

The Christian in Complete Armour - Part 5

by William Gurnall

The devil's principality is a system of government in this world, where he exercises power and control over humanity, but God permits this principality as a righteous act of vengeance on humanity for their rebellion against Him, and also to glorify His name in the recovery of His elect from the devil's power.

Scripture: Isaiah 54:16

Topics: "Satanic Warfare", "Spiritual Assurance"

Description

William Gurnall preaches about the power and limitations of Satan as described in Ephesians 6:12. He emphasizes that Satan's power is derived, limited, and ministerial, appointed by God for the benefit of the saints. Gurnall encourages believers not to fear Satan, as his power is under God's control and serves a purpose in refining and purifying the faithful. He reminds the audience that Satan's rule is temporary, confined to this world, and will ultimately be overthrown by Christ at the end of time, bringing hope and assurance to believers.

Transcript

Division Second.--The Assailants described Positively.

'But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph. 6:12

The apostle having shown what the saint's enemies are not, flesh and blood, frail men, who cannot come but they are seen, who may be resisted by man's power, or escaped by flight; now he describes the positively, 'against principalities, against powers,' &c. Some think [that] the apostle by these divers names and titles, intends to set forth the distinct orders, whereby the devils are subordinate one to another; so they make the devil, ver. 11, to be the head or monarch, and these, ver. 12, so many inferior orders, as among men there are princes, dukes, earls, &c., under an emperor. That there is an order among the devils cannot be denied. The Scripture speaks of a prince of devils, Matt. 9:34, and of the devil and his angels, who with him fell from their first station, called his angels, as it is probably conceived, because one above the rest (as the head of the faction), drew with him multitudes of others into his party, who with him sinned and fell. But that there should be so many distinct orders among them, as there are several branches in this description, is not probable; too weak a notion to be the foundation of a pulpit discourse. Therefore we shall take them as meant of the devil collectively--we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but

[with] devils, who are principalities and powers, &c.--and not distributively, to make principalities one rank, powers another; for some of these branches cannot be meant of distinct orders, but promiscuously of all as spiritual wickedness; it being not proper to one to be spirits, or wicked, but common to all. first, Then, the devil or whole pack of them are here described by their government in this world--principalities. second, By their strength and puissance, called powers. third, In their kingdom or proper territories--rulers of the darkness of this world. fourth, By their nature in its substance and degeneracy--spiritual wickedness. fifth, By the ground of the war--in the heavenly places, or about heavenly things.

BRANCH FIRST.

[Against principalities.]

The devil or whole pack of them are here described by their government in this world --principalities. The term principalities^[1] is here used in the abstract for the concrete; that is, such as have a principality. So, Titus 3:1, we are bid to be subject to principalities and powers, that is, princes and rulers; so the Vulgate reads it. We wrestle against princes, which some will have to express the eminency of their nature above man's; that as the state and spirit of princes is more raised above others--great men have great spirits--as Zebah and Zalmunna to Gideon, asking who they were they slew at Tabor; 'As thou art,' say they, 'so were they, each one resembled the children of a king,' that is, for majesty and presence befitting a princely race; so they think, the eminent nature of angels here to be intended, who are as far above the highest prince, as he above the basest peasant. But because they are described by their nature in the fourth branch, I shall subscribe to their judgment, who take this for their principality or government, which the devil exerciseth in this lower world; and the note shall be,

[What a principality Satan hath.]

Doctrine. That Satan is a great prince. Christ himself styles him the 'prince of this world,' John 14:30. Princes have their thrones where they sit in state; Satan hath his--Thou dwellest where Satan hath his throne, Rev. 2:13; and that such a one, as no earthly princes may compare [with]. Few kings are enthroned in the hearts of their subjects; they rule their bodies and command their purses, but how oft in a day are they pulled out of their thrones by the wishes of their discontented subjects. But Satan hath the heart of all his subjects. Princes have their homage and peculiar honour done to them. Satan is served upon the knee of his subjects; the wicked are said to worship the devil, Rev. 13:4. No prince expects such worship as he; no less than religious worship will serve him. Jeroboam is said to ordain priests for devils, II Chr. 11:15; and therefore he [Satan] is called not only the prince, but the god of this world, because he hath the worship of a god given him. Princes, such as are absolute, have a legislative power, nay, their own will is their law, as at this day in Turkey, where their laws are written in no other tables than in the proud sultan's breast. Thus Satan gives law to the poor sinner, who is bound and must obey, though the law be writ with his own blood, and the creature hath nothing but damnation for fulfilling the devil's lust. It is called a 'law of sin,' Rom. 8:2, because it comes with authority. Princes have their ministers of state, whom they employ for the safety and enlargement of their territories; so Satan his, who propagates his cursed designs, [and] therefore we read of 'doctrines of devils,' I Tim. 4:1^[2]. Princes have their^[3] secrets of government, which none knows but a few favourites in whom they confide. Thus the devil hath his mysteries of iniquity, and depths of Satan we read of, which all his subjects know not of, Rev. 2:24; these are imparted to a few favourites, such as Elymas, whom Paul calls 'full of subtlety, and child of the devil,' such, whose consciences are so debauched, that they scruple not the most horrid sins; these are his white boys. I have read of a people in America that love meat best when it is rotten and stinks. The devil is of

their diet. The more corrupt and rotten the creature is in sin, the better he pleaseth his tooth. Some are more the children of the devil than others. Christ had his beloved disciple; and Satan those that lie in his very bosom, and know what is in his heart. In a word, princes have their^[4] tribute and custom; so Satan his. Indeed he doth not so much share with the sinner in all, but is owner of all he hath; so that the devil is the merchant, and the sinner but the broker to trade for him, who at last puts all his gains into the devil's purse. Time, strength, parts, yea, conscience and all, is spent to keep him in his throne.

[How Satan came to be such a prince.]

Question 1. But how comes Satan to this principality?

Answer. Not lawfully, though he can show a fair claim. As,

1. He obtained it by conquest; as he won his crown, so he wears it by power and policy. But conquest is a cracked title. A thief is not the honestest because able to force the traveller to deliver his purse; and a thief on the throne is no better than a private one on the road, or a pirate in a pinnace, as one boldly told Alexander. Neither doth that prove good with process of time which was evil at first. Satan indeed hath kept possession long, but a thief will be so as long as he keeps his stolen goods. He stole the heart of Adam from God at first, and doth no better to this day. Christ's conquest is good, because the ground of the war is righteous--to recover what was his own; while Satan cannot say of the meanest creature, 'It is my own.'

