

The Christian in Complete Armour - Part 2

by William Gurnall

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of being armed for the war against sin and Satan by putting on the whole armour of God, which includes Christ and the graces of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 5:48, Ephesians 6:11, Hebrews 5:12, James 1:3

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Armor"

Description

William Gurnall preaches about the importance of believers being fully equipped with the whole armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil. He emphasizes the need for believers to put on the complete armor of God, not leaving any part of their spiritual defense vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Gurnall highlights the significance of each piece of the armor, stressing the necessity of faith, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity in the Christian's spiritual warfare. He encourages believers to strive for perfection in their grace, to continually advance and grow in their spiritual walk, despite discouragement or feelings of inadequacy.

Transcript

the apostle had exhorted believers to encourage and bear up their fainting spirits on the Lord, and the power of his might. Now in these words he explains himself, and shows how he would have them do this, not presumptuously [to] come into the field without that armour which God hath appointed to be worn by all his soldiers, and yet with a bravado, to trust to the power of God to save them. That soul is sure to fall short of home (heaven I mean), who hath nothing but a carnal confidence on the name of God, blown up by its ignorance of God and himself. No, he that would have his confidence duly placed on the power of God, must conscientiously use the means appointed for his defence, and not rush naked into the battle, like that fanatic spirit at Munster, who would needs go forth, and chase away the whole army then besieging that city, with no other cannon than a few words charged with the name of the Lord of hosts, which he blasphemously made bold to use, saying, In the name of the Lord of hosts depart. But himself soon perisheth, to learn others wisdom by what he paid for his folly. What foolish braving language shall ye hear drop from the lips of the most profane and ignorant among us! They trust in God, hope in his mercy, defy the devil and all his works, and such like stuff, who are yet poor naked creatures without the least piece of God's armour upon their souls. To cashier such presumption from the saints' camp, he annexeth this directory to his exhortation, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' So that the words fall into these two general parts. FIRST, A direction annexed to the former exhortation, showing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord,

that is, by putting on the whole 'armour of God.' SECOND, A reason or argument strengthening this direction, 'that ye may be able to stand against the wile of the devil.'

DIRECTION I.--FIRST GENERAL PART.

[The Christian must be armed for the War, 'Put on the whole armour of God.']

In this part we have a direction annexed to the former exhortation, showing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord, that is, by putting on the whole 'armour of God.' In this observe, first, The furniture he directs, and that is 'armour.' second, The kind or quality of this armour--'armour of God.' third, The quantity or entireness of the armour--the 'whole' armour of God. fourth, The use of this armour--'put on' the whole armour of God.

BRANCH FIRST.

[The furniture or armour needful

--what it is.]

To begin with the first, the furniture which every one must get that would fight Christ's battles, [and that is 'armour.'] The question here will be, What is this armour?

First. By armour is meant Christ. We read of putting on the 'Lord Jesus,' Rom. 13:14, where Christ is set forth under the notion of armour. The apostle doth not exhort them for rioting and drunkenness to put on sobriety and temperance, for chambering and wantonness [to] put on chastity, as the philosopher would have done, but bids, 'put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;' implying thus much [that] till Christ be put on, the creature is unarmed. It is not a man's morality and philosophical virtues that will repel a temptation, sent with a full charge from Satan's cannon, though possibly it may the pistol-shot of some less solicitation; so that he is the man in armour, that is in Christ. Again,

Second. The graces of Christ, these are armour, as 'the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness,' and the rest. Hence we are bid also [to] 'put on the new man,' Eph. 4:24, which is made up of all the several graces, as its parts and members. And he is the unarmed soul, that is the unregenerate soul, not excluding those duties and means which God hath appointed the Christian to use for his defence. The phrase thus opened, the point is, to show that to be without Christ is to be without armour.

[The Christless and graceless soul is

without armour, and therein his misery.]

Observe. That a person in a Christless graceless state is naked and unarmed, and so unfit to fight Christ's battles against sin and Satan. Or thus, A soul out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend him against sin and Satan. God at first sent man forth in complete armour, 'being created in true righteousness and holiness,' but by a wile the devil stripped him, and therefore as soon as the first sin was completed, it is written, 'they were naked,' Gen. 3:7, that is, [they were] poor weak creatures, at the will of Satan, a subdued people disarmed by their proud conqueror, and unable to make head against him. Indeed it cost Satan some dispute to make the first breach, but after that he hath once the gates opened to let him in as conqueror into the heart of man, he plays rex [or king]. Behold, a troop of other sins crowd in after him, without any stroke or strife; instead of confessing their sins, they run their head in a bush, and

by their good-will would not come where God is, and when they cannot fly from him, how do they prevaricate before him? They peal one of another, shifting the sin rather than suing for mercy. So quickly were their hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And this is the woeful condition of every son and daughter of Adam; naked he finds us, and slaves he makes us, till God by his effectual call delivers us from the power of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son, which will further appear, if we consider this Christless state in a fourfold notion.

First. It is a state of alienation from God: 'Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,' &c. Eph. 2:12. Such an one hath no more to do with any covenant-promise, than he that lives at Rome hath to do with the charter of London, which is the birthright of its own denizens, not [of] strangers. He is without God in the world; he can claim no more protection from God, than an out-lawed subject from his prince. If any mischief befalls him, the mends is in his own hands; whereas God hath his hedge of special protection about his saints, and the devil, though his spite be most at them, dares not come upon God's ground to touch any of them, without particular leave. Now what a deplored condition is that wherein a soul is left to the wide world, in the midst of legions of lusts and devils, to be rent and torn like a silly hare among a pack of hounds, and no God to call them off! Let God leave a people, though never so warlike, presently they lose their wits, cannot find their hands. A company of children or wounded men may rise up, and chase them out of their fenced cities, because God is not with them; which made Caleb and Joshua pacify the mutinous Israelites at the tidings of giants and walled cities with this, 'They are bread for us, their defence is departed from them.' How much more must that soul be as bread to Satan, that hath no defence from the Almighty? Take men of the greatest parts, natural or acquired accomplishments, who only want an union with Christ, and renewing grace from Christ. O what fools doth the devil make of them, leading them at his pleasure, some to one lust, some to another! The proudest of them all is slave to one or other, though it be to the ruining of body and soul for ever. Where lies the mystery, that men of such parts and wisdom should debase themselves to such drudgery work of hell? Even here. They are in a state of alienation from God, and no more able of themselves to break the devil's prison, than a slave to run from his chain.

