

The Christian in Complete Armour - Part 12

by William Gurnall

The power of faith is necessary to quench the fiery darts of Satan, which are shot with a fiery wrath and lead to hell-fire.

Scripture: Psalm 37:2, Psalm 119:37, Proverbs 28:20, Zechariah 3:2, Romans 6:14, Ephesians 6:16, Hebrews 11:29, James 1:14, 1 John 2:15-16, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Faith", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

William Gurnall emphasizes the necessity of faith as a shield for Christians to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, which represent the temptations and attacks from the enemy. He describes the nature of these enemies as wicked and united, and explains that faith not only helps resist these temptations but also extinguishes their harmful effects. Gurnall encourages believers to recognize the power of faith in overcoming both enticing and frightening temptations, asserting that true faith leads to victory over sin and the world. He urges Christians to engage in prayer and expect God's help, reinforcing that faith is essential for spiritual warfare.

Transcript

DIRECTION VIII.--SECOND GENERAL PART.

[Argument pressing the exhortation.]

'Whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked' (Eph. 6:16)

We have done with the exhortation, and now come to the second general part of the verse, viz. a powerful argument pressing this exhortation, contained in these words--'Whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.' 'Ye shall be able.' Not an uncertain 'may be ye shall;' but he is peremptory and absolute--'ye shall be able.' But what to do? 'able to quench'--not only to resist and repel, but 'to quench.' But what shall they 'quench?' Not ordinary temptations only, but the worst arrows the devil hath in his quiver--'fiery darts;' and not some few of them, but 'all the fiery darts of the wicked.' In this second general there are two particulars. first. The saint's enemy described--'The wicked.' second. The power and puissance of faith over the enemy--'Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

Division First.--The Saint's Enemy Described.

'The Wicked.'

Here we have the saint's enemy described in three particulars. First. In their nature--'wicked.' Second. In their unity--'wicked,' or 'wicked one,' J@Ø B@<ZD@Ø, in the singular number. Third. In their warlike furniture and provision, with which they take the field against the saints--'darts,' and they are 'fiery.'

[The saints enemy described by their nature.]

First. The saint's enemy is here described by their nature--'wicked.' Something I have said of this, ver. 12 where Satan is called 'spiritual wickednesses.' [1] I shall at present therefore pass it over with the lighter hand. Certainly there is some special lesson that God would have his people learn even from this attribute of the devil and his limbs--for the whole pack of devils and devilish men are here intended --that they are represented to the saint's consideration by this name so oft as 'wicked.' I shall content myself with two ends, that I conceive God aims at by this name.

First End. They are called 'wicked,' as an odious name whereby God would raise his children's stomachs into a loathing of sin above all things in the world, and provoke their pure souls as to hatred and detestation of all sin, so [to] a vigorous resistance of the devil and his instruments, as such, who are wicked; which is a name that makes him detestable above any other. God would have us know, that when he himself would speak the worst he can of the devil, he can think of no name for the purpose like this--to say he is 'the wicked one.' The name which exalts God highest, and is the very excellency of all his other excellencies, is, that he is 'the holy One,' and 'none holy as the Lord.' This therefore gives the devil the blackest brand of infamy, that he is 'the wicked one,' and none wicked to that height besides himself. Could holiness be separated from any other of God's attributes--which is the height of blasphemy to think --the glory of them would be departed. And could the devil's wickedness be removed from his torments and misery, the case would be exceedingly altered. We ought then to pity him whom now we must no less than hate and abominate with a perfect hatred.

1. Consider this, all ye who live in sin, and blush not to be seen in the practice of it. O that you would behold your faces in this glass, and you would see whom you look like! Truly, no other than the devil himself and in that which makes him most odious, which is his wickedness. Never more spit at the name of the devil, nor seem to be scared at any ill-shapen picture of him; for thou carriest a far more ugly one --and the truest of him that is possible--in thy own wicked bosom. The more wicked the more like the devil; who can draw the devil's picture like himself? If thou beest a wicked wretch thou art of the devil himself. 'Cain,' it is said, 'was of that wicked one,' I John 3:12. Every sin thou committest is a new line that the devil draws on thy soul. And if the image of God in a saint--which the Spirit of God is drawing for many years together in him--will be so curious a piece when the last line shall be drawn in heaven, O think, then, how frightful and horrid a creature thou wilt appear to be, when after all the devil's pains here on earth to imprint his image upon thee, thou shalt see thyself in hell as wicked to the full as a wicked devil can make thee.

2. Consider this, O ye saints, and bestow your first pity on those poor forlorn souls that are under the power of a wicked devil. It is a lamentable judgment to live under a wicked government, though it be but of men. For a servant in a family to be under a wicked master is a heavy plague. David reckons it among other great curses. 'Set thou a wicked man over him,' Ps. 109:6. O what is it then to have a wicked spirit over him! He would show himself very kind to his friend that should wish him to be the worst slave in Turkey, rather than the best servant of sin or Satan. And yet see the folly of men. Solomon tells us, 'When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn,' Prov. 29:2. But when a wicked devil rules, poor besotted sinners laugh and are merry. Well, you who are not out of your wits so far, but know sin's service to be the

creature's utmost misery, mourn for them that go themselves laughing to sin, and by sin to hell.

And again, let it fill thy heart, Christian, with zeal and indignation against Satan in all his temptations. Remember he is wicked, and he can come for no good. Thou knowest the happiness of serving a holy God. Surely, then, thou hast an answer ready by thee against this wicked one comes to draw thee to sin. Canst thou think of fouling thy hands about his base nasty drudgery, after they have been used to so pure and fine work as the service of thy God is? Listen not to Satan's motions except thou hast a mind to be 'wicked.'

Second End. They are called 'wicked,' as a name of contempt, for the encouragement of all believers in their combat with them. As if God had said, 'Fear them not; they are a wicked company you go against'--cause, and they who defend it, both 'wicked.' And truly, if the saints must have enemies, the worse they are the better it is. It would put mettle into a coward to fight with such a crew. Wickedness must needs be weak. The devils' guilt in their own bosoms tells them their cause is lost before the battle is fought. They fear thee, Christian, because thou art holy, and therefore thou needest not be dismayed at them who are wicked. Thou lookest on them as subtle, mighty, and many, and then thy heart fails thee. But look on all these subtle mighty spirits as wicked ungodly wretches, that hate God more than thee, yea thee for thy kindred to him, and thou canst not but take heart. Whose side is God on that thou art afraid? Will he that rebuked kings for touching his anointed ones and doing them harm in their bodies and estates, stand still, thinkest thou, and suffer these wicked spirits to attempt the life of God himself in thee, thy grace, thy holiness, without coming in to thy help? It is impossible.

