

## PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN S DEVICES

2 Cor. ii. 11—Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Who can comprehend or take up the way of this deceiver, whose way is more subtle than the way of an eagle in the air, than the way of a serpent on a rock, or than the way of a ship in the midst of the sea?

There are these two things we would mainly press upon you to know. First, the subtle devices and stratagems of the devil, by which he catches immortal souls. And there is that, secondly, that we would desire you to know, and that is, these precious deceits, these divine stratagems of Jesus Christ, by which He studies to catch immortal souls; according to that word, Hosea ii, 14, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness;" or, as the word may be rendered, I will deceive her. Christ hath a divine deceit, a precious guile, by which He studies to gain that excellent thing, the soul of man; He knows what key can best open our hearts. He that hath the keys of the house of David, knows what arguments will be most effectual to persuade us to embrace Him; and Christ knows what is the most suitable time to propose His divine deceit to catch our immortal souls.

And I would only say this one thing to persuade you to be caught by Him who hath been these six thousand years a fisher of men, and it is this, would you have satisfaction of all your senses? Then come and embrace Christ. And would ye have satisfaction to all your desires?- then embrace Christ. And would ye have eternal blessedness?- then come and embrace Christ. You shall have satisfaction to all your senses. Will not the sense of sight be satisfied, when ye embrace Him? O what a sight will it be to behold Him, whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars? And what a sight, suppose ye it will be, to behold Him whose face is as the sun when it shines in its strength? And to behold Him that is the light of the higher house, and is, and shall be, the eternal admiration of angels? Would you have satisfaction unto your sense of hearing? Then come and embrace this precious object, Christ. O what a life shall it be to hear His voice, and to hearken to these pleasant words that He shall speak!

If Christ never spake a word but that one, it might satisfy your sense of hearing, Song ii, 10, 11 and 12, "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'Is not that a pleasant song to satisfy your sense of hearing? - And would ye have sat-

isfaction to your sense of smelling? Then come and embrace Christ. o what a scent doth He cast, who is perfumed with all the powders of the merchant? What a scent doth He cast, who is the beautiful rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys? What a scent doth He cast, whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces? - And, would ye have satisfaction to your sense of taste? Then come and embrace precious Christ, and be caught with his deceits. O how much shall the sense of taste be satisfied, when ye shall be admitted to eat of these pleasant apples that grow upon the tree of life, and shall be satisfied with flagons, and taken into His banqueting house!

There is a great difference between the apples that first Eve hid eat, and these precious apples that grow upon the tree of life. The eating of these apples shall indeed make you as gods; ye shall be made partakers of a divine nature. - And would ye have satisfaction unto your sense of touching? Then come and embrace Christ. O what a life shall it be, eternally to enfold that precious object, Jesus Christ? What a life shall it be, to hold Him as a bundle of myrrh, all night to lie between our breasts? I would only say this, O expectants of heaven, comfort yourselves in this; there is no such inhibition served upon Mary in heaven, as that, 'Touch me not' That inhibition is now sweetly reduced. And would ye know her exercise? She is now enfolding and kissing Him that was the object of her desires.

2. Would ye have satisfaction to your desires? Then, come and embrace Christ. There shall be no end of your desiring, when once ye fix your desires upon Him that hath no end. Let Christ be the object of your love, let Christ be the object of your faith, let Christ be the object of your desires, and let Christ be the object of your delight.

3. Would ye have eternal blessedness? Then let Christ deceive you. O blessed are these eternally, whom Christ hath caught by guile, and hath taken into the bond of the covenant. I would only ask these three questions.

1st, Were ye never put to bless God for giving you wisdom to make choice of Christ? Were ye never put to bless Him forthis, that He did so wisely direct you, as to make choice of such a One? This was the practice of David, in that remarkable place, Psalm xvi, 6, 7. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel." He there sits down and magnifies the Lord that had directed him to this choice. There is this,

2ndly, that I would ask you, and it is this: Will ye rather believe the promises of him that is a liar from the beginning, than believe the promises of Him that is the faithful witness and the Amen? There is this,

3rdly, that I would ask of you, and it is this: Do ye put a higher account upon fellowship with the devil and his

angels, than upon fellowship with Jesus Christ, and the spirits of just men made perfect? I would seriously desire you once to consider Him, and then ye shall he forced to become His captive. There is this that I would say of Christ; there was never anyone that ever saw Him in His beauty, that ever turned his enemy. The first sight that ever persecuting Saul got of Christ, he said, 'Here am I, what wilt thou have me to do?' We have told you, that in the words was contained a threefold character of a complete Christian, of a Christian that hath gone on to a great length in godliness.