2. Satan may lay claim to his principality by election. It is true he came in by a wile, but now he is a prince elect, by the unanimous voice of corrupt nature. 'Ye are of your father the devil,' saith Christ, 'and his lusts ye will do.' But this also hath a flaw in it, for man by law of creation is God's subject, and cannot give away God's right; by sin he loseth his right in God as a protector, but God loseth not his right as a sovereign. Sin disabled man to keep God's law, but it doth not enfranchise or disoblige him that he need not keep it.

3. Satan may claim a deed of gift from God himself, as he was bold to do to Christ himself upon this ground, persuading him to worship him as the prince of the world. He showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world, saying, 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it,' Luke 4:5, 6. Here was a truth, though he spake more than the truth--as he cannot speak truth, but to gain credit to some lie at the end of it. God, indeed, hath delivered, in a sense, this world to him, but not in his sense to do what he will with it; nor by any approbatory act given him a patent to vouch him his viceroy: not Satan by the grace of God, but by permission of God, prince of this world.

Question 2. But why doth God permit this apostate creature to exercise such a principality over the world?

Answer 1. As a righteous act of vengeance on man, for revolting from the sweet government of his rightful Lord and Maker. It is the way God punisheth rebellion: 'Because ye would not serve me in gladness, in the abundance of all things, therefore ye shall serve your enemies in hunger,' &c. Satan is a king given in God's wrath. Ham's curse is man's punishment; 'a servant of servants.' The devil is God's slave, man the devil's. Sin hath set the devil on the creature's back; and now he hurries him without mercy, as he did the swine, till he be choked with flames, if mercy interpose not.

Answer 2. God permits this his principality, in order to the glorifying of his name in the recovery of his elect from the power of this great potentate. What a glorious name will God have when he hath finished this

war, wherein, at first, he found all possessed by this enemy, and not a man of all the sons of Adam to offer himself as a volunteer in this service, till made willing by the day of his power! This, this will gain God a name above every name, not only of creatures, but of those by which himself was known to his creature. The workmanship of heaven and earth gave him the name of Creator; providence of Preserver; but this of Saviour. Herein he doth both the former; preserve his creature, which else had been lost; and create a new creature--I mean the babe of grace --which, through God, shall be able to beat the devil out of the field, who was able to drive Adam, though created in his full stature, out of paradise. And may not all the other works of God empty themselves as rivers into this sea, losing their names, or rather swelling into one of redemption? Had not Satan taken God's elect prisoners, they would not have gone to heaven with such acclamations of triumph. There are three expressions of great joy in Scripture; the joy of a woman after her travail, the joy of harvest, and the joy of him that divideth the spoil. The exultation of all these is wrought upon a sad ground, many a pain and tear it costs the travailing woman, many a fear the husbandman, perils and wounds the soldier, before they come at their joy; but at last they are paid for all, the remembrance of their past sorrows feeding their present joys. Had Christ come and entered into affinity with our nature, and returned peaceably to heaven with his spouse, finding no resistance, though that would have been admirable love, and would have afforded the joy of marriage, yet this way of carrying his saints to heaven will greatness the joy, as it adds to the nuptial song the triumph of a conqueror, who hath rescued his bride out of the hands of Satan, as he was leading her to the chambers of hell.

[How we may know whether we be

under Satan as our prince, or not.]

First. Is Satan such a great prince? Try whose subject thou art. His empire is large; [there are] only a few privileged who are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Even in Christ's own territories --[the] visible church I mean--where his name is professed and the sceptre of his gospel held forth, Satan hath his subjects. As Christ had his saints in Nero's court, so the devil his servants in the outward court of his visible church. Thou must therefore have something more to exempt thee from his government, than living within the pale, and giving an outward conformity to the ordinances of Christ; Satan will yield to this and be no loser. As a king lets his merchants trade to, yea, live in a foreign kingdom, and, while they are there, learn the language, and observe the customs of the place. This breaks not their allegiance; nor all that, thy loyalty to Satan. When a statute was made in Queen Elizabeth's reign, that all should come to church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the pope's pleasure. He returned then this answer, as it is said, 'Bid the Catholics in England give me their heart, and let the queen take the rest.' His subject thou art whom thou crownest in thy heart, and not whom thou flatterest with thy lips.

But to bring the trial to an issue, know that thou belongest to one of these, and but to one; Christ and Satan divide the whole world. Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no superior; and therefore, hold in with both thou canst not.

Now if thou sayest that Christ is thy prince, answer to these interrogatories.

1. How came he [Christ] into the throne? Satan had once the quiet possession of thy heart; thou wast by birth, as the rest of thy neighbours, Satan's vassal; yea, hast oft vouched him in the course of thy life to be thy liege lord; how then comes this great change? Satan, surely, would not of his own accord resign his crown and sceptre to Christ; and for thyself, thou wert neither willing to renounce, nor able to resist, his power. This then must only be the fruit of Christ's victorious arms, whom God hath exalted 'to be a Prince

and a Saviour,' Acts 5:31. Speak therefore, Hath Christ come to thee, as once to Abraham to Lot, when prisoner to Chedorlaomer, rescuing thee out of Satan's hands, as he was leading thee in the chains of lust to hell? Didst thou ever hear a voice from heaven in the ministry of the word calling out to thee as once to Saul, so as to lay thee at God's foot, and make thee face about for heaven; to strike thee blind in thine own apprehension, who before hadst a good opinion of thy state; to tame and meeken thee; so as now thou art willing to be led by the hand of a child after Christ? Did ever Christ come to thee, as the angel to Peter in prison, rousing thee up, and not only causing the chains of darkness and stupidity to fall off thy mind and conscience, but make thee obedient also--that the iron gate of thy will hath opened to Christ before he left thee? Then thou hast something to say for thy freedom. But if in all this I be a barbarian, and the language I speak be strange, thou knowest no such work to have passed upon thy spirit, then thou art yet in the old prison. Can there be a change of government in a nation by a conqueror that invades it, and the subjects not hear of this? One king unthroned and another crowned in thy soul, and thou hear no scuffle all this while? The regenerating Spirit is compared to the wind, John 3:8. His first attempts on the soul may be so secret that the creature knows not whence they come, or whither they tend; but, before he hath done, the sound will be heard throughout the soul, so as it cannot but see a great change in itself, and say, 'I that was blind, now see; I that was hard as ice, now relent for sin; now my heart gives; I can melt and mourn for it. I that was well enough without a Christ, yea, did wonder what others saw in him, to make much ado for him, now have changed my note with the daughters of Jerusalem; and for, What is your Beloved? as I scornfully have asked; I have learned to ask where he is, that I might seek him with you.' O soul, canst thou say it thus with thee? Thou mayest know who has been here; no less than Christ, who, by his victorious Spirit, hath translated thee from Satan's power into his own sweet kingdom.