[The saint's enemy described by their unity.]

Second. The saint's enemy is set out by their unity--'fiery darts of the wicked'--'of the wicked one.' It is as if all were shot out of the same bow, and by the same hand; as if the Christian's fight were a single duel with one single enemy. All the legions of devils, and multitudes of wicked men and women, make but one great enemy. They are all one mystical body of wickedness; as Christ and his saints [are] one mystical holy body. One Spirit acts Christ and his saints; so one spirit acts devils, and ungodly men his limbs. The soul is in the little toe; and the spirit of the devil in the least of sinners. But I have spoken something of this subject elsewhere.[2]

[The saint's enemy described

by their warlike provision.]

Third. The saint's enemy is here described by their warlike furniture and provision with which they take the field against the saints--'darts,' and those of the worst kind, 'fiery darts.'

First. Darts. The devil's temptations are the darts he useth against the souls of men and women. They may fitly be so called in a threefold respect.

1. Darts or arrows are swift. Thence is our usual expression, 'As swift as an arrow out of a bow.' Lightning is called God's arrow, because it flies swiftly. 'He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them,' Ps. 18:14, that is, lightning like arrows. Satan's temptations flee like a flash of lightning--not long of coming. He needs no more time than the cast of an eye for the despatch of a temptation. David's eye did but unawares fall upon Bathsheba, and the devil's arrow was in his heart before he could shut his casement. Or the hearing of a word or two [will suffice]. Thus, when David's

servants had told what Nabal the churl said, David's choler was presently up--an arrow of revenge wounded him to the heart. What quicker than a thought? Yet how oft is that a temptation to us? one silly thought riseth in a duty, and our hearts, before intent upon the work, are on a sudden carried away, like a spaniel after a bird that springs up before him as he goes after his master. Yea, if one temptation speeds not, how soon can he send another after it!--as quick as the nimblest archer. No sooner than one arrow is delivered, but he hath another on the string.

2. Darts or arrows fly secretly. And so do temptations.

(1.) The arrow oft comes afar off. A man may be wounded with a dart and not see who shot it. The wicked are said, to shoot their arrows 'in secret at the perfect,' and then, 'they say, Who shall see them?' Ps 64:4, 5. Thus Satan lets fly a temptation. Sometimes he useth a wife's tongue to do his errand; another while he gets behind the back of a husband, friend, servant, &c., and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a devil in Peter tempting his master, or suspected that Abraham should be his instrument to betray his beloved wife into the hands of a sin? Yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret that he borrows God's bow to shoot his arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is God chides and is angry, when it is the devil that tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits God's voice. Job cries out of 'the arrows of the Almighty,' how 'the poison of them drank up his spirit,' and of 'the terrors of God that did set themselves in array against him,' Job 6:4, when it was Satan all the while that was practicing his malice and playing his pranks upon him. God was friends with this good man, only Satan begged leave--and God gave it for a time--thus to affright him. And poor Job cries out, as if God had cast him off and were become his enemy.

(2.) Darts or arrows, they make little or no noise as they go. They cut their passage through the air, without telling us by any crack or report, as the cannon doth, that they are coming. Thus insensibly doth temptation make its approach;--the thief is in before we think of any need to shut the doors. The wind is a creature secret in its motion, of which our Saviour saith, 'We know not whence it cometh and whither it goeth,' John 3:8, yet, 'we hear the sound thereof,' as our Saviour saith in the same place. But temptations many times come and give us no warning by any sound they make. The devil lays his plot so close, that the soul sees not his drift, observes not the hook till he finds it in his belly. As the woman of Tekoah told her tale so handsomely, that the king passeth judgement against himself in the person of another before he smelt out the business.

3. Darts have a wounding killing nature, especially when well headed and shot out of a strong bow by one that is able to draw it. Such are Satan's temptations--headed with desperate malice, and drawn by a strength no less than angelical; and this against so poor a weak creature as man, that it were impossible, had not God provided good armour for our soul, to outstand Satan's power and get safe to heaven. Christ would have us sensible of their force and danger, by that petition in his prayer which the best of saints on this side heaven have need to use--'Lead us not into temptation.' Christ was then but newly out of the list, where he had tasted Satan's tempting skill and strength; which, though beneath his wisdom and power to defeat, yet well he knew it was able to worst the strongest of saints. There was never any besides Christ that Satan did not foil more or less. It was Christ's prerogative to be tempted, but not lead into temptation. Job, one of the chief worthies in God's army of saints, who, from God's mouth, is a nonesuch, yet was galled by these arrows shot from Satan's bow, and put to great disorder. God was fain to pluck him out of the devil's grip, or else he would have been quite worried by that lion.

Second. Satan's warlike provision is not only darts, but 'fiery darts.' Some restrain these fiery darts to some particular kind of temptation, as despair, blasphemy, and those which fill the heart with terror and horror. But this, I conceive, is too strait; but faith is a shield for all kind of temptations--and indeed there is none but may prove a 'fiery' temptation; so that I should rather incline to think all sorts of temptations to be comprehended here, yet so as to respect some in an especial manner more than others. These shall be afterwards instanced in.

Question. Why are Satan's darts called fiery ones?

Answer 1. They may be said to be 'fiery,' in regard of that fiery wrath with which Satan shoots them. They are the fire this dragon spits, full of indignation against God and his saints. Saul, it is said, 'breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,' Acts 9:1. As one that is inwardly inflamed, his breath is hot--a fiery stream of persecuting wrath came as out of a burning furnace from him. Temptations are the breathings of the devil's wrath.

Answer 2. They may be said to be 'fiery,' in regard of the end they lead to, if not quenched; and that is hell-fire. There is a spark of hell in every temptation; and all sparks fly to their element. So all temptations tend to hell and damnation, according to Satan's intent and purpose.