Firstly, the first character of a complete Christian from the words was, that he is not ignorant of the devices of the devil. He knows his stratagems, and from thence we proposed seven things to consider.

The first was the general devices of the devil by which he catches immortal souls, and studies to assault everyone; and of this we have spoken.

Secondly, we proposed to speak a little to these devices of the devil by which he keeps men in nature; and we have spoken unto these devices by which he keeps them that are more grossly profane in nature- There is this,

Thirdly, which we arc to speak unto, and it is this; these devices by which he assaults them that are under the exercise of the law before their closing with Christ. And we conceive there are these devices by which he assaults

such.

1st. There is this **FIRST DEVICE** of the devil, by which he assaults a Christian under the exercise of the law-, and under the terrors of God, and it is this; there are three things he makes them to misinterpret. He makes such a Christian to misinterpret sermons, to misinterpret providence, and to misinterpret scripture. That is the first device of the devil by which he studies to catch, and assault them that are under the exercise of the law. As for the misinterpreting of sermons, we would speak a little unto these things.

1. Consider this, how a Christian may know whether a word born in upon him, be from the Spirit of the Lord, or from the spirit of delusion. And, we conceive, there are these seven marks by which ye may know when a word is born in by the Spirit of the Lord.

(1) The word that seals a Christian's exercise, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord, and not from the spirit of delusion. As for instance, when a Christian, under the exercise of security, does meet with a word that doth awaken him, that is from the Spirit of the Lord. This is clear, 2 Sam. xii, 7, where the words that are spoken to David by Nathan, were from the spirit of the Lord, because they were blessed unto that end, to awaken David from his security. And that word, Matth. xxv, 6, where that voice that was raised at midnight, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh,' is from the Lord, because it was effectual

to raise them from their security. As likewise, ye may take this instance of it; a Christian, when he is under the exercise of unbelief, and questioning his interest, does meet with a word that strengthens his faith and confidence, that word is from the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion.

(2) Ye may know it by this, the words that are born in upon you from the Spirit of the Lord, have a more precious lustre and excellency than the words that are born in upon you from the spirit of delusion. And there are three things that point out the lustre of a word that is born in from the Spirit of the Lord,

[1] This points it out, and that is, it is a seasonable word; it is spoken in season. As for instance, when a Christian is like to give over his hope, and meets with a word that will strengthen faith: and Christ's words have that property, Isa. L.4. He hath 'the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to him that is weary,'and all His words are fitly spoken, and are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

[2] That which points out their lustre, is this, the words that are spoken unto you by Christ, are spoken with authority; so that ye cannot resist the power from whence they are spoken. This is clear from the words of Christ, Matth. vii, 29, He 'taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.'

[3] There is this also which makes out the lustre of the words of Christ, born in upon you, and it is this; these words do exceedingly affect your hearts, there is much tenderness and love that accompanies a word from Christ to your soul, Luke xxiv, 32, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?' The talking of Christ with them made their souls to burn within them. The words that are from a spirit of delusion, have not this tenderness.

(3) Ye may know when a word is born in upon you from the Spirit of the Lord by this; the word that is born in upon you from God's Spirit, increases your delight in duty. This is clear from that sermon that is preached by Haggai, Hag. i, 4. It is an evidence these words were from the Lord, because it put the people to a more serious building of the temple. So I would in short say this; that word that puts you from the exercise of duty, or makes you to lose delight in the exercise of duty, that word is from a spirit of delusion.

