

True repentance, among other companions, is always attended with these three: "What CAREFULNESS, what INDIGNATION, what FEAR hath it wrought in you?" (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

8. Consider, *sin re-iterated riseth high, adds another figure to increase thy account.*—"Is the sin of Peor too little for you," (old sins in ignorance,) "but that you must this day again turn away anew?" (Joshua xxi. 17, 18.) The Lord keeps an account how often and how often thou hast committed such and such a sin; at length [he] saith, "For three transgressions, and for four, I will not turn away their punishment." (Amos i. ii. *passim*.) When Israel had seen God's works forty years, and tempted him ten times, he swore they should not enter into his rest. (Num. xiv. 22.) In the law, if an ox did gore a man, and the master knew not of it, the ox should die, not the owner. "But if the ox was wont to push with his horn," and the master was told of it, ox and master were both to die. (Exod. xxi. 28, 29.)

Lastly. Though I will not say to thee who art a *frequent* relapsarian, "It is impossible," as to the *malicious* relapser; yet I say, Remember, that every time the bone is broken the more danger; and though thou mayest possibly, after a second breaking, have it well set, yet thou mayest at times, against weather, specially when in years, feel it to thy dying day. Thy sins will lie down with thee in thy grave; and in sickness and trouble thou wilt "possess the sins of thy youth." (Job xiii. 26.)

I conclude all, as St. Jude concludes his Epistle: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from" all "falling" and relapses, "and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

SERMON V.

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HOW MAY WE BE SO SPIRITUAL, AS TO CHECK SIN IN THE FIRST
RISINGS OF IT?

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—

Gal. v. 16.

THE case of conscience to be discussed this morning, from these words, is, How a Christian may be able to check sin in the first risings of it.

"And without controversy great is *this* mystery of godliness," and, if any other, of inestimable use and moment in the practice of Christianity.

As the title which Solomon inscribes on the frontispiece of that divine poem of his, the Canticles, is, שִׁיר חַשְׁמִיּוֹן, "the Song of Songs;" and as Aristotle calls the hand, "the instrument of instruments," and the mind, "the form of forms;" so may we with as just a reason style this holy skill of arresting and intercepting sin in its earliest motions and overtures, "the art of arts." Could the chymists ever compass their grand elixir, it were but a poor and cheap trifle in comparison of this grand secret of the school of Christ. So that the case of conscience before us, like Diana of the Ephesians, is great and illustrious amidst its fellows.

My text presents us with it resolved in this excellent rule of sanctification: "Walk in the Spirit," &c.

Wherein we have,

I. The principle and root of sin and evil,—the flesh with its lusts.

II. The opposite principle and root of life and righteousness,—the Divine Spirit.

III. The terms and bounds of a Christian's conquest, how far he may hope for victory: "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

IV. The method and way of conquering: "Walk in the Spirit." Of each a word:—

I. *The principle and root of sin and evil, the flesh with its lusts.*—The apostle meaneth (pardon the phrase) a spiritual flesh, not that of the body, but the mind. The immortal souls of men, through their apostasy from God, the blessed Source and Original of all goodness, are become carnal. (Rom. viii. 7.) There is a principle of evil radicated in the very nature, interwoven in the very frame, and births, and constitution of all men; a bias that turns us off in large and wide aberrations from the paths of life and happiness, but with notorious partiality seduceth us into the ways of sin and death. This the Scripture calls "the old man," (Eph. iv. 22,) "the law of sin in our members," and "the body of death," &c. (Rom. vii. 23, 24.)

The wiser Heathen felt, by the very dictate of reason, that human nature was not either as it should be, or as they could have wished it. What meaneth else that ἀπτερία, πτερορρύσησις, "that hanging and flagging of the soul's wings," that drooping of her noblest faculties, and that fatal unwieldiness, and untractableness of the will to virtue, which the Platonists so much complain of? * and what meaneth that ἀναγκη πολλὰ τῷ Θεῷ δυσμαχοῦσα καὶ ἀφηνιαζούσα, "that reluctancy to the divine life, and that impetuous hurry and propension" wherewith they felt themselves driven headlong towards folly and sensuality?

This "flesh" in man, this corrupt and depraved nature, is perpetually fly-blown with evil lustings. "This body of death," like a rotten carcass, is constantly breeding vermin, as a filthy quagmire, a noisome Mephitis or Camarina, sends out stench and unsavouriness. This region of the lesser world, like Africa in the greater, swarms with monsters. It is "the valley of the shadow of death," "a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls," where dwell "the cormorant and the bittern, the raven, the screech-owl, and the satyr," if I may allude to that of the prophet.

* PLUTARCH in *Ψυχογορία*.

(Isai. xxxiv. 11—14.) The apostle sets down elegantly the whole pedigree and lineage of evil: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 15.) Lust is the root of bitterness, fruitful in all the unfruitful works of darkness; and these, like the apples of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah, if you gather them, crumble into the dust and ashes of death. They are fruits "nigh unto a curse, and whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 8.)

That is the first, the "old Adam," "the flesh with its lusts."

II. *We have here the Second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit.* (1 Cor. xv. 45.)—There is in good and holy souls an immortal seed, a principle of life and righteousness, an antidote to the former poison. "For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) Philo the Jew, or whoever was the author of that noble tract in the Apocrypha, called the Wisdom of Solomon, styles it, "the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty." (Wisdom vii. 25, 26.) Every one that is in Christ is "a new creature," (2 Cor. v. 17,) "born again," (John iii. 3—6,) and "made partaker of the divine nature." (2 Peter. i. 4.) For it is the royalty of that King of saints: "Behold I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 5.) The divine Spirit, that great and heavenly Archeus, is busy in holy souls; that mighty principle of life is counter-working the flesh and its lusts. So that now the weapons of a Christian's "warfare are mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds, and the captivating every imagination," yea, "bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 17.)

III. *Here are the terms and bounds of the Spirit's conquests in this present life, at which a Christian's hopes and endeavours must take aim:—*Not the extirpating but subduing, not *the not having* but *the not fulfilling*, the lusts of the flesh. The flesh will be lusting, that accursed womb will be conceiving, in the regenerate themselves. But here is the Christian's privilege, that while he walks in the Spirit, those conceptions shall prove abortive.

IV. *The words entirely, and in sum, present us with the method and way of conquering, with the art of circumventing sin in the first avenues and approaches of it.*—"Walk in the Spirit," &c. This is the *εὐ μύα*, "the [one] great and Achillean stratagem" against the powers of darkness, the true and only course we are to take, if we would strangle the brats of night and hell in their very birth, and crush the cockatrice's egg whilst it is hatching, and before it excludes* the serpent.

DOCTRINE.

So that, in fine, the observation which resulteth, is this:—

The best expedient in the world not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, is to walk in the Spirit; which what it imports, I come now to show.

1. "Walk in the Spirit:" that is, *in obedience to God's commandments which are the oracles of the Spirit.*—That this is excellently preventive

* An expression, borrowed from the Latin classics, for hatching; in which sense it is employed by many old English authors.—EDIT.

of fulfilling the motions to sin, appeareth [from] Psalm cxix. 1—3: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies. They also do no iniquity." Again, a little lower: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Verse 9.) Aristotle, that great dictator in philosophy, despaired of achieving so great an enterprise, as the rendering a young man capable of his *ἠθικὰ ακροαματα*, "his grave and severe lectures of morality;" for that age is light and foolish, yet headstrong and untractable.* Now, take a young man all in the heat and boiling of his blood, in the highest fermentation of his youthful lusts; and, at all these disadvantages, let him enter that great school of the Holy Spirit,—the Divine scripture, and permit himself to the conduct of those blessed oracles; and he shall effectually be convinced, by his own experience, of the incredible virtue, the vast and mighty power, of God's word, in the success it hath upon him, and in his daily progressions and advances in heavenly wisdom. Let me invite you then this day in the prophet's words: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isai. ii. 5.) And what THAT is, David tells us: "Thy words are a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths." (Psalm cxix. 105.) And, "His judgments are as a light that goeth forth." (Hosea vi. 5.) Order thy steps by his word, and thou shalt not tread awry. Let the law of thy God be in thine heart; and sin, which is the transgression of the law, shall not come nigh thee. Walk in this broad day-light of the Sun of righteousness shining in the scriptures, and thou shalt have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. This was the practice, and experience too, of the "man after God's own heart:" "I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm cxix. 11.) It is good writing after the copy of so great a Master: "Go thou and do likewise."