Answer 3. And chiefly they may be said to be 'fiery,' in regard of that malignant quality they have on the spirits of men--and that is to enkindle a fire in the heart and consciences of poor creatures. The apostle alludes to the custom of cruel enemies, who used to dip the heads of their arrows in some poison, whereby they became more deadly, and did not only wound the part where they lighted, but inflamed the whole body, which made the cure more difficult. Job speaks of 'the poison of them which drank up his spirits,' Job 6:4. They have an envenoming and inflaming quality.

Division Second.--The Power and Puissance of Faith over this Enemy.

'The shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

The fiery darts of Satan which the believing soul is able by faith to quench may be described as of two sorts. First. Either those that do pleasingly entice and bewitch with some seeming promises of satisfaction to the creature. Or, Second. Such as affright and carry horror with them. Both are fiery, and quenched by faith, and only faith.

FAITH'S FIRST QUENCHING POWER.

[Satan's 'fiery darts' of pleasing temptations,

and faith's power to quench them.]

We shall begin with the first sort of Satan's fiery darts, viz. those temptations that do pleasingly entice and bewitch the soul with some seeming promises of satisfaction to the creature. The note is this:-- Doctrine. That faith will enable a soul to quench the fire of Satan's most pleasing temptations. First. We will show you that these enticing temptations have a fiery quality to them. Second. That faith is able to quench them.

[Satan's pleasing temptations have a 'fiery' quality.]

First. We shall show you that Satan's enticing temptations have a fiery quality in them. They have an inflaming quality. There is a secret disposition in the heart of all to all sin. Temptation doth not fall on us as

a ball of fire on ice or snow, but as a spark on tinder, or [as] lightning on a thatched roof, which presently is on a flame. Hence in Scripture, though tempted by Satan, yet the sin is charged on us. 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,' James 1:14. Mark! it is Satan tempts, but our own lust draws us. The fowler lays the shrap,[3] but the bird's own desire betrays it into the net. The heart of a man is marvellous prone to take fire from these darts. 'Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out,' Prov. 26:20. Thus the 'fiery darts' on Christ. There was no combustible matter of corruption in him for Satan to work upon. But our hearts being once heated in Adam could never cool since. A sinner's heart is compared to 'an oven.' 'They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker,' Hosea 7:4. The heart of man is the oven, the devil the baker, and temptation the fire with which he heats it; and then no sin comes amiss. 'I lie,' saith David, 'among them that are set on fire,' Ps. 57:4. And, I pray, who sets them on fire? The apostle will resolve us, 'set on fire of hell,' James 3:6. O friends! when once the heart is inflamed by temptation, what strange effects doth it produce! how hard to quench such a fire, though in a gracious person! David himself, under the power of a temptation so apparent that a carnal eye could see it--Joab I mean, who reprov'd him--yet was hurried to the loss of seventy thousand men's lives; for so much that one sin cost. And if the fire be so raging in a David, what work will it make where no water is nigh, no grace in the heart to quench it? Hence the wicked are said to be 'mad' upon their idols, Jer. 1:38--spurring on without fear or wit, like a man inflamed with a fever that takes his head; there is no holding of him then in his bed. Thus the soul possessed with the fury of temptation runs into the mouth of death and hell, and will not be stopped.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. O how should this make us afraid of running into a temptation when there is such a witchery in it. Some men are too confident. They have too good an opinion of themselves--as if they could not be taken with such a disease, and therefore will breathe in any air. It is just with God to let such be shot with one of Satan's darts, to make them know their own hearts better. Who will pity him whose house is blown up, that kept his powder in the chimney corner? 'Is thy servant a dog,' saith Hazael, II Kings 8:13. Do you make me a beast, sunk so far below the nature of man as to imbrue my hands in these horrid murders? Yet, how soon did this wretch fall into the temptation, and, by that one bloody act upon his liege lord, which he perpetrated as soon as he got home, show that the other evils, which the prophet foretold of him, were not so improbable as at first he thought. Oh, stand off the devil's mark, unless you mean to have one of the devil's arrows in your side! Keep as far from the whirl of temptation as may be. For if once he got you within his circle, thy head may soon be dizzy. One sin helps to kindle another; the less the greater, as the brush the logs. When the courtiers had got their king to carouse and play the drunkard, he soon learned to play the scorner: 'The princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorn,' Hosea 7:5.

Use Second. Hath Satan's darts such an enkindling nature? take heed of being Satan's instrument in putting fire to the corruption of another. Some on purpose do it. Idolaters set out their temples and altars with superstitious pictures, embellished with all the cost that gold and silver can afford them, to bewitch the spectator's eye. Hence they are said to be 'inflamed with their idols,' Isa. 57:5--as much as any lover with his minion. And the drunkard, he enkindles his neighbour's lust, 'putting the bottle to him,' Hab. 2:15. O what a base work are these men employed about! By the law it is death for any wilfully to set fire on his neighbour's house. What then deserve they that set fire on the souls of men, and that no less than hell-fire? But, is it possible thou mayest do it unawares by a less matter than thou dreamest on. A silly child playing with a lighted straw may set a house on fire which many wise cannot quench. And truly Satan

may use thy folly and carelessness to kindle lust in another's heart. Perhaps an idle light speech drops from thy mouth, and thou meanest no great hurt; but a gust of temptation may carry this spark into thy friend's bosom, and kindle a sad fire there. A wanton attire, which we will suppose thou wearest with a chaste heart, and only because it is the fashion, yet may ensnare another's eye. And if he that kept a pit open but to the hurt of a beast, sinned, how much more thou, who givest occasion to a soul's sin, which is a worse hurt? Paul 'would not eat flesh while the world stood, if it made his brother offend,' I Cor. 8:13. And canst thou dote on a foolish dress and immodest fashion, whereby many may offend, still to wear it? 'The body,' Christ saith, 'is better than raiment.' The soul, then, of thy brother is more to be valued surely than an idle fashion of thy raiment. We come to the second branch of the point.

[Faith's power to quench

Satan's pleasing temptations.]

Second. We shall show you that faith will enable a soul to quench the pleasing temptations of the wicked one. This is called our 'victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,' I John 5:4. Faith sets its triumphant banner on the world's head. The same St. John will tell you what is meant by the world: 'Love not the world;... for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,' I John 2:15, 16. All that is in the world is said to be 'lust,' because it is food and fuel for lust. Now faith enables the soul to quench those darts which Satan dips and envenoms with these worldly lusts --called by some the worldlings Trinity.