(4) Ye may know it by this; the word that discovers to a Christian both his sinfulness and his duty, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion. This is clear, Acts ii, 37. The words that were spoken by Peter were from the Lord because they had these two effects: the discovery of sin which is holden forth in that word, 'They were pricked in their heart.' Likewise the discovery of duty, they cry forth, 'Men and brethren what



shall we do?' And I would only say these two things from this:

[1] Satan may discover unto you your sin, and bear it strongly upon you, but he will never bear in a word upon you that will discover unto you your duty. So that word that hath these two best attendants, the discovery of sin, and the discovery of duty, that word is from the Spirit of the Lord.

[2] I would say this from it, question that word to be from a spirit of delusion that discovers your sin unto you, and withal causes you to give over hope.

(5) Ye may know it by this, from the scope and end of these words. The words that are born in upon you from the spirit of delusion, the end of them is surely sin; but the words that are born in upon you that are from the Spirit of the Lord, the end of them is surely duty. As for instance, the devil will bear in promises upon a presumptuous sinner, amid he will bear in threatenings upon a discouraged Christian, and the end of both of these is sin. But the end of Christ's speaking unto a soul, is one of these two: He will bear in promises upon a discouraged sinner, that his hands may be strengthened, and not hang down; and He will bear in threatenings upon a presumptuous sinner, that so he may see his state.

(6) Ye may know it by this; the word that removes a Christian's confusions and darkness, that word is from

the Spirit of the Lord, and not from a spirit of delusion. As for instance, when a Christian is under debates concerning his interest, or concerning such a truth of the gospel, and meets with a word in a sermon that will clear that truth unto him, and withal affect the heart with the clearing of it, that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord. But, more particularly, if one were questioning concerning the nature of original sin, and had darkness and confusion about that sin and meets with a word in a sermon that would clear the nature of that sin; that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord. Likewise in this, when a Christian is under darkness and confusion, concerning the nature of the free grace of Christ, and meets with a word in a sermon that would clear the nature of the freedom of his love, and withal makes his heart to burn within him; that word is certainly from the Spirit of the Lord.

(7) We shall only add this, by which ye may know to distinguish between words born in upon you by the Spirit of the Lord, and words born in upon you by the spirit of delusion, and it is this; the words that are born in upon you by the Spirit of the Lord, they have the more constant impression upon your spirits, than these words that are born in upon you by a spirit of delusion.

2, Now the second thing we would speak to upon the misinterpreting of sermons is, to point out a little when the devil doth apply threatenings, and when the Spirit of

God doth apply them; for, it is certain, the devil may apply threatenings to a Christian under the exercise of the law. I would only say this. There are these three ends of the devil that he hath before him in applying threatenings.

(1) Either to make you to give over your hope and confidence, that ye may cry forth, My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord: that is the great end the devil hath in applying threatenings.

(2) To keep a Christian from the exercise of duty and to make the exercise of religion a burden unto him: that is the devil's scope in applying threatenings.

(3) There is this end of the devil in applying threatenings, that a Christian may have low and sinistrous (wrong) apprehensions of Christ, that your thoughts of Christ may be lower than they are; that is the devil's end in applying threatenings.

I would also speak a little to these ends of Christ's in applying threatenings; and, we conceive, there are these four ends in applying threatenings that Christ hath: He applies threatenings that we may awake from our security, that so He may rouse us up. When He applies that word of threatening, Song ii, 10, He challenges the bride, but the end of that challenge is, that she may waken from her present state. The second end that Christ hath in challenging and threatening is, that a Christian may be put to

the exercise of duty. He will apply threatenings to a Christian that neglects the duty of prayer, that so he may be put to pray more than he did. The third end He applies threatenings is, that we may be put to forsake our idols; that is the great end He hath before Him in applying threatenings, that we may be put to draw that conclusion, 'What have I to do any more with idols.' The fourth end that Christ hath before Him in applying threatenings is, to impose upon a Christian a divine necessity of making use of Him. There is not one threatening ye meet with, but this is the language of it, Embrace Christ, and that will answer the threatening; the end of threatening is to make you to make more use of Christ.

Now, to shut up this, upon the misinterpreting of sermons, I shall add these two words:

(1) It is a notable evidence of a complete Christian, to take up [to know] when Christ speaks, and when temptations and the devil speak. This is clear, Song ii, 8.10. The spouse takes notice of this, 'My beloved spake'; and this is 'the voice of my beloved': she knows it to be the voice of Christ. And Song v, 2, 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh': she knows Christ's voice from any other. And, John x, 4, 'The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.'