2. Whose law dost thou freely subject thyself unto? The laws of these princes are as contrary as their natures; the one a law of sin, Rom. 8:2; the other a law of holiness, Rom. 7:12; and therefore if sin hath not so far bereaved thee of thy wits, as not to know sin from holiness, thou mayest, except [thou] resolve to cheat thy own soul, soon be resolved. Confess therefore and give glory to God; to which of these laws doth thy soul set its seal? When Satan sends out his proclamation, and bids the sinner go, set thy foot upon such a command of God. Observe what is thy behaviour; dost thou yield thyself, as Paul phraseth it, Rom. 6:16[5]; 'yield yourselves,' a metaphor from princes' servants or others, who are said to present themselves before their lord, as ready and at hand to do their pleasure; by which the apostle elegantly describes the forwardness of the sinner's heart to come to Satan's foot, when knocked or called. Now doth thy soul go out thus to meet thy lust, as Aaron his brother, glad to see its face in an occasion? Thou art not brought over to sin with much ado, but thou likest the command. Transgress at Gilgal, saith God, this liketh you well, Hosea 4:5[6]. As a courtier, who doth not only obey, but thank his prince that he will employ him. Needest thou be long in resolving whose thou art? Did ever any question, whether those were Jeroboam's subjects, who willingly followed his command? Hosea 5:11. Alas, for thee, thou art under the power of Satan, tied by a chain stronger than brass or iron; thou lovest thy lust. A saint may be for a time under a force; sold under sin, as the apostle bemoans; and therefore glad when deliverance comes; but thou sellest thyself to work iniquity. If Christ should come to take thee from thy lusts, thou wouldst whine after them, as Micah after his gods.

3. To whom goest thou for protection? As it belongs to the prince to protect his subjects, so princes expect their subjects should trust them with their safety. The very bramble bids, 'If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow,' Judges 9:15. Now who hast thy confidence? Darest thou trust God with thy soul, and the affairs of it in well-doing? Good subjects follow their calling, commit state matters to the wisdom of their prince and his council. When wronged, they appeal to their prince in his

laws for right; and when they do offend their prince, they submit to the penalty of the laws, and bear his displeasure patiently, till humbling themselves they recover his favour, and do not, in a discontent, fall into open rebellion. Thus a gracious soul follows his Christian calling, committing himself to God as a faithful Creator, to be ordered by his wise providence. If he meets with violence from any, he scorns to beg aid of the devil to help him, or be his own judge to right himself; no, he acquiesceth in the counsel and comfort the Word of God gives him. If himself offends, and so comes under the lash of God's correcting hand, he doth not then take up rebellious arms against God, and refuse to receive correction; but saith, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?' whereas a naughty man dares not venture his estate, life, credit, or anything he hath, with God in well-doing; he thinks he shall be undone presently, if he sits still under the shadow of God's promise for protection; and therefore he runs from God as from under an old house that would fall on his head, and lays the weight of his confidence in wicked policy, making lies his refuge. Like Israel, he trusts in perverseness; when God tells him, 'In returning and rest he shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be his strength;' he hath not faith to take God's word for his security in ways of obedience. And when God comes to afflict him for any disloyal carriage, instead of accepting the punishment for his sin--and so to own him for his Sovereign Lord, that may righteously punish the faults of his disobedient subjects --his heart is filled with rage against God, and instead of waiting quietly and humbly, like a good subject till God upon his repentance receives him into his favour, his wretched heart, presenting God as an enemy to him, will not suffer any such gracious and amiable thoughts of God to dwell in his bosom, but bids him look for no good at his hand: 'This evil is of the Lord; why should I wait on the Lord any longer?' Whereas a gracious heart is most encouraged to wait from this very consideration that drives the other away: 'Because it is the Lord afflicts.'

4. Whom dost thou sympathize with? He is thy prince, whose victories and losses thou layest to heart, whether in thy own bosom or abroad in the world. What saith thy soul, when God hedgeth up thy way, and keeps thee from that sin which Satan hath been soliciting for? If on Christ's side thou wilt rejoice when thou art delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction. As David said of Abigail, so wilt thou here: Blessed be the ordinance, blessed be the providence which kept me from sinning against my God; but if otherwise thou wilt harbour a secret grudge against the word which stood in thy way, and be discontented, thy design took not. A naughty heart, like Amnon, pines while his lust hath vent. Again, what music doth the achievements of Christ in the world make in thy ear? When thou hearest [that] the gospel thrives, the blind see, the lame walk, the poor gospellized, doth thy spirit rejoice in that hour? If a saint, thou wilt, as God is thy Father, rejoice [that] thou hast more brethren born; as he is thy prince, that the multitude of his subjects increase. So when thou seest the plots of Christ's enemies discovered, powers defeated, canst thou go forth with the saints to meet King Jesus, and ring him out of the field with praises? or do thy bells ring backward, and such news make thee haste, like Haman, mourning to thine house, there to empty thy spirit, swollen with rancour against his saints and truth? Or if thy policy can master thy passion, so far as to make fair weather in thy countenance, and suffer thee to join with the people of God in their acclamations of joy, yet then art thou a close mourner within, and likest the work no better than Haman his office, in holding Mordecai's stirrup, who had rather have held the ladder. This speaks thee a certain enemy of Christ, how handsomely soever thou mayest carry it before men.

Second. Bless God, O ye saints, who upon the former trial, can say you are translated into the kingdom of Christ, and so delivered from the tyranny of this usurper. There are few but have some one gaudy day in a year, which they solemnize; some keep their birthday, others their marriage; some their manumission from a cruel service, others their deliverance from some imminent danger. Here is a mercy where all these meet. You may call it, as Adam did his wife, Evah, the mother of all the living; every mercy riseth up and

calls this blessed. This is thy birth-day; thou wert before, but beganst to live when Christ began to live in thee. The father of the prodigal dated his son's life from his return: 'This my son was dead, and is alive.' Is it thy marriage day: 'I have married you to one husband, even Christ Jesus,' saith Paul to the Corinthians. Perhaps thou hast enjoyed this thy husband's sweet company many a day, and had a numerous offspring of joys and comforts by thy fellowship with him, the thought of which cannot but endear him to thee, and make the day of thy espousals delightful to thy memory. It is thy manumission; then were thy indentures cancelled, wherein thou wert bound to sin and Satan. When the Son made thee free, thou becamest free indeed. Thou canst not say thou wast born free, for thy father was a slave; not that thou boughtest thy freedom with a sum. By grace ye are saved. Heaven is settled on thee in the promise, and thou not at charge so much as for the writing's drawing. All is done at Christ's cost, with whom God indented, and to whom he gave the promise of eternal life before the world began, as a free estate to settle upon every believing soul in the day they should come to Christ, and receive him for their Prince and Saviour; so that from the hour thou didst come under Christ's shadow, all the sweet fruit that grows on this tree of life is thine. With Christ, all that both worlds have, fall to thee; all is yours, because you are Christ's.

