

you, and you will pardon others; only faith can throw dust upon injuries, and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness.

4. Think how thou hast sometimes wronged others; and may it not be just with God that the same measure you mete to others, should be measured to you again? Hast thou not wronged others, if not in their goods, yet in their name? If thou hast not borne false witness against them, yet perhaps thou hast spoken falsely of them: the consideration of this may make Christians bury injuries in silence.

5. Get humble hearts. A proud man thinks it a disgrace to put up an injury. What causeth so many duels and murders but pride? 'Be clothed with humility,' Pet. v. 5. He who is low in his own eyes, will not be troubled much though others lay him low: he knows there is a day coming, where there shall be a resurrection of names as well as bodies, and God will avenge him of his adversaries, Luke xviii. 7. 'And shall not God avenge his own elect?' The humble soul leaves all his wrongs to God to requite, who hath said, 'Vengeance is mine,' Rom. xii. 19.

*Use, of comfort.* Such as forgive, God will forgive them. You have a good argument to plead with God for forgiveness. Lo, I am willing to forgive him who makes me no satisfaction, and wilt not thou forgive me who hast received satisfaction in Christ my surety. So ends the fifth petition.

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## OF THE SIXTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

THIS petition consists of two parts. *First*, Deprecatory, 'Lead us not into temptation.' *Secondly*, Petitory, 'but deliver us from evil.'

*First*, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Doth God lead into temptation? God tempts no man to sin, James i. 13. 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God tempteth not any man.' God doth permit sin, but doth not promote it. He who is an encourager of holiness cannot be a patron of sin. God doth not tempt to that which he hath an antipathy against. What king will tempt his subjects to break those laws which he himself hath established.

*Qu.* *But is it not said, God tempted Abraham?* Gen. xxii. 1.

*Ans.* Tempting there was no more than trying. God tried Abraham's faith, as a goldsmith tries gold in the fire: but there

is a great deal of difference between God's trying his people's grace and exciting their corruption; he trieth their grace, but doth not excite their corruptions: man's sin cannot be justly father'd on God. God tempts no man.

Qu. *What then is the meaning of this, 'Lead us not into temptation?'*

Ans. When we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation;' the meaning is, we desire of God, that he would not suffer us to be overcome by temptation. That we may not be given up to the power of temptation, which is when we are trepanned into sin.

Qu. 2. *Whence do temptations come?*

Ans. 1. *Ab intra*, from ourselves. The heart is *fomes peccati*, the bearer of all evil. Our own hearts are the greatest tempters: *quisque sibi Satan est*, James i. 14. 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.' The heart is a perfect decoy.

2. Temptations come *ab extra*, from Satan. He is called the Tempter, Mat. iv. 3. he lies in ambush to do us mischief; *stat in procinctu diaboli*, the devil lays a train of temptation to blow up the fort of our grace: the devil is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail: the world is his diocese where he visits; we are sure to find Satan, whatever we are doing, reading, praying, meditating: we find him within, how he came there we know not; we are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it. A saint's whole life (saith Austin) is a temptation. Elias, who could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation. This is a great molestation to a child of God; as it is a trouble to a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted. The more one is tempted to evil, the more he is hindered from good: we are in great danger of Satan the 'prince of the air;' and we had need often pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' That we may see in what danger we are of Satan's temptations.

Consider, (1.) His malice in tempting. This hellish serpent is swelled with the poison of malice. Satan envies man's happiness: to see a clod of dust so near to God, and himself (once a glorious angel) cast out of the heavenly paradise, this makes him pursue mankind with inveterate hatred, Rev. xii. 12. 'The devil is come down to you having great wrath.' If there be any thing this infernal spirit of hell can delight in, it is to ruin souls, and bring them into the same condemnation with himself. This malice of Satan in tempting must needs be great, if we consider three things:

1. That when Satan is so full of *torment*, yet, that at such a time he should tempt. One would think that Satan should scarce have a thought free from thinking of his own misery;

yet such is his rage and malice, that, when God is punishing him, he is tempting.

2. Satan's malice is great, that he will tempt where he knows he cannot prevail: he will put forth his sting, though he cannot hurt. He tempted Christ, Matth. iv. 3. 'If thou be the Son of God.' He knew well enough Christ was God as well as man, yet he would tempt him. Such was his malice against Christ, that he would put an affront upon Christ, though he knew he could not conquer him. He tempts the elect to blasphemy: he knows he cannot prevail against the elect; yet such is his malice, that though he cannot storm the garrison of their hearts, yet he will plant his pieces of ordinance against them.

3. Satan's malice is great, that though he knows his tempting men to sin will increase his own torment in hell, yet he will not leave off tempting: every temptation makes his chain heavier, and his fire hotter, yet he will tempt. Therefore Satan being such a malicious revengeful spirit, had we not need pray that God would not suffer him to prevail by his temptations? 'Lead us not into temptation.'

(2.) Consider Satan's diligence in tempting, 1 Pet. v. 8. 'He walketh about.' He neglects no time; he who would have us idle, yet he himself is always busied. This lion is ever hunting after his prey, he compasseth sea and land to make a proselyte: he walks about, he walks not as a pilgrim, but a spy; he watcheth where he may throw in the fire ball of a temptation. He is a restless spirit; if we repulse him, yet he will not desist, but come again with a temptation. Like Marcellus, a Roman captain Hannibal speaks of, whether he was conquered, or did conquer, he was never quiet. More particularly, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this.

1. If he gets the least advantage by temptation he pursues it to the utmost. If his motion to sin begins to take, he follows it close, and presseth to the act of sin. When he tempted Judas to betray Christ, and found that Judas was inclinable, and began to bite at the bait of thirty pieces of silver, he hurries him on, and never leaves him till he had betrayed his Lord and Master. When he had tempted Spira to renounce his religion, and saw Spira begin to yield, he follows his temptation close, and never left till he had made him go to the legate at Venice, and there abjure his faith in Christ.

2. Again, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this, the variety of temptations he useth. He doth not confine himself to one sort of temptation, he hath more plots than one: if he finds one temptation doth not prevail, he will have another: if he cannot tempt to lust, he will tempt to pride: if a temptation to covetousness doth not prevail, he will tempt to profaneness: if he cannot fright men into despair, he will see if he can

draw them to presumption : if he cannot make them profane, he will see if he can make them formalists : if he cannot make them vicious, he will tempt them to be erroneous. He will tempt them to leave off ordinances ; he will pretend revelations. Error damns as well as vice ; the one pistols, the other poisons : thus Satan's diligence in tempting is great, he will turn every stone, he hath several tools to work with ; if one temptation will not do, he will make use of another. Had not we need then to pray, ' Lead us not into temptation ?'

3. Consider Satan's power in tempting. He is called, ' the prince of the world,' John xii. 31. and the ' strong man,' Luke xi. 21. and the ' great red dragon,' who ' with his tail cast down the third part of the stars,' Rev. xii. 4. He is full of power, being an angel ; though Satan hath lost his holiness yet not his strength. The devil's power in tempting is seen several ways : 1. He, is a spirit having an intellectual being, can convey himself into the fancy and poison it with bad thoughts. As the Holy Ghost doth cast in good motions, so the devil doth bait, he puts it into Judas' heart to betray Christ, John xiii. 2. 2. Satan, though he cannot compel the will, yet he can present pleasing objects to the senses, which have a great force in them. He set a ' wedge of gold' before Achan, and so enticed him with that golden bait. 3. The devil can excite and stir up the corruption within, and work some inclinableness in the heart to embrace the temptation : thus he stirred up corruption in David's heart, and provoked him to number the people, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Satan can blow the spark of a lust into a flame.

4. Herein lies much of his power, that he being a spirit, can so strangely convey his temptations into our minds, that we cannot easily discern whether they come from Satan, or from ourselves : whether they are his suggestions, or the natural births of our own hearts. A bird may hatch the egg of another bird, thinking it is her own : often we hatch the devil's motions, thinking they come from our own hearts. When Peter dissuaded Christ from suffering, sure Peter thought it came from the good affection, which he did bear to his master, Matt. xvi. 22. little did Peter think Satan had a hand in it. Now, if the devil hath such a power to insil his temptations, that we hardly know whether they be his or ours, we are in a great deal of danger, and had need pray, not to be led into temptation. Here, I know, some are desirous to move the question.

*Qu. How shall we perceive when a motion comes from our own hearts, and when from Satan ?*

*Ans.* It is hard (as Bernard saith) to distinguish *inter morsum serpentis & morbum mentis*, between those suggestions which

come from Satan, and which breed out of our own hearts. But I conceive there is this threefold difference.

1. Such motions to evil as come from our own hearts, spring up more leisurely, and by degrees; a sin is long concocted in the thoughts, ere consent be given; but usually we may know a motion comes from Satan by its suddenness; therefore a temptation is compared to a dart, Eph. vi. 15. because it is shot suddenly. David's numbering the people was a motion which the devil did inject suddenly.

2. The motions to evil which come from our own hearts are not so terrible; few are frightened at the sight of them, as children; but motions coming from Satan are more ghastly and frightful, as motions to blasphemy and self-murder. Hence it is temptations are compared to fiery darts, Eph. vi. for their terribleness, because they do, as flashes of fire, startle and affright the soul.

3. When evil thoughts are thrown into our mind, when we lothe, and have reluctancy against; when we strive against them, and flee from them, as Moses did from the serpent, this shews they are not the natural birth of our own heart, but the hand of Joab is in this. Satan hath injected these impure motions.

4. Satan's power in tempting appears by the long experience he hath gotten in the art; he hath been a tempter, well nigh as long as he hath been an angel. Who are fitter for action than men of experience? who is fitter to steer a ship than an old experienced pilot? Satan hath gained much experience, by his being so long versed in the trade of tempting. He having such experience, knows what are the temptations which have foiled others, and are most likely to prevail: the fowler lays those snares which have caught other birds. Satan having such power in tempting, we are in danger, and had need pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

5. Consider Satan's subtilty in tempting. The Greek word to tempt, signifies to deceive. Satan in tempting, useth many subtil policies to deceive; we read of the depths of Satan, Rev. ii. 24. and devices and stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. we read of his snares and his darts: he is called a lion for his cruelty, and an old serpent for his subtilty; he hath several sorts of subtilty in tempting.

1<sup>st</sup>, Subtilty. The devil observes the natural temper and constitution, *Omnium discutit mores*.—The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself. As the husbandman knows what seed is proper to sow in such a soil; so Satan finding out the temper, knows what temptation is proper to sow in such a heart. That way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows; Satan tempts

the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold. He provides favoury meat, such as the sinner loves.

2d, Subtlety. Satan chooseth the fittest season to tempt in. As a cunning angler casts in his angle when the fish will bait best; the devil can hit the very joint of time when a temptation is likeliest to prevail. There are several seasons he tempts in.

1st, In our first initiation and entrance into religion, when we have newly given up our names to Christ. Satan will never disturb his vassals: but when we have broke his prison in conversion, now he pursues us with violent temptations. *Solet inter primordia conversionis acrius insurgere*, Bern. When Israel were got a little out of Egypt, then Pharaoh pursues them. Herod, as soon as Christ was born, sent to destroy him; so when the child of grace is newly born the devil labours to strangle it with temptation. When the first buddings and blossoms of grace begin to appear, the devil would nip these tender buds with the sharp blasts of his temptations. Indeed, at first conversion, grace is so weak, and temptation so strong, that one would wonder how the young convert escapes with his life: Satan hath a spite at the new creature.

2d, *Season*. The devil tempts when he finds us idle, and unemployed. We do not sow seed in fallow ground; but Satan sows most of his seed in a person that lies fallow. When the fowler sees a bird sit still and perch upon the tree now he shoots it; so when Satan observes us to sit still, now he shoots his fiery darts of temptation at us, Mat. xiii. 25. 'While men slept, the enemy sowed tares;' so, while men slept in sloth, Satan sows his tares. When David was walking on the leads, and unemployed, now the devil set a tempting object before him, and it prevailed, 2 Sam. xi. 3.

3d, *Season*. When a person is reduced to outward wants and straits, now is the devil's tempting time. When Christ had fasted forty days and was hungry, then the devil comes and tempts him with the glory of the world, Matth. iv. 8. When provisions grow short, now Satan sets in with a temptation; What, wilt thou starve rather than steal? reach forth thy hand, pluck the forbidden fruit. How oft doth this temptation prevail? how many do we see, who, instead of living by faith, live by their thifts, and will steal the venison, though they lose the blessing.

4th, *Season*. Satan tempts after an ordinance. When we have been at hearing of the word, or prayer, or sacrament; now Satan casts in the angle of temptation. 'When Christ had been fasting and praying, then came the tempter,' Matth. iv. 3.

Qu. *Why doth Satan choose this time to tempt in, after an*

*ordinance? one would think this were the most disadvantageous time for now the soul is raised up to an heavenly frame?*

*Ans.* 1. Malice puts Satan upon it. The ordinances that cause fervour in a saint, cause fury in Satan. He knows in every duty we have a design against him; in every prayer we put up a suit in heaven against him; in the Lord's supper, we take the sacrament upon it, to fight under Christ's banner against the devil; therefore now Satan is more enraged, he now lays his snares, and shoots his darts against us.

2. Satan tempts after an ordinance, because he thinks he shall now find us more secure. After we have been at the solemn worship of God, we are apt to grow remiss, and leave off former strictness; like a soldier, that after the battle leaves off his armour: now Satan watcheth his time; he doth as David did to the Amalekites, after they had taken the spoil, and were secure, they did eat and drink, and dance; now David fell upon them, and did smite them, 1 Sam. xxx. 17. So when we grow remiss after an ordinance, and perhaps too much indulge ourselves in carnal delights, now Satan falls upon us by a temptation, and oft foils us. As after a full meal, men are apt to grow drowsy; so after we have had a full meal at an ordinance, we are apt to slumber and grow secure, and now Satan shoots his arrow of temptation, and hits us between the joints of our armour.

*5th, Season.* Satan tempts after some discoveries of God's love. Satan, like a pirate, sets on a ship that is richly laden; so when a soul hath been laden with spiritual comforts, now the devil will be shooting at him to rob him of all. The devil envies to see a soul feasted with spiritual joy. Joseph's party-colored coat made his brethren envy him, and plot against him. After David had the good news of the pardon of his sin (which must needs fill him with consolation) Satan presently tempted him to a new sin in numbering the people: and so all his comfort leaked out, and was spilt.

*6th, Season.* Satan tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest; as the sons of Jacob came upon the Shechemites when they were sore, and could make no resistance, Gen. xxxiv. 25. At two times Satan comes upon us in our weakness.

(1.) When we are alone; so he came to Eve when her husband was away, and she the less able to resist his temptation. Satan hath this policy, he gives his poison privately, when no body is by; others may discover his treachery. Satan is like a cunning suiter, that woos the daughter when the parents are from home; so, when one is alone, and none near, now the devil comes a wooing with a temptation, and hopes to have the match struck up.

(2.) When the hour of death approaches. As the poor sheep when it is sick and weak and can hardly help itself, now the crows lie picking at it ; so, when a saint is weak on his death-bed, now the devil lies picking at him with a temptation ; he reserves his most furious assaults till the last. The people of Israel were never so fiercely assaulted, as when they were going to take possession of the promised land ; then all the kings of Canaan combined their forces against them ; so, when the saints are leaving the world, and going to set their foot on the heavenly Canaan, now Satan sets upon them by temptation ; he tells them, they are hypocrites ; all their evidences are counterfeit. Thus, like a coward, he strikes the saints when they are down ; when death is striking at the body, he is striking at the soul. This is his second subtilty, Satan chooseth the fittest season when to throw in a temptation.

3. *Subtlety*. A third subtil policy of Satan in tempting, is, he baits his hook with religion ; the devil can hang out Christ's colours, and tempt to sin under pretences of piety. Now he is the white devil, and transforms himself into an angel of light. Celsus wrote a book full of error, and he entitled it, *liber veritatis*, the book of truth. So Satan can write the title of religion upon his worst temptation. He comes to Christ with scripture in his mouth, 'it is written,' &c. So he comes to many, and tempts them to sin, under the pretence of religion ; he tempts to evil, that good may come of it ; he tempts men to such unwarrantable actions, that they may be put into a capacity of honouring God the more. He tempts them to accept of preferment against conscience, that hereby they may be in a condition of doing more good : he put Herod upon killing John Baptist, that hereby he might be kept from the violation of his oath. He tempts many to oppression and extortion, telling them, they are bound to provide for their families. He tempts many to make away with themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God : thus he wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a divine, and quotes scripture.

4. *Subtlety* of Satan is, to tempt to sin gradually. The old serpent winds himself in by degrees, he tempts first to lesser sins, that so he may bring on greater. A small offence may occasion a great crime ; as a little prick of an artery may occasion a mortal gangrene. Satan first tempted David to an impure glance of the eye, to look on Bathsheba ; and that unclean look occasioned adultery and murder. First the devil tempts to go into the company of the wicked, then to twist into a cord of friendship, and so, by degrees, to be brought into the same condemnation with them ; this is a great subtilty of Satan, to tempt to

leffer fins firft ; for thefe harden the heart, and fit men for the committing of more horrid and tremendous fins.

5. *Subtily.* Satan's policy is to hand over temptations to us, by thofe whom we leaft fufpect.

1. By near friends ; he tempts us by them who are near in blood. He tempted Job by a proxy, he handed over a temptation to him, by his wife, Job ii. 9. ' Dost thou ftill retain thy integrity ?' As if he had faid, Job, thou feeft how, for all thy religion, God deals with thee ; his hand is gone out fore againft thee : what, and ftill pray, and weep ? Cast off all religion, turn atheift : ' curfe God, and die.' Thus Satan made ufe of Job's wife to do his work : the woman was made of the rib, and Satan made a bow of this rib, out of which he fhoot the arrow of his temptation. *Per coftam petit cor.* The devil oft ftands behind the curtain, he will not be feen in the bufinefs, but puts others to do his work. As a man makes ufe of a ferjeant to arreft another ; fo Satan makes ufe of a proxy to tempt : as he did creep into the ferpent, fo he can creep into a near relation.

2. He tempts fometimes by religious friends ; the devil keeps ftill out of fight, that his cloven foot may not be feen. Who would have thought to have found the devil in Peter ? When he difsuaded Chrift from fuffering, mafter, ' fpare thyfelf ;' Chrift fpied Satan in the temptation, ' Get thee behind me, Satan.' When our religious friends would difsuade us from doing our duty, Satan is a lying Spirit in their mouths, and would by them entice us to evil.

6. *Subtily.* Satan tempts fome perfons more than others : fome are like wet tinder, who will not fo foon take the fire of temptation as others. Satan tempts moft where he thinks his policies will more eafily prevail ; fome are fitter to receive the impreffion of temptations, as foft wax is fitter to take the ftamp of the feal. The apoftle fpeaks of ' veffels fitted for deffruftion,' Rom. ix. 22. fo there are veffels fitted for temptation. Some, like the fponge, fuck in Satan's temptations. There are five forts of perfons that Satan doth moft fit brooding upon by his temptations.

*1<sup>ft</sup>, Ignorant perfons.* The devil can lead them into any fnare ; you may lead a blind man any whither. God made a law, that the Jews fhould not put a ftumbling-block in the way of the blind, Lev. xix. 14. Satan knows it is eafy to put a temptation in the way of the blind, at which they fhall ftumble into hell. When the Syrians were fmitten with blindnefs, the prophet Elifha could lead them whether he would into the enemy's country, 2 Kings vi. 20. The bird that is blind is foon fhoot by the fowler. Satan, the god of this world, blinds men and then fhoots them. An ignorant man cannot fee the de-

vil's snares ; Satan tells him ſuch a thing is no ſin, or but a little one, and he will do well enough ; 'tis but repent.

2dly, Satan tempts unbelievers. He who, with Diagoras, doubts of Deity, or, with the Phocinians, denies hell : what ſin will not this man be drawn to ? He is like metal that Satan can caſt into any mould ; he can dye him of any colour. An unbeliever will ſtick at no ſin : luxury, perjury, injuſtice. Paul was afraid of none ſo much as them that did not believe, Rom. xv. 31. ' That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.'

3dly, Satan tempts proud perſons ; theſe he hath more power of : None is in greater danger of falling by a temptation, than he who ſtands high in his own conceit. When David's heart was lifted up in pride, then the devil ſtirred him up to number the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 2. *Celſae graviore caſu decidunt turres, feriuntque ſummos fulmina montes*, Hor. Satan made uſe of Haman's pride to be his ſhame.

4thly, *Melancholy perſons*. Melancholy is *atra bilis*, a black humour, ſeated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy clothes the mind in ſable, it doth diſturb reaſon ; Satan doth work much upon this humour. There are three things in melancholy, which gives the devil great advantage ; (1.) It unfits for duty, it pulls off the chariot-wheels, it diſpirits a man. Lute-ſtrings when they are wet will not ſound ; when the ſpirit is ſad and melancholy, a Chriſtian is out of tune for ſpiritual actions. (2.) Melancholy ſides often with Satan againſt God ; the devil tells ſuch a perſon, God doth not love him, there is no mercy for him ; and the melancholy ſoul is apt to think ſo too, and ſets his hand to the devil's lies. (3.) Melancholy breeds diſcontent, and diſcontent is a cauſe of many ſins, unthankfulneſs, impatience, and oft it ends in ſelf-murder. Judge then what an advantage Satan hath againſt a melancholy perſon, and how eaſily he may prevail with his temptations. A melancholy perſon tempts the devil to tempt him.

5thly, *Idle perſons*. He who is idle, the Devil will find him work to do. Jerom gave his friend this counſel, To be ever well employed, that when the tempter came, he might find him working in the vineyard. If the hands be not working, the head will be plotting ſin, Micah. ii. 1.

7. *Subtility* of Satan is, to give ſome little reſpite, and ſeem to leave off tempting a while, that he may come on after with more advantage. As Iſrael made as if they were beaten before the men of Ai, and fled ; but it was a policy to draw them out of their fenced cities, and enſnare them by an ambuſh, Joſh. viii. 15. The devil ſometimes raiſeth the ſiege, and feigns a flight, that he may the better obtain the victory. He goes away for a time, that he may return when he ſees a better ſea-

son, Luke xi. 24. 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks in dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith I will return to mine house whence I came out.' Satan, by feigning a flight, and leaving off tempting a while, causeth security in persons, and they think they are safe, and are become victors; when, on a sudden, Satan falls on, and wounds them. As one that is going to leap, runs back a little, that he may take the greater jump; Satan seems to retire and run back a little, that he may come on again with a temptation more furiously and successfully: therefore we need always to watch and have on our spiritual armour.