Second. The Christless state is a state of ignorance, and such must needs be naked and unarmed. He that cannot see his enemy, how can he ward off the blow he sends? One seeing prophet leads a whole army of blind men whither he pleaseth. The imperfect knowledge saints have here, is Satan's advantage against them. He often takes them on the blind side. How easily then may he with a parcel of good words carry the blind soul out of his way, who knows not a step of the right! Now that the Christless state is a state of ignorance, see Eph. 5:8: 'For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Ye were darkness, not in the dark, so one that hath an eye may be. A child of light is often in the dark concerning some truth or promise, but then hath a spiritual eye, which the Christless person wants, and so is darkness. And this darkness cannot be enlightened, but by its union with Christ, which is expressed in the following phrase: 'But now are ye light in the Lord.' As the eye of the body once put out, can never be restored by the creature's art, so neither can the spiritual eye--lost by Adam's sin--be restored by the teaching of men or angels. It is one of the diseases Christ came to cure, Luke 4:18. It is true, there is a light of reason, which is imparted to every man by nature, but this light is darkness compared with the saints', as the night is dark to the day, even when the moon is in its full glory. This night-light of reason may save a person from some ditch or pond--great and broad sins--but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions, which the saint sees like atoms in the beams of spiritual knowledge. There is such curious work the creature is to do, which cannot be wrought by candle-light of natural knowledge. Nay more, where the common illumination of the Spirit is superadded to this light of nature, yet there is

darkness compared with the sanctifying knowledge of a renewed soul, which doth both discover spiritual truths, and warm the heart at the same time with the love of truth, having like the sun a prolific and quickening virtue, which the other wants; so that the heart lies under such common illuminations, cold and dead. He hath no more strength to resist Satan, than if he knew not the command; whereas the Christian's knowledge, even when taken prisoner by a temptation, pursues and brings back the soul, as Abraham his nephew, out of the enemies' hands. This hints the third notion,

Third. The Christless state is a state of impotency: 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,' Rom. 5:6. What can a disarmed people that have not sword or gun do to shake off the yoke of a conquering enemy? Such a power hath Satan over the soul [as that], Luke 11:21, he is called the strong man that keeps the soul as his palace. If he hath no disturbance from heaven, he need fear no mutiny within; he keeps all in peace there. What the Spirit of God doth in a saint, that in a manner doth Satan in a sinner. The Spirit fills his heart with love, joy, holy desires, fears; so Satan fills the sinner's heart with pride, lust, lying. 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart?' saith Peter. And thus filled with Satan (as the drunkard with wine), he is not his own man, but Satan's slave.

Fourth. The state of unregeneracy is a state friendship with sin and Satan. If it be enmity against God, as it is, then friendship with Satan. Now it will be hard to make that soul fight in earnest against his friend. Is Satan divided? Will the devil within fight against the devil without?--Satan in the heart shut out Satan at the door? Sometimes indeed there appears a scuffle between Satan and a carnal heart, but it is a mere cheat, like the fighting of two fencers on a stage. You would think at first they were in earnest, but observing how wary they are, [and] where they hit one another, you may soon know they do not mean to kill; and that which puts all out of doubt, when the prize is done you shall see them making merry together with what they have got of their spectators, which was all they fought for. When a carnal heart makes the greatest bustle against sin by complaining of it, or praying against it, follow him but off the stage of duty, where he hath gained the reputation of a saint--the prize he fights for--and you shall see them sit as friendly together in a corner as ever.

[Use and Application.]

Use First. This takes away the wonder of Satan's great conquests in the world. When you look abroad and see his vast empire, and what a little spot of ground contains Christ's subjects, what heaps of precious souls lie prostrate under this foot of pride, and what a little regiment of saints march under Christ's banner, perhaps the strangeness of the thing may make you ask, I shell stronger than heaven? --the arms of Satan more victorious than the cross of Christ? No such matters. Consider but this one thing, and you will wonder that Christ hath any to follow him, rather than that he hath so few. Satan finds the world unarmed; when the prince of the world comes, he finds nothing to oppose; the whole soul is in a disposition to yield at first summons. And if conscience, governor for God in the creature, stands out a while, all the other powers, as will and affections, are in a discontent, like mutinous soldiers in a garrison, who never rest till they have brought over conscience to yield, or against its command set open the city gate to the enemy, and so deliver traitorously their conscience prisoner to their lusts. But when Christ comes to demand the soul, he meets a scornful answer. 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of the Most High. We will not have this man to reign over us.' With one consent they vote against him, and rise up as the Philistines against Samson, whom they called the destroyer of the country. 'Ye will not come unto me,' saith Christ. O how true are poor sinners to the devil's trust! They will not deliver the castle they hold for Satan till fired over their heads. Pharaoh opposeth Moses on one hand, and Israel cry out upon him on the other. Such measure hath Christ both at Satan's hand and the sinner's. That which lessened Alexander's conquests

was, [that] he overcame a people buried in barbarism, without arms and discipline of war; and that which heightened Caesar's, though not so many, he overcame a people more warlike and furnished. Satan's victories are of poor ignorant graceless souls, who have neither arms, nor hands, nor hearts to oppose. But when he assaults a saint, then he sits down before a city with gates and bars, and ever riseth with shame, unable to take the weakest hold, to pluck the weakest saint out of Christ's hands; but Christ brings souls out of his dominion with a high hand, in spite of all the force and fury of hell, which like Pharaoh and his host pursue them.

Use Second. This gives a reason why the devil hath so great a spite against the gospel. Why? Because this opens a magazine of arms and furniture for the soul. The word is that tower of David, 'Builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men,' Song 4:4. Hence the saints have ever had their armour, and the preaching of the gospel unlocks it. As gospel-light ascends, so Satan's shady kingdom of darkness vanisheth, Rev. 14:6; there one angel comes forth to preach the everlasting gospel, and another angel follows at his back, ver. 8, crying Victory, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.'

The very first charge the gospel gave to the kingdom of darkness, shook the foundations thereof, and put the legions of hell to the run. The seventy whom Christ sent out, bring this speedy account of their ambassage, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;' and Christ answers, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.' As if he had said, It is no news you tell me, I beheld Satan falling when I sent you: I knew the gospel would make work where it came: and therefore no wonder Satan labors to dispossess the gospel, which dispossesseth him; he knows that army is near lost, whose magazine is blown up.