O Christian, look upon thyself now, and bless thy God to see what a change there is made to thy state, since that black and dismal time, when thou wert slave to the prince of darkness. How couldst thou like thy old scullion's work again, or think of returning to thy house of bondage, now thou knowest the privileges of Christ's kingdom? Great princes, who from baseness and beggary have ascended to kingdoms and empires--to add to the joy of their present honour--have delighted to speak often of their base birth, to go and see the mean cottages where they were first entertained, and had their birth and breeding and the like. And it is not unuseful for the Christian to look in at the grate, to see the smoky hole where once he lay, to view the chains wherewith he was laden, and so to compare Christ's court and the devil's prison--the felicity of the one and the horror of the other--together. But when we do our best to affect our hearts with this mercy, by all the enhancing aggravations we can find out, alas, how little a portion of it shall we know here? This is a nimium excellens--a surpassing excellence, which cannot be fully seen, unless it be by a glorified eye. How can it be fully known by us, where it cannot be fully enjoyed? Thou art translated into the kingdom of Christ, but thou art a great way from his court. That is kept in heaven, and that the Christian knows, but as we [know] far countries which we never saw only by map, or some rarities that are sent us as a taste of what grows there in abundance.

Third. This, Christian, calls for thy loyalty and faithful service to Christ, who hath saved thee from Satan's bondage. Say, O ye saints, to Christ, as they say to Gideon, 'Come thou and rule over us, for thou hast delivered us from the hand, not of Midian, but of Satan.' Who so able to defend thee from his wrath, as he who broke his power? who like to rule thee so tenderly, as he that could not brook another's tyranny over thee? In a word, who hath right to thee besides him, who ventured his life to redeem thee? --that being delivered from all thine enemies, thou mayest serve him without fear in holiness all the days of thy life.

And were it not pity that Christ should take all this pains to lift up thy head from Satan's house of bondage, and give thee a place among those in his own house, who are admitted to minister unto him--which is the highest honour the nature of men or angels is capable of--and that thou shouldst after all this be found to have a hand in any treasonable practice against thy dear Saviour? Surely Christ may think he hath deserved better at your hands, if at none besides. Where shall a prince safely dwell, if not in the midst of his own courtiers? and those such were all taken from chains and prisons to be thus preferred, the more to oblige them in his service.

Let devils and devilish men do their own work, but let not thy hand, O Christian, be upon thy dear Saviour. But this is too little, to bid thee not play the traitor. If thou hast any loyal blood running in thy veins, thy own heart will smite thee when thou rendest the least skirt of his holy law; thou canst as well carry burning coals in thy bosom, as hide any treason there against thy dear Sovereign. No, it is some noble enterprise I would have thee think upon, how thou mayest advance the name of Christ higher in thy heart, and [in the] world too, as much as in thee lies.

O how kindly did God take it, that David, when peaceably set in his throne, was casting about, not how he might entertain himself with those pleasures which usually corrupt and debauch the courts of princes in times of peace, but how he might show his zeal for God, in building a house for his worship that had reared a throne for him, II Sam. 7. And is there nothing, Christian, thou canst think on, wherein thou mayest be instrumental for God in thy generation? He is not a good subject, that is all for what he can get of his prince, but never thinks what he may do for him; nor he the true Christian, whose thoughts dwell more on his own happiness than on the honour of his God.

If subjects might choose what life stands best for their own enjoyment, all would desire to live at court with their prince; but because the prince's honour is more to be valued than this, therefore, noble spirits, to do their prince service, can deny the delicacies of a court, to jeopard their lives in the field, and thank their prince too for the honour of their employment. Blessed Paul upon these terms was willing to have his day of coronation in glory prorogued[7], and he to stay as companion with his brethren in tribulation here, for the furtherance of the gospel.

This, indeed, makes it worth the while to live[8], that we have by a fair opportunity--if hearts to husband it--in which we may give a proof of our real gratitude to our God, for his redeeming love in rescuing us out of the power of the prince of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of his dear Son. And therefore, Christian, lose no time, but, what thou meanest to do for God, do it quickly.

Art thou a magistrate? now it will be soon seen on whose side thou art. If indeed thou hast renounced allegiance to Satan, and taken Christ for thy prince, declare thyself an enemy to all that bear the name of Satan, and march under his colours. Study well by commission, and when thou understandest the duty of thy place, fall to work zealously for God. Thou hast thy prince's sword put into thy hand. Be sure thou use it, and take heed how thou usest it, that when called to deliver it up, and thy account also, it may not be found rusty in the sheath through sloth and cowardice, besmeared with the blood of violence, not bent and gaped with partiality and injustice.

Art thou a minister of the gospel? Thy employment is high, an ambassador, and that not from some petty prince, but from the great God to his rebellious subjects; a calling so honourable, that the Son of God disdained not to come in extraordinary from heaven to perform it, called therefore the 'messenger of the covenant,' Mal. 3:1; yea, he had to this day stayed on earth in person about it, had he not been called to reside as our ambassador and advocate in heaven with the Father; and therefore in his bodily absence he hath intrusted thee, and a few more, to carry on the treaty with sinners, which, when on earth, himself began. And what can you do more acceptable to him, than to be faithful in it, as a business on which he hath set his heart so much? As ever you would see his sweet face with joy--you that are his ambassadors--attend to your work, and labour to bring this treaty of peace to a blessed issue between and those you are sent to. And then if sinners will not come off, and seal the articles of the gospel, you shall, as Abraham said to his servant, be clear of your oath. Though Israel be not gathered, yet you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.