S. *Subtlety* of the old serpent is, either to take men off from the use of means, or to make them miscarry in the use of means.

*Firſt*, He labours to take men off from duty, from praying and hearing; his design is to discourage them: and, to do that, he hath two artifices;

1. He discourageth them from duty, by suggesting to them their unworthiness; they are not worthy to approach to God, or have any signals of his love and favour. They are sinful, and God is holy, how dare they presume to bring their impure offering to God? This is a temptation indeed. That we should see ourselves unworthy, is good, and argues humility; but to think we should not approach to God because of unworthiness, is a conclusion of the devil's making. God saith, Come, though unworthy; by this temptation, the devil takes many off from coming to the Lord's table. O (saith he) this is a solemn ordinance, and requires much holiness; how darest thou so unworthily come, lest thou eat and drink unworthily? Thus, as Saul kept the people from eating honey, so the devil by this temptation, fears many from this ordinance which is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.

2. Satan endeavours to discourage from duty, by objecting want of success. When men have waited upon God in the use of ordinances, and yet find not that comfort they desire: now Satan disheartens them, and puts them upon resolves of declining all religion; they begin to say as that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. 'Why should I wait on the Lord any longer?' When Saul saw God answered him not by dreams and visions, Satan tempted him to leave God's worship, and seek to the witch of Endor, 1 Sam. xviii. 6. No answer of prayer comes, therefore, saith Satan, leave off praying: who will sow seed where no crop comes up? Thus the devil would, by his subtil logic, dispute a poor soul out of duty. But if he sees he cannot prevail this way, to take men off from the use of means, then he labours,

*Secondly*, To make them miscarry in the use of means. By

this artifice he prevails over multitudes of professors. The devil stands as he did at Joshua's right-hand, to resist men, Zech. iii. 2. If he can't hinder them from duty, he will be sure to hinder them in duty, two ways.

1<sup>st</sup>, By causing distraction in the service of God ; and this he doth by proposing objects of vanity, or by whispering in men's ears, that they can scarce mind what they are doing.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Satan hinders, by putting men upon doing duties in a wrong manner. 1. In a dead formal manner, that so they may fail of the success. Satan knows duties done superficially were as good to be left undone. That prayer which doth not pierce the heart, will never pierce heaven. 2. He puts them upon doing duties for wrong ends. *Finis specificat actionem* ; he will make them look a-squint, and have by-ends in duty, Matth. vi. 5. ' Be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Prayer is good, but to pray to be seen of men, this was the dead fly in the box of ointment ; the oil of vain-glory feeds their lamp : sinister aims corrupt and fly-blow our holy things. Here is Satan's policy, either to prevent duty, or pervert it ; either to take men off from the use of means, or make them miscarry in the use of means.

9. *Subtily*. Satan can colour over sin with the name and pretence of virtue. Alcibiades hung a curtain curiously embroidered over a foul picture or satyrs ; so Satan can put the image of virtue over the foul picture of sin. Satan can cheat men with false wares ; he can make them believe, that presumption is faith, that intemperate passion is zeal, revenge is prudence, covetousness is frugality, and prodigality good hospitality. ' Come, see my zeal for the Lord,' saith Jehu. Satan persuaded him it was a fire from heaven, when it was nothing but the wild-fire of his own ambition ; it was not zeal but state-policy. This is a subtle art of Satan, to deceive by tempting, and put men off with the dead child, instead of the live child ; to make men believe that is a grace, which is a sin ; as if one should write balm-water upon a glass of poison. If Satan hath all these subtil artifices in tempting, are we not in great danger from this prince of the air ? and had we not need often pray, ' Lord, suffer us not to be led into temptation ? As the serpent beguiled Eve with his subtily, 2 Cor. xi. 2. let us not be beguiled by the snares and policies of this hellish Machiavel.

Satan hath a dexterity in subtle contrivances ; he doth more hurt as a fox, than a lion ; his snares are worse than his darts, 2 Cor. ii. 11. ' We are not ignorant of his devices.'

10. The next *subtily* of Satan is, he labours to ensnare us

by lawful things, *in licitis perimus omnes* ; more are hurt by lawful things, than unlawful, as more are killed with wine than poison : gross sins affright, but how many take a surfeit and die, in using lawful things inordinately ? Recreation is lawful ; eating and drinking are lawful, but many offend by excess, and their table is a snare. Relations are lawful, but how oft doth Satan tempt to over-love ? how oft is the wife and child laid in God's room ? excess makes things lawful become sinful.

11. *Subtily* of Satan is, to make the duties of our general and particular calling hinder and juggle out one another. Our general calling is serving God, our particular calling is minding our employments in the world. It is wisdom to be regular in both these, when the particular calling doth not eat out the time for God's service, nor the service of God hinder diligence in a calling. The devil's art is to make Christians defective in one of these two : some spend all their time in hearing, reading, and under a pretence of living by faith, do not live in a calling ; others Satan takes off duties of religion, under a pretence that they must provide for their families ; he makes them so careful for their bodies that they quite neglect their souls. This is the subtily of the old serpent, to make men negligent in the duties either of the first table or the second.

12. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to misrepresent true holiness, that he may make others out of love with it. He paints the face of religion full of scars, and with seeming blemishes, that he may create in the minds of men prejudice against it. Satan represents religion as the most melancholy thing, and that he who embraceth it, must banish all joy out of his diocels ; though the apostle saith, ' Joy in believing,' Rom. xv. 13. Satan suggests that religion exposeth men to danger ; he shews them the cross, but hides the crown from them : he labours to put all the disgrace he can upon holiness, that he may tempt men to the renouncing of it. Satan abuseth the good Christian, and gives him a wrong name ; the truly zealous man, Satan calls hot-headed and factious : the patient man, that bears injuries without revenge, Satan represents him as a coward ; the humble man is low-spirited ; the heavenly man Satan calls fool, he lets go things that are seen, for things that are not seen ; thus the devil misrepresents religion to the world. As John Huss, that holy man, was painted with red devils ; so Satan paints holiness with as deformed, mishapen a face as he can, that he may by this temptation, draw men off from solid piety, and make them rather scorn than embrace it. The hand of Joab is in this : Satan is tempting persons to atheism, to cast off all religion.

13. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to draw men off from

the love of the truth to embrace error, 2 Theff. ii. 11. ' That they should believe a lie.' Satan is called, in scripture, not only an unclean spirit, but a lying spirit. As an unclean spirit, so he labours to defile the soul with lust; and as a lying spirit so he labours to corrupt the mind with error: and indeed this is dangerous, because many errors do look so like the truth, as alchymy represents true gold. Satan thus beguiles souls. Though the scripture blames heretics for being the promoters of error; yet it chargeth Satan with being the chief contriver of it. They spread the error, but the devil is a lying spirit in their mouths. This is Satan's great temptation: he makes men believe such are glorious truths, which are dangerous impostures; thus he transforms himself ' into an angel of light.' What is the meaning of Satan's sowing tares in the parable, Mat. xiii. 25. but Satan's sowing error instead of truth? How quickly had the devil broached false doctrine in the apostles' times, That it was necessary to be circumcised, Acts xv. 1. that angel-worship was lawful, and that Christ was not yet come in the flesh? 1 John iv. 3. Now the devil tempts by drawing men to error, because he knows how deadly his snare is, and the great mischief error will do when it comes. 1. Error is of a spreading nature; it is compared to leaven, because it sours, Mat. xvi. 11. and to gangrene, because it spreads, 2 Tim. ii. 17. (1.) One error spreads into more like a circle in the water, that multiplies into more circles; one error seldom goes alone. (2.) Error spreads from one person to another; It is like the plague, which infects all round about. Satan, by infecting one person with error, infects more: the error of Pelagius did spread on a sudden to Palestine, Africa, Italy: the Arian error was at first but a single spark, but at last it set almost all the world on fire. 2. The devil lays this snare of error, because error brings divisions into the church; and divisions bring an opprobrium and scandal upon the ways of God. The devil danceth at discord: division destroys peace which was Christ's legacy: and love, which is the bond of perfection. Not only Christ's coat hath been rent, but his body, by the divisions which error hath caused. In churches or families where error creeps in, what animosities and factions doth it make? it sets the father against the son, and the son against the father. What slaughters and bloodsheds have been occasioned by errors broached in the church? 3. The devil's policy in raising errors, is to hinder reformation; the devil was never a friend to reformation. In the primitive times, after the apostles' days, the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, Rev. xii. 15. Which was a deluge of heresies, that so he might hinder the progress of the gospel. 4. Satan tempts to error, because error devours godliness. The Gnostics, as Epiphanius observes, were not only corrupted in

their judgments, but in their morals; they were loose in their lives, Jude 4. 'Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' The Familists afterwards turned ranters, and gave themselves over to vices and immoralities; and this they did, boasting of the spirit and perfection. 5. The devil's design in seducing by error, is, he knows error is pernicious to souls. Error damns, as well as vice; poison kills as well as pistol. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 'They shall privily bring in damnable heresies.' Now, if Satan be thus subtil in laying snares of error to deceive, had not we need pray that God would not suffer us to be led into temptation; that he would make us wise to keep out of the snares of error, or, if we have fallen into it, that he would give us to recover out of the snare by repentance?

14. Another *subtlety* of Satan is, to bewitch and ensnare men, by setting pleasing baits before them; the riches, pleasures, honours of the world, Mat. iv. 9. 'All this will I give thee.' How many doth Satan tempt with this golden apple? Pride, idleness, luxury, are the three worms which breed of plenty, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.' Satan kills with these silver darts: how many surfeit on luscious delights? The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down mens' souls. His policy is to tickle them to death, to damn them with delights. The flesh would fain be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation; he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure, such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares. We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be 'led into temptation.' We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity, as a man hath to be careful at a feast, where there are some poisoned dishes of meat.

15. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to plead necessity. Satan's policy in tempting men under a plea of necessity is this, he knows that necessity may in some cases seem to palliate and excuse a sin. It may seem to make a lesser evil good to avoid a greater, as Lot offered to expose his daughters to the Sodomites, and was willing that they should defile them, that he might preserve the angel strangers that were come into his house, Gen. xix. 8. Doubtless Satan had a hand in this temptation, and made Lot believe that the necessity of this action would excuse the sin. The tradesman pleads a necessity of unlawful gain, else he cannot live; another pleads a necessity of revenge, else his credit would be impaired: thus Satan tempts men to sin, by telling them of the necessity. Nay, the devil will quote scripture for it, that in some cases extraordinary, there may be a necessity of doing that which is not justifiable: did not David, in case of necessity, 'eat the shew bread, which was not lawful

for him, but only the priests?' Mat. xii. 4. Nor do we read he was blamed; then will Satan say, why may not you in cases extraordinary trespass a little, and take the forbidden fruit? O beware of this temptation, see Satan's cloven foot in it: nothing can warrant a thing in its own nature sinful; necessity will not justify impiety.

16. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to draw men to presumption. Presumption is a confidence without ground: it is made up of two ingredients, audacity and security; this temptation is common. There is a twofold presumption: (1.) Satan tempts men to presume of their own hearts, that they are better than they are; they presume they have grace, when they have none, they will not take gold on trust, but they will take grace upon trust; the foolish virgins presumed that they had oil in their vessels when they had none. Here that rule of Epicharmus is good, "distrust a fallacious heart." (2.) Satan tempts men to presume of God's mercy: though they are not so good as they should be, yet God is merciful. They look upon God's mercy with the broad spectacles of presumption. Satan soothes men up in their sins; he preacheth to them "all hope, no fear;" and so he deludes them with these golden dreams. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendant ad inferos*, Aug. Presumption is Satan's draw-net, by which he drags millions to hell: Satan by this temptation, oft draws the godly to sin; they presume upon their privileges, or graces, and so venture on occasions of sin. Jehoshaphat twisted into a league of amity with king Ahab, presuming his grace would be antidote strong enough against the infection, 2 Chron. xviii. 3. Satan tempted Peter to presume upon his own strength: and when it came to a trial, he was foiled, and came off with shame. We had therefore need pray, 'that we may not be led into this temptation;' and with David, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins,' Psal. xix. 13.

17. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting is, to carry on his designs against us under the highest pretences of friendship: he thus puts silver upon his bait, and dips his poisoned pills in sugar. Satan doth, as some courtiers, make the greatest pretences of love, where they have the most deadly hatred. Joab's sword was ushered in with a kiss; 'He kissed Abner, and then smote him under the fifth rib.' Satan puts off his lion's skin, and comes in sheep's cloathing: he pretends kindness and friendship: he would consult what might be for our good. Thus Satan came to Christ, 'Command that these stones be made bread,' Matth. iv. As if he had said to Christ, I see thou art hungry, and there is no table spread for thee in the wilderness; I therefore, pitying thy condition, wish thee to get something to eat, turn stones to bread, that thy hunger may be satisfied;

but Christ spied the temptation, and with the sword of the Spirit wounded the old serpent. Thus Satan came to Eve, and tempted her under the notion of a friend; eat, saith he, of the forbidden fruit; for the Lord knows, that 'in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods.' as if he had said, I persuade you only to that which will put you into a better condition than now you are; eat of this tree, and it will make you omniscient, 'ye shall be as gods.' What a kind devil was here? But it was a subtil temptation, she greedily swallowing the bait, it undid her and all her posterity. Let us fear his fallacious flatteries. *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.*

18. *Subtily* is, when Satan hath tempted men to sin, he persuades them to keep his counsel: like them that have some foul disease, they will rather die than tell the physician. It were wisdom, in case of sore temptation, to open one's mind to some experienced Christian, whose counsel might be an antidote against the temptation: but the danger of a temptation lies in the concealing of it; it is like the concealing of temptation, which may prove mortal. How had we need renew this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation?'

19. *Subtily* of Satan in tempting is, to make use of fit tools and engines, for the carrying on of his work; that is, he makes use of such persons as may be likely means to promote his tempting designs. The devil lays the plot of a temptation, and as it were cuts out the work, and then he employs others to finish it.

(1.) Satan makes use of such as are in places of dignity. Men of renown, he knows, if he can get these on his side, they may draw others into snares: when the princes and heads of the tribes joined with Korah, they presently drew a multitude into the conspiracy, Numb. xvi. 2, 10.

(2.) The Devil makes use of such to carry on his tempting designs, as are men of wit and parts; such as, if it were possible, should deceive the very elect. He must have a great deal of cunning that shall persuade a man to be out of love with his food: the devil can make use of such heretical spirits as shall persuade men to be out of love with the ordinances of God, which they profess they have found comfort in. Many who once seemed to be strick frequentors of the house of God, are now persuaded, by Satan's cunning instruments, to leave off all, and follow an *ignus fatuus*, the light within them. This is a great subtilty of the devil, to make use of such cunning, subtlety-pated men, as may be fit to carry on his tempting designs.

(3.) Satan makes use of bad company to be instruments of tempting; they draw youth to sin. First they persuade them to come into their company, then to twist into a cord of friend-

ship, then to drink with them ; and, by degrees, debauch them. These are the devil's decoys, to tempt others.

20. *Subtlety* of Satan is, he in his temptation, strikes at some grace more than others : as in tempting, he aims at some persons more than others ; so he aims at some grace more than others ; and if he can prevail in this, he knows what an advantage it will be to him. If you ask what grace it is that Satan in his temptations doth most strike at ? I answer, it is the grace of faith : he lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of our faith, *Fidei scutum percutit*. Why did Christ pray more for Peter's faith, than any other grace ? Luke xxii. 32. Because Christ saw that his faith was most in danger, the devil was striking at this grace. Satan, in tempting Eve, did labour to weaken her faith, Gen. iii. 1. ' Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ?' The devil would persuade her, that God had not spoken truth ; and when he had once wrought her to distrust, then she took of the tree. 'Tis called *scutum fidei*, ' the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16. Satan in tempting, strikes most at our shield, he assaults our faith. True faith, though it cannot be wholly lost, yet it may suffer a great eclipse ; though the devil cannot by temptation take away the life of faith, yet he may the lively acting ; he cannot *gratiam diruere*, but he may *debilitare*.

Qu. *But why doth Satan in tempting chiefly set upon our faith ?* Ans. 1 Kings. xxii. 31. ' Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.' So faith is as it were the king of the graces : it is a royal princely grace, and puts forth the most majestic and noble acts, therefore Satan fights chiefly with this kingly grace. I shall shew you the devil's policy in assaulting faith most.

1<sup>st</sup>, Because this is the grace doth Satan most mischief ; it makes the most resistance against him, 1 Pet. v. 9. ' Whom resist, steadfast in faith.' No grace doth more bruise the serpent's head than faith. Faith is both a shield and a sword, defensive and offensive. (1.) It is a shield : a shield guards the head, defends the vitals ; the shield of faith causeth that the fiery darts of temptation do not pierce us through. (2.) Faith is a sword, it wounds the red dragon.

Qu. *How comes faith to be so strong, that it can resist Satan, and put him to flight ?*

Ans. 1. Because faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul ; Samson's strength lay in his hair, ours lies in Christ. If a child be assaulted, it runs and calls to its father for help ; so, when faith is assaulted, it runs and calls Christ, and in his strength overcomes.

2. Faith furnishes itself with store of promises ; the promises are faith's weapons to fight with. Now, as David by five stones

in his sling, wounded Goliath, 2 Sam. xvii. 40. so faith puts the promises, as stones, into its sling, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5. 'He will not break the bruised reed,' Matth. xii. 20. 'He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet,' Rom. xvi. 20. 'None shall pluck you out of my Father's hands,' John x. 29. Here are five promises, like five stones, put in the sling of faith, and with these a believer wounds the red dragon. Now faith being such a grace, that doth so resist and wound Satan, he will watch his opportunity that he may batter our shield, though he cannot break it.

*2dly*, Satan strikes most at our faith, and would weaken and destroy it, because faith hath a great influence upon all the other graces; faith sets all the graces a-work. Like some rich clothier, that gives out a stock of wool to the poor, and sets them all a-spinning; so faith gives out a stock to all the other graces, and sets them a-working. Faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith which worketh by love.' When once the soul believes God's love, this kindles love to God.

The believing martyrs burned hotter in love than in fire. Faith sets repentance a-work. When the soul believes there is mercy to be had, and that this mercy is for him, this sets the eyes a-weeping, O, faith the soul, that ever I should offend such a gracious God! Repenting tears drop from the eye of faith, Mark ix. 23. 'The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe.' Faith sets his eyes abroad with tears; therefore the devil hath most spite at faith, and by his temptations would undermine it, because it is such an operative grace, it sets all the other graces on work. If the devil cannot destroy our faith, yet if he can disturb it, if he can hinder and stop the actings of faith, he knows all the other graces will be lame and unactive. If the spring in a watch be stopped, it will hinder the motion of the wheels: if faith be down, all the other graces are at a stand.

21. Subtlety of Satan in tempting, is, in broaching those doctrines that are flesh-pleasing. Satan knows the flesh loves to be gratified, it cries out for ease and liberty; it will not endure any yoke, unless it be lined and made soft. The devil will be sure so to lay his bait of temptation, as to please and humour the flesh. The word faith, 'Strive as in an agony' to enter into glory; crucify the flesh; take the kingdom of heaven by holy violence: now Satan, to enervate and weaken these scriptures, comes with temptations and flatters the flesh; he tells men, there needs no such strictness: why so much zeal and violence? a softer pace will serve? sure there is an easier way to heaven: there needs no breaking the heart for sin: do

but confels to a priest, or tell over a few beads, or say some Ave Marias and this will procure you a pardon, and give you admission into paradise. Or, the devil can go another way to work; if he sees men startle at popery, then he stirs up the flattering Antinomian, and he comes in another disguise, and saith, What needs all this cost? what needs repenting tears? these are legal. What need you be so strict in your obedience? Christ hath done all for you, you may make use of your Christian liberty: this temptation draws many away; it takes them off from strictness of life. He who sells cheapest shall have most customers; the devil knows this is a cheap easy doctrine, which will please the flesh, and he doth not doubt but he shall have customers enough.

-22. *Subtlety* of Satan in tempting, is, in reference to holy duties. His policy is either to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty.

I. To hinder from duty, as 1 Theff. ii. 18. 'I would have come once and again, but Satan hindered me.' So many duties of religion had been performed, but Satan hindered. The hand of Joab is in this. There are three duties which the devil is an enemy to, and labours to keep us from.

1. *Meditation*. He will let men profess, or pray and hear in a formal manner; this doth him no hurt, nor them no good; but he doth oppose meditation, as being a means to compose the heart and make it serious. Satan can stand your small shot, if you do not put in this bullet: he cares not how much you hear, nor how little you meditate. Meditation is a chewing of the cud, it makes the word digest, and turn to nourishment; meditation is the bellows of the affections; the devil is an enemy to this. When Christ was alone in the wilderness, giving himself to divine contemplations, then the devil comes and tempts him, to hinder him. He will thrust in worldly business, something or other to keep men off from holy meditation.

2. *Duty*, which Satan, by tempting, would keep us from, is mortification. This is as needful as heaven, Col. iii. 5. 'Mortify your members which are upon earth, uncleanness, inordinate affection.' Satan will let men be angry with sin, exchange sin, restrain sin, which is keeping sin prisoner, that it doth not break out; but when it comes to the taking away the life of sin, Satan labours to stop the warrant, and hinder the execution. When sin is mortifying, Satan is crucifying.

3. *Self-examination*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine yourselves:' a metaphor from metal, that is pierced through, to see if it be gold within. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition set up in one's soul: a man must search his heart for sin, as one would search a house for a traitor: or, as Israel sought for heaven to

burn it. Satan, if it be possible, will by his temptations, keep men from this duty ; he useth a great deal of subtilty.

(1.) Here, first he tells them their estate is good, and what need they put themselves to the trouble of examination ? Though men will not take their money on trust, but will examine it by the touch-stone, yet Satan persuades them to take their grace on trust. The devil persuaded the foolish virgins, they had oil in their lamps.

(2.) Satan hath another policy, he will shew men the faults of others, to keep them from searching their own : see what a proud covetous man goes there. He will allow them spectacles to see what is amiss in others, but not a looking-glass to behold their own faces, and see what is amiss in themselves.

