable to the temptation. And therefore, I say, first observe the temptation, then know you have a disposition subservient thereunto, and the devil lays his temptation in that disposition, and presently falls to work, and labours to file and pare off more and more that disposition in Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, When a temptation arises, do not always stand to answer it in the kind; but sometimes turn your mind and thoughts off it to another object. It is in our deliverance from a temptation, as in our comforts under an affliction: a man hath a great affliction upon him, possibly the death of some friend that is near and dear unto him, and you go to comfort him, and in comforting him, you fall a speaking of his friend departed: whereas the way to comfort him, is not to speak of the person departed, but fall into conference about some other good thing different: and by that time his heart is settled upon some other thing, then you may come back again and speak of the friend departed without grieving

of him ; but otherwise, even in your comfort you fetch out tears. And so I say in regard of temptation : the way to avoid temptation is not always to apply a salve directly pertinent to the temptation ; but turn off your mind and your thoughts to some other good object, and by that time your mind is settled upon other objects, you will be easily able to meet with the temptation.

Fifthly, Above all things take the shield of faith. "Whom resist, stedfast in the faith." "Simon, Simon," says our Saviour, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may winnow you : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : " that must do it. That same woman that came to Christ for her daughter, she met with great temptations : there was the temptation of her calamity ; her daughter possessed : there was a temptation of Christ not answering, but delaying her answer : there was a temptation of Christ's seeming denial ; " I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." There was a temptation of her own unworthiness ; "It is not lawful to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs : " yet notwithstanding she believes. Oh ! says our Saviour, "Woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And so I say, though your temptations be twisted one within another, and one stands at the end of another ; do but get the prospect of faith, and you will be able to look over all. When temptation, therefore, arises, say, Lord, though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee : and, Satan, though thou slayest me, I will keep to Jesus Christ. It was the speech of Taulerus, one that Luther prizeth above all : says he, Though the mariners may make use of their oars in the time of calm ; yet when a storm comes down, the mariners leave all and fly to their anchor. So, though at other times we may make use of resolutions, and vows, and the like ; yet when the storm of temptation comes down, nothing then but fly to the anchor of faith, nothing then like to casting of anchor into the vail. And as if the Holy Ghost put all on this, he calls faith our anchor ; and he calls faith our shield. All dangers are either sea dangers or land dangers : if your dangers be sea dangers, faith is your anchor ; and if your dangers be land dangers, faith is your shield. And therefore, I say, when temptation arises, labour then to exercise your faith, and say,

Oh, how should I do this thing, and sin against my Christ, and sin against my God? Satan, thou tellest me, All this will I give thee, if thou wilt do this thing : Aye, but how shall I do this and sin against Jesus Christ who hath loved me and given himself for me? Satan, thou tellest me, that if I do yield, God is merciful, and God will pardon me : Yea, but Satan, God hath pardoned me already, and therefore I will not yield ; and because I know that the Lord would pardon me if I did it, therefore I will not do it. Thus labour to exercise your faith in time of a temptation.

Sixthly, Be sure of this, When temptation arises, do not fear too much, nor do not fear too little. I confess, it is an hard thing to carry it equally between too much and too little ; but, beloved, if you fear too much, you honour Satan, you weaken yourselves : immoderate fear weakens. And if you fear too little, then you grow secure ; security betrays you, and so you lose all before you strike a stroke. Wherefore this rule is : If temptation arise, do not fear too much, though the temptation be never so great : do not fear too little, though the temptation be never so small.

Seventhly, Art thou assaulted by temptation? Either you do overcome, or you are overcome : if you do overcome, be thankful, lest you lose your former victory, by your after unthankfulness. And if you be overcome, yet do not lay down the weapon, hold it up still, stand upon your guard. The devil tempts that he may tempt ; and he is willing to be overcome in the skirmish, that he may overcome you in the battle ; and he brings up the greatest temptations in the rear : as Job's afflictions were greatest at the last : yea, he tempts us to break the law, and sin against the law, that he may tempt us to sin against the gospel. This is the seventh rule : If you be overcome, or be not overcome, walk thus.

Eightly and lastly, If temptation do arise ; be sure that you make some improvement of it for the better. If an enemy come and make an assault against one of your garrison towns, and he goes away and gets no hurt, he is encouraged and invited to come again ; for, says he, I lost nothing, though I did not gain and carry the town, yet I lost nothing. But now, if upon his assault he loses many men, and his ordnance ; I will come no more there, says he, for there I had such and such a great loss. Thus it is with Satan when he

comes before a soul with his temptations : There is a soul, says he, I came before him with my temptations, and though indeed I did not carry it, I did not get the thing I would, yet I lost nothing, and therefore I will go again. But there is a soul, and there is a heart ; I came before him with my temptations, and I confess I lost much ; I tempted and he prayed, and the more I tempted the more he prayed, and the more I tempted still, the more he did go to Jesus Christ, and therefore I will tempt him no more. Beloved, labour to improve your temptations ; go to God with your temptations in your hands, and pray over your temptations : and if you improve your temptations, you shall not be troubled with Satan ; and therefore you are troubled with Satan so much, because you improve your temptations no more. Oh, how well might it be with us, if we did but improve our temptations ! what a good day would this be ; what a good day might be this sad day of our temptation, if we did but improve our temptations. And I beseech you think of it, how we may improve them more and more. You know what our Saviour said concerning the false ground ; In the time of temptation it fell away : let that awe our hearts. You know what our Saviour says again by way of comfort unto his disciples ; “ You continued with me in my temptations, and therefore I appoint unto you a kingdom : ” and blessed are they that do continue and hold out this siege. Beloved, these turning times are tempting times : and I think I may truly say, if ever there was an hour of temptation upon this kingdom, this is the hour of England’s temptation, it is an hour of temptation. Oh ! you that are the servants of God, and the disciples of Jesus Christ, will ye not watch with him one hour ? an hour of temptation it is ; but this is our comfort, it is but an hour : and therefore you that are his servants and disciples, will you not watch with him one hour ? Watch and pray, watch and pray : some pray, but they will not watch ; and some pretend to watch, but they do not pray. Therefore that I say to you, to myself, and to all is, Watch and pray : if you watch, you enter into your master’s joy ; if you watch not, you enter into temptation : Oh ! let us all watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation.

SERMON II.

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—HEB. II. 18.

By the word tempted in the first clause, relating to Christ, we are to understand Satan's solicitations to evil (as ye have read in the former sermon). By the word tempted in the last clause, "He is able to succour them that are tempted," especially to understand those solicitations of Satan and our own sins, by comparing the former verse with this. As if the apostle should say: For in that our Lord and Saviour Christ was tempted by Satan, solicited to what was evil; he is able to succour them that are both, either solicited to evil or overcome thereby.

But how is it said here, He is able to succour them that are tempted, in that he himself suffered being tempted? Was he not as God able to succour them that are tempted? Why then is it said, In that he suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted?

There is an ability of sufficiency, and an ability of idoniety. As God, indeed, he is able to succour those that are tempted: but by being tempted in the flesh, he is able, that is, apt and idonious to succour those that are tempted. There is an absolute ability and a respective ability as he is High Priest. As God indeed, he was able to succour them that are tempted, though he had not been tempted: but he speaks of Christ here as our High Priest; and so by being tempted, he is able to succour them in that way. There is, as I may so speak, a scientific ability, or an experimental ability. As he was God, he was able in the first sense to succour, it is true: but by being tempted, he is able experimentally to succour them that are tempted.

It is an ability of disposition and compassion that here he speaks of. And therefore in the vth chapter, speaking of the same thing, he saith concerning the high priest, That he can have compassion on the ignorant. and those that are out of the way. So then, Christ by being tempted, is able to succour those that are tempted with an ability of idoniety, an

experimental ability; with an ability of compassion and disposition, and gracious inclination. And so the observation that lies before us is this :

The Lord Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ to tempted souls.

In the former doctrine ye heard, That God suffers his own servants and dearest children to be sorely tempted. Now this doctrine holds forth the remedy : Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ to tempted souls. As our hearts are full of sin, so his heart is full of succour, he is a succouring Christ. His names and titles speak him so. His nature speaks him so. His offices, his doctrine, his life and conversation, his death and sufferings call him a succouring Christ. I shall not run through all these particulars. But because men are known by their names, I will fix there a little : and we shall see how all the names and titles of Christ call him a succouring Christ.

If we search the Scriptures, we may observe, that the names of Satan, of the devil, carry malice with them, and evil against them : And the names of Jesus Christ are contrary thereunto, as holding forth a succour against all that evil that is in him who is the evil one.

Is the devil called Satan ? that is, an adversary : Jesus Christ is called our Friend. Is Satan called Diabolus ? the accuser, or the accuser of the brethren : Jesus Christ is called our Advocate. Is Satan called a destroyer ? Jesus Christ is called our Saviour. Is Satan called a lion, that goes up and down seeking whom he may devour ? Jesus Christ is called a Lion of the tribe of Judah. Is Satan called a serpent and old serpent ? Jesus Christ is called the Brazen Serpent. Still names of relief and succour answerable unto those names of Satan.

We shall observe, that there is no evil in sin, but there is somewhat in the name of Jesus Christ that speaks the contrary, contrary succour. Is sin called *avopia* or a transgression of the law ? Jesus Christ is called our Righteousness : "The Lord our Righteousness." Is sin called folly ? Jesus Christ is called Wisdom, "The Wisdom of the Father." Is sin called an infirmity or weakness ? He is called the Rock, and the Rock of Ages, and the Arm of the Lord. Is sin called darkness ? He is called Light. Is sin called pol-

lution or uncleanness? His blood is the "Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness to wash in." Is sin called death? He is called Life. Is there ignorance in sin? He is called our Prophet in opposition to that. Is there disorder in sin? In opposition to that he is called our King to order. Is there guilt in sin? In opposition to that he is called our Priest; he is called our Propitiation in that place of John: but in the iiird of the Romans, and the 25th verse, he is called our Propitiatory, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation," so you read it, but rather, *ιλαστηριον* a propitiatory; the same Greek word that the Septuagint used for the Jews' propitiatory: and in that he is our Propitiation or Propitiatory; this speaks him a succouring Christ.

Famous was the succour and relief that the Jews had from their cities of refuge: and as if the Holy Ghost intended the confirmation of this truth that is now before us, those Hebrew names that were given to the cities of refuge are given to Christ. Is any of the cities of refuge called Kedesh? signifying holy. He is called, Holy, holy, holy. Was another city called Shechem? signifying shoulder: Upon his shoulder is the government; and the lost sheep brought home upon his shoulder. Is another city called Hebron? from society or fellowship: By him we have fellowship with the Father. Is another called Golan? signifying one revealed or manifested: It is said of him, He was manifested in the flesh. Is another city called Ramoth? things exalted: Him hath God exalted, and by him are all exalted. In the phrase of the New Testament, he is called our Father, and our Brother, and our Friend, and our Shepherd; a Hen, a Lamb, a Door: there are none of all his names, but speak him full of sweetness, and loving disposition, and succour unto poor souls.

But that I may the better clear up this truth I shall deliver myself these four ways.

First, That Jesus Christ is able to succour tempted souls.

Secondly, That he is willing to do it.

Thirdly, That he is faithful in doing of it.

Fourthly, How he doth it, in the day and time of their temptation; and so come to the application.

First, He is able to do it, he is able to succour them that are tempted. He is able (saith our apostle in that xviith of

the Hebrews) to save those that come unto God by him, he is able to save them to the uttermost : as Satan tempts to the uttermost he is able to save to the uttermost. And as they sin to the uttermost, he is able to save to the uttermost. A man is said to be able to do all that which he hath a commission, and power from God to do : the Lord Jesus Christ in the iird of the Romans and the 25th was set forth to be a propitiation : “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.” “ He hath laid help upon one that is mighty :” and that is Christ. Designed, and called he is to the office of the high priest. The proper work of the high priest’s office was to condole with, relieve and succour the people against their sins ; and the more eminent any high priest was, the more in this work. In the xviith of the Hebrews, we find all along, how abundantly he excels all the high priests that ever were. As for other high priests, they did not take an oath when they came into their office : but he swears. Other high priests, had sins themselves to offer for : but he holy and separate from sinners. Other high priests died, and did not continue so for ever : but he “ liveth for ever to make intercession.” Other high priests offered not themselves : but he offered up himself. He was a king and a priest : they were not. They indeed entered into the holy of holiest, but it was earthy : he is gone into the holy of holiest and that is heavenly. They were but types of him, shadows : if a shadow fall upon a dirty ground, it cannot make it dry : but the sun can : and yet notwithstanding, these other high priests, the apostle saith of them, “ Being compassed about with infirmities ; they could have compassion on those that are ignorant, and out of the way ;” they men of infirmities, sinners ; they in the time of the law : how much more is Jesus Christ able to succour, who is so transcendant an High Priest, and excelling all others that ever went before him. I will say nothing of the great power that he hath with the Father, or in his own hands : the keys of hell and death. He is able by conquest for to succour you that are tempted : he is able by conquest for to raise the seige that is laid against our souls ; he hath beaten through the enemy : as now, if a town be beleaguered straitly, besieged by an enemy, and the enemy abroad in the field, having an army in the field : if any will come to raise the siege, they must fight through the

army, they must beat through the army before they can raise the siege. Never a tempted soul but is thus besieged with temptation, closely begirt, and the devils were abroad in the field, were masters of the field till Christ came: and no man, nor angel was able to beat through: but Jesus Christ beat up the quarters all along, beat through the enemy, cast out devils all along, overcame. Paul by being tempted overcame temptation. So by his dying he overcame death; and by taking our infirmities upon him, he overcame our infirmities; and by being subject to the law, he overcame the law, and the curse of the law: and so by being tempted, he overcame temptation; and having beaten the enemy out of the field he is now able to raise the siege; he is absolutely able to raise the siege, which none else is able to do: he is able to save to the uttermost. We shall not need to stand long on this.

But you will say, secondly, We will grant Christ is able to succour tempted souls: but is he willing?

Yes, he is infinitely willing to succour poor tempted souls. Our great succour lies in reconciliation with God the Father; as by comparing these two verses together doth appear. God the Father hath set him forth to be a propitiation: it was the will of God the Father, that Jesus Christ should come and make propitiation, it was his will. Now, look into the xlth Psalm, and see what Christ saith concerning the will of the Father; verse the 7th. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart:" some books read it, "thy law is within my bowels:" thy law is within my heart, it is in my desires. Yea, not only, saith he, in my desires: but in the gospel we read it, with desiring have I desired to eat this passover, before he suffered. Desiring have I desired. And, saith he, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and I am straitened till it be accomplished:" I can have no rest till it be done, I am straitened till it be accomplished. Yea, not only so: but, saith he, here in this Psalm, "I delight to do thy will:" it is the will of God he should make propitiation, and so succour: "I delight to do thy will." And in the viiith of the Proverbs: "My delights are with the sons of men:" some read it, "All my delight:" but it is in the plural number. When God laid the foundations of the earth my delights were with the

sons of men. A high, and a great expression. Surely, Jesus Christ cannot but be willing to succour tempted ones, when his delights are with the sons of men.

Again, a man must needs be willing to do that which he is willing to suffer much for, to be at much cost and pains for. David was willing to build the temple, because he laid out so much by way of preparation. And Araunah was willing to have a sacrifice, because he gave up his threshing floor: it appeared he was willing. And now then Jesus Christ is content to suffer so much that he may make a propitiation for sinners, and reconciliation with the Father and so succour; it argues that he is very willing.

Besides, a man is willing to have that done which he is much troubled for if it be not done. You know when Christ came to Jerusalem, he wept, says the text, and he wept: he came a succouring, and they would not be succoured; "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not." A hen is a succouring creature: Christ came a succouring, came to gather them as a hen. A hen sits upon the eggs, and hatcheth with the warmth of her body: So doth Christ do with the warmth of his love. A hen sits until the feathers be off her own body, makes her own body naked for to hatch up: And so did Christ. When the chicken is hatched, she succours it, and covers it under her wings; and when the chicken can run abroad, let the hen find but a grain of corn, she clucks, and calls the chicken to her to have part of it: and so did Christ. And when danger comes, the kite comes, she calls the chicken under her wings again to succour it: So does Christ. When he says thus, He came to gather them as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, he came to succour them, but they would not be succoured; see how he takes it: the text says "He wept," he was much troubled. Wise men do not use to weep before company; children will: but those that are very wise, if they will weep, they weep in private. Jesus Christ (that was the wisdom of the Father) falls a weeping, and all because they would not be succoured. Surely then, Jesus Christ is very willing to succour poor sinners. And beloved, this was his love, and this was his compassion in the day of his infirmity: how great is it now in the day of his glory!

