

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 161

SATAN & HIS DECEPTION

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your
adversary the devil, as a roaring
lion, walketh about, seeking
whom he may devour.*

1 Peter 5:8

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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#161

Contents

Satan's Personality	2
<i>A.W. PINK (1886-1952)</i>	
Satan Considering the Saints.....	6
<i>Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)</i>	
Ten Helps against Satan's Devices	19
<i>Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)</i>	
Resisting the Devil	28
<i>A.W. Pink (1886-1952)</i>	
The Blood of the Lamb, the Conquering Weapon	33
<i>Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)</i>	

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SATAN'S PERSONALITY

A.W. Pink (1886-1952)

THIRTY-FIVE times [Satan] is denominated “the devil,” which means “the accuser” or “slanderer”—accusing the saints before God and traducing¹ the character of God before men. Fifty-two times, he is called “Satan,” which means “enemy” or “adversary.” He is God’s enemy and man’s adversary. “Satan” refers to his *character*: the malignant Adversary of all good—in God or His creatures. “Devil” refers to his *mode* of carrying out his evil designs: by lying slanders, false accusations, evil traducings. He is termed “The Prince of this world” (Joh 14:30), which defines his position in relation to our earth. He is named “Beelzebub” (Mat 12:27), which regards him as the head of the demons. He is spoken of as the “Wicked One” (Mat 13:19) which refers to him as the prime mover of *all* wickedness. He is styled “Apollyon,” that is “Destroyer” (Rev 9:11), which links him with the bottomless pit. He is referred to as “The prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), which points to his present home and sphere of operations (*cf.* Eph 6:12). He is termed “Lucifer,” which means “Morning Star” (Isa 14:12), a title that seems to have belonged to him before his apostasy. He is called “The god of this world” (2Co 4:4) because he is the inspirer and director of all spurious² religion. He is termed “Liar, and the father of it” (Joh 8:44) because he is the inveterate opposer of the truth. These and other titles of Satan are meaningless unless he is a personal being.

2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE PREDICATED OF HIM. Intelligence: His temptations are spoken of as “the wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11); while in Revelation 2:24 we read of “The depths of Satan” (Greek, “deep things”). Further, in Revelation 12:9 he is termed “That old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” To deceive implies design; and design is the product of intelligence, and intelligence is inseparable from personality.

Memory: In his conflict with our Lord, he *quoted* from the Old Testament Scriptures (Mat 4:6). A mere abstraction could not do this.

Knowledge: In Revelation 12:12, we are told he has “great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” But that which is impersonal cannot be said to “know.”

Will: “...that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2Ti 2:26). “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my

¹ **trading** – speaking badly of or telling lies about someone to damage his reputation.

² **spurious** – false; fake.

throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation” (Isa 14:12-13). That Satan possesses a will or the power of choice is further proof that he is a personal being.

Moral character: Satan is spoken of as a “deceiver,” “liar,” “murderer,” “tempter,” all of which are terms implying moral character—i.e., that of which duty or obligation, and right and wrong may be predicted.

Speech: He is represented as talking with God (Job 1:9-10), arguing with our Lord, and as “accusing” the brethren. This is a further indication that Satan possesses the same characteristics as ourselves.

Emotions: He desired Peter that he might sift him as wheat (Luk 22:31). *Pride* is spoken of as “the condemnation of the devil” (1Ti 3:6). While in Revelation 12:12 we read, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great *wrath*.” But pride and anger cannot be predicated of the law of gravitation—they are inseparable from personality.

Executive and organizing ability: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” (Rev 12:7). “Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle” (Rev 20:7-8). Here we find Satan marshaling³ his legions to engage in warfare. Ephesians 6:12 more than hints that he is the head of graduated and organized forces.

3. PERSONAL ACTS ARE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. *He tempts.* The first time this mysterious being is introduced to us in the Word of God, he appears in this capacity, inciting our first parents to disobey their Maker. In Matthew 4:3, he is expressly termed “the tempter.” Again, in 1 Corinthians 7:5 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5, the saints are warned against his machinations.⁴ To tempt implies design and argues intelligence and moral qualities, and these are inseparable from personality.

He accuses. To “accuse” unquestionably argues a conscious and rational entity. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev 12:10). This verse affords us a glimpse into the Unseen, and presents our Enemy maliciously impugning the saints before God. Two striking illustrations of this part of his work are furnished in Scripture. In Job 1:9-11 we find him charging the old patriarch; and, in Zechariah 3:1-5, he is seen standing before God to resist Joshua the high priest. Upon these interesting passages, we cannot now comment. Blessed it is to know that Satan’s efforts in this direction are all in vain—“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom 8:33).

³ **marshaling** – arranging soldiers in order to fight.

⁴ **machinations** – plots and schemes, especially for doing harm.

He makes war. We have already quoted Revelation 12:7, and 20:8-9 in another connection. We do not comment further on them now except to say that they furnish another proof that Satan is an intelligent, and albeit, malignant being.

He performs miracles. This opens up a wide subject in itself, into which we cannot now enter at length. We content ourselves with two scripture references. When Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles before Pharaoh as credentials of their divine commission, we read that “Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments” (Exo 7:11, etc.). Again, we read concerning the “Man of Sin” (Antichrist) that his coming shall be “after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2Th 2:9).

He causes bodily sufferings. The first two chapters of the book of Job clearly intimate that all the trials and afflictions which came upon Job were directly caused by the malignant assaults of the devil. When vindicating Himself for healing a sufferer on the Sabbath day our Lord said, “Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luk 13:16). Again; after the apostle Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, an affliction was sent him lest he should be exalted above measure at the abundance of the revelations which he had received, and this affliction is described as “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan” (2Co 12:7).

He works in and through the wicked. Just as we read that “it is God which worketh in you [the believer] both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phi 2:13), so, also, we read that Satan is “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). Another evidence of his activities is furnished in Matthew 13. In imitation of our Lord who scattered the “good seed” in the field, Satan went and *sowed* tares.

4. THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD PROVES SATAN TO BE A PERSONAL BEING. No unbiased mind can read carefully the fourth chapter of Matthew without coming to the conclusion that we have recorded there a real conflict between two persons—our Lord Jesus Christ and Satan. If we deny that the latter is there definitely brought before us as a person, we must logically affirm the same of the former. To say, in reply, we admit that Christ there *is* a real person but that “the devil” must be regarded as a personification of evil, is blasphemy; for it impugns the character of our blessed Lord.

Unlike every fallen son of Adam who is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, the Lord Jesus Christ was *sinless*. He is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26). “In him is no sin” (1Jo 3:5). He is “the Holy One of God” (Mar 1:24). He declared, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (Joh 14:30). As then there was no evil in our blessed Savior, the one who tempted Him must have been external and personal.

To deny that Matthew 4 presents Satan as a personal entity is either to traduce our Lord’s character or to reduce the entire narrative to meaningless jargon. Everything that is said of Satan in this chapter indicates and intimates that he is as real and actual

a person as the Lord Jesus Himself. The tempter “came to him.” He spoke, yea, reasoned and argued. He took Christ up into the holy city. He quoted to Him from the Psalms. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. He sought worship from the Savior. At His word, “he departed from him for a season.” All of which is proof positive—to one that believes in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures—that Satan is a living person.

5. HE IS AN ACCOUNTABLE BEING. Finally, the fact that the Word of God announces that Satan shall yet be cast into the bottomless pit, and afterwards into the lake of fire, argues that he is an accountable being. A mere abstraction cannot be punished. That which is nothing more than a negation could not be tormented. That which was incorporeal and intangible could not be “cast into the Lake of Fire.” The fact that the Scriptures declare that Satan *shall* be punished is conclusive evidence that he is a person, and a person endowed with moral responsibility.

From *Satan and His Gospel*, available as a small booklet from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

A.W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, author of numerous books and articles; born in Nottingham, England.

SATAN CONSIDERING THE SAINTS

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job...?”—Job 1:8.

HOW very uncertain are all terrestrial things! How foolish would that believer be who should lay up his treasure anywhere, except in heaven! Job’s prosperity promised as much stability as anything can do beneath the moon. The man had round about him a large household of, doubtless, devoted and attached servants. He had accumulated wealth of a kind that does not suddenly depreciate. He had oxen, asses, and cattle. He had not to go to markets and fairs, and trade with his goods to procure food and clothing, for he carried on the processes of agriculture on a very large scale round about his own homestead, and probably grew within his own territory everything that his establishment required. His children were numerous enough to promise a long line of descendants. His prosperity wanted nothing for its consolidation. It had come to its flood tide: where was the cause that could make it ebb?