II. Satan's policy is to discourage us in duty. When one hath been about the performing of holy duties, then the devil stands up and tells him, he hath played the hypocrite ; he hath served God for a livre : he hath had sinister ends : his duties have been full of distraction ; they have been fly-blown with pride : he hath offered the blind and lame, and can he expect a reward from God ? Satan tells a Christian, he hath increased his sin by prayer ; and, by this temptation, he would make a child of God quite out of conceit with his duties, he knows not whether he had best pray or not.

III. Or *thirdly*, If this plot will not take, Satan labours by temptation to put a Christian on too far in duty : if he cannot keep a child of God from duty, he will run him on too far in it. For instance, humiliation and mourning for sin is a duty, but Satan will put one on too far in it ; thou art not (saith he) humbled enough ; and indeed Satan never thinks a man is humbled enough, till he despair. He would make a Christian wade so far in the waters of repentance, that he should wade beyond his depth, and be drowned in the gulph of despair. Satan comes thus to the soul, Thy sins have been great, and thy sorrow should be proportionable to thy sins. But is it so ? canst thou say thou hast been as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner ? thou didst for many years drive no other trade but sin, and is a drop of sorrow enough for a sea of sin ? No ; thy soul must be more humbled, and lie sleeping longer in the brinish waters of repentance. Satan would have a Christian weep himself blind, and in desperate mood throw away the anchor of hope. Now, lest any here be troubled with this temptation, let me say this, this is a mere fallacy of Satan : for sorrow proportionable to sin is not attainable in this life, nor doth God expect it. It is sufficient for thee (Christian) if thou hast a gospel-sorrow ; if thou grievest so far as to see sin hateful, and Christ precious : if thou grievest so as to break off iniquity ; if thy remembrance end in divorce, this is to be humbled enough. Then the gold

hath lain long enough in the fire, when the dross is purged out? then a Christian hath lain long enough in humiliation, when the love of sin is purged out; this is to be humbled enough to divine acceptance. God, for Christ's sake, will accept of this sorrow for sin; therefore let not Satan's temptations drive to despair. You see how subtil an enemy he is, to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty, that he may run them upon the rock of despair. Had we not then need (having such a subtil enemy) pray 'Lord, lead us not into temptation?' As the serpent beguiled Eve, let us not be beguiled by this hellish Machiavel.

23. *Subtility* of Satan in tempting to the act of sin, is the hopes of returning out of it by speedy repentance. But this is a fallacy: it is easy for the bird to fly into the snare, but it is not easy to get out of the snare. Is it so facile a thing to repent? are there no pangs in the new birth? is it easy to leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? how many has Satan flattered into hell by this policy, that if they sin, they may recover themselves by repentance? Alas! is repentance in our power? a spring-lock can shut of itself, but it cannot open without a key: we can shut of ourselves to God, but we cannot open by repentance, till God open our heart, who hath the key of David in his hand.

24. *Subtility* of Satan in tempting, is, to put us upon doing that which is good unseasonably.

(1.) To mourn for sin is a duty; the sacrifices of God are a broken heart, Psalm li. 17. But yet there is a time when it may not be so seasonable: after some eminent deliverance, which calls for rejoicing, now to have the spirits dyed of a sad colour, and to sit weeping, is not seasonable. There was a special time at the feast of tabernacles, when God called his people to cheerfulness, Deut. xvi. 15. 'Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast to the Lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice.' Now, if at this time, the Israelites had hung their harps upon the willows, and been disconsolate, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding. When God by his providence calls us to thanksgiving, and we sit drooping, and, with Rachel, refuse to be comforted, this is very evil, and favours of ingratitude. This is Satan's temptation; the hand of Joab is in this.

(2.) To rejoice is a duty, Psalm xxxiii. 1. 'Praise is comely for the upright.' But when God, by his judgments, calls us to weeping, now joy and mirth are unseasonable, Isa. xxii. 19. 'In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness.'

Oecolampadius, and other learned writers, think it was in the time of king Ahaz, when the signs of God's anger, like a

blazing star, did appear : now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable.

3. To read the word is a duty, but Satan will sometimes put men upon it when it is unseasonable. To read it at home when God's word is preaching, or the sacrament administering, is unseasonable, yea sinful, as Hushai said, 2 Sam. xvii. 7. 'The counsel is not good at this time.' There was a set time enjoined for the passover, when the Jews were to bring their offering to the Lord, Numb ix. 2. Had the people been reading the law at home in the time of the passover, it had not been in season, and God would have punished it for a contempt. This is the devil's subtil temptation, either to keep us from duty, or to put us upon it, when it is least in season. Duties of religion not well timed, and done in season, are dangerous. Snow and hail are good for the ground when they come in their season; but in harvest; when the corn is ripe, then a storm of hail would do hurt.

25. *Subtilty* of Satan in tempting, is, to persuade men to delay their repenting and turning to God. He saith, as Hag. i. 2. 'The time is not yet come.' Now youth is budding, or you are but in the flower of your age, it is too soon to repent, 'The time is not not yet come.' This temptation is the devil's draw-net, by which he draws millions to hell: it is a dangerous temptation. Sin is *dulce venenum*, Bern. a poison; the longer poison lies in the body, the more mortal: by delay of repentance, sin strengthens, and the heart hardens. The longer ice freezeth, the harder it is to be broken: The longer a man freezeth in impenitency, the more difficult it will be to have his heart broken. When sin hath gotten a haunt, it is not easy shaken off. Besides, the danger of this temptation to delay repentance, appears in this, because life is hazardous, and may on a sudden expire. What security have you that you shall live another day? Life is made up of a few flying minutes; it is a taper soon blown out, Jam. iv. 14. 'What is your life it is but a vapour.' The body is like a vessel, tuned with a little breath; sickness broacheth this vessel, death draws it out: how dangerous therefore is this temptation, to procrastinate and put off turning to God by repentance! Many now in hell did propose to repent, but death surprized them.

26. *Subtilty* of Satan in tempting is, to infringe and weaken the saint's peace. If he cannot destroy their grace, he will disturb their peace. Satan envies a Christian should have a good day; and if he cannot keep them from heaven, he will keep them from an heaven upon earth. There is nothing (next to holiness) a Christian prizeth more, than peace and tranquility of mind: this is the cream of life, a bunch of grapes by the way. Now, it is Satan's great policy to shake a Christian's

peace ; that, if he will go to heaven, he shall go thither through frights and plenty of tears. The devil throws in his fire-balls of temptation, to set the faints' peace on fire. Of such great concern is spiritual peace, that no wonder if Satan would by his intricate subtilties, rob us of this jewel.

Spiritual peace is a token of God's favour. As Joseph had a special testimony of his father's kindness in the party-coloured coat he gave him : so have the faints a special token of God's good will to them, when he gives them inward peace, which is, as it were, the party-coloured coat to wear. No wonder then, if Satan so much rage against the faints' peace, and would tear off this comfortable robe from them.

The devil troubles the waters of the faints' peace, because hereby he hopes to have the more advantage of them.

(1.) By this perplexing of their spirits. Satan takes off their chariot wheels ; unsfits them for the service of God : body and mind are both out of temper, like an instrument out of tune. Sadness of spirit prevailing, a Christian can think of nothing but his troubles ; his mind is full of doubts, fears, surmises, so that he is like a person distracted and he is scarce himself ; either he neglects the duties of religion, or his mind is taken off from them while he is doing them. Especially there is one duty that melancholy and sadness of spirit unsfits for, and that is thankfulness. Thankfulness is a tribute or quit-rent due to God, Pf. cxlix. 3. ' Let the faints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouth.' But when Satan hath disturbed a Christian's spirit, and filled his mind full of black, and almost despairing thoughts, how can he be thankful ? It rejoiceth Satan to see how his plot takes : by making God's children unquiet, he makes them unthankful,

(2.) Satan, by troubling the faints' peace, hath this advantage of laying a stumbling-block in the way of others ; by this policy, the devil gets an occasion to render the ways of God unlovely to those who are looking heaven-ward. He sets before new beginners, the perplexing thoughts, the tears, the groans of them who are wounded in spirit, to scar them quite off from all seriousness in religion. He will object to new beginners. Do you not see how these sad souls torture themselves with melancholy thoughts, and will you change the comforts and pleasures of this life to sit always in the house of mourning ? will you espouse that religion, which makes you a terror to yourselves, and a burden to others ? can you be in love with such a religion, as is ready to fright you out of your wits ? This advantage the devil gets by troubling the faints' peace, he would discourage others who are looking towards heaven ; he would beat them off from prayer, and hearing all soul-awakening ser-

mons, lest they fall into this black humour of melancholy, and end their days in despair.

(3.) By this subtil policy of Satan, in disturbing the faints' peace, and making them believe God doth not love them, he hath his advantage, he sometimes so far prevails over them, as to make them begin to entertain hard thoughts of God. Through the black spectacles of melancholy, God's dealings look sad and ghastly. Satan tempts the godly to have strange thoughts of God; to think he hath cast off all pity, and hath forgotten to be gracious, Pf. lxxvii. and to make sad conclusions, Isa. xxxviii. 13. 'I reckoned, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day, even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.' The devil setting in with melancholy, causeth a sad eclipse in the soul; it begins to think God hath shut up the springs of mercy, and there is no hope. Hereupon Satan getteth further advantage of a troubled spirit; sometimes he puts the troubled soul upon sinful wishes and execrations against itself; Job, in disemper of mind, cursed his birth-day, Job iii. 3. Job, though he did not curse his God, yet he cursed his birth-day. Thus you see what advantages the devil gets by raising storms, and troubling the faints' peace; and let me tell you, if the devil is capable of any delight, it is to see the faints' disquiets; their groans are his music; 'tis a sport to him to see them torture themselves upon the rack of melancholy, and almost drown themselves in tears. When the godly have unjust surmises of God, question his love, deny the work of grace, and fall to wishing they had never been born; now Satan is ready to clap his hands, and shout for a victory.

Having shewn you the advantages the devil gets by this temptation of disturbing the faints' peace, I shall answer a question. *By what arts and methods doth Satan, in tempting, disturb the faints' peace?*

*Ans.* (1.) Satan slyly conveys evil thoughts, and then makes a Christian believe they come from his own heart. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack, but it was of Joseph's putting in; so a child of God oft finds atheistical, blasphemous thoughts in his mind, but Satan hath cast them in. The devil doth, as some, lay their children at another's door; so Satan lays his temptations at our door, fathers them upon us, and then we trouble ourselves about them, and nurse them, as if they were our own.

(2.) Satan disturbs the faints' peace, by drawing forth their sins in the most black colours, to affright them, and make them ready to give up the Ghost. Satan is called the accuser of the brethren; not only because he accuseth them to God, but accuseth them to themselves; he tells them, they are guilty of such sins, and they are hypocrites; whereas the sins of a be-

liever shew only that grace is not perfect, not that he hath no grace. When Satan comes with this temptation, shew him that scripture, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.'

27. *Subtily* of Satan is, by plausible arguments, to tempt men to be *felo de se*, to make away themselves. This temptation doth not only cross the current of scripture, but is abhorrent to nature to be one's own executioner: yet such cunning artifices doth Satan, that he persuades many to lay violent hands upon themselves, which the bills of mortality witness. (1.) He tempts some to do this in terror of conscience, telling them, All the hell they shall have is in their conscience, and death will give them present ease. (2.) He tempts others to make away themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God. (3.) Others he tempts to make away themselves that they may presently arrive at happiness; he tells them, the best of the saints desire heaven, and the sooner they are there the better.

Austin speaks of Cleombratas, who hearing Plato read a lecture of the immortality of the soul, and the joys of the other world, *se in praet cipitum dejecit*; threw himself down a steep precipice, or rock, and killed himself. This is Satan's plot; but we must not break prison, by laying violent hands upon ourselves, but stay till God send and open the door. Let us pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Still bear in mind that scripture, Exod. xx. 13. 'Thou shalt not kill.' *Clamitat in caelum vox sanguinis*—If we may not kill another, much less ourselves; and take heed of discontent, which often opens the door to self-murder.

Thus I have shewn you twenty-seven subtilties of Satan in tempting, so that you may the better know them, and avoid them.

There is a story of a Jew that should have poisoned Luther; but a friend sent to Luther the picture of this Jew, warning him to take heed of such a man, when he saw him; by which means he knew the murderer, and escaped his hands. I have told you the subtil devices of Satan in tempting; I have shewn you (as it were) the picture of him that would murder you: I beseech you, being forewarned, take heed of the murderer.

1st, *Use*. From this subtilty of Satan in tempting, let me draw two inferences.

1. It may administer matter of wonder to us how any soul is saved. How may we admire, that Satan, this Abaddon, or angel of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 11. this Apollyon, this soul-devourer, doth not ruin all mankind! What a wonder is it that some are preserved, that neither Satan's hidden snares prevail, nor his fiery darts; that neither the head of the serpent, nor the paw of the lion destroys them? Sure it will be matter

of admiration to the faints, when they come to heaven, to think how strangely they came thither; that, notwithstanding all the force and fraud, the power and policy of hell, yet they should arrive safe at the heavenly port: this is through the safe conduct of Christ, the captain of our salvation; Michael is too hard for the dragon.

2. Is Satan so subtil? See then what need we have to pray to God for wisdom to discern the snares of Satan and strength to resist them: we cannot of ourselves stand against temptation; if we could, this prayer were needless, 'lead us not,' &c. Let us not think we can be too cunning for the devil, we can escape his wiles and darts. If David and Peter, who were 'pillars in God's temple,' fell by temptation, how soon should such weak reeds as we be blown down, did God leave us. Take Christ's advice, Mat. xxvi. 41. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'

Inference 3. See what the end of all Satan's subtilties in tempting is, he is a tempter, that he may be an accuser. He lays the plot, enticeth men to sin, and then brings in the indictment; as if one should make another drunk, and then complain of him to the magistrate for being drunk. The devil is first a tempter, and then an informer; first a liar, and then a murderer.

Having shewn you the subtilties of Satan in tempting, I shall answer two questions;

Qu. 1. *Why doth God suffer his saints to be so hurried and buffeted by Satan's temptations?*

Ans. The Lord doth it for many wise and holy ends.

(1.) He lets them be tempted to try them. The Hebrew word *nissa* in *pyhil*, signifies both to tempt and to try; temptation is a touchstone, to try what is in the heart; the devil tempts that he may deceive, but God lets us be tempted to try us. *Qui non tentatur non probatur*, Aug.

1. Hereby God tries our sincerity. Job's sincerity was tried by temptation; the devil told God that Job was an hypocrite, and served God only for a livery; but, saith he, 'touch him, (that is, let me tempt him) and then see if he will not curse thee to thy face?' Job i. 11. Well God did let the devil touch him by a temptation, yet Job remains holy, he worships God, and blesteth God, ver. 20, 21. Here Job's sincerity was proved; Job had fiery temptations, but he came out of the fire a golden Christian. 'Temptation is a touchstone of sincerity.'

2. By temptation God tries our love. The wife of Tigranes did never so shew her chastity and love to her husband, as when she was tempted by Cyrus, but did not yield; so, our love to God is seen in this, when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it; though the devil come as a serpent

subtilly, and offers a golden apple, yet we will not touch the forbidden fruit. When the devil shewed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, such was Christ's love to his Father, that he abhorred the temptation. True love will not be bribed. When the devil's darts are most fiery, a saint's love to God is most fervent.

3. By temptation, God tries our courage, Hof. vii. 11. 'Ephraim is a silly dove without an heart.' So it may be said of many, they are *ex corde*, without an heart; they have no heart to resist a temptation; no sooner doth Satan come with his sollicitations, but they yield; like a coward, as soon as the thief approacheth, he delivers his purse; but he is a valorous Christian, that brandisheth the sword of the Spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The courage of the Romans was never more seen than when they were assaulted by the Carthaginians; the heroic spirit of a saint is never more seen than in a field-battle, when he is fighting with the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. *Fidei robor potest esse concussum, non excussum*, Tertul. This is one reason why God lets his people be tempted, that their metal may be tried, their sincerity, love, magnanimity; when grace is proved, the gospel is honoured.

2. God suffers his children to be tempted, that he may be kept from pride. *Quos non gula superavit*, Cypr. Pride crept once into the angels, and into the apostles, when they disputed 'which of them should be greatest;' and in Peter, 'though all men forsake thee, yet I will not,' as if he had had more grace than all the apostles. Pride keeps grace low, that it cannot thrive; as the spleen swells, so the other parts of the body consume; as pride grows, so grace consumes. God resists pride, and, that he may keep his children humble, he suffers them sometimes to fall into temptation, 2 Cor. xii. 7. 'Left I should be exalted, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me:' when Paul was lifted up in revelations, he was in danger to be lifted up in pride: now came the messenger of Satan to buffet him; that was some sore temptation to humble him. The thorn in the flesh was to prick the bladder of pride; better is that temptation that humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud. Rather than a Christian should be proud, God lets him fall into the devil's hands a while, that he may be cured of his imposthume.

(3.) God lets his people be tempted, that they may be fitter to comfort others, who are in the same distress: they can speak a word in due season to such as are weary. St. Paul was trained up in the fencing-school of temptation, 2 Cor. ii. 11. And he was able to acquaint others with Satan's wiles and stratagems. A man that hath rid over a place where there are quick-sands,

is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way; he who hath been buffeted by Satan, and hath felt the claws of this roaring lion, is the fittest man to deal with one that is tempted.

(4.) God lets his children be tempted, to make them long more for heaven, where they shall be out of gun shot; there they shall be freed from the hissing of the old serpent. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he doth vex and molest the faints; he lays his snares, throws his fire-balls, but this is only to make the people of God long to be gone from hence, and that they may pray that they had 'the wings of a dove,' to fly away beyond Satan's temptations. God suffered Israel to be vexed with the Egyptians, that they might long the more to be in Canaan. Heaven is the *centrum*, a place of rest, *centrum quietativium*; no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle that soars aloft in the air, and sits perching upon the tops of high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of serpents: so, when believers are gotten above into the empyrean heaven, they shall not be stung with the old serpent. The devil is cast out of the heavenly paradise. Heaven is compared to an exceeding high mountain, Rev. xxi. 10. It is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot reach up to it. *Nullus ibi hostium metus, nullæ insidiæ demonum*, Bern.

The temptations here are to make the faints long till death found a retreat, and call them off the field where the bullets of temptation fly so thick, that they may receive a victorious crown. Thus I have answered this question, why God lets his dear servants be tempted.

Qu. 2. *What rocks of support are there, or what comfort for tempted souls?*

Ans. 1<sup>st</sup>, That it is not our case alone, but hath been the case of God's eminent faints, 1 Cor. x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you but that which is common to man,' yea, to the best: men, Christ's lambs, which have had the ear-mark of election upon them, have been set upon by the world. Elijah that could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation, 1 Kings xix. 4. Job was tempted to curse God, Peter to deny Christ; hardly ever any faint hath got to heaven, but hath met with a lion by the way: *sortem quam omnes sancti patiuntur nemo recusat*. Nay, Jesus Christ himself, though he was free from sin, yet not from temptation; we read of Christ's baptism, Mat. iii. and Mat. v. 1. 'Then was he led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' No sooner was Christ out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation; and if the devil would set upon Christ, no wonder if he set upon us. There was no sin in Christ, no powder for the devil's fire; temptation to Christ, was like a bur on a crystal-glass, which

glides off ; or like a spark of fire on a marble pillar, which will not stick ; yet Satan was so bold as to tempt Christ. This is some comfort, such as have been our betters, have wrestled with temptations.

2d. Rock of support that may comfort a tempted soul, is, that temptations (where they are burdens) evidence grace. Satan doth not tempt God's children, because they have sin in them, but because they have grace in them. Had they no grace, the devil would not disturb them : where he keeps possession all is in peace, Luke xi. 21. His temptations are to rob the saints of their grace. A thief will not assault an empty house but where he thinks there is treasure ; a pirate will not fit upon an empty ship, but one that is full fraught with spices and jewels ; so the devil most assaults the people of God, because he thinks they have a rich treasure of grace in their hearts, and he would rob them of that. What makes so many cudgels be thrown at a tree, but because there is so much fruit hanging upon it ? The devil throws his temptations at you, because he sees you have so much fruit of grace growing upon you. Though to be tempted is a trouble, yet to think why you are tempted is a comfort.

3d. Rock of support or comfort, is, that Jesus Christ is near at hand, and stands by us in all our temptations. Here take notice of two things.

1. Christ's sympathy in temptation. 2. Christ's succour in temptation.

(1.) Christ's sympathy in our temptations. *Nobis compatitur Christus.*

Heb. iv. 15. ' We have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Jesus Christ doth sympathize with us ; he is so sensible of our temptations, as if he himself lay under them, and did feel them in his own soul. As in music, when one string is touched all the rest sound, so Christ's bowels sound ; we cannot be tempted but he is touched. If you saw a wolf worry your child, would you not pity your child ? You cannot pity it so as Christ doth tempted ones. Christ had a fellow-feeling when he was upon earth, much more now in glory.

Qu. *But how can it stand with Christ's glory now in heaven, to have a fellow-feeling of our miseries and temptations ?*

Ans. This fellow-feeling in Christ ariseth not from an infirmity or passion, but from the mystical union between him and his members, Zech. ii. 8. ' He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.' Every injury done to a saint Christ takes as done to him in heaven ; every temptation is a striking at Christ, and he is touched with the feeling of our temptations.

(2.) Christ's succour in temptation. As the good Samaritan

first had compassion on the wounded man, there was sympathy, then he poured in wine and oil, there was succour, Luke x. 34. So when we are wounded by the red dragon, Christ is first touched with compassion, and then he pours in wine and oil, Heb. ii. 18. 'In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' The Greek word to succour [*baethesai*] signifies to run speedily to one's help; so fierce is Satan, so frail is man, that Christ, who is God-man, runs speedily to his help. When Peter was ready to sink, and said, 'Lord save me,' Christ presently stretched forth his hand, and caught him; so when a poor soul is tempted, and cries to heaven for help, 'Lord save me,' Christ comes in with his auxiliary forces: *noicit Christus*, our Lord Jesus knows what it is to be tempted, therefore he is so ready to succour such as are tempted. It hath been an observation, that child-bearing women are more pitiful to others in their travails, than such women as are barren; so the Lord Jesus having been in travail by temptations and sufferings, is more ready to pity and succour such as are tempted.