Again, It argues that he is very willing to succour poor tempted souls, because he was so willing to cure diseased bodies ; when he was upon the earth he was willing to cure them, so willing, as though it did cost a miracle, yet he would do it. So willing, that though they did not know him as he was, but thought him a prophet, yet he would do it. So willing, as that though they did not desire it themselves, but were brought by others, yet he would do it. So willing, as that though they were unmannerly in their coming to him, witness the pulling the tiles off the house, yet he would do it. And that so willing, though much unbelief expressed by those that were brought unto him, yet he would do it. I beseech you consider it : this was a work that Christ came into the world to do ; this is the work, the work that Christ came to do, it was to bind up broken hearts : the work that Christ came to do, was to open the prison doors to poor captives : “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (you know the place) to administer a word in due season to those that are weak. He hath given me the tongue of the learned to administer a word in due season to those that are weak. Now then, if Jesus Christ was so willing to do the other work which was but his work by the by, which was not the work that he did come about : how infinitely willing must he needs be to do the work that he did come about. But I say, to succour poor tempted ones, this was the work that he came upon ; heaven hath not altered him, he hath lost none of his love by going thither : Surely therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely willing to succour poor tempted souls.

Well, thirdly, But though he be able and willing, yet it may be he is not faithful.

Yes, saith the former verse, faithful ; merciful and faithful High Priest. Faithful in all his house as Moses was. What honest man will break his word ? go contrary to his oath ? He is sworn into this office of the High Priest. Yea, we have not only his promise and his oath, but the Father’s bond for the Son’s performance : “The seed of the woman shall break the serpent’s head ;” it shall bruise his heel, she shall break his head. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. This is the work that is in his hand, to succour tempted ones : it shall prosper in his hand. In the viiith chapter of Matthew, we read there at the 16th verse, that

he cast out spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, " Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Because he took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses, he took himself to be engaged for to heal the sicknesses and diseases among the people. Beloved ! he hath taken our infirmities, he hath borne our sins, and therefore he takes himself engaged also for to heal our foul diseases, to heal those temptations : he is very faithful.

Well, But suppose he is faithful, how doth he succour those that are tempted in the day and time of their temptation ? (that is the fourth thing).

He succours before temptation : he succours in temptation : he succours after temptation.

Christ succours tempted souls before the temptation comes, sometimes ; by a special manifestation of himself, his love, and fulness to them. When Christ himself was to be tempted, immediately before, the Father said from heaven, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And so when Christ sees that a soul is to go into temptation, he speaks out from heaven, and says, This is my beloved servant in whom I am well pleased.

Sometimes he succours before temptation, by laying in of gospel principles and gospel dispositions in the heart. The law is weak, says the apostle. As it is weak unto the point of justification, the matter of justification ; so a legal disposition is weak as to the matter of resisting temptation : a gospel disposition is able to bear it off. Christ foreseeing a temptation, lays in such a disposition, and then when it comes, Oh ! says the soul, how shall I be able to close with all this love of the world, having received so many love-tokens from my dear Saviour.

Again, He succours before the temptation, by filling the heart with the Holy Ghost. When the vessel is filled with one liquor, it keeps out another. I will return to my house, saith Satan, and I came and found it empty ; and so he entered. The Lord, therefore, fills the house, the soul, with the Holy Ghost, and so keeps Satan from entering.

He succours also under temptation, by opening the eyes of him that is tempted to see that it is but a temptation. A temptation is half cured, when a man knows that it is but a

temptation : when a man's eyes are open to see the tempter and the temptation. Therefore men are so hardly cured, because they are hardly persuaded that it is a temptation ; when they see that, then they say, Get thee behind me, Satan. Christ opens their eyes.

Again, He succours under temptation, by letting fall some glimpse of his love, some love-look upon a tempted soul. And so, when Peter was in the high priest's hall, Christ looks upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly. It was the sweet voice of Christ that made Peter weep bitterly ; Peter's tears came from Christ's eyes first ; and though he were much engaged, yet having a love-look from Christ, I will stay no longer, and away he goes. And so, when a soul sees but the gracious eye of Christ looking on him, he breaks off from his temptation : thus he succours.

Again, he succours under temptation by temptation, even from temptation. Beloved ! the devil seldom tempts with one single temptation : as we seldom commit single sins, or receive single mercies ; so the devil seldom tempts with a single temptation. One may be laid in our natures, and the other laid in our callings. Christ sees now, that one is given to uncleanness or to pride ; and so he lets out Satan upon him, to trouble him with blasphemous thoughts, and by the afflictions of those blasphemous thoughts, they are kept from pride, and from wantonness, and delighting in other sins.

He does succour from temptation ; I say, from temptation by temptation (sometimes) by causing a word in the temptation to stand out, so as thereby to give the tempted man an hint to Jesus Christ. So when Christ tempted and tried the woman of Canaan ; It is not lawful to cast children's bread before dogs. There stood out a word, that word dog ; she lays hold on it ; " Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs." Christ does so order the very temptations of Satan, that some word or other in the very temptation does so stand forth as to hint the soul again unto Jesus Christ.

Sometimes he succours under temptation : by throwing in a promise, lotting the soul upon some promise ; which, as a cable, keeps the heart fast in the time of a storm.

And sometimes he succours under temptation, again, by weakening the temptation, and by keeping the heart and the temptation asunder ; may be, by raising up some affliction :

woe to that soul when the heart and temptation meet, corruption and temptation meet. The Lord Christ, therefore, sometimes is pleased to raise up an affliction between them, that so these two wicked lovers may be kept asunder. Thus under temptation.

After temptation he succours: by filling the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory. By sending the angels to minister: as when the devil left Christ, had tempted him and left him; then came the angels and ministered to him. Every way, before temptation, and in temptation, and after temptation, the Lord Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ to tempted souls: he is a succouring Christ. Beloved! he was a man of sorrows that he might be a God of succours; his heart it is full of succours.

I come to the application.

First, Whilst I stand upon this truth, methinks I hear a solemn and gracious invitation to all poor tempted souls to come unto Jesus Christ, to come for succour. There is none of you all but labour under some temptation or other. Ye have read that the Lord Christ is a succouring Christ: shall I need to invite you to come unto him? Ye have read how able he is: and willing he is to succour. His heart is bent to succour you; his arms are open, his bosom is open, his heart is open to poor tempted souls that they may receive succour from him. Oh, therefore, you that are tempted, come unto Jesus Christ that you may be succoured by him: come unto Christ; come unto Christ alone.

You will say, But does he succour all that are tempted? why then are any damned?

Some men will not come unto him: "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." Some come unto him, but make an half Christ of him: they will not come under great temptations; then they are afraid, and then they despair: they will not come under small temptations: then they despise: but for middling temptations, those they will come to Christ for succour in; and thus they make a half Christ of him. Some come to him as to a Moses; make a conditional Christ of him: they must have their own preparations and humiliations before they come unto him, or else they will not come unto him. But, beloved, ye know what the apostle says, in the viith of the Hebrews: "He is able to save unto

the uttermost those that come to God by him." Those that come to God by Him: if you come unto Him he will succour.

But my temptation is an old temptation, an ancient temptation; I have gone under fears and temptations for many years together, I may say, almost my whole life: and will Jesus Christ succour such an one as I am?

Pray what think you of the verse that goes before the text? read it and consider it: the 14th and 15th verses: "He himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." And at the 15th verse: "Deliver them from Satan that were all their life-time subject to bondage." That he might deliver them from Satan that were all their life-time subject to bondage: in fear of death, and all their life-time subject to bondage.

Art thou, therefore, a man or woman that hath gone up and down, all thy days, in fear of death, and fear of hell, and been in bondage all thy life-time? See, he came to deliver such souls: such tempted souls as these are, Christ came to deliver.

Oh! but my temptation is not a bare temptation, there is much affliction that is mixed withal: and will he deliver those?

Yes, you know how it was with Jacob: Jacob used indirect means to get the blessing; Esau's heart rose against him: Jacob flies for it; when he was in the field, in the night, then Christ appears to him: a ladder, whose top was in heaven (the Deity), the bottom on earth (the humanity), and angels ascending and descending. All the while he was in his father's house he never had this vision of Christ, but now, when he lay in the open field, Christ appears for his succour by his angels thus.

Oh, but my temptation is not such; but my temptation is mixed with much corruption; I have a proud heart, an unclean heart, a froward heart: will the Lord Jesus Christ lay such a wretched heart as mine is in his bosom? Oh, will he succour such a soul as I am?

For answer to this, I pray consider these three things with me: the Lord Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ ye have read; and,

First, He will succour tempted sinners most when they are most tempted. When the child is sick, and when the child is most sick, then the mother comes forth and succours it, then love sits upon the bed-side, then love lays the child in her bosom. And, says he, in the lxvith chapter of Isaiah, and at the 13th verse, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Again, secondly, he will not only succour thus, but he will succour you that are tempted, when you cannot succour yourselves; when your own thoughts cannot succour you, when your own thoughts dare not succour you, or when your own thoughts trample upon your evidences, and when your own thoughts shall make a mutiny in your hearts, and set all on fire: "In the multitude of my thoughts thy word comforts my soul." The Lord knows how to deliver in the time of temptation, though you do not know; and when you do not know it, then he knows, and then he will deliver when you know not. Read again the same place, the 13th verse of the lxvith of Isaiah. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Who are those? says he, at the 5th verse. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, and you that are cast out by your brethren: as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you:" you that lie and tremble before the promise, and dare not draw near unto it, as a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.

Thirdly, He will not only succour thus, but he will succour poor tempted souls with a notwithstanding: notwithstanding all their failings, notwithstanding all their infirmities. Joseph, a type of Christ, his brethren sold him away, he endured much misery. Afterward his brethren came to want, and they go down to Egypt to him; and when they came there, Joseph succours them, notwithstanding all their former unkindness: I am your brother Joseph, I am Joseph your brother; it is true you sold me, and thus and thus you dealt by me; but you are come for succour, and I will succour you with a notwithstanding. So says the Lord Jesus Christ: Poor tempted soul, I know how thou hast dealt by me, how thou hast sold me, how thou hast neglected me, how thou hast crucified me; but I will succour thee with a

notwithstanding, notwithstanding all thy guilt and all thy fear, I will succour thee with a notwithstanding.

Three great succours that the Jews had in the wilderness. Succour from the rock, that gave out water; succour against their thirst. Succour from the manna that came down from heaven; succour against their hunger. Succour from the brazen serpent; from the fiery serpents that stung them. All these three were great types of Christ. "And the rock was Christ," says the apostle. And says Christ himself, "I am the bread," speaking of the manna. "And when I am lifted up," speaking of the brazen serpent, alluding to it. Now look into the story and you will find, God did not give out these succours to them till they murmur; in the xvth of Exodus, there they murmur and murmur and murmur, and then God opened the rock, and God gave them water notwithstanding. And in the xvith of Exodus there he gives them bread. And in the xviith there he opens the rock: but first they murmured; the Lord gave them these succours with a notwithstanding. The thing that I mean is this: Will the Lord give them a typical Christ for their succour, with a notwithstanding, and will he not give poor tempted souls a real Christ with a notwithstanding? notwithstanding all, if they do come unto him, if tempted souls do but come unto him? Oh, what a mighty encouragement is here unto all poor tempted souls to come unto Jesus Christ? Oh you, come unto Jesus Christ, you that never came unto Jesus Christ, come unto Jesus Christ, you shall find him a succouring Christ.

Secondly, If this doctrine be true, what ground of strong consolation is here unto all the saints? Oh, you that are the servants of God, children of God; you that are saints, will you ever doubt of Christ's love again? will you ever suffer your hearts to lie under the pressure of despondent fears again? Doubting arising from ignorance, mistakes of Christ; we put Esau's clothes upon him; we make him an angel of darkness and then we fear him. Ye do not look upon him as a succouring Christ, and therefore you are so full of doubtings; or if you do, you do not actuate your considerations and your notions on him.

Beloved! Either there is a truth in this doctrine; or else there is not. If there be not, what mean all the proofs that

ye have had? And if there be a truth, if the Lord Jesus Christ be a succouring Christ to tempted souls; why then should you not triumph in him? and say, Well nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Jesus Christ: I am persuaded, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus Paul reasoned in the viiith of the Romans. And I pray mark it; "Who then shall separate us? (says he at the 35th verse) shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life," &c. Whence did arise this persuasion? (at the 23rd verse) "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth." Mark, he does not say, It is God that justifies me; but only in the general, "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." He does not say, It is Christ that died for me; but it is Christ that died.

You will say, Aye indeed, if I could say, That God justifies me; and Christ died for me; then I would say with Paul, that nothing shall separate.

Paul raises this persuasion thus; it is God that justifies, and it is Christ that died.

Aye, but was there any temptation, in any of all these that Paul speaks on?

Yes sure: why does he say else, "That in all these things we are more than conquerors?" There is an adversary's power in this. And what think you when he says, "That neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities and powers?" Does not the devil come in there, under principalities and powers? Neither does he say thus; I will hope well now, that because Christ dies, and it is God that justifies; I will hope well: No, but "I am persuaded, none of all these shall separate me from the love of God in Christ." Though I have feared, I will fear no more. Thus he makes his triumph. Oh! what strong consolation is here to all the saints? You that are the tempted saints of God, do not your hearts burn, and glow within you with love to

Jesus Christ? and will you question his love to you? Did Christ come and succour you? and will you not succour yourselves? Is his heart full of succour toward you? and will not you own it? The Lord rebuke our unbelief.

Thirdly, If Jesus Christ be a succouring Christ: then let us be succouring christians. Shall the Lord Jesus Christ take a poor tempted soul into his arms? and shall I thrust him away with my hand? shall the Lord Christ take him into his bosom? and must I thrust him out of the city, and the place where he dwelt? Shall the Lord Jesus Christ carry a poor tempted soul upon his shoulder, by way of succour? and shall I carry him upon my shoulder as a burden? It was Christ's command: "See that ye love one another, as I have loved you." And how did Christ love us? "He loved us, and gave himself for us:" he loved us, and was made in the form of a servant, took our infirmities upon him: he loved us, and was tempted for us, suffered being tempted: and shall not I be willing to succour those that are tempted? You look upon another man's opinion, or his practice, or his froward disposition, and you are offended at it, whom otherwise you would love, and do account godly: but how do you know whether that be not his temptation? that his disposition, and opinion, and practice; how do you know whether that be not his temptation that he lies under? and will not you succour him? Oh! my beloved, how contrary are our dispositions to Christ's? Christ came from heaven to succour those that are tempted: and we call for fire from heaven against those that are tempted. Christ would bear with much smoke, for a little fire: and we will quench a great deal of fire because of a little smoke. Oh! therefore, as you desire to be like unto Jesus Christ, succour the saints: and if there be any thing in their life that does offend you, say, with yourselves; Aye, but may be it is a temptation that such a man lies under; and Christ came to succour those that are tempted, why should not I?

Fourthly, If the Lord Jesus Christ be a succouring Christ, then, why should we yield unto our sins and to our temptations? Though the siege be strait, and violent, and fierce, if a city be blocked up, be beleaguered; if it have but hopes that succour and relief will come, it will hold it out; and if it know for certain that succour will come, it will hold out unto

great extremity. There is never a temptation, but you are beleaguered by it: and when your temptation is about you, say, O my soul, be quiet, yield not; the Lord Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ, and succour will come, and therefore hold it out. Shall the Lord Jesus Christ, shall he succour me against my temptations with his bosom? and shall I take my sins and temptations into mine own bosom? Shall he come to succour me against my sins? and shall I succour my sins that he comes against? What a mighty argument is here to keep us from all our sins, and from yielding to our temptations. Jesus Christ is a succouring Christ to tempted souls.

In the fifth place, If there be a truth in this,—Christ is a succouring Christ; Let us all labour to answer Christ. Beloved, it is the duty and the property of the people of God, to observe what God is doing upon their hearts, and to help on that work. If Jesus Christ be succouring of any of your souls against your temptations; Oh! help it on, help on the work; it is your duty for to help it on, and to answer him.

But you will say, Christ succours before temptation; and he succours under temptation; and he succours after temptation: how shall I answer this? how shall I help his work on?

Give me leave to give an answer unto this question, and so I will wind up all. Does the Lord Jesus Christ succour before temptation? Observe his succours, and lay them up in your hearts against a rainy day: gird your sword upon your thigh, it may not be to seek when the enemy comes; have it in readiness. You do not lay the plaster on upon the wrist for the ague, when the ague is on, but before it comes. Observe what those tokens of love are that Jesus Christ does throw into your bosom before a temptation comes, and lay them up carefully there.

And, beloved in the Lord, labour to keep the sense of his love warm upon your hearts. Look as it is with water in winter; so with your hearts in this respect: so long as the fire is under the water, and the water is hot, it freezes not; but when the heat goes off, and the water is cold, then ice comes upon it. And so long as your heart is kept up in the sense of Christ's love, and warm with Christ's love; so long the ice comes not, the temptation comes not. The slumber

of grace is a preparation to sin and a preparation to temptation. When once our hearts grow cold, and grow remiss; then way is made to temptation: and therefore if you would answer Jesus Christ, Oh! labour to keep the sense of his love still upon your hearts.