Up there, beyond the clouds, where no human eye could see, there was a scene enacted which augured no good to Job’s prosperity. The spirit of evil stood face to face with the infinite Spirit of all good. An extraordinary conversation took place between these two beings. When called to account for his doings, the evil one boasted that he had gone to and fro throughout the earth, insinuating that he had met with no hindrance to his will, and found no one to oppose his freely moving and acting at his own pleasure. He had marched everywhere like a king in his own dominions, unhindered and unchallenged. When the great God reminded him that there was at least one place among men where he had no foothold, and where his power was unrecognized, namely, in the heart of Job; that there was one man who stood like an impregnable castle, garrisoned by integrity, and held with perfect loyalty as the possession of the King of Heaven; the evil one defied Jehovah to try the faithfulness of Job, told him that the patriarch’s integrity was due to his prosperity, that he served God and eschewed evil from sinister motives, because he found his conduct profitable to himself. The God of heaven took up the challenge of the evil one and gave him permission to take away all the mercies that he affirmed to be the props of Job’s integrity, and to pull down all the outworks and buttresses and see whether the tower would not stand in its own inherent strength without them. In consequence of this, all Job’s wealth went in one black day, and not even a child was left to whisper comfort.

A second interview between the Lord and his fallen angel took place. Job was again the subject of conversation; and the Great One defied by Satan, permitted him even to touch him in his bone and in his flesh, until the prince became worse than a pau-

per, and he who was rich and happy was poor and wretched, filled with disease from head to foot, and fain to scrape himself with a miserable potsherd, to gain a poor relief from his pain.

Let us see in this the mutability of all terrestrial things. “He hath founded it...upon the floods” (Psa 24:2), is David’s description of this world; and, if it be founded on the floods, can you wonder that it changes oft? Put not your trust in anything beneath the stars: remember that “Change” is written on the forefront of nature. Say not therefore, “My mountain standeth firm: it shall never be moved.” The glance of Jehovah’s eye can shake thy mountain into dust; the touch of His foot can make it like Sinai, to melt like wax, and to be altogether on a smoke. “Set your affection on things above” (Col 3:2), “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col 3:1), and let your heart and your treasure be “where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Mat 6:20). The words of Bernard may here instruct us: “That is the true and chief joy which is not conceived from the creature, but received from the Creator, which (being once possessed thereof) none can take from thee: compared with which all other pleasure is torment, all joy is grief, sweet things are bitter, all glory is baseness, and all delectable things are despicable.”

This is not, however, our subject this morning. Accept this much as merely an introduction to our main discourse. The Lord said to Satan, “Hast thou considered my servant Job?” (Job 1:8; 2:3). Let us deliberate, *first*, in what sense the evil spirit may be said to consider the people of God; *secondly*, let us notice what it is that he considers about them; and then, *thirdly*, let us comfort ourselves by the reflection that One Who is far above Satan considers us in a higher sense.

1. IN WHAT SENSE MAY SATAN BE SAID TO CONSIDER THE PEOPLE OF GOD? Certainly not in the usual Biblical meaning of the term *consider*. “O LORD, consider my trouble” (Psa 9:13). “Consider my meditation” (Psa 5:1). “Blessed is he that considereth the poor” (Psa 41:1). Such consideration implies good will and a careful inspection of the object of benevolence with regard to a wise distribution of favor. In that sense, Satan never considers any. If he has any benevolence, it must be towards himself; but all his considerations of other creatures are of the most malevolent kind. No meteoric flash of good flits across the black midnight of his soul. Nor does he consider us as we are told to consider the works of God, that is, in order to derive instruction as to God’s wisdom and love and kindness. He does not honor God by what he sees in His works or in His people. It is not with him, “Go to the ant...consider her ways, and be wise” (Pro 6:6); but he goes to the Christian and considers his ways and becomes more foolishly God’s enemy than he was before. The consideration that Satan pays to God’s saints is upon this wise. *He regards them with wonder, when he considers the difference between them and himself.* A traitor, when he knows the thorough villainy and the blackness of his own heart, cannot help being astounded, when he is forced to believe another man to be faithful. The first resort of a treacherous heart is to believe that all men would be just as treacherous, and are

really so at bottom. The traitor thinks that all men are traitors like himself, or would be, if it paid them better than fidelity.

When Satan looks at the Christian, and finds him faithful to God and to His truth, he considers him as we should consider a phenomenon—perhaps despising him for his folly, but yet marveling at him and wondering how he can act thus. “I,” he seems to say, “a prince, a peer of God’s parliament, would not submit my will to Jehovah: I thought it better to reign in hell than serve in heaven: I kept not my first estate, but fell from my throne: how is it that these stand? What grace is it that keeps these? I was a vessel of gold, and yet I was broken; these are earthen vessels, but I cannot break them! I could not stand in my glory—what can be the matchless grace which upholds them in their poverty, in their obscurity, in their persecution, still faithful to the God Who doth not bless and exalt them as He did me!”

It may be that he also wonders at their happiness. He feels within himself a seething sea of misery. There is an unfathomable gulf of anguish within his soul, and when he looks at believers, he sees them quiet in their souls, full of peace and happiness, and often without any outward means by which they should be comforted, yet rejoicing and full of glory. He goes up and down through the world and possesses great power, and there be many myrmidons¹ to serve him, yet he hath not the happiness of spirit possessed by yonder humble cottager, obscure, unknown, having no servants to wait upon her, but stretched upon the bed of weakness. He admires and hates the peace that reigns in the believer’s soul.

His consideration may go farther than this. Do you not think that *he considers them [in order] to detect, if possible, any flaw and fault in them, by way of solace to himself?* “They are not pure,” saith he, “these blood-bought ones, these elect from before the foundations of the world—they still sin! These adopted children of God, for whom the glorious Son bowed His head and gave up the ghost—even they offend!” How must he chuckle, with such delight as he is capable of, over the secret sins of God’s people! And if he can see anything in them inconsistent with their profession, anything that appears to be deceitful, and therein like himself, he rejoices. Each sin born in the believer’s heart, cries to him, “My father! My Father!” and he feels something like the joy of fatherhood as he sees his foul offspring.

He looks at the “old man” in the Christian, and admires the tenacity with which it maintains its hold, the force and vehemence with which it struggles the mastery, the craft and cunning with which every now and then, at set intervals, at convenient opportunities, it putteth forth all its force. He considers our sinful flesh, and makes it one of the books in which he diligently reads. One of the fairest prospects, I doubt not, which the devil’s eye ever rests upon, is the inconsistency and the impurity which he can discover in the true child of God. In this respect he had very little to consider in God’s true servant, Job.

¹ **myrmidons** – faithful followers who obey unquestioningly.

Nor is this all, but rather just the starting point of his consideration. We doubt not that he views the Lord's people, and especially the more eminent and excellent among them, as the great barriers to the progress of his kingdom. Just as the engineer, endeavoring to make a railway, keeps his eye very much fixed upon the hills and rivers, and especially upon the great mountain through which it will take years laboriously to bore a tunnel, so Satan, in looking upon his various plans to carry on his dominion in the world, considers most such men as Job.

Satan must have thought much of Martin Luther. "I could ride the world over," says he, "if it were not for that monk. He stands in my way. That strong-headed man hates and mauls my firstborn son, the pope. If I could get rid of him I would not mind though fifty thousand smaller saints stood in my way." He is sure to consider God's servant, if there be "none like him," if he stand out distinct and separate from his fellows.

Those of us who are called to the work of the ministry must expect from our position to be the special objects of his consideration. When the glass is at the eye of that dreadful warrior, he is sure to look out for those who by their regimentals are discovered to be the officers. And he bids his sharpshooters be very careful to aim at these, "For," saith he, "if the standard-bearer fall, then shall the victory be more readily gained to our side; and our opponents shall be readily put to rout." If you are more generous than other saints, if you live nearer to God than others, as the birds peck most at the ripest fruit, so may you expect Satan to be most busy against you.

Who cares to contend for a province covered with stones and barren rocks, and ice-bound by frozen seas? But in all times there is sure to be contention after the fat valleys where the wheat-sheaves are plenteous, and where the husbandman's toil is well requited, and thus, for you who honor God most, Satan will struggle very sternly. He wants to pluck God's jewels from His crown, if he can, and take the Redeemer's precious stones even from the breastplate itself. He considers, then, God's people; viewing them as hindrances to his reign, he contrives methods by which he may remove them out of his way, or turn them to his own account. Darkness would cover the earth if he could blow out the lights. There would be no fruit to shake like Lebanon, if he could destroy that handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; hence, his perpetual consideration is to make the faithful fail from among men.