It is true indeed, under the very gospel the devil rageth more in such swinish sinners, as are given over of God to be possessed of that fiend, for rejecting of his grace; but he is cast out of others, who 'before the loving-kindness of God to man appeared in the gospel,' were commanded by him, 'serving divers lusts and pleasures;' but now by the light of the gospel they see their folly, and by the grace it brings are enabled to renounce him. This, this is that which torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take his subjects from him: and therefore he labours either by persecution to drive the gospel away, or by policy to persuade a people to send it away from their coasts.

And was he ever more likely to effect it among us? What a low esteem hath he brought the preaching of the gospel unto? the price is fallen half and half to what it was some years past, even among those that have been counted the greatest merchants upon the saints' exchange. Some that have thought it worth crossing the seas, even to the Indies--almost as far as others fetch their gold--to enjoy the gospel, are loathe now to cross the street to hear it, at so cheap a rate; and some that come, who formerly trembled at it, make it most of their errand to mock at, or quarrel wit it.

Nay, it is come to such a pass, that the Word is so heavy a charge to the squeamish stomachs of many professors, that it comes up again presently, and abundance of choler with it, against the preacher, especially if it fall foul of the sins and errors of the times, the very naming of which is enough to offend, though the nation be sinking under their weight. What reproaches are the faithful ministers of the gospel laden withal! I call heaven and earth to witness, whether ever they suffered a hotter persecution of the tongue, than in this apostatizing age.

A new generation of professors are started up, that will not know them to be the ministers of Christ, though those before them (as well in grace as time, [and] more able to derive their spiritual pedigree than themselves), have to their death owned them for their spiritual fathers. And must not the ark needs shake, when they that carry it are thus struck at, both in their person and office? What are these men doing? Alas, they know not. 'Father, forgive them.' They are cutting off their right hand with their left; they are making themselves and the nation naked, by despising the gospel, and those that bring it.

Use Third. Consider your deplored estate, [you] who are wholly naked and unarmed. Can you pity the beggar at your door (when you see such in a winter day, shivering with naked backs, exposed to the fury of the cold), and not pity your own far more dismal soul-nakedness, by which thou liest open to heaven's wrath and hell's malice? Shall their nakedness cover them with shame, fill them with fear of perishing, which makes them with pitiful moans knock and cry for relief, as it is reported of Russia, where their poor, through extreme necessity, have this desperate manner of begging in their streets: 'Give me and cut me, give me and kill me.' And canst thou let Satan come and cut thy throat in thy bed of sloth, rather than accept of clothes to cover, yea, armour to defend thee?--I mean Christ and his grace, which in the gospel is tendered to you. Do not lightly believe your own flattering hearts, if they shall tell you, You are provided of these already. I am afraid many a gaudy professor will be found as naked in regard of Christ, and truth of grace, as drunkards and swearers themselves. Such there are, who content themselves with a Christ in profession, in gifts, and in duties, but seek not a Christ in solid grace, and so perish. Those indeed are an ornament to the Christian, as the scarf and feather to the soldier, but these quench not the bullet in battle; it is Christ and his grace [that] doth that. Therefore labour to be sound rather than brave Christians. Grace embellished with gifts, is more beautiful, but these without grace are only the richer spoil for Satan.

BRANCH SECOND.

[The kind or quality of armour needful

--Armour of God.]

The subject of this branch is the quality or kind of that armour, the Christian is here directed to provide. It is not any trash will serve the turn; better none than not armour of proof, and none [is] such 'but the armour of God.' In a twofold respect it must be of God. First, In institution and appointment. Second, In constitution.

[The armour we use against Satan

must be divine in the institution,

and only as God appoints.]

Observe First. The Christian's armour which he wears must be of divine institution and appointment. The soldier comes into the field with no arms but what his general commands. It is not left to every one's fancy to bring what weapons he please; this will breed confusion. The Christian soldier is bound up to God's order; though the army be on earth, yet the council of war sits in heaven; this duty ye shall do; these means ye shall use. And [those who] do more, or use other, than God commands, though with some seeming success against sin, shall surely be called to account for this boldness. The discipline of war among men is strict in this case. Some have suffered death by a council of war even when they have beaten the enemy, because out of their place, or beside their order. God is very precise in this point; he

will say to such as invent ways to worship him of their own, coin means to mortify corruption, obtain comfort in their own mint: 'Who hath required this at your hands?' This is truly to be 'righteous over-much,' as Solomon speaks, when he will pretend to correct God's law, and add supplements of our own to his rule. Who will pay that man his wages that is not set on work by God? God tells Israel the false prophets shall do them no good, because they come not of his errand, Jer. 23:32; so neither will those ways and means help, which are not of God's appointing. God's thoughts are not as man's, nor his ways as ours, which he useth to attain his ends by. If man had been to set forth the Israelitish army, now to march out of Egypt, surely this wisdom would have directed rather to have plundered the Egyptians of their horses and arms, as more necessary for such an expedition, than to borrow their jewels and ear-rings. But God will have them come out naked and on foot, and Moses keeps close to his order; yea, when any horses were taken in battle, because God commanded that they should be houghed, they obeyed, though to their seeming disadvantage. It was God's war they waged, and therefore but reasonable they should be under his command. They encamped and marched by his order, as the ark moved or rested. They fight by his command. The number is appointed by him--the means and weapons they should use--all are prescribed by God, as in the assault of Jericho. And what is the gospel of all this--for surely God hath an eye in that our marching to heaven, and our fighting with these cursed spirits and lusts that stand in our way--but that we should fight lawfully, using those means which we have from his mouth in his Word? This reproveth two sorts:

Reproveth First, Those that fight Satan in armour that hath no divine institution.

1. The Papist. Look into his armour, and hardly a piece will be found armour of God. They fight in the pope's armour. His authority is the shop wherein their weapons are forged. It were a kind of penance to your patience, to repeat all the several pieces of armour with which they load silly souls --too heavy indeed for the broadest shoulders among them to bear--yea, more than the wiser sort of them mean to use. Their masses, matins, vigils, pilgrimages, Lent-fasts, whippings, vows of chastity, poverty, with a world of such trash!--where is a word of God for these? Who hath required these things at their hands? A thousand woes will one day fall upon those impostors, who have stripped the people of their true armour of God, and put these reeds and bulrushes in their hands. This may justify us in the sight of God and men for our departure from them who will force us to venture the life of our souls in such paper-armour, when God hath provided better.