And when the temptation is come, then look upon Jesus Christ. No temptation so violent or fierce, but a thought may steal out, and get a look upon Jesus Chrst. The sight of Christ on the cross, is a judge upon the bench against all temptations. The consideration of three things keeps one from the power of temptation: the worth of a soul; the heinousness of sin; and the love of Christ. And you see all these in Christ upon the cross. When temptation comes, stand and look upon him. You know, that when the Israelites were stung, they were then to look upon the brazen serpent, and by their very looking upon it, they were cured thereby. The Lord Jesus Christ is our brazen serpent, lift up upon gospel poles, having more excellency than any brazen serpent. This was but a piece of brass; he is the God of glory. That for a time; he is our High Priest, and lives for ever. That for the Jews only; but he for Jew and Gentile. That for those that could see, and if any poor blind man was stung, it was a case, what should become of the blind man, how should he look upon the brazen serpent? how should he be cured? but this our brazen serpent is able to give you an eye. Beloved, this ordinance is still on foot spiritually. And therefore Christ says by the prophet Isaiah, "Look unto me from all the ends of the earth, and be saved." Oh! when a temptation comes, poor tempted soul, address thyself to the Lord Jesus, stand wishly looking upon him.

And then, give thy soul over into the hands of Christ all thou canst: put thyself out of thine own hands. So long as the plank, or the board swims in the stream, in the midst of the water, you may draw it along with a little thread; but if once it comes towards the bank, towards the shore, and touches upon the ground, then you can hardly draw it. So long as your temptation is in the stream of Christ's love, and of his blood, you may draw it along the more easily: but if once it come to touch upon your own shore, oh then you draw hard. Whensoever, therefore, a temptation arises, go unto Jesus Christ, and say, O Lord, I have no strength

to stand against this great enemy : I confess it is my duty to resist this temptation, but it is thy promise to succour me under this temptation, and therefore I put myself upon thee.

And then, rest upon Christ. As I used to say, Your very resting upon him makes him your's; your resting on his strength makes it yours; and your resting on his succour makes that yours.

And if the Lord command you to the use of any means, do not rest upon any because they are great, or despise any because they are small. You do observe that the great victories among the Jews, they were obtained by the weakest means; and by the blowing of ram's horns, walls fell down. Those were but types of those spiritual victories under the gospel.

God seldom does wound the head of a temptation, but first the heel (the means) is bruised, whereby the head of the temptation is wounded. As Christ's heel is bruised in his wounding of Satan's head: so I say it is in regard of means: seldom that any means do wound the head of a temptation, but the very heel of that means is first bruised: and, therefore do not despise it though it be small.

And if it please the Lord to cast in any promise, when you are under a temptation, oh, take heed that you do not live upon the letter of the promise. I mean, do not live upon the conveyance, but upon the land: and yet how many do live upon the bare promise, bare letter of the promise. When a temptation comes, pass from the temptation unto the promise, and through the promise unto Jesus Christ, and learn to live upon the thing promised, and not the letter of the promise.

After temptation is over, (I can but touch on things,) either you have the better of Satan, or else the worse. If you have the worse; be for ever humbled, but never discouraged. And if you have the better of him; then rejoice in the Lord, and in all his goodness toward you, and in all his succouring love and mercy. "Rejoice in the Lord evermore, and again I say, Rejoice." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." And then it follows, "They shall rejoice: your hearts shall rejoice." But take heed that your spiritual joy, after victory, does not degenerate into carnal joy, and you be drunk therewith. It is reported of

the English, that once going into Spain, and taking in a town there; after they had taken it, there being much wine in the town, the soldiers fell a drinking of themselves drunk; and the country came down upon them, and beat them out, and recovered the town again. So it is with many: they have victory over temptation, and they begin to rejoice spiritually; but their spiritual joy degenerates into carnal joy, and they are drunk with their joy, and so lose their victory. Beloved, joy not in your joy, but in the God of your joy, after victory.

And if you have the better after temptation, if you have the better: be sure of this, that you improve your victory to more assurance. If the devil get the better of you, he will be sure to improve his victory to your despair: I say, If he get the better of you, he will be sure to improve his victory to your despair. Therefore, if you get the better of him, be sure that you improve your victory to more assurance of God's love in Christ.

Yea, my beloved, for aught I know there is no temptation that a child of God meets withal, but he may improve it to more assurance. As thus:

Surely, if I were the devil's own, he would never trouble me thus. When the strong man keeps the house, all is at peace, and all is at quiet. Now ever since, from the very first day that I have set my face towards heaven and Christ; oh how have I been troubled, and tempted, and perplexed, and vexed in my spirit! Surely, therefore, I am none of the devil's. Now if I had been his own, I should have been more quiet under him: but because I am thus troubled, I hope in the Lord I am none of the devil's, I am the child of God. Thus a man may improve.

And, oh, what a good thing were it, if we did make improvement of our temptations! what gracious improvement might we make of all our temptations; and what a blessed issue might we have in our temptations, if we did go unto Christ for succour!

I beseech you, therefore, in the Lord, when as any temptation arises, go unto Jesus Christ, he is a succouring Christ. He hath national succours; and he hath family succours; and he hath personal succours: you have national temptations; and you have family temptations; and you have per-

sonal temptations, soul temptations, temptations when you are alone. Therefore go unto Christ for succour.

To conclude : I beseech you, beloved in the Lord, go to Christ and try him ; put him to it : the greater your temptation is, the more fit work for Christ to cure : do not despair ; do not sit down ; go to Jesus Christ, you shall find him better than I have spoken, you shall not find him worse ; he will go beyond my words, he will not fall short of my words. As the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour : so Jesus Christ, in the gospel, goes up and down with his succour, seeking whom he may succour. Go to him for succour : and the God of peace, even Jesus Christ himself, tread down Satan under our feet shortly.

SERMON III.

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”—LUKE XXII. 31, 32.

AFTER our greatest enjoyments of God, usually follow the greatest temptations of Satan. And therefore our Saviour speaks these words unto his disciples. In the 19th verse of this chapter, we find them at the Lord's Supper with Christ himself ; “This is my body which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me.” Having received the supper with Christ himself, and having had sweet communion with him there, our Saviour gives them out a most gracious and blessed promise, at the 28th, 29th, and 30th verses, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Having said thus unto them, he comes in the very next words to acquaint them with a great temptation that was coming down upon them all : and therefore these words are knit together with the former by the word and ; “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired.” Though you have had this communion with me ; and though I have made you this gracious and blessed promise, know,

that there is a great storm of temptation coming down upon you.

Here are two things: the danger of the temptation; and the remedy against it. The danger in the 31st, and the remedy in the 32nd verse. In the 31st verse, we have for consideration, the tempter, called Satan, which signifies an adversary. The tempted; and those are, not Simon only, but all the disciples. Satan hath desired you: it is in the plural number: he directs his speech unto Simon, but the temptation spreads larger upon all the disciples; "That he may sift you."

The manner of the temptation, in two expressions: Satan hath desired you: according to the original word, Satan hath challenged you into the field; as one man does another: and hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat, and leave you nothing but chaff. Plainly then here is this observation.

The Lord Jesus Christ does give leave sometimes unto Satan, to tempt and winnow his own and best disciples; Christ's own, and best disciples are exposed to Satan's tempting, and winnowings: not Peter only, but James and John and all the beloved disciples of Jesus Christ were exposed here unto Satan's winnowings. He hath desired you, in the plural number, not thee Peter only, but you all my disciples, that he may sift you as wheat.

For the clearing and making out of this truth, I shall labour to discover.

First, What great power Satan hath to tempt, molest, and annoy the children of men.

Secondly, That he puts forth this power especially upon the saints, Christ's own and best disciples.

Thirdly, How he comes by this power, and why God the Father gives him this leave. And so to the application.

First, if ye ask me, What power Satan hath to infest, molest, and thus to tempt the children of men?

I answer, First, ye know that Satan is an angel still; and being an angel, he is a superior creature to man, and therefore, according to the rank of creation, he hath a great deal of power over man. Man hath a great power over the beasts, for man is a superior. The beasts have a great deal of power

over the herbs and the grass, for the beast is the superior. The angels by creation are superior to man; Satan, though fallen, is an angel still: according to the rank of creation, therefore he must needs have a mighty power over the children of men.

Secondly, He is not only a superior creature, but also a more spiritual creature than man, he is a spirit: and upon that account, he is more able to come within man, to close with a man's soul and spirit: being spirit himself, he is more able to converse with, to close and get within our souls and spirits.

Thirdly, He is able to suggest unto man whatsoever he pleases, and to cast in a thousand sinful objects into a man's mind one after another.

Yea, fourthly, and being so well experienced, having studied man for many thousand years: having gotten in all these years so much tempting skill and policy, he is able to discern what that bait is that will take soonest with the children of men, according to their natures, constitutions, complexions, ages, sexes, &c.

Fifthly, He is not only able to present and suggest, but he is also able to follow his suggestions. It is said, "That he stood up, and provoked David to number the people:" he did not only present that evil unto David, but he did solicit: he provoked David to number the people, says the text.

Sixthly, he is not only able thus, but he is able, also, to bemire the fancy, to raise storms in that lower region: a man's soul, ye know, it works by organs, it works by the body, and by the fancy: now Satan being able to disturb the fancy of a man, is thereby able, also, to hinder the very operation of the soul.

Seventhly, He is able to hold down a man's mind unto that particular thing, and to cut off all relief to the soul; so to besiege it, that unless relief come immediately from heaven, he is able to bow down a man's mind, and to hold it down unto that particular.

Lastly, Satan hath so great a power, that the same words that are given unto God, and unto the Holy Ghost, for good, in Scripture, are given, also, unto Satan for evil. The Holy Ghost is said to *enlighten* a man: Satan is said for to *blind* him: "The God of this world hath blinded their eyes,"

says the apostle. The Spirit is said "to rule in us;" Satan is said to "rule in the children of disobedience." The Holy Ghost is said "to work in us mightily;" the same word is used for him also. The Holy Ghost is said to fill the hearts of believers; "They were filled with the Holy Ghost:" so are men's hearts said to be filled with Satan; says Peter to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart?" Indeed, there are three things especially wherein he does fall short: for though Satan is able to discern what temptations would take best with a man, yet he does not know man's thoughts, for God only is the knower of one's thoughts; that is God's prerogative. And though Satan may work very effectually in the children of disobedience, yet, notwithstanding, he does not work with an almighty power. When the Lord converts a man, he puts forth an almighty power in man's conversion. "The same power," says the apostle, "that raised up Christ from the dead, makes ye to believe." The devil is magnipotent, says Luther, but not omnipotent: the devil may be very powerful, but he is not almighty: neither does he put forth an almighty power in his temptations, as God does in the conversion of a sinner. And though he may suggest, and provoke unto what is evil, he cannot force or determine any man to evil. And therefore says the apostle Peter, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart?" He asked Ananias that question, because Satan, though he did fill his heart, he could not have forced, or determined him without his own will thereunto. But very powerful Satan is. In the vith chapter of the Ephesians, you shall see the apostle speaks thus much unto you there, at the 12th verse: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." He speaks concerning Satan, as you see in the former verse: "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood," &c. It is something for a man to have all the world against him, to have all mankind against him: if all mankind should be against one man, you would say, There were a great strength; but behold more than that, here is something more than flesh and blood that every man does wrestle against: "For we wrestle not against flesh and

blood:" all mankind is but flesh and blood, and so there is a weakness; but we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, for authority; and against powers, for strength; and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. Oh, what a mighty power then hath Satan to infest, molest, and to tempt the children of men.

Whether does Satan put forth this power, and exercise this his tempting power upon the saints and children of God?

Yes, for they are the saints that the apostle speaks of here, in that to the Ephesians: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood." You that are Ephesians, and you that are saints, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Properly, ye do not wrestle with a man that is down; ye wrestle with a man for to throw him down; but he must be a standing man that ye wrestle withal: ye do not wrestle with one that does run away, but one that stands to it. Now all wicked men, they are down, but the saints, they stand, and they labour to throw Satan down, and Satan labours to lay them all along in unbelief: but they properly do wrestle with Satan, for they stand, the other are fallen already.

Yea, the saints are not only tempted by Satan; but the best, and the most beloved disciples of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament; who more beloved than David and Job? yet they were tempted. In the New Testament; who more beloved than Peter and Paul? One of the circumcision, and the other of the uncircumcision and apostleship, and yet both had special temptations.

Yea, it is possible for one of God's own children to be so far oppressed with Satan, that he may even be weary of his life. In the xth chapter of Job, and the 2nd verse, says Job under his great temptations, "My soul is weary of my life." And if Rebekah were weary of her life because of the children of Heth; much more may a poor gracious soul be weary of his life, by reason of these children of darkness, these powers of darkness, these temptations of Satan.

But you will say, Why should Satan lie so heavy upon God's own children and people? for he may know, that they shall be saved do he what he can. Satan had heard our Saviour Christ say to Peter, The gates of hell shall not prevail against

thee ; and yet now Satan tempts : if Satan know this, why should he follow God's children, yea, the best of his children so sorely with sad temptations ?

First, Satan is the envious man we read of in Scripture ; and when he hears the Lord owning and honouring of his children, then does his envy work, and rise : and when he hears any of God's children triumphing by faith, and making boast of the love of God, then does his malice kindle into a flame ; Shall such a one go to heaven, and shall I be damned, says he, shall such a one be received, and shall I be cast away for ever ? These are the boilings of this envious man's heart against the children of the Most High.

But, secondly, there is this great reason for it. Satan knows, that if he can but make God's people and the best of his children fall ; though they should not be damned, but pardoned, that their fall may be stumbling blocks unto others that may be damned. And therefore, I pray, mark how it is carried concerning David : it is said in the 1 Chronicles xxist chapter, and the 1st verse, "That Satan stood up against Israel to provoke David to number Israel." It is not said thus ; And Satan stood up against David, and provoked David to number the people : no, but thus, And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people : he stood up against Israel ; Why ? because he knew, that if he did make David thus to number the people, it would be a stumbling for all Israel, and all Israel should fare the worse by it. When Satan stands up and tempts the master of a family unto sin, he does not barely stand up against him ; but in tempting him, he stands up against all the family. When Satan tempts a religious holy man, a beloved disciple of Christ in a town, Satan stands up against all the town in tempting that one man. He stood up against Israel, and tempted David to number the people : and so when he tempts those that are the most beloved disciples of Christ, he stands up against others ; and therefore, though Satan knows that their sins shall be pardoned, yet he does follow them with sad and sore temptations.

Thirdly, Satan loves to divide between friends ; he is the great make-bare of the world, he loves to divide. He may know, that there is so much goodness between man and wife, that he shall never part them ; and yet he will labour to sow

discord among them, that they may live uncomfortably. And so, though he knows he shall never part Christ and a poor believer; yet he will labour to throw jealousies into the heart of a believer concerning the love of Christ. He knew well enough what was said concerning our Saviour Christ; what was said by the angels at the birth of Christ; what was said by the angel to Mary, what was said by Elizabeth; he heard what was said from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" and yet presently he comes to Christ with an if; "If thou be the Son of God:" labouring to throw a jealousy into the heart of Christ, and to doubt of his Sonship, even with God the Father. So I say, although Satan should know that the Lord will pardon such or such a man, yet he loves to make a division between God and the soul, and to cast in jealousies between Christ and a believer. As for others, says he, they are my own already, I shall not need to break into that house, there is nothing but chaff lies there; but here is a godly man, and here is treasure; and therefore he does especially lay his battery against the saints, and those that are the most beloved disciples of Jesus Christ.

But you will say unto me, How does Satan come by this tempting power, this infesting and molesting power?

Great is the power, as we have read already, that he hath, as he is a superior creature: but Satan hath yet another power, and that is the power of conquest; for in Adam's fall, Satan conquered the whole world, all mankind, they were the devil's conquest upon the fall. When a man is converted and turned to God, then he comes out of the kingdom of Satan. But I say, upon the fall the devil made a conquest upon all mankind, and so by conquest he hath a great power. Satan hath leave from God the Father to tempt; I do not say that he hath a special leave for every temptation, not a special commission or permission, or leave for every temptation; but there is no great or extraordinary temptation that does fall upon the children of God, but Satan hath a special leave from God the Father for it. There was a special temptation upon the country, in his running their herd of swine into the sea, and he had leave for that before he did it. There was a special temptation upon Ahab, in the lying spirit of the prophets, and he had a special leave and permission from God for that. There was a special temptation upon

Job, and he had a leave for that. Here was a special temptation coming down upon the disciples, and he had leave for that. Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired you. He was fain to ask leave, and he had leave for that. There is no extraordinary or great temptation befalls any of the children of God, but Satan is fain to ask leave for it; he hath a leave for it, before he can come and tempt the soul.

But you will say then unto me, Why does God the Father give Satan leave thus to tempt his own children and Christ's own disciples?