Concerning Christ's succouring the tempted, consider two things; (1.) Christ's ability, (2.) His agility to succour.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, Christ's ability to succour, Heb. ii. 18. 'He is able to succour them that are tempted.' Christ is called Michael, Rev. xii. 7. which signifies "Who is like God." Tho' the tempted soul is weak, yet he fights under a good Captain, 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' When a tempted soul fights, Christ comes into the field as his second. Michael would be too hard for the dragon: when the devil lays the siege of a temptation, Christ can raise the siege when he pleases; he can beat through the enemy's quarters, and can so rout Satan, that he shall never be able to rally his forces any more. Jesus Christ is on the faint's side, and who would desire a better life-guard than omnipotency?

*2<sup>dly</sup>*, Christ's agility in succouring. As Christ is able to succour the tempted, so he will certainly succour them. Christ's power enables him, his love inclines him, his faithfulness engages him to succour tempted souls. This is a great comfort to a soul in temptation, he hath a succouring Saviour. As God did succour Israel in the wilderness among fiery serpents, they had the rock set abroad, the manna, the pillar of cloud, the brazen serpent, what was this but a type of God's succouring a poor soul in the wilderness of temptation, flung with the devil that fiery serpent? Alexander being asked how he could sleep so securely, when his enemies were about him, said, Antipater is awake, who is always vigilant. So when our tempting enemy is near us, Jesus Christ is awake, who is a wall of fire about us. There is a great deal of succour to the tempted in the

names given to Christ : as Satan's names may terrify, so Christ's names may succour. The devil is called *Apollyon*, the devourer, Rev. ix. 11. Christ is called a Saviour; the devil is called the 'strong man,' Matth. xii. 29. Christ is called *El Gibbor*, the 'mighty God,' Isa. ix. 6. The devil is called the accuser, Rev. xii. 10. Christ is called the advocate, 1 John ii. 1. The devil is called the tempter, Mat. iv. 3. Christ is called the comforter, Luke ii. 25. The devil is called the prince of darkness. Christ is called the sun of righteousness. The devil is called the old serpent, Christ is called the brazen serpent that heals, John iii. 15.

Thus the very names of Christ have some succour in them for tempted souls.

Qu. *How, and in what manner, doth Christ succour them that are tempted?*

Ans. Several ways :

1. Christ succours them, by sending his Spirit, whose work it is to bring those promises to their mind, which are fortifying, John xiv. 25. 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance.' The Spirit furnisheth us with promises, as so many weapons to fight against the old serpent, Rom. xvi. 20. 'The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet.' 1 Cor. x. 13. 'God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,' Gen. iii. 15. 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' We are oft in times of temptation, as a man that hath his house beset, and cannot find his weapons, he hath his sword and gun to seek : now, in this case, Christ sends his Spirit, and he brings things to our remembrance ; that helps us in our combat with Satan. The Spirit of Christ doth to one that is tempted, as Aaron and Hur did to Moses, they put a stone under him, and held up his hands, and then Israel prevailed ; so God's Spirit puts the promises under the hand of faith, and then a Christian overcomes the devil, that spiritual Amalek. The promise is to the soul, as the anchor is to the ship, which keeps it steady in a storm.

2. Christ succours them that are tempted by his blessed 'interceding for them.' When the devil is tempting, Christ is praying. That prayer Christ put up for Peter when he was tempted, extends to all his saints, Luke xxii. 32. Lord, saith Christ, it is my child that is tempted ; Father, pity him. When a poor soul lies bleeding of his wounds the devil hath given him, Christ presents his wounds to his Father, and in the virtue of those, pleads for mercy. How powerful must Christ's prayer needs be ? He is a favourite, John xi. 42. He is both an high priest and a son : if God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a Son. Besides Christ prays for nothing but what is agreeable to his Father's

will : if a king's son petitions only for that which his father hath a mind to grant, his suit will not be denied.

3. Christ succurs his people, by taking off the tempter. A shepherd, when the sheep begin to straggle, may fet the dog on the sheep to bring it nearer the fold, but then he calls off the dog again ; God will take off the tempter, 1 Cor. 10. 13. ' He will with the temptation make a way to escape,' he will make an outlet. Christ will rebuke the tempter, Zech. iii. 2. ' The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' This is so small support, that Christ succours the tempted. The mother succours the child most when it is sick ; she sits by its bed-side, brings it cordials ; so, when a soul is most assaulted, it shall be most assisted.

Obj. *But I have dealt unkindly with Christ, and sinned against his love ; and sure he will not succour me, but let me perish in the battle ?*

Ans. Christ is a merciful high-priest, and will succour thee notwithstanding thy failings. Joseph was a type of Christ ; his brethren sold him away, and the ' irons entered into his soul : ' yet afterwards, when his brethren were ready to die in the famine, he forgot their injuries, and succoured them with money and corn ; ' I am saith he, Joseph your brother ; ' so will Christ say to a tempted soul, " I know thy unkindnesses, how thou hast distrusted my love, grieved my Spirit, but I am Joseph, I am Jesus, therefore I will succour thee, when thou art tempted."

4th Rock of support. The best man may be most tempted. A rich ship may be violently fet upon by pirates : he who is rich in faith, yet may have the devil (that pirate) fet upon them by his battering pieces. Job, an eminent saint, yet how fiercely was he assaulted ? Satan did smite his body, that he might tempt him, either to question God's providence, or quarrel with it. St. Paul was a chosen vessel, but how was this vessel battered with temptation ? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Obj. *But is it not said, ' He who is born of God the wicked one toucheth him not ? ' 1 John v. 16.*

Ans. It is not meant, that the devil doth not tempt him, but he toucheth him not, that is *tuctu lethali*, Cajetan, with a deadly touch, 1 John v. 16. ' There is a sin unto death.' Now Satan with all his temptations doth not make a child of God sin ' a sin unto death.' Thus he toucheth him not.

5th Rock of support. Satan can go no further in tempting than God will ' give him leave ; ' the power of the tempter is limited. A whole legion of devils could not touch one swine, till Christ gave them leave. Satan would have sifted Peter to have sifted out all his grace ; but Christ would not suffer him, ' I have prayed for thee,' &c. Christ binds the devil in a chain, Rev. xx. 1. If Satan's power were according to his malice, not

one foul should be fayed ; but he is a chained enemy, this is a comfort, Satan cannot go a hair's breadth beyond God's permission. If an enemy could not touch a child further than the father did appoint, sure he should do the child no great hurt.

6th Rock of support. It is not the having a temptation makes guilty, but the giving consent ; we cannot hinder a temptation ; Elijah, that could by prayer shut heaven, could not shut out a temptation ; but if we abhor the temptation, it is our burden not our sin. We read in the old law, if one went to force a virgin, and she cried out, she was reputed innocent ; if Satan would by temptation commit a rape upon a Christian, and he cries out, and will not give consent, the Lord will charge it upon the devil's score. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite.

7th Rock of support. Our being tempted is no sign of God's hating us. A child of God oft thinks God doth not love him, because he lets him be haunted with the devil ; *non sequitur*, this is a wrong conclusion : was not Christ himself tempted ? yet by a voice from heaven proclaimed, ' This is my beloved Son,' Mat. iii. 17. Satan's tempting, and God's loving, may stand together. The goldsmith loves his gold in the fire ; God loves a faint, though shot at by fiery darts.

8th Rock of support. Christ's temptation was for our consolation, *Aquaignis*. Jesus Christ is to be looked upon as a public person, as our head and representative ; and what Christ did, he did for us ; his prayer was for us, his suffering was for us ; when he was tempted, and overcame the temptation, he overcame for us. Christ's conquering Satan, was to shew that elect persons shall at last be a conqueror over Satan ; when Christ overcame Satan's temptation, it was not only to give us an example of courage, but an assurance of conquest : we have overcome Satan already in our head, and we shall at last perfectly overcome.

9th Rock of support. The faints' temptations shall not be above their strength. The lutenist will not stretch the strings of his lute too hard lest they break, 1 Cor. x. 13. ' God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.' God will proportion your strength to the stroke, 2 Cor. xii. 9. ' My grace is sufficient for thee.' The torch light of faith shall be kept burning, notwithstanding all the winds of temptation blowing.

10th Rock of support. These temptations shall produce much good.

1. They shall quicken a spirit of prayer in the faints, they shall pray more and better, temptation is *orationes stabellem*, the exciter of prayer : perhaps, before, the faints came to God as cold suiters in prayer, they prayed as if they prayed not.

Temptation is a medicine for security : when Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, he was more earnest in prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. ' Three times I besought the Lord ;' the thorn in his flesh was a spur in his sides to quicken him in prayer. The deer being shot with the dart, runs faster to the water ; when a soul is shot with the fiery darts of temptation, he runs the faster to the throne of grace : now he is earnest with God, either to take off the tempter, or to stand by him when he is tempted.

2. God makes the temptation to sin a means to prevent sin. The more a Christian is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation ; the more a chaste woman is assaulted, the more she abhors the motion : the stronger Joseph's temptation was, the stronger was his opposition. The more the enemy attempts to storm a castle, the more he is repelled and beat back.

3. Godly temptations causeth the increase of grace. *Unus Christianus temptatus mille* ; " one tempted Christian (saith Luther) is worth a thousand." He grows more in grace : as the bellows increaseth the flame : so the bellows of a temptation doth increase the flame of grace.

4. By these temptations God makes way for comfort ; as Christ after he was tempted, the angels came and ministered unto him, Matth. iv. 11. As, when Abraham had been warring, Melchisedeck brought him bread and wine to revive his spirits, Gen. xiv. 18. so, after the saints have been warring with Satan, now God sends his Spirit to comfort them ; which made Luther say, that temptations were *amplexus Christi*, Christ's embraces, because he doth then most sweetly manifest himself to the soul. Thus you see what rocks of support there are for tempted souls.

That I may further comfort such as are tempted, let me speak to two cases of the tempted.

*1<sup>st</sup> Case. I have horrid temptations to blasphemy.*

*Ans.* Did not the devil tempt Christ after this manner? Mat. iv. 9. ' All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' What greater blasphemy can be imagined, than that the God of heaven and earth should worship the devil? Yet Christ was tempted to this. If when blasphemous thoughts are injected, you tremble at them, and are in a cold sweat, they are not yours, Satan shall answer for them ; let him that plots the treason, suffer.

*2d Case. But my case is yet worse: I have been tempted to such sins, and have yielded: the tempter hath overcome me.*

*Ans.* I grant, that, through the withdrawing of God's grace, and the force of a temptation, a child of God may be overcome. David was overcome by a temptation in case of Bathsheba, and numbering the people. There is a party of grace in the heart,

true to Christ; but sometimes it may be overvoted by corruption, and then a Christian yields: it is sad thus to yield to the tempter. But yet let not a child of God be wholly discouraged, and say there is no hope: let me pour in some balm of Gilead into this wounded soul.

1. Though a Christian may fall by a temptation, yet the seed of God is in him, 1 John iii. 9. 'His seed remaineth in him.' *Gratia concutitur non excutitur*, Aug. A man may be bruised by a fall, yet there is life in him: a Christian, being foiled by Satan, may be like him who going to Jericho, fell among thieves, 'wounded and half dead,' Luke x. 39. but still there is a vital principle of grace, his seed remains in him.

2. Though a child of God may be overcome *in praelio*, in a skirmish, yet not *in bello*, in the main battle: an army may be worsted in a skirmish, but overcomes at last. Though Satan may foil a child of God in skirmish by temptation, yet the believer shall overcome at last: a faint may be foiled, not conquered; he may lose ground not lose the victory.

3. God doth not judge of his children by one action, but by the frame of their heart: as God doth not judge of a wicked man by one good action, so neither of a godly man by one bad action: an holy person may be worsted by a temptation, but God doth not measure him by that. Who measures milk when it feethes and boils up? God doth not take the measure of a faint, when the devil hath boiled him up in a passion, but God judgeth of him by the pulse and temper of his heart: he would fear God; when he fails he weeps. God looks which way the bias of his heart stands: if his heart be set against sin, God will pardon.

4. God will make a faint's being foiled by temptation, turn to his spiritual advantage.

(1.) He may let a regenerate person fall by a temptation, to make him more watchful: perhaps he walks loosely, and so was decoyed into sin; but for the future he grows more curious and cautious in his walking. The foiled Christian is a vigilant Christian; he will have a care of coming within the lion's chain any more, he will be shy and fearful of the occasion of sin; he will not go abroad without his spiritual armour, and he girds on his armour by prayer. When a wild beast gets over the hedge, and hurts the corn, a man will make his fence stronger; so, when the devil gets over the fence by a temptation, and foils a Christian, he will be sure to mend his fence, and be more vigilant against a temptation afterwards.

(2.) God lets his children be sometimes foiled by a temptation, that they may see their continual dependance on God, and may go to him for strength. We need not only habitual grace, to stand against temptation, but auxiliary grace; as the boat

needs not only the oars, but wind, to carry it against a strong tide. God lets his children sometimes fall by a temptation, that, seeing their own weakness, they may rest more on Christ and free-grace, Cant. viii. 5.

(3.) God, by suffering his children to be foiled by a temptation, will settle them the more in grace; they shall get strength by their foils. The poets feign, that Antæas the giant, in wrestling with Hercules, got strength by every fall to the ground: it is true here; a saint, being foiled in wrestling with Satan, gets more spiritual strength. Peter had never such a strengthening in his faith, as after his being foiled in the high priest's hall: how was he fired with zeal, steeled with courage? He who before was dashed out of countenance by the voice of a maid, now dares openly confess Christ before the rulers and the councils, Acts ii. 14. The shaking of the tree settles it the more; God lets his children be shaken with the wind of temptation, that they may be more settled in grace afterwards. This I have spoken, that such Christians as God hath suffered to be foiled by temptation, may not cast away their anchor, or give way to sad despairing thoughts.

*Obj. But this may seem to make Christians careless whether they fall into a temptation or not, if God can make their being foiled by a temptation advantageous to them.*

*Ans.* We must distinguish between one who is foiled through weakness, and through wilfulness; if a soldier fights, but is foiled for want of strength, the general of the army will pity him, and bind up his wounds; but if he be wilfully foiled, and proves treacherous, he must expect no favour; so, if a Christian fight it out with Satan, but is foiled for want of strength (as it was with Peter) God will pity him, and do him good by his being foiled; but if he be foiled wilfully, and runs into a temptation, (as it was with Judas) God will shew him no favour, but will execute martial law upon him.

The uses remain.

*Use 1.* See in what continual danger we are. Satan is an exquisite artist, a deep head-piece, he lies in ambush to ensnare; he is the tempter, it is his delight to make the saints sin; and he is subtil in tempting, he hath ways and methods to deceive.

*First,* He brings a saint into sin, by making him confide in his habitual graces. Satan makes him believe he hath such a stock of grace, as will antidote him against all temptations; thus Satan deceived Peter, he made him trust in his grace: he had such a cable of faith and strong tacklings, that though the winds of temptation did blow never so fierce, he could weather the point; 'Though all men forsake thee, yet I will not;' as if he had more grace than all the apostles; thus he was led into temptation, and fell in the battle: a man may make an idol of

grace. Habitual grace is not sufficient without auxiliary. The boat needs not only oars, but a gale of wind to carry it against the tide; so we need not only habitual grace, but the blowing of the Spirit, to carry us against a strong temptation.

*Secondly*, Satan tempts to sin by the baits and allurements of the world. *Tænus pecuniæ funus animæ*,—One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Such as the devil cannot debauch with vice, he will corrupt with money: 'all this will I give thee,' was his last temptation, Mat. iv. 9. Achan was deluded by the wedge of gold. Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.

*Thirdly*, Satan tempts to sin, *sub specie boni*, under a mask and shew of good; his temptations seem gracious motions.

1. He tempts men to duties of religion: you would think this strange, that Satan should tempt to duty; but it is so. 1. He tempts men to duty out of sinister ends. Thus he tempted the Pharisees to pray and give alms, that they might be seen of men, Mat. vi. 5. Prayer is a duty, but to look a-squint in prayer, to do it for vain glory, this prayer is turned into sin. 2. He tempts to duty, when it is not in season, Numb. xxviii. 2. 'My offering and my bread for my sacrifices, shall ye offer unto me in their due season.' Satan tempts to duty when it is out of season: he tempts to read the word at home, when we should be hearing the word: he will so tempt to one duty as it may hinder another. 3. He tempts some to duty, out of design that it may be a cloak for sin. He tempts them to frequency in duty, that they may sin and be less suspected. He tempted the Pharisees to make long prayers, that they might devour widows' houses under this pretence, Mat. xxiii. 14. who would suspect him of false weights, that so oft holds a Bible in his hand? Thus cunning is Satan, he tempts duty.

2. He tempts men to sin, out of a shew of love to Christ: you will think this strange, but there is truth in it. Many a good heart may think what he doth is in love to Christ, and all this while he may be under a temptation. Christ told Peter he must suffer at Jerusalem; Peter took him and rebuked him, 'Be it far from thee, Lord,' Matth. xvi. 21. as if he had said to Christ, Lord, thou hast deserved no such shameful death, and this shall not be unto thee. Peter, as he thought, did this out of love to Christ, but Peter was all this while under a temptation. What had become of us, if Christ had hearkened to Peter, and had not suffered? So, when Christ washed his disciples feet, Peter was so mannerly that he would not let Christ wash his feet, John xiii. 8. 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.' This Peter did (as he thought) out of love and respect to Christ: Peter thought Christ was too good to wash his feet, and therefore would have put Christ off; but this was a temptation, the

devil put Peter upon this sinful modesty ; he struck at Peter's salvation, inſomuch that Chriſt ſaith, ' If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.' So again, when the Samaritans would not receive Chriſt, the diſciples, James and John, ſaid, ' Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to conſume them ?' Luke ix. 54. They did this, as they thought, out of love to Chriſt : they would wiſh for fire to conſume his enemies : but they were under a temptation ; it was not zeal, but the wild-fire of their own paſſion ; ' ye know not (ſaith Chriſt) what Spirits ye are of.'

*Fourthly*, Satan tempts to that ſin which a man's heart is naturally moſt inclinable to ; he will not tempt a civil man to groſs ſin, this is abhorring to the ſight of nature ; Satan never ſets a diſh before men that they do not love : but he will tempt a civil man to pride and to truſt in his own righteouſneſs, and to make a Saviour of his civility. The ſpider weaves a web out of her own bowels ; the civil man would weave a web of ſalvation out of his own righteouſneſs. See then in what danger we are, when Satan is continually lying in ambuſh with his temptations.

*Inf.* 2. See man's inability of himſelf to reſiſt a temptation. Could he ſtand of himſelf againſt a temptation, this prayer were needleſs, ' Lead us not into temptation : ' no man hath power of himſelf to reſiſt a temptation, further than God gives him ſtrength, Jer. x. 23. ' O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himſelf.' If Peter who had true grace, and Adam who had perfect grace, could not ſtand againſt temptation, much leſs can any ſtand by the power of nature ; which confutes the doctrine of free-will : what freedom of will hath man, when he cannot reſiſt the leaſt temptation ?

*Inf.* 3. Here is matter of humiliation, that there is in us ſuch an aptitude and proneneſs to yield to temptation—*Netimur in vetitum*—We are as ready to ſwallow a temptation, as the fiſh to ſwallow the bait. If the devil tempt to pride, luſt, envy, revenge ; how do we ſymbolize with Satan, and embrace his ſnares ? Like a woman that hath a ſuiter come to her, and ſhe doth not need much wooing, ſhe preſently gives her conſent : Satan comes a-wooing by temptation, and we ſoon yield ; he ſtrikes fire, and we are as dry tinder that catcheth the firſt ſpark ; he knocks by temptation, and it is ſad to think how ſoon we open the door to the devil, which is as if one ſhould open the door to a thief ; this may cauſe a ſpring of tears.

*Inf.* 4. See hence, a Chriſtian's life is no eaſy life ; it is military ; he hath a Goliath in the field to encounter with, one that is armed with power and ſubtilty ; he hath his wiles and darts. A Chriſtian muſt be continually watching and fighting ; Satan's deſigns carry death in the front, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' Seeking

whom he may devour : ' therefore we had need be always with our weapons in our hand. How few think their life a warfare ? Though they have an enemy in the field, that is always laying of snares, or shooting of darts, yet they do not stand centinel, or get their spiritual artillery ready ; they put on their jewels, but not their armour, Job xxi. 12. ' They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ,' as if they were rather in music than in battle. Many are asleep in sloth, when they should be fighting against Satan ; and no wonder the devil shoots them when he finds them asleep.

*Use 2.* It reproves them who pray, ' Lead us not into temptation : yet run themselves into temptation : such are they who go to plays and masquerades, and hunt after strange flesh. Some go a slower pace to hell, but such as run themselves into temptation, these go galloping thither : we have too many of these in this debauched age, who, as if they thought they could not sin fast enough, tempt the devil to tempt them.

*Use 3. Exhortation.* Let us labour that we be not overcome by temptation.

*Qu. What means may be used, that Satan's temptations may not prevail against us ?*

*Ans. 1.* Avoid solitariness. It is no wisdom in fighting with an enemy to give him the advantage of the ground : we give Satan advantage of the ground when we are alone. Eve was foiled in the absence of her husband. A virgin is not so soon set upon in company, Eccl. iv. 10. ' Two are better than one.' Get into the communion of saints, and that is a good remedy against temptation.

2. If you would not be overcome of temptation, beware of the predominancy of melancholy : this is *etra bilis*, a black humour seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy disturbs reason, and exposeth to temptation. One calls melancholy *balneum diaboli*, the devil's bath ; he bathes himself with delight in such a person. Melancholy clothes the mind in sable, it fills it with such dismal apprehensions, as oft end in self-murder.

3. If you would not be overcome of temptation, study sobriety, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' Be sober, because your adversary walketh about.' Sober-mindedness consists in the moderate use of earthly things : an immoderate desire of these things oft brings men into the snare of the devil, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ' They that will be rich fall into a snare.' He who loves riches inordinately, will purchase them unjustly. Ahab would swim to Naboth's vineyard in blood. He who is drunk with the love of the world, is never free from temptation ; he will pull down his soul to build up an estate. *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis auri, jâcra fames ?* — Be sober, take heed of being drunk with the love of the world, lest ye fall into temptation.

4. Be always upon your guard, watch against Satan's wiles, and subtilities, 1 Pet. v. 8. 'Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about.' A Christian must *excubias agere* keep watch and ward: see where Satan labours to make a breach, see what grace he most strikes at, or what sin he most tempts to, Mark xiii. 37. 'I say, unto you all, watch.' Watch all the senses, the eye, the ear, the touch; Satan can creep in here; O how needful is the spiritual watch! shall Satan be watchful, and we drowsy? Doth he watch to devour us, and shall not we watch to save ourselves? Let us see what sin our heart most naturally inclines to, and watch against this.