2. The Carnal Protestant, who fights in fleshly armour, II Cor. 10:3. The apostle speaks there of 'warring after the flesh,' that is, with weapons or means which man's carnal wisdom prompts to, and not God's commands, and [which] so are weak. How few are clad with other in the day of battle!

(1.) When Satan tempts to sin, if he hath not presently a peaceable entrance, yet the resistance commonly made is carnal; the strength carnal they rest on, their own, not God's; the motive's carnal, as the fear of man more than of God; [as to which] one saith, 'How shall I do this and sin against God?' Many in their hearts say, How shall I do this and anger man, displease my master, provoke my parents, and lose the good opinion of my minister? Herod feared John, and did many things. Had he feared God, he would have labored to have done everything. The like may be said of all other motives, which have their spring in the creature, not in God; they are armour which will not out-stand shot. If thy strength lie in a creature-lock, it may be soon cut off; if in God it will hold, as his command: It is written. I cannot do it, but I must set my foot on the law of my Maker, or on the love of Christ. I cannot come at my lust, but I must go over my bleeding Savior, and therefore away, foul tempter, I hate thee and thy motion. This foundation is rock, and will stand; but if it be some carnal respect that balanceth thee, another more weighty may be found of the

same kind, which will cast the scales another way. She that likes not the man because of his dress only, may soon be gained when he comes in another habit. Satan can change his suit, and then thy mouth will be stopped when thy carnal argument is taken off.

(2.) When the Word or conscience rebukes for sin, what is the armour that men commonly cover their guilty souls withal? Truly no other than carnal. If they cannot evade the charge that these bring, then they labor to mitigate it, by extenuating the fact. It is true, they will say, I did (I confess) commit such a fault, but I was drawn in. 'The woman gave me, and I did eat,' was Adam's fig-leaf armour. It is but once or twice, and I hope that breaks no such squares. Was this such a great business? I know jolly Christians will do as much as this comes to. I thank God, I cannot be charged with whore or thief. This is the armour that must keep off the blow. But if conscience will not be thus taken off, then they labor to divert their thoughts, by striking up the loud music of carnal delights, that the noise of one may drown the other; or with Cain, they will go from the presence of the Lord, and come no more at those ordinances which make their head ache, and hinder the rest of their raving consciences. If yet the ghost haunts them, then they labor to pacify it with some good work or other, which they set against their bad; their alms and charity in their old age, must expiate the oppression and violence of their former days; as if this little frankincense were enough to air and take away the plague of God's curse, which is in their ill-gotten goods. Thus poor creatures catch at any sorry covering, which will not so much as hide their shame, much less choke the bullet of God's wrath, when God shall fire upon them. There must be armour of God's appointing. Adam was naked for all his fig-leaves, while God taught him to make 'coats of skins,' Gen. 3:21, covertly (as some think) shadowing out Christ the true Lamb of God, whose righteousness alone was appointed by him to cover our shame, and arm our naked souls from the sight and stroke of his justice.

Reproveth Second. Those who use the armor of God, but not as God hath appointed; which appears in three sorts.

1. When a person useth a duty appointed by God, not as armor of defence, but as a cover for sin. Who would think him an enemy that wears Christ's colors in his hat, and marcheth after Christ in his exercise of all the duties of his worship? Such a one may pass all the courts of guard, without so much as being bid [to] stand. All take him for a friend. And yet some such there are, who are fighting against Christ all the while. The hypocrite is the man; he learns his postures, gets the Word, hath his tongue tipped with Scripture language, and walks in the habit of a Christian, merely on a design to drive his trade the more closely, like some highwayman in our days, who rob in the habit of soldiers, that they may be the less suspected. This is desperate wickedness indeed, to take up God's arms and use them in the devil's service; of all sinners such shall find least mercy, false friends shall speed worse than open enemies.

2. They use not the armour of God, as God hath appointed, who put a carnal confidence therein. We must not confide in the armour of God, but in the God of this armour, because all our weapons are only 'mighty through God,' II Cor. 10:4. The ark was the means of the Jews safety, but [being] carnally applauded and gloried in, hastened their overthrow: so duties and ordinances, gifts and graces in their place, are means for the soul's defence. Satan trembles as much as the Philistines at the ark, to see a soul diligent in the use of duty and exercise of grace; but when the creature confides in them, this is dangerous. As some, when they have prayed, think they please God for all day, though they take little heed to their steps. Other have so good an opinion of their faith, sincerity, knowledge, that you may as soon make them believe they are dogs, as that they may ever be taken in such error or sinful practice. Others, when assisted in duty, are prone to stroke their own head with a bene fecisti Bernarde, and so promise themselves to speed, because they have done their errand so well. What speak such passages in the hearts of men, but a

carnal confidence in their armour to their ruin? Many souls, we may safely say, do not only perish praying, repenting, and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying and repenting, &c., while they carnally trust in these. As it falls out sometimes, that the soldier in battle loseth his life by means of his own armour, [because] it is so heavy he cannot flee with it, and so close buckled to him that he cannot get it off, to flee for his life without it. If we be saved, we must come naked to Christ for all our duties; we will not flee to Christ while confiding in them. Some are so locked into them, that they cannot come without them, and so in a day of temptation are trampled under the feet of God's wrath and Satan's fury. The poor publican throws down his arms, that is, all confidence in himself, cries for quarter at the hands of mercy, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' He comes off with his life--he went away justified; but the Pharisee, laden with his righteousness, and conceited of it, stands to it, and is lost.

3. They do not use the armour of God as such, who in the performing of divine duties, eye not God through them, and this makes them all weak and ineffectual. Then the Word is mighty, when read as the Word of God; then the gospel preached, powerful to convince the conscience, and revive the drooping spirit, when heard as the appointment of the great God, and not the exercise of a mean creature. Now it will appear in three things, whether we eye divine appointment in the means.

(1.) When we engage in a duty, and look not up to God for his blessing. Didst thou eye God's appointment in the means, thou wouldst say, Soul, if there come any good of thy present service it must drop from heaven, for it is God's appointment, not man's. And can I profit whether God will or no, or think to find, and bring away, any soul-enriching treasure from his ordinance, without his leave? Had I not best look up to him, by whose blessing I live more than by my bread?