First, take it thus, Look whatsoever is the end and the issue of any evil which befalls the children of God, that was the design of God the Father in suffering that evil to come upon them. Now the end and issue of the saints' temptation is always good unto them; and therefore God suffers the temptations of his people, because he hath a design of mercy and love upon them in these temptations. What was the end and issue of Satan's tempting of Adam and Eve? They fell, and then the righteousness of Christ, and eternal life thereby was brought in: this was the end and the issue of it. Now God the Father had this design upon Satan's temptation, all the while Satan was tempting of Adam: and the Lord would never have suffered our heel to have been bruised by Satan's temptation, but that he did intend to break the head of Satan. It was a great temptation that of David, when as Satan stood up and provoked him to number the people: pray, what was the end and issue of that temptation? I shall only name the Scriptures: the 1 Chronicles, the xxist chapter; and the xxiind chapter and the beginning of it; and the 2 Chronicles, the iiird chapter, and 1st verse, compared together you shall find this. First Satan tempts David; he numbers the people, the people being numbered, a plague breaks forth; the plague prevailing, David goes and offers up a sacrifice at the threshing floor of Ornan, and there God told him the temple should be built. David had a long time desired to know where the temple should be built; he says, he would give no rest unto himself, no sleep unto his eye-lids, until he had found out a place for God: you shall find, that David had this place discovered as the issue of this temptation, this was the issue of it; the devil had as good have let David alone, he had as good have been

quiet, for David now had the end and the issue, attained unto that that he never did attain unto before. So I say it is with the people of God, the Lord never suffers his own children to fall into any sin, but he does intend to wean them from that sin that they do fall into even by the falling into it: the Lord never suffers any of his own children to be tempted, but he intends to break the back of that temptation, even by their being tempted. This is the design of God the Father. Oh! what a glorious design of love and mercy is here upon all the temptations of God's people!

But, secondly, God hath yet greater and higher designs: The manifestation of his own power, of his own wisdom, of his own faithfulness, of his own love and free grace.

The manifestation of his power. When Paul was tempted and buffeted by Satan, the Lord said unto him, that his "strength should be perfected in weakness:" in Paul's weakness, God's strength should be perfected.

The manifestation of his wisdom. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation," says the apostle.

The manifestation of his faithfulness. In the 1 Cor. x. 13, "The Lord is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able to bear."

The manifestation of his free love and grace. And therefore, when Paul was tempted and buffeted by Satan, and prayed against his temptation, the Lord answered thus: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

But in regard of the saints themselves: How should they give a probate or testimony of their uprightness and sincerity, their firm and fast cleaving to God, if they were never tempted? read for this purpose the xiiith chapter of Deuteronomy, and the 2nd and 3rd verses. Before Job was tempted, Satan thought that Job had served God for a boon, for something: "Hast thou not seen my servant Job?" says God; Aye, says Satan, but "Does Job serve God for nought?" Job is an hypocrite, all things go well with him; Job is in a fair and blessed outward condition, and Job was never tempted: does Job serve God for nought? but now touch him, and let me tempt him a little, and see if he does not blaspheme God then: thus Satan then. And just thus is the language of the devil now: Does such a man or woman serve God for nought? he is but an hypocrite, all things go well with him, he was

never yet tempted: but, O Lord, let this man or woman come under my hand, and let me tempt him a little, and see if he does not blaspheme. Well, Satan, says God, Job is in thine hand, only spare his life. And Satan did tempt him and touch him; and instead of blaspheming, behold, blessing; "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be his Name." Here now Job gave a testimony that he did not serve God for something, that his heart was sincere and upright. And so, when men can hold out, notwithstanding all their temptations, they give a testimony of their uprightness and sincerity, and that their souls do cleave unto God in truth. For these and many other reasons, the Lord doth suffer his own best and dearest children to be tempted by Satan.

I come to the application.

If God doth suffer his own people and dearest children to be exposed to Satan's temptings and winnowings; Why should any man then doubt of his childship, doubt of his own everlasting condition, and say, that he is none of the child of God because he is tempted? Beloved, I have seen a sore evil under the sun, a vanity even among the saints and people of God: some doubting of the soundness of their condition and the love of God because they are not tempted; others doubt because they are tempted. One says, Oh! I am afraid I am none of the child of God, for I was never tempted; the children of God, they meet with temptations, but I was never yet buffeted, and therefore I am none of God's child: another, on the contrary; I labour under these and these temptations, and therefore, I fear that I am none of God's child: yea, sometimes the same person thus: First, he does not observe his own heart, and says he, I fear I am none of God's child, for I was never tempted. Afterward when he meets with temptation, then he doubts again that he is not God's child because he is tempted. Oh, what childish dealing is this with God your Father!

But, my beloved in the Lord, if this be true, that the Lord doth suffer his own, and best children, to be exposed to Satan's winnowings and temptings, then why shouldest thou conclude that thou art not the child of God because thou art tempted? Oh, but I do not conclude, will some say, that I am not the child of God; I do not conclude that the Lord does not love me because I am tempted, but because I meet

with such and such temptations. Tell me, did not David, Job, Paul and Peter meet with such and such, and so great temptations? Yea, did not Christ himself meet with it? Oh, but my temptations are such as would make one's hair stand upright on one's head to think of them; sometimes tempted even to lay violent hands upon myself. What think ye of Christ? when Satan spake unto him, and tempted him to throw himself down off the pinnacle of the temple. Oh, but I am tempted with such temptations that I am ashamed to name, and my heart aches and trembles when I do reflect on them; even with blasphemous thoughts. What think ye of Christ? was not he tempted to blasphemy? says the devil to him, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me:" what greater blasphemy than to worship the devil? to make a God of the devil himself, what greater blasphemy? Oh! but I fear and doubt my condition, and the love of God towards me, because my temptations are not as the temptations of God's children; but my temptations are such as cannot stand with grace, there is a spot, that is not the spot of God's people: and are there not temptations that are not the temptations of God's people? have not wicked men their peculiar temptations, such as does not fall upon the children of God? I am afraid that my temptations are of that rank and of that sort, and therefore I fear and doubt my condition. Mark I pray, this same word temptation may be considered two ways; either in regard of the formality or form of the temptation, or in regard of the materiality or matter of the temptation.

Take now temptation according to the propriety of the speech and phrase, and so wicked men are not said to be tempted by Satan; by their own hearts they are, but I speak of Satan's temptations, properly the wicked are not said to be tempted by Satan. He is said to rule in them, in the children of disobedience; and he is said to lead them captive at his will: but if ye look into the New Testament, ye will not ordinarily find, that wicked men are said to be tempted by Satan. A man does not tempt his wife, but when he solicits another woman, then he is said for to tempt that woman. As the saints are married to Christ, so wicked men they are matched to Satan; and he is not in propriety of phrase said for to tempt them. Your men-stealers, those that steal

children, they do not tempt their own children for to go with them, they naturally go with their father : but they come and tempt your children, they are other folk's children that they tempt. And so Satan, he is properly said to tempt those that are none of his children. A master does not tempt his servant, he is not said properly to tempt his own servant to dwell with him, or to serve him : but he goes to another man's servant, and speaks to him to come and dwell with him, and to serve him. As for wicked men, they are properly the servants of Satan ; and therefore when the devil solicits them to do that which is evil, or to dwell with him, and to converse with him, it is not I say in propriety of speech a proper temptation : but for the servants of Christ, when he solicits them unto evil, then he is properly said to tempt them. This for the form of a temptation.

But now, take a temptation in the materiality of it, for the matter of it, which is a solicitation to evil ; and so wicked men are tempted by Satan ; yea, they more tempted than the godly are, that is, they are more solicited unto evil by Satan ; and the same temptation that godly men are tempted with, wicked men are tempted with : and the same temptation that wicked men are tempted with, a godly man is tempted with. As there is no duty which a godly man does perform, but a wicked man may do it, for the act, and yet remain wicked : so there is no sin, which a wicked man falls into, but a godly man may be tempted to it, and yet remain godly.

But you will say unto me, This evil that is upon my heart, is not the temptation of Satan, but indeed it is the corruption of mine own heart, and therefore I fear my condition. Indeed, if I were sure that it were only the temptation of Satan, I should never question God's love, nor mine own condition because of it ; but, oh ! I am afraid it is not a temptation of Satan, but the corruption of mine own heart, and therefore I fear all is not right with me.

I answer, first, this is no new thing for God's own people and children, to charge all Satan's temptations upon their own hearts, to lay all at their own door. Wicked men, they charge all their own corruptions upon Satan's temptations, as if they were not their own, but altogether Satan's : godly men, they charge all Satan's temptations upon their own hearts, and

upon their own account, as if they were all their own and nothing of Satan's; this is no new thing. Adam and Eve, when they were fallen, and had eaten the forbidden fruit, then they were ungodly, in the state of nature presently upon the fall before they believed in Christ: and, says Eve, "This serpent gave me to eat;" as if she should say, He hath done it, it is all his work, it is Satan's work, and it is none of mine; being in her unregenerate state, she lays all upon the devil, and frees herself, as if she had nothing to do with it. On the other side, David was provoked by Satan to number the people; yet notwithstanding, see what he says in the 2. Sam. xxivth chapter and the 10th verse. "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly." He lays it all upon himself: he does not go now and say, Satan hath provoked me to number the people, and it is Satan's work and none of mine; but he does charge it here upon himself, as if Satan had no hand at all in it. I have done foolishly, says he, and I have sinned, and forgive this great iniquity. This is usual; wicked men excuse their own corruptions, by Satan's temptations: godly men aggravate Satan's temptations by their own corruptions.

But, in the second place, although this be so, that it is usual with the saints thus to do, to charge all upon themselves and nothing on Satan; yet know, that the saints seldom or never do fall into any great sin, but Satan hath a special hand therein. I am not of Origen's mind, to lay all sin upon Satan, not upon man; but I say, there is no great sin that any of God's children do fall into, but Satan hath a special hand and a work therein. And, therefore, if ye look into the New Testament, you will find, that the sins of the godly, they are very often called temptations: in the first of Corinthians, the xth chapter, and the 13th verse, "There bath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation, also, make a way to escape. Wherefore (at the 14th verse), my dearly beloved, fly from idolatry;" as if that were temptation too. And so in that vith of Galatians, and 1st verse:

“ If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, let thou also be tempted :” lest thou also fall into sin. And so the apostle says unto the Thessalonians, in the first epistle, the iiird chapter, and the 5th verse : “ For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. The meaning is, Lest you are fallen ; but it is called temptation to them.

Thirdly, Although this be true, that there is no great sin that the saints do fall into, but Satan hath a special hand in it ; yet it is the property and disposition of God’s people to be humbled and grieved under their temptations, as if they were all their own and nothing of Satan’s. Peter goes out and weeps bitterly when he had fallen ; he might have said thus : The Lord told me that there was a temptation coming, Satan had desired to winnow me ; and now the word of the Lord is fulfilled, Satan hath tempted me, and I am thus fallen : but not a word of Satan, but he goes out and weeps bitterly, as if it were all his own work. And let me tell you, for your comfort, when as you can mourn over your temptations, as if they were all your own, and nothing of Satan’s, the Lord will pardon them to you, as if they were all Satan’s, and nothing of your own.

In the fourth place, to speak a little of the difference between these, that ye may know the difference between the temptations of Satan and the corruptions of your own heart.

When as your heart and your flesh trembles and quakes under the first rising and motion of a sin, this is not your own corruption alone, but there is a temptation with it. When the corruptions of one’s own heart do work up evil, a man’s heart is rather pleased and tickled with it, and consents to it, than any way one’s flesh lies trembling and quaking under it. That temptation is not much to be feared, when a man fears himself for his temptation. He is to be feared most that does fear least : and he is to be feared least that does fear most. A godly, gracious man or woman, is humbled under nothing more than under his temptations ; he looks upon his temptations, as the greatest afflictions in all the world. As now, take that of blasphemous thoughts ; suppose a poor soul troubled with such evil thoughts, such a

poor soul says, I do profess it in the sight of God, I never met with such an affliction since I was born: I have lost children; oh, but that affliction is not like to this! I have lost friends; oh, but that affliction is not like to this! I have lost my estate; oh, but that affliction is not like to this! Man or woman, if it be thy affliction it is not thy sin. And I appeal to you now, you that say ye do not doubt of God's love, ye do not fear your own condition, because of temptations only, but because ye are afraid they are the corruptions of your own heart, and not the temptations of Satan; I appeal to you that say so; Are ye not afraid in yourselves because of your temptations? Do not ye look upon your temptations as your greatest afflictions? Nay, does not thy flesh quake and tremble, sometimes, when a temptation dashes, and beats in upon thy soul? Does not thy very outward man, sometimes, lie quaking and trembling before a temptation? Certainly this is not all the corruption of thine own heart, here is the devil's hand, here is a temptation in it, and, poor soul, thou mayest have some comfort yet; notwithstanding the oppression is so great, yet here is comfort, it is no other but what may stand with grace.

Oh! but you will say, suppose it be all the temptation of Satan, and not the corruption of mine own heart, yet it is a great affliction, and what comfort can I have in this condition?

What comfort! Is it not much comfort to know that there is nothing does befall you but what may befall a true child of God? Sometimes ye say thus: No man's condition is like to mine; did I but know that it is so with other of God's children, then I should be satisfied. This doctrine tells thee, that Christ's own best disciples, sometimes, are exposed to Satan's temptings, to Satan's winnowings.

Is it not a great comfort, for a man to know, that while he is tempted, Christ is at prayer for him? "But I have prayed for thee." In time of temptation you cannot pray, aye but Christ can pray, and he is then at prayer for you: as he said to Peter, so he says to every disciple of his now, "But I have prayed for thee:" poor soul, though thou canst not pray for thyself, yet I have prayed for thee.

Is it not a sweet comfort, for a man to know, that the enemy is overcome before he strikes? Satan's temptation is overcome by Christ's intercession; and Christ prays before

Satan tempts; "But I have prayed for thee:" before the temptation came.

Is it not a choice comfort, for a man to know, that Satan, the great tempter, hath no more power than my Father gives him leave? Thus it is, "Satan hath desired," &c.

Is it not wonderful comfort, for a man to know, that there is something that he can never be robbed of? When a man is travelling on his journey, if he meet with thieves, they take away the money that he hath about him; but when they have taken all his money that he hath about him, Well, says he, though they have taken away my spending money, and that which I did wear about me, yet I have land at home that they can not rob me of. And so says the child of God, or at least he may say so, when Satan comes and tempts him, and robs him of some comfort; yet, blessed be the Lord, I have union with Christ that I can never be robbed of; and I have an inheritance in heaven that thieves cannot break through and steal away. Satan may take away my spending money, my spending comforts that I have here in this world; but Oh! blessed be God, I have such comforts, and such an estate, such durable riches that I can never be robbed of. Oh! you that are the saints and people of God, lift up your heads: you that have been bowed under temptation, these things have I spoken to you, that you may not be overwhelmed with temptation, you that are tempted, but that in the midst of all you may breathe out your souls in the bosom of Jesus Christ.

Well, but you will say, It is not comfort that I look for, or that I follow after; but the truth is, I am sorely tempted, and Satan lies heavy on me, following, and dogging me at the heels to yield unto his temptations; what shall I say, or what shall I do, that I may not yield unto his temptations?

What shalt thou say: if it be possible, do not stand to treat with Satan, do not stand to parley with him; he will dispute you out of all your comfort if you stand and parley with him. You have half lost the field when ye honour Satan, and you honour him when you follow him into his disputes: if it be possible therefore do not stand and parley, or dispute with Satan, but if you must say something to him, and ye must treat, ye must speak; tell Satan then, that therefore you believe it, because he denies it: therefore you do not believe

it, because he affirms it; that you believe the contrary because he speaks thus. When ye are to deal with a great liar, one that is your enemy, and he comes and tells you very ill news, you will say, He is a liar and he is my enemy, and he does it to scare me, and therefore I believe the contrary. Satan is a great liar, and he is your enemy, and therefore when he says unto thee, there is no hope for thee, thou hast been a great sinner, a drunkard for thus many years, a swearer thus many years, there is no hope for thee: say to Satan, therefore I believe the contrary, there is hope for me, because thou sayest there is none, for thou art a liar, yea, the father of lies.

Again, if ye must speak with Satan; then speak of Christ of grace, of the infinite love of God in Christ: he cannot stand before words of grace, and before words of love: not a word of grace, or of free love in all his temptations.