5. Beware of idleness; Satan sows most of his seed in fallow ground. It was Hierom's counsel to his friend, to be ever busied, that if the devil did come he might find him working in the vineyard. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt: the bird that sits still is shot: he that wants employment, never wants temptation: when a man hath nothing to do, Satan will bring grist to the mill, and find him work enough.

6. Make known thy case to some godly friend: the hiding a serpent in the bosom, is not the way to be safe; when the old serpent hath gotten into your bosom by a temptation, do not hide him there by keeping his counsel. If a spark be got into the thatch, it is not wisdom to conceal it, it may set the house on fire; conceal not temptation. The keeping of secrets is for familiar friends: be not so great a friend to Satan, as to keep his secrets; reveal your temptations, which is the way to procure others prayers and advice, let all see that you are not true to Satan's party, because you tell all his plots, and reveal his treasons. Besides the telling of our case to some experienced Christian, is the way to have ease; as the opening of a vein gives ease, so the opening of our case to a friend gives ease to the soul, and a temptation doth not so much enflame.

7. Make use of the word. This the apostle calls the 'sword of the spirit,' Eph. vi. 17. a fit weapon to fight against the tempter. This 'sword of the Spirit' is *gladius anceps*, a two-edged sword: it wounds carnal lust, and it wounds Satan. He who travels a road where there is robbing, will be sure to ride with his sword; we are traveling to heaven, and in this road there is a thief will always beset us, Satan is in every place where we go; he meets us at church, he doth not miss a sermon, he will be tempting us there; sometimes to drowsiness; when you sleep at a sermon, the devil rocks you asleep; sometimes he tempts by distracting the mind in hearing, sometimes he tempts to question the truth of what you hear; thus we meet with the tempter at church. And he tempts in the shop, he tempts you to use collusion and deceit, Hof. xii. 7. 'The ballances of deceit are in his hand:' so that we meet with the

tempter every where ; therefore, this thief being in the road, we had need ride with a sword ; we must have the ‘ sword of the Spirit about us.’ We must have skill to use this sword, and have an heart to draw it out, and this sword will put the devil to flight. Thus our blessed Saviour, when Satan tempted him to distrust and blasphemy, he uses a scripture weapon, ‘ It is written.’ Three times Christ wounded the old serpent with this sword. Christ could with his power and authority have rebuked the prince of the air, as he did the winds ; but he stops the devil’s mouth with scripture, ‘ It is written.’ It is not our vows and resolutions will do it, it is not the papists’ holy water or charms will drive away the devil, but let us bring the word of God against him ; this is such an argument as he cannot answer. It was a saying of Luther, “ I have had great troubles of mind, but so soon as I laid hold on any place of scripture and staid myself upon it, as upon my chief anchor, straightway my temptations vanished away.” There’s no temptation but we have a fit scripture to answer it. If Satan tempts to sabbath-breaking, answer him, ‘ It is written, Remember to keep the sabbath day holy.’ If he tempts to uncleanness, answer him. ‘ It is written, whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.’ If he tempts to carnal fear, say, ‘ It is written, fear not them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.’ No such way to confute temptation as by scripture ; the arrows which we shoot against Satan must be fetched out of this quiver. Many people want this sword of the Spirit, they have not a Bible ; others seldom make use of this sword, but let it rust ; they look seldom into the scripture, therefore no wonder they are overcome by temptations. He who is well skilled in the word, is like one who hath a plaister ready, to lay upon the wound as soon as it is made, and so the danger is prevented. Oh study the scripture, and you will be too hard for the devil ; he cannot stand against this.

8. Let us be careful of our own hearts, that they do not decoy us into sin. The apostle saith, ‘ a man is drawn away of his own heart, and enticed.’ James i. 14. *Quisique sibi Satan est*, Bern. Every man hath a tempter in his own bosom. A traitor within the castle is dangerous. The heart can bring forth a temptation, though Satan do not midwife it into the world ; if Satan were dead and buried the heart would draw us to evil. As the ground of all diseases lies in the humours of the body ; so the seed of all sin lies in the original lust. Look to your hearts.

9. If you would not be overcome of temptation, flee the ‘ occasions of sin.’ Occasions of sin have a great force in them to awaken lust within. He that would keep himself free from infection, will not come near an infected house, if you would be

sober, avoid drunken company. Joseph when he was enticed by his mistress, shunned the occasion; the text saith, 'he would not be with her,' Gen. xxxix. 10. If you would not be snared with popery, do not hear the mass. The Nazarite, who was forbid wine, might not eat grapes, which might occasion intemperance. Come not near the borders of a temptation. Suppose one had a body made of gun powder, he would not come near the least spark of fire, lest he should be blown up; many pray, 'lead us not into temptation,' and they run themselves into temptation.

10. If you would not be overcome by temptation make use of faith, 'above all things take the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16. Faith wards off Satan's fiery darts, that they do not hurt, 1 Pet. v. 9. 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' Mariners in a storm flee to their anchor; flee to your anchor of faith: faith brings Christ along with it, duellers bring their second with them into the field; faith brings Christ along for its second. Faith puts into Christ, and then the devil cannot hurt us. The chicken is safe from the birds of prey, under the wings of the hen; and we are secure from the tempter, under the wings of the Lord Jesus. Though other graces are of use to resist the impulsions of Satan, yet faith is the conquering grace; faith takes hold of Christ's merits, value and virtue: and so a Christian is too hard for the devil. The stars vanish when the sun appears: Satan vanisheth when faith appears.

11. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be much in prayer. Such as walk in infectious places, carry antidotes about them; prayer is the best antidote against temptation. When the apostle had exhorted 'to put on the whole armour of God,' Eph. vi. 11. he adds, ver. 18. 'Praying with all prayer.' Without this, *reliqua arma parum profunt*, Zanchy. All other weapons will do little good. Christ prescribes this remedy, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,' Mark xiv. 38. A Christian fetcheth down strength from heaven by prayer. Let us cry to God for help against the tempter, as Sampson cried to heaven for help, Judges xvi. 28. 'O Lord God, remember me and strengthen me, I pray thee, that I may be avenged of the Philistines.' And ver. 30. 'The house' upon the lords, and upon all the people.'

Prayer is *flagellum diaboli*, it whips, and torments the devil; the apostle bids us 'pray without ceasing.' 1 Thess. v. 17. It was Luther's advice to a lady, when temptation came, to fall upon her knees by prayer. Prayer doth assuage the force of a temptation. Prayer is the best charm or spell we can use against the devil. Temptation may bruise our heel; but, by prayer, we wound the serpent's head. When Paul had a 'messenger of Satan to buffet him,' what remedy doth he use? He

betook himself to prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8. 'For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.' When Satan assaults furiously, let us pray fervently.

12. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be humble in you own eyes; such are nearest falling, who presume of their own strength. Penelton, who said, his fat flesh should melt in the fire: instead of his fat melting, his heart melted, and he turned from the truth. When men grow into a big conceit, God lets them fall, to prick the bladder of pride. O be humble! such are like to hold best out in temptation, who have most grace; but God gives more grace to the humble, James iv. 6. Beware of pride; an impoſſhume is not more dangerous in the body, than pride in the soul. The doves (saith Pliny) take a pride in their feathers, and in their flying high; at last they fly so high, that they are a prey to the hawk; when men fly high in pride and self-confidence, they become a prey to the tempter.

13. If you would not be foiled by temptation, do not enter into a dispute with Satan. When Eve began to argue the case with the serpent, the serpent was too hard for her; the devil, by his logic disputed her out of paradise; Satan can mince sin, make it small, and varnish it over, and make it look like virtue; Satan is too subtil a sophister to hold an argument with him. Dispute not, but fight. If you enter into a parley with Satan, you give him half the victory.

14. If we would not be overcome of Satan, let us put on Christian fortitude. An enemy we must expect who is either shooting of darts, or laying of snares, therefore let us be armed with courage, 2 Chron. xix. 11. 'Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.' The coward never won victory; and, to animate us in our combat with Satan. (1.) We have a good captain that marcheth before us, Christ is called the 'captain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. (2.) We have good armour; grace is armour of God's making, Eph. vi. 11. (3.) Satan is beaten in part already; Christ hath given him his death wound upon the cross, Col. i. 15. (4.) Satan is a chained enemy, his power is limited; he cannot force the will; it was all Eve complained of, that the serpent 'deceived her,' not constrained her, Gen. iii. 13. Satan hath *auſutium ſuae-ndendi* not *potentiam cogendi*; he may persuade, not compel. (5.) He is a cursed enemy, and God's curse will blast him; therefore put on holy gallantry of spirit and magnanimity. Fear not Satan. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is against you.

15. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us call in the help of others. If an house be set on fire, would not you call in help? Satan tempts, that he may rob you of your soul;

acquaint some friends with your case, and beg for their counsel and prayers. Who knows but Satan may be cast out by the joint prayers of others? In case of temptations, how exceeding helpful is the communion of saints?

16. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us make use of all the encouragements we can. If Satan be a roaring lion, 'Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah:' If Satan tempts, Christ prays: if Satan be a serpent to sting, Christ is a brazen serpent to heal; if the conflict be hard, look to the crown, James i. 12. Whilst we are fighting, Christ will succour us; and when we overcome he will crown us. What makes the soldier endure a bloody fight, but the hope of a golden harvest? Think, that shortly God will call us out of the field where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and he will set a garland of glory upon our head. How will the case be altered? Instead of fighting, singing; instead of an helmet, a diadem; instead of a sword, a palm branch of victory; instead of armour, white robes; instead of Satan's skirmishes, the kisses and embraces of a Saviour, the viewing these eternal recompences, would keep us from yielding to temptation. Who would to gratify a lust, lose a crown?

*Use 4.* A word of counsel to such as are tempted; be so wise as to make good use of your temptations. As we should labour to improve our afflictions, so to improve our temptations. We should pick some good out of temptation, as Samson got honey out of the lion.

*Qu.* *What good comes out of a temptation? Can there be any good in being set upon by an enemy? Can there be any good to have fiery darts shot at us?*

*Ans.* Yes, God that can make a treacle of poison, can make his people get much good by their temptations. First, hereby a Christian sees that corruption in his heart, which he never saw before. Water in a glass looks pure, but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up; so in temptation a Christian sees that scum of sin boil up, that passion and distrust of God, as he thought had not been in his heart. Secondly, hereby a Christian sees more of the wiles of Satan, and is better able to withstand them; St. Paul had been in the fencing-school of temptation, and he grew expert in finding out Satan's stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' Thirdly, hereby a Christian grows more humble; God will rather let his children fall into the devil's hands, than be proud: temptation makes the plumes of pride fall, 2 Cor. xii. 7. 'Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.' Better is that temptation that humbles, than that duty which makes one proud. Thus you see how much good a Christ-

tian may get by temptation; which made Luther say, three things make a good divine, prayer, meditation, temptation.

*Use 5.* To such as have been under fore temptations and buffetings of Satan, to lust, revenge self-murder, but God hath stood by them, and given them strength to overcome the tempter.

1. Be very thankful to God; say as 1 Cor. xv. 57. ‘Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory.’ Be much in doxology. Why were we kept more than others from falling into sin? Was it because temptation was not so strong? No, Satan shoots his darts with all his force. Was the cause in our will? No, such a broken shield would never have conquered Satan’s temptations; know, that it was free grace that beat back the tempter, and brought us off with trophies of victory. O be thankful to God: had you been overcome with temptation, you might have put black spots in the face of religion, and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme, 2 Sam. xii. 14. Had you been overcome you might have lain sick of a ‘wounded spirit,’ and cried out with David of ‘broken bones.’ After David yielded to temptation, he lay for three quarters of a year in horror of mind: and some divines think, he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. O therefore, what cause have they to stand upon mount Gerizzim blessing of God, who in a field of battle, have got the better of Satan, and been more than conquerors! Say, as the Psalmist, Psal. cxxiv. 6. ‘Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth:’ so blessed be God who hath not given us as prey to Satan that roaring lion. When God puts mercy in the promises, we must put praise in the conclusion.

2. You that have been tempted, and come off victors, be full of sympathy, pity tempted souls; shew your piety in your pity. Do you see Satan’s darts sticking in their sides? Do what you can to pull out these darts: communicate your experiences to them; tell them how you broke the devil’s snare, and your Saviour was your succour.—The apostle speaks of restoring others in the ‘spirit of meekness,’ Gal. i. 6. The Greek word for rest, alludes to chirurgeons, who set bones out of joint; so, when we see such as are tempted, and Satan hath, as it were, put their bones out of joint, labour to put them in joint again, with all love, meekness and compassion. A word ‘spoken in season, may relieve a soul fainting in temptation:’ and you may do, as the good Samaritan, drop in oil and wine into the wound, Luke x. 34. *Vir spiritualis consilia magis quam convitia meditatur*, Aug.

3. You that have got a conquest of Satan, be not secure. Think not that you shall never be troubled with the tempter more: he is not like the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 23. ‘The bands

of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.' A cock, if he be made once to run away, he will fight no more; but, it is not so with Satan, he is a restless enemy: and if you have beaten him back, he will make a fresh onset. Hannibal said of Marcellus, a Roman captain, that whether he did beat or was beaten, he was never quiet.

When Christ had worsted Satan, he went away from Christ, but *ad tempus*, for a season, Luke iv. 13. as if he meant to come again. When we have gotten the better of Satan, we are apt to grow secure, to lay aside our armour, and leave off our watch; which, when Satan perceives, then he comes upon us with a new temptation and wounds us: he deals with us as David did with the Amalekites, when they had taken the spoil, and were secure, 1 Sam. xxx. 16. 'They were spread upon the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing:' then, ver. 17. 'David smote them, and there escaped not a man of them.' Therefore, after we have got the better of the tempter, we must do as the mariners in a calm, mend our tackling, as not knowing how soon another storm may come. Satan may for a time retreat, that he may afterwards come on more fiercely: he may go away a while, and bring other seven spirits with him, Luke xi. 26.

Therefore, be not secure, but stand upon your watch towers; lie in your armour, always expect a fight. Say, as he that hath a short respite from an ague, I look every day when my fit shall come; so say, I look every day when the tempter should come; I will put myself into a warlike posture. Satan, when he is beat out of the field, is not beaten out of heart, he will come again. He had little hope to prevail against Christ: Christ gave him three deadly wounds, and made him retreat; yet he departed only 'for a season.' If the devil cannot conquer us, yet he knows he shall molest us; if he cannot destroy us, he will surely disturb us; therefore we must, with the pilot, have our compass ready, and be able to turn our needle to any point where temptation shall blow. If the tempter come not so soon as we expect, yet, by putting ourselves into a posture, we have this advantage, we are always prepared.

To conclude all; let us oft make this prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation.' If Satan woos us by a temptation, let us not give consent. But in case a Christian hath, through weakness (and not out of a design) yielded to a temptation, yet let him not 'cast away his anchor:' take heed of despair, this is worse than the fall itself.

Christian, keep thy soul in the brinish waters of repentance, and God will be appeased. Repentance gives the soul a vomit: Christ loved Peter after his denial of him, and sent the first news of his resurrection to him; 'Go tell the disciples and

Peter.' It is an error to think that one act of sin can destroy the habit of grace: It is a wrong to God's mercy, and a Christian's comfort, to make this despairing conclusion that after one hath fallen by temptation, his estate is irrecoverable. Therefore, Christian, if thou hast fallen with Peter, repent with Peter, and God will be ready to seal thy pardon.



MATTH. vi. 13. *But deliver us from evil.*

THE second branch of this sixth petition is, *libero nos a malo*: 'Deliver us from evil.' There is more in this petition than is expressed; the thing expressed is, that we may be kept from evil, the thing further intended is, that we may make a progress in piety, Titus ii. 11. 'Denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts;' there is being delivered from evil; 'that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly;' there is a progress in piety.

I begin with the first thing in this petition expressed, 'Deliver us from evil.'

Qu. *What evil do we pray to be delivered from?*

Ans. 1. In general, from the evil of sin.

2. More particularly, we pray to be delivered,

(1.) From the evil of our own heart, it is called an evil heart, Heb. iii. 12.

(2.) From the evil of Satan; he is called the evil one, Mat. xiii. 19.

(3.) From the evil of the world; it is called the present evil world, Gal. i. 4.

*First*, in general, 'Deliver us from evil:' we pray to be delivered from the evil of sin. Not that we pray to be delivered immediately from the presence and in-being of sin, for that cannot be in this life, we cannot shake off this viper; but we pray, that God would deliver us more and more from the power and practice, from the scandalous acts of sin, which cast a reflection upon the gospel.

Sin then is the deadly evil we pray against; 'Deliver us from evil;' with what pencil shall I be able to draw the deformed face of sin? The devil would baptize sin with the name of virtue; it is easy to lay fair colours on a black face.

But I shall endeavour to shew you what a prodigious monster sin is; and there is great reason we should pray, 'Deliver us from evil.'

Sin is, (as the apostle saith) exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 13. Sin is the very spirits of mischief distilled; it is called 'the ac-

curfed thing,' Josh. vii. 13. That fin is the moft execrable evil, appears feveral ways :

1. Look upon fin in its original.
2. Look upon fin in its nature.
3. Look upon fin in the judgment and opinion of the godly.
4. Look upon fin in the comparative.
5. Look upon fin in the manner of cure.
6. Look upon fin in its direful effects ; and when you have feen all thefe, you will apprehend what an horrid evil fin is, and what great reafon we have to pray, ' Deliver us from evil.'

1<sup>st</sup>, Look upon fin in its original ; it fetcheth its pedigree from hell. Sin is of the devil, John viii. 34. Sin calls the devil father. It is *ferpentis venenum*, as Auftin faith, it is the poifon the old ferpent hath fpit into our virgin-nature.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Look upon fin in its nature, and fo it is evil. (1.) See what the fcripture compares it to. Sin hath got a bad name, it is compared to the vomit of dogs, 2 Pet. ii. 22. to a menftruous cloth, Ifa. xxx. 22. which, as Jerom faith was the moft unclean thing under the law : it is compared to the plague, 1 Kings viii. 38. to a gangrene, 2 Tim. ii. 17. Perfons under thefe difeafes we would be loth to eat and drink with.

(2.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is injurious to God three ways :

1. It is a breach of God's royal law, 1 John iii. 4. Sin is a tranfgreffion of the law : It is *crimen laeae majestatis*, high treason againft heaven. What greater injury can be offered to a prince, than to trample upon his royal edicts? Neh. ix. 16. ' They have caft thy laws behind their backs.'

2. Sin is a contumacious affront to God, it is a walking contrary to him, Lev. xxvi. 40. the Hebrew word for fin fignifies rebellion : fin flies in the face of God, Job xv. 25. ' He stretcheth forth his hand againft God.' We ought not to lift up a thought againft God, much lefs to lift up an hand againft him, but the finner doth fo. Sin is *Deicidium* ; it would not only unthroned God, but ungod him : if fin could help it, God fhould be no longer God.

3. Sin is injurious to God, as it is an act of high ingratitude. God feeds a finner, fcreens off many evils from him ; yet he not only forgets God's mercies, but abufeth them, Hof. ii. 8. ' I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her filver, which they prepared for Baal.' God may fay, I gave thee wit, health, riches, which thou haft employed againft me. A finner makes an arrow of God's mercies, and thoots at him, 2 Sam. xvi. 17. ' Is this thy kindnefs to thy friend ?' Did God give thee life to fin ? Did he give thee wages to ferve the devil ? O what an ungrateful thing is fin ! Ingratitude forfeits mercy, as the merchant doth his goods by not paying cuftom.

(3.) Sin is evil in its nature, as it is a foolish thing, Luke xii. 20. 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Is it not foolish to prefer a short lease before an inheritance? A sinner prefers the pleasure of sin for a season, before those pleasures which run at God's right hand for evermore. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? Sin gratifies Satan. *Mortaliū errores epulæ sunt daemonum*, men's sins feast the devil. Is it not folly for a man to be *felo de se*, guilty of his own destruction, to give himself poison? A sinner hath an hand in his own death, Prov. i. 18. 'They lay wait for their own blood;' no creature did ever willingly kill itself but man.

(4.) Sin is a polluting thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution; it is as rust to gold, as a stain to beauty; it is called 'filthiness of flesh and spirit,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. *Quanta fœditus vitiosæ mentis!* Cicer. This filth of sin is inward: a spot in the face may be easily wiped off, but to have the liver and lungs tainted is far worse; sin hath got into the conscience, Tit. i. 15. Sin defiles all the faculties, the mind, memory, affections, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted; sin pollutes and fly-blows our holy things; the leper, in the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had polluted the altar; an emblem of sin's leprosy spotting our holy things.

(5.) Sin is a debasing thing, it degrades us of our honour, Dan. xi. 25. 'In those days shall stand up a vile person.' This was spoken of Antiochus Epihanes, who was a king, and his name signifies illustrious; but sin had made him vile. Sin blots a man's name; nothing so turns a man's glory into shame as sin doth: sin makes a man like a beast, Ps. xlix. 20. it is worse to be like a beast, than to be a beast; it is no shame to be a beast, it is a shame for a man to be like a beast. Lust makes a man brutish, and wrath makes him devilish.

(6.) Sin is an enslaving thing. A sinner is a slave, when he sins most freely. *Grave servitutis jugum*, Cicero. Sin makes men the devil's servants; Satan bids them sin, and they do it; he bid Judas betray Christ, and he did it; he bid Ananias tell a lie, and he did it; Acts v. 3. When a man commits a sin, he is the devil's lackey, and runs on his errand; they who serve Satan, have such a bad master, that they will be afraid to receive their wages.

(7.) Sin is an unfavoury thing, Psalm xiv. 3. 'They are altogether become filthy; in the Heb. they are become stinking! Sin is very noisome to God: that person who shall worship in God's house, yet live in the sin of uncleanness, let him be perfumed with all the spices of Arabia, his prayers are unfavoury, Isa. i. 13. 'Incense is an abomination to me;' there-

fore God is said to 'behold the proud afar off,' Pf. cxxxviii. 6. He will not come near the dung-hill sinner, that hath such noisome vapours coming from him.

(8.) Sin is a painful thing, it costs men much labour and pains to accomplish their wicked designs, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' *Peccatum est sui, ipsius poena.* What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. What pains did the powder-traitors take in digging through a thick stone wall? What pains in laying their barrels of powder, and then covering them with crows of iron? How did they tire out themselves in sin's drudgery? Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice: It is easier to be sober than intemperate: it is easier to serve God than to follow sin. A wicked man sweats at the devil's plough, and is at great pains to damn himself.