2. "Walk in the Spirit;" that is, *as becometh those in whom God's Spirit dwells*.—As if the apostle had said, "The part which ye are now to act, O ye Christian Galatians, it is that of new creatures: see that ye keep the decorum. Demean yourselves like the children of God who are led of the Spirit of God. (Rom. viii. 14.) Be true to your part, fill it up, adorn it; and then, sure enough, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For that were to *act the part just contrary to what you sustain*:† as he that is to represent upon the stage some generous and heroic person, cannot do the least base and sordid thing but he breaks his part, and digresseth into the garb and posture of a vile and abject person. Whilst he is true to his part, he cannot possibly do any thing that is absurd and misbeseeeming."

Some of the Nethinim stood continually porters at the door of the

* *Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper, &c.*—HORATII *Ars Poet.* 169.

† The youth, whose will no forward tutor bounds,
Joys in the sunny fields, his horse and hounds;
Yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears,
Rough to reproof, and slow to future cares;
Profuse and vain, with every passion warm'd,
And swift to leave what late his fancy charm'd."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

† Μεταβαλλειν εις αλλο γενος.

temple, to keep out whatsoever was unclean; and hereunto the apostle palpably alludeth: "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Now if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) So then that which the rule amounts to, by this interpretation, is, "Walk in the Spirit;" that is, "Walk as becomes the temples of the Holy Ghost, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."*

3. "Walk in the Spirit:" that is, *Fulfil the counsels and advices of the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.*—Every renewed soul is the scene and stage, wherein the two mightiest contraries in the world, the Spirit and the flesh, that is, light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, good and evil, Michael and his angels, and the dragon with his, are perpetually combating hand to hand. And well it is for a Christian that the Holy Spirit is lusting in him against the flesh. *Αγαθὴ ὁ ἐπὶ ἡδὲ βροτοῖσι.* ["This is a contest which is beneficial to mortals."] God takes thy part, Christian; the Spirit of the Lord of hosts is with thee, if thou dost not sin and grieve him away. Follow but thy Leader; be prompt and ready to start at the Divine signal; when the Holy Ghost displays his ensigns, then *μετ' ἰχθυα βαῖνε Θεοῖο*,† march presently forth under those mighty and victorious banners, and thou shalt become invincible. When a Christian goeth out thus to warfare, following the Almighty conduct of his God, he must needs proceed conquering, and to conquer.‡ "My soul followeth hard after thee," saith David: "thy right hand upholds me." (Psalm lxxiii. 8.) The original is, *רבקה נפשי אחריך* "My soul cleaves after thee." As if he had said, "Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; *e vestigio*; 'I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step,' leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction." Lot had almost

* That a good man's soul is a temple which God inhabits, the philosophers acknowledge; and that the honour and worship rendered to him in a pure and holy mind, is incomparably more worthy and acceptable, than all the costliest sacrifices and offerings in temples made with hands, how magnificent soever. *Μόνος γὰρ οἶδε τιμὰν ὁ τὴν αἰαν μὴ συγχέων τῶν τιμωμένων, καὶ ὁ προηγούμενος ἱερεὺς ἑαυτὸν προσάγων, καὶ ἀγάλμα θεῖον τεκταίνων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν, καὶ ναὸν εἰς ὑποδοχὴν τοῦ θεοῦ φωτὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ παρὰ σκευάων νοῦν.* *Ψυχῆς καθαρὰς τόπον οἰκειωτέρον ἐπὶ γῆς θεὸς οὐκ ἔχει ὅς καὶ ὁ Πυθίος συμφέρεται, λέγων* *Εὐσεβέσω δὲ βροτοῖς γανύμηναι τόσον ὅσον Ὀλύμπῳ*—*HIEROCLES Comment. in aurea Pythagoreorum Carmina*, p. 18. "For he alone knows how to render due honour, who does not confound the relative worthiness of those that ought to be honoured; who, in preference to all other acts, offers up himself as a sacrifice, fashions and moulds his own soul into the Divine image, and prepares and furnishes his mind as a temple for the reception of Divine light. The Deity possesses no spot on earth which is more the object of his choice for a residence, than a pure human spirit. In accordance with these sentiments, the Pythian oracle declares:—

"As much as in Olympus bright,
With holy men is my delight."—*EDIT.*

† "The footsteps of the Deity he treads."—*POPE'S Translation of the Odyssey*, ii. 453.

‡ *Ἄλλως μὴδεν ἄλλο δελεῖ ἢ ὁ θεὸς δελεῖ· καὶ τις σε κωλύει, τις ἀναγκάζει, οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν Δία, ὅταν τοιοῦτον ἐχρῆς ἡγεμόνα, καὶ τοιοῦτον συνέληρς καὶ συνέργης,* &c.—*ARRIAN in Epictetum*, lib. ii. cap. 17. "Simply wish and will for nothing but for that which God wills; and any one shall as soon hinder or compel God himself as thee, when thou hast such a mighty Leader, in concert with whom thou both wilt and doest," &c.—*EDIT.*

perished in Sodom, for lingering when his God hastened him away. (Gen. xix. 16.) But Samson (till then invincible) awoke too late from the bosom of his Delilah, when the Philistines had shaved his seven locks. And he thought to go out and shake off their cords wherewith they bound him, "as at other times:" but "the Lord was departed from him:" and they took him and put out both his eyes. (Judges xvi. 20, 21.) A Christian is more than a man when he acts in concurrence with his God. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm xxvii. 1.) But if he resists the Holy Ghost, he doth not only grieve Him, but will (if he go on resisting) quench Him; and then he is all alone, and becomes heir to the curse of Reuben: he who was, a while since, "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," is now weak "as water, and cannot excel." (Gen. xlix. 3, 4.)

The proverb tells us, Πολλος εν καιρω χρονος, "There is a great deal of time in a little opportunity." It is good striking while the iron is hot, and launching-out while wind and tide serve. Open all thy sails to every breath and gale of God's good Spirit. Welcome every suggestion, reverence every dictate, cherish every illapse of this blessed Monitor. Let every inspiration find thee as the seal doth the wax, or the spark the tinder; and then, as the spouse tells her beloved, "or ever thou art aware, thy soul" will make thee "as the chariot of Ammi-nadib."* Step into the pool when the Angel stirs the water. (John v. 4.) Keep touch with the motions of the Spirit, and all is well.

But if these three rules are too general and remote, I shall now lay down some more particular and exact directions for checking the beginnings of sin: and these are of two sorts; (as physicians have their prophylactics, and their therapeutics;) some *for the prevention* of the fit and paroxysm; others *for the cure, and removal*, when the symptoms of it are upon thee.

RULE I.

Before the paroxysm cometh, prepare and antidote thy soul against these lusts of the flesh, by observing these advices:—

The first is that notable counsel of Eliphaz to Job: "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace." (Job xxii. 21.) Get thy heart fixed where thy treasure is. Have thy "conversation in heaven," and thy "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Flee to thy God to hide thee. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalm xci. 1, 3, 4.) Arise with thine arisen Lord, and "seek the things that are above." Set thine affections there, "where Christ sits at the right hand of God." If the soul is not where it animates, but where it loves, awaken thine, and kindle it into holy passionate ecstasies of love, that

* נָדִיב נָחֵם, that is, "a free and willing people."

thou mayest live in heaven all day long, and (which is the privilege of "the upright") "dwell in the presence of that God" whom thy soul delighteth in. (Psalm cxl. 13.) The tempter cannot reach thee there.

Be much in converse with God, and the devil will have little converse with thee; or if he have, it will be to little purpose. How was the majesty of king Ahasuerus incensed at that affront of Haman, when he threw himself upon queen Esther's bed! "What! will he force the queen in our presence?" (Esther vii. 8.) Keep but in the presence of thy Lord, thy King, thy Husband; and the ravisher will not offer to force thee there; or, if he do, it will be but in vain. How secure is that soul that lives under the deep, and warm, and constant sense of God's being its "all in all!" What a munition of rocks is this against all assaults and incursions of the tempter! They are our tame and common poultry whose wings sweep the ground as they fly, and raise a dust: but the generous eagle soon mounts above this smoky lower region of the air, till she makes the clouds a pillow for her head. Put on, Christian, thy eagles' wings, (which are the same with those doves' wings which David prays for,) "and flee away, that thou mayest be at rest." (Psalm lv. 6.) "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shalt mount up with wings as eagles," &c. (Isai. xl. 31.) When the soul is once but upon the wing heaven-ward, O how easily then doth it soar away above this region of smoke and dust, above this atmosphere of carnality and fleshly lustings, into the pure and free ethereal air, the blessed serenity and rest of God's life and kingdom, "which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!" (Rom. xiv. 17.) It is cold iron that shows its rusty scales; they disappear when it is red hot. Get but thine heart on fire heaven-ward, be but ascending thither Elijah-like in a flaming chariot of holy longings and pantings after God; and the lustings of the flesh shall no more appear to deform thy beauty, than the rust of iron appears, when the metal is candent, that is, all over of a light and glowing ardour. The rule then is, Be sick of love to thy dear Master and Lord; and thou shalt not be sick of sin. Stir up spiritual and holy lustings in thy soul after the love and favour, the grace and image, of thy God; and thou shalt not fulfil the lustings of the flesh.