And let not the private Christian say he is a dry tree, and can do nothing for Christ his prince, because he may not bear the magistrate's fruit or minister's. Though thou hast not a commission to punish the sins of others with the sword of justice, yet thou mayest show thy zeal in mortifying thy own with the sword of the Spirit, and mourn for theirs also; though thou mayest not condemn them on the bench, yet thou mayest, yea, oughtest, by the power of a holy life, to convince and judge them. Such a judge Lot was to the Sodomites. Though thou art not sent to preach and baptize, yet thou mayest be wonderfully helpful to them that are. The Christian's prayers whet [the] magistrates and ministers' sword also. O pray, Christian, and pray again, that Christ's territories may be enlarged. Never go to hear the Word but pray, Thy kingdom come. Loving princes take great content in the acclamations and good wishes of their subjects as they pass by. A vivat rex--long live the king--coming from a loyal breast, though poor, is more worth than a subsidy from those who deny their hearts while they part with their money. Thou servest a prince, Christian, who knows what all his subjects think of him, and he counts it his honour not to have a multitude feignedly submit to him, but to have a people that love him and cordially like his government, who, if they were to choose their king, and make their own laws they should live under every day, would desire no other than himself, nor any other laws than what they have already from his mouth. It was no doubt great content to David, that he had the hearts of his people, so as whatever the king did, pleased them all, II Sam. 3:36. And surely God took it as well, that what he did pleased David, for indeed David was content under the rule and disposure of God as the people were under his. Witness the calmness of his spirit in the greatest affliction that ever befell him: 'Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him,' II Sam. 15:26. Loyal soul! he had rather live in exile, with the good-will of God, than have his throne, if God will not say it is good for him.

BRANCH SECOND.

[Against powers.]

Satan, in this second branch of the description, is set forth by his strength and puissance--called powers. This gives weight to the former. Were he a prince and not able to raise a force that might dread the saints, the swelling name of prince were contemptible; but he hath power answerable to his dignity, which in five particulars will appear. First. In his names. Second. His nature. Third. His number. Fourth. His order and unity. Fifth. The mighty works that are attributed to him.

The great power Satan hath not only over
the elementary and sensitive part of the world,
but over the intellectual also
--the souls of men.

First. He hath names of great power. [He is] called 'the strong man,' Luke 11:21; strong that he keeps his house in peace in defiance of all the sons of Adam, none on earth being able to cope with this giant. Christ must come from heaven to destroy him and his works, or the field is lost. He is called the roaring lion, which beast commands the whole forest. If he roars, all tremble; yea, in such a manner, as Pliny relates, that he goes amongst them, and they stand exanimated while he chooseth his prey without resistance; such a lion is Satan, who leads sinners captive at his will, II Tim. 2:26. He takes them alive, as the word is, as the fowler the bird, which, with a little scrap is enticed into the net; or as the conqueror his cowardly enemy, who has no heart to fight, but yields without contest. Such cowards the devil finds sinners [that] he

no sooner appears in a motion, but they yield. They are but a very few noble spirits, and those are the children of the most High God, who dare valiantly oppose him, and in striving against sin resist to blood. He is called the 'great red dragon,' who with his tail, wicked men his instruments, sweeps down the third part of the stars of heaven; the 'prince of the power of the air,' because as a prince can muster his subjects, and draw them into the field for his service so the devil can raise^[9] [the power of the air]. In a word, he is called 'the god of this world,' II Cor. 4:4, because sinners give him a god-like worship, fear him as the saints do God himself.

Second. The devil's nature shows his power; it is angelical. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, Ps. 103:20. Strength is put for angels, Ps. 78:25. They did eat angels' food, the food of the mighty. In two things the power of angelical nature will appear; in its superiority, and in its spirituality.

1. Its superiority. Angels are the top of the creation; man himself is made a little lower than the angels. Now in the works of creation, the superior hath a power over the inferior; the beasts over the grass and herb, man over the beasts, and angels over man.

2. The spirituality of their nature. The weakness of man is from his flesh; his soul, made for great enterprises, but weighed down with a lump of flesh, is forced to row with a strength suitable to its weak partner. But now, the devils being angels have no such encumbrance, no fumes from a fleshly part to cloud their understanding, which is clear and piercing; no clog at their heel to retard their motion, which, for swiftness, is set out by the wind and flame of fire. Yea, being spiritual, they cannot be resisted with carnal force; fire and sword hurt not them. The angel which appeared to Manoah went up in the fire that consumed the sacrifice. Though such had been the dotage, and is at this day, of superstitious ones, that they think to charm the devil with their carnal exorcisms; hence the Romish relics, cross, holy water; yea, and [it existed] among the Jews themselves in corrupter times, who thought by their phylacteries and circumcision to scare away the devil, which made some of them expound that [passage] Song. 3:8, of circumcision: 'Every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.' By sword on the thigh, they expound circumcision, which they will vainly have given as a charm against evil spirits that affright them in the night. But alas, the devil cares for none of these, no, not for an ordinance of God, when by fleshly confidence we make it a spell; he hath been often bound with these fetters and chains, as is said of him in the gospel, and the chains have been plucked asunder by him, neither could any man thus tame him. He esteems, as Job saith of the leviathan, iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. It must be a stronger than the strong man [that] must bind him, and none [is] stronger but God, the Father of spirits. The devil lost, indeed, by his fall, much of his power in relation to that holy and happy estate in which he was created, but not his natural abilities; he is an angel still, and hath an angel's power.

Third. The number of devils adds to their power. What lighter than the sand? yet number makes it weighty. What creature less than lice? yet what plague greater to the Egyptians. How formidable must devils be, who are both for nature so mighty and for number such a multitude! There are devils enough to beleague the whole earth; not a place under heaven where Satan hath not his troops; not a person without some of these cursed spirits haunting and watching him wherever he goes; yea, for some special service, he can send a legion to keep garrison in one single person, as Mark 5; and, if so many can be spared to attend one, to what a number would the muster-roll of Satan's whole army amount, if known? And now tell me if we are not like to find our march difficult to heaven--if ever we mean to go thither --that are to pass through the very quarters of this multitude, who are scattered over the face of all the earth?

When armies are disbanded, and the roads full of debauched soldiers, wandering up and down, it is dangerous travelling; we hear then of murderers and robberies from all quarters. These powers of hell are that party of angels, who for their mutiny and disobedience were cashiered heaven, and thrust out of that glorious host; and, ever since, they have straggled here below, endeavouring to do mischief to the children of men, especially travelling in heaven's road.