First Dart of pleasing temptations. 'The lust of the flesh.' Under this are comprehended those temptations that promise pleasure and delight to the flesh. These indeed carry fire in the mouth of them; and when they light on a carnal heart, do soon inflame it with unruly passions and beastly affections. The adulterer is said to burn in his lust, Rom. 1:27. The drunkard to be 'inflamed with his wine,' Isa. 5:11. No sort of temptation works more strongly than those which present sensual pleasure and promise delight to the flesh. Sinners are said to 'work all uncleanness with greediness'--with a kind of covetousness; for the word imports they never have enough.[4] When the voluptuous person hath wasted his estate, jaded his body in luxury, still the fire burns in his wretched heart. No drink will quench a poisoned man's thirst. Nothing but faith can be helpful to a soul in these flames. We find Dives in hell burning, and not 'a drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue' found there. The unbelieving sinner is in a hell above ground. He burns in his lust, and not a drop of water, for want of faith, to quench the fire. By faith it is said those glorious martyrs 'quenched the violence of the fire,' Heb. 11. And truly the fire of lust is as hot as the fire of martyrdom. By faith alone this is quenched also: 'We...were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,...But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,...he saved us,' Titus 3:3, 4. Never could they shake off these lusts, the old companions, till by faith they got a new acquaintance with the grace of God revealed in the gospel.

[How faith quenches the 'lust of the flesh.']

Question. How does faith quench this fiery dart of sensual delights?

Answer 1. As it undeceives and takes off the mist from the Christian's eyes, whereby he is now enabled to see sin in its naked being and callow[5] principles before Satan hath plumed [it]. It gives him the native taste and relish of sin before the devil hath sophisticated it with his sugared sauce. And truly, now sin proves a homely piece, a bitter morsel. Faith hath a piercing eye; it is 'the evidence of things not seen.' It looks behind the curtain of sense, and sees sin, before its fiery was on and it be dressed for the stage, to

be a brat that comes from hell, and brings hell with it. Now, let Satan come if he please, and present a lust never so enticing, the Christian's answer is ready. 'Be not cheated, O my soul,' saith faith, 'with a lying spirit.' He shows thee a fair Rachel, but he intends thee a blear-eyed Leah; he promises joy, but he will pay thee sorrow. The clothes that make this lust so comely are not its own. The sweetness thou tastest is not native, but borrowed to deceive thee withal. 'Thou art Saul,' saith the woman of Endor, 'why hast thou deceived me?' Thus, faith can call sin and Satan by their own names when they come in a disguise. 'Thou art Satan,' saith faith, 'why wouldst thou deceive me? God hath said sin is bitter as gall and wormwood, and wouldst thou make me believe I can gather the sweet fruits of true delight from this root of bitterness? grapes from these thorns?'

Answer 2. Faith doth not only enable the soul to see the nature of sin void of all true pleasure, but also how transient its false pleasures are. I will not lose, saith faith, sure mercies for transient uncertain pleasures. This made Moses leap out of the pleasures of the Egyptian court into the fire of 'affliction,' Heb. 11:25, because he saw them 'pleasures for a season.' Should you see a man in a ship throw himself overboard into the sea, you might at first think him out of his wits; but if, a little while after, you should see him stand safe on the shore, and the ship swallowed up of the waves, you should then think he took the wisest course. Faith sees the world and all the pleasures of sin sinking: there is a leak in them which the wit of man cannot stop. Now is it not better to swim by faith through a sea of trouble and get safe to heaven at last, than to sin in the lap of sinful pleasures till we drown in hell's gulf? It is impossible that the pleasure of sin should last long.

(1.) Because it is not natural. Whatever is not natural soon decays. The nature of sugar is to be sweet, and therefore it holds its sweetness; but sweeten beer or wine never so much with sugar, in a few days they will lose their sweetness. The pleasure of sin is extrinsical to its nature, and therefore will corrupt. None of that sweetness which now bewitches sinners will be tasted in hell. The sinner shall have his cup spiced there by his hand that will have it a bitter draught.

(2.) The pleasures of sin must needs be short, because life cannot be long, and they both end together. Indeed, many times the pleasure of sin dies before the man dies. Sinners live to bury their joy in this world. The worm breeds in their conscience before it breeds in their flesh by death. But be sure that the pleasure of sin never survives this world. The word is gone out of God's mouth, every sinner shall 'lie down in sorrow and wake in sorrow.' Hell is too hot a climate for wanton delights to live in. Now faith is a provident, wise grace, and makes the soul bethink itself how it may live in another world. Whereas the carnal heart is all for the present; his snout is in the trough, and, while his draught lasts he thinks it will never end. But faith hath a large stride; at one pace it can reach over a whole life of years and see them done while they are but beginning. 'I have seen an end of all perfections,' saith David. He saw the wicked, when growing on their bed of pleasure, cut down, and burning in God's oven, as if it were done already, Ps. 37:2. And faith will do the like for every Christian according to its strength and activity. And who would envy the condemned man his feast which he hath in his way to the gallows.

Answer 3. Faith outvies Satan's proffers by showing the soul where choicer enjoyments are to be had at a cheaper rate. Indeed, 'best is best cheap.' Who will not go to that shop where he may be best served? This law holds in force among sinners themselves. The drunkard goes where he may have the best wine; the glutton where he may have the best cheer. Now faith presents such enjoyments to the soul that are beyond all compare best. It leads to the promise, and entertains it there, at Christ's cost, with all the rich dainties of the gospel. Not a dish that the saints feed on in heaven but faith can set before the soul, and give it, though not a full meal, yet such a taste as shall melt it in 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' This

sure must needs quench the temptation. When Satan sends to invite the Christian to his gross fare, will not the soul say, 'Should I forsake those pleasures that cheered, yea ravished, my heart, to go and debase myself with sin's polluted bread, where I shall be but a fellow-commoner with the beast, who shares in sensual pleasures with man--yea, become worse than the beast--a devil, like Judas, who arose from his Master's table to sit at the devil's?'