(2) I would only say this, the mistaking of Christ's voice in prayer, or in preaching, obstructs much of a Christian's communion with God. There is nothing that will obstruct

a Christian's fellowship with Christ so much as this, to want clearness to take up when Christ speaks; and when the devil and temptations speak. Something of this may be gathered, 1 Sam. iii, 7, the Lord appears to Samuel three times, and calls upon him; but the reason why Samuel doth not correspond with God is, because he knew not His voice, and was not acquainted with the Lord; therefore, if a Christian would have communion with Christ, he should study to know His voice.

Now, as for misinterpreting providence and scripture, I shall not say much; only I would speak these two things on the misinterpreting providence, that Christians, under the exercise of the law, ordinarily have.

1. Study to judge of Christ, rather by His words than by His providence. Judge of Christ rather by what He hath said of Himself, than by what dispensations say of Him. Believe it, as long as ye build faith upon providence, it will be changeable

2. I would say this, time meaning of providence is most dark. I can compare the meaning of providence to nothing so fit as the writing that Beishazzar saw upon the wall; he saw it, but he knew not the meaning of it. It would require the spirit of a Daniel to understand the meaning of providence. It is easy to know there is something intended in such a providence; but it is hard to know what is the particular intention of such a particular providence. It would require a spirit very well acquainted

with God to interpret providence; and I shall tell you the ground of misinterpreting. Unbelief, sense and reason, do oft misinterpret providence. All these three interpreters put a wrong gloss upon the meaning of providence. Unbelief will always read wrath in a cross; sense will evermore read wrath in a rod; and reason will never believe when providence contradicts a promise; but will say, 'This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait for the Lord any longer!' Therefore, I entreat you, do not misinterpret providence, but interpret providence more by faith, than by these three bad interpreters. I would also say this, if ye would interpret providence aright, take not providence by halves, but take the whole series of providences together.

Second, the **SECOND DEVICE** of the devil, by which he assaults Christians that are under the exercise of the law is this, he studies to bring those Christians into a spirit of discouragement. When once a soul begins to see its whoring and departing from God, and to see the terrors of the law, then the devil presses that soul into the spirit of discouragement; like that which is said, 2 Cor. ii, 7, 'Swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' And I would only, in discoursing of this device, speak a little to these three things. 1. I shall give you some evidences by which a Christian may know when he is under a spirit of discouragement, and is excessive in the thing.

(1) The first evidence by which a Christian may know he

is under a spirit of discouragement is this, when your discouragement leads you to the neglect of duty, then ye may know your discouragement is excessive, and ye are under the spirit of it. This is clear, Jer. xx, 9, where Jeremiah's trouble, no doubt, was excessive; and the ground of it is, because it put him from the exercise of duty. 'I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.' His discouragement was accompanied with a conclusion, that he would preach no more. So then, if ye would know when your discouragement is above the due limits and bounds, ye may know it to be this, when your discouragement makes you to neglect the exercise of duty.

(2) The second evidence of a person under the spirit of discouragement, and when he is excessive in it is this, when your discouragements lead you to cast at [to question] your comforts, and the consolations that are allowed you, and not to receive them; this discouragement is excessive. This was so in David, Psalm Lxxvii, 2, his 'soul refused to be comforted': he would not allow of, nor accept these comforts that were suitable for him to take. Jer. viii, 18, when Jeremiah is under the spirit of discouragement, because, when he would have comforted himself, his heart is sorrowful, his heart is faint in him, he could not apply the consolations of God that were suitable for him to take.

(3) The third mark of one that is under discouragement

is this, such a Christian as casts at [has doubts about] his faith, and at his confidence, that Christian is certainly under a spirit of discouragement; as is clear, Lam. iii, 18. Jeremiah was under the spirit of discouragement when he cried forth, 'My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.' Whenever your discouragements lead you to quit your faith, and cast off your confidence, ye may know they are excessive.