Fourth. Their unity and order makes their number formidable. We cannot say there is love among them--that heavenly fire cannot live in a devil's bosom; yet there is unity and order as to this --they are all agreed in their design against God and man: so their unity and consent is knit together by the ligaments not of love, but of hatred and policy --hatred against God and his children, which they are filled with--and policy, which tells them that if they agree not in their design, their kingdom cannot stand. And how true they are to this wicked brotherhood, our Saviour gives a fair testimony, when he saith, Satan fights not against Satan. Did you ever hear of any mutiny in the devil's army? or that any of these apostate angels did freely yield up one soul to Christ? They are many, and yet but one spirit of wickedness in them all. My name, said the devils, not our name, is legion. The devil is called the leviathan. 'The Lord with his strong sword shall punish leviathan,' Isa. 27:1, from their cleaving together, of %&- (lava), compact or joined together, used for the whale, whose strength lies in his scales, which are so knit, that he is, as it were, covered with armour. Thus these cursed spirits do accord in their machinations, and labour to bring their instruments into the same league with them; not contented with their bare obedience, but where they can obtain it do require an express oath of their servants to be true to them, as in witches.

Fifth. The mighty works that are attributed to these evil spirits in Scripture declare their power; and these either respect the elementary, sensible, or intellectual part of the world. The elementary: what dreadful effects this prince of the power of the air is able to produce on that, see in the word; he cannot indeed make the least breath of air, drop of water, or spark of fire, but he can, if let loose, as reverend Master Caryl saith on Job 1, go to God's storehouse, and make use of these in such a sort as no man can stand before him; he can hurl the sea into such a commotion that the depths shall boil like a pot, and disturb the air into storms and tempests, as if heaven and earth would meet. Job's children were buried in the ruins of their house by a puff of his mouth, yea, he can go to God's magazine (as the former author saith) and let off the great ordinance of heaven, causing such dreadful thunder and lightning as shall not only affright, but do real execution, and that in a more dreadful way than in the ordinary course of nature. If man's art can so subliminate nature, as we see in the invention of powder, that such hath a strange force; much more able is he to draw forth its power. Again, over the sensitive world his power is great; not only the beasts, as in the herd of swine, hurried by him into the deep; but over the bodies of men also, as in Job, whose sore boils were not the breakings out of a distempered nature, but the print of Satan's fangs on his flesh, doing that suddenly, which in nature would have required more time to gather and ripen; and [over] the demoniacs in the gospel, grievously vexed and tormented by him. But this the devil counts small game.

His great spite is at the souls of men, which I call the intellectual world; his cruelty to the body is for the soul's sake. As Christ's pity to the bodies of men, when on earth, healing their diseases, was in a subserviency to the good of their souls, bribing them with those mercies suitable to their carnal desires, that they might more willingly receive mercies for their souls from that hand which was so kind to their bodies; as we give children something that pleaseth them, to persuade them to do something that pleaseth them not--go to the school, learn their book; so the devil, who is cruel as Christ as meek, and wisheth good neither to body nor soul, yet shows his cruelty to the body, but on a design against the soul --knowing well that the soul is soon discomposed by the perturbation of the other--[for] the soul cannot but

lightly hear, and so have its peace and rest broken by the groans and complaints of the body, under whose very roof it dwells; and then, it is not strange, if, as for want of sleep, the tongue talk idly, so the soul should break out into some sinful carriage, which is the bottom of the devil's plot on a saint. And as for other poor silly souls, he gains little less than a god-like fear and dread of them by that power he puts forth, through divine permission, in smiting their goods, beasts, and bodies, as among the Indians at this day. Yea, there are many among ourselves who plainly show what a throne Satan hath in their hearts upon this account; such, who, as if there were not a God in Israel, go for help and cure to his doctors--wizards I mean. And truly had Satan no other way to work his will on the souls of men, but by this vantage he takes from the body, yet, considering the degeneracy of man's state,--how low his soul is sunk beneath its primitive extraction; how the body, which was a lightsome house, is now become a prison to it; that which was its servant, is now become its master --it is no wonder he is able to do so much.

But besides this, he hath, as a spirit, a nearer way of access to the soul, and as a superior spirit, yet more [power] over man, a lower creature. And, above all, having got within the soul by man's fall, he hath now far more power than before; so that, where he meets not resistance from God, he carries all before him; as in the wicked, whom he hath so at his devotion, that he is, in a sense, said to do that in them which God doth in the saints: God works effectually in them, Gal. 2:8; I Thes. 2:13. Satan worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2:2, the word in the original being the same as in the former places[10], --he is in a manner as efficacious with them, as the Holy Spirit with the other. His delusions [are] 'strong,' II Thes. 2:11; they return not[11], [without accomplishing their object]. The Spirit enlightens; he 'blinds the minds of them which believe not,' II Cor. 4:4. The Spirit fills the saints, Eph. 5:18; 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart?' saith Peter to Ananias, Acts 5:3. The Spirit fills with knowledge and the fruits of righteousness; Satan fills with envy and all unrighteousness. The Holy Spirit fills with comfort; Satan, the wicked with terrors--as in Saul, vexed by an evil spirit, and Judas, into whom it is said he entered, and when he had satisfied his lust upon him (as Amnon on Tamar), shuts the door of mercy upon him, and makes him that was even now traitor to his Master, hangman to himself. And though saints be not the proper subjects of his power, yet they are the chief objects of his wrath; his foot stands on the wicked's back, but he wrestles with these, and when God steps aside, he is far above their match. He hath sent the strongest among them home, trembling and crying to their God, with the blood running about their consciences. He is mighty, both as a tempter to, and for, sin; knowing the state of the Christian's affairs so well, and able to throw his fire-balls so far into the inward senses, whether they be of lust or horror, and to blow up these with such unwearied solicitations, that--if they at first meet not with some suitable dispositions in the Christian, at which, as from some loose corns of powder, they may make fire, which is most ordinary--yet, in time, he may bring over the creature, by the length of the siege, and continued volleys of such motions, to listen to a parley with them, if not a yielding to them. Thus many times he even wearies out the soul with importunity.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. Let this, O man, make the plumes of thy pride fall, whoever thou art that gloriest in thy power. Hadst thou more than thou or any of the sons of Adam ever had, yet what were all that to the power of these angels? Is it the strength of thy body thou gloriest in? Alas, what is the strength of frail flesh, to the force of their spiritual nature? Thou art no more to these, than a child to a giant, a worm to a man: they could tear up the mountains, and hurl the world into a confusion, if God would but suffer them. Is it the strength of thy parts above others? Dost thou not see what fools he makes of the wisest among men? winding them about as a sophist would do an idiot, making them believe light is dark, bitter is sweet, and