RULE II.

Study thoroughly the unchangeable natures, the eternal laws and differences, of moral good and evil.—To open this: There are some things of a middle and indifferent nature, neither good nor evil in themselves. But if God commands or forbids any of these, they are then good or evil indeed; but only because or whilst He doth so. The ceremonial law of the Old Testament stood in these things, and is now abolished by the same Divine authority which enacted it. And it is now the glory of Christian religion, that (excepting the two sacraments, and a very few other positive institutions for great and weighty causes reserved) the evangelical law of the New Testament consists of such precepts as carry their own credential letters, and are built upon moral grounds of everlasting equity and righteousness. Wherefore the Romanists deserve

very ill of Christian religion ; nor are the Lutheran churches to be excused, who, of their own heads, impose so many indifferent things now in the service of God under the gospel, and that for no other reason, but because they will ; consequently rendering that yoke a *hard* one which Christ left *easy*, and that burden a *heavy* one, which he would have *light*.

But, now, moral good and evil are not only such because God commands the one, and forbids the other, but because the things themselves are so, essentially and unalterably. As mathematical truths and proportions are not such only *because God would have them so*, but *because the nature of the things cannot be otherwise* ; almighty power itself (reverently be it spoken !) cannot make two parallel lines or surfaces meet, though extended infinitely ; or the three angles of any straight-lined triangle amount to any less or more than two right angles, in geometry ; or, in arithmetic, alter the proportions between two and four, to any other than that of double and half, or between three and nine than that of a root and square ; or (to name no more) is it possible that a seventh in music should ever become a concord, or a unison (fifth or eighth) a discord : for these things are in their very nature fixed, and unchangeable ; they must be what they are, or not be at all. Thus there is an eternal reason why that which is good should be so, and commanded ; and why that which is evil should be so, and forbidden, which depends not so much on God's *will*, as on his *nature*. For if God could will that good should be evil and evil good, he could deny himself, and change his own unchangeable Divinity ; which is impossible : and therefore I look upon that opinion of a modern Dutch author* (though I would be so charitable as to believe he knew not, and therefore meant not, what he said) as overthrowing all religion : the thing is this,—That God may, if he please, out of the vast sovereignty of his will, command all that wickedness which he hath forbidden, and make it our duty ; also forbid all that holiness which he hath commanded, and make it become sin to us.

For my part, I would choose rather to be an atheist, than to believe there is such a God as this in the world. But, I am sure, “the Holy One of Israel” cannot do so, not through any *defect*, but through infinite *plenitude and redundancy*, of all perfection. For instance : There is an eternal fitness and comeliness that a reasonable creature should love, and honour, and obey its Creator ; and, contrarily, an eternal horridness and indecency, that an immortal soul should forget, contemn, and affront the Father of spirits. Now to affirm that God can dispense with the former, nay, [that He can] make our fear of him, or delight in him, to be a sin, and punish it with everlasting torments ; and to affirm, that God can wink at or allow the latter, much less command atheism, blasphemy, pride, unthankfulness, &c., or make hypocrisy, covetousness, revenge, sensuality, to become duties and graces, and reward them with everlasting happiness ;—this were to utter the most hellish blasphemy, and the most impossible contradictions in the world. The heathen Plato, in those divine discourses of his (his Eutyphro and Theætetus) and other-

* Ziglovius.

where, may well rebuke the madness of such Christians as this bold and vain speculator. The sum of this rule then is : Deeply possess and dye thy soul all over with the representation of that everlasting beauty and amiableness that are in holiness, and of that horror, and ugliness, and deformity that eternally dwell on the forehead of all iniquity. Be under the awe and majesty of such clear convictions all day long, and "thou shalt not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." For the mind of man is wont to conceive before its own apprehensions and ideas of good and evil, as Jacob's sheep did before the rods in the gutter. If thy notions of good and evil be right and clear, thy lustings and desires will be from evil towards good, all the conceptions of thy soul and their births will be fair and unspotted. But if thy apprehensions be speckled, confused, and ring-straked, (like his rods,) the conceptions of thy mind, thy lustings, will be so too ; so great a truth is that, *Πας μοχθηρος αγνοει*, that dark ignorance and folly lie at the bottom, as the root and foundation of all wickedness ; "every immoral man is a fool ;"—even when he commits a known sin,* yet then he may be said not to know what he doeth. (Luke xiii. 34.) All the reason in the world takes the part of holiness ; and sin hath not one jot of true reason to plead, or allege in its own behalf.

RULE III.

Understand thyself ; be no stranger to thy own breast ; know the frame, and temper, and constitution of thy mind.—"The wise man's eyes are in his head ; but the fool walketh in darkness." (Eccles. ii. 14.) It is a true and sober maxim of the Platonist, *Εφ' ὅσον σαυτον αγνοεις, νομιζε μαινεσθαι*, "As far as a man is ignorant of himself, so far forth he is to reckon himself guilty of madness and distraction."† The satirist complains of this :—

Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo.‡

Dare to unlock thy bosom, to ransack every corner of thy heart ; let thy spirit accomplish a diligent search. Feel the pulse of thy soul ; visit it

* *Παραδειγματων εν τη οντι εστων, του μεν δειου ευδαιμονεστατου, του δε αθεου αθλιωτατου' ουχ' ὁρωντες οτι ουτως εχει, ὑπο ηλιθιοτητος τε και της εσχατης ανοιας λαμβανουσι τη μεν ὁμοιουμενοι δια τας αδικους πραξεις, τη δε ανομοιουμενοι' ου δη τινοσι δικην ζωντες τον εικοτα βιον ὡ ὁμοιουνται. Εαν δ' εικωμεν ὅτι, αν μη απαλλαγωσι της δεινοτητος, και τελευτησαντας αυτους εκεινος μεν δ των κακων καθαρος τοπος ου δεζεται, &c.*—PLATO in *Theateto*. "In the present life two classes of examples present themselves to our view ; the one being of a truly Divine and most felicitous character, the other without any reference to God, and consequently most wretched and miserable. Those who compose the latter, not observing the existence of this broad difference, are imperceptibly assimilating themselves, by their wicked conduct and extreme folly, to their own unhappy class ; pursuing an opposite course to the virtuous and happy. The wicked indeed suffer the penalty of their unrighteousness while they lead a life which is in conformity with that to which they are assimilated. If, however, we remark, that unless they desist from the practice of their wickedness, that place which is unsullied, and perfectly free from the society of the wicked, will not be their receptacle when they depart out of this life ; but then their state of existence will for ever be in accordance with themselves, wicked men constantly herding with their flagitious companions ;—if we talk in this style to these desperate and artful men, our words will insure from them only that degree of attention which they usually give to the ravings of idiots."—EDIT. † DEMOPHILUS in *Γνωμαις*.

‡ PERSIUS, sat. iv. 23. "Into themselves how few, alas ! descend,

And act, at home, the free, impartial friend !"

BREWSTER'S Translation, altered.

often; ask it how it doth. Survey thyself, and blush to leave any *terra incognita*, any "region of thy mind undiscovered." God hath charged and intrusted every man with his own soul: and what folly is it *αλλοτριεπισκοπειν*, "to be busy in what doth not concern thee," and neglect what chiefly doth so,—the affairs of thy own mind! Is any thing nearer thee, or of such consequence to thee, as thyself? O let thy charity then begin at home! Thou owest this duty to thyself,—to take an exact account daily of the posture and order of thy inward man. With how great confusion doth the spouse acknowledge this neglect!—"They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Canticles i. 6.) If ever thou wouldest be dexterous in suppressing the first risings of sin, inquire what advantages the tempter hath against thee; where that *nescio quid tenerum et molle** lieth in thy soul, as Cicero calls it, against which temptation plants its chiefest battery and artillery; what "thine own iniquity" is, (Psalm xviii. 23,) which is that *ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν*, "the sin that doth so easily beset thee." (Heb. xii. 1.) See what grace is principally wanting in thee, which is weakest, in what instances thy greatest failure betrays itself, in which of thy passions and affections thou art most peccable, and what lustings of the flesh they are which give thee the frequentest alarms, and threaten the greatest dangers. Be making these researches and explorations daily; compare thy heart with the law of the eternal God, and with the dictates and maxims of thine own conscience. See where thy greatest discrepancy and non-conformity to these from time to time ariseth; and this, like pathology, or understanding the disease and the constitution of the patient, will hugely minister and conduce to the exact method of physic, either for prevention or for cure.