Yea, if you must speak with Satan, tell him, Oh! tell him, what ye find in the ways of God, and tell him, that you believe beyond what ye find; thus: Satan for the present I find nothing but sweetness in the ways of God: thou told me that if I would turn godly I should never have a merry day again, but I tell thee what I now find; I find of a truth that the sourest part of godliness, is sweeter than the sweetest part of wickedness. Satan, I find, that all that ever thou told me is false; thou saidest, I should lose all my friends: I have better. Thou saidest, I should lose all my comforts if I turned godly; I have better, Satan. And this I find, Satan; that all that ever Christ spake unto me, is true: oh! I find infinite sweetness in the ways of God, and I believe beyond what I find; that if the wheels of providence should run never so cross, yet through grace I would believe. Beloved, ye know what the apostle says, "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith:" and "By faith we quench his fiery darts." Must ye therefore needs speak with Satan, speak to him words of faith; not of sense, man, not of reason, but speak words of faith: I charge ye in the Lord, if ye will stand and parley, and speak with Satan, speak words of faith to him, speak words in a way of believing; and it is only faith that brings Christ and the soul together in the time of temptation; and when Christ comes in, Satan goes out.

But you will say, I know it is a good thing and happy, so to answer Satan's temptations as I may not yield : but oh ! that I might not be led into any temptation : What shall I do that I may prevent it ?

First, take heed that you do not stand playing upon the borders or confines of any sin. If you stand upon the brink of a sin, Satan comes behind and thrusts you into it. Some there are that tempt the tempter, that begin unto Satan, they drink to Satan the first draught, and Satan pledges them, and drinks unto them again. Would you, my beloved, prevent temptation ? Oh ! take heed how ye stand playing upon the borders of any sin, the holes of the asps.

Again, secondly, If ye would prevent temptation ; then labour to get your hearts mortified unto the objects of love and fear. Satan tempts two ways ; as a serpent, and as a lion. When Satan tempts as a serpent ; then he does make a tender, and an offer of some comfortable, profitable, sweet thing. You shall be like God, "You shall be as God," says he unto Adam and Eve, when he tempted as a serpent, came as a serpent. And so dealing as a serpent with our Saviour Christ, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Shows him the glory of the world, and all this will I give thee. So says he unto a poor soul when he tempts as a serpent, Come and yield unto this temptation, and all this comfort will I give thee, and all this profit will I give thee, and all this repute and honour will I give thee. Thus as a serpent. Sometimes he tempts as a lion ; for he goes up and down as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And when Satan tempts as a lion, then he does roar upon a poor soul, and labours to scare him out of his conscience, and out of the good ways of God. And therefore in the book of the Revelation, "Satan shall cast some of you into prison." Satan shall do it. And sometimes he shall stand and rattle the chains of a prison ; look, do you hear these ? If you will go on in such and such a way, you will lose all your friends ; and if you will go on in such a way, I will make it too hot for you, and thus and thus shall you suffer, and it shall cost ye a prison ere I have done with you. Thus now Satan tempts as a lion, by holding terrible objects before a man. It is said that Satan came to our Saviour Christ, and he found nothing in him ; so he prevailed not : but Satan comes to us, and he

finds a great deal in us, he finds a disposition in us to be moved with objects of love, unto comfortable, and profitable things: he comes to us, and finds in us a disposition to be moved with fear by terrible objects. Wherefore now, my beloved, do you desire to prevent the mischief of a temptation? oh! labour more and more to die unto all the objects of your outward love, and the objects of fear; die to the objects of love, get your heart mortified to these two objects of love and fear. And be sure of this, if thou wouldest prevent temptation, that ye labour more and more to walk in the light: Satan is the prince of darkness, and he walks in darkness, and he tempts in darkness. "When night comes the beasts go forth to their prey," says the Psalmist. And when Satan sees a poor ignorant soul, that walks in the dark, says he, Here is a fit prey for me. Oh! therefore, you that are ignorant, and have sat ignorant under the ordinances; for the Lord's sake, labour to get more light and more knowledge, get your heart opened unto every truth of God, labour to acquaint yourselves more with gospel light, and set your bosoms open unto every truth of the Lord.

And, beloved! whether you would overcome, or whether you would prevent temptation; whatever means you use; be sure of this, that you take your temptation and dip it in the blood of Christ. Take a candle, that is lighted, and only blow out the candle, the candle is easily lighted again: but when the candle is out, take it and put it into the water, and then it is not so easily lighted again: so now a temptation comes, and you blow it out with a resolution, and you will not yield to it, alas, it is easily lighted again: but now take this candle, take this temptation, and come and dip it in the blood of Jesus Christ, and it will not be so easily lighted again; so you shall be able to prevent temptation for the time to come: never rest alone in resolving, but, oh! take your temptation and dip it in the blood of Jesus Christ.

And if that you do overcome your temptation at any time; be thankful to God: if ye have more than flesh and blood against you, ye shall have more than flesh and blood with you. And therefore, have you overcome temptation? go away and be very thankful, and say, oh! though flesh and blood be against me, yet I have more than flesh and blood

with me, praise the Lord much : and if you have been overcome with temptation, yet be not discouraged ; for ye hear the doctrine, God doth suffer his own dear children to be tempted, to be buffeted, to be exposed to Satan's temptings, and to Satan's winnowings. But though ye be tempted, and it be a temptation of Satan, yet ye hear withal, that it is the property and disposition of God's own people to grieve and mourn under their temptation, as if it were all their own, and nothing of Satan's. Wherefore now, my beloved, having heard these things, think on them, and the Lord bless them to you every day more and more.

SERMON IV.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."—LUKE XXII. 31, 32.

YE find that these words hold forth the relation of a great storm of temptation coming down upon Christ's disciples. The *danger* of it. And the *remedy* against it. Of the danger somewhat ye heard from the 31st verse. And now I am to speak unto the 32nd verse. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Here is somewhat implied, and somewhat expressed : implied, Satan's design, and his great design upon their faith. Expressed ; Christ's love and care, his special love and care over them, and towards them in this temptation. As if he should say thus, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to tempt you ; not only thee, but all my disciples : the temptation is great, and in this temptation, his great design is upon your faith : but I have spoken unto my Father, and your Father, that your faith may not fail. So that hence you may observe thus much :

That in the time of temptation, Satan's great design is upon the faith of the saints, to make their faith fail.

He doth not say, But I have prayed for thee, that thy prayer fail not, or that thy patience fail not, or that thy love fail not ; but I have prayed that thy "faith fail not." So that Satan's great design in all his temptations is upon the

faith of the saints, that he may make their faith to fail them.

For the further clearing and opening of these words, and of this truth, I shall labour to show you :

First, What it is for to fail in our faith ; and how far the saints may fail in their faith in time of temptation.

Secondly, What an evil thing it is for the saints to fail in their faith in time of temptation.

Thirdly, That Satan's great design in all his temptations, is upon our faith.

Fourthly, How Satan labours to weaken our faith in the time of temptation ; what strokes he gives unto our faith, and how we shall be able to bear off those blows in the time of temptation, that so our faith fail not ?

If ye ask me, first, What it is for to fail in faith here ? I answer, The word in the original signifies, an eclipse, as the eclipse of the sun, or of the moon : and the words may be so translated, But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith be not eclipsed. But according to the ordinary acceptance of that word eclipse, Peter's faith did fail, for it was much eclipsed. The word signifies also, a total defect, such as Judas made, who of a disciple became an enemy, a traitor ; and instead of believing fell to despair : and so Peter's faith did not fail. A man's faith is said to fail, either when it falls short of what it hath been, or what it should be ; and in both these respects Peter's faith did fail : it fell short of what it had been, it fell short of what it should be. But there is a two-fold failing in faith : one in regard of the acting and exercise of faith ; and another in regard of the grace of faith itself. In regard of the acting, working, and exercise of faith, Peter's faith did fail : but in regard of the grace itself, so it failed not. The Lutherans, they say, and contend much for it, that a regenerate man's faith may fail totally, and finally in time of temptation : and so they say that Peter's faith, failed here, when he denied his Lord and Master ; because it is said in the next words, " When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." As if his faith had failed so far, as he should need a new conversion. But that word translated, When thou art converted (as divers of the learned do well observe) may be translated, again, thus : I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not : and do thou strengthen thy brethren

again : do thou return to that work again. And so you have the same word used in the Septuagint, translated at the lviiith Psalm, at the 6th verse. "Wilt thou not revive us again?" The word in the Hebrew is thus : Wilt thou not convert, or turn unto us, and revive us? which we translate, "Wilt thou not revive us again?" And so the words here may be translated, (being an Hebraism) But do thou strengthen thy brethren again. But suppose that the words stand according to their present translation, it does not argue, that Peter did fail totally in this temptation : for, the whole life of a christian here, is a continual converting, and turning to God : we repent, and repent again ; we turn, and turn again. Every day we turn unto God yet more and more ; every day brings forth another conversion : yet not so, as if the former conversion were made void. And if the faith of a believer would fail totally in the time of a temptation ; what should be the meaning of those words, in 1 John vth chapter, and the 18th verse. "We know, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not : " the wicked one : that is Satan, he toucheth him not. But now, if Satan could tempt a godly man, and prevail so far in his temptation, as to make his faith fail totally, then he would touch him to the purpose : but, says the text, "He keeps himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not : " and therefore his faith cannot fail totally, a regenerate man's faith cannot fail totally. And ye know what is said, in that viith of Matthew at the 24th and 25th verses, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which hath built his house upon a rock ; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house ; and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock." Now every believer is founded upon a rock, Christ, and therefore though the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and temptations be never so great, he cannot fail totally, because he is built upon a rock. In the xiiith of Matthew, ye know it is made the property of the false ground that in the time of temptation it fell away : now if the good ground, a regenerate man, should fall away in the time of temptation ; what difference were there between the false

ground, and the good ground? Plainly therefore, the Scripture holds forth this truth unto us, that a regenerate man, a believer, though his faith may fail much, yet it does not fail totally in time of temptation. And thus Peter's faith failed, and thus it failed not: in regard of the exercise, and acting of his faith it did fail; but in regard of the grace itself, faith itself, so it failed not: and so it is, and may be with others of the saints also.

Secondly: If the faith of a believer do only fall in regard of the acting, exercise, and working thereof, what great inconvenience is there or evil in the failing of his faith?

Much, my beloved, very much: for though that faith fail only in regard of the acting, exercise, and working, he does lose an opportunity of glorifying God. It is said of Abraham, that he believed and gave glory to God. Faith gives glory to God: it glorifies his power, his mercy, his faithfulness, and his wisdom; not faith in the habit, but faith in the exercise of it, glorifies God: and so much as a man's faith does fail, in the acting, working, and exercise of it, so much he loseth an opportunity of glorifying God.

Moreover, he loses his own comfort. Faith is a comforting grace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." And in the xvth to the Romans, and the 13th verse, ye find, that joy and peace grows upon faith: "Now the God of hope, fill ye with joy and peace in believing." So much as a man does believe, so much joy and peace: if a man fail in the exercise of his faith, he does lose his comforts.

Yea, hereby also, he does lose his present prize. A Christian hath a prize in this life; he hath a two-fold crown: a crown of glory in the world to come; and a present crown. And therefore says the Lord unto the Church of Philadelphia, "Hold fast that which thou hast, lest another take thy crown." Now if a man do fail in the exercise of his faith, he does lose much of his present prize. Ye know how it was with Moses and Aaron, ye read of it in the xxth chapter of Numbers, and the 12th verse. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believe me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have promised them." They were shut out of the land of Canaan for not believing. But Moses and Aaron did not lose the

grace of faith, it was only failing in the exercise of faith; their failing was not in the grace itself, but only they failed in the exercise of their faith, and they were shut out of Canaan for it. And Moses besought the Lord earnestly in prayer, that he would reverse this threatening, and it might not be; he was shut out of Canaan, merely for failing in the exercise of his faith. Oh! what an evil thing is it then, for a Christian to fail in his faith, though it be no more than in the exercise of his faith.

Further, in this failing of one's faith, though but in the exercise of it; a Christian does lose much of the benefit, and sweetness of the mercy promised. Look as it is with a wicked man, in regard of the judgment threatened; so with a godly man in regard of the mercy promised. Now take a wicked man, and let the threatening of God be fulfilled before him upon others, upon himself; he profits not by God's judgments. Why? because that he does not exercise faith concerning the threatening; and so when the judgment comes, he profits not by God's dealing, by God's judgment, he loses the benefit of God's dispensations that way. So I say with a godly man: let the promise be fulfilled, and possibly he does not find the sweetness, or the benefit of the mercy promised when the promise is fulfilled. Why? because he does not exercise faith in the promise itself. When as the Lord gave manna, Moses had the sweetness of it, why? because he exercised faith about it! but the children of Israel, they made a tush of it, a light matter of it: why? because they looked upon it in a way of sense, and did not take it in a way of believing, and so they lost the benefit, and sweetness of the mercy promised. Beloved, it is no small matter this, for to lose the benefit and sweetness of the mercy promised: that a Christian loses by failing in his faith in regard of the exercise of it; and therefore certainly it is a very evil thing: though their faith fail not in regard of the grace itself, yet if it fail in regard of the work, and the exercise of it, it is a very evil thing, and much inconvenience comes unto the saints thereby.

Thirdly, whereby may it appear, that Satan's great design is upon our faith in the time of temptation?

He does tempt most unto that sin which is the greatest: and the sin against the gospel is the greatest sin. Satan's

great design is to hinder the work of Christ, the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of the saints; to counter-work the Spirit of God. Satan does tempt that he may tempt: and the greatest temptation usually comes in the rear, comes at the last. Satan does tempt a man to break the law; but he hath a further reach in that: for he tempts a man to break the law, that so he may tempt him afterwards to sin against the gospel: he lies in ambush in one temptation, for to draw to another. When Satan tempted our first parents Adam and Eve, he tempted like a serpent, in form of a serpent: and so now too, he comes, and he winds about us in his temptation; but his sting is in the tail, and at the latter end. And thus ye see it was in the temptation of our Saviour Christ, his great design was upon Christ's faith: in the ivth of Matthew, ye know he hath three temptations there: and says he, in the two first temptations, "If thou be the Son of God?" and, "If thou be the Son of God?" and in the last temptation: "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." He tempted him to blasphemy, and atheism; and what greater unbelief? so it is with the saints also: Satan, comes and he tempts them to sourness, frowardness, and passion in their families, but he hath a further reach upon that distemper: for, says he, I will tempt this man or woman to passion, and frowardness, and when he hath been froward, and passionate, then I will tempt him to be doubting whether he be the child of God or no: first I will tempt this man for to break the law, and when he hath broken the law, then will I tempt him to sin against the gospel, then will I strike at his faith: his great design still is upon your faith in all his temptations.

But you will say, Why is Satan's great design upon our faith in time of temptation?

He is the great robber, or thief: and if he can, he will be sure to spoil a man of that which is the best. Now faith is more precious than gold; the *trial* of your faith is, faith is the gift of God: and therefore if he can get any thing from a man, he will get that which is God's gift. He is the great hinderer of all good, of every good work; and he will especially labour to hinder that work which is the work of God in a special manner: and this is the work of God, that ye believe in his Son. Satan knows, that faith is the most

called ; and the anchor of faith. If ye be in a storm at sea ; faith is your anchor : If ye be in danger at land, before enemies, faith is your shield. If that a man's faith fail, his duties fail, his heart fails, and all fails. He knows well enough, that he shall soon make us suffer shipwreck, if he can but weaken faith, and therefore his great design is upon our faith. He knows, that faith is most prejudicial to himself ; for "by faith we overcome the world ; whom resist, steadfast in the faith ; and by faith we quench the fiery darts of the devil." Now then, says Satan, does faith quench my fiery darts ? then will I labour to quench faith if I can. The devil does labour always to present himself in Christ's clothes unto a soul, as an angel of light : and he does labour to present Christ in his own clothes, as an angel of darkness. When as he is a liar himself, he does labour to make the soul put the lie upon Christ, and upon the Spirit. The Spirit of God, that comes and testifies unto a man or woman, thou art the child of God : Satan says, no. When a man therefore does say, he is not the child of God ; the language of his action is, he gives the lie unto the Spirit, and he says that Satan speaks true : so here he makes Christ and the Spirit of Christ a liar by his unbelief ; and he makes the devil to speak true. Now this is Satan's great design, and therefore in all his temptations, still he strikes at the faith of the saints, labours to weaken their faith ; his great design is upon their faith.

In the fourth place, how does Satan weaken our faith in time of temptation ? What are those strokes that Satan gives unto our faith ? and how shall we be able to bear them off.

In the general, Satan does sometimes labour to weaken our faith, by drawing us from the means of faith. Take the wood away from the fire, it will soon lose its heat, if not put out. And if a man be but drawn away from the means of faith ; the means drawn from him, or he from the means by his own default, his faith will be soon weakened. This Satan labours to do sometimes.

Sometimes, again, he raises up mountains of difficulties ; and discouragements in the way of a Christian's obedience ; and so labours to wound his faith. Throw water upon the fire, it will soon be out.

But that I may speak the more fully unto this great question, the answer whereof is of concernment every day amongst you.

Ye know there are three acts of faith: there is the faith of reliance; whereby a soul does rely upon God in Christ. There is the faith of assurance; whereby a man is persuaded of God's love towards him, and his love to God, and that he is the child of God. And there is the faith of acknowledgment; whereby a man does own, and acknowledge the cause, and truth of Christ. I shall now spend some time, and shew ye how Satan strikes at all these faiths: and withal labour to shew you, how we may bear off his blows, that so we may stand in the time of temptation, and our faith may not fail.