(4) The fourth mark of one that is under a spirit of discouragement is this; he hath wrong and sinistrous apprehensions of Christ. This was clear in David, when he was under the spirit of discouragement, Psalm Lxxvii, 3, 'I remembered God, and was troubled.' The remembrance of God was a trouble to David when he was under a spirit of discouragement. And also it is clear from that word, Jer. xv, 18, where Jeremiah, under a spirit of discouragement, cries out, 'Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? His discouragements led him to such a length, as to charge God with Lying. I would only say this, by the way, discouragement will sometimes speak falsehood, and discouragement will sometimes speak blasphemy, as Jeremiah's discouragement, which went such a length, that in a manner, it speaks blasphemy against God, and charges Him with lying.

(5) The fifth evidence of one that is under a spirit of discouragement, and whose discouragements are excessive, and above bounds is, when his discouragements make



him to have no delight in the exercise of duty. There is no piece of a duty that a discouraged person goes about, but this may be engraven upon it, "This duty is my burden", and, "This duty is my cross." It is impossible for a discouraged Christian to go about duty with delight. Every duty he is called unto becomes a burden unto him when he is under the spirit of discouragement; he knows not what it is to obey; he knows not what it is to believe.

2. The second thing that we would speak to upon this device of the devils is this,

(1) That discouragement is big with child of apostasy, and departing from God. There is nothing that so much travails in birth of apostasy from God, as discouragement; according to that word, Lam. i, 8, 'She sigheth, and turneth backward.' All their exercises are to backsliding; for it is impossible for a discouraged Christian not to backslide and depart from God.

(2) Discouragement of spirit is one of the most damnable sins that a Christian can fall into; therefore, ye will see that among them that are cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, he that is discouraged is put in the first place, Rev. xxi, 8, 'The fearful and unbelieving'; that is, the discouraged creatures, and the unbelieving creatures; they are first in the roll of these that are cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone.

3. Lastly, I would say this, upon this device of the devil,

that a Christian will condemn himself rather for presumption than for discouragements; for discouragement seems to be a more gospel and spiritual thing than presumption. But, be sure of it, that discouragement is as great a sin in the sight of God, if not more, than presumption. Discouragement charges God with lies; it contradicts the truth of the scripture; it makes a Christian cast at duty.

Now, there is this **THIRD DEVICE** of the devil by which he assaults Christians that are under the exercise of the law, and it is this; he studies to kill their convictions. When a Christian is under the exercise of the law, it is impossible for him not to be convinced. And I shall tell you six convictions of a Christian under the exercise of the law that the devil studies to mortify.

1. When ye are convinced of your former evil way and all your iniquities are presented unto you, and, in a roll, set before your face, the devil studies to mortify that conviction.

2. The second conviction of a Christian under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction of their lost and desperate estate. When once ye come to draw this conclusion, woe is me, I am undone; then the devil studies by all means to mortify that conviction, and to kill it in the birth.

3. There is that third conviction of a Christian under the

exercise of the law that the devil studies to mortify, and that is, the conviction of their utter inability to save themselves. When once ye come to sing that first song of the gospel, the first line, as it were, of the precious tidings of salvation, which is this, There is no name under heaven, by which I can be saved, but by the name of Christ, then the devil studies, by all means, to mortify that conviction, that ye may be brought back to make mention of your own righteousness, and to seek salvation through a covenant of works.

4. The fourth conviction of one under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is this; the conviction of the necessity of the advantage, and of the beauty of believing. When once a person comes to that length, 'I will never be made up till I believe!' then the devil studies, by all means, to have that conviction mortified; for when ye are brought to this conviction, ye are upon the utmost lines and borders of Satan's kingdom, and are stepping into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

5. The fifth conviction of a person, under the exercise of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction that he hath, how unsupportable a burden sin is. When once ye begin to cry forth, who would bear the burden of iniquity?; then the devil studies, by all means, to make sin to appear exceeding light unto you.

6. The last conviction of a Christian under the exercise

of the law, that the devil studies to mortify is, the conviction how sad and woeful an estate, how intolerable a lot it is to live under the wrath of the living God. When a Christian is brought to be convinced of sin, and of the burden of sin, and of the burden of wrath, then by all means that he can, he studies to mortify and kill these convictions. And, I would only speak these two things unto this device of the devil.