sweet bitter. Were not the strength of his parts admirable, could he make a rational creature, as man is, so absurdly throw away his scarlet, and embrace dung? I mean, part with God and the glorious happiness he hath with him, in hope to mend himself by embracing sin. Yet this he did when man had his best wits about him in innocency. Is it the power of place and dignity got by war-like achievement? Grant thou wert able to subdue nations, and give laws to the whole world, yet even then, without grace from above, thou wouldst be his slave. And he himself, for all this his power, is a cursed spirit, the most miserable of all God's creatures, and the more as he hath so much power to do mischief. Had the devil lost all his angelical abilities when he fell, he had gained by his loss. Therefore tremble, O man, at any power thou hast, except thou usest it for God. Art [thou] strong in body; who hath thy strength? God, or thy lusts? Some are strong to drink, strong to sin; thy bands shall therefore be stronger, Isa. 28:22. Hast thou power, by thy place, to do God and his church service, but no heart to lay it out for them, but rather against them? Thou and the devil shall be tried at the same bar. It seems thou meanest to go to hell for something, thou wilt carry thy full lading thither. No greater plague can befall a man, than power without grace. Such great ones in the world, while here, make a brave show, like chief commanders and field-officers at the head of their regiments--the common soldiers are poor creatures to them; but when the army is beaten, and all taken prisoners, then they fling off their scarf and feather, and would be glad to pass for the meanest in the army. Happy would devils be, [happy would] princes and great ones in the world be, if then they could appear in the habit of some poor sneaks to receive their sentence as such; but then their titles and dignity, and riches, shall be read, not for their honour, but further shame and damnation.

Use Second. It shows the folly of those that think it is such an easy matter to get to heaven. If the devil be so mighty, and heaven's way so full of them, then sure it will cost hot water before we display our banners upon the walls of that new Jerusalem. Yet it is plain that many think otherwise by the provision they make for their march. If you should see a man walking forth without a cloak, or with a very thin one, you will say, 'Surely he fears no foul weather;' or one riding a long journey alone and without arms, you will conclude he expects no thieves on the road. All, if you ask them, will tell you they are on the way to heaven; but how few care for the company of the saints? as if they needed not their fellowship in their journey! Most go naked, without so much as anything like armour, [and] have not enough to gain the name of professors at large; others, it may be, will show you some vain flighty hopes on the mercy of God, without any scripture bottom for the same, and with these content themselves, which will, like a rusty unsound pistol, fly in their own face when they come to use it; and is it any wrong to say [that] they meet with many rooks^[12] and cheaters in their dealing, who, should they not look to themselves, would soon undo them. And are there none that thou needest fear will put a cheat on thy soul, and bereave thee of thy crown of glory if they can? Thou art blinder than the prophet's servant, if thou seest not more devils encompassing thee, than he saw men about Samaria. Thy worldly trade they will not hinder, nay, may be [will] help thee to sinful tricks in that, to hinder thee in this; but if once thou resolvest to seek out for Christ and his grace, they will oppose thee to thy face. They are under an oath, as Paul's enemies were, to take away the life of thy soul if they can; desperate creatures themselves, who know their doom is irrecoverable, and sell their own lives they will as dear as they can. Now what folly is it to betray thy soul into their hands, when Christ stands by to be thy convoy? Out of him thou art a lost creature; thou canst not defend thyself alone against Satan, nor with Satan against God. Close with Christ, and thou art delivered from one of thy enemies, and him the most formidable, God, I mean; yea, he is become thy friend, who will stick close to thee in thy conflict with the other.

Use Third. To the saints; be not ye dismayed at this report which the Scripture makes of Satan's power. Let them fear him who fear not God. What are these mountains of power and pride, before thee, O

Christian, who servest a God that can make a worm thrash a mountain? The greatest hurt he can do thee, is by nourishing this false fear of him in thy bosom. It is observed, Bernard saith, of some beasts in the forest[13], [that] though they are too hard for the lion in fight, yet [they] tremble when he roars. Thus the Christian, when he comes to the pinch indeed, is able through Christ to trample Satan under his feet, yet before the conflict, stands trembling at the thought of him. Labour therefore to get a right understanding of Satan's power, and then this lion will not appear so fierce, as you paint him in your melancholy fancy. Three considerations will relieve you when at any time you are beset with the fears of his power.

Consider 1. It is a derived power. He hath it not in himself, but by patent from another, and that no other but God. All powers are of him, whether on earth or in hell. (1.) This truth subscribed in faith, would first secure thee, Christian, that Satan's power shall never hurt thee. Would thy Father give him a sword to mischief thee his child? 'I have created the smith,' saith God, 'that bloweth the coals,' 'I have created the waster to destroy,' and therefore he assures them that no weapon formed against them shall prosper,' Isa. 54:16, 17. If God provides his enemies' arms, they shall, I warrant you, be such as will do them little service. When Pilate thought to scare Christ, with what he could do towards the saving or taking away of his life, he replies, that he could do nothing 'except it were given him from above,' John 19:11, as if he had said, 'Do your worst, I know who sealed your commission.' (2.) This considered, would meeken and quiet the soul, when troubled by Satan within, or his instruments without. It is Satan buffets, man persecutes me, but it is God who gives them both power. The Lord, saith David, bids him curse. The Lord, saith Job, hath given, and the Lord hath taken. This kept the king's peace in both their bosoms. O Christian, Look not on the jailor that whips thee; may be he is cruel, but read the warrant, [see] who wrote that, and at the bottom thou shalt find thy Father's hand.

Consider 2. [It is a limited power.] Satan's power is limited, and that two ways--he cannot do what he will, and he shall not do what he can.

(1.) He cannot do what he will. His desires are boundless, they walk not only to and fro here below, but in heaven itself, where he is pulling down his once fellow-angels, knocking down the carved work of that glorious temple, as with axes and hammers, yea, unthroning God and setting himself in his place.