(9.) Sin is a disturbing thing; whatever defiles, disturbs. Sin breaks the peace of the soul, Isa. lvii. 21. 'No peace to the wicked.' When a man sins presumptuously, he stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. Sin causeth a trembling at the heart. When Spira had sinned, he had a hell in his conscience; he was in that horror, that he professed he envied Cain and Judas. Charles IX. who was guilty of the massacre in Paris, was afterwards a terror to himself; he was frightened at every noise, and could not endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music.—Sin breaks the peace of the soul. Cain, in killing Abel, stabbed half the world at a blow, but could not kill the worm of his own conscience. Thus you see what an evil sin is in the nature of it; and had we not need pray, 'Deliver us from evil.'

3dly, Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly, and it will appear to be the most prodigious evil.

1. Sin is so great an evil, that the godly will rather do any thing than sin, Heb. xi. 24. 'Moses chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.' The primitive Christians said, *ad leonum potius quam lenonem*, they chose rather to be devoured by lions without, than lusts within. Irenaeus was carried to a place, where was a cross on one side, and an idol on the other, and he was put to his choice, either to bow to the idol, or suffer on the cross, and he chose the latter. A wise man will choose rather to have a rent in his coat than in his flesh: the godly will rather endure outward sufferings than a rent in their conscience. So great an evil is in sin, that the godly will not sin for the greatest gain; they will not sin though they might purchase an estate by it, nay though they were sure to promote God's glory by it.

2. The godly testify sin is a great evil, in that they desire to

die upon no account more than this, that they may be rid of sin; they are desirous to put off the clothing of the flesh, that they may be unclothed of sin: it is their greatest grief that they are troubled with such inmates, they have the stirrings of pride, lust, envy. It was a cruel torment Mezentius used, he tied a dead man to a living: thus a child of God hath corruption joined with grace: here is a dead man tied to the living. So hateful is this, that a believer desires to die for no other reason more than this, that death shall free him from sin. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. Thus you see, in the opinion of the godly, sin is the most hyperbolical and execrable evil.

*4thly*, Look upon sin in the comparative, and it will appear to be the most deadly evil. Compare what you will with it; 1. Afflictions, 2. Death, 3. Hell, and still sin is worse.

*First*, Compare sin with affliction: there is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction.

1. Sin is the cause of affliction, the cause is more than the effect. Sin brings all mischief: sin hath sickness, sword, famine, and all judgments in the womb of it. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, wastes the radical moisture. As the poets feign of Pandora's box, when it was opened, it filled the world full of diseases; when Adam broke the box of original righteousness, it hath caused all the penal evils in the world. Sin is the Phæton that sets the world on fire. Sin turned the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise. Sin causeth mutinies, divisions, massacres, Jer. xlvii. 6. 'O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet?' The sword of God's justice lies quietly in the scabbard, till sin draws it out and whets it against a nation. So that sin is worse than affliction, it being the cause of it: the cause is more than the effect.

2. God is the author of affliction, Amos iii. 6. 'Is there any evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' It is meant of the evil of affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but no hand in sin: God is the cause of every action, so far as it is natural, but not as it is sinful. He who makes an instrument of iron, is not the cause of the rust and canker which corrupts the iron; so God made the instrument of our souls, but the rust and canker of sin, which corrupts our souls, God never made. *Peccatum Deus non fecit*, Austin. God can no more act evil, than the sun can darken. In this sense sin is worse than affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but disclaims having any hand in sin.

3. Affliction doth but reach the body, and make that miserable; but sin makes the soul miserable. The soul is the most noble part. The soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay: it is excellent in its essence, a spiritual, immortal substance; ex-

cellent in the price paid for it, redeemed with the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. It is more worth than a world; the world is of a coarser make, the soul of a finer spinning: in the world we see the finger of God, in the soul the image of God. To have the precious soul endangered, is far worse than to have the body endangered. Sin wrongs the soul, Prov. viii. 56. Sin casts this jewel of the soul overboard. Affliction is but skin deep, it can but take away the life, but sin takes away the soul, Luke xii. 20. The loss of the soul is an unparalleled loss, it can never be made up again. "God (saith St. Chryostom) hath given thee two eyes, if thou lovest one, thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and if that be lost, it can never be repaired." Thus sin is worse than affliction; the one can but reach the body, the other ruins the soul. Is there not great reason then, that we should often put up this petition, 'Deliver us from evil?'

4. Afflictions are good for us, Ps. cxix. 71. It is good for me that I was afflicted.' Many can bless God for affliction. Affliction humbles, Lam. iii. 19. 'Remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.' Afflictions are compared to thorns, Hos. ii. 8. these thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Affliction is the school of repentance, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised: I repented.' The fire being put under the still, makes the water drop from the roses: the fire of affliction makes the water of repentance drop from the eyes. Affliction brings us nearer to God. The loadstone of mercy doth not draw us so near to God as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with want, then, saith he, 'I will arise and go to my father,' Luke xv. 18. Afflictions prepare for glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'This light affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory;' The limner lays his gold upon dark colours: so God lays first the dark colours of affliction, and then the golden colour of glory. Thus affliction is for our good; but sin is not for our good, it keeps good things from us, Jer. v. 25. 'Your sins have withholden good things from you.' Sin stops the current of God's mercy, it precipitates men to ruin. Manasseh's affliction brought him to humiliation; but Judas' sin brought him to desperation.

5. A man may be afflicted, and his conscience may be quiet. Paul's feet were in the stocks, yet he had the witness of his conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. The head may ache, yet the heart may be well: the outward man may be afflicted, yet the soul may dwell at ease, Ps. xxv. 13. The hail may beat upon the tiles of the house, when there is music within: in the midst of the outward pain, there may be inward peace. Thus, in affliction, conscience may be quiet; but when a man commits a

presumptuous, scandalous sin, conscience is troubled : by defiling the purity of conscience, we lose the peace of conscience. When Spira had sinned, and abjured the faith, he was a terror to himself, he had an hell in his conscience. Tiberius the emperor felt such a sting in his conscience, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily.

6. In affliction we may have the love of God. Afflictions are love-tokens, Rev. iii. 19. ‘As many as I love, I rebuke.’ Afflictions are sharp arrows, but shot from the hand of a loving father. If a man should throw a bag of money at another, and it should bruise him a little, and raise the skin, he would not be offended, but take it as a fruit of love ; so when God bruisseth us with affliction, it is to enrich us with the golden graces of his Spirit, all is love : but when we commit sin, God withdraws his love ; it is the sun overcast with a cloud, nothing appears but anger and displeasure. When David had sinned in the matter of Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 27. ‘The thing that David had done displeased the Lord.’

7. There are many encouragements to suffer affliction, God himself suffers with us, Isa. lxii. 9. ‘In all their afflictions he was afflicted.’ God will strengthen us in our sufferings, Pf. xxxvii. 39. ‘He is their strength in the time of trouble.’ Either God makes our burden lighter, or our faith stronger. He will compensate and recompense our sufferings, Mat. xix. 29. ‘Every one that hath forsaken houses or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and inherit life everlasting.’ Here are encouragements, to suffer affliction, but there is no encouragement to sin ; God hath brandished a flaming-sword of threatenings to deter us from sin, Pf. lxxviii. 21. ‘God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.’ There is a flying roll of curses which enters into the house of a sinner, Zech. v. 4. ‘If a man sin, be it at his pearl, Deut. xxxii. 42. ‘I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.’ God will make men weary of their sins, or he will make them weary of their lives. Thus sin is worse than affliction : there are encouragements to suffer affliction, but no encouragement to sin.

8. When a person is afflicted, only he himself suffers ; but by sinning openly he doth hurt to others. (1.) He doth hurt to the unconverted ; one man’s sin may lay a stone in another man’s way, at which he may stumble and fall into hell ; O the evil of scandalous sin ! Some are discouraged, others hardened ; thy sinning may be the cause of another’s damning, Mal. ii. 7, 8. The priests going wrong caused others to stumble. (2.) He doth hurt to the converted : by an open scandalous sin he offends weak believers, and so sins against Christ, 1 Cor. viii. 12. Thus sin is worse than affliction because it doth hurt to others.

9. In affliction the saints may rejoice, 1 Theff. i. 6. 'Ye received the word in much affliction with joy,' Heb. x. 34. 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.' Aristotle speaks of a bird that lives among thorns, yet sings sweetly; so a child of God can rejoice in afflictions. St. Paul had his prison-songs, Rom. v. 3. 'We glory in tribulation.' The Greek word signifies an "exuberancy of joy, a joy with boasting and triumph." God doth oft pour in those divine consolations as cause the saints to rejoice in afflictions; they had rather have their afflictions, than want their comforts; God doth candy their wormwood with sugar, Rom. v. 5. You have seen the sun-shine when it rains; the saints have had the shinings of God's face, when afflictions have rained and dropped upon them. Thus we may rejoice in affliction, but we cannot rejoice in sin, Hof. ix. 1. 'Rejoice not, O Israel for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a-whoring from thy God.' Sin is a matter of shame and grief, not of joy. David having sinned in numbering of the people, 'his heart smote him,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. As the pricking of a vein lets out the blood; so, when sin hath pricked the conscience it lets out the joy.

10. Affliction is a magnifying of a person, Job vii. 17. 'What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and visit him every morning?' That is, visit him with affliction.

Qu. *How doth afflictions magnify us?*

Ans. (1.) As they are signs of sonship, Heb. xii. 7. 'If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.' Every print of the rod is a badge of honour. (2.) As the sufferings of the godly have raised their fame and renown in the world; the zeal and constancy of the martyrs in their sufferings have eternized their name: O how eminent was Job for his patience! James v. 11. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job.' Job the sufferer was more renowned than Alexander the conqueror. Thus afflictions magnify a person, but sin doth not magnify but vilify him. When Eli's sons had sinned and profaned their priesthood, they turned their glory into shame; the text saith, 'They made themselves vile,' 1 Sam. iii. 13. Sin casts an indelible blot on a man's name, Prov. vi. 32, 33. 'Whoso commits adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.'

11. A man may suffer affliction, and bring honour to religion. Paul's iron chain made the gospel wear a gold chain; suffering credits and propagates the gospel; but committing of sin brings a dishonour and scandal upon the ways of God. Cyprian saith, when in the primitive times a virgin, who vowed herself to religion, had defiled her chastity, *totum ecclesiae cœtum erubescere*, shame and grief filled the face of the whole congregation. When scandalous sins are committed by a few, they bring a re-

proach upon all them that profess ; as three or four brass shillings in a sum of money make all the rest suspected.

12. When a man's afflictions are on a good account, that he suffers for Christ, he hath the prayers of God's people. 'Tis no small privilege to have a stock of prayer going ; it is like a merchant that hath a part in several ships : suffering faints have a large share in the prayers of others, Acts xii. 5. ' Peter was in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him.' What greater happiness than to have God's promises, and the faints' prayers ? but when a man sins presumptuously and scandalously, he hath the faints bitter tears and just censures : he is a burden to all that know him, as David speaks in another case, Psal. xxxi. 11. ' They that did see me without, fled from me.' So a scandalous sinner, the people of God flee from him, he is like an infected person, every one shuns and avoids him.

13. Affliction can hurt a man only while he is living, but sin doth hurt him when he is dead, As a man's virtues and alms may do good when he is dead, so a man's sins may do him mischief when he is dead. When a spider is killed, the poison of it may do hurt ; so the poison of an evil example may do much hurt, when a man is in his grave. Affliction at most can but last a man's life, but sin lives, and doth hurt, when he is gone. Thus you see sin is far worse than affliction.

*Secondly*, Sin is worse than death. Aristotle calls death the terrible of terribles, and Job calls it, ' the king of terrors,' Job xviii. 4. but sin is more deadly than death itself. (1.) Death, though it be painful, yet it were not hurtful but for sin ; it is sin that imbitters death and makes it sting, 1 Cor. xv. 56. ' The sting of death is sin.' Were it not for sin, though death might kill us, it could not curse us. Sin poisons death's arrow, so that sin is worse than death, because it puts a sting into death. (2.) Death doth but separate between the body and the soul : but sin, without repentance, separates between God and the soul, Judges xviii. 24. ' Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more ?' Death doth but take away our life from us, but sin takes away our God from us ; so that sin is worse than death.

*Thirdly*, Sin is worse than hell. In hell there is the worm and the fire, but sin is worse. (1.) Hell is of God's making, but sin is none of his making ; it is a monster of the devil's creating. (2.) The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner, but sin is a burden to God, Amos ii. 13. ' I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.' (3.) In hell torments there is something that is good ; there is the execution of God's justice, there is justice in hell ; but sin is the most unjust thing ; it would rob God of his glory, Christ of his

purchase, the soul of its happiness; so that it is worse than hell.

*5thly*, Look upon sin in the manner of its cure; it cost dear to be done away: the guilt of sin could not be removed but by the blood of Christ; he who was God must die, and be made a curse for us, before sin could be remitted. How horrid is sin, that no angel or arch-angel, nor all the powers of heaven, could procure the pardon of sin, but it cost the blood of God; If a man should commit an offence, and all the nobles should kneel upon their knees before the king for him; but no pardon could be had, unless the king's son be arraigned and suffer death for him; all must conceive it was an horrible fact that must be the cause of this; such is the case here, the Son of God must die to appease God's anger for our sins. O the agonies and sufferings of Christ! (1.) In his body; his head crowned with thorns, his face spit upon, his side pierced with the spear, his hands and feet nailed,—*Totum pro vulnere corpus*—(2.) He suffered in his soul, Mat. xxvi. 38. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.' He drank a bitter cup, mingled with curses; which made him, though he was sanctified by the Spirit, supported by the Deity, comforted by angels, sweat drops of blood, and cry out upon the cross, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' All this was to do away our sin. View sin in Christ's blood, and it will appear of a crimson colour.

*6thly*, Look upon sin in the dismal effects of it, and it will appear the most horrid prodigious evil, Rom. vi. 23. 'The wages of sin is death,' that is, the 'second death,' Rev. xxi. 8. Sin hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. A wicked man knows what sin is in the pleasure of it, but doth not know what sin is in the punishment of it. Sin is *Scorpio pungens*, it draws hell at the heels of it. This hellish torment consists of two parts;

1. *Pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, Mat. vii. 23. 'Depart from me.' It was a great trouble to Absalom, that he might not see the king's face; to lose God's smiles, to be banished from his presence, in whose presence is fulness of joy, how sad and tremendous! this word 'depart,' (saith Chrysostom) is worse than the fire. Sure sin must be the 'greatest evil,' which separates us from the 'greatest good.'

2. *Pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, Mat. xxv. 41. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Why, might sinners plead, Lord, if we must depart from thee, let us have thy 'blessing:' no, 'Go, ye cursed:' but if we must depart from thee, let it be into some place of ease and rest; no, Go into fire. But, if we must into fire, let it be for a little time; let the fire be quickly put out; no, Go into everlasting fire: but if it be so, that we must be

there, let us be with good company, no, 'with the devil and his angels.' O what an evil is sin! all the torments of this life are but *indibrium & risus*, a kind of sport to hell torments: what is a burning fever to the burning in hell! it is called 'the wrath of the Almighty,' Rev. xix. 15. The Almighty God inflicts the punishment, therefore it will be heavy. A child cannot strike very hard, but if a giant strike he kills with a blow: to have the Almighty God to lay on the stroke, it will be intolerable. Hell is the EMPHASIS of misery. The body and soul, which have sinned together, shall suffer together: and these torments shall have no period put to them, Rev. ix. 6. 'They shall seek death, and shall not find it.' Rev. xiv. 11. 'And the smoke of their torments ascendeth for ever and ever;' here the wicked thought a prayer long, a sabbath long; but how long will it be to lie upon beds of flames for ever? This word, ever, breaks the heart; thus you see sin is the most deadly and execrable evil: look upon it in its original, in its nature, in the judgment and estimate of the wise; look upon it comparatively, it is worse than affliction, death, hell; look upon it in the manner of cure, and in the dismal effect, it brings eternal damnation: is there not then a great deal of reason that we should make this prayer, 'deliver us from evil?'

*Use I. Branch I.* Is sin such a deadly, pernicious evil, the evil of evils? See then what it is we are to pray most to be delivered from, and that is from sin, our Saviour hath taught us to pray, 'deliver us from evil.' Hypocrites pray more against temporal evils than spiritual. Pharaoh prayed more to have the plague of hail and thunder to be removed, than his hard heart should be removed, Exod. ix. 28. The Israelites prayed, *tolle serpentes*, take away the serpents from us, more than to have their sin taken away, Numb. xxi. 8. The hypocrite's prayer is carnal, he prays more to be cured of his deafness and lameness, than of his unbelief: more that God would take away his pain, than take away his sin. But our prayer should be, 'deliver us from evil.' Spiritual prayers are best: hast thou a diseased body? pray more that the disease of thy soul may be removed, than thy body, Psal. xli. 4. 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned.' The plague of the heart is worse than a cancer in the breast, hast thou a child that is crooked? Pray more to have its unholiness removed than its crookedness: spiritual prayers are more pleasing to God, and are as music in his ears. Christ hath here taught us to pray against sin, 'deliver us from evil.'

*II. Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then admire the wonderful patience of God that bears with sinners. Sin is a breach of God's royal law, it strikes at his glory; now, for God to bear with sinners, who provoke him, it shews admirable patience;

well may he be called, 'the God of patience,' Rom. xv. 4, 5. It would tire the patience of the angels, to bear with men's sins one day; but what doth God bear? How many affronts and injuries doth he put up? God sees all the intrigues and horrid impieties committed in a nation, Jer. xxix. 23. 'They have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.' God could strike men 'dead in their sins;' but he forbears, and respites them. Methinks I see the justice of God with a flaming sword in his hand, ready to strike the stroke; and patience steps in for the sinner, Lord, spare him a while longer. Methinks I hear the angel saying to God, as the king of Israel to the prophet, 2 Kings vi. 21. 'Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?' Lord here is such a sinner, shall I smite him? Shall I take off the head of such a drunkard, swearer, sabbath-breaker? And God's patience saith, as the dresser of the vineyard, Luke xiii. 8. 'Let him alone this year.' O the infinite patience of God, that sin being so great an evil, and so contrary to God, he should bear with sinners so long! 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. 'If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?' God finds his enemies, yet he lets them go, he is not presently avenged on them. Every sin hath a voice to cry to God for vengeance; Sodom's sin cried, Gen. xviii. 20. Yet God spares men; but let not sinners presume upon God's patience: if they repent not, long forbearance is no forgiveness; God's patience abused will leave men more inexcusable.

III. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then there is no sin little. There is no little treason; every sin strikes at God's crown and dignity: and in this sense it may be said, as Job xxii. 5. 'Are not thy iniquities infinite?' The least sin (as the schoolmen say) is infinite objective, because it is committed against an infinite Majesty; and besides, nothing can do away sin, but that which hath an infiniteness in it; for though the sufferings of Christ (as man) were not infinite, yet the divine nature did shed forth an infinite value and merit upon his sufferings. So that as no sin is little, there is no little hell for sin. As we are not to think any of God's mercies little, because they are more than we can deserve; so neither are we to think any of our sins little, because they are more than we can answer for. That sin we esteem lightest, without Christ's blood will be heavy enough to sink us into perdition.

IV. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then see whence all personal or national troubles come; they come from the evil of sin; our sin grows high that makes our divisions grow wide; sin is the Achan that troubles us, it is the cockatrice egg, out of which comes a fiery flying serpent. Sin is like Phæton, who, as the poets feign, driving the chariot of the sun, set the

world on fire. Sin, like the planet Saturn, hath a malignant influence: sin brings us into straits, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. 'David said unto God, I am in a great strait.' Jer. iv. 17. 'As keepers of a field are they against her round about: as horses or deer in a field are so inclosed with hedges, and so narrowly watched, that they cannot get out; so Jerusalem was so close besieged with enemies, and watched, that there was no escape for her: whence was this? ver. 18. 'This is thy wickedness.' All our evils are from the evil of sin. The cords that pinch us are of our own twisting. *Flagitium et flagellum sunt tanquam acus et filum.* Sin raiseth all the storms in conscience: the sword of God's justice lies quiet till sin draws it out of the scabbard, and makes God whet it against a nation.

V. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then how little reason hath any one to be in love with sin? some are so infatuated with sin, that they delight in it. The devil can so cook and dress sin, that it pleaseth the sinner's palate, Job xx. 12. 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth.' Sin is as delightful to corrupt nature, as meat to the taste. Sin is a feast on which men feed their lusts; but there is little cause to be so in love with sin, Job xx. 14. 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, it is the gall of asps within him.' To love sin, is to hug an enemy. Sin puts a worm into conscience, a sting into death, a fire into hell. Sin is like those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. 'On their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and they had tails like scorpions, and they had stings in their tails.' After the woman's hair comes in the scorpion's sting.

VI. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then what may we judge of them who make light of sin, as if there were no danger in it; as if God were not in earnest when he threatens sin; or as if ministers were about a needless work, when they preach against sin? Some people make nothing of breaking a commandment; they make nothing of telling a lie, of cozening, of flandering; nothing of living in the sin of uncleanness; if you weigh sin in the balance of some men's judgments, it weighs very light: but, who are those that make so very light of sin? Solomon hath described them, Prov. xix. 9. 'Fools make a mock of sin.' *Stultus in vitia cito dilabitur,* Isidor. Who but fools would make light of that which grieves the Spirit of God? Who but fools would put such a viperous sin in their bosom? Who but fools would laugh at their own calamity, and make sports while they give themselves poison.

VII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then I infer, that there is no good to be gotten by sin; of this thorn we cannot gather grapes.—If sin be so deadly an evil, then we cannot get

any profit by it ; no man did ever thrive upon this trade ; Those Atheists said, Mal. iii. 14. ' It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it ? ' But we may say more truly, what profit is there in sin ? Rom. vi. 21. ' What fruit had ye in these things, whereof ye are now ashamed ? ' Where are your earnings ? What have you gotten by sin ? It hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages. What profit had Achan of his wedge of gold ? That wedge seemed to cleave asunder his soul from God. What profit had Ahab of the vineyard he got unjustly ? The dogs licked his blood, 1 Kings xxi. 19. What profit had Judas of his treason ? For thirty pieces he sold his Saviour, and bought his own damnation. All the gain men get by their sins, they may put in their eye ; nay, they must, and weep it out again.