Second Dart of pleasing temptations. 'The lust of the eyes.' This is quenched by faith. By 'the lust of the eyes,' the apostle means those temptations which are drawn from the world's pelf and treasure. [It is] called so, in the first place, because it is the eye that commits adultery with these things. As the unclean eye looks upon another man's wife, so the covetous eye looks upon another's wealth to lust after it. In the second place it is called so, because all the good that in a manner is received from them is but to please the eye. 'What good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?' Ecc. 5:11. That is, if a man hath but to buy food and raiment enough to pay his daily shot of necessary expenses, the surplusage serves only for the eye to play the wanton with. Yet we see how pleasing a morsel they are to a carnal heart. It is rare to find a man that will not stoop, by base and sordid practices, to take up this golden apple. When I consider what sad effects this temptation had on Ahab, who, to gain a spot of ground of a few acres, that could not add much to a king's revenues, durst swim to it in the owner's blood, I wonder not to see men whose condition is necessitous nibbling at the hook of temptation, where the bait is a far greater worldly advantage. This is the door the devil entered into Judas by. This was the break-neck of Demas' faith, he embraced 'this present world.' Now faith will quench a temptation edged with these.

[How faith quenches the 'lust of the eyes.']

1. Faith persuades the soul of God's fatherly care and providence over it. And where this breast-work is raised the soul is safe so long as it keeps within its line. 'Oh!' saith Satan, 'if thou wouldst but venture on a lie--make bold a little with God in such a command--this wedge of gold is thine, and that advantage will accrue to thy estate.' Now faith will teach the soul to reply, 'I am well provided for already, Satan; I need not thy pension; why should I play the thief for that which, if good, God hath promised to give?' 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb. 13:5. How canst thou want, O my soul, that by the promise hast command of God's purse? Let him that is 'without God in the world' shift and shirk by his wits; do thou live by thy faith.

2. Faith teaches the soul that the creature's comfort and content comes not from abundance but God's blessing. And to gain the world by a sin is not the road that leads to God's blessing. 'A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent,' Prov. 28:20. 'Shouldst thou,' saith faith, 'heap up the world's goods in an evil way, thou art never the nearer to the content thou expectest.' It is hard to steal one's meat and then crave a blessing on it at God's hands. What thou gettest by sin Satan cannot give thee quiet possession of, nor discharge those suits which God will surely commence against thee.

3. Faith advanceth the soul to higher projects than to seek the things of this life. It discover a world beyond the moon--and there lies faith's merchandise --leaving the colliers of this world to load themselves with clay and coals, while it trades for grace and glory. Faith fetcheth its riches from on far. Saul did not more willingly leave seeking his father's asses when he heard of a kingdom, than the believing soul leaves proling for the earth now it hears of Christ and heaven, Ps. 39:6, 7. We find, ver. 6, holy David branding

the men of the world for folly, that they troubled themselves so much for naught: 'Surely,' saith he, 'they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.' And, ver. 7, we have him with a holy disdain turning his back upon the world as not worth his pains: 'And now, Lord, what wait I for?' As if he had said, Is this the portion I could be content to sit down with?--to sit upon a greater heap of riches than my neighbour hath? 'My hope is in thee; deliver me from all my transgressions,' ver. 8. Every one as they like. Let them that love the world take the world; but, Lord, pay not my portion in gold or silver, but in pardon of sin. This I wait for. Abraham, he by faith had so low an esteem of this world's treasure that he left his own country to live here a stranger, in hope of 'a better,' Heb. 11:16.

Third Dart of pleasing temptations. 'The pride of life.' There is an itch of pride in man's heart after the gaudy honours of the world; and this itch of man's proud flesh the devil labours to scratch and irritate by suitable proffers. And when the temptation without and lust within meet, then it works to purpose. Balaam loved the way that led to court; and therefore spurs on his conscience--that boggled more than the ass he rode on--till the blood came. The Jews when convinced of Christ's person and doctrine, yet were such slaves to their honour and credit, that they part with Christ rather than hazard that. 'For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,' John 12:43. Now faith quenches this temptation, and, with a holy scorn, disdains that all the preferment the world hath to heap on him should be a bribe for the least sin. 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' Heb. 11:24, though by this adoption he might have been heir, for aught we know, of the crown; yet this he threw at his heels. It is not said, 'he did not seek to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' though that would have sounded a high commendation, having so fair an opportunity. Some would not have scrupled a little court flattery, thereby to have cologued[6]From Webster's. -- SDB themselves into further favour--having so fair a stock in the king's heart to set up with. But, it is said that he 'refused to be called' by this name. Honour came trouling in upon him, as water at a flowing tide. Now, to stand against this flood of preferment, and no breach made in his heart to entertain it--this was admirable indeed. Nay, he did not refuse this preferment for any principality that he hoped for elsewhere. He forsook not one court to go to another, but to join with a beggarly reproached people. Yea, by rejecting their favour he incurred the wrath of the king. Yet faith carried him through all those heights and depths of favour and disgrace, honour and dishonour; and truly, wherever this grace is--allowing for its strength and weakness--it will do the like. We find, Heb. 11:33, how Samuel and the prophets 'through faith subdued kingdoms.' This, sure, is not only meant of the conquest of the sword --though some of them performed honourable achievements that way--but also by despising the honour and preferments of them. This indeed many of the prophets are famous for; and in particular Samuel, who, at God's command, gave away a kingdom from his own house and family by anointing Saul, though himself at present had possession of the chief's magistrate's chair. And others, ver. 37, we read, 'were tempted;' that is, when ready to suffer, were offered great preferments if they would bend to the times by receding a little from the bold profession of their faith; but they chose rather the flames of martyrdom than the favour of princes on those terms. But, more particularly to show you how faith quenches this temptation.

[How faith quenches 'the pride of life.']

1. Faith takes away the fuel that feeds this temptation. Withdraw the oil and the lamp goes out. Now that which is fuel to this temptation is pride. Where this lust is in any strength, no wonder the creature's eyes are dazzled with the sight of that which suits the desires of his heart so well. The devil now by a temptation does but broach, and so give vent to, what the heart itself is full with. Simon Magus had a haughty spirit; he would be Simon μX("H--some great man, and therefore, when he did but think an opportunity as

offered to mount him up the stage, he is all on fire with a desire of having a gift to work miracles, that he dares to offer to play the huckster with the apostle. Whereas a humble spirit loves a low seat; is not ambitious to stand high in the thoughts of others; and so, while he stoops in his own opinion of himself, the bullet flees over his head which hits the proud man on the breast. Now it is faith lays the heart low. Pride and faith are opposed; like two buckets, if one goes up the other goes down in the soul. 'Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith,' Hab. 2:4.