(1) The first is this, oft times a Christian, under the exercise of the law, helps to mortify his own convictions. We have a cursed correspondence and harmony with the devil in mortifying these convictions; for when we are convinced of the excellency of believing, we mortify that conviction, through the apprehended difficulty that is in the exercise of that grace. When once we begin to believe, if it succeed not presently well with us, we cast at faith and the exercise of believing, as that which is impossible to be done.

(2) I would say this, that though a Christian hath won up [attained] to these convictions, he is not to rest upon these, but to press forward unto closing with Christ, and would study to have his peace and union made up with Him.

There is this FOURTH DEVICE of the devil by which he assaults Christians under the exercise of the law, and that is, by darkening the freedom of the gospel, and the offers of the everlasting covenant. He makes you believe

the gospel requires more of you than it doth. I would only say this to these that are assaulted with this, which is a most ordinary device, to wit, the darkening of the freedom of the gospel; I would only desire them to take along with them these five things, by which they may destroy all his temptations.

1. Upon this: know that there is no impediment put in your way of closing with Christ, but the want of willingness. If ye be willing to have Christ ye may have Him; the gospel requires no qualification, but only to have a willing mind, Rev. xxii, 17, where the gate of the gospel seems to be cast open. The gospel is proposed in these terms, 'Let him that is a-thirst come'; but lest this should be the subject of this discouragement, he casts the gate a little more open 'And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;' if ye have a will to close with Christ, ye may close with Him.

2. I would say this farther, your unbelief proceeds from the want of willingness, rather than from the want of qualifications. I know some Christians who will not close with Christ because they were never in such a measure under the exercise of the law. They never knew what it was to mourn for sin, and they never knew what it was to sit down and lament over themselves, because of their sinful state; and therefore, they will not close with Christ. Know this, ye may father your unbelief upon the want of willingness, and upon no other thing, John v,

40; Christ fathers their unbelief upon this, 'Ye will not come to me,' it is not said, ye are not able to come to me, but ye will not do it. If ye had a will, then certainly ye might come forward.

3. I would say this, to answer any temptations that arise from the devil in darkening the freedom of the gospel, and it is, that all the promises of the gospel that hold out the qualifications of those that come unto Christ, are to be interpreted this way; that they hold out the qualifications of those that will come, but do not hold forth the qualifications of these that should come, as Matthew xi, 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' for your souls. It is not to be supposed that weariness and being heavy laden are the qualifications of those that should come to Christ, but are the qualifications of those that will come to Christ. As if Christ would have said, there are none that I need bid come, but only these that are weary and heavy laden; for it is only these that will come; but if ye would come otherwise, He would not receive you. And,

4. I say this, I never read (which may make the disputers of this age ashamed), of any, who after they were invited to come to Christ, that stood up and disputed, 'Will ye embrace me? Am I fitted to come?' Are there any such disputes as this recorded of any, when there were so many converted at the preaching of the gospel, Acts ii, or anywhere else? 'I am not fit to come to Christ, I have

not been humbled for my sin, I have not been under such a measure of sorrow for sin.'No, they embraced Christ without debate. I would pose these that delight so much in disputing, if they have any such practice of any of the saints in scripture, before their closing with Christ, to be a pattern of their walk? Did the three thousand Jews ever mention such a dispute; and yet some of them did consent unto the killing of Christ. But when the gospel is offered unto them, they stand not to debate their qualifications, but they close with Him offered unto them in the gospel.

5. Lastly, I would say this unto you, by which ye may answer the temptations of the devil, when he darkens the freedom of the gospel unto you, and it is this; he will say, ye dare not close with Christ, because ye are such a sinner. I tell you, the devil calls a Christian under the exercise of the law, 'legion, for ye are many'.

But I would have you making use of that argument of the devil, which he uses to hinder you from closing with Christ, and make it a ground of your closing with Him. Would ye know how to improve aright the discoveries of your sin? It is even this, to lay upon yourselves a necessity of closing with Christ. Would ye know how ye should improve the discoveries of the multitude of sins? To cry in faith that word, Psalm xxv, 11, 'O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.' That divinity will not hold out at the court of men; but it holds out well there, where

love sits as arbitrary judge. That is a strong argument at the court of love, 'Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great, though it be not a strong argument at the court of justice; that argument justice will cast out but love will take hold of such an argument.