It needs not much wisdom to discern that *the great object of Satan in considering God's people is to do them injury*. I scarcely think he hopes to destroy the really chosen and blood-bought heirs of life. My notion is that he is too good a divine for that. He has been foiled too often when he has attacked God's people, that he can hardly think he shall be able to destroy the elect, for you remember the soothsayers who are very nearly related to him, spoke to Haman on this wise, "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him" (Est 6:13). He knows right well that there is a seed royal in the land against whom he fights in vain; and it strikes me, if he could be absolutely

certain that any one soul was chosen of God, he would scarcely waste his time in attempting to destroy it, although he might seek to worry and to dishonor it.

It is, however, most likely that Satan no more knows who God's elect are than we do, for he can only judge as we do by outward actions, though he can form a more accurate judgment than we can through longer experience, and being able to see persons in private where we cannot intrude—yet into God's book of secret decrees his black eye can never peer. By their fruits, he knows them; and we know them in the same manner. Since, however, we are often mistaken in our judgment, he too may be so; and it seems to me that he therefore makes it his policy to endeavor to destroy them all—not knowing in which case he may succeed. He goeth about seeking whom he may devour, and, as he knows not whom he may be permitted to swallow up, he attacks all the people of God with vehemence.

Someone may say, "How can one devil do this?" He does not do it by himself alone. I do not know that many of us have ever been tempted directly by Satan: we may not be notable enough among men to be worth his trouble. But he has a whole host of inferior spirits under his supremacy and control. As the centurion said of himself, so he might have said of Satan, "he saith to this spirit, 'Do this,' and he doeth it, and to his servant, 'Go,' and he goeth." Thus all the servants of God will more or less come under the direct or indirect assaults of the great enemy of souls, and that with a view of destroying them; for he would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect.

Where he cannot destroy, there is no doubt that Satan's object is to *worry*. He does not like to see God's people happy. I believe the devil greatly delights in some ministers, whose tendency in their preaching is to multiply and foster doubts and fears, grief and despondency, as the evidences of God's people. "Ah," saith the devil, "preach on; you are doing my work well, for I like to see God's people mournful. If I can make them hang their harps on the willows, and go about with miserable faces, I reckon I have done my work very completely."

My dear friends, let us watch against those specious temptations which pretend to make us humble, but which really aim at making us unbelieving. Our God takes no delight in our suspicions and mistrusts. See how He proves His love in the gift of His dear Son Jesus! Banish then all your ill surmisings,² and rejoice in unmoved confidence. God delights to be worshipped with joy. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psa 95:1-2). "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" (Psa 32:11). "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice" (Phi 4:4). Satan does not like this. Martin Luther³ used to say, "Let us sing psalms and spite the

² **ill surmisings** – troubling speculations.

³ **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) – a German Roman Catholic monk, theologian, university professor, and church reformer, whose writings and preaching inspired the Protestant Reformation and changed the course of Western civilization.

devil,” and I have no doubt Martin Luther was pretty nearly right; for that lover of discord hates harmonious, joyous praise.

Beloved brother, the archenemy wants to make you wretched here, if he cannot have you hereafter; and in this, no doubt, he is aiming a blow at the honor of God. He is well aware that mournful Christians often dishonor the faithfulness of God by mistrusting it, and he thinks if he can worry us until we no more believe in the constancy and goodness of the Lord, he shall have robbed God of His praise. He that “offereth praise glorifieth me” (Psa 50:23), says God; and so Satan lays the axe at the root of our praise, that God may cease to be glorified.

Moreover, if Satan cannot destroy a Christian, how often has he *spoiled his usefulness*? Many a believer has fallen, not to break his neck—that is impossible—but he has broken some important bone, and he has gone limping to his grave! We can recall with grief some men once eminent in the ranks of the Church, who did run well, but on a sudden, through stress of temptation, they fell into sin, and their names were never mentioned in the Church again, except with bated breath. Everybody thought and hoped they were saved so as by fire; but certainly, their former usefulness never could return. It is very easy to go back in the heavenly pilgrimage, but it is very hard to retrieve your steps. You may soon turn aside and put out your candle, but you cannot light it quite so speedily.

Friend, beloved in the Lord, watch against the attacks of Satan and stand fast because you, as a pillar in the house of God, are very dear to us; and we cannot spare you. As a father or as a matron in our midst, we do you honor, and oh!—we would not be made to mourn and lament. We do not wish to be grieved by hearing the shouts of our adversaries while they cry, “Aha! Aha! So would we have it.” For alas! There have been many things done in our Zion that we would not have told in Gath nor published in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised should rejoice and the sons of the Philistines should triumph (2Sa 1:20).

Oh, may God grant us grace as a Church to stand against the wiles of Satan and his attacks—that having done his worst he may gain no advantage over us. After having considered, considered again, and counted well our towers and bulwarks,⁴ he may be compelled to retire because his battering rams cannot jar so much as a stone from our ramparts, and his slings cannot slay one single soldier on the walls.

Before I leave this point, I should like to say that perhaps it may be suggested, “How is it that God permits this constant and malevolent⁵ consideration of His people by the evil one?” One answer, doubtless, is that God knows what is for His own glory and that He giveth no account of His matters; that having permitted free agency and having allowed, for some mysterious reason, the existence of evil, it does not seem agreeable with His having done so to destroy Satan. But He gives him power

⁴ **bulwarks** – defensive walls.

⁵ **malevolent** – wishing evil towards others.

that it may be a fair hand-to-hand fight between sin and holiness, between grace and craftiness.

Besides, be it remembered, that incidentally the temptations of Satan are of *service* to the people of God. Fenelon⁶ (1651-1715) says they are the file that rubs off much of the rust of self-confidence; and I may add, they are the horrible sound in the sentinel's ear, which is sure to keep him awake. An experimental divine remarks that there is no temptation in the world that is so bad as not being tempted at all. For to be tempted will tend to keep us awake: whereas, being without temptation, flesh and blood are weak—and though the spirit may be willing, yet we may be found falling into slumber. Children do not run away from their father's side when big dogs bark at them. The howlings of the devil may tend to drive us nearer to Christ, may teach us our own weakness, may keep us upon our own watchtower, and be made the means of preservation from other ills. Let us “be sober, be vigilant, because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour” (1Pe 5:8). And let us who are in a prominent position be permitted affectionately to press upon you one earnest request, namely, “Brethren, pray for us,” that, exposed as we are peculiarly to the consideration of Satan, we may be guarded by divine power. Let us be made rich by your faithful prayers that we may be kept even to the end.

2. WHAT IS IT THAT SATAN CONSIDERS WITH A VIEW TO THE INJURY OF GOD'S PEOPLE? It cannot be said of him as of God that he knoweth us altogether. Yet, since he has been now nearly six thousand years dealing with poor fallen humanity, he must have acquired a very vast experience in that time. Having been all over the earth, and having tempted the highest and the lowest, he must know exceeding well what the springs of human action are, and how to play upon them.

Satan watches and considers first of all our peculiar infirmities. He looks us up and down, just as I have seen a horse dealer do with a horse; and soon finds out wherein we are faulty. I, a common observer, might think the horse an exceedingly good one, as I see it running up and down the road, but the dealer sees what I cannot see, and he knows how to handle the creature just in such quarters and at such points that he soon discovers any hidden mischief. Satan knows how to look at us and reckon us up from heel to head, so that he will say of this man, “His infirmity is lust,” or of that other, “He hath a quick temper,” or of this other, “He is proud,” or of that other, “He is slothful.”

The eye of malice is very quick to perceive a weakness, and the hand of enmity soon takes advantage of it. When the arch-spy finds a weak place in the wall of our castle, he takes care to plant his battering ram and begin his siege. You may conceal, even from your dearest friend, your infirmity, but you will not conceal it from your worst enemy. He has lynx eyes,⁷ and detects in a moment the joint in your harness. He goes about with a match, and though you may think you have covered all the gunpowder

⁶ **François Fénelon** (1651-1715) – French Roman Catholic archbishop and theologian.

⁷ **lynx eyes** – keen vision.

of your heart, yet he knows how to find a crack to put his match through, and much mischief will he do, unless eternal mercy shall prevent.

He takes care also to consider our frames and states of mind. If the devil would attack us when our mind is in certain moods, we should be more than a match for him; he knows this, and shuns the encounter. Some men are more ready for temptation when they are distressed and desponding; the fiend will then assail them. Others will be more liable to take fire when they are jubilant and full of joy; then will he strike his spark into the tinder. Certain persons, when they are much vexed and tossed to and fro, can be made to say almost anything; and others, when their souls are like perfectly placid⁸ waters, are just then in a condition to be navigated by the devil's vessel. As the worker in metals knows that one metal is to be worked at such a heat and another at a different temperature; as those who have to deal with chemicals know that at a certain heat one fluid will boil, while another reaches the boiling point much earlier—so Satan knows exactly the temperature at which to work us to his purpose. Small pots boil directly they are put on the fire, and so little men of quick temper are soon in a passion; larger vessels require more time and coal before they will boil, but when they do boil, it is a boil indeed, not soon forgotten or abated. The enemy, like a fisherman, watches his fish, adapts his bait to his prey, and knows in what seasons and times the fish are most likely to bite.