2. Faith is Christ's favourite, and so makes the Christian expect all his honour from him. Indeed it is one of the prime acts of faith to cast the soul on God in Christ as all-sufficient to make it completely happy; and therefore, when a temptation comes --'soul, thou mayest raise thyself in the world to this place or that esteem, if thou wilt but dissemble thy profession, or allow thyself in such a sin'--now faith chokes the bullet. Remember whose thou art, O my soul. Hast thou not taken God for thy liege-lord, and wilt thou accept preferment from another's hand? Princes will not suffer their courtiers to become pensioners to a foreign prince--least of all to a prince in hostility to them. Now, saith faith, the honour or applause thou gettest by sin makes thee pensioner to the devil himself, who is the greatest enemy God hath.

3. Faith shows the danger of such a bargain, should a Christian gain the glory of the world for one sin.

(1.) Saith faith, Hadst thou the whole world's empire, with all bowing before thee, this would not add to thy stature one cubit in the eye of God. But thy sin which thou payest for the purchase blots thy name in his thoughts; yea, makes thee odious in his sight. God must first be out of love with himself before he can love a sinner as such. Now, wilt thou incur this for that? Is it wisdom to lose a prize, to draw a blank?

(2.) Saith faith, The world's pomp and glory cannot satisfy thee. It may kindle thirstings in thy soul, but quench none; it will beget a thousand cares and fears, but quiet none. But thy sin that procures these hath a power to torment and torture thy soul.

(3.) When thou hast the world's crown on thy head, how long shalt thou wear it? They are sick at Rome, as he said, and die in princes' courts, as well as at the spital; yea, kings themselves are put as naked to their beds of dust as others. In that day all thy thoughts will perish with thee. But the guilt of thy sin, which was the ladder by which thou didst climb up the hill of honour, will dog thee into another world. These and such like are the considerations by which faith breaks off the bargain.

4. Faith presents the Christian with the exploits of former saints, who have renounced the world's honour and applause, rather than defile their consciences, and prostitute their souls to be deflowered by the least sin. Great Tamerlane carried the lives of his ancestors into the field with him, in which he used to read before he gave battle, that he might be stirred up not to stain the blood of his family by cowardice or any unworthy behaviour in fight. Thus, faith peruses the roll of Scripture-saints, and the exploits of their faith over the world, that the Christian may be excited to the same gallantry of spirit. This was plainly the apostle's design in recording those worthies, with the trophies of their faith, Heb. 11--that some of their nobleness might steal into our hearts while we are reading of them, as appears, 'Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' Heb. 12:1. Oh, what courage does it put into the soldier to see some before him run upon the face of death! Elisha, having seen the miracles of God wrought by Elijah, smites the waters of Jordan with his mantle, saying, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?--'and they parted,' II Kings 2:14. Thus faith makes use of the exploits of former saints and turns them into prayer. Oh where is the Lord God of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and those other worthies, who by faith have trampled on the world's pomp and

glory, subdued temptations, stopped the mouths of lion-like lusts? Art not thou, O God, god of the valleys--the meanest saints, as well as of the mountains --more eminent heroes? Do not the same blood and spirits run in the veins of all believers? Were they victorious, and shall I be the only slave, and of so prostrate a spirit, like Issachar, to couch under my burden of corruption without shaking it off? Help me, O my God, that I may be avenged of these my enemies. And when it hath been with God it will also plead with the Christian himself. 'Awake,' saith faith, 'O my soul, and prove thyself akin to these holy men --that thou art born of God as they were--by thy victory over the world.'

[Faith's victory over the world distinguished from
that attained by some of the better heathens.]

Objection. But some may say, if this be all faith enables to, this is no more than some heathens have done. They have trampled on the profits, pleasures of the world, who never knew what faith meant.

Answer. Indeed, many of them have done so much by their moral principles, as may make some, who would willingly pass for believers, ashamed to be outgone by them who shot in so weak a bow. Yet it will appear that there is a victory of faith, which, in the true believer, outshoots them more than their moral conquest doth the debauched conversations of looser Christians.

1. Distinction. Faith quenches the lust of the heart. Those very embers of corruption, which are so secretly raked up in the inclination of the soul, find the force and power of faith to quench them. Faith purifies the heart, Acts 15:9. Now none of their conquests reach the heart. Their longest ladder was too short to reach the walls of this castle. They swept the door, trimmed a few outward rooms; but the seat and sink of all, in the corruption of man's nature, was never cleansed by them; so that the fire of lust was rather pent in than put out. How is it possible that could be cleansed, the filthiness of which was never known to them? Alas! they never looked so near themselves to find that enemy within them which they thought was without. Thus, while they laboured to keep the thief out he was within, and they knew it not. For they did either proudly think that the soul was naturally endued with principles of virtue, or vainly imagined it to be but an *abrasa tabula*--white paper, on which they might write good or evil as they pleased. Thus you see the seat of their war was in the world without them, which, after some sort, they conquered; but the lust within remained untouched, because a *terra incognita*--an unknown region to them. It is faith from the word that first discovers this unfound land.

2. Distinction. Faith's victory is uniform. Sin in Scripture is called a 'body,' Rom. 6:6, because made up of several members, or as the body of an army, consisting of many troops and regiments. It is one thing to beat a troop or put a wing of an army to flight, and another thing to rout and break the whole army. Something hath been done by moral principles, like the former. They have got some petty victory, and had the chase of some more gross and exterior sin; but then they were fearfully beaten by some other of sin's troops. When they seemed to triumph over 'the lust of the flesh' and 'eye'--the world's profits and pleasures--they were at the same time slaves to 'the pride of life,' mere *gloriæ animalia*--creatures of fame--kept in chains by the credit and applause of the world. As the sea which, they say, loses as much in one place of the land as it gains in another; so, what they got in a seeming victory over one sin they lost again by being in bondage to another, and that a worse, because more spiritual. But now, faith is uniform, and routs the whole body of sin, that not one single lust stands in its unbroken strength. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. 6:14. 'Sin shall not'--that is, no sin; it may stir like a wounded soldier on his knees--they may rally like broken troops, but never will they be

long master of the field where true faith is seen.

3. Distinction. Faith enables the soul not only to quench these lusts, but, the temptation being quenched, it enables him to use the world itself against Satan, and so beat him with his own weapon by striking his own cudgels to his head. Faith quenches the fire of Satan's darts, and then shoots them back on him. This it doth by reducing all the enjoyments of the world which the Christian is possessed of into a serviceableness and subordination for the glory of God.