RULE IV.

Get and keep a tender conscience. Be sensible of the least sin.—As the apple of the eye (the fittest emblem, in the world, of a tender conscience) is not only offended with a blow or wound, but if so much as a little dust or smoke get in, it weeps them out. Some men's consciences are like the stomach of the ostrich that digesteth iron: they can swallow and concoct the most notorious sins, (swearing, drunkenness, &c.,) without regret. "Their consciences are seared as with a hot iron," as the apostle phraseth it. (1 Tim. iv. 2.) They have so inured their souls to the grossest wickedness, (as the Psylli, a people of Africa, whom Plutarch mentions, had [inured] their bodies to the eating poison,) that it becomes as it were natural. But a good conscience hath a delicate sense; it is the most tender thing in the whole world; it feels the least touch of known sin, and grieves at the grieving of God's good Spirit, not only for quenching, or resisting, or rebelling against the Holy Ghost, but even for "grieving the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby it is sealed to the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) The most tender-hearted Christian,—he is the stoutest and most valiant Christian. "Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

* "That undefinable softness and tenderness."—EDIT.

(Prov. xxviii. 14.) It is the truest magnanimity and heroic courage in our spiritual warfare, to tremble at the least iniquity. A Christian is never fitter to "endure hardness as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ," (2 Tim. ii. 3,) than when his conscience is most tender. To be such a coward as not to dare to break any one of God's commandments, is to be the valiantest person in the world; for such an one will choose the greatest evil of suffering, before the least of sinning; and, however the jeering Ishmaels of the world [may] be ready to reproach and laugh one to scorn, for "this niceness and precise scrupulosity," as they term it; yet the choice, if God be but wiser than vain man, is a very wise one.

RULE V.

Keep an exact guard upon thy heart. (Prov. iv. 23.)—Let the eyes of thy soul be open and awake, upon all the stirrings of thy thoughts and affections. Bid them stand at their first appearance. As soon as ever thou descriest any of them in motion, summon them before thy soul's tribunal: let them not pass till thou knowest perfectly whence they come, whither they go. Ask their errand:—

State, viri! quæ causa viæ? quive estis in armis?—VIRGILII Æneis, ix. 376.*

Is it grief, or is it joy, or hope, or fear, or love, &c., that is now upon the march? Demand the word of it; ask whether it hath a pass from God and conscience; catechise it, examine it, search it; speak to it in the sentinel's and watchman's phrase, Δείξον τα συνθηματα, "Show me your ticket." "Tell me, my desire, my love, my fear, my anger, by whose authority art thou now up, and in motion?" If they are able to produce a good warrant from God's commandments, or from the dictate of reason and conscience, let them go on in God's name; they are about their business. But if they cannot, arrest them as idle vagrants, nay, as enemies to thy soul's peace, and charge them, upon their allegiance to their superiors, that they stir no further.

RULE VI.

Be daily training and exercising all thy graces.—Have them always in battle-array. Be in a military posture, both defensive and offensive. Stand constantly to thine arms; for thou hast to do with two enemies that will never give thee any truce or respite, the יצר דע and the בליאך הזמור, as the Jews call them, the flesh within thee, (Jer. xvii. 9,) and the tempter, that destroying angel of the bottomless pit, without thee. (1 Peter v. 8.) The Christian warfare is πολεμος ασπονδος, "a war never to be altered;" it admits of no peace, no cessation. The soldier of Christ must never lay down his arms, but expect to be upon continual duty and travel, till the great Lord of hosts, under whose banner he now fighteth, is pleased to remove his quarters from that army militant here on earth, to that blessed and triumphant [one] in the heavens.

* "Declare, young men, both whence and what you are,
And whither bound? and wherefore arm'd for war?"—PITT'S Translation, altered.

RULE VII.

Be well-skilled in the elenchs of temptation.—I mean, in unmasking the sophistry and mystery of iniquity, in defeating the wiles and stratagems of the tempter, and in detecting and frustrating the cheats and finesses of the flesh with its deceitful lusts. (Eph. iv. 22 ; 2 Cor. ii. 11.) No small part of spiritual wisdom lies in the blessed art of discovering and refuting sin's fallacies and impostures. If ever thou wouldest prove famous and victorious, and worthy [of] honour and reverence in thy spiritual warfare, be well-seen in the skill of fencing, know all thy wards for every attack. Provide thyself with answers and retorts beforehand, against the subtle insinuations and delusions of thine enemy. For example: If Satan tells thee, as he often will, that the sin is pleasant,* ask whether the gripings of conscience be so too, whether it be such a pleasant thing to be in hell, to be under the wrath of an Almighty Judge! If he tells thee, "Nobody sees; thou mayest commit it safely;" ask whether he can put out God's all-seeing eye, whether he can find a place empty of the Divine Presence for thee to sin in, or whether he can blot out the *items* out of the book of God's remembrance. If he tells thee, "It is a little one;" ask whether the majesty of the great Jehovah be a little one, whether there be a little hell or no. If he talks of profits and earthly advantages that will accrue, ask what account it will turn to at the last day, and what profit there is if one should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what one should give in exchange for his soul! (Matt. xvi. 26.) When sin, like Jael, invites thee into her tent, with the lure and decoy of a lordly treatment, think of the nail and hammer which fastened Sisera dead to the ground. (Judges iv. 18, 21 ; v. 25, 26.) Be not caught with chaff; lay by thee such memoirs, such answers and repartees, as these, wherewith thou mayest reply upon the tempter: That the God of truth hath other manner of pleasures, profits, honours, to court thy love and reward thy service with, than the father of lies; namely, true and real, solid and eternal ones. What are "the pleasures that are in sin for a season," to be compared with "the rivers of God's pleasure, that are for evermore at his right hand?" And what is a little wealth, "that thieves can steal," a despicable heap of riches, (which, like a flock of birds alighting a little while in thy yard, will "take wing presently and fly away,") to be named with "the unsearchable riches of Christ," or that "inheritance of the saints in light?" Or what is the painted bubble, the fading though beauteous rainbow, of earthly honour and grandeur, to "a weight of glory," to an "incorruptible crown of righteousness that fadeth not away," to "a kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to reserve" in the highest heavens for every sheep and every lamb of his "little flock?" And (to name these considerations by cluster) remember, that the greatest wisdom is to do (not what in some poor few regards is, but) what is absolutely lovely and desirable; that what is best of all is best for thee to love, and

* Τις σε πολυπλανεων επων εδιδασκελευθους;—ΜΥΣ.ΚΙ *Hero*. 175.

"Who first essay'd thy youthful mind to teach
These wily arts of smooth deceptive speech?"—EDIT.

mind, and prosecute;* that a good conscience is a continual feast; that God alone is enough, and *without him* nothing [is enough] for thy happiness; that thy soul is worthier thy care than thy carcass, and the life to come than this; that eternity is more valuable than time; that not the opinions of men lulled asleep in voluptuousness and sensuality, but God's estimate, but the sentiments of the holiest, best, and wisest men,—or, if you needs will, of the worst and vilest, when conscience is awakened, when they come to lie a-dying, and when they shall stand before God at the last day,—are to be preferred as the wisest; that everlasting happiness cannot be bought too dear, but repentance and shame may easily; that the hardest doings or sufferings for Christ are infinitely easier than everlasting misery; that heaven and glory will more than recompense all thy self-denials and mortifications, all thy watchings, fastings, &c.; and, in the mean time, the very hope of it, beside “the peace of God which passeth all understanding,” and his love and grace, and the comforts of his Spirit, will certainly sweeten all the tediousness of thy way to heaven, with inexpressible redundance of satisfaction, yea, sometimes with joy unutterable and full of glory: in sum, that God is a good master, and his service perfect freedom; for beside the glorious recompence to come, thy work, Christian, is even now its own reward. If thou believest strongly such aphorisms as these,—and he is madder than any in Bedlam that doth not believe them,—it will be no hard matter, by God's blessing and assistance, in their strength to “put to flight the armies of the aliens,” at least to shield thyself against the volleys of fiery darts, which at any time the tempter shall pour upon thee.

RULE VIII.