(2.) It appears we look not at God's appointment, when we have low thoughts of the means. What is Jordan that I should wash in it? What is this preaching that I should attend on it, where I hear nothing but I knew before? what these beggarly elements of water, and bread, and wine! Are not these the reasonings of a soul that forgets who appoints them? Didst thou remember who commands, thou wouldst not question what the command is. What though it be clay, let Christ use it and it shall open the eyes, though in itself more like to put them out. Hadst thou thy eye on God, thou wouldst silence thy carnal reason with this, It is God sends me to such a duty; whatsoever he saith unto me I will do it, though he should send me, as Christ to them, to draw wine out of pots filled with water.

(3.) When a soul leaves off a duty, because he hath not in it what he expected from it. Oh, saith the soul, I see it is vain to follow the means as I have done; still Satan foils me, I will even give over. Dost thou remember, soul, it is God's appointment? Surely then thou wouldst persevere in the midst of discouragements. He that bids thee pray without ceasing; he that bids thee hear, bids thee wait at the posts of wisdom. Thou wouldst reason thus, God hath set me on duty, and here I will stand, till God takes me off and bids me leave praying.

[The armour we use against Satan
must be divine by constitution.]

Observe Second. The Christian's armour must be of God in regard of its make and constitution. My meaning is, it is not only that God must appoint the weapons and arms the Christian useth for his defence: but he must also be the efficient of them, he must work in them and for them. Prayer is an appointment of God, yet this is not armour of proof, except it be a prayer of God flowing from his Spirit, Jude 20. Hope, that is the helmet the saint by command is to wear, but this hope must be God's creature; 'who hath

begotten us to a lively hope,' I Pet. 1:3. Faith, that is another principal piece in the Christian's furniture, but it must be faith of God's elect, Titus 1:1. He is to take righteousness and holiness for his breastplate, but it must be true holiness: 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. 4:24. Thus you see that it is not armour as armour, but as armour of God, that makes the soul impregnable. That which is born of God overcometh the world--a faith born of God, a hope born of God. But the spurious adulterous brood of duties and graces, being begot of mortal seed, cannot be immortal.

Must the soul's armour be of God's make? Be exhorted then to look narrowly whether the armour ye wear be the workmanship of God or no. There is abundance of false ware put off now-a-days; little good armour worn by the multitude of professors. It is Satan's after-game he plays, if he cannot please the sinner with his naked state of profaneness, to put him off with something like grace, some flighty stuff, that shall neither do him good, nor Satan hurt. Thus many [are] like children, that cry for a knife or dagger, and are pleased as well with a bone knife and wooden dagger, as with the best of all. So they have some armour, it matters not what. Pray they must, but little care how it be performed. Believe in God? yes, they hope they are not infidels. But what [the armour] is, how they came by it, or whether it will hold in an evil day, this never was put to the question in their hearts. Thus thousands perish with a vain conceit [that] they are armed against Satan, death, and judgment, when they are miserable and naked, yea, worse on it [their conceit] than those who are more naked, those I mean who have not a rag of civility to hide their shame from the world's eye; and that in a double respect,

First. It is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he hath a form, though not the power, and this affords him a plea. A soul purely naked, nothing like the wedding garment on, he is speechless. The drunkard hath nothing to say for himself, when you ask him why he lives so swinishly; you may come up to him, and get within him, and turn the very mouth of his conscience upon him, which will shoot into him. But come to deal with one who prays and hears, one that is a pretender to faith and hope in God; here is a man in glittering armour, he hath his weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the preacher, and the word he chargeth him with, at arm's length. Who can say I am not a saint? What duty do I neglect? Here is a breastwork he lies under, which makes him not so fair a mark either to the observation or reproof of another; his chief defect being within, where man's eye comes not. Again, it is harder to work on him, because he hath been tampered with already, and miscarried in the essay. How comes such a one to be acquainted with such duties--to make such a profession? Was it ever thus? No, the word hath been at work upon him, his conscience hath scared him from his trade of wickedness, into a form of profession, but, taking in short of Christ, for want of a thorough change, it is harder to remove him than the other. He is like a lock whose wards have been troubled; which makes it harder to turn the key than if never pottered with. It is better dealing with a wild ragged colt, never backed, than one that in breaking hath took a wrong stroke; [with] a bone quite out of joint than false set. In a word, such a one hath more to deny than a profane person. The one hath but his lusts, his whores, his swill, and dross, but the other hath his duties, his seeming graces. O how hard it is to persuade such a one to light, and hold Christ's stirrup, while he and his duties are made Christ's footstool.

Second. Such an one is in deepest condemnation. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. As it aggravates the torments of the damned souls in this respect above devils, [because] they had a cord of mercy thrown out to them, which devils had not so, by how much God by his Spirit waits on, pleads with, and by both gains on [one] soul more than others, by so much such a one, if he perish, will find hell the hotter. These add to his sin, and the remembrance of his

sin in hell thus accented will add to his torment. None will have such a sad parting from Christ as those who went half-way with him and then left him.

Therefore, I beseech you, look to your armour. David would not fight in armour he had not tried, though it was a king's. Perhaps some thought him too nice. What! is not the king's armour good enough for David? Thus many will say, Art thou so curious and precise? Such a great man doth thus and thus, and hopes to come to heaven at last, and darest not thou venture thy soul in this armour? No, Christian, follow not the example of the greatest on earth; it is thy own soul thou ventur'st in battle, therefore thou canst not be too choise of thy armour. Bring thy heart to the Word, as the only touch-stone of thy grace and furniture; the Word, I told you, is the tower of David, from whence thy armour must be fetched; if thou canst find this tower stamp on it, then it is of God, else, not. Try it therefore by this one scripture-stamp. Those weapons are mighty which God gives his saints to fight his battles withal. 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,' II Cor. 10:4. The sword of the Spirit hath its point and edge, whereby it makes its way into the heart and conscience, through the impenitency of the one and stupidity of the other (wherewith Satan, as with buff and coat of mail, arms the sinner against God) and there cuts and slashes, kills and mortifies lust in its own castle, where Satan thinks himself impregnable. The breastplate which is of God, doth not bend and break at every pat of temptation, but is of such a divine temperament, that it repels Satan's motions with scorn on Satan's teeth. Should such an one as I sin, as Nehemiah in another case; and such are all the rest.