This hunter of souls comes upon us unawares, and often we are overtaken in a fault, or caught in a trap through an unwatchful frame of mind. That rare collector of choice sayings, Thomas Spencer, has the following that is much to the point: “The chameleon, when he lies on the grass to catch flies and grasshoppers, taketh upon him the color of the grass, as the polypus⁹ doth the color of the rock under which he lurketh, that the fish may boldly come near him without any suspicion of danger. In like manner, Satan turneth himself into that shape which we least fear, and sets before us such objects of temptation as are most agreeable to our natures, that so he may the sooner draw us into his net. He sails with every wind, and blows us that way which we incline ourselves through the weakness of nature. Is our knowledge in matter of faith deficient?—he tempts us to error. Is our conscience tender?—he tempts us to scrupulosity and too much preciseness. Hath our conscience, like the ecliptic line,¹⁰ some latitude?¹¹—he tempts us to carnal liberty. Are we bold spirited?—he tempts us to presumption. Are we timorous and distrustful?—he tempteth us to desperation. Are we of a flexible disposition?—he tempteth us to inconstancy. Are we stiff?—he labors to make obstinate heretics, schismatics,¹² or rebels of us. Are we of

⁸ **placid** – free from disturbance by heavy waves.

⁹ **polypus** – octopus or squid.

¹⁰ **ecliptic line** – the apparent path of the sun on the celestial sphere, marked by a longitudinal line at a 23.5 degree angle to the equator (the angle of the earth's axis in relation to the plane of its orbit around the sun). Spurgeon's point is that this represents some variance from precise longitude measurements that exactly parallel the equator.

¹¹ **latitude** – variance, flexibility.

¹² **schismatics** – those who cause divisions.

an austere temper?—he tempteth us to cruelty. Are we soft and mild?—he tempteth us to indulgence and foolish pity. Are we hot in matters of religion?—he tempteth us to blind zeal and superstition. Are we cold?—he tempteth us to Laodicean lukewarmness (Rev 3:16). Thus doth he lay his traps, that one way or other, he may ensnare us.

He also takes care to consider our position among men. There are a few persons who are most easily tempted when they are alone; they are the subjects then of great heaviness of mind, and they may be driven to most awful crimes. Perhaps the most of us are more liable to sin when we are in company. In some company, I never should be led into sin; into another society, I could scarcely venture. Many are so full of levity, that those of us who are inclined the same way can scarcely look them in the face without feeling our besetting sin set a-going. Others are so somber that if they meet a brother of like mold, they are pretty sure between them to invent an evil report of the goodly land. Satan knows where to overtake you in a place where you lie open to his attacks. He will pounce upon you, swoop like a bird of prey from the sky, where he has been watching for the time to make his descent with a prospect of success.

How, too, will he consider our condition in the world! He looks at one man, and says, “That man has property: it is of no use my trying such-and-such arts with him; but here is another man who is very poor, I will catch him in that net.” Then, again, he looks at the poor man, and says, “Now, I cannot tempt him to this folly, but I will lead the rich man into it.” As the sportsman has a gun for wild fowl and another for deer and game, so has Satan a different temptation for various orders of men. I do not suppose that the Queen’s temptation ever will annoy Mary the kitchen maid. I do not suppose, on the other hand, that Mary’s temptation will ever be very serious to me. Probably you could escape from mine; I do not think you could—and I sometimes fancy I could bear yours, though I question if I could. Satan knows, however, just where to smite us, and our position, our capabilities, our education, our standing in society, our calling, may all be doors through which he may attack us.

You who have no calling at all are in peculiar peril—I wonder the devil does not swallow you outright. The most likely man to go to hell is the man who has nothing to do on earth. I say that seriously. I believe that there cannot happen a much worse evil to a person than to be placed where he has no work; and if I should ever be in such a state, I would get employment at once, for fear I should be carried off, body and soul, by the evil one. Idle people tempt the devil to tempt them. Let us have something to do, let us keep our minds occupied—if not, we make room for the devil. Industry will not make us gracious, but the want of industry may make us vicious. Have always something on the anvil or in the fire...So Watts taught us in our childhood, and so let us believe in our manhood. Books, works, or such recreations as are necessary for health, should occupy our time. If I throw myself down in indolence, like an old piece of iron, I must not wonder that I grow rusty with sin.

Satan notices all of the objects of our affection. Nor have I done yet. Satan, when he makes his investigations, notices all *the objects of our affection*. I doubt not when he

went round Job's house, he observed it as carefully as thieves do a jeweler's premises when they mean to break into them. They very cunningly take account of every door, window, and fastening: they fail not to look at the next-door house, for they may have to reach the treasure through the building that adjoins it. So, when the devil went round, jotting down in his mind all Job's position, he thought to himself, "There are the camels and the oxen, the asses, and the servants—yes, I can use all these very admirably." "Then," he thought, "there are the three daughters! There are the ten sons, and they go feasting—I shall know where to catch them, and if I can just blow the house down when they are feasting, that will afflict the father's mind the more severely, for he will say 'O that they had died when they had been praying, rather than when they had been feasting and drinking wine.' I will put down too in the inventory," says the devil, "his wife—I dare say I shall want her," and accordingly it came to that. Nobody could have done what Job's wife did—none of the servants could have said that sad sentence so stingingly—or, if she meant it very kindly, none could have said it with such a fascinating air as Job's own wife, "Bless God and die," as it may be read, or "Curse God and die." Ah, Satan, thou hast ploughed with Job's heifer, but thou hast not succeeded; Job's strength lies in his God, not in his hair, or else thou mightest have shorn him as Samson was shorn! Perhaps the evil one had even inspected Job's personal sensibilities, and so selected that form of bodily affliction that he knew to be most dreaded by his victim. He brought upon him a disease that Job may have seen and shuddered at, in poor men outside the city gates.

Brethren, Satan knows quite as much regarding *you*! You have a child, and Satan knows that you idolize it. "Ah," says he, "there is a place for my wounding him." Even the partner of your bosom may be made a quiver in which hell's arrows shall be stored until the time may come, and then she may prove the bow from which Satan will shoot them. Watch even your neighbor and her that lieth in your bosom, for you know not how Satan may get an advantage over you. Our habits, our joys, our sorrows, our retirements, our public positions, all may be made weapons of attack by this desperate foe of the Lord's people. We have snares everywhere—in our bed and at our table, in our house and in the street. There are gins and trap-falls in company; there are pits when we are alone. We may find temptations in the house of God as well as in the world—traps in our high estate and deadly poisons in our abasement. We must not expect to be rid of temptations until we have crossed the Jordan, and then, thank God, we are beyond gunshot of the enemy. The last howling of the dog of hell will be heard as we descend into the chill waters of the black stream, but when we hear the hallelujah of the glorified, we shall have done with the black prince forever and ever.

3. SATAN CONSIDERED, BUT THERE WAS A HIGHER CONSIDERATION THAT OVERRODE HIS CONSIDERATION. In times of war, the sappers and miners of one party will make a mine, and it is a very common counteractive for the sappers and miners of the other party to counter-mine by undermining the first mine. This is just what God does with Satan. Satan is mining, and he thinks to light the fuse and to

blow up God's building, but all the while God is undermining him, and He blows up Satan's mine before he can do any mischief. The devil is the greatest of all fools. He has more knowledge but less wisdom than any other creature, he is more subtle than all the beasts of the field, but it is well called subtlety, not wisdom. It is not true wisdom; it is only another shape of folly. All the while that Satan was tempting Job, he little knew that he was answering God's purpose, for God was looking on and considering the whole of it, and holding the enemy as a man holds a horse by its bridle.

The Lord had considered exactly how far He would let Satan go. He did not the first time permit him to touch his flesh—perhaps that was more than Job at that time could have borne. Have you never noticed that if you are in good strong bodily health you can bear losses and crosses, and even bereavements, with something like equanimity?¹³ Now that was the case with Job. Perhaps if the disease had come first and the rest had followed, it might have been a temptation too heavy for him. But God, Who knows just how far to let the enemy go, will say to him, “Thus far, and no farther.” By degrees he became accustomed to his poverty; in fact, the trial had lost all its sting the moment Job said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away” (Job 1:21). That enemy was slain—nay it was buried and this was the funeral oration, “Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

When the second trial came, the first trial had qualified Job to bear the second. It may be a more severe trial for a man in the possession of great worldly wealth suddenly to be deprived of the bodily power of enjoying it, than to lose all first, and then lose the health necessary to its enjoyment. Having already lost all, he might almost say, “I thank God that now I have nothing to enjoy, and therefore the loss of the power to enjoy it is not so wearisome. I have not to say, “How I wish I could go out in my fields, and see to my servants, for they are all dead. I do not wish to see my children—they are all dead and gone. I am thankful that they are; better so, than that they should see their poor father sit on a dunghill like this.” He might have been almost glad if his wife had gone too, for certainly she was not a very particular mercy when she was spared; and possibly, if he had had all his children about him, it might have been a harder trial than it was. The Lord Who weighs mountains in scales had meted out his servant's woe.