VIII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, see then the folly of those who venture upon sin, because of the pleasure they have in it, 2 Thess. ii. 12. ' Who have pleasure in unrighteousness.' As for the pleasure of sin, (1.) It is but seeming, it is but a pleasant fancy, a golden dream. (2.) And besides, it is a mixed pleasure, it has bitterness intermingled, Prov. vii. 17. ' I have (saith the harlot) perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. For one sweet, here are two bitter ; cinnamon is sweet, but myrrh and aloes are bitter ; the harlot's pleasure is mixed. There are those inward fears and lashes of conscience, as imbitter the pleasure. 3. If there be any pleasure in sin, it is only to the body, the brutish part ; the soul is not at all gratified by the pleasure, Luke xii. 19. ' Soul, take thy ease ; ' he might have more properly said, ' Body, take thy ease ; ' the soul cannot feed on sensual objects. 4. In short, that pleasure men talk of in sin, is their disease. Some take pleasure in eating chalk or coals, this is from their disease ; so, when men talk of pleasure in eating the forbidden fruit, it is from the sickness and disease of their souls, ' they put bitter for sweet,' Isa. v. 20. O what folly is it, for a cup of pleasure, to drink a sea of wrath ? Sin will be bitter in the end, Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. ' Look not on the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup ; at last it bites like a serpent.' Sin will prove like Ezekiel's roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly, *mel in ore, fel in corde*. Ask Cain now, how he likes his murder ? Achan, how he likes his golden wedge ? O remember that saying of Austin, *Momentaneum est quod delectat, aeternum quod cruciat*. The pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.

IX. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then, what wisdom is it to depart from evil : Job xxviii. 28. ' To depart from evil is understanding.' To sin is to do foolishly ; therefore, to depart from sin, is to do wisely. Solomon saith, Prov. xxix.

6. 'In every transgression is a snare.' Is it not wisdom to avoid a snare? Sin is a deceiver, it cheated our first parents; instead of being as gods, they became as the beasts that perish, Ps. xlix. 29. Sin hath cheated all that have meddled with it, is it not wisdom to shun such a cheater? Sin hath many fair pleas, and tells how it will gratify all the senses with pleasure; But, saith a gracious soul, Christ's love is sweeter; peace of conscience is sweeter; what are the pleasures of sin to the pleasures of paradise? Well may the saints be called wise virgins, because they spy the deceits that are in sin, and avoid the snares. 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.'

X. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, then, how justifiable and commendable are all those means which are used to keep men from sin? how justifiable are a minister's admonitions and reproofs? Tit. i. 13. 'Rebuke them sharply;' cuttingly; a metaphor from a chirurgeon that searches a wound, and cuts out the proud flesh, that the patient may be sound; so God's minister comes with a cutting reproof, but it is to keep you from sin, and to save your souls. *Si merito objurgaverit te aliquis, scito quia profuit*, Seneca. "Esteem them your best friends, who would keep you from sinning against God." If a man were going to poison or drown himself, were not he his friend who would hinder him from doing it? All a minister's reproofs are but to keep you from sin, and hinder you from self-murder; all is in love, 2 Cor. v. 11. 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' It is the passion of most to be angry with them that would reclaim them from sin, Amos v. 10. 'They hate him that rebuketh in the gate.' Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion, seeing it is to purge out the peccant humour? It is mercy to mens' souls to tell them of their sins. And surely those are priests for the devil, 2 Cor. xi. 15. who see men go on in sin, and ready to drop into hell, yet never pull them back by a reproof; nay, perhaps flatter them in their sins. God never made ministers as false glasses, to make bad faces look fair: such make themselves guilty of other men's sins.

XI. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, the evil of evils, then see what a bad choice they make, who choose sin to avoid affliction: as if, to save the coat from being rent, one should suffer his flesh to be rent. It was a false charge that Elihu brought against Job, chap. xxxvi. 21. 'Thou hast chosen iniquity rather than affliction.' This is a bad choice. Affliction hath a promise made to it, 2 Sam. xxii. 28. but sin hath no promise made to it. Affliction is for our good, but sin is not for our good; it would entail hell and damnation upon us. Spira chose iniquity rather than affliction, but it cost him dear; he at

last repented of his choice. He who commits sin to avoid suffering, is like one that runs into a lion's den to avoid the stinging of a gnat.

XII. *Branch.* If sin be so great an evil, see then what should be a Christian's great care in this life to keep from sin; 'Deliver us from evil.' Some make it all their care to keep out of trouble; they had rather keep their skin whole, than their conscience pure: but our care should be chiefly to keep from sin. How careful are we to forbear such a dish, as the physicians tell us is hurtful for us: it will bring the stone or gout? Much more should we be careful that we eat not the forbidden fruit, which will bring divine vengeance, 1 Tim. v. 22. 'Keep thyself pure.' It hath always been the study of the saints to keep aloof off from sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Ps. xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' It was a saying of Anselm, If sin were on one side, and hell on the other, he would rather leap into hell than willingly sin against God. O what a mercy is it to be kept from sin! We count it a great mercy to be kept from the plague and fire; but what is it to be kept from sin?

XIII. *Branch.* Is sin so great an evil? see then that which may make us long for heaven, when we shall be perfectly freed from sin, not only from the outward acts of sin, but from the in-being of sin. In heaven we shall not need to pray this prayer, 'Deliver us from evil.' What a blessed time will it be, when we shall never have a vain thought more? Then Christ's spouse shall be *sine macula aut ruga*, without spot or wrinkle, Ephes. v. 27. Now there is a dead man tied to the living: we cannot do any holy duty, but we mix sin; we cannot pray without wandering; we cannot believe without doubting: but then, our virgin-souls shall not be capable of the least tincture of sin, but we shall all be as the angels of God.

In heaven we shall have no temptation to sin. The old serpent is cast out of paradise, and his fiery darts shall never come near to touch us.

*2d Use of exhortation.* And it hath two distinct branches.

I. *Branch.* To all in general. If sin be so great and prodigious an evil, then, as you love your souls take heed of sin: If you taste of the forbidden fruit, it will cost you dear, it will cost you bitter tears, it may cost you lying in hell; O therefore flee from sin.

(1.) Take heed of sins of omission, Mat. xxiii. 23. It is as well dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden. Some think it no great matter to omit reading scripture: the Bible lies by like rusty armour, which they never use: they think it no great matter to omit family or closet-

prayer; they can go several months, and God never hear of them. These have nothing sanctified to them; they feed upon a curse; 'for every creature is sanctified by prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5. The bird may shame many, it never takes a drop, but the eye is lifted up towards heaven. O take heed of living in the neglect of any known duty. It was the prayer of a reverend holy man on his death-bed, 'Lord, forgive my sins of omission.'

(2.) Take heed of secret sins. Some are more modest than to sin openly in a balcony; but they will carry their sins under a canopy, they will sin in secret. Rachel did not let her father's images be seen, 'but she put them under her, and sat upon them,' Gen. xxxi. 34. Many will be drunk, and unclean, if they may do it when no body may see them; they are like one that shuts up his shop windows, but follows his trade within doors. But if sin be so great an evil, let me warn you this day, not to sin in secret: Know, that you can never sin so privately, but that there are two witnesses always by, God and conscience.

(3.) Take heed of your complexion-sin, that sin which your nature and constitution doth most incline you to. As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin, Pf. xviii. 23. 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.' There is some sin that is a special favourite, the *peccatum in deliciis*, the darling-sin that lies in the bosom, and this doth bewitch and draw away the heart. O beware of this.

*Qu. How may this darling-sin be known?*

*Ans.* 1. That sin which a man doth most cherish, and to which all other sins are subservient; that is the sin which is most tended and waited upon: the Pharisees darling-sin was vain-glory, all they did was to feed this sin of pride, Matth. vi. 2. 'That they may have glory of men;' when they gave alms, they sounded a trumpet. If a stranger had asked the question, Why doth this trumpet sound? The answer was, the Pharisees are going to give alms to the poor. Their lamp of charity was filled with the oil of vain-glory, Matth. xxiii. 5. all their works for to be seen of men. Pride was their bosom-sin. Oftentimes covetousness is the darling-sin; all other sins are committed to maintain this. Why do men equivocate, oppress, defraud, take bribes? All is to uphold covetousness.

2. That sin which a man doth not love to have reprov'd, is the darling-sin: Herod could not endure to have his incest spoken against: if John Baptist meddles with that sin, it shall cost him his head.

3. That sin which hath most power over one, and doth most easily lead him captive, that is the beloved of the soul. There are some sins a man can better put off, and give a repulse to: but there is one sin, which, if it comes to be a suiter, he cannot

deny, but is overcome by it ; this is the bosom-sin. The young man in the gospel had a complexion-sin which he could not resist, and that was the love of the world ; his silver was dearer to him than his Saviour. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a lust, that he will part with the kingdom of heaven to gratify it.

4. That sin which men use arguments to defend, is the darling-sin. To plead for sin, is to be the devil's attorney ; if the sin be covetousness, and we vindicate it ; if it be rash anger, and we justify it, Jonah iv. 9. ' I do well to be angry : ' this is the complexion-sin.

5. That sin which doth most trouble one, and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the beloved sin. When Joseph's brethren were distressed, their sin came to remembrance in selling their brother, Gen. xii. 2. So, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, Dost not thou remember how thou hast lived in such a sin, though thou hast been often warned, yet thou wouldst not leave it ? Conscience reads a curtain-lecture ; sure that was the darling-sin.

6. That sin which a man is most unwilling to part with, that is the darling-sin. Jacob could of all his sons, most hardly part with Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 36. ' Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away.' So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have parted with ; but must Benjamin go ? must I part with this delightful sin ? that goes to the heart. This is the Dalilah, the beloved sin. O if sin be such a deadly evil, dare not to indulge any bosom-sin : this is of all the most dangerous : like an humour striking to the heart, which is mortal. Leave open but one gap, the wild beast may enter at it : one darling sin lived in, is setting open a gap for Satan to enter.

(4.) Take heed of the sins which attend your particular callings. A calling you must live in ; Adam in Paradise tilled the ground ; God never sealed warrants to idleness ; but every calling hath its snare : as some sin in living out of a calling, so others sin in a calling. Remember how deadly an evil sin is ; avoid those sins which you may be exposed to in your trade ; take heed of all fraud and collusion in your dealings, Matth. vii. 19. ' Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'

1. Take heed of a deceitful tongue in selling : the scripture makes it the character of one that goes to heaven, Psal. xv. 2. ' He speaketh the truth from his heart.' It is the custom of many to say, the commodity stands them more, yet take less. This is hardly credible.

2. Beware of a deceitful balance, Hof. xii. 7. ' The balances of deceit are in his hand.' Men, by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier.

3. Beware of sophisticating, mingling and embasing commodities, Amos viii. 6. 'They sell the refuse of the wheat.' They would pick out the best grains of the wheat, and sell the worst at the same price as they did the best: to mix a coarser commodity with a fine, and yet sell it all for fine, is no better than deceit, Isa. i. 2.

4. Beware of stretching your consciences too far, or taking more for a commodity than it is worth, Lev. xxv. 14. If thou sellest ought unto thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.' There is a lawful gain allowed, yet one may not so advantage himself as to damnify another. Let that be the tradesman's motto, Acts xxiv. 16. 'A conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.' He hath an hard bargain, that doth 'purchase the world with the loss of his soul.'

5. Sin being so deadly an evil, 'take heed of the appearance of sin.' Abstain not only from apparent evil, but the appearance of evil; if it be not absolutely a sin, yet if it looks like sin, avoid it. He who is loyal to his prince, not only forbears to have his hand in treason, but he will take heed of that which hath a shew of treason. Joseph's mistress tempted him, and he fled and would not be with her, Gen. xxxix. 12. An appearance of good is too little, and an appearance of evil is too much.

(1.) The appearance of evil is oft an occasion of evil: dalliance is an appearance of evil, and oftentimes it occasions evil. Touching the forbidden fruit, may occasion tasting: dancing in masquerades, hath often been the occasion of uncleanness.

(2.) The appearance of evil may scandalize another, 1 Cor. viii. 12. When ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ: sinning against a member of Christ, is a sinning against Christ.

Thus you see, sin being so deadly an evil, we should avoid all sin; sins of omission, secret sins, complexion-sins, sins that attend our particular calling, yea, the appearance of evil.

*Qu. What means shall we use to be kept from the acts of sin?*

*Ans.* 1. If you would be preserved from actual and scandalous sins, labour to mortify original sin. If you would not have the branches bud and blossom, smite at the root. I know original sin cannot in this life be removed, but labour to have it subdued. Why do men break forth into actual sins, but because they do not mortify heart sins? Suppress the first risings of pride, lust, passion; original sin unmortified, will prove such a root of bitterness, as will bring the cursed fruit of scandalous sin.

2. If you would be kept from actual sins, think what an odious thing sin is. Besides what you have heard, remember, sin is the accursed thing, Josh. vii. 21. It is the abominable

thing God hates, Jer. xlv. 4. 'O do not this abominable thing that I hate.' Sin is the spirit of witchcraft; it is the devil's excrement; it is called filthiness, James i. 21. If all the evils in the world were put together, and their quintessence strained out, they could not make a thing so filthy as sin doth. So odious is a sinner, that God lothes the sight of him, Zech. xi. 8. 'My soul lothed them.' He who defiles himself with avarice, what is he but a serpent licking the dust? He who defiles himself with the lust of uncleanness, what is he but a swine with a man's head? He who defiles himself with pride, what is he but a bladder, which the devil hath blown up? He who defiles himself with drunkenness, what is he but a beast that hath got the staggers? To consider how odious and base a thing sin is, would be a mean to keep us from sinning.

3. If you would be kept from actual sins, get the fear of God planted in your hearts, Prov. xvi. 6. 'By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.' *Cavebis si pavebis*; fear is a bridle to sin, and a spur to holiness. Fear puts an holy awe upon the heart, and binds it to its good behaviour. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. When the empress Eudoxia, threatened to banish Chrysostom, "Tell her (saith he) I fear nothing but sin." Fear is *janitor animae*: it stands as a porter at the door of the soul, and keeps sin from entering: all sin is committed for want of the fear of God, Rom. iii. 14. 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; there is no fear of God before their eyes.' Holy fear stands centinel, and is ever watching against security, pride, wantonness. Fear is a Christian's life-guard, to defend him against the fiery darts of temptation. *Si vis esse securus, semper time*. The way to be safe, is always to fear, Prov. ii. 14.

(4.) If we would be kept from actual sins, let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin; run not into evil company; he that would not have the plague, will not go into an infected house. Guard your senses, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the eye and the ear; especially, look to your eye; much sin comes in by the eye, the eye is oft an inlet to sin, sin takes fire at the eye: the first sin in the world began at the eye, Gen. iii. 6. 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was pleasant to the eyes, then she took of the fruit thereof.' Looking begat lusting. Intemperance begins at the eye: looking on the wine when it is red, and gives its colour in the glass, causeth excess of drinking, Prov. xxi. 31. Covetousness begins at the eye, Josh. vii. 21. 'When I saw among the spoils, a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, I coveted and took them.' The fire of lust begins to kindle at the eye; 'David walking upon the roof of his house, saw a woman washing herself, and she was (saith the

text) beautiful to look upon, and he sent messengers and took her, and defiled himself with her,' 2 Sam. xi. 2. O therefore look to your eyes, 'Job made a covenant with his eyes,' Job xxxi. 1. If the eye be once inflamed, it will be hard to stand out long against sin: if the out-works are taken by the enemy, there is great danger of taking the whole castle.

5. If you would be kept from actual gross sin, study sobriety and temperance, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Sobrii este*, be sober. Check the inordinancy of appetite; sin doth frequently make its entrance this way. By gratifying the sensual appetite, the soul, that is a-kin to angels, is enslaved to the brutish part. Many drink, if not to drunkenness, yet to drowsiness. The not denying the sensitive appetite, makes men's conscience so full of guilt, and the world so full of scandal. If you would be kept from running into sin, lay restraint upon the flesh. What hath God given reason and conscience for, but to be a bridle to check inordinate desires?

6. If you would be kept from actual sins, be continually upon your spiritual watch.

(1.) Watch your thoughts, Jer. iv. 14. 'How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?' Sin begins at the thoughts. First, men cherish revengeful thoughts, then they dip their hands in blood. Set a spy over your thoughts.

(2.) Watch your passions: Passions of anger, passions of lust. The heart is ready to be destroyed by its own passions, as the vessel is to be overturned by the sail. Passion transports beyond the bounds of reason; it is *brevis insania*, Seneca. A short frenzy. Moses, in a passion, spake unadvisedly with his lips, Ps. cvi. 3. The disciples, in a passion, called for fire from heaven. A man in a passion is like a ship in a storm, that hath neither pilot nor sails to help it, but is exposed to the waves and rocks.

(3.) Watch your temptations. Satan continually lies in ambush, and watcheth to draw us to sin: *fiat in procinctu diabolus*: he is fishing for our souls: he is either laying of snares, or shooting of darts; therefore we had need watch the tempter, that we be not decoyed into sin. Most sin is committed for want of watchfulness.

7. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, consult with the oracles of God, be well versed in scripture, Ps. cxix. 11. 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' The word is, *anceps gladius*, a two-edged sword, to cut asunder men's lusts. When the fogs and vapours of sin begin to arise, let but the light of scripture shine into the soul, and it dispels those fogs; 'let the word of Christ dwell richly in you,' Col. iii. 26. Alphonfus, king of Arragon, read over the Bible fourteen times. The word shews the damnable evil of sin, it fur-

nisheth us with precepts, which are so many receipts and antidotes against sin. When Christ had a temptation to sin, he beat back the tempter, and wounded him three times with this sword of the Spirit, 'It is written.'

Why do men live in sin, but because they either do not read the word, or do not believe it?

8. If you would be preserved from gross presumptuous sin, get your hearts fired with love to God. Love hath great force in it, it is 'strong as death;' it breaks the league between the heart and sin.

Two things in God cause love.

(1.) His 'orient beauty:' Moses desired to see some glimpse of it; 'Lord, shew me thy glory.'

(2.) His amazing love: what a prodigy of love was it, to give his Son out of his bosom, and lay such a jewel to pawn for our redemption! these two, the orient of God's beauty, and the magnitude of his love, may, like two loadstones, draw our love to God, and if we love him, we will not sin against him; he that loves his friend, will not by any means displease him. I have read of four men, meeting together, who asked one another, what it was that kept them from sinning? One said, the fear of hell; another said the joys of heaven; the third said, the odiousness of sin; the fourth said, that which keeps me from sin, is, love to God; shall I sin against so good a God? shall I abuse love? Love to God is the best curbing-bit to keep from sin.

9. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, be diligent in a calling. *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.*—Adam in paradise must till the ground. Such as live idly, expose themselves to sin; if we have no work to do, Satan will find us work; he sows most of his seed in fallow ground. A woman being much tempted to sin, came to the Rev. Mr. Greenham for advice, what she should do to resist the temptation? He gave her this answer, be always well employed, that so when Satan comes, he may find thee busied in thy calling, and thou mayest not be at leisure to listen to his temptations.

10. If you would be kept from sin, fix the eye of your mind upon the 'beauty of holiness.' Holiness consists in our conformity to God: Holiness is the sparkling of the divine nature, a beam of God shining in the soul. How lovely is Christ's bride, when decked and bespangled with the jewels of holiness? What makes the seraphims angels of light, but their holiness? Do but think with yourselves what a splendid, glorious thing holiness is, and it will cause a disgust and hatred of sin, which is so contrary to it. The beholding of beauty, makes one out of love with deformity.

11. If you would keep from the evil of sin, meditate fre-

quently on death, *First*, the unavoidable nature of it, Heb. ix. 27. *Statutum est*, 'It is appointed for all men once to die.' We are not so sure to lie down this night in bed, as we are to lie down in the grave. *Secondly*, The uncertainty of the time. We are but tenants at will : we hold our life at the will of our landlord, and how soon may God turn us out of this house of clay ? Death oft comes when we least look for it. The flood (as some learned writers observe) came in the month of *Ziph* or April, in the spring ; when the trees were blossoming, and the birds singing, then came the flood, when they least looked for it : so, oft in the spring of youth, when the body is most healthy and the spirits most sprightly and vigorous, and death is least thought on, then it comes. Could we think often and seriously of death, it would give a death's-wound to sin. *Nihil sit revocato peccata quam crebra mortis contemplatio.* Aug. No stronger antidote against sin than this ; I am now singing, and to-morrow may be dying ? What, if death should take me doing the devil's work, would it not send me to him to receive my wages ? Would but the adulterer think, I am now in the act of sin, but how soon may death come, and then I who have burned in lust, must burn in hell : this sure would strike a damp into him, and make him afraid of going after strange flesh.

12. If you would be kept from gross scandalous sins, beware of a covetous heart. Covetousness is a dry drunkenness. He who thirsts insatiably after the world, will stick at no sin, he will betray Christ and a good cause for money. *Cui nihil satis, eidem nihil turpe,* Tacitus. 1 Tim. vi. 10. 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' From this root comes, *First*, theft. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, Josh. vii. 21. Covetousness makes the goals so full. *Secondly*, From this root comes murder. Why did Ahab stone Naboth to death, but to possess his vineyard ? 1 Kings xxi. 13. Covetousness hath made many swim to the crown in blood. *Thirdly*, From this bitter root of covetousness proceeds cozenage : it is the covetous hand holds false weights. *Fourthly*, From this root of covetousness comes uncleanness. You read of the hire of a whore, Deut. xxiii. 18. For money she would let both her conscience and chastity be set to sale. O if you would be kept from the evil of sin, beware of covetousness which is the inlet to so many sins. 13. Let us be much in prayer to God, to keep us from ingulphing ourselves in sin, Ps. xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' We have no power inherent to keep ourselves from evil. Arnoldus saith, that man, in his corrupt estate, hath *aliquas reliquias vitæ spiritualis*—some reliques of spiritual life left. And Arminius saith, man hath a sufficiency of grace in himself, whereby he may *abstinere a malo*, abstain from evil ; free-will is a sufficient

curb to check and pull him back from sin. But then what needed Christ to have taught us this prayer; *Libera nos a malo*, 'Deliver us from evil?' If we have power of ourselves to keep from sin, what need we pray to God for power? Alas! if David and Peter, who had an habit of grace, fell, for want of a fresh gale of the Spirit to hold them up, much more will they be in danger of falling, who have only the power of free-will to hold them.