Some of the heathens' admired champions, to cure 'the lust of the eyes,' have from a blind zeal plucked them out; to show the contempt of riches, have thrown their money into the sea; to conquer the world's honour and applause, have sequestered themselves from all company in the world--a preposterous way that God never chalked. Shall we call it a victory or rather a frenzy? The world by this time perceives their folly. But faith enables for a nobler conquest. Indeed, when God calls for any of these enjoyments, faith can lay all at Christ's feet. But while God allows them, faith's skill and power is in sanctifying them. It corrects the windiness and flatulent nature of them so, that what on a naughty heart rots and corrupts, by faith turns to good nourishment in a gracious soul. If a house were on fire, which would you count the wiser man--he that goes to quench the fire by pulling the house down, or he that by throwing good store of water on it, doth this as fully, and also leaves the house standing for your use? The heathen and some superstitious Christians think to mortify by taking away what God gives us leave to use; but faith puts out the fire of lust in the heart, and leaves the creature to be improved for God's glory and enjoyed to the Christian's comfort.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. This may be a touchstone for our faith, whether of the right make or no; is thy faith a temptation‑quenching faith? Many say they believe. Yes, that they do! They thank God they are not infidels. Well, what exploits canst thou do with thy faith? Is it able to defend thee in a day of battle, and cover thy soul in safety when Satan's darts flee thick about thee? Or is it such a sorry shield that lets every arrow of temptation pierce thy heart through it? Thou believest, but still as very a slave to thy lust as ever. When a good fellow calls thee out to a drunken meeting, thy faith cannot keep thee out of the snare, but away thou goest, as a fool to the stocks. If Satan tells thee thou mayest advantage thy estate by a lie, or cheat in thy shop, thy faith stands very tamely by and makes no resistance. In a word, thou hast faith, and yet drivest a trade of sin in the very face of it! Oh! God forbid that any should be under so great a spirit of delusion to carry such a lie in their hand and think it a saving faith. Will this faith ever carry thee to heaven that is not able to bring thee out of hell? for there thou livest while under the power of thy lust. 'Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely,... and come and stand before me,' Jer. 7:9. If this be faith, well fare and honest heathens who escaped these gross pollutions of the world, which you like beasts with your faith lie wallowing in. I had rather be a sober heathen than a drunken Christian, a chaste heathen than an unclean believer.

Oh venture not the life of your souls with such a paper shield. Come to him for a faith that is the faith maker--God I mean. He will help thee to a faith that shall quench the very fire of hell itself, though kindled in thy bosom, and divide the waves of thy lust in which now thou art ever drowned--as once he did the sea for Israel--that thou shalt go on dry land to heaven, and thy lusts not be able to knock off the wheels of thy chariot. But, if thou attemptest this with thy false faith, the Egyptians' end will be thine. 'By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned,' Heb. 11:29. Though true faith gets safely through the depths of temptation, yet false faith will drown by the way.

But, perhaps thou canst tell us better news than this, and give us better evidence for the truth of thy faith than so. Let us therefore hear what singular thing hath been done by thee since a believer. The time was thou wert as weak as water; every puff of wind, blast of temptation, blew thee down; thou wert carried as a dead fish with the stream. But, canst thou say [that] since thou hast been acquainted with Christ thou art endued with a power to repel those temptations which before held thy heart in perfect obedience to their commands? Canst thou now be content to bring thy lusts, which once were of great price with thee--as those believers did their conjuring books, Acts 19:19--and throw them into the fire of God's love in Christ to thy soul, there to consume them? Possibly thou hast not them at present under thy foot in a full conquest. Yet have they begun to fall in thy thoughts of them? and is thy countenance changed towards them to {from} what it was? Be of good comfort, this is enough to prove thy faith of a royal race. 'When Christ cometh,' said the convinced Jews, 'will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?' John 7:31. And when Christ comes by faith into the heart, will he do greater works than these thy faith hath done?

Use Second. This helps to answer that objection by which many poor souls are discouraged from believing and closing with the promise. 'Oh,' saith the tempted soul, 'ye bid me believe--alas! how dare I, when I cannot get victory of such a lust, and am overcome by such a temptation? What have such as I to do with a promise?' See here, poor soul, this Goliath prostrated. Thou art not to believe because thou art victorious, but that thou mayest be victorious. The reason why thou art so worsted by thy enemy is for want of faith. 'If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established,' Isa. 7:9. Wouldst thou be cured before thou goest to the physician? that sounds harsh to thy own reason, and is as if thou shouldst say thou wilt not go to the physician till thou hast no need of him. No; go and touch Christ by faith that virtue may flow from him to thy soul; thou must not think to eat the fruit before thou plantest the tree. Victory over corruption is a sweet fruit; but found growing upon faith's branches. Satan does by thee as Saul did by the Israelites, who weakened their hands in battle by keeping them fasting. Up and eat, Christian, a full meal on the promise, if thou wouldst find thy eyes enlightened and thy hands strengthened for the combat with thy lusts. It is one part of the 'doctrine of devils,' which we read of, I Tim. 4:3, to forbid 'meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.' But the grand doctrine of the devil which above all he would promote is, to keep poor trembling souls from feeding by faith on the Lord Jesus; as if Christ were some forbidden fruit! Whereas, God hath appointed him above all other, that he should be received with thanksgiving of all humble sinners. And therefore, in the name of God, I invite you to this feast. Oh, let not your souls--who see your need of Christ, and are pinched at your very heart for want of him--be lean from day to day from your unbelief; but come, 'eat, and your souls shall live.' Never was child more welcome to his father's table than thou art to Christ's, and that feast which stands on the gospel board.

Use Third. Make use of faith, O ye saints, as for other ends and purposes, so particularly for this, of quenching this kind of fiery darts, viz. enticing temptations. It is not the having of a shield, but the holding and wielding of it, that defends the Christian. Let not Satan take thee with thy faith out of thy hand, as David did Saul in the cave, with his spear sticking in the ground which should have been in his hand.

[Directions how to use the shield of faith

to quench enticing temptations.]

Question. But how would you have me use my shield of faith for my defence against these fiery darts of Satan's enticing temptations?