There is this FIFTH DEVICE of the devil, by which he assaults Christians under the exercise of the law, and that is, he studies by all means to make you to fall asleep. The great scope of all his temptations is this, to bring you from a spirit of discouragement to a spirit of security. This is a most ordinary and most fruitful device of the devil. I would only say this, if ye improve not your discouragements for making use of Christ, your discouragements will end in security, and in hardness of heart; therefore, ye would beware to dwell long in the place of the breaking forth of children. But when Christ gives you the first summons, to go out of the land of Egypt, and to go into the land of Canaan, ye should study to obey the summons.

I shall, at this time, shut up our discourse; only I would have you take notice of these things.

1. That it is the duty of a Christian, if he can, to observe the month, and day of the month, and year of God, when first Christ brought him out of the land of Egypt; that is, a Christian would study to observe the first day when love began to overcome him, when he was made a captive unto Christ. We conceive in this we may fitly allude



to that word, Deut. xvi, 1, 'Observe the month Abib; for in the month of Abib, the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt'; keep it in perpetual record. I confess it is undeniable then, there are some Christians whom Christ doth overcome at unawares; so that if ye would ask them when they did begin to believe, . . . "they might say with that blind man, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see,'but of the time I know not.

2. I would say this, the observation of the month and day when Christ brought you out of the land of Egypt, will be a notable help to answer many temptations of unbelief. I tell you what is the mother of much unbelief among Christians; they can never pitch upon the day when first they began to close with Christ, but if that day were once well known, we might better answer the temptations of unbelief. We might say, I know Christ was once kind to me, and once He took upon Him my iniquity. Would ye know the first song of a Christian, when he is planted in that pleasant land, it is this, Jer. xx, 7, 'Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed'against me. O to be a captive of Christ, it is a noble captivity. When seventy years are accomplished ye should not cry out, 'Turn about our captivity, as the streams in the south.'

3. There is this, thirdly, that we would say upon what we have spoken, and it is this, that it is the concernment of a

Christian, as he would not wrong his own peace and satisfaction, that he would not needlessly dwell at mount Sinai. There are some whom we cannot get persuaded to touch mount Sinai, and some, when they have once touched mount Sinai, they will not venture to touch mount Sion; though Christ held forth to them the sceptre of His love, they will sit down and say, He hath a controversy with me, I dare not adventure to go unto Him. I would only ask this question of you, did ye ever know that Christ killed a contrite soul? Was there ever any that could leave that imputation upon precious Christ, that He is a hard master, and will not easily condescend to take in these that are strangers unto Him?

4. There is this, fourthly, that I would say unto you, and it is this; think ye this good divinity, that because ye are sinful, therefore ye will not close with Christ; because ye are sick, therefore ye will not go to the physician? This was Peter's divinity, Luke v, 8, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man.' But I would pose you with this, think ye it good reasoning that because I am filthy, therefore I will not go to the fountain; because I am sick, I will not go to the physician; or think ye it good arguing, that because ye are under bondage, therefore, ye will not go to Him whose name is the Redeemer of His people? Think ye it good divinity, that because ye are holden captive by your own lusts, ye will not go to Him whose name is Jesus, who saves His people from their sins?

5. There is this, fifthly, that I would say unto you, and it is this; I would desire and seriously adjure you, that you would not be found despisers of the precious offers of this everlasting gospel. I would wish that some were no surer of heaven than some, if not many of you, may be certain of hell, and eternity of pain, and seclusion from the presence of the Lord.

I would only say these five words, and shall close, unto these that despise the precious offer of this everlasting gospel, and who account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

(1) I would say this unto you, that despise and never knew what it was to lay hold upon the precious offers of Christ. Know this of a certainty, Christ is either the best friend or the worst enemy. The vengeance of a crucified Saviour is the most terrible vengeance, as the love of a dying Christ is the most sweet, the most conquering, and the most refreshing love. Think ye, ye will be able to endure that war, when Christ shall enter the lists with you? I would say this, every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood; but the noise of this battle and war that Christ shall eternally wage against your immortal souls, shall be with scorching and everlasting pain.