Withdraw thyself, if possible, from the occasions of sin.—It is good standing out of harm's way: do not gaze upon temptations, but pray, with David, “Lord, turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” (Psalm cxix. 37.) If thou perceivest “thy feet are almost gone, thy steps had well-nigh slipped,” (Psalm lxxiii. 2,) it is surely high time for thee, if thou canst, to run away; nor will it be reckoned thy cowardice, but thy valour, in the day of thine account, thus to retreat from the enemy. It is a very wise man's counsel, concerning the haunts and converses of the profane: “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away.” (Prov. iv. 14, 15.) Again, concerning the strange woman: “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.” (Prov. v. 8.) And again, concerning occasions of intemperance: “Be not among wine-bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright;” (Prov. xxiii. 20, 31;) that is, when it sparkles and vapours in the glass. When it laughs in thy face, and invites thy lip, then shut thy eyes, lest sin steal in upon thee. Do not imitate the silly lark, which,

* Μηδεις μητε λογω σε παρεικη, μητε τι εργω,
Πρηξαι μηδ' ειπew δ τι μη βελτερον εστι.—PYTHAGORÆ Auz. Carm. 25, 26.

“To words or actions stain'd with horrid vice,
Disgraceful to thyself, let none entice.”—EDIT.

by the pleasing contemplation of the little piece of glass, that glitters in the sun, while the fowler twirls it about, is enticed nearer and nearer, forgetting or overseeing the net, which ere long overwhelms it. Vouchsafe not to admit the tempter to a parle: the poets fable Ulysses to have stopped his ears at the enchanting voices of the Syrens. Be thou as the deaf adder to that great charmer: the best entertainment thou canst give him, is, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

RULE IX.

Bind thyself beforehand, with the severest of thy resolutions, not to trust thy own judgment, when the temptation begins to get within thee.— "A man in passion is not himself." *Perit judicium cum res transiit in affectus.* One distempered with the *morbis arcuatus*, "the jaundice," black or yellow, is apt to impute the colour his eye is vitiated with to every object. Who would trust such a judge of colours? or the palate of one in a fever, to distinguish of tastes? It is a good rule, under the disorder of temptation, *Μεμνησο ἀπιστεῖν** "Never credit thy own apprehensions" at such a time. If thou takest thyself yielding in the least, start back with abhorrence, and chide thy rashness, appealing from thy present distracted, to thy ancient and wiser, self; from thyself asleep and disordered, to thyself awake and sober at other times. Jonah's judgment was weak and childish, though a prophet, when he was under that temptation of impatient anger: "I do well to be angry;" (Jonah iv. 9;) a saucy and bold answer to his God! He should not have trusted his present sentiments; for he was not himself. As one that bespeaks an awakening, will, over-night, desire his friend not to give ear to him: "Though," saith he, "I plead earnestly to sleep a little longer, yet do not regard that; for I tell you of it before on purpose; and I shall thank you, when once I am up, for not letting me have my will." Thus tell thyself aforehand, that though, under a drowsiness and slumber of spirit, thou art ready to plead for the flesh, and to feel some inclinations to fulfil its lusts, and art very loath to let them go unsatisfied; yet, if thou art but resolute not to comply with thy own foolish and unreasonable desires, thou wilt heartily thank thyself; I mean, [thou wilt] be entirely glad, when thy eyes are open, that thou hast overcome thyself, and that wisdom and reason and conscience have got the day. Resolve to remember this, when temptation comes the next time to assault thee, and play the man.

Having laid down these directions, by way of prevention against the time of conflict, to prepare the soul aforehand, that in the assault it may not be vanquished, I come now to the Christian's behaviour in the fit and paroxysm itself, when the lusts of the flesh are stirring. And the great rule to be observed here, is this:—

As soon as ever thou perceivest thine affections and lusts begin to grow inordinate, and thy inferior appetites to rebel, take thyself to task forthwith, and resist them with all thy might.— Do not stay a moment; delay is unutterably dangerous. Who but a madman, that sees the stable or barn hard by his dwelling-house just beginning to catch fire, would stand

* "Recollect to be mistrustful of thyself."—EDIT.

still, and say, "Let it alone a little, I would see what will come of it?"—Two or three minutes' indulgence to the flame will embolden it, without expecting his leave or permission any longer, to devour, and rage, and consume, and carry all before it, in despite of his *mightiest* resistances; when a *little* at first might have saved that vast damage which his folly and loitering have occasioned. How contemptible were those fires at first, that in few hours have triumphed over stately palaces, and turned sometimes vast cities into heaps of dust and ashes! How small an infirmity and distemper, neglected, hath ushered in the most fatal sickness! And how often hath a trifling bruise or strain been preface to a gangrene; and the prick of a pin or thorn, not looked after time enough, enforced the cutting off a leg or arm, nay, [hath] proved mortal and incurable! Advantages to good, like *arithmetical* progressions, rise slowly, in fair and even intervals; but advantages to ill, like *geometrical*, grow up presently from little to vast excesses:—

————— *Facilis descensus Avern:*
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hic labor, &c.—VIRGILII *Æneis*, vi. 126, 8, 9.*

Motion to ill is downwards, and, like the descent of heavy bodies, collects a new impetus, and moveth every step with a swiftness perpetually increasing,† and, if not stopped early, soon irresistible. Mischief springs apace; grows tall, and large, and adult suddenly, as Jonah's gourd did in a night. Our passage in sin is with wind and tide increasing; but in holiness, with both against us. To seek the things above is a supernatural motion, and therefore difficult; but the contrary is natural, and therefore easy: 'Ἦδὺ μὲν τὸ κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ δὲ βίαιον λυπηρὸν,‡ as the philosopher well determines. Evil is now akin to us since our degeneracy, and hath vast advantages on its side, if once it gets an allowed harbour and entertainment in our breast.

The inquiry then before us is, by what methods a Christian ought to address himself to battle in this spiritual warfare; how he may so bid defiance to his enemies, as to daunt and vanquish them. Let these RULES therefore be observed for resisting and quelling thy lusts and inordinate affections in their first sallies, and in the commencement of the insurrection.

RULE I.

Ave them with the authority of thy reason and understanding.—It is infinitely unbecoming a man, that his lower appetites should grow mutinous and untractable, that τὸ ἀλογον τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ θηριώδες,

- * "Smooth lies the road to Pluto's gloomy shade;
 And hell's black gates for ever stand display'd.
 But 't is a long unconquerable pain,
 To climb to these ethereal realms again."—PITT'S Translation.

† Galileo, and, after him, Gaasendus, and others, have demonstrated, that heavy bodies, in their descent, do in equal times transmit unequal spaces, continually increasing according to the progression of odd numbers. For instance: If in one pulse a bullet fall perpendicularly one inch; in the next it will three inches; in the third, five; in the fourth, seven, &c., till the swiftness grow immense and unutterable. ‡ "We feel pleasure in that which is agreeable to nature; but the exertion of force against her is harassing and painful."—EMT.

“the inferior and brutish faculties of our souls,” should rebel against the *το ἡγεμονικόν*, “that sovereign faculty of reason.” The Scythians are reported, when their slaves took arms, to have dashed the sneaking rebels presently out of countenance by showing their whips, that well-known weapon. How soon doth the presence of a grave magistrate allay a popular tumult, if he comes in soon enough, in the beginning of the riot!

Ille regū dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.—VIRGILII *Æneis*, i. 157.*

God hath made reason the magistrate of the little world; he hath given it a commission to keep the peace in our souls. And so far as our minds are illustrated and governed by right reason, so far do they partake of the image of God; of whose glorious mind one of the best and clearest conceptions we can have is, that *it is infinite and eternal reason*. Do thy passions begin to rise in arms? Do they grow disordered and unruly? Let thy reason come out to them, and ask whether they know their master; and let thy soul blush, with infinite scorn, that ever these base slaves should usurp the throne of their rightful lord, and unman thee, by deposing reason, which is all thou hast to show that thou art not a beast! What an extreme silly thing is a man in passion! Nothing can be more ridiculous and contemptible. Out of love and pity to thyself, O man, do not affront and disgrace thine immortal soul any more, by suffering any malapert and saucy passion to outrage and assassinate thy reason. That was a generous rule of Pythagoras: Παντῶν δὲ μάλιστα αἰσχυνοῦ σαυτὸν† “Let a man use great reverence and manners to himself.” Be ashamed, friend, to do any vile or dishonest action before thyself. Though nobody be conscious, yet thy soul is; and thou canst not run away from that. What good will it do thee to contradict the dictates of thine own mind? Is it possible for thee to be at peace, when thou fallest out with thyself? Thou justifiest all the injuries in the world that others do thee; for thou doest thyself daily injuries ten millions of times greater than the greatest others can do to thee. Whoever thou art that despisest thy own reason, and permittest every silly lust to abuse thee, by scorning *that* thou art a false traitor to thy own soul. There are but a very few men that are in their wits. The far greatest part of mankind, in the greatest matters, in the highest concerns of a man, are beside themselves: for a man’s own self must be a reasonable creature; and therefore, not to govern one’s own mind and affections by reason, is to be mad and distracted. If he that looks not to his family is worse than an infidel, what then is he that looks not to his mind? What “confused chaos” are most men’s minds! *Rudis indigestaque moles*? ‡ A man makes a fool of himself as oft as he prefers his passion before his reason. The philosopher gives us the sum of this rule excellently: Μηδ’ αλογιστῶς σαυτὸν εἶναι περὶ μηδὲν ἐπιζέε’§ “Accustom thyself to act every where like a reasonable creature.”