Answer. By faith engage God to come in to thy succour against them. Now, there are three engaging acts of faith which will bind God--as we may so say with reverence--to help thee, because he binds himself to help such.

Direction 1. The first is the prayerful act of faith. Open thy case to God in prayer, and call in help from heaven--as the governor of a besieged castle would send a secret messenger to his general or prince to let him know his state and straits. The apostle James saith, 'Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not,' chap. 4:2. Our victory must drop from heaven if we have any. But it stays till prayer comes for it. Though God had a purpose to deliver Israel out of Egypt, yet no news of his coming till the groans of his people rang in his ears. This gave heaven the alarm, 'Their cry has come up to God,... and God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant,' Ex. 2:24. Now the more to prevail upon God in this act of faith, fortify thy prayer with those strong reasons which saints have used in like cases. As,

(1.) Engage God from his promise when thou prayest against any sin. Show God his own hand in such promises as these, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you,' Rom. 6:14. 'He will subdue our iniquities,' Micah 7:19. Prayer is nothing but the promise reversed, or God's word formed into an argument, and retorted by faith upon God again. Know, Christian, thou hast law on thy side; bills and bonds must be paid, Ps. 119:37. David is there praying against the sins of a wanton eye and a dead heart, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.' And see how he urgeth his argument in the next words--'Stablish thy word unto thy servant.' A good man is as good as his word, and will not a good God? But where finds David such a word for help against these sins? surely in the covenant; it is the Magna Charta. The first promise held forth thus much, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.'

(2.) Plead with God from relation when thou art against any sin. Art thou one God hath taken into his family? Hast thou chosen God for thy God? Oh what an argument hast thou here! 'I am thine, Lord, save me,' saith David. Who will look after the child if the father will not? Is it for thy honour, O God, that any child of thine should be a slave to sin? 'Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.' 'Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me,' Ps. 119:132.

(3.) Engage God from his Son's bloody death to help thee against thy lusts that were his murderers. What died Christ for but to 'redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people,' Titus 2:14. And shall not Christ be reimbursed of what he laid out? Shall he not have the price of his blood and purchase of his death? In a word, what is Christ praying for in heaven, but what was in his mouth when praying on earth? That his Father would 'sanctify them, and keep them from the evil of the world.' Thou comest in a good time to beg that of God which thou findest Christ hath asked for thee.

Direction 2. A second way to engage God is by faith's expecting act; when thou hast been with God expect good from God. 'I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up,' Ps. 5:3. For want of this many a prayer is lost. If you do not believe, why do you pray? and if you believe, why do you not expect? By praying, you seem to depend on God; by not expecting, you again renounce your confidence and ravel out your prayer. What is this but to take his name in vain, and to play bo‑peep with God? as if one that knocks at your door should, before you came to open it to him, go away and not stay to be spoken with. Oh Christian, stand to your prayer in a holy expectation of what you have begged upon the credit of the promise, and you cannot miss of the ruin of your lusts.

Question. O, but, saith the poor soul, shall not I presume to expect when I have prayed against my corruptions that God will bestow on me so great a mercy as this is?

Answer (1.) Dost thou know what it is to presume? He presumes that takes a thing before it is granted. He were a presumptuous man indeed that should take your meat off your table who never was invited. But I hope your guest is not over-bold that ventures to eat of what you set before him. For one to break into your house, upon whom you shut the door, were presumptuous; but to come out of a storm into your house when you are so kind as to call him in, is no presumption, but good manners. And, if God opens not the door of his promise to be a sanctuary to poor humbled sinners fleeing from the rage of their lust, truly then I know none of this side heaven that can expect welcome. God hath promised to be a king, a lawgiver, to his people. Now it is no presumption in subjects to come under their princes' shadow and expect protection from them, Isa. 33:21, 22. God there promiseth he 'will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby.' 'For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.' God speaks to his people as a prince or a state would to their subjects. He will secure them in their traffic and merchandise from all pirates and pickpockets; they shall have a free trade. Now, soul, thou art molested with many pirate lusts that infest thee and obstruct thy commerce with heaven--yea, thou hast complained to thy God what loss thou hast suffered by them; is it now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear who is thy liege-lord?

Answer (2.) You have the saints for your precedents, who, when they have been in combat with their corruptions, yea, been foiled by them, have even then acted their faith on God, and expected the ruin of those enemies which for the present have overrun them. Iniquities prevail against me, Ps. 65:3--he means his own sins and others' wrath. But see his faith. At the same time they prevailed over him he beholds God destroying of them, as appears in the very next words, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' See here, poor Christian, who thinkest thou shalt never get above deck. Holy David has a faith not only for himself, but also [for] all believers--of whose number I suppose thee one--'as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away!' And mark the ground he hath for his confidence, taken from God's choosing act, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts,' ver. 4. As if he had said, 'Surely he will not let them be under the power of sin or want of his gracious succour whom he sets so nigh himself.' This is Christ's own argument against Satan in the behalf of his people. 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee,' Zech. 3:2.

Answer (3.) Thou hast encouragement for this expecting act of faith from what God already hath enabled thee to do. Thou canst, if a believer indeed, through mercy say, that sin is not in that strength within thy soul as it was before thy acquaintance with Christ, his word and ways. Though thou art not what thou wouldst be, yet also thou art not what thou hast been. There was a time when sin played rex--king, in thy heart without control. thou didst go to sin as a ship to sea before wind and tide. Thou didst dilate and spread thy affections to receive the gale of temptation. But now the tide is turned, and runs against those motions, though weakly--being but new flood; yet thou findest a secret wrestling with them, and God seasonably succouring thee, so that Satan hath not all his will on thee. Well, here is a sweet beginning, and let me tell thee, this promiseth thee a readiness in God to perfect the victory; yea, God would have thy faith improve this into a confidence for a total deliverance. 'Moses,' when he slew the Egyptian, 'supposed his brethren would have understood,' by that little hint and essay, 'how that God by his hand would deliver them,' Acts 7:25. Oh it is a bad improvement of the succours God gives us, to argue from them to unbelief:

'He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, can he give bread also?' He broke my heart, saith the poor creature, when it was a rock, a flint, and brought me home when I was walking in the pride of my heart against him; but, can he give bread to nourish my weak grace? I am out of Egypt; but can he master those giants in iron chariots that stand betwixt me and Canaan? He helped me in such a temptation; but what shall I do the next bout? Oh,

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