The Lord also considered how He should sustain His servant in the trial. Beloved, you do not know how blessedly our God poured the secret oil upon Job's fire of grace while the devil was throwing buckets of water on it. He saith to Himself, “If Satan shall do much, I will do more; if he takes away much, I will give more; if he tempts the man to curse, I will fill him so full of love to Me that he shall bless Me. I will help him; I will strengthen him; yea, I will uphold him with the right hand of My righteousness.” Christian, take those two thoughts and put them under your tongue as a wafer made with honey—you will never be tempted without express license from the

¹³ **equanimity** – equality; equivalent handling or response.

throne where Jesus pleads, and, on the other hand, when He permits it, He will with the temptation make a way of escape, or give you grace to stand under it.

The Lord considered how to sanctify Job by this trial. Job was a much better man at the end of the story than he was at the beginning. He was “a perfect and an upright man” (Job 1:18) at first, but there was a little pride about him. We are poor creatures to criticize such a man as Job—but still there was in him just a sprinkling of self-righteousness. I think, and his friends brought it out, Eliphaz and Zophar said such irritating things that poor Job could not help replying in strong terms about himself that were rather too strong, one thinks; there was a little too much self-justification. He was not proud as some of us are, of a very little—he had much to be proud of, as the world would allow—but yet there was the tendency to be exalted with it; and though the devil did not know it, perhaps if he had left Job alone, that pride might have run to seed, and Job might have sinned. But he was in such a hurry, that he would not let the ill seed ripen, but hastened to cut it up, and so was the Lord’s tool to bring Job into a more humble, and consequently a more safe and blessed state of mind. Moreover, observe how Satan was a lackey to the Almighty!

Job all this while was being enabled to earn a greater reward. All his prosperity is not enough; God loves Job so much, that He intends to give him twice the property; He intends to give him his children again; He means to make him a more famous man than ever, a man whose name shall ring down the ages, a man who shall be talked of through all generations. He is not to be the man of Uz, but of the whole world. He is not to be heard of by a handful in one neighborhood, but all men are to hear of Job’s patience in the hour of trial. Who is to do this? Who is to fashion the trump of fame through which Job’s name is to be blown? The devil goes to the forge, and works away with all his might—to make Job illustrious! Foolish devil! He is piling up a pedestal on which God will set His servant Job that he may be looked upon with wonder by all ages.

To conclude, Job’s afflictions and Job’s patience have been a lasting blessing to the Church of God, and they have inflicted incredible disgrace upon Satan. If you want to make the devil angry, throw the story of Job in his teeth. If you desire to have your own confidence sustained, may God the Holy Ghost lead you into the patience of Job. Oh! How many saints have been comforted in their distress by this history of patience! How many have been saved out of the jaw of the lion and from the paw of the bear by the dark experiences of the patriarch of Uz. Oh, archfiend, how art thou taken in thine own net! Thou hast thrown a stone that has fallen on thine own head. Thou madest a pit for Job, and hast fallen into it thyself; thou art taken in thine own craftiness. Jehovah has made fools of the wise and driven the diviners mad.

Brethren, let us commit ourselves in faith to the care and keeping of God—come poverty, come sickness, come death, we will in all things through Jesus Christ’s blood be conquerors, and by the power of His Spirit we shall overcome at the last. I would God we were all trusting in Jesus. May those who have not trusted Him be led to begin this very morning, and God shall have all the praise in us all evermore. Amen.

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Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential English Baptist pastor and history's most widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture); born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.



The devil often keeps you out of church, especially when he knows that the sermon to be preached could be a choice means to your conversion. During the sermon, he seeks to detract you by infusing other thoughts, holding such matters before you that he knows you delight in, thereby facilitating your meditation upon them. If you hear something that makes an impression upon you, he seeks in every possible way to rob you of this impression (Mat 13:19). The devil prevents you from comprehending the power of the gospel. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2Co 4:3–4). Do not think that this renders you innocent, for you yourself are also blind and of an evil disposition, willingly rejecting the gospel. The devil, however, often creates the occasion for this, stimulates you, and you then obey him. Carefully meditate upon all this and apply it to yourself. Consider that you are a slave of the devil, that he is your lord and master, that he controls you, engages you to be active in his cause, and will soon drag you as his prey to hell to be eternally tormented there.

What a dreadful condition to be subject to such an abominable tyrant—the archenemy of God, Christ, and yourself—who in bitter hatred murders your soul and eternally separates you from God and His blessed Christ! Therefore have mercy upon your

own soul, wake up, hate the devil and his work, flee from him, bid his kingdom farewell, and surrender yourself to the sweet, easy, and lovely government of the Lord Jesus Christ—a government which will culminate in eternal salvation. Oh, that you would hear me! May the Lord save you.

—*Wilhelmus à Brakel*

TEN HELPS AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

IF Satan has such a world of devices and stratagems¹ to ensnare and undo the souls of men, then instead of wondering that so few are saved, sit down and wonder that *any* are saved, that *any* escape the snares of this cunning fowler, who spreads his nets and casts forth his baits in all places, in all cases and companies.

But this is not the main thing that I intend to speak to; my main business shall be to set before you some special rules and helps against all his devices.

1. Walk by rule of the Word of God. *The first help.* If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then *walk by rule of the Word of God* (Pro 12:24; Gal 6:16). He who walks by rule walks most safely; he who walks by rule walks most honorably; he who walks by rule, walks most sweetly. When men throw off the Word, then God throws them off, and then Satan takes them by the hand and leads them into snares at his pleasure. He who thinks himself too good to be ruled by the Word will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God does not or will not own him, Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him. Those who keep to the rule shall be kept in the hour of temptation. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev 3:10).

2. Take heed of vexing² and grieving the Holy Spirit. *The second help.* As you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, *take heed of vexing and grieving of the Holy Spirit of God.* The divine Spirit is very tender; if you grieve Him, He will certainly grieve and vex your precious souls (Lam 1:16). It is the Spirit Who is best able to discover Satan's snares against us; it is only He who can point out all his plots, discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that Satan has dug for their precious souls. Ah! If you set that sweet and blessed Spirit a-mourning, who alone can secure you from Satan's depths—by whom will you be preserved? Man is a weak creature, and no way able to discover Satan's snares, nor to avoid them—unless the Spirit of the Lord gives skill and power. Therefore, whoever is grieved, be sure the Spirit is not grieved by your enormities,³ nor by your refusing the cordials and comforts that He sets before you, nor by slighting and despising His gracious actings in others, nor by calling sincerity hypocrisy and faith fancy, nor by fathering those things upon the Spirit that are the offspring and fruits of your own hearts (Isa 63:10; Psa 73:23; 1Th 5:19; Act 2:13).

¹ **stratagems** – plans for deceiving an enemy or gaining an advantage.

² **vexing** – troubling, afflicting, or harassing.

³ **enormities** – acts of extreme or monstrous wickedness.

The Spirit of the Lord is your counselor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener. It is the Spirit alone who makes a man too great for Satan to conquer. “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1Jo 4:4).

3. Labor for more heavenly wisdom. *The third help.* If you would not be taken with any of Satan’s devices, then *labor for more heavenly wisdom*. Ah, souls! You are much in the dark, you have but a little wisdom compared to what others have and compared to that you might have had. There are many educated souls—but there are but a few wise souls. There is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge, where there is but a little wisdom to improve that knowledge. It is not the most knowing Christian—but the most wise Christian, who sees, avoids, and escapes Satan’s snares. “The way of life is above to the wise,” says Solomon, “that he may depart from hell beneath” (Pro 15:24). Heavenly wisdom makes a man delight to fly high; and the higher any man flies, the more he is out of the reach of Satan’s snares.

Ah, souls! You had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices, and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts, that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one has laid for your precious souls.