* “All stand attentive, while the sage controls

Their wrath, and calms the tumult of their souls.”—PITT’S Translation.

† PYTHAGORAS, in *Carminibus*, 12.

‡ OVIDII *Metam.* i. 7.

§ PYTHAGORÆ *Carmina*, 14.

RULE II.

If thy distempered affections and lusts slight the authority of thy reason, as thou art a man; bid thy conscience do its office, as thou art a Christian.—Try to awe them with God's written word: thus our Saviour thrice repulsed the tempter, by producing scripture to confront him: "It is written," &c. (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.) Ask thy heart if it knows that hand; whether it dares rebel against the express commands, statutes, and ordinances of the living God. Bring out of the register of conscience the laws of Him that made thee; oppose some clear text of holy writ, that comes into thy mind, against that very lust that is now rising. For instance: If it be carnal fear, Isai. li. 12; if love of the world, 1 John ii. 15; if revenge, Rom. xii. 19; if impatience under affliction, James i. 12; if diffidence in God's promises, Num. xxiii. 19; if immoderate anger, Eph. iv. 26; if pride and arrogance, and self-assuming, Matt. v. 3; xi. 29, &c. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of such artillery, whose conscience is rich in these memoirs! Store thy mind with this sacred treasure, that, as a "scribe instructed for the kingdom of heaven," thou mayest upon all occasions "bring forth out of thy treasure things new and old." (Matt. xiii. 52.) Hold such scriptures as are point-blank contrary to the temptation, before thy conscience; if it would turn away, compel it to look upon them; and think, "I am God's creature, I must obey him." Did ever any rebel against him and prosper? *Eine ego ut adverser?* * "Is it wisely done of me to resist my Maker?" to try which is strongest, a poor worm, or the Almighty God? And if the love of God's commands will not constrain thee, let the terrors, the thunders and lightnings of his threats persuade thee; which are all levelled against wilful sinners. And it is not safe standing, surely, in the very cannon's mouth. Peruse those two scriptures, and tremble to venture on any known breach of the law of thy God, Deuteronomy xxviii. 58, and Isaiah xlv. 9.

RULE III.

If all this effect nothing, then draw the curtain, take off the vail from before thy heart, and let it behold the God that searcheth it. (Jer. xvii. 10; Heb. iv. 13.)—Show it the majesty of the Lord; see how that is described, Isai. vi. 1—3. Ask thy soul whether it sees the living God, that seeth it; whether it is aware whose eye looks on; (Gen. xvi. 13, 14;) whether it hath no respect for God himself, who stands by, and whose pure and glorious eyes pierce through and through thee! (Hab. i. 13.) Tell thy heart again and again, that God will not be mocked; that he is "a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed;" (1 Sam. ii. 3;) that he is "a jealous God" too, "and will by no means clear the guilty." (Exod. xxxiv. 7.) Bid it consider well and look to itself; for God will bring to light every hidden thing of dishonesty; he that now sees, will judge it. Speak to thy unruly lusts as the town-clerk of Ephesus wisely did to the mutinous citizens: "Sirs, we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this tumult." (Acts xix. 40.)

* TERENCE.

RULE IV.

If these great real arguments be slighted, try whether an argument ad hominem, drawn from sense, will prevail.—Awe thy lusts then with the bitterness of thine own experience. Consider how often thou hast rued their disorders; what dismal consequences have followed upon their transports, and how dearly thou hast paid heretofore for thy connivance at them. Bethink thyself on such a fashion as this: “The other day I was angry, and behaved myself uncomely, put the whole company or family out of order, disobliged such a dear and faithful friend, by my rashness and folly, in uttering hasty words before I weighed them. O how did I repent me afterwards! How ashamed, and abashed, and confounded was I, when I came to myself! So at another time thus and thus I miscarried myself; and these are the fruits and cursed effects of my yielding to the beginnings of sin: and shall I go now and repeat my madness? Had I not smart enough for my folly before, but must I needs play the fool and the beast again?” Ask thyself what thou ailest, to forget all the sighs and groans and bitter tears that thy lust hath already cost thee; and yet would the impudent sin be committed once more? *Πα τας φρενας εκπεποτασαι*; * “Where are thy wits, man,” if thou goest about it? *Sic notus Ulysses*? † Was it so sweet a thing to lie under the horror and agony of a wounded conscience, and under God’s rebukes in secret the last time, that thou must needs venture again? Why wilt thou hurt thy soul, and become a devil to thyself? Why wilt thou needs break thy peace, by consenting to sin; and not only so, but torment thyself, and kindle a hell in thine own bosom; and all this in despite of all thy warnings? *Ictus piscator sapit*. ‡ “The burnt child dreads the fire.” But it seems thou art in love with misery, and weary of thy joy and comfort. Thou hast a mind to be cursed; wretchedness, and woe, and death are, it seemeth, grown so amiable in thine eyes, as to become thy deliberate choice. Thus upbraid thyself; and do it so long and loud till thou fetchest thy soul again to itself, out of that swoon and lethargy which besotteth it. Give not over chiding and reproaching thyself, till thou makest thy heart sensible and considerate.

RULE V.

Labour to cure thy lustings and affections in the first beginning of their disorders, by revulsion, by drawing the stream and tide another way.—As physicians stop an hemorrhage, or bleeding at the nose, by breathing the *basilic* vein in the arm, or opening the *saphæna* in the foot; so may we check our carnal affections, by turning them into spiritual ones; and those either,

1. *Of the same nature.*—For example: catch thy worldly sorrow at the rise, and turn thy mourning into godly sorrow. If thou must needs

* THEOCRITUS, in *Idyl*. xi. 72. (Cyclops.) † “Is not Ulysses notorious for the highest exercise of human prudence?”—EDIT.

‡ “When a fisherman has received one smart stroke, he afterwards becomes wiser and more cautious.” In Pliny’s “Natural History,” (lib. xxxii.) *scorpius et draco pisces* are described as the only species of fish which strike the fishermen when taking them out of the nets. May not this proverb, which Erasmus traces up to Sophocles, have had its origin in the shock of an electrical eel?—EDIT.

weep, weep for somewhat that deserves it. Be the occasion of thy grief what it will,—loss of estate, relations, &c.,—I am sure thy sins are a juster occasion; for they brought that occasion of mourning upon thee, be it what it will, that thou art now in tears for. Art thou troubled at any danger, full of fears, heart-aching, and confusion? O forget not the mother-evil, sin; let that have but its due share, and there will not be much left to spare of these affections for other things.

Is thy desire, thy love, thy joy, too busy about some earthly trifle, some temporal good thing? Pray them to look up a little, and behold thy God, who is altogether lovely, “in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore;” (Psalm xvi. 11;) and let everlasting shame stop thy mouth, if thou darest affirm any thing in this wretched world worthy to be named once with the living God, for rivalry and competition in thy heart: * sure I am he is the fountain and measure of all goodness. Let but the first and sovereign good have its due of thy love and desire, thy delight and joy, and the remainder will be little enough for thy creature-comforts. (Jer. ii. 12, 13.) O, how great a folly is it to doat on husks, and overlook the bread in thy Father’s house!

2. *Turn thy carnal affections into spiritual ones of a contrary nature.*—For example: allay thy worldly sorrow by spiritual joy. Try whether there be not enough in *all-sufficiency* itself to compensate the loss of any outward enjoyment; whether there will be any great miss or want of a broken cistern, when thou art at the fountain-head of living waters; whether the light of the sun cannot make amends for the expiring of a candle. Chastise thy carnal fears by hope in God. Set on work the grace contrary to the lust that is stirring: if it be pride and vain-glory in the applause of men, think how ridiculous it were for a criminal to please himself in the esteem and honour his fellow-prisoners render him, forgetting how guilty he is before his judge. If thou beginnest to be poured loosely out, and as it were dissolved in frolic mirth and joviality, correct that vainness and gaiety of spirit by the grave and sober thoughts of death, and judgment, and eternity.