Now try whether your weapons be mighty or weak; what can you do or suffer more for God than an hypocrite that is clad in fleshly armour? I will tell you what the world saith, and if you be Christians, clear yourselves, and wipe off that dirt which they throw upon your glittering armour. They say, These professors indeed have God more in their talk than we; but when they come down into their shops, relations and worldly employment, then the best of them all is but like one of us. They can throw the tables of God's commandments out of their hands as well as we; [can] come from a sermon, and be as covetous and gripping, as peevish and passionate, as the worst. They show as little love to Christ as others, when it is matter of cost, as to relieve a poor saint or maintain the gospel; you may get more from a stranger, an enemy, than from a professing brother. O Christians, either vindicate the name of Christ, whose ensign you seem to march after, or throw away your seeming armour, by which you have drawn the eyes of the world upon you. If you will not, Christ himself will cashier you, and that with shame enough ere long. Never call that the armour of God which defends thee not against the power of Satan.

Take, therefore, the several pieces of your armour and try them, as the soldier before he fights will set his helmet or head-piece as a mark, at which he lets fly a brace of bullets, and as he finds them so will wear them or leave them. But be sure thou shootest scripture-bullets. Thou boastest of a breastplate of righteousness. Ask thy soul, Didst thou ever in thy life perform a duty to please God, and not to accommodate thyself? Thou hast prayed often against thy sin, a great noise of the pieces have been heard coming from thee by others, as if there were some hot fight between thee and thy corruption, but canst thou indeed show one sin thou hast slain by all thy praying? Joseph was alive, though his coat was brought bloody to Jacob; and so may thy sin be, for all thy mortified look in duty, and outcry thou makest against them. If thou wouldst thus try every piece, thy credulous heart would not so easily be cheated with Satan's false ware.

Objection. But is all armour that is of God thus mighty? We read of weak grace, little faith; how can this then be a trial of our armour whether of God or not?

Answer. I answer, the weakness of grace is in respect of stronger grace, but the weak grace is strong and mighty in comparison of counterfeit grace. Now, I do not bid thee try the truth of thy grace by such a power as is peculiar to stronger grace, but by that power which will distinguish it from false. True grace, when weakest, is stronger than false when strongest. There is a principle of divine life in it which the other hath not. Now life, as it gives excellency--a flea or a fly by reason of its life, is more excellent than the sun in all his glory--so it give strength. The slow motion of a living man, though so feeble that he cannot go a furlong in a single day, yet coming from life, imports more strength than is in a ship, which though it sails swiftly, hath its motion from without. Thus possibly an hypocrite may exceed the true Christian in the bulk and outside of a duty, yet because his strength is not from life, but from some wind and tide abroad that carries him, and the Christian's is from an inward principle, therefore the Christian's weakness is stronger than the hypocrite in his greatest enlargements. I shall name but two acts of grace whereby the Christian, when weakest, exceeds the hypocrite in all his best array. You will say, then grace is a weak stay indeed, when the Christian is persuaded to commit a sin, a great sin, such a one as possibly a carnal person would not have it said of him for a great matter. So low may the tide of grace fall, yet true grace at such an ebb will appear of greater strength and force than the other.

1. This principle of grace will never leave till the soul weeps bitterly with Peter, that it hath offended so good a God. Speak, O ye hypocrites can ye show one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? Possibly you may weep to see the bed of sorrow which your sins are making for you in hell, but ye never loved God so well as to mourn for the injury ye have done the name of God. It is a good gloss Augustine hath upon Esau's tears Heb. 12:16, 17. --Flevet quòd perdidit, non quòd vendidit --he wept that he lost the blessing, not that he sold it. Thus we see an excellency of the saint's sorrow above the hypocrite's. The Christian by his sorrow shows himself a conqueror of that sin which even now overcame him; while the hypocrite by his pride shows himself a slave to a worse lust than that he resists. While the Christian commits a sin he hates; whereas the other loves it while he forbears it.

2. When true grace is under the foot of a temptation, yet then it will stir up in the heart a vehement desire of revenge. [It is] like a prisoner in his enemies' hand, who is thinking and plotting how to get out, and what he will do when out, waiting and longing every minute for his delivery, that he again may take up arms. 'O Lord God, remember me,' saith Samson, 'I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. Jud. 16:28. Thus prays the gracious soul, that God would but spare him a little, and strengthen him but once before he dies, that he may be avenged on his pride, unbelief, and those sins whereby he hath most dishonoured God. But a false heart is so far from studying revenge, that he rather swells like the sea against the law which banks his lust in, and is angry with God who hath made sin such a leap, that he must hazard his soul if he will have it.

BRANCH THIRD.

[The entireness of our armour.

It must be the whole armour of God.]

In this branch observe the quantity or entireness of the saints' furniture or armour, 'the whole armour of God.' The Christian's armour must be complete, and that in a threefold respect.

First. He must be armed in every part cap-à-pie, soul and body, the powers of the one, and the senses of the other, not any part left naked. A dart may fly in at a little hole, like that which brought a message of death to Ahab, through the joints of his harness, and Satan is such an archer as can shoot at a penny

breadth. If all the man be armed, and only the eye left without, Satan can soon shoot his fireballs of lust in at that loophole, which shall set the whole house on flame. Eve looked but on the tree, and a poisonous dart struck her to the heart. If the eye be shut, and the ear be open to corrupt communication, Satan will soon wriggle in at this hole. If all the outward senses [of a man] be guarded, and the heart not kept with all diligence, he will soon by his own thoughts be betrayed into Satan's hands. Our enemies are on every side, and so must our armour be, 'on the right hand and on the left,' II Cor. 6:7. The apostle calls sin μ "D"<, ÛB,DFJ"J@<, an enemy that surrounds us, Heb. 12:1. If there be any part of the line unguarded or weakly provided, there Satan falls on; [as] we see the enemy often enter the city at one side, while he is beat back on the other, for want of care to keep the whole line. Satan divides his temptations into several squadrons, one he employs to assault here, another to storm there. We read of fleshly wickedness and spiritual wickedness; while thou repellst Satan tempting thee to fleshly wickedness, he may be entering thy city at the other gate of spiritual wickedness. Perhaps thou hast kept thy integrity in the practical part of thy life; but what armour hast thou to defend thy head, thy judgment? If he surprise thee here, corrupting that with some error, then thou wilt not long hold out in thy practice. He that could not get thee to profane the Sabbath among sensualists and atheists, will under the disguise of such a corrupt principle as Christian liberty prevail. Thus we see what need we have of universal armour, in regard of every part.