First, For the faith of reliance: Satan does sometimes strike at the faith of reliance in the saints, by hiding from them their former experiences of God's gracious dealing with them. So long as a man hath the sight, and view of his experiences of God's gracious dealing with him before, he does rely on God, and he says, I will for ever rest upon God, and rely upon God in Christ, for thus and thus he hath dealt with me heretofore. Now therefore, Satan does labour in the time of temptation, to hide the experiences of the saints from them, and so does strike at their faith, and labours to make their faith fail.

But then, how should we bear off this blow?

Thus: Take heed that ye never rest upon the promise barely, or only because of your experience; but rather deal with your experience because of the promise. It is a good thing for a man to come up to the promise by the ladder of experience: but it is better for a man to go down to the promise by his experience. And if ye look into the cvith Psalm, ye shall find, that when a man does rest upon the promise, barely by reason of his experience, his faith will soon fail. "The waters covered their enemies" (at the 11th verse, it is spoken of the Israelites when they came through the Red Sea) "there was not one of them left." Verse the 12th. "Then believed they his words." Mark now, because of their experience, now they believed God's word, now they believed his promise by reason of their experience; "Then believed they his words, they sang his praise." But what became of

this : read the next words : “ They soon forgot his works, they waited not for his counsel.” So that I say, take heed that ye do not rest upon the promise barely, and only because of your experience, for if your experience be but out of the way a little, then your heart will fail, and your faith fail presently.

Secondly, Take heed that ye never mourn for any evil, no not for sin itself, so as to be unthankful for, or unmindful of former mercies. We are very apt to this, and Satan he comes, and tempts, and says unto a poor soul, Are you speaking of former mercies, or blessings to be thankful for them ? That is a good work for others, but as for you, you have committed such a sin, and it is your duty now to mourn for your sin committed, look you to that, to be humbled ; apply yourself to that work : and so when he hath gotten a man’s heart fixed upon that work in opposition to thankfulness for former mercies received, the soul loses the sight of his experience, and so his faith fails in the time of temptation. Wherefore my exhortation is, that you may avoid this blow, and this stroke. Never mourn, no not for sin committed ; but so as still to be thankful for grace received, otherwise your experience will go out of sight, and then your faith fails you.

Again, thirdly, Satan does sometimes strike at the faith of reliance, labours to weaken the faith of the saint’s reliance, by sundering or severing their souls from the promise. So long as a man hath the sight of the promise, and the promise is by him ; a gracious heart says, I will for ever trust in God, and rely upon God in Christ, for thus and thus hath God spoken, and thus and thus saith the promise to me. But now, if the promise be gone, then a man’s reliance fails. Satan therefore, in the time of temptation, labours to take away the promise ; scaring the soul, or coggng the soul from the promise ; this he does many ways, but sometimes he speaks out thus ; What ! do you meddle with the promise ? the promise does not belong to you, the threatening belongs to you ; you have sinned so and so, and the threatening belongs to you, but the promise does not belong to you : and if he can but get the soul to believe this, then his faith fails.

Oh ! but, how should we bear off this blow in time of temptation ? for I confess thus, by this temptation does Satan strike at my faith, and labours to make my faith to fail.

In this case, let a man's heart speak thus :

First: If the Lord do command me to believe, then the promise belongs to me, for I cannot believe unless I apply the promise: now in this time, at this very time of my temptation, the Lord does command me to believe, else it were no sin not to believe; it is a sin for me not to believe, now therefore the Lord commands me to believe; but believe I cannot unless I apply the promise, therefore God would have me to apply the promise, therefore the promise does belong to me, and I may apply it.

Again, secondly, let the heart speak thus: if the Lord does give out a threatening that it may not be fulfilled; and he does give out a promise that it may be fulfilled: if the very applying of the threatening, makes the threatening not to belong to me; and the very applying of the promise, makes the promise to belong to me; then the threatening does not belong to me, for I have applied it; and the promise does belong to me, for I have applied it: oh! I remember how my soul hath lien trembling before the threatening, the Lord knows I have often applied the threatening: but now this is true, that the very applying of the threatening, makes the threatening not to belong to a man; and the very applying of the promise, makes the promise to belong to a man; and therefore, Satan, the threatening belongs not unto me, but the promise does.

But then again, thirdly, let him say thus: If I be more godly now, than I was when Satan told me, that the threatening did not belong to me, and the promise did belong to me, then there is no reason for this temptation. When I went on in a way of sin, then Satan told me, that the threatening did not belong to me; and then he told me, the promise did belong to me: oh! but now I am more godly than I was then, I have more of Christ than I had then I am sure, and therefore Satan, didst thou tell me, that the promise did belong to me then? therefore it belongs much more to me now. Thou toldest me therefore when I went on in a way of sin, the threatening did not belong to me: now then the threatening does less belong to me, for now I am more godly than I was then.

But above all things, remember that of the command to believe. Luther was a man that laboured under great temp-

tations : and being once sorely tempted, and the tears trickling down his cheeks ; says he, My friend, my spiritual father, came unto me, and said, O my son ? why dost thou mourn ? dost thou not know that God hath commanded thee to believe ? When, says Luther, I heard that word, command, that God hath commanded me to believe ; it prevailed more with my heart, than all that was said, or thought on before. So say I now unto ye, does Satan come with this temptation, and tell thee, the promise does not belong to thee ? answer, Aye, but the Lord hath commanded me to believe, Satan, God hath commanded me to believe, it is my duty at this time to believe ; but I cannot believe unless I apply the promise, therefore I may go by commission from God unto the promise, and the promise does belong to me. Thus, give in these answers, so shall ye be able to stand, and to rely upon God, and your faith of reliance shall not fail. This is the first thing, the faith of reliance.

Secondly, How does Satan strike or labour to weaken the faith of assurance, the assurance of God's people ?

Much may be said here, it is a large field ; I shall only gather up some few things, and present them to you.

First, Sometimes Satan does labour to weaken the assurance of the saints, by telling them that they have no faith. Assurance is the flower of faith, it grows upon faith ; but you have no faith, says Satan, and therefore your assurance is naught. But how unreasonable is this temptation ! for observe I pray, in what rounds Satan goes : he tempts us to believe that we have no faith, because we have no assurance ; and he tempts us again, to believe we have no assurance, because we have no faith. For answer hereunto, I shall only turn unto that ivth to the Romans : It is said of Abraham, at the 21st verse, " Being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore (at the 22nd verse,) it was imputed to him for righteousness." Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him : but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Abraham was justified by faith, it was imputed to him for righteousness : and says the apostle here, it was not written for his sake, but for us also. We are justified as Abraham was, by the same faith : what faith is that ? Is it

the faith of assurance? Yes! he was assured indeed, but I pray of what? He was assured that God was able to perform: he being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Abraham believed that God was able, and so relied upon God, and hereby he was justified. So it shall be with men and women now: if they be assured, and persuaded, that God is able, and so rely upon God; this is the faith that justifies. When therefore this temptation comes, answer unto Satan: Satan, thou sayest I have no assurance, because I have no faith; but I have this assurance that Abraham had, whereby he was justified, I believe God is able to help me, and so I rely upon God, and therefore, Satan, I am now justified, and stand righteous through Jesus Christ in the sight of God.

Secondly, As he does labour to weaken the faith of assurance, by telling the saints that they have no faith; so, also, by telling them that they have no obedience, that they do not profit under the means, that they are not fruitful: wherever there is true faith, there will be obedience, and men will profit under the means, and be fruitful, but you are unfruitful, and you are barren, and where is your obedience? here is no obedience, therefore no faith: so no assurance, your assurance is wrong.

Well, but how may we ward, and keep off this blow in the time of temptation, that our faith of assurance may not fail?

Truly, I answer, this blow is not to be warded off, if this be true; that ye never were obedient, never fruitful, never profited by the means of grace; this blow falls dead upon the soul, this blow is not to be warded off, this is no temptation. But now, if ye have ever been fruitful, if ye have ever been obedient, if ye have ever profited by the means of grace; though for the present ye may seem dead: yet remember what Job says, "There is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that by the scent of waters it will flourish again." And so, there is hope of thy soul, that by the scent of the gospel waters thou mayest flourish again. But though there be no obedience in your own eye, though ye do not profit under the means in your own eye; yet your obedience may be in the eye of others: and, in time of temptation, another man's eye is a better judge than your own.

But suppose there seem to be no obedience, neither in your

own, nor in another's eye ; yet the root of the matter may be in you. Ye know how it is with the fish, that are in the water, in a windy and a stormy day : ye put many fish into a pond ; and in a fair, sun-shiny day, ye see them playing upon the water, upon the uppermost part of the water ; but in a rainy and stormy day, ye see none of them there, but yet you say they are all there, they are in the water, they are at the bottom, though you see them not. And so, it may be, in this stormy time of temptation, your obedience and profiting is not seen, but it may be there as heretofore. Satan does never more press a child of God, to try himself by signs of grace drawn from his own conversation, than in the time of temptation. There is indeed a good use of signs drawn from our own conversation, but this is agreed upon by all, that there is no use of them in the time of temptation. And therefore says Luther : In the time of temptation, I am as if there were no law, nor no works, but only the righteousness of Christ in the world, and so I do rest upon him. Does Satan come forth, therefore, with this temptation, That you have no obedience, that you do not profit, that you are unfruitful ? answer it thus : True, Satan, I confess I am very unprofitable, and therefore I will learn to profit more ; I confess I am very unfruitful, and therefore I will labour to be more fruitful : but, Satan, I will not now, at this time, determine about my condition ; for it may be a time of temptation : hereafter, at another time, I will come and determine about my condition, and I will look after signs, but now, at this time, it may be a time of temptation, and therefore I will forbear to wind, and draw up a conclusion, but lean myself upon God, and rest upon God at this time.

Thirdly, Sometimes Satan does labour to weaken the assurance of God's people, the faith of assurance, to make that to fail, by telling of them, that they have no faith at all, because they have no particular faith, no particular promise ; for, says Satan thus : Faith and wavering, faith and doubting, do not agree ; he that believeth doubteth not : but now you pray and doubt, you believe and waver ; ye have no particular word for what you believe, therefore ye have no particular faith, so no faith at all, and therefore your assurance is naught.

How should we ward off this blow ?

In this case, now, let a poor believer say two or three things unto his own soul.

First, Tell thy soul this: Though it pleases God, sometimes, to give out a particular word unto his people, a particular promise, in the time of affliction, or desertion (especially) or temptation; yet the Lord does not, therefore, give out a particular promise, that a man may measure his condition thereby; there is a mistake; but the Lord does therefore give out a particular word or promise, to uphold the soul in the condition: not to measure out his condition by it, but to uphold him; and therefore, though I have not a particular word or promise, I will not conclude against my faith for this.

Secondly, Tell thine own soul, that though it pleases the Lord to give out a particular word or promise sometimes; yet always he does not. Hezekiah had a particular word for his recovery; but the three children had not a particular word that they should be delivered out of the fiery furnace, yet they believed; and whether God deliver, or does not deliver, say they, we will not bow ourselves to this idolatry. So that, though God is pleased, sometimes, to give out a particular word or promise, yet always he does not, and therefore my faith may be right, Satan, though I have not a particular word now for this business.

Again, thirdly, tell thy soul this: that though God is pleased thus to indulge, and sometimes to give out a particular promise unto his people, and they have a particular faith concerning this or that business; yet there is always a waiting faith that we read of in Scripture. There is a faith of recumbency, whereby a soul leans upon God, and commits his cause unto God: and there is a waiting faith. Now therefore, Satan, though I have not a particular word, and a particular faith for this business; yet notwithstanding I have a waiting faith, I can wait upon the Lord my God, and I can rest upon Jesus Christ: and therefore, Satan, I do yet believe, and my faith is right. Tell your own soul thus; so shall you be able to stand to your faith, and shall not fall off in the time of your temptation.

Thirdly, for the faith of acknowledgment. Sometimes Satan does labour to weaken the faith of the saint's acknowledgment. He does labour either that they should deny the

truth, or not own it: either that they should deny Christ, or that they should not own him. So he laboured to make Peter's faith to fail, by denying Christ. And therefore, he comes unto a poor soul and says, if you will go on in this way, it shall cost you a prison; can you lie and rot, and die in a prison? he rattles chains in the ears of a poor believer, and so labours to scare him away from his conscience, and from his faith, and from the truth and cause of God, and the good ways of Christ:

How should we ward off this blow?

First, before the temptation comes, labour to possess your heart much, with the mercy, and privilege of suffering for the cause, truth, name, and way of Christ. To you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer; it is a great gift: a suffering opportunity, and a suffering heart is a great gift from God. Is it not a great mercy to be conformable to Jesus Christ our Head? "For this cause (says Christ) came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." Is it not a great mercy, to be confessed at the last day before all the world, angels and men? "He that confesses me before men, (says Christ) him will I confess before my Father," &c. Is it not a great mercy, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years? ye know that scripture; I shall not speak of the meaning of it now, but certainly, there is a great deal of glory promised there, living and reigning with Christ a thousand years: and the promise is made unto those that do acknowledge, and own the cause and truth of God, and Jesus Christ. Possess your heart much, with the privilege, and mercy, of bearing witness to the truth, the cause, and the good way of Christ before your temptation comes.

Secondly, If you would bear off the blow of this temptation; be sure that you look upon both sides of your suffering, or bearing witness to the truth, cause, or way of Christ: the dark side, and the light side; let them not be sundered. When the Lord calls for any of his people to suffer at any time for him, he does give them more strength than before, and he does give them more comfort and consolation, than they had before. Now Satan, comes forth and holds the suffering, he makes mention of the suffering; but he hides the strength, and the consolation. Either Satan holds forth the suffering alone; or else, if he do mention any strength, or

comfort that a gracious soul shall have in the suffering, it is but the same strength that he hath now, he does not speak of the strength he shall have then, and the great consolation that he shall have then when the suffering comes : and so these being parted, the suffering, and the consolation being parted, now our faith fails. Whenever therefore this temptation does come upon you, answer thus : Satan, here thou bringest the suffering before me, and causest that to come before me ; but thou dost not tell me of the strength I shall have, and of the consolation I shall receive ; Satan, I shall not have the strength I have now, nor the consolation I have now, but I shall have more strength then, when the suffering comes, and I shall have more consolation, when as the affliction comes than I had before. Keep these together, do not look only upon the one side of your suffering, and witness-bearing ; but look upon both sides together, and thus you shall be able to stand, and ride out the storm of this temptation.

But you will say, We have heard of the several blows that Satan gives unto our faith : unto the faith of reliance, unto the faith of assurance, and unto the faith of acknowledgement ; how he labours to weaken all these our faiths, and how we should bear off all these blows : but there may be yet some temptation, possibly, that does not fall within the compass of these temptations : these directions are pointed against these particular temptations ; but I have other temptations that does not fall within the compass of these, whereby Satan labours to weaken my faith, and to make my faith to fail : what general rules and directions may be given, by which a man should so walk, as that Satan may not make his faith to fail in the time of his temptation ?

I answer, first : Before your temptation comes, while you are upon even ground ; study, and look much into the Scripture, and into every corner, and nook thereof, as I may so speak, laying, and treasuring up promises and words suitable to every condition. Let the word of the Lord dwell in you richly ; that so when a temptation comes, ye may have a word suitable at hand, and this will help ye to bear off the strength of the temptation when it comes.

Secondly, Either a particular word and promise does come unto ye, or it does not, in the time of your temptation.

If it do come unto ye, take heed that ye do not measure yourselves, or your condition, by the warmth, and life, and enlargement of your heart, which ye have at the coming in of the word. And if a particular word or scripture, and promise do not come unto you in the time of your temptation ; do not measure yourselves, and your condition, by the straitness, and deadness of your heart which you have at that time when a particular word does not come.

Thirdly, If temptation come, Look much unto the infirmities of Jesus Christ : not the sinful infirmities, for so he had none, but he had many other infirmities. And ye know what the spouse in the time of desertion says, in the book of the Canticles, “ His left hand is under my head, and with his right hand he does embrace me.” The right hand, is a hand of power ; and the left hand, is a hand of weakness : and in the the time of desertion, and temptation, it is a great relief to a poor soul, to consider the infirmities of Jesus Christ ; his left hand is under our head then. As when a man is enlarged in heart, it is good to consider of Christ's example, that so he may be humbled under his enlargement : so when a man is in desertion, or temptation, it is good for to think of Christ's infirmities, that so he may not be overwhelmed, or cast down too much.

