

AN EXPOSITION VPON
THE FOVRTH OF IAMES.

Iames 4. 7.

Resist the Diuell, and he will flye from you.



These words containe a commandement, [*Resist the Diuell:*] and a promise, [*and he will flye from you.*] In the commandement two things are to be marked, first, an action; secondly, the object of that action. The action is a Resistance; the object, the Diuell. First, of the object. By

the Diuell here is meant all sinnes and temptations arising either from that corruption that is in vs, and so from our selues; or else springing from external objects, and such motions as are by the Diuell immediately suggested vnto vs. All which are termed by the name of Diuell, because he hath the chiefe hand in these matters, and is a principall agent therein. The action of resistance is that, whereby a spirituall souldier of Christ Iesus doth striue and endeaour according to that measure of grace that is given him to auoide all sinnes whatsoeuer, and to please God in all things, not to offend him in any. This action thus explained in generall, respecting the whole course of mans life: let vs consider it therefore in a more particular regard, according as we are to put it in practice at severall combats, with severall temptations.

For the better performance of it, we are to consider three things: first, our preparation before the combate. Secondly, our behauiour in the very time of the assault. Thirdly, our demeanour when the fight is ended. For the first, it is needfull that

that we be armed for our defence ; the parts of which spirituall armour, we may see afforded vnto vs out of the *Eph. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.* The first peece, is to haue our loynes girt about with verity: that is, an heart firmly grounded and established in the truth, in certainty of Gods pure worship and Religion, that we be not carried about with euery blast of outside doctrine. The second, is the Brest-plate of righteousnesse; that is, a stedfast resolution of the heart, to be vpright, righteous, and holy before God in all things, not willing to offend him in the least: as *David* saith, *Psal. 40. 8. I haue desired to doe thy good will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within mine heart.* The next part, is to haue our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospell of peace: which is an vndaunted and ready minde to make a constant profession of the Gospell in all places, and at all times, though it bee to losse of lands, goods, liuing, yea, life: as *Saint Peter* wisheth vs, to put on our Sandals, and to be ready to giue an account of our Faith to euery one that shall require it of vs. The fourth is the Shield of Faith; which is a liuely and stedfast perswasion and assurance of the mercie of God in Iesus Christ, particularly belonging vnto vs; the force of which, is to quench all the fiery darts of the Diuell; that is, all strong, all sudden, and all dangerous temptations by him suggested. A fift, is the Helmet of saluation, which, as it is *1. Thes. 5. 8.* is the hope of euerlasting life, whereby our heads being couered, may be preserued from doubt and despaire. Another is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: the vse of which is, that we ought to labour to bee furnished with such pregnant places of Scripture, as whereby we may both defend our selues, and offend Satan, according as *Christ* did, *Matth. 4.* The last is Prayer, whereby we must intreate the ayde and assistance of Gods Spirit, to strengthen vs to the combate. Our behauiour in the combate ought to be guided by these rules:

First, entertaine not with any liking the first motions to sin, but resist the primary beginning, intlements, and occasions to them, and suffer them not to haue a place of abode in heart and affection.

Reas. 1. From the nature of sinne, which being not at the first

first, repelled quickly gets ground of vs. By the example of *David*, who first was idle, then looked; the temptation left him not there, but then hee lusted, and afterwards committed actuall folly: 2. *Sam.* 11. So *Peter*, first, he denied barely; secondly, then he sware it; thirdly, he cursed and denied: *Mat.* 26. 70, 72, 74.

Secondly, because the Diuell as he is strong, so is he subtiler: giue him an Inch, and he will take an Ell. Giue him but entrance to set foote into your heart, and you shall hardly chuse but he will possesse it wholly.

Thirdly, put not too much trust and confidence in our owne strength, but rather to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, *Ephes.* 6. 10. This confident boldnesse, and reliance on our owne ability, caused *Peters* fall, *Luk.* 22. 33.

Fourthly, we must not beleue the Diuell, nor hearken to his perswasion and reasons; nay, nor trust him, though hee spake truth. So when the Diuell tooke on him to be a Preacher, *Acts* 16. 16, 17, 18. *Paul* would not suffer him to speake; but commanded him forth. So Christ rebuked the Diuell, *Luk.* 4. 34, 35. *He* sinned by being credulous, in beleueing the Diuell when he vttered a loud lye, *Gen.* 3. 3, 4.

Fifthly, wee must consider what profit a stout resistance doth bring, viz. that the Diuell will bee the weaker, the more foiles he receiues, and we the stronger.

Lastly, take heed that we compare not the pleasures of sinning and yeelding to the temptation, with the paine of resistance, for then soone shall wee faile: but rather compare the paine of resistance with the horrors, anguish, and perplexitie of an euill conscience, which follow the committing of any sinne, and see whether is rather to be vndergone. The burden of an euill conscience. *Salomon* (*Prou.* 18. 14.) describeth, saying, *The spirit of a man will sustaine his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can beare it?* After the combate ended, if thou obtaine the victory, first, giue God the glory and prayse, not ascribing it to any strength, or worthinesse in thy selfe; take heed of this pride. Secondly, auoide securitie, and thinke not when thou hast overcome one, then thou hast vanquishd all; but know,

that one temptation, like waues, come one in the necke of another. And therefore provide thy selfe for a new assault. If thou be overcome, thinke with thy selfe, that, it may bee, God hath let you fall, thereby to punish some sinne in thee. Secondly, lye not in sinne, but endeaour to renew thy selfe by repentance, knowing that it is as great, if not a greater victorie, to recover being fallen, then to avoide a fall.

Encouragements to this dutie are, first, the promise here made, that he wil flye from vs, like a coward, that seeing his adversarie buckle his armour to encounter with him, takes him to his heeles. Secondly, consider the intent of Satan in alluring vs to sinne; that it is not for our good, but for our destruction. So let vs not yeeld to his pleasures, and be drawne away by his allurements. Thirdly, learne the nature of sinne, that is it such as laies vs open to the iudgements of God both here, and hereafter. Lastly, thinke of those many mercies God hath vouchsafed; and then say with *Ioseph*, *How can I doe this, and so sinne against my God, Gen. 39. 9.*

One thing to bee performed in the time of combate is left out, which is this, that when the Diuell labourerh by any temptation to draw vs into any vice, we should not onely withstand and resist this temptation, but also endeaour to doe the contrary vertue: as *Ioseph* being tempted to adultery, exercised himselfe to chastitie, *Genes. 39.* and *Iob*, who when Satan had done all that he could to make him curse, and blaspheme God, did not onely not doe that, but did the contrary, he blessed and prayesd the Name of God, *Iob 1. last verse.*