RULE VI.

If this avail not, fall instantly to prayer.—And, indeed, all along the whole encounter with thy lusts, pray continually; lift up thy heart to God with sighs and groans unutterable: “O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!” Tell him, thy lusts are his enemies, as well as thine; tell him they are too strong for thee; beg of him that he would interpose, and make bare his arm, and get himself a glorious name. “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” (Isai. li. 9.) Entreat him, of all love, to pity thee, even by his very bowels, and not to let the enemy

* Καλον μεν γαρ ειναι τον Θεον, και των καλων το φανωτατον. Καθосον αυτου μετεσχεν εκαστα, καλα, και εδραια, και σωζομενα: και καθосον αυτου απολειπεται, αισχυρα και διαλυομενα, και φθειρομενα.—MAXIMUS TYRICKS, Dissert. i. “For the Divinity is indeed beautiful, and the most splendid of all beautiful things. So far as every thing participates of this, it is beautiful, stable, and safe; and, so far as it falls off from this, it is base, dissipated, and corrupted.”—TAYLOR’S Translation.

triumph over thee. Tell him thou knowest not what to do; but thy eyes are toward him. Bemoan thyself before him, and plead his glory with him, and his truth and faithfulness. Spread his own gracious promises in his eyes: Psalm xxvii. 14; Isaiah xl. 28—31; Psalm lv. 22; 1 Peter v. 7.

Such ejaculations or meditations as these are mighty useful; God's children find them so in the very paroxysm and assault. But if the temptation continue, get into thy closet, and humble thyself greatly before thy God: throw thyself at his feet; tell him, thou wilt not rise till he hath given thee a token for good: no, thou art resolved there to lie hanging on him, and not to let him go until he bless thee. O how welcome is every honest heart to the Father of spirits, when it comes on such an errand, and in such a manner, to the throne of grace! God cannot choose but melt in pity and tenderness over his poor desolate ones, when he sees the anguish of their souls. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? My bowels are troubled for thee, they will not give me leave to forget thee. Is Ephraim my dear son? I do earnestly remember him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." (Isai. xlix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 20; Hosea xi. 8.) Give not over wrestling, like Jacob, till thou risest ISRAEL, "one who hast power with God and prevailest:" (Gen. xxxii. 26—28.) And it is worth observing, that the Lord takes pleasure to be called "the mighty God of Jacob," and "the Lord God of Israel:" as if he reckoned it an honour, that once the worm Jacob wrestled with his omnipotence, and overcame him, he seems to glory in his being conquered, and chooseth that for his name, and for his memorial throughout generations; which is an everlasting monument, that a poor frail man got the day of him. So much doth the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous prevail.

Perhaps sometimes it may be requisite to join secret fasting with thy prayer. It may be, the devil that tempts thee is of that "kind that will not go out but by prayer and fasting." (Matt. xvii. 21.) Thus Daniel lay prostrate at God's feet, "till a hand touched him, and set him upon his knees, and the voice said to him, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved," &c. (Dan. x. 2, 3, compared with verses 10, 11, 18, 19.)

RULE VII.

When thou hast done this, rise up, and buckle on "the shield of faith, wherewith thou shalt be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. vi. 16.)—Clothe thy soul with a heroic confidence in the power and faithfulness of thy God, and in the name and majesty of the Lord of hosts; bid battle to thy lusts, and to all the powers of darkness. Take heed of going out in thy own single strength; for lust "hath cast down many strong men wounded." (Prov. vii. 26.) While thou art keeping thine own heart with all diligence, forget not by faith to bring the great Keeper of Israel in. If any other man could have kept his own heart, sure the man after God's own heart could have done it.

*Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.*—(VIRGILII ÆNEIS, ii. 291.)

* "Could any mortal hand prevent our fate,
This hand, and this alone, had saved the state."—Pitt's Translation.

But the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba stands on record to all posterity to the contrary : for "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm cxvii. 1.) Do not venture to grapple with the roaring lion, but in the strength of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is also the Lamb of God, and the great Shepherd of Israel, "that carries his lambs in his bosom ;" (Isai. xl. 11 ;) and whither should the pursued lamb betake itself, but into that Shepherd's arms? "In the time of trouble," spiritual as well as other, "he will hide thee in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide thee, and set thee upon a rock." (Psalm xxvii. 5.) He never fails the eyes of them that look up to him, nor makes his people ashamed of their hope. "What time thou art afraid trust in him." His name is a strong tower. Cast thy care upon him ; and expect the same pity from thy God, which the men of Jabesh-Gilead found from Saul when Nahash the barbarous Ammonite would have put out their right eyes : "To-morrow, ere the sun be hot, ye shall have help." (1 Sam. xi. 9.) If the king of Israel's bowels yearned over those poor men, shall not the bowels of the God of Israel over those that fear him? Yes, upon his honour, truth, and faithfulness, he will not suffer that cruel *Nahash*, (to allude to the signification of the word,) that "old serpent,"* to have his will upon them : if he doth not come to-day, he "will to-morrow, ere the sun be hot." "Lift up your heads," therefore, "O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." (Psalm xxiv. 7, 8.) Thus was Joseph rescued from the "archers that shot at him, and sorely grieved him. His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the arms of the mighty God of Jacob." (Gen. xlix. 23, 24.)

I come at length to the USE.

USE I.—INFORMATION.

We are to learn hence, *that our souls are not as they came out of the Father of spirits' hands.*—They appear as it were wrong risen in the world, and begin to tread awry the very first steps they measure on the stage of earth. All the symptoms of degeneracy are upon them. The best of men that ever yet blessed the earth with their residence upon it,—except that Son of man who was only so by the mother's side, being by the Father's the only-begotten Son of the eternal God,—had flesh lusting in them unto sin : which is as convincing an argument, that human nature is blemished and infected, that it hath received a *μιασμα*, "a stain and venom," as the *εξανθήματα* ["pustules or eruptions"] are of a pestilential disease, whose breakings-out display the contagion within. If the *carbuncle* and the *tokens* proclaim the plague, or the spots discover a pestilential fever, or the *variola*, those pustulous efflorescences which we commonly name "the small-pox," argue the precipitation of the blood, by some latent malignity ; certainly the lustings of the flesh in all men demonstrate, that the very nature of man on earth is now blasted and corrupted.

* נחש *serpens*, Hebrew.

Methinks the Divine Perfection, and our own imperfection, are the two greatest sensibles in the world, both of them equally, that is, immensely, clear and discernible. For the former is no less illustriously undeniable, than is the being, light, and beauty of the sun in the firmament at noon-day; and the latter is no less evident and conspicuous than the obscurity and horror of midnight darkness. Not to see the one is to be *αθεος*, "without God in the world;" and not to feel the other, (for it is like the Egyptian darkness, Exod. x. 21, that may be felt by all that are not past feeling,) is to be without (or beside) one's self.

Now, since all the reason in the world consents to the truth of that aphorism of the philosopher, Παντ' ὑπ' ἀριστου νοι γίνεται,* that "the Best and Most Excellent Mind is the Parent of the universe," and an almighty, ever-living goodness is the source and root of all things; since heaven and earth say, "Amen," and again, "Amen, hallelujah!" to that oracle of the Psalmist, "The work of God is honourable and glorious;" (Psalm cxi. 3;) "and all that God made was very good;" (Gen. i. 31;) no wonder if it puzzled all philosophy, Ποθεν το κακον; "whence human nature came to be thus vitiated and debauched." What are the fountains of this great deep of sin within us, which, "like the troubled sea," is perpetually thus "casting out mire and dirt?" (Isai. lvii. 20.) Sure enough, so universal an effect as this calamity of mankind must have a cause as universal.

The Socinians here, and others, will have us believe that we all are born as innocent as Adam in Paradise; that is, say they, in an *equilibrium* and perfect indifferency to good and evil; assigning no other cause of the general corruption of men's lives and manners, but the infection of example, and evil custom: which is, methinks, as wise a guess as to affirm the wolf and vulture to be bred and hatched with as sweet and harmless a nature as the innocent lamb or loving turtle, but only the naughty behaviour and ill example of their ancestors and companions have debauched them into ravenousness and ill manners.