Fourthly, If temptation do come, be sure of this, that ye do not conclude it is no temptation. Satan tempts, and then he tempts a man to think it is no temptation. So long as a poor soul thinks it is but a temptation, his heart is borne up with comfort, and he says, It is but a temptation, and it will be over shortly, and the Lord Jesus Christ will pity me, for it is but a temptation, and so his heart is borne up with comfort, waiting upon God : but if the devil can get a man so far, as to make him think it is no temptation, but worse than a temptation ; then his heart fails, and his faith fails. Therefore, I beseech ye, if a temptation come, do not conclude it is no temptation, but say, oh ! it may be it is a temptation, and therefore, I will wait on God.

Fifthly, If temptation come, remember thine own soul of the ways of God with thee. God's ways, ye know, are in the deep, and his footsteps are not known ; but as the heavens are greater than the earth, so are God's ways of mercy beyond our ways. Now therefore, if a dark temptation do come

upon ye, and ye see no way to get out, say, Oh but, my soul, remember God's ways are infinite, and his ways are beyond our ways; and though I see no way, God hath infinite ways, he walks over mulberry-trees, and his ways have been in the deep; and so it hath been all along with my soul, and therefore, now, O my soul, wait on God.

Sixthly, If temptation come, if Satan come, do you run to Christ; and look how Satan appears to you, so do you apply the attributes of Christ to you suitable to his temptation. Does Satan set a temptation to your breast? observe what temptation it is, and take an attribute of Christ suitable to that temptation, and set it to the breast of that temptation. For example: does Satan come and tempt as a serpent? Then remember, that Jesus Christ is the brazen Serpent. Does Satan come and present himself as a roaring lion? Now remember, that Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Does Satan come and present himself as an accuser? Now remember, that the Lord Jesus Christ is an Advocate. Beloved! in the time of temptation, ye are to run to Christ, that is true; but that is not all, but you are to observe how your temptation lies, and apply that attribute of Christ to your soul which is suitable to your temptation: do this, and your faith shall not fail in time of temptation.

Seventhly, and lastly, "Above all things, take the shield of faith." Take the shield of faith, that your faith may not fail: for, the way to believe, is to believe; the way to pray, is to pray; the way to hear, is to hear; the way to receive, is to receive; the way to perform duty, is to perform duty; the way to exercise grace, is to exercise grace. When temptation therefore does come upon thee, that thy faith may not fail, now stir up thyself to this work of faith, and to believe; and if ye believe that ye shall overcome, ye shall overcome; and if ye believe that that ye shall prevail against your temptations, ye shall prevail against your temptations. And, poor soul, if thou canst rely upon Christ, and believe that thou shalt be justified, thou shalt be justified; and if thou canst by faith rely upon the promise, the promise shall belong to thee. Wherefore, stir up yourselves now to believe when temptation comes. When ye have to deal with an enemy here among men, I do not say, believe ye shall overcome your enemy, and ye shall overcome: a man may be-

lieve he shall overcome his outward enemy here in the field, and yet fall before him, and not overcome: but having to deal with this enemy, God's enemy, your father's enemy, and your enemy; believe ye shall overcome him, and ye shall overcome him.

But shall we overcome him *only* if we believe?

Whoever thou art that speakest, or thinkest thus: dost thou make an *only* of believing? I tell thee, from the Lord, It is an harder thing to believe, than to keep all the commandments: for there is something in nature towards the keeping of the ten commandments, but nothing in nature towards believing in Christ. And, poor soul, dost thou make an only of believing? thou dost not know what believing means: but I say unto thee from the Lord, Believe that thou shalt overcome, and thou shalt overcome; believe that thou shalt prevail against Satan, and thou shalt prevail against him; believe that thy sins shall be pardoned through Christ and rely upon him, and thy sins shall be pardoned. Whensoever therefore any temptation comes, oh! run to Christ, cry unto Christ, and rest upon Christ, and say, Lord, I do believe, help thou my unbelief.

Beloved in the Lord, ye have heard, that in all Satan's temptations, his great design is upon your faith, to weaken your faith: therefore, let it be all your design, in all your temptations, to strengthen your faith, and to look to your faith. Which that ye may do, think on all these things, and the Lord bless them to you.

SERMON V.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."—LUKE XXII. 31, 32.

THESE words, as ye have heard, acquaint us with a great temptation that was to come down upon Christ's disciples. Concerning which ye have here, the *danger* of the temptation: and the *remedy* against it. For the danger of the temptation, I have spoken already: and now come unto this 32nd verse, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail

not." Here is something implied and something expressed. Satan's design implied, which is, and was, to weaken the faith of Christ's disciples, to make their faith to fail. And of that ye have heard already.

Now that which is expressed is ; Christ's tender care of, and love unto his disciples in regard of their temptations. And this love and care of his towards his disciples under temptation, is expressed in many things. First, in the forewarning of them of a temptation coming upon them : there is his love and care, in that he told them of the temptation before it came. And then, also, he prayed for them. Yea, he prayed for them before they were tempted. Yea, and he tells them that he did pray for them that they might have assurance of his help in the time of their temptation. Great was his love and care to, and for his disciples under their temptation. And so the observation is this.

Christ's love and mercy, is never more at work for his disciples and people, than when they are most assaulted by Satan. When Satan is most busy to tempt and assault their faith, then is Christ's love and mercy most at work, to keep and defend both them and their faith. We do not read of such a prayer for Peter before. We read, indeed, that our Saviour said unto Peter ; " Unto thee do I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven ;" " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church ;" but we do not read there, that he prayed for Peter. But here he prays, and for Peter in particular : " I have prayed for thee." Why ? Because now his temptations were to be more than ordinary ; and therefore Christ's love and care was drawn out and expressed in a more than ordinary way.

For the clearing of this truth unto ye, I shall labour to discover,

First, Wherein the love, care, and mercy of Christ is expressed unto his people under their temptations.

Secondly, That this love and care of his, is most expressed when they are most tempted.

Thirdly, What there is in the heart of Christ, that does thus incline him to this indulgence or mercy. And so to the application.

First, If ye ask me, wherein the love and care of Christ is expressed unto his people under their temptations ? I an-

swer, first, In the ordering of their temptations. For there is no temptation befalls any of his, but he measures out the temptation according to their abilities. As a wise physician does not give the same physic unto every person, but considers every one's ability; that which he gives to one, is too strong for another: he considers first the ability of his patient, and prescribes accordingly. Now, though our Saviour Christ does not direct Satan for to tempt, yet he does order him in tempting; and Satan cannot put the least drachm into any temptation, but as it is measured out by the hand of Christ. And this is that which the apostle speaks plainly, in 1 Cor. xth chapter and the 13th verse: "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able," &c. that ye may be able to bear it. The psalmist David says: "Search me, O Lord, and prove me," Psalm xciii. That is, says Gregory, first, O Lord, look upon my strength, and then, if I must be tempted, suffer me to be tempted according to my ability. Christ does measure out all the temptations of his people according to their abilities.

Secondly, As he does measure out their temptations according to their abilities: so he does also mortify their temptations, and weaken them as they come through his hand. Mortify them before they do come at his disciples and people, before they do come at you. And, upon this account, partly, it is said, that, "We are more than conquerors, through Christ that giveth victory." Because our enemy is overcome before he strikes, and his blow is broken as he strikes. And therefore, says the apostle, concerning our Saviour, "That he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly upon the cross." All your temptations, the power and strength of them, were spoiled upon the cross. There is no temptation befalls any of God's people, but it is mortified and weakened before it does come at them; the sting, teeth, and the poison being taken out.

Thirdly, He does not only thus mortify and weaken a temptation before it does come at us; but he does cause Satan so to lay his temptations, as that he may be discerned, and so overcome. Satan tempted Adam and Eve, but he tempted in a serpent, and so Adam might easily have discerned the hand of Satan in it, for Adam knew all the creatures, he gave them their names, and he knew their

natures ; and he knew well enough the serpent could not speak to him ; he might easily have known that the hand of Satan was in the business. And so now, though God does suffer Satan to tempt his people, yet he does cause Satan so to lay his temptation, as that the black feet of the tempter may be discovered ; and when a temptation is discovered it is half overcome.

Fourthly, He doth not only thus, but the Lord Jesus Christ hath the timeing of all our temptations. Time is a great matter in the point of temptation. Should a temptation come at such or such a time, possibly God's child might be overwhelmed. I praise the Lord, says one, I did resist such a temptation ; but had it fallen out at such a time, I should never have been able to have stood under it. Satan observes his tempting times, he knows that great advantage may be made unto him by this. And therefore when Christ was an hungry, he tempted him to turn stones into bread : observed his time. And as Satan does observe his time to tempt, so our Lord and Saviour Christ does set him his time, and the time of his temptations is in the hand of Christ. And therefore, if ye look into the xxth chapter of the Revelation, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd verses, ye shall find to this purpose thus : " I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand : and he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that, he must be loosed a little season." Mark, the Lord Jesus Christ hath not only the tempter in a chain, that he can go no further than he gives him leave to go ; but his hand also is in the hand of Christ, and Christ hath an eye to the time of his temptation, a special eye upon the time of our temptation, and this argues much of his care and love.

Fifthly, He hath not only the timeing of our temptations, but he does also sanctify our temptations, and does make them blessed means of our sanctification. And therefore says Paul, " I received the messenger Satan for to buffet me, that I might not be exalted." Twice he hath that : " That he might not be exalted out of measure." But for this I

need go no further than the instance of Peter. Before Peter was tempted, what abundance of carnal confidence was there in Peter! "Lord (says he) though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." But now I pray look upon him after his temptation, and you shall see how this carnal confidence was laid down; for our Saviour says unto him, "Peter, lovest thou me more than these? Lord (says he) thou knowest I love thee;" but not a word of the comparative, "more than these:" he had left comparing now, having been under temptation, and having fallen, his carnal confidence was gone, and he does not say now, "Lord, though all men forsake thee, yet will not I;" the comparison is left out now; he answers to the other part, but not a word to that. So that I say, If the Lord Jesus Christ do measure out all our temptations for us, and mortify them before they come at us; and does cause Satan to lay them as we may most easily discover them; and if the Lord Christ does time our temptations for us, and sanctify them unto us: then certainly there is much of Christ's love and mercy at work for his people under their temptations.

Secondly, If ye ask me yet further, Wherein is the love of Christ expressed, or drawn out unto his people under their temptations? I answer, it is seen and expressed in this: in teaching of them in and by their temptations. Tempting times are teaching times unto God's people: the school of temptation is a great school. Luther said, that the temptations of Satan were the embracings of Christ; meaning that then Christ did embrace his people most, and discover most of his love unto them. Three things, he said, there were that made a preacher: meditation, prayer and temptation. And indeed when or where does God or Christ reveal himself more fully unto his people, than in the times of their temptations? It is said that at Massah and Meribah, the waters of strife and of temptation, there the Lord gave Israel his statutes. How many experiences do God's people get in, and by their temptations? Tempting times are teaching times, and Christ teaches his people by their temptations. Satan's buffetings are the saints' schoolings.

Yea, thirdly, He does not only teach his people, but he does also bear up and uphold their hearts with new supplies of his grace and Spirit in the times of their temptations.

Christ does not suffer his people to go into new temptations with old strength ; but as a new temptation does come from Satan, so new supplies of grace and strength do come from Christ. Says David, in the xcivth Psalm and the 18th verse, " When I said, My foot slippeth ; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." He does not say thus, When my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up : but, " When I said, My foot slippeth ;" when I thought I was quite rejected, cast off, and forsaken ; " When I said, My foot slippeth ; then thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." As new temptations do come in, so new strength comes in.

Yea, and supplies of grace in proportion to our temptations. " My grace is sufficient for thee," says the Lord to Paul : My grace is fit for thee.

Yea, he does not only give out proportionable strength, but an overplus of strength. As the woman that had oil given her ; not enough barely to pay her debt, but an overplus to live on the rest. So God's people in the time of their temptations, have not only strength given them to stand out against their temptations, but an overplus to live on the rest.

Yea, and they have not only incomes of assisting grace, but of accepting grace too ; more accepting grace. God doth and will then accept lesser than at another time. Though the prayer be weak and the faith low, yet, says the Lord, It is the time of temptation with this my poor servant, and therefore I will take the duty, though it be never so little, because it is the time of temptation ; it is a time of darkness, and a time of sadness. Ye know what our Saviour said unto Thomas : " Reach hither thine hand, and put it into my side." Come, Thomas, if thou wilt not believe without it, I will take thy faith even upon these terms, for I know it is a time of temptation with thee. What grace, what love and mercy is here !

Yea, fourthly, The Lord Jesus Christ does not only come in thus, with supplies of grace and strength in the times of temptation ; but he does give his people an ease and a remedy, a breathing time under their temptations, though they be never so sad and never so great. Indeed Job said that God was his enemy, and would not suffer him to swallow his spittle, he followed him so close ; but the good man

was mistaken much, for at the same time, the time of his temptation, he could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and he could bless the Lord: he had his breathing time in the midst of all. When David was persecuted by Saul, he was under temptation; for, as the devil casts some men into prison, so the devil persecutes in wicked men: yet David had his breathing time now and then; Saul given into his hands, as a pledge of that full deliverance that David should have afterwards. And this is no other than that which the apostle speaks of, in that same 1st of the Corinthians, the xth chapter at the 13th verse, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape:" make an outlet, so the word is; he will make an outlet. Though the smoke be very offensive, yet there shall be always some window open for to let it out, or some door open for a poor tempted soul to go out at: still an outlet, some breathing time in the midst of these temptations.

Fifthly, and lastly. As the Lord Jesus Christ liveth for ever to make intercession for us; So he doth it especially when his people are under temptation; then he prays for them, and then especially. I will not determine, whether Christ now in heaven, does intercede vocally, or really: but when Satan lies hard upon a poor tempted soul, and fetches blood from it, then does the Lord Jesus step in unto his Father, and present his wounds, and his blood, and says unto his Father, O Father, I have prayed unto thee, that this poor man or woman, may not fail in the time of temptation. Thus it was with Peter here; I have prayed for thee: and yet this was not the time of his full intercession, when he was here on earth. There are two parts of Christ's priestly office: satisfaction, and intercession. The proper place for him to make satisfaction for sin, was here on earth: and in heaven, the holy of holiest, he does make intercession; there he does do it fully, but he could not forbear while he was here on earth; but he says unto Peter, I have prayed for thee. Though my great work in heaven be to intercede, and my special work here on earth be to satisfy: yet notwithstanding, I have prayed for thee already Peter. And the Lord Jesus Christ was heard in all that he prayed for. Now then, if the Lord Christ doth in-

tercede here on earth for his poor tempted servants, and was heard here ; how much more, when his disciples are tempted, does he intercede, and pray for them in heaven, and is heard there. Satan may come running in upon you with his temptation : but when Satan runs in upon you with his temptation, Christ runs into the presence of God the Father, and spreads his blood, and his satisfaction for you, and there he says unto the Father, Father, I have prayed that this man or woman's faith may not fail. Oh ! what grace, and mercy, and love is here ! Thus in all these respects, and many others that I might mention, is the love of Christ, and his mercy drawn out unto his people, in the time of their temptation.

Well, But how may it appear, that Christ's mercy is most at work, when his people are most assaulted by Satan ? Christ deals by his, as God the Father did deal by him. Now ye shall find, that God's love was never more towards Christ, than when Christ was under temptation. When Christ came to die, Satan was very busy ; it is called, The hour of darkness : so busy was Satan with all his malice against him : yet then was the Father's love towards Christ, then especially ; for says Christ, "Therefore does the Father love me, because I lay down my life." If the Father did therefore love him, because he laid down his life, then his love was most at work towards Christ when this hour of darkness was. And so I say, when your hour of darkness is, the hour of temptation ; Christ's love is then most at work, because he deals by his, as the Father did deal by him.

The truth is, Christ's dealing with his disciples, was a pattern and platform of his dealing with all his people, to the end of the world. Now ye shall observe, that Christ's love was never more let out towards his disciples, than from this time, after he had said these words, "Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat." After this time they were all offended because of Christ, and they all forsook him : Peter denied him ; some doubted whether he were the Messiah or no : and another would not believe his resurrection ; and as sheep, they were all scattered, and shattered ; great was their temptations : yet from this time, do but observe the love of Christ towards them : after this speech, then Christ preaches a most excellent and sweet sermon to them, in

the xivth, xvth, and xvith chapters of John. Then he takes water and a towel, and washes, and wipes his disciples' feet. Then he appoints the Lord's Supper. Then he spends a whole chapter, the xviith of John, in prayer for them: makes a most excellent, and sweet prayer for them. Then he calls them his friends: Ye are no longer my servants, but my friends: yea, his children: yea his little children. Never was his love more drawn out, or expressed towards them, than after this time; and, I say, this was a pattern and a platform of his dealing, with all his people unto the end of the world. And therefore, though Christ do suffer his own people to be tempted, yet his love and mercy is never more at work than when they are most assaulted by Satan.

Thirdly, you will say, What is there in the heart of Jesus Christ, that does incline him to this indulgence toward his people, that his love and mercy is then most at work, when they are most assaulted by Satan?