If men could but see the fair face of wisdom with mortal eyes, they would be in love with her, says Plato.⁴

4. Make immediate resistance against Satan’s first motions. *The fourth help.* If you would not be taken with any of Satan’s devices, then *make immediate resistance against Satan’s first motions*. It is safe to resist; it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes and falls in paradise (Gen 3); Job resists, and conquers upon the ash-heap. He who will play with Satan’s bait will quickly be taken with Satan’s hook! The promise of conquest is given to resisting, not to disputing: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam 4:7). Ah, souls! Were you better at resisting than at disputing, your temptations would be fewer, and your strength to stand would be greater than now it is.

5. Labor to be filled with the Spirit. *The fifth help.* If you would not be taken with any of Satan’s devices, then *labor to be filled with the Spirit*. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power; and what can a soul do without light and power against spiritual wickedness in high places? (Eph 6:12). It is not enough that you have the Spirit—but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else Satan, that evil spirit, will be too hard for you; and his plots will prosper against you. That is a sweet word of the apostle, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18); *that is*, labor for abundance of the Spirit. He who thinks he has enough of the Holy Spirit will quickly find himself vanquished by the evil spirit. Satan has his snares to take you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company, when you come on to spiritual duties and when you come off from spiritual duties; and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too

⁴ Plato (428?-347 B.C.) – influential Greek philosopher.

hard and too crafty for you, will easily and frequently take you in his snares, and make a prey of you in spite of your souls. Therefore, labor more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit than to have your heads filled with notions, your shops with wares, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold; so shall you escape the snares of this fowler and triumph over all his plots.

Luther says [that] a holy gluttony is to lay on, to feed hard, and to fetch hearty draughts until they be even drunk with the abundance of the Spirit. Oh, that there were more such holy gluttony in the world!

6. Keep humble. *The sixth help.* If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then *keep humble*. An humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness and sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting and snares of his spreading, as the low shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind that shake and rend the taller trees. The devil has least power to fasten a temptation on him who is most humble. He who has a gracious measure of humility is neither affected with Satan's offers nor terrified with his threatenings.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, sat down, mourned, and said in himself, "Who shall pass through these?" Whereupon he heard a voice answering, "*Humility shall.*"

God has said that "he will teach the humble," that "he will dwell with the humble," and that "he will fill and satisfy the humble." And if the teachings of God, the indwellings of God, if the pourings in of God will not keep the soul from falling into Satan's snares, I do not know what will. Therefore, as you would be happy in resisting Satan and blessed in triumphing over Satan and all his snares, keep humble! I say again, keep humble! (Psa 25:9; Isa 57:15; Jam 4:6).

7. Keep a strong, close, and constant watch. *The seventh help.* If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then *keep a strong, close, and constant watch* (1Th 5:6). A sleepy soul is already an ensnared soul. That soul that will not watch against temptations will certainly fall before the power of temptations. Satan works most strongly on the imagination when the soul is drowsy. The soul's slothfulness is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to destroy the soul, as Joshua did the men of Ai. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults is, with Nehemiah and the Jews, to watch and pray and pray and watch. By this means, they became too hard for their enemies; and the work of the Lord did prosper sweetly in their hands.

Remember how Christ chid⁵ His sluggish disciples. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Mat 26:40). What, cannot you watch with me? How will you then die with me? If you cannot endure words, how will you endure wounds? Satan always keeps a crafty and malicious watch, "seeking whom he may devour" (1Pe 5:8). Satan is very envious of our condition—that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast and out of which he shall be forever kept!

⁵ **chid** – rebuked.

We must effectually mind the following scriptures wherein this duty of watchfulness is so strictly enjoined: Mat 26:40; Mar 13:33-35, 37; 1Co 16:13; Col 4:2; 1Pe 4:7; Rev 2:3.

Shall Satan keep a crafty watch and shall not Christians keep a holy spiritual watch? Our whole life is beset⁶ with temptations. Satan watches all opportunities to break our peace, to wound our consciences, to lessen our comforts, to impair our graces, to slur our evidences, and to dampen our assurances. Oh! What need then have we to be always upon our watchtower, lest we be surprised by this subtle serpent! Watchfulness includes a waking, a rousing up of the soul. It is a continual, careful observing of our hearts and ways in all the turnings of our lives—that we still keep close to God and His Word.

Hannibal⁷ never rested, whether he did conquer or was conquered. It is so with Satan. “Learn, for shame of the devil,” said blessed Latimer,⁸ “to watch, seeing the devil is so watchful.”

Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere. Watchfulness is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of what comes from without us and into us. Ah, souls! You are no longer safe and secure than when you are upon your watch. While Antipater⁹ kept the watch, Alexander¹⁰ was safe; and while we keep a strict watch, we are safe. A watchful soul is a soul upon the wing, a soul out of gunshot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in God’s everlasting arms!

I shall conclude this seventh head with this advice: Remember the dragon is subtle, bites the elephant’s ear, and then sucks his blood because he knows that to be the only place that the elephant cannot reach with his trunk to defend. So our enemies are so subtle that they will bite us and strike us where they may most mischief us; therefore, to stand always upon our guard does very much concern us.

8. Keep up your communion with God. *The eighth help.* If you would not be taken with any of Satan’s snares and devices, then *keep up your communion with God*. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan’s fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted—but will not easily be

⁶ **beset** – attacked on all sides.

⁷ **Hannibal** (247–182 B.C.) – Carthaginian general, who attacked Italy via the Alps in the second Punic War, repeatedly defeating the Romans, but failed to take Rome itself.

⁸ **Hugh Latimer** (c.1485–1555) – English Protestant prelate and martyr. One of Henry VIII’s chief advisers when the king broke with the papacy; under Mary I, he was condemned for heresy and burnt at the stake at Oxford with Nicholas Ridley (c. 1500-1555).

⁹ **Antipater** (c. 397 BC – 319 BC) – Macedonian general and a supporter of kings Philip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great.

¹⁰ **Alexander III of Macedon** (356-323 BC) – commonly known as Alexander the Great; a Greek king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece. Before his death at age 23, he had conquered most of the known world.

conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnishes the soul with the greatest and the choicest arguments to withstand Satan's temptations. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal¹¹ exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul, by divine influences, sweetly ascending to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, elevating, and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him—he goes on conquering and to conquer. But when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for “spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph 6:12); but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall, as others, before the face of every temptation.

David, so long as he kept up his communion with God stands and triumphs over all his enemies; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, then he falls before the enemies that were in his own bosom and flies before those who pursued after his life. It will be so with your souls if you do not keep up your communion with God. Job keeps up his communion with God and conquers Satan upon the ash-heap. Adam loses his communion with God and is conquered by Satan in paradise. Communion with God is a shield upon land, as well as an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, as well as a staff to support you; therefore, keep up your communion.

9. Do not engage Satan in your own strength. *The ninth help.* If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then *do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus.* Certainly, that soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter; he rested upon some old received strength—“I will not deny thee” (Mat 26:35)—and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses, swears, and denies Him thrice—Who had thrice appeared gloriously to him. Ah, souls! When the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, Who is lifted up in the gospel as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness; and say to Him, “Dear Lord! Here is a new snare laid to catch my soul. Grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh! Give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, so that I may escape the snares!”

Ah, souls! Remember this: your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received in the past—but from the fresh and renewed influences of heaven. You must lean more upon Christ than upon your duties; you must lean more upon Christ than upon your spiritual tastes and discoveries: you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces, or else Satan will lead you into captivity. “Without me ye can do nothing” (Joh 15:5)—separate from Me or apart from Me, you can do nothing.

¹¹ **reciprocal** – giving and receiving.

10. Be in much prayer. *The tenth help.* If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then *be much in prayer*. Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil. David's heart was often more out of tune than his harp. He prays, and then, in spite of the devil, cries, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul" (Psa 116:7). Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders Satan's plots fruitless like prayer; therefore says Christ: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Mat 26:41). You must watch and pray, and pray and watch, if you would not enter into temptation.

When Sennacherib and Haman had laid plots and snares to have destroyed the Jews, they prayed, and their souls were delivered, and Sennacherib and Haman destroyed. David had many snares laid for him, and this puts him upon prayer. "But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares that they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape" (Psa 141:8-10).

"Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD" (Psa 140:4-6). Saul and many others had laid snares for David, and this puts him upon prayer, and so the snares are broken and he is delivered.

Ah, souls! Take words to yourselves, and tell God that Satan has spread his snares in all places and in all companies! Tell God that he digs deep and that he has plot upon plot and device upon device—and all to undo you! Tell God that you have neither skill nor power to escape his snares! Tell God that it is a work too high and too hard for any created creature to work your deliverance unless He puts under His own everlasting arms! Tell God how His honor is engaged to stand by you and to bring you off a victor that you be not ruined by Satan's plots! Tell God how the wicked would triumph if you should fall into Satan's snares! Tell God of the love of Christ, of the blood of Christ, and of the intercession of Christ for you that a way may be found for your escape! Tell God that if He will make it His honor to save you from falling into Satan's snares, you will make it your glory to speak of His goodness and to live out His kindness. Christians must do as Daedalus: when he could not escape by a way upon earth, [he] went by a way of heaven—and that is, the way of prayer, which is the only way left to escape Satan's snares.

Applications

1. Thankfulness. The first use is *thankfulness to those who escape Satan's snares—that they have not been taken by him at his will*. Ah! Christians, it stands upon you with that princely prophet David, to call upon your souls and say, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psa 103:1-2). God has not given us to be a prey to Satan

and to be ensnared by those snares that he has laid for our souls! The sense of this great favor did work up David's heart to praises: "Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psa 124:6-8).

Ah! Christians, remember that the greatest part of the world, yes, the greatest part of professors, are taken in Satan's snares. Can you think seriously of this and not blush to be unthankful? What are you better than others? And what have you deserved of God or done for God more than others that you should by the help of a divine hand escape the snares, when others are taken and held in the snares of the devil to their eternal overthrow?

Will you be thankful for the escaping the snares that men spread for your lives or estates, and will you not be much more thankful for escaping those snares that Satan has laid for your precious souls? "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works" (Psa 71:14-17).

Remember this: deliverance from Satan's snares does carry with it the clearest and the greatest evidence that the soul and heart of God are towards us. Many a man by a common hand of providence escapes many a snare that another has laid for him—yet [he] escapes not the snares that Satan has laid for him. Saul, Judas, and Demas doubtless escaped many snares that men had laid for them—but none of them escaped the snares that the devil had laid for them. Many men are lifted up above the snares of men by a common hand of providence that are left to fall into the snares of the devil by a hand of justice. Your deliverance from Satan's snares is a fruit of special love. Can you thus look upon it and not be thankful, O precious soul? I judge not.

2. Long to be at home with Jesus. The last use of this point is *to encourage Christians to long to be at home with Jesus*. Oh! Long to be in the bosom of Christ! Long to be in the land of Canaan! For this world, this wilderness is full of snares; all our employments are full of snares; all our enjoyments are full of snares. In civil things, Satan has his snares to entrap us; and in all spiritual things, Satan has his snares to catch us. All places are full of snares, city and country, shop and closet, sea and land. Even our mercies are all surrounded with snares! There are snares about our tables and snares about our beds! Yes, Satan is so powerful and subtle that he will oftentimes make our greatest, nearest, and dearest mercies to become our greatest snares! Sometimes he will make the wife that lies in the bosom to be a snare to a man, as Samson's was and as Job's was. Sometimes he will make the child to be a snare, as Absalom was and Eli's sons were. And sometimes he will make the servant to be a snare, as Joseph was to his mistress.

Ah! Souls, Satan is so cunning and artful that he can turn your bread into snares, your clothes into snares, your houses into snares, your gardens into snares, and all your recreations into snares. And oh! How should the consideration of these things work all your souls to say with the church, “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices,” and to love, and look, and long for the coming of Christ (Song 8:14). Shall the espoused maid long for the marriage day? Shall the servant long for his freedom? Shall the captive long for his ransom? Shall the traveler long for his inn and the mariner for his harbor? And shall not the people of the Lord long much more to be in the bosom of Christ? There [is] nothing below the bosom of Christ that is not surrounded with Satan’s snares (Phi 1:23; 2Co 5:2, 4).

Augustine¹² wished that he might have seen three things: Rome flourishing, Paul preaching, and Christ conversing with men upon the earth. Bede¹³ comes after, and, correcting this last wish, says, “Yes—but let me see the King in His beauty, Christ is His heavenly kingdom.”

What Paul once spoke of bonds and afflictions—that they attended him in every place (Act 20:23)—may all the saints say of Satan’s snares—that they attend them in every place; which should cause them to cry out, “Let us go hence, let us go hence!” Ah! Souls, until you are taken up into the bosom of Christ, your comforts will not be full, pure, and constant. Until then, Satan will still be thumping on you and spreading snares to entangle you! Therefore, you should always be crying out with the church, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20).

Is not Christ the star of Jacob that gives light to those who are in darkness (Luk 1:79)? Is not Christ that Prince of Peace Who brings the olive branch to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth in Him? Are not the petty excellencies and perfections of all created creatures epitomized¹⁴ in Him? Is not He the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens? Oh then, be still a-longing after a full, clear, and constant enjoyment of Christ in heaven; for until then, Satan will still have plots and designs upon you. He acts by an untiring power and will never let you rest until you are taken up to an everlasting rest in the bosom of Christ! It is as easy to contain the sea in a nutshell—as to relate fully Christ’s excellencies or heaven’s happiness!

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that

¹² **Aurelius Augustine** (354-430) – Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa and theologian.

¹³ **The Venerable Bede** (672/673 – 735) – English monk, well known as an author and scholar; his most famous work, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* gained him the title “The Father of English History.”

¹⁴ **epitomized** – summed up.

ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”—Ephesians 6:11-13.

From “Precious Remedies against Satan’s Devices” in *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, Vol. 1, The Banner of Truth Trust, www.banneroftruth.org;
also available as a small booklet from Chapel Library.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680): Nonconformist preacher and advocate of the Congregational way; buried in Bunhill Fields.



The gospel is the great and admirable mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, into which the angels desire to look, whereby His manifold wisdom is made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places. It is the efficacious means by which God saves men from sin and misery and bestows on them eternal life—the instrument by which He triumphs in their hearts, and destroys in them the dominion of Satan.—*Robert Haldane*

Let me put this to you as concisely as I possibly can: According to the Bible, the whole trouble with the world was initiated by this one who is called the Devil. You see, there is an unseen spiritual world. That is why the world goes wrong. Our Lord came, then, into this world in order to rid us from the tyranny and from the power of the Devil. But it was on the cross that He did it supremely and finally.

—*David Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

RESISTING THE DEVIL

A.W. Pink (1886-1952)

“Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you”—James 4:7.

THIS brings before us an aspect of the Truth concerning which many Christians are largely ignorant. Oftentimes they are unaware that it is “the devil” that is attacking them and needs to be resisted. Many suppose that Satan’s assaults are confined unto tempting us to sin. Not so; in many cases his object is to oppose and hinder us in the doing of that which is good. Frequently he makes use of human beings to annoy and harass us. For example, he will send a caller to the door, or someone to ring on the telephone, when we are engaged in prayer. He will move worldly relatives to visit us on the Sabbath-day and thus prevent our spending the time quietly with the Lord. Or, he will shape our “circumstances” to hinder our spiritual good, multiplying our duties and tasks so that we have not leisure or are too weary for study. Few of God’s children appear to know that it is their privilege and right to be victorious over Satan’s attacks. The Lord has not left His people here at the mercy of their great Enemy, helpless to overcome him. No, He has told us in His Word *how* we may defeat him.

To begin at the beginning: *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* This is a divine command; it is a duty that the Lord has laid upon us. Our *first* responsibility concerning it is to give it our best attention, to fix it in our minds, to ponder its terms, to desire and determine to obey. Probably some will say, “I wish that I could, but I know not how.” Then our *second* responsibility concerning it is to acknowledge this, asking God to enlighten, begging Him to teach us how to obey it. Tell Him you want to do as He has bidden, and for Him to grant instruction and enablement thereunto.

Yet necessary and important as this is, it is not enough. Prayer was never designed by God to relieve us of our responsibilities and encourage laziness. It is not sufficient for me to pray that God will grant us a fruitful garden this summer—though I *should* pray about this, as about “everything”: Philippians 4:6. No, I must dig and plant, water and weed it. So it is here: the *answer* to my prayer for enlightenment for heeding the exhortation of James 4:7 must come to me through the Scriptures. Hence, my *third* responsibility is to search the Scriptures, asking the Holy Spirit to guide me graciously into the Truth. This means that I must come to the Bible with a *definite* object, aiming to discover just what it teaches about the Christian’s “resisting the devil” so that he “flees” from him.

Let us begin our “search” of God’s Word on this important practical subject by looking closely at the immediate *context* of the command found in our text. First, we note that it is found in the second half of the verse: “Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil.” Ah, how can I expect to do the second until I have done the

first? To “submit” myself unto God means that my own wisdom, will and wishes must be entirely set aside, and His Word and will rule me in all things. To submit to God means that I recognize His *claims* upon me, that I am His creature, His child, to be controlled by Him as One having absolute right to my complete subjection.

But let us look more closely at and ponder the first half of this verse: “Submit yourselves *therefore* to God.” This at once tells me that I need to look back to the previous verse, for the word “therefore” always points to a conclusion based upon and drawn from something going before. Turning back, then, to verse 6, I read, “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Ah, that is encouraging, that stimulates faith and hope. The One unto whom I am to “submit” myself is no harsh Tyrant, no merciless despot, but the “God of all grace.” He has already given me *saving* grace, and “He giveth *more* grace” to the humble, and “more grace” is exactly what I need, if I am to “resist the devil” successfully.

“Wherefore He saith, God *resisteth the proud*, but giveth grace unto the humble.” God resisteth the proud, because the proud resist Him. The essence of pride is self-sufficiency: it is that spirit which disdains help from another, confident that I am fully able to manage for myself. Spiritually, pride is that awful conceit that I can get along without God. It is a fearful delusion begotten and fostered by the devil. Contrariwise, “humility” is a being emptied of self-sufficiency: it is the heart realization that I am completely dependent upon God for everything. Humility, grace, and victory over the devil are inseparably connected! But nothing is more offensive to Satan than humility, for he is a proud spirit, and his desire is to puff us up and get us to walk and act independently of God.

“*Submit* yourselves therefore to God.” The word “submit” signifies to place myself under another. There must be a subjection of the whole man to the whole law of God; a giving up of ourselves to be governed by Him; our thoughts, desires, actions regulated strictly by the rules laid down in His Word. Submission to God also denotes an unrepining acquiescence to the dispositions of His providence, an uncomplaining disposal of ourselves to His sovereign pleasure. Thus, there must be a complete surrender of myself and my life to God, to be ordered and disposed of by Him.

Now there is a double relation or connection between the two halves of James 4:7. First and most obviously, I must “submit” to God if ever I am to “resist” the devil successfully. How can it be otherwise? I cannot prevail over the great Enemy in my own strength, and God will not give me of His “*grace*” while I am resisting Him! Thus, I must cease resisting God before I can hope to resist the devil—chiefly to make me proud, self-sufficient, independent. The prayerless soul is a proud one, for his refusal to receive strength from God is tantamount to saying that he can get along through the day without Him. It was by pride Satan fell, and he would feign have more company, and draw us into his snare. His bait is easily swallowed, for it is *natural* to us. Our first parents caught readily at the suggestion “Ye shall be as gods.”

But what is meant by “*resist the devil?*” First, that I am not to be terrified at him. Satan has no enforcing power: he cannot prevail over me without my consent. Second, that I am not to even listen to his suggestion: “resist” *actively*, saying “I will not”: take that attitude, and firmly stand your ground. Third, *quote Scripture to him*, a pertinent and suitable one that meets his particular suggestion. Count upon the power of God’s Word; *expect* it to drive him away. Fourth, *plead God’s promise* in the text: “resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Yes, he will “flee,” for he is not only a conquered foe, but an arrant coward as well. “Flee from you,” yet only, “for a season”; he will return and renew the fight; *and so must you*.

But let us now resume our searching of God’s Word to find out what it has to teach us on this subject of resisting the devil. We have already discovered enough to encourage us, so let us continue our quest for further light and help. This means that I must turn to a concordance and look up, slowly and carefully, every verse having in it the word “devil” or “Satan.” This calls for patience, but if it be prayerfully exercised, God will reward it. I come now to 1 Peter 5:8 and read, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.” Surely this is very graphic and impressive. If you knew that a lion had escaped from a local circus, that it was a fierce and hungry one, that it was loose and roaming the streets, and your daily duties obliged you to go abroad, how cautiously and carefully would you proceed! Ah, dear friends, my supposition is neither imaginary nor overdrawn. There is one, more powerful and cruel than any animal lion, which is abroad, seeking to devour your soul and mine. How little we really believe this! How halfhearted is the heed we give to this divine warning!

Let us glance for a moment at the context of this verse: “Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you” (1Pe 5:7). Here the tried and troubled children of God are invited to roll upon the Lord the whole burden of their anxiety, being assured of His compassion for them. Yes, but that privilege and assurance of His tender care must not tempt us to be careless and reckless. Here, as everywhere in Scripture, the promise and the command are joined together. Note what immediately follows. First, “*Be sober*.” In common speech “soberness” is the opposite of drunkenness. But let us bear in mind that there are many other things besides wine and whiskey that intoxicate. “Be sober” means be temperate in all things, put a curb on your every desire and appetite, particularly be “sober” in your use of and expectations from the world.

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:2). If the eye of faith measures earthly things in the light of God’s Word it will be seen that they are temporary, unsatisfying, worthless. The pleasures of sin are only “for a season” (Heb 11:25), and a brief one at that! Remember too there must be “soberness” of mind, before there will be soberness of body. O the importance of forming right estimates of earthly and heavenly things. If I truly receive into my heart the declaration of God’s Word that “*all* under the sun” is but “vanity and vexation of spirit,” soberness will indeed be promoted.

Second, “*be vigilant*,” not careless, nor rash and presumptuous. I must be watchful, alert, wide awake. Here again I must start with the *inner* man: I shall never be “vigilant” about external temptations until I have learned to “gird up the loins” of my mind (1Pe 1:13), and to “rule my own spirit” (Pro 16:32). Let us then seek grace to be “vigilant” over our *minds* and bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2Co 10:5). Let us seek to be “vigilant” over our *moods*, watchful lest Satan should gain an advantage. If depressed, he will seek and tempt me to despondency and despair. But I must “resist” that inclination. If light and giddy, he will tempt to fleshly mirth and hilarity, which ill-becomes a follower of Christ. But remember that I must first be “sober,” if I am to be “vigilant”!

Third, “*whom resist steadfast*.” Resist his efforts to *prejudice your heart against God*, and instill into your mind evil thoughts about Him. He will try to make you doubt His love, murmur against the severity of His providences and the strictness of His commandments. Resist his enticements to draw you unto the place of temptation, remembering that God has said “Have *no* fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph 5:11). Resist his efforts to lead you into active sinning: saying with Joseph, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!” (Gen 39:9).

Our resistance must be *earnest and zealous*. If a madman attacked and you were fighting for your very life, you would put forth every effort. So it must be here: it is your own soul he is seeking to destroy. Eve’s resistance was faint and half-hearted: she dallied with his evil solicitations. Be warned from her fall. By “earnest” I mean be indignant at his first suggestions—for example, to laze in bed on the Sabbath morning. Our resistance must be *thorough*. The approaches of Satan to the soul are gradual: he asks us to yield but a little at first. Many promise themselves they will stop after they have conceded a trifle, but when a stone at the top of the hill starts rolling down, it is hard to stop. We see this principle forcibly illustrated in the case of gamblers and drunkards. Take heed unto thyself. Our resistance must be *constant and continuous*: against not only his first attack, but also his whole siege. The devil is very persevering, and we must be so too.

Let these three considerations bestir unto this imperative duty of resistance. First, the devil cannot overcome without your consent: but where there is not a powerful dissent, there is a virtual consent. Take a *positive attitude* against the great Enemy of souls. Second, think much of the blessedness of victory: this will more than compensate you for all the diligence and strenuous efforts you make. The pleasures of sin are only for a season, but the pleasures and gains of self-denial are eternal: read Mark 10:29-30. Third, remember that God’s grace is promised unto the one who resists. God delivers, but we “keep ourselves” (1Jo 5:18). It is via our watchfulness and prayer that God makes such resistance effectual. There is no promise that God will keep a careless and lax soul.

“Whom resist steadfast in *the faith*.” Probably there is a double reference here in the expression “the faith.” First, the analogy of faith or Word of God—compare Jude 3; second, the exercise of the grace of faith. Satan is “the power of darkness” (Luk

22:53), and only the light of God can expose and expel him. Satan uses error to deceive souls, and the truth of God is needed to deliver us. We are to resist him in the faith, by believing, receiving, and acting out the Holy Scriptures. We are also to resist the devil by the exercise of the grace of faith. Our hearts must lay hold of the precepts and promises of God. A blessed example of this has been left us by Christ: He resisted the devil steadfastly in the faith, using against him naught but the Sword of the Spirit.

“Whom resist *steadfast* in the faith.” When we stagger through unbelief, we are powerless to stand before our great Enemy. It was through doubting God’s threat that Eve fell. But we can only successfully resist the devil “steadfast in the faith” as there is a personal appropriation of Christ’s victory. It is written, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 12:11). Plead that blood before God for deliverance from Satan’s temptations. Count upon its efficacy to deliver you. Shelter beneath it when you realize that Satan is shooting his fiery darts at you.

Finally, let it be pointed out that, either we must overcome the devil, or be overcome by him. There is no third alternative! If we are completely overcome by him, the result will be fatal. He is not merely seeking to wound us, but to “devour” (1Pe 5:8)! And how is this to be harmonized with the eternal security