The Manichees, as St. Austin tells us, (who was himself for several years before his conversion of that heresy,) thought that all the evil in the world sprang from an almighty and an eternal principle of evil, counter-working and over-bearing God, whom they held the opposite eternal principle of goodness. But since the very formal notion of God involveth infinite perfection, and that of sin mere imperfection, it is a perfect contradiction that evil should be infinite, if good be so; it were to make imperfection perfect, and mere impotency omnipotent. Therefore, there can be but one God, who is Almighty Goodness; and as possible it is that the sun should darken the world by shining, as Almighty Goodness should do any hurt in the world, or make any evil.

* Hierocles most divinely concludes: Αἰτία γὰρ τῆς τῶν πάντων ποιήσεως οὐδέμια ἀλλῇ προσεισὶν εὐλογος, πλὴν τῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ἀγαθοτήτος. Ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ἡν φύσει· ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενος οὐδέποτε ἐγγίνεται φύλονος.—HIEROCLES in *Carm. Pythagor.* p. 21. "The dictate of sound reason can assign no other cause for the creation of all things, than that of essential goodness. For, according to his own nature, God is infinitely good; and in that Being who is essentially good, no malignant passion against any one can possibly exist."—EDIT.

God is the Author of all the good in the world; but sin and misery are of our making. (Hosea xiii. 9.)

Much wiser than either of the two former was the conjecture of the Pythagoreans and Platonists, though Heathens; who, having nothing else to consult (as wanting the divine revelation of holy scripture) but their own faculties, embraced the conceit, that all human souls were created in the beginning upright, and placed by God in happier mansions, in purer and higher regions of the universe, until at length they did *αποβησκειν την θειαν ευζωϊαν, τη απο Θεου φυγη*,* as Hierocles phraseth it; that is, till they fell from the divine life, and became inhabitants of earthly tabernacles, bringing their fallen and degenerate natures along with them. This opinion had of old the general consent of the Jews, as appeareth, John ix. 2; and yet hath, as Men. Ben Israel, in his book *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, witnesseth. Among the Christians, Origen is in the number of its sectaries, (in his books *Περὶ Αρχων*.) and some few of the ancients.

But as much as is necessary for us to know about this great inquiry, God hath (blessed be his goodness!) sufficiently revealed in Genesis i.—iii., compared with Psalm li. 5; Eccles. vii. 29; Rom. i. 24, 25, &c. And he is as wise as he need be in so great a point, that knows how to understand these scriptures according to the analogy of faith, and consistently with the divine perfections; and that so believeth them, as to put that and no other sense and interpretation upon them which is worthy of the glorious attributes and excellent majesty of the living God; although some difficulties will remain perhaps insuperable to us, in this our present estate on earth.

USE II.—EXHORTATION.

I have already in some measure discovered the mysteries and secrets of this blessed art of checking sin in the beginnings of it. *Let me now persuade the practice of these holy rules. Let us resolve, in the strength of Christ, to resist these lustings of the flesh.* Take the exhortation of the apostle: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. xvi. 13.)†

Let me press this with a few considerations.

1. *The more thou yieldest, the more thou mayest.*—Sin is unsatiable: it will never say, "It is enough." Give it an inch, it will take an ell. See the sad example of Peter denying his Lord. (Matt. xxvi.) (1.) He was only timorous; he follows afar off. (Verse 58.) (2.) At the next step he denies his Lord openly before them all. (Verse 70.) (3.) He adds an oath to it. (Verse 72.) And, lastly, he falls a cursing and swearing, as if he meant to out-sin the vilest there. (Verse 74.) It is no wisdom to try conclusions between fire and gunpowder in the heap. Who but a fool would unlock the door of his house, when it is beset

* "By their departure from God, they destroyed that happy and divine life which they had previously enjoyed."—EDIT.

† *Ανεπεσ εστε, φιλοι, μησασθε δε θουριδος αλκης.*—HOMER *Ilias*, vi. 112.

"Be mindful of the strength your fathers bore;

Be still yourselves, and Hector asks no more."—POPE'S Translation.

with thieves, and excuse it?—"he did but turn the key, that was all!" Why, he need do no more to undo himself; they will easily do all the rest.

2. *It is the quarrel of the Lord of hosts in which thou fightest.*—Let thy courage rise in proportion to the goodness of thy cause, and the honour of that great Prince and Captain under whose banner thou servest.* Upon thy good behaviour and address in arms depends much of the renown and honour of Christianity. A cowardly soldier is the reproach of his commanders. Thou hast a noble General, O Christian, that hath done and finished perfectly whatever concerns thy redemption from the powers of darkness. "To him that overcometh will he give to sit on his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down on his Father's throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) Do valiantly and worthily. Follow thy victorious Leader; let all that know thee see that religion is no mean and feeble thing; that the school of Christ breeds the excellent of the earth; that the divine life is the most powerful principle in the world; that the Spirit of God in thee, and his grace, are stronger than all thy lusts and corruptions. Not he that talks most, or professeth most, but he that acts and lives most, as a Christian, shall be the "man whom the King delights to honour."

3. *The lusts of the flesh are thy greatest enemies, as well as God's.*—"They war against thy soul." (1 Peter ii. 11.) To resist them feebly, is to do not only the work of the Lord, but of thy soul, negligently.

4. *It is easy vanquishing at first in comparison.*—A fire newly-kindled is soon quenched, and a young thorn or bramble easily pulled up. The fierce lion may be tamed, when a whelp; but if thou stay a little, there will be no dealing with a lust any more than with a savage beast of prey. Grace will lose, and corruption get, strength continually by delaying.

5. *If thou resistest, the victory is thine.* (James iv. 7.)—And in my text, "Walk," &c., "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Thou canst never be conquered, if thou wilt not yield. Stand but to it, and thou art invincible; while thou art unwilling, all the devils in hell cannot force thee to sin. Temptation puts on its strength, as the will is. Cease but to love the sin, and the temptation is answered. Indeed, if thou chooseth to be a slave, thou shalt be one. Nothing but thy own choice can undo thee.

6. *Consider what thou doest.*—If thou fulfillest the lusts of the flesh, thou provokest thy heavenly Father, rebellest against him, (and "rebellion is as witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry,"†) thou "crucifiest Jesus Christ afresh, and putteth him to an open shame."‡ Is this thy love and thanks to thy Lord, to whom thou art so infinitely beholden? Canst thou find in thy heart to put thy spear again in his side? Hath he not suffered yet enough? Is his bloody passion nothing? Must he bleed again? Ah monster of ingratitude! Ah perfidious traitor as thou art, thus to requite thy Master! Again: thou grieveest thy Comforter; and is that wisely done? Who shall comfort

* *Cæsarem vehis et fortunam Cæsaris.* "Thou conveyest Cæsar, and the destinies of Cæsar."—EDIT. † 1 Sam. xv. 23. ‡ Heb. vi. 6.

thee, if He depart from thee grieved? Or is it ingenuous, thus unworthily to treat that noble guest, to affront God's sacred Spirit to his very face; and, in despite and mockery of him, to side with his enemy, the flesh? Is this thy kindness to thy best Friend, thy faithful Counsellor, thy infallible Guide, thy Minister and Oracle, thy sweet and only Comforter? What need I add, that thou breakest thy peace, woundest thy conscience, forfeitest the loss of God's countenance, and makest a gap in the divine protection for all evil to rush in at?

7. And lastly, *Consider the invaluable benefit of resisting, of not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh*, in two great instances:—

(1.) *Unutterable joy and pleasure will be shed abroad in thy soul, as often as thou gettest the day.*—I know no greater triumph than that of a Christian, when he is “more than conqueror through Christ that loves him.” O the peace, the joy, and holy glorying in the Lord, and in the power of his might, that a good man is even ravished and caught up into the third heavens with, when the Lord covers his head in the day of battle, and lifts it up above his spiritual enemies! To vanquish one's self, is a nobler exploit than to subdue a city; (Prov. xvi. 32;) nay, a vaster conquest than if one could, with that great Macedonian captain, achieve the empty title of “the vanquisher of the world.”

(2.) *Every conquest will increase thy strength and dexterity against the next assault.*—So that when the vanquished lust recruits its forces thou wilt be able to outvie thyself, and become more dexterous every time.

Nay, the mortifying of one earthly member, like the cutting-off a limb from the natural body, will make the whole body of sin tremble, all the rest of thy lusts will fare the worse, and by consent languish: so that every victory over any one corruption weakens that and all the rest, and breaks the way for future conquests.

SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A.M.

HOW MINISTERS OR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS MAY AND OUGHT TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO SICK PERSONS, FOR THEIR GOOD, AND THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.
—Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

THESE words are part of Elihu's discourse uttered by way of rephension and conviction to Job, and by way of vindication and apology for God in his dealings with men; and although he premiseth this, that