My beloved, there is the quintessence of all the excellency of loving relations in Jesus Christ: a father, a mother, a brother, a friend. He is the Everlasting Father. And his soul was in travail, says the prophet. He is not ashamed to call you his brethren. And he is a Friend: "I call you my friends." Now though parents be tender of their children at all times, yet especially when they are sick; then there is a chair of love stands by the child's bed-side. And so, though Christ be always tender of his people, yet then especially, when their souls are sick, and labour under temptation. There is the greatest pity in Christ that can be, the most pitiful disposition in Christ; which is always laid out where he sees a fit object for it. Pray what is the object of pity? The object of pity, is one whom ye love in misery. If ye see a man in misery, yet if ye do not love him, ye do not pity him: if ye see a man whom ye love, yet if ye do not see him in misery, ye do not pity him; ye love him but ye do not pity him: but a person whom ye love in misery is the object of pity. Now all the saints and people of God are the beloved of Christ; and when they are in temptation, that is their greatest misery; and therefore, when they are most tempted, then is the love and mercy of Christ drawn out unto them especially.

Besides, the Lord Jesus Christ hath a great interest and

share in every believer, a share going in every believer. As the member hath an interest and share in the head, so the head hath also in every member. "Thine they were (says Christ) and thou gavest them me." Christ hath a special and great interest in all his people, and he will not lose his interest. The truth is, when Satan does assault a believer, he does rather strike at Christ, than at the believer. And therefore, says Gregory well, The devil, in tempting Job, did not so much strike at Job, as at God; for the Lord had said that Job was an upright man: and now the devil would go about to make Job an hypocrite; so that the devil would fain have made God a liar; and he did not so much strike at Job, as at God's testimony of Job: he did strike at God. And so now, in all the temptations of the saints, he strikes at Christ, and they bear those temptations because of Christ. Let a man go on in a wicked and ungodly way, Satan will not vex him with temptations; but let a man once become godly, and be in Christ, and then how many temptations will Satan vex him with? Now, says Christ, shall this poor soul endure all this for me, and shall not I help, shall not I assist, shall not I deliver? If a man break his arm or his leg before ye, you will pity him: but if he break his arm or his leg in your work or service, in a work that you set him about, you count yourself engaged then to help him. It is the work of Christ that the saints are about, and Christ sets them on work; and when Satan comes to tempt, it is to disturb them in the work that Christ sets them about: Now, therefore, says Christ, shall they endure all this because of me, and because of my work, and shall not I assist and defend them and help them? Surely I will. O my beloved! if ye did but know what an interest Jesus Christ hath in every believer, you would easily see the reason of this, so great tenderness in him, that his love and mercy is never more at work than when they are most assaulted by Satan.

For application.

What abundance of comfort is here unto all those that are the true disciples of Jesus Christ! you are not alone in your temptations, Christ is with you; and he is in heaven too, interceding and praying for you: he hath sent his Spirit into your hearts, to make intercession for you there; and he himself is in heaven, making intercession and praying for you

there: when you are in temptation, Christ is at prayer for you. Yea, he does not only pray for you, but his love and his mercy is most of all at work then, when you are most assaulted. Oh, what comfort is this!

But, will some say, I fear this comfort belongs not to me, because I am none of these that are Christ's true disciples; Christ prayed for Peter, because he was his disciple; and he prayed for the rest because they were his disciples: but as for me, though in profession I may be a disciple, yet really I fear I am no true disciple of Jesus Christ, and therefore I fear that he does not pray and intercede for me in the time of my temptation.

Two things for answer to this:

First, I pray consider that place in the xvth chapter of Matthew, and the 24th verse: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me (or, If any man will be my disciple; so some books have it), let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mark, here are three properties of a true disciple. To open the words a little unto ye, that I may settle this comfort the more fully upon your hearts.

First, A true disciple does deny himself. So long as a man is in the state of nature, he is always in the circle of self, and Satan keeps him in it: but when Christ comes, he gets out of that circle, and then he denies himself. Self says, whether natural self, civil self, or sinful self, thou art now minding Christ, and the ways of Christ; but mind thy estate more, and thy name more, and thy friends and relations more, and thy health more, and thy pleasures and recreations more. Nay, says a true disciple, but I must mind Christ more, I must mind mine own soul more, I must mind mine eternity more; so he denies himself; his sinful self, and civil self, and religious self too: his self-reason, and his self-will, and his self-affection.

Secondly, He does take up his cross: a true disciple takes up his cross. It is not said, he does bear his cross with patience; there is a great deal of difference between these; bearing of a man's cross with patience, when it is laid upon him, and taking up his cross when it is laid before him. Properly a man is said to take up his cross, when there is sin laid on one side; and there is a cross, and an affliction laid

on the other side; now, either you must commit this sin, or else you must endure this cross, or affliction: Nay then, says a true disciple, rather than I will commit that sin, I will endure this affliction; and so he takes up his cross.

Thirdly, He does also follow Christ. Some there are, that having suffered for the name, and cause of Christ, they then grow proud of their sufferings, and they fall into foul miscarriages; but a true disciple of Christ, when he hath taken up the cross, he follows Christ: now properly a man is said to follow Christ, when he does do those things at Christ's command, wherein Christ does differ from others. As now a man is said to follow Luther, when he does follow him in those things wherein he differs from Calvin; a man follows Calvin, when he does follow him in those things wherein he differs from Luther. So a man is said to follow Christ, when he follows him in those things wherein he differs from others. There are some things, wherein Christ and nature do agree: nature says, That a man must do by another, as he would be dealt by himself; herein Christ and nature agree. But Christ says, "A new commandment give I unto ye, that ye love one another, as I have loved you:" here Christ differs from nature. Nature teaches a man that there is a God, and that God is to be prayed unto; and that a man is to pray for his friends: but now Christ says, "Pray for your enemies." I say, a man is properly said for to follow Christ, when he follows him in that wherein Christ differs from others. Now whosoever thou art that makes this objection, that thou art not a disciple of Jesus Christ, and therefore he does not pray for thee in the time of thy temptation; I appeal to ye: Are ye not willing to take up your cross? rather to endure that affliction, than commit this sin? do ye not set yourself to deny yourself, your pleasures, recreations, relations, and all for Christ? And do ye not desire to follow Jesus Christ in those things wherein he does differ from Anti-Christ, and from nature, and from Moses? then surely, thou art a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But besides this, our Saviour tells us in the xviith of John, that he did not only pray for those his present disciples; but, says he, "I pray for all that shall believe on me

through their word," verse the 20th. What is it to believe on Christ? To rest upon Christ for life and glory in the time of our temptation; this is to believe on Christ. Now in the time of your temptation, do not ye rest on Christ? do not ye rely on Christ? then Christ hath prayed for ye. And though thou art in such a temptation, as thou complainest, thou canst not pray, yet the Lord Jesus Christ hath prayed for thee: and he is heard in all that he prayed for.

But I fear, will some say yet, that the Lord Jesus Christ does not pray, or intercede for me in the time of my temptation, because my faith fails me; oh! my faith hath failed me in the time of temptation. Did Christ pray for me my faith would not fail, for he is heard in all that he prays for; but oh! my faith fails in time of temptation, and therefore I fear that this love and mercy of Christ is not at work for me in the time of my temptation.

For answer, first, There is a great deal of difference between the failing of your faith and the failing of your heart. Possibly your heart may fail in time of temptation, and yet not your faith. Look I pray into the lxxiiiird Psalm, the 26th verse, and you shall find as much. Says the Psalmist there, "My flesh and my heart faileth." Aye, but did not his faith fail now? See what he says; his faith stands notwithstanding this: "But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Here is his faith. So that though his flesh failed, and his heart failed, yet his faith did not fail. There is a great deal of difference between a recoiling fit of a heart-failing in time of temptation, and the failing of one's faith.

Secondly, It is one thing for you to fail in your faith in your own opinion, and another thing for your faith to fail in the opinion of Jesus Christ. When Peter denied his Lord and Master, in his own opinion he could not but think that his faith failed; and yet in the opinion of Jesus Christ his faith did not fail, for Christ prayed that his faith should not fail; and it did not fail, for Christ was heard in what he prayed for.

Thirdly, There is a great deal of difference between the failing of faith, and failings that do accompany faith. The poor woman that came to Christ and touched the hem of his garment, failed very much, for she came behind him and

thought to have stolen a cure: aye, but, though there were many failings that did accompany her faith, yet her faith did not fail, for she came and touched the hem of his garment, and was cured by her faith. So I say there is a great deal of difference between the failing of faith, and the failings that do accompany faith; there may be many failings that do accompany one's faith, and yet one's faith may stand and not fail.

But yet further, whosoever you are, that say your faith fails you, and therefore you are afraid that Christ prays not for you: man or woman, did thy faith ever fail thee like Peter's? Didst thou ever deny thy Lord and Master as Peter did? and yet Christ said, "I have prayed that thy faith fail not," and he was heard in the thing that he prayed for.

Oh! but, that was but one act in Peter; but my faith doth constantly fail; Peter denied, and his faith failed in the exercise as to one act, but my faith doth constantly fail in time of temptation: I was heretofore more able to believe in the time of my temptation than now I am; my faith is failed, and it constantly fails, and therefore I fear that the Lord Christ will not pray for me in the time of my temptation.

Well, but if you be more able to rely upon mere free grace, than ye have been heretofore, then your faith is not less, but, increased rather. If you be now more able to be contented with your condition, than you were heretofore; if you can let God and Christ alone, to use his own means about you; if you can leave the events and successes of things, more unto God than you could heretofore; then your faith is not failed, but rather increased. Man or woman, if that you are able now to take those hints of a word which you could not heretofore; if your judgment be more settled in the truth; if you be more contented to suffer now for the cause, and the way of God than you were heretofore: then thy faith is not failed, but thy faith is increased rather, and so thou comest within the compass of the Lord Christ's prayer.

Oh! but yet, will some say, I have sinned greatly, very much; I have been a great sinner; and therefore I fear, that the Lord Jesus Christ will let me alone to wrestle with my temptations all alone, and will not pray and intercede for me in the time and hour of my temptation.

Well, I must yet say again to you : Hast thou sinned more than this Peter did, when he denied his Lord and Master ? Yet Christ prayed for him, and his prayer took and prevailed. Have you sinned more than Jerusalem did ? “ Oh Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets,” says Christ, when they put him to death. And yet if you look into the ist of the Acts, you shall find, that Christ after his resurrection, bids his disciples for to stay and wait at Jerusalem, and not stir from thence ; and preach the gospel, and mercy, and free-grace in Jerusalem. Hast thou, man or woman, that makest this objection, sinned more than those did that put Christ to death ? that run him into his body with a spear ? that nailed him upon the cross ? hast thou sinned more than these ? Ye know our Lord and Saviour when he was upon the cross, he prayed for them ; oh ! “ Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” But, Lord, these are thine opposers, these are persecutors, and they persecute thee to death. Well, be it so, says Christ, I know what I do, and I know whom I pray for : “ Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” Oh ! what grace, and mercy, and love are here ! Comfort, yea, comfort unto all the disciples of Jesus Christ : when ye are in temptation, the Lord Christ is at prayer for you. And remember the doctrine ; never is his love and mercy more at work for ye, than when Satan is most busy about ye, to tempt ye most. What comfort is here ! This was that, in part, that comforted the martyrs in the primitive times, ye read of very great comforts that the martyrs had in the primitive times, those times next after Christ : I have desired to consider, what it was especially, that bore up their hearts under all those persecutions. And Turtullian, pitches upon this as one thing : We consider, says he, the case of Peter ; Satan desired to winnow him ; Christ prayed for him. Here were, says Turtullian, two requests before God the Father : one was the request of Satan : and another was the request of Christ. Now the Son having more credit with God the Father than Satan, his request must needs prevail : so, says he, Satan hath desired for to tempt, and to winnow us, and persecute us ; but the Lord Jesus Christ hath requested for us : there are two requests before God the Father ; there is Satan’s request to winnow us ; and there is the Son’s request praying for us : now therefore, seeing that the Son hath

more credit with God the Father than Satan, therefore are we assured that we shall be upheld, and our faith shall not fail. And so may you also. This is matter of great comfort unto all the saints.

You will say, Indeed it is matter of great comfort: but is there no duty that this truth calls for at our hands? Here is much comfort, but what is that duty that this truth calls for?

I answer, Much every way. If I be an ungodly man; what a mighty encouragement is here for to get into Jesus Christ, that I may be in the number of the true disciples. So long as a man is out of Christ, not a true disciple of Jesus Christ; Satan may come and tempt, and do what he will with him, and no Christ by to help. Satan could not hurt, or touch, or tempt Job, but he must ask leave: but Satan went to the Sabeans, and brought in them upon Job's estate, and and he did not ask leave for that, they were in his power, he ruleth in the children of disobedience. Daniel was in the lions' den, and they devoured him not, their mouths were stopped, and they could not hurt him: but when the enemies were thrown in to the lions, they cracked, and crushed their bones before they came to the ground. If a godly man, one that is a true disciple of Jesus Christ, if he be in a den, with these lions, devils, their mouths shall be stopped, they shall not swallow him. But oh! for wicked men that are not in Christ, these lions, they crush their bones, every day they crush their bones: and a wicked man may say as Saul did, "The Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me." So a wicked man, that is not in Christ, he may cry out and say, oh! temptations are upon me, and Christ is departed from me, I have none of Christ to help me: as for the saints, and those that are true disciples of Jesus Christ, they have Christ at hand, though they fall, Christ is by for to help them up. And Christ himself measures out all their temptations, and Christ assists them, and helps them, but oh! as for me, I am all alone in my temptations, I, poor soul, am all alone in my temptations: ah! who would be a drunkard still? who would be a swearer still; who would be an unclean wanton still? who would be a liar, and a thievish servant still? let me tell ye, that while ye go on in these sins, you are out of Christ: poor soul, a swearer, a drunkard, a common liar, a sabbath breaker, a

wanton, out of Christ, and thy temptations fall heavily upon thee; the Lord knows, thou art all alone in the time of thy temptations: oh! but get into Jesus Christ, get into Jesus Christ, to be in the number of Christ's true disciples; and when thou art tempted, the Lord prays for thee; yea, and the love and mercy of Christ is never more at work for thee, than when thou art most tempted, and assaulted by Satan. What a mighty encouragement is here to all that hear the word of the Lord, to get into Jesus Christ!

But if I be godly; and all this be true: Why should I question the love of God towards me in the time of my temptation? Beloved! ye know in your experience, ye are never more apt for to question the love of Christ, than in temptation; and yet Christ's love is never more at work for you than in temptation. Oh! what an unworthy answering of Christ's love is here!

Again, If I be godly: Why should not I be contented, and quiet under all my temptations, though they be never so great? Christ prayeth for me, Christ's love is most at work now I am most assaulted, his bowels then yearn towards me.

Yea, If I be godly: Why should I not with Paul, triumph over all temptations? and make my boast of Christ, and say as he did "Now know I that nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Christ;" not principalities, nor powers, nor devils, nor temptation; for when I am most tempted, Christ is most at work in love for me.

Yea, beloved in the Lord, why should we not all warm our hearts with this love of Jesus Christ? it is a mercy that the Lord Christ will cast but an eye or a look upon a poor soul under temptation; that is a mercy: aye, but I tell ye more than so; Christ does not only cast an eye and a look upon a poor tempted soul, but his love and mercy is never more at work than when you are most assaulted and tempted by Satan: ah, what grace and heart-warming love is here!

If I be godly, again, upon this account, why should I give over so soon, and lay down my weapon in time of temptation? If a city be beleaguered, besieged, and know that help will come, they will not give over. And though I am thus besieged, and thus tempted, help will certainly come, for Christ hath prayed; why should I give over then in time of temptation?

And if these things be so, if there be so much love in the heart of Christ towards poor tempted souls : then, beloved, should we not all run to Christ in the time and hour of our temptation, run unto him by prayer ?

It may be there are some that will say, If Christ pray for us in time of temptation, what need we pray ?

But, I answer, pray look into this chapter, and you will find our Saviour carries it otherwise. In the text, says he, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." At the 46th verse, says he, "Why sleep ye ? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." So that, though he had said that he prayed for them, yet he calls upon them also to pray. It is good praying, my beloved, when mercy is coming : and mercy is then coming when Christ is praying ; and when you are most tempted, then Christ is at prayer.

But to end all. Whatever your temptations, therefore, be, you that are the servants of God, still think ye hear Christ saying to ye, Man, woman, be of good comfort, I have prayed for you : though thy temptations be very great, I have prayed for thee : though thou canst not pray for thyself as thou wouldest, I have prayed for thee : when flesh fails, and eyes fail, and heart fails, and all fails, yet remember this, Christ prayeth for you, in the time of your temptation Christ prayeth for you : think that ye hear Christ speaking to ye in the time of your temptation, for certainly he does it as well to his disciples now, as he did to his disciples then, he does speak and say, Be of good comfort, man or woman, though thy temptations be great, yet I have prayed for thee, and thy faith shall not fail.