Let us therefore sue to God for strength to keep us from sinning: pray that prayer of David, Pf. cxix. 117. 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.' And that other prayer, Pf. xvii. 5. 'Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.' 'Lord, keep me from dishonouring thee,' keep me from the defiling sins of the age, that I may not be the worse for the times, nor the times the worse for me. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' Lord, whatever I suffer, keep me from sin. The child is safe in the nurse's arms; and we are only safe from falling into sin, while we are held up in the arm's of Christ and free grace.

II. *Branch* of the exhortation hath an aspect to God's children. You that are professors, and carry Christ's colours, I beseech you, above all others, to take heed of sin; beware of any action that is scandalous and unbecoming the gospel: you have heard what a prodigious hyperbolical evil sin is. Come not near the forbidden fruit, Hof. iv. 15. 'Though Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend.' So, though wicked men run into sin, yet let not the spouse of Christ defile the breasts of her virginity. Sin doth ill become any, but doth worse become professors. Dung is unhandsome in the street; but to see it in the temple, how offensive is it? Leprosy in the foot doth ill, but to see a leprous sore in the face is much worse; to see sin break forth in them who have a face of religion, is most to be abominated. The sins of the wicked are not so much wondered at, Dan. xii. 10. 'The wicked shall do wickedly.' It is no wonder to see a toad spit poison. It was not so much wonder to see Cain or Ahab sin: but to see Lot's incest, to see David's hands stained with blood, this was strange. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse.

The sins of God's people do, in some sense, more provoke God than the sins of the wicked. We read of the provokings of his sons and daughters, Deut. xxxii. 19. The sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of his people grieve him. The sins of God's people have a more malignant aspect, and are of a blacker dye than others; there are those aggravations in the

Gins of God's people, as are not to be found in the sins of the unregenerate, in eight particulars.

For, 1. The godly have something which may *ponere obicem*, refrain them from sin. Wicked men, when they sin, have no principle to refrain them; they have wind and tide to carry them, but have nothing to pull them back from sin; but a child of God hath a principle of grace to give check to sin; he hath the impulses of God's Spirit dissuading him from evil; therefore, for him to commit sin, is far worse than for others: this is to sin more desperately; it is as if a woman should go about to kill in her womb. Christian, this thou art to do, when thou sinnest presumptuously, thou dost what in thee lies to kill the babe of grace in thy soul.

2. The sins of God's people are greater than others, because they sin against more mercy. This is like a weight put in the scale, it makes sin weigh heavier. God hath given Christ to a believer; he hath cut him off from the wild stock of nature, and grafted him into the true olive; and for him to abuse all this mercy, it is to outdo the wicked, and to sin with an higher aggravation, because it is to sin against greater love. How was Peter's sin enhanced and accented; that when Christ had done more for him than others, he had dropped some of the holy oil upon him, he had taken him into the number of the apostles, he had carried him up into the mount of transfiguration, and shewn him the glory of heaven in a vision; now, that Peter should deny Christ after all this mercy, this was heinous, and could not be forgiven, but by a miracle and prodigy of love.

3. The sins of the godly are worse, and have this aggravation in them, that they sin against more clear illuminations than the wicked, Job xxiv. 13. They are of those that rebel against the light: light is there taken figuratively for knowledge. It cannot be denied but the wicked sin knowingly: but the godly have a light beyond them, such a divine penetrating light, as no hypocrite can attain unto: they have better eyes to see sin than others: and for them to meddle with sin, and embrace this dunghill, how must this needs provoke God, and make the fury rise up in his face? Oh therefore, you that are the people of God, flee from sin; your sins are more enhanced, and have worse aggravations in them than the sins of the unregenerate.

4. The sins of the godly are worse than the sins of the unregenerate; for, when they sin, it is against great experiences. They have felt the bitterness of sin in the pangs of the new birth, and afterwards God hath spoken peace, and they have had an experimental taste how 'sweet the Lord is;' and yet, after these experiences, that they should touch the forbidden fruit, venture upon a presumptuous sin, how doth this enhance and aggravate their guilt, and is like putting a weight more in

the scale to make their sin weigh heavier? The wicked, when they sin, never tasted the sweetness of an heavenly life; they never knew what it was to have any smiles from God; they never tasted any thing sweeter than corn and wine, therefore no wonder if they sin: but for a child of God, who hath had such love tokens from heaven, and signal experiences from God, for him to gratify a lust, how horrid is this! it was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, that his heart was turned from the Lord which had appeared to him twice, 1 Kings xi. 9.

5. The sins of the godly are greater than others, because they sin against their sonship. When wicked men sin, they sin against the command: but when the godly sin, they sin against a privilege, they abuse their sonship. The godly are adopted into the family of heaven, they have a new name: Is it a light thing (said David) to be son-in-law to a king? So, to be called the sons of God, to be heirs of the promises, is no small honour: now, for such to run into an open offence, it is a sinning against their adoption; they hereby make themselves vile, as if a king's son should be tumbling in the mire, or lie among swine.

6. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they are committed against more vows and engagements. They have given up their names to God; they have bound themselves solemnly to God by oath, Pl. cxix. 106. 'I have sworn that I will keep thy statutes.' And in the supper of the Lord they have renewed this sacred vow; and, after this, to run into a presumptuous sin, it is a breach of vow, a kind of perjury, which dyes the sin of a crimson colour.

7. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they bring a greater reproach upon religion. For the wicked to sin, there is no other expected from them; swine will wallow in the mire; but when sheep do so, when the godly sin, that redounds to the dishonour of the gospel, 2 Sam. xii. 24. 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.' A stain in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it: for the godly to sin, it is like a spot in scarlet, it is more taken notice of, and it reflects a greater dishonour upon the ways of God. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse. How doth the gospel suffer by the miscarriages of the godly? Their blood never can wash off the stain that they bring upon religion.

8. The sins of the godly are worse, because they are a mean to encourage and harden wicked men in sin. If the wicked see the godly to be loose and uncircumspect in their lives, they think they may do so too: The wicked make the godly their pattern, not in imitating their virtues, but their vices; and is not this fearful, to be a mean to damn others? These are the

aggravations of the sins of the godly : therefore you, above all others, beware of presumptuous sin : your sins wound conscience, weaken grace, and do more highly provoke God than the sins of others, and God will be sure to punish you : whoever escapes, you shall not, Amos iii. 3. ‘ You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’ If God doth not damn you, yet he may send you to hell in this life : he may cause such agonies and tremblings of heart, that you will be a terror to yourselves ; you may draw nigh to despair, and be ready to look upon yourselves as cast-aways. When David had stained himself with adultery and murder, he complained of his broken bones, Psal. li. 8. A metaphor, to set forth the grief and agony of his soul : he lay in fore desertion three quarters of a year, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to his dying day. Oh therefore, you who belong to God, and are enrolled in his family, take heed of blemishing your profession with scandalous sin ; you will pay dear for it ; think of the broken bones : though God doth not blot you out of his book, yet he may cast you out of his presence, Psal. li. 11. He may keep you in long desertion. You may feel such lashes in your conscience, [that you may roar out, and think yourselves half in hell.]

So much for the first, ‘ Deliver us from evil :’ we pray to be delivered from evil, in general, that is sin.

*Secondly*, In special. ‘ Deliver us from evil.’ We pray to be delivered from evil, under a threefold notion. (1.) From the evil of our heart. It is called an evil heart, Heb. iii. 12. (2.) From the evil of Satan. He is called ‘ the evil one,’ Matth. xiii. 19. (3.) From the evil of the world. It is called an ‘ evil world,’ Gal. i. 4.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, In this petition, ‘ deliver us from evil,’ we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not decoy and trepan us into sin. The heart is the poisoned fountain, from whence all actual sins flow, Mark vii. 21. ‘ Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornications, murders.’ The cause of all evil lies in a man’s own breast, all sin begins at the heart. Lust is first conceived in the heart, and then it is midwived into the world. Whence comes rash anger ? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is a shop or work-house, where all sin is contrived and hammered out : how needful therefore is this prayer, ‘ deliver us from evil,’ from the evil of our hearts ? The heart is the greatest seducer, therefore the apostle James saith, ‘ every man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,’ James i. 14. The devil could not hurt us, if our own hearts did not give consent. All that he can do is, to lay the bait, but it is our fault to swallow the bait.

O let us pray to be delivered from the lusts and deceits of

our own heart, 'Deliver us from evil.' Luther feared his heart more than the pope or cardinal, and it was Austin's prayer, *libera me, Domine, a meipso*; Lord deliver me from myself. It was a good advice one gave to his friend, *Caveas teipsum*. Beware of the bosom traitor, the flesh. The heart of man is the Trojan horse, out of which comes a whole army of lusts.

2dly, In this petition 'deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of Satan. He is 'the evil one,' Matt. xiii. 19.

Qu. *In what respect is Satan the evil one?*

Ans. 1. He was the first inventor of evil, John viii. 44. 'He plotted the first treason.'

2. His inclination is only to evil, Eph. vi. 12.

3. His constant practice in doing evil, 1 Pet. v. 8.

4. All the evils and mischiefs that fall out in the world, he hath some hand in them.

(1.) He hinders from good, Zech. iii. 1. 'He shewed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan at his right-hand to resist him.'

(2.) He provokes to evil; he put it into Ananias' heart to lie, Acts v. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' the devil blows the fire of lust and strife. When men are proud, the old serpent hath poisoned them, and makes them swell. Thus he is the evil one; and well may we pray, 'Lord, deliver us from the evil one.' The word Satan in the Hebrew signifies an opponent or adversary.

1. He is a restless adversary, he never sleeps; spirits need no sleep. He is a peripatetic, 'He walks about,' 2 Pet. v. 8. And, how doth he walk? not as a pilgrim, but as a spy; he narrowly observes where he may plant his pieces of battery, and make his assaults with most advantage against us. Satan is a subtil engineer; there is no place that can secure us from Satan's assaults and inroads. We find him while we are praying, hearing, meditating. We are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it.

2. Satan is a puissant adversary, he is armed with power. He is called the 'strong man,' Luke xi. 21. He takes men captive at his pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26. 'Who are taken captive by him at his will,' who are taken alive by him. It alludes to a bird that is taken alive in the snare; thus you see he is the evil one. The devil's work is to angle for mens' souls; he lays suitable baits; he allures the ambitious man with honour, the covetous man with riches: he baits his hooks with silver; he allures the lustful man with beauty, he tempts men to Dalilah's lap to keep them from Abraham's bosom. The devil glories in the damnation of souls. How needful then is this prayer, 'Deliver us from evil?' Lord, keep us from the evil one; though

Satan may solicit to sin, suffer us not to give consent; though he may assault the castle of our hearts, yet let us not deliver up the keys of the castle to our mortal enemy.

*3dly,* In this petition, 'Deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of the world. It is called an evil world, Gal. i. 4. not but that the world, as God made it, is good, but through our corruption it becomes evil, and we had need pray, deliver us from an evil world.

*Qu. In what sense is it an evil world?*

*Ans.* 1. As it is a defiling world. It is like living in an infectious air, it requires an high degree of grace to 'keep ourselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 27. It is as hard to live in the world and not be defiled, as to go much in the sun and not be tanned.

(1.) The opinions of the world are defiling; that a little religion will serve the turn; like leaf-gold, it must be spread but thin; that morality runs parallel with grace: that to be zealous, is to be righteous over-much. That it is better to keep the skin whole than the conscience pure: that the flesh is rather to be gratified than mortified. These opinions of the world are defiling.

(2.) The examples of the world are defiling examples, have a great force in them to draw us to evil,—*Princeps imperio magnus exemplo major*, Princes are looking-glasses which we dress ourselves by; if they do evil, we are apt to imitate them. Great men are copies we set before us, and usually we write most like the copy when it is blotted. There is a great proneness in us to follow the example of the world; therefore God hath put in a caveat against it, Exod. xxiii. 2. 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' How easily are we hurried to sin, when we have the tide of natural corruption, and the wind of example to carry us? Lot was the world's wonder; the complexion of his soul kept pure in Sodom's infectious air. The river of Peru in America, after it hath run into the main sea, keeps fresh, and doth not mingle with the salt waters; to this river might Lot be compared, whose piety kept fresh in Sodom's salt water. Bad examples are catching, Ps. cvi. 35. 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' Had not we need then to pray, Lord, deliver us from this evil world? Living in the world is like travelling in a dirty road.

2. It is an evil world, as it is an ensnaring world. The world is full of snares. Company is a snare, recreation is a snare, oaths are snares, riches are golden snares;—*Opes irritamenta malorum*. The apostle speaks of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16. The lust of the flesh is beauty, the lust of the eye is money, the pride of life is

honour ; these are the natural man's trinity, *In mundo splendor opum, gloriæ majestatis voluptatum illecebræ ab amore Dei nos astrahunt.* The world is a flattering enemy, whom it kisses, it oft betrays ; it is a silken halter : the pleasures of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of security. Lyfimachus sold his crown for a draught of water ; so many part with heaven for the world. It is an ensnaring world : the king of Armenia was sent prisoner to queen Cleopatra in golden fetters : too many are enslaved with the world's golden fetters. The world bewitched Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity, and not be giddy. Thus the world, through our innate corruption, is evil, as it is a snare, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ' They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare.' If an angel were to live here there were no danger of the world's ensnaring him, because he hath no principle within to receive the temptation : but we have a corrupt principle that suits with the temptation, and that makes us always in danger.

3. It is an evil world, as it is a discouraging world. It casts scorn and reproach upon them who live virtuously ; what, will you be holier than others, wiser than your ancestors ? The world deals with the professors of religion, as Sanballat did with the Jews when they were building, Neh. iv. 1. ' He mocked the Jews, and said, What do these feeble Jews ? Will they fortify themselves ? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish that are burnt ?' So the wicked world casts out squibs of reproach at the godly, what, will ye build for heaven ? What needs all this cost ? What profit is it to serve the Almighty ? thus the world will pluck off our chariot-wheels when we are driving towards heaven : they are called cruel mockings, Heb. xi. 36. It requires a great measure of sanctity to withstand the discouragements of the world, to dance among serpents, to laugh at reproaches, and bind them as a crown about our head.

4. It is an evil world, as it is a deadning world. It dulls and deadneth the affections to heavenly objects. The world cools holy motions, like a damp in a silver-mine, which puts out the light : earthly things choke the seed of the word. A man entangled in the world is so taken up about secular concerns, that he can no more mind the things above, than the earth can ascend, or the elephant fly in the air : and, even such as have grace in them, yet, when their affections are belimed with the earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer : it is like swimming with a stone about the neck.

5. It is an evil world, as it is a maligning world. It doth disgust and hate the people of God, John xv. 19. ' Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Hatred is (as Aristotle saith) against the whole kind. Haman's hatred

was againſt the feed of the whole Jews. When you can find a ſerpent without a ſting, or a leopard without ſpots, then you may expect to find a wicked world without hatred. The white that is ſhot at is piety, Pl. xxxviii. 20. ‘They are mine adverſaries, becauſe I follow the thing that is good.’ The world pretends to hate the godly for ſomething elſe, but the ground of the quarrel is holineſs. The world’s hatred is implacable : anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot ; you may as well reconcile heaven and hell, as the two feeds. If the world hated Chriſt, no wonder it hates us, John xv. 18. ‘The world hated me before it hated you.’ Why ſhould any hate Chriſt ? This bleſſed Dove had no gall, this Roſe of Sharon did ſend forth a moſt ſweet perfume, but this ſhews the world’s baſeneſs, it is a Chriſt-hating and a ſaint-hating world. Had not we need to pray, deliver us from this evil world ?

6. It is an evil world, as it is a deceitful world.

(1.) There is a deceit in dealing, Hoſ. xii. 7. ‘He is a merchant, the ballances of deceit are in his hand.’ The Hebrew word *rimmah in pihil*, ſignifies both to deceive and oppreſs. He who dares uſe deceit, will not ſpare to oppreſs.

(2.) There is a deceit in friendſhip, Prov. xx. 6. ‘But a faithful man who can find ?’

—*Trita frequenſque via eſt per amici fallere nomen*—

Some uſe too much courtſhip in friendſhip, they are like trumpets which make a great noiſe, but within they are hollow. Some can flatter and hate, commend and cenſure. *Miel in ore, fel in corde*. Diſſembled love is worſe than hatred.

(3.) There is a deceit in riches, Matth. xiii. 22. ‘The deceitfulneſs of riches.’ The world makes us believe it will ſatisfy our deſires, and it doth but increaſe them ; it makes us believe it will ſtay with us, and it takes wings, Prov. xxiii. 5.

7. It is an evil world, as it is a diſquieting world. It is full of trouble, John xvi. 33. The world is like a bee-hive ; when we have taſted a little honey, we have been ſtung with a thouſand bees. St. Baſil was of opinion, that before the fall, the roſe did grow without prickles : but now every ſweet flower of our life hath its prickles. There are many things cauſe diſquiet ; loſs of friends, law-ſuits, croſſes in eſtate : relations are not without their troubles : ſome are troubled that they want children, others troubled that they have children : the world is a vexing vanity. If a man be poor, he is deſpised by the rich ; if he be rich, he is envied by the poor. If we do not find it an enſlaving world, we ſhall find it an afflicting world ; it hath more in it to wean us than tempt us. The world is a ſea, where we are toſſed upon the ſurging waves of ſorrow, and often in danger of ſhipwreck ; the world is a wilderneſs full of fiery ſerpents. [What ſtorms of perſecution are raiſed againſt

the righteous?' 2 Tim. iii. 12.] The wicked are briars, Mic. vii. 4. where Christ's sheep lose some of their golden fleece. Then had we not need pray, Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world? Why should we love the world? Though we are commanded to love our enemies, yet this enemy we must not love, 1 John. ii. 15. 'Love not the world.'

I have been all this while opening the first sense of this petition, 'Deliver us from evil;' we pray to be delivered from sin in general, and to be delivered from evil under this threefold notion, from the evil of our heart, from the evil of Satan, from the evil of the world. Ere I leave this, let me insert a

*Caution.* Not that our abstaining from, or forbearing the external acts of sin, is sufficient to entitle us to salvation: but when we pray, 'Deliver us from evil,' there is more implied in it, namely, that we make a progress in holiness. Being divorced from sin is not enough, unless we are espoused to virtue; therefore in scripture these two are joined, Psal. xxxiv. 14. 'Depart from evil, and do good.' Rom. xii. 9. and Isa. i. 16. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.' Leaving sin is not enough, unless we embrace righteousness. *Virtutis est magis honeste agere, quam non turpia.* As it is in the body, it is not enough that the disease be stopped, but it must grow in health; so it is in the soul, it is not enough acts of sin be forborne, (which is the stopping a disease) but it must be healthy, that is, grow in holiness.

*Use.* Which reproves those who labour only to suppress the outward acts of sin, but do not press on to holiness; they cease from doing evil, but do not learn to do well. Their religion lies only in negatives; they glory in this, that they are given to no vice, none can charge them with any foul miscarriages, Luke xviii. 11. 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers.' This is not enough, you must advance a step further in solid piety; it is not enough that a field be not sown with tares or hemlock, but it must be sown with good seed. Consider two things:

1. If this be the best certificate you have to shew that you are not guilty of gross sin, God makes no account of you. A piece of brass, though it be not so bad as clay, yet not being so good as silver, it will not pass for current coin; so, tho' you are not grossly profane, yet not being of the right metal, wanting the stamp of holiness, you will never pass current in heaven.

2. A man may abstain from evil, yet he may go to hell for not doing good, Matth. iii. 10. 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Why were the foolish virgins shut out? they had done no hurt, they had not broke their lamps; yea, but their fault was, there was

no goodnefs in them, they had no oil in their lamps. Oh therefore let us not content ourfelves in being free from grofs acts of fin, but let us launch forth further in holinefs; let us cleanfe ourfelves from all pollution, perfecting holinefs.

*Secondly*, ‘ Deliver us from evil,’ that is, from temporal evil. We pray that God will either prevent temporal evils, or deliver us out of them.

1. We pray that God will prevent temporal evils; that he will be our fcreen to ftand between us and danger, Pfal. vii. 1. ‘ Save me from them that perfecute me.’ We may lawfully pray againft the plots of the wicked, that they prove abortive; that, though they have a defign upon us, they may not have their defire upon us, Pfal. cxli. 9. ‘ Keep me from the fnare which they have laid for me.’

2. We pray that God will deliver us out of temporal evils; that he will remove his judgments from us, whether famine, fword, peftilence, Pfal. xxxix. 10. ‘ Remove thy ftroke away from me.’ Yet with this

*Caution.* We may pray to be delivered from temporal evils, only fo far as God fees it good for us. We may pray to be delivered from the evil of fin abfolutely, but we muft pray to be delivered from temporal evils conditionally, fo far as God fees it fitting for us, and may ftand with his glory.

*Ufe.* In all the troubles that lie upon us, let us look up to God for eafe and fuccour; ‘ Deliver us from evil,’ Ifa. viii. 19. ‘ Should not a people feek unto their God?’ To blame then are the papifts, who knock at the wrong door; when they are in any trouble, they pray to the faints to deliver them; when they are in danger of fhipwreck, they pray to St. Nicholas; when they are in a fit of the fever, they pray to St. Petronelle; when they are in travail, they pray to St. Margaret. How unlawful it is to invoke faints in prayer, I will prove from one fcripture, Rom. x. 14. ‘ How then fhall they call on him, in whom they have have not believed?’ We may pray to none but fuch as we believe in; but we ought not to believe in any faint, therefore we may not pray to him. The papifts have, in their Lady’s Pfalter, directed their prayers for deliverance to the Virgin Mary; Deliver me, O Lady. *Benedicta Domina, in manibus tuis repofita eft noftra falus*; O thou blefled Lady, in thy hands our falvation is laid up. But ‘ Abraham is ignorant of us,’ Ifa. lxiii. 16. The faints and Virgin Mary are ignorant of us.

To pray to faints, is idolatry advanced to blaſphemy. Our Saviour hath taught us better, in all our diftreffes to pray to God for a cure, ‘ Deliver us from evil.’—He only knows what our troubles are, and can give us help from trouble; he only, that laid the burden on, can take it off. David went to God,

Pf. xxv. 17. 'O bring thou me out of my distresses.' God can, with a word, heal, Pf. cvii. 20. 'He sent forth his word, and healed them.' He delivered the three children out of the fiery furnace, Joseph out of prison, Daniel out of the lion's den: this proves him to be God, because none can deliver as he doth, Dan. iii. 29. 'There is no other that god can deliver after this fort.' Let us then, in all our straits and exigencies, seek to God, and say, 'Deliver us from evil.'