Second. The Christian must be in complete armour, in regard of the several pieces and weapons, that make up the whole armour of God. Indeed there is a concatenation of graces; they hang together like links in a chain, stones in an arch, members in the body. Prick one vein, and the blood of the whole body may run out at the sluice; neglect one duty, and no other will do us as good.

The apostle Peter, in his second epistle, ch. 1:5-7, presseth the Christians to a joint endeavour to increase the whole body of grace; indeed, that is health when the whole body thrives. 'Add,' saith he, 'to your faith virtue.' Faith is the file-leading grace. Well, hast thou faith, add virtue. True faith is of a working stirring nature, without good works it is dead or dying. *Fides pinguescit operibus*--'faith fattens or becomes strong on works,' Luther. It is kept in plight and heart by a holy life, as the flesh which plasters over the frame of man's body, though it receives its heat from the vitals within, yet helps to preserve the very life of those vitals. Thus good works and gracious actions have their life from faith, [and] yet are necessary helps to preserve the life of faith; thus we see sometimes the child nursing the parents that bare it, and therein [he] performs but his duty.

Thou art fruitful in good works, yet thou art not out of the devil's shoot, except thou addest to thy virtue, knowledge. This is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work. Art thou going to give an alms? If it be not *oculata charitas*, if charity hath not this eye of knowledge to direct when, how, what, and to whom thou art to give, thou mayest at once wrong God, the person thou relievest, and thyself. Art thou humbling thyself for thy sin? For want of knowledge in the tenor of the gospel, Satan may play upon thy ignorance, and either persuade thee thou art not humbled enough, when, God knows, thou art almost quackled[i] with thy tears, and even carried down by the impetuous torrent of thy sorrow into despair, or else showing thee thy blubbered face, may flatter thee into a carnal confidence of thy humiliation.

Perhaps thou seest the name of God dishonoured in the place where thou livest, and thy spirit is stirred within thee, as Paul's at Athens; now if knowledge sits not in the saddle to rein and bridle in thy zeal, thou wilt be soon carried over hedge and ditch, till thou fallest into some precipice or other by thy irregular acting. Neither is knowledge enough, except thou beest armed with temperance, which here, I conceive, is that grace, whereby the Christian, as master of his own house, so orders his affections, like servants, to reason and faith, that they do not regularly move, or inordinately lash out into desires of, cares for, or joy in

the creature comforts of this life, without which Satan will be too hard for thee. The historian tells us, that in one of the famous battles between the English and French, that which lost the French the day was a shower of English arrows, which did so gall their horse, as put the whole army into disorder, [for] their horse knowing no ranks, did tread down their own men. The affections are but as the horse to the rider, on which knowledge should be mounted; if Satan's barbed arrows light on them, so that thy desires of the creature prove unruly, and jostle with thy desires of Christ, [if] thy care to keep thy credit or estate put thy care to keep a good conscience to disorder, and thy carnal joy in wife and child trample down or get before thy joy in the Lord, judge on which side victory is like to fall.

Well, suppose thou marchest provided thus far in goodly array towards heaven, while thou art swimming in prosperity, must thou not also prepare for foul way and weather--I mean in an afflicted estate? Satan will line the hedges with a thousand temptations, when thou comest into the narrow lanes of adversity, where thou canst not run from this sort of temptation, as in the campaign of prosperity. Possibly, thou that didst escape the snare of an alluring world, mayest be dismounted by the same when it frowns; though temperance kept thee from being drunk with sweet wines of those pleasures, yet for want of patience thou mayest be drunk with the wine of astonishment, which is in affliction's hands; therefore, saith the apostle, 'to temperance, add patience.' Either possess thyself in patience, or else some raving devil of discontent will possess thee. An impatient soul in affliction is a bedlam in chains, yea, too like the devil in his chains, [who] rageth against God, while he is fettered by him.

Well, hast thou patience?--an excellent grace indeed, but not enough. Thou must be a pious man as well as patient. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'to patience, add godliness.' There is an atheistical patience, and there is a godly Christian patience. Satan numbs the conscience of one, and [so] no wonder he complains not, that feels not; but the Spirit of Christ sweetly calms the other, not by taking away the sense of pain, but by overcoming it with the sense of his love. Now godliness comprehends the whole worship of God, inward and outward. If thou beest never so exact in thy morals, and not a worshipper of God, then thou art an atheist. If thou dost worship God, and that devoutly, but not by Scripture rule, thou art but an idolater. If according to the rule, but not in spirit and truth, then thou art an hypocrite, and so fallest into the devil's mouth. Or if thou dost give God one piece of his worship, and deniest another, still Satan comes to his market. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination,' Prov. 28:9.

Yet, Christian, all thy armour is not on. Thy godliness indeed would suffice, wert thou to live in a world by thyself, or hadst nothing to do but immediate communion with God. But, Christian, thou must not always dwell on this mount of immediate worship, and [since] when thou descendest, thou hast many brethren and servants of thy Father, who live with thee in the same family, thou must deport thyself becomingly, or else thy Father will be angry. Thou hast brethren, heirs of the same promise with thee, therefore you must add to godliness 'brotherly-kindness.'

If Satan can set you at odds, he gives a deep wound to your godliness. You will hardly join hearts in a duty, that cannot join hands in love. In the family there are not only brethren, but servants, a multitude of profane carnal ones, who though they never had the names of sons and daughters, yet retain to God's family. And thy heavenly Father will have thee walk unblameably, yea winningly, to those that are without, which thou mayest do, thou must add to brotherly-kindness, 'charity;' by which grace thou shalt be willing to do good to the worst of men.

When they curse thee, thou must pray for them, yea, pray for no less than a Christ, a heaven, for them. 'Father, forgive them,' said Christ, while they were raking in his side for his heart-blood. And truly, I am persuaded this last piece of armour hath given Satan great advantage in these our times, we are so afraid our charity should be too broad. Whereas in this sense, if it be not wide as the world, it is too strait for the command which bids us 'do good to all.' May not we ministers be charged with the want of this, when the strain of our preaching is solely directed to the saints, and no pains taken in rescuing poor captive souls, yet uncalled, out of the devil's clutches?