(a) This fool saith in his heart, 'There is no God;' but he cannot do this, nor many other things, which his cankered malice stirs him up to wish; he is but a creature, and so hath the length of his tedder, to which he is staked, and cannot exceed. And if God be safe, then thou also, for thy life 'is hid with Christ in God.' 'If I live,' saith Christ, 'ye shall live also.' You are engraven on the table of his heart; if he plucks one away, he must the other also. (b) Again, as he cannot hurt the being of God, so he cannot pry into the bosom of God. He knows not man's, much less the thoughts of God. The astrologers nor their master could bring back Nebuchadnezzar's dream. As men have their closets for their own privacy, where none can enter in but with their key; so God keeps the heart as his withdrawing room, shut to all besides himself; and therefore when he takes upon him to foretell events, if God teach him not his lesson, nor second causes help him, he is beside his book. So to save his credit [he] delivers them dubiously, that his text may bear a gloss suitable to the effect whatever it is. And when he is bold to tell the state of a person, there is no weight to be laid on his judgement. Job was an hypocrite in his mouth, but God proved him a liar. (c) Again, he cannot hinder those purposes and counsels of God he knows. He knew Christ was to come in the flesh, and did his worst, but could not hinder his landing, though there were many devices in his heart, yet the counsel of the Lord concerning him did stand, yea, was delivered by the midwifery of Satan suggesting, and his instruments executing his lust as they thought, but fulfilling God's counsel against themselves. (d) Satan cannot ravish thy will. He cannot command thee to sin against thy will, he can

motum agere--make the soul go faster[14], that is on its way, as the wind carries the tide with more swiftness; but he cannot turn the stream of the heart contrary to its own course and tendency.

(2.) Satan's power is so limited that he cannot do what he can. God lets out so much of his wrath as shall praise him, and be as a stream to set his purpose of love to his saints on work, and then lets down the flood-gate by restraining the residue thereof. God ever takes him off before he can finish his work on a saint. He can, if God suffers him, rob the Christian of much of his joy, and disturb his peace by his cunning insinuations, but he is under command; he stands, like a dog, by the table, while the saints sit at his sweet feast of comfort, but dares not stir to roam[15] off their cheer; his Master's eye is on him. The want of this consideration loseth God his praise, and us our comfort--God having locked up our comfort in the performance of our duty. Did the Christian consider what Satan's power is, and who dams it up, this would always be a song of praise in his mouth. Hath Satan power to rob and burn, kill and slay, torment the body, distress the mind? whom may I thank that I am in any of these out of his hands? Doth Satan love me better than Job? or am I out of sight, or beside his walk? Is his courage cooled or his wrath appeased, that I escaped so well? No, none of these. His wrath is not against one, but all the saints; his eye is on thee, and his arm can reach thee; his spirit is not cowed, nor his stomach stayed with those millions he hath devoured, but [is] keen as ever; yea, sharper, because now he sees God ready to take away, and the end of the world drawing on so fast. It is thy God alone whom thou art beholden to for all this; his eye keepeth thee. when Satan finds this good man asleep, then he finds our God awake; therefore thou art not consumed, because he changeth not. Did his eye slumber or wander for one moment, there would need no other flood to drown thee, yea, the whole world, that what would come out of this dragon's mouth.

Consider 3. [It is a ministerial power.] Satan's power is ministerial, appointed by God for the service and benefit of the saints. It is true, as it is said of the proud Assyrian, 'he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,' Isa. 10:7; but it is in his heart to destroy those he tempts. But no matter what he thinks; as Luther comforted himself, when told what had passed at the diet at Nuremberg against the Protestants, that 'it was decreed one way there, but otherwise in heaven;' so for the saints' comfort, the thoughts which God thinks to them are peace, while Satan's are to ruin their graces, and destruction to their souls. And his counsel shall stand in spite of the devil. The very mittimus[16] which God makes, when he commits any of his saints to the devil's prison, runs thus: 'Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,' I Cor. 5:5; so that tempted saints may say, 'We had perished if we had not perished to our own thinking.' This leviathan, while he thinks to swallow them up, is but sent of God (as the whale to Jonah) to waft them safe to land. 'Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white,' Dan. 11:35. This God intends when he lets his children fall into temptation. As we do with our linen, the spots they get at our feasts, are taken out by washing, rubbing, and laying them out to bleach. The saints' spots are most got in peace, plenty, and prosperity, and they never recover their whiteness to such a degree as when they come from under Satan's scouring. We do too little, not to fear Satan; we should comfort ourselves with the usefulness and subserviency of his temptations to our good. All things are yours who are Christ's. He hath given life to be yours, hath given death also. He that hath given heaven for your inheritance--Paul and Cephas, his ministers and ordinances to help you thither--hath given the world with all the afflictions of it, yea, the prince of it too, with all his wrath and power, in order to the same end. This, indeed, is love and wisdom in a riddle, but you who have the Spirit of Christ can unfold it.

BRANCH THIRD.

[Against the rulers of the darkness

of this world.]

These words contain the third branch in the description of our great enemy the devil; and they hold forth the proper seat of his empire, with a threefold boundary. He is not 'Lord over all'--that is the incommunicable title of God--but a ruler of the darkness of this world, where the time, place, and subjects of his empire are stinted. First. The time when this prince hath his rule--in this world, that is, now, not hereafter. Second. The place where he rules--in this world, that is, here below, not in heaven. Third. The subjects or persons whom he rules, not all in this lower world neither; they are wrapped up in these words--the darkness of this world.

[The time when Satan rules.]

First. [Satan's empire is bounded by time.] The time when he rules is in this world; that is, now, not hereafter. This word world may be taken in the text for that little spot of time which, like an inconsiderable parenthesis, is clapped in on either side with vast eternity, called sometimes the present world, Titus 2.12. On this stage of time this mock king acts the part of a prince; but when Christ comes to take down his scaffold at the end of this world, then he shall be degraded, his crown taken off, his sword broke over his head, and he hissed off with scorn and shame; yea, of a prince, become a close prisoner in hell. No more, then, shall he infest the saints, no, nor rule the wicked, but he with them, and they with him, shall lie under the immediate execution of God's wrath. For this very end Christ hath his patent and commission, which he will not give up, till 'he shall have put down all rule,' I Cor. 15:24. Then, and not till then, will he deliver up his economical kingdom to his Father, 'when he shall have put down all rule;' 'for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet,' ver. 25. Satan is cast already, his doom is past upon him, as Adam's was upon his first sin, but full execution is stayed till the end of the world. The devil knows it; it is an article in his creed, which made him trembling ask Christ why he came to torment him before his time.

Use First. This brings ill news to the wicked. Your princes cannot long sit in his throne. Sinners at present have a merry time of it, if it would hold; they rejoice, while Christ's disciples weep and mourn; they rustle in their silks, while the saint goes in his rags. Princes are not more careful to oblige their courtiers with pensions and preferments, than the devil is to gratify his followers. He hath his rewards also: 'All this will I give thee.' 'Am not I able to promote thee?' saith Balak to Balaam. Oh, it is strange--and yet not strang

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