(2) I would say this to the despisers of this everlasting gospel: Behold, behold, the day is approaching, when instead of the doctrine that ye now hear, 'Come unto me all

ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,'ye shall hear that sad doctrine from heaven, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'Ye that will not obey that precious invitation, Come unto me,shall, of necessity, obey that sad sentence, 'Depart from me.' There is no sitting of that command; ye may sit [treat with carelessness] the precious offers and invitations of Christ, but that sentence ye shall not sit.

(3) There is this I would say unto the despisers of this gospel, and it is this, what will be your exercise, O reprobates, when ye shall behold Christ sitting upon a white throne? I tell you four things that will be a reprobate's exercise when he shall behold Christ upon the throne.

1. He will be much in the exercise of prayer. I tell you two prayers ye shall pray then, and pray them most fervently; and believe it, the day is coming when ye shall indeed pray that prayer, if ye embrace not Christ, when ye shall be standing before the throne. The first prayer is this, 'O call time again! O call time again! O call time again!'O reprobates, what would ye give for an hour in that day, when ye shall appear before the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ, and shall see Him passing sentence upon you, whom so often ye have dishonoured and undervalued? What would you give for one hour? 'O, ten thousand worlds for one hour! Ten thousand worlds for

one sermon to embrace Him, whom so often I have despised!"The second prayer that ye shall pray in that great and terrible day of the Lord, is this, 'Hills and mountains fall on us, and cover us from the face of the Lamb, and from Him that sits upon the throne!'Ye that never knew what it was to pray seriously, ye shall pray seriously, and with much zeal in that day. O to hear your prayers in that day of the Lord! How will ye lament over, and exceedingly bewail your abusing of sermons, and the precious invitations of the gospel, and your selling of your time into the hands of your enemies?

2. This will be your exercise, and that is the exercise of shame and confusion of spirit. I will pose your consciences with this. See if you can remember it? What will be your thoughts of Christ when ye shall see Him clothed with majesty as with a robe, and with righteousness as with a garment, when you shall see the same Christ to whom oft times ye have spoken that word, 'Depart from me, we will not have this man to reign over us'? O will you not condemn yourselves for folly in that day, that this so precious and excellent object should have been so oft despised by you?

3. This will be your exercise, and that is, the exercise of fear. In that day your knees shall smite one against another, and ye shall be fearing that dreadful sentence of separation from God that shall come out against you. Did you ever see the leaves of a tree shaken in a windy day?

So shall the knees, and all the joints of the stoutest-hearted sinner in Sion shake in that day, when Christ shall render up the kingdom unto His Father.

4. The exercise of hope shall be much your exercise in that day. Ay, ye shall be much in the exercise of hope and expectation; ye shall be waiting at His throne till the sentence he passed against you.

5. I would say this unto you, know that within threescore and ten years, ye shall once judge and determine, whether ye did right in refusing Christ or embracing Him. O if ye heard the screechings of the souls that are in everlasting chains! If a minister of the gospel could possibly go down to hell, and preach that doctrine, 'Upon the embracing of Christ, ye shall win out,' we conceive if they could exercise any grace in hell, there would not be one inhabitant of that place that would refuse these offers. And, believe it, we do now summon you in His great name, who is the great master and author of this gospel, that ye would take Him and embrace Him; and, therefore, this shall meet you in the day of the Lord, if ye take Him not, that he hath once been offered unto you, and ye would not embrace Him.

6. Lastly, I would say this unto you, and it is this; it had been better for you that ye had never been born, if ye do not embrace Jesus Christ. The curse of all the three blessed persons of the glorious Trinity will light upon you. The curse of the Father, the first person of the

blessed Trinity, the curse of the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity, and the curse of the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity; and the curse of the four beasts, and the curse of the twenty-four elders, and the curse of all the angels that are in heaven, and the curse of all the patriarchs, and the curse of all the blessed apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, will light on the head of them that undervalue Christ. And, O, will ye refuse Christ, since ye may get Him for a look; for one look ye shall get an infinite object, Christ; and will ye not give one look for Christ? Ye shall get Him for a look; according to that word, 'Look unto me all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved.' O, take precious Christ at so low a rate. Now to Him that can persuade you, we desire to give praise. Amen.