He may haul them to hell without disturbance, while we are comforting the saints, and preaching their privileges; but in the meantime, let the ignorant be ignorant still, and the profane profane still, for want of a compassionate charity to their souls, which would excite us to the reproofing and exhorting of them, that they might also be brought into the way of life, as well as the saints encouraged, who are walking therein. We are stewards to provide bread for the Lord's house.

The greatest part of our hearers cannot, must not, have the children's bread, and shall we therefore give them no portion at all? Christ's charity pitied the multitude, to whom in his public preaching he made special application, as in that famous sermon, most part of which is spent in rousing up the sleepy consciences of the hypocritical Pharisees, by those thunderclaps of woes and curses so often denounced against them, Matt. 23. Again, how great advantage hath Satan from the want of this charity in our families?

Is it not observed how little care is taken by professing governors of such societies for the instructing their youth? Nay, it is a principle which some have drunk in, that it is not their duty. O where is their charity in the meantime, when they can see Satan come within their own walls, and let them drive a child, a servant, in their ignorance and profaneness, to hell, and not so much as sally out upon this enemy by a word of reproof or instruction, to rescue these silly souls out of the murder's hand?

We must leave them to their liberty forsooth, and that is as fair play as we can give the devil. Give but corrupt nature enough of this rope, and it will soon strangle the very principles of God and religion in their tender years.

Third. The entireness of the saint's armour may be taken not only for every part and piece of the saint's furniture, but for the completeness and perfection of every piece. As the Christian is to endeavour after every grace, so is he to press after the advance and increase of every grace, even to perfection itself. As he is to add to his faith virtue, so he is to add faith to faith--he is ever to be completing of his grace. It is that which is frequently pressed upon believers. 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' Matt. 5:48. 'And purify yourselves, as God is pure.' There we have an exact copy set, not as if we could equalize that purity and perfection which is in God, but to make us strive the more, when we shall see how infinitely short we fall of our copy, when we write the fairest hand; so 'Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,' James 1:3, 4, or [be] wanting in nothing. Thou who makest a hard shift to carry a little burden with thy little patience, wouldst sink under a greater, therefore there is need that patience should be ever perfecting, lest at last we meet a burden too heavy for our weak shoulders. Take a few reasons why the Christian should thus be completing of his grace.

First. Because grace is subject to decays, and therefore ever needs completing. [It is] as in an army, especially [one] which often engageth in battle; their arms are battered and broken, one man hath his helmet bent, another his sword gaped, a third his pistol unfixed, and therefore recruits are ever necessary.

In one temptation the Christian hath his helmet of hope beaten off his head, in another his patience hard put to it. The Christian had need have an armourer's shop at hand to make up his loss, and that speedily, for Satan is most like to fall on when the Christian is least prepared to receive the charge. 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you;' he knew they were at that time weakly provided--(Christ their captain now to be taken from the head of their troop; discontents among themselves, striving who should be greatest; and their recruits of stronger grace, which the Spirit was to bring, not yet come). Now he hath a design to surprise them; and therefore Christ, carefully to prevent him, promiseth speedily to despatch his Spirit for their supply, Acts 1:4, and in the meantime sends them to Jerusalem, to stand as it were in a body in their joint supplications upon their guard, while he comes to their relief; showing us in the weakness of our grace what to do, and whither to go for supply.

Second. Because Satan is completing his skill and wrath. It is not for nought that he is called the old serpent--subtle by nature, but more by experience, wrathful by nature, yet every day more and more enraged; like a bull, the longer he is baited, the more fury he shows. And therefore we who are to grapple with him, now his time is so short, had need come well appointed into the field.

Third. It is the end of all God's dispensations, to complete his saints in their graces and comforts. Wherefore doth he lop and prune by afflictions, but to purge, that they may bring forth more fruit, that is, fuller and fairer? John 15:2. Tribulation works patience, Rom. 5:3; it is God's appointment for that end. It works, that is, it increaseth the saints. Patience enrageth indeed the wicked, but meekens the saints. It is his design in the gospel; he preacheth to carry on his saints from 'faith to faith,' Rom. 1:17, and accordingly he hath furnished his church with instruments, and those with gifts, 'For the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ,' Eph. 4:12. Wherefore doth the scaffold stand, and the workman on it, if the building go not up? For us not to advance under such means is to make void the counsel of God. Therefore the apostle blames the Christian Jews for their non-proficiency in the school of Christ: 'When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. 5:12.

[Use and Application.]

Use. O how few are there endeavour thus to promove in their spiritual state, and labour to perfect what is yet lacking in their knowledge, patience, and the rest.

1. Tell some of adding faith to faith, one degree of grace to another, and you shall find they have more mind to join house to house, and lay field to field. Their souls are athirst, ever gaping for more. But of what? not of Christ or of heaven. It is earth. Earth they never think they have enough of, till death comes and stops their mouth with a shovel-full, digged out of their own grave. What a tormenting life must they needs have, who are always crying for more weight, and yet cannot press their covetous desires to death? O sirs, the only way--if men would believe it--to quench this thirst to the creature, were to enkindle another after Christ and heaven. Get but a large heart vehemently thirsting after these, and the other will die alone, as the feverish thirst doth when nature comes to her temper.

2. Others labour not thus to perfect grace, because they have a conceit they are perfect already, and upon this fancy throw away praying, hearing, and all other ordinances, as strings for those babes in grace to be carried by, who are not arrived to their high attainments. O what fools does pride make men! Truly heaven were no such desirable place, if we should be no more perfect than thus--a sort of people that are too high for this world, and too low for another. The way by which God cures this frenzy of pride, we have in these

days seen to be something like that of Nebuchadnezzar; to give them the heart of a beast, I mean, for a time, to suffer them to fall into beastly practices, by which he shows them how far they are from that perfection they dreamed of so vainly.

3. Others who have true grace, and desire the advancement of it, yet are discouraged in their endeavour for more, from too deep a sense of their present penury. Bid some such labour to get more power over corruption, more faith on, and love to God, that they may be able to do the will of God cheerfully, and suffer it in the greatest afflictions patiently, yea, thankfully, and they will never believe, that they whose faith is so weak, love so chill, and stock so little in hand, should ever attain to anything like such a pitch. You may as well persuade a beggar with one poor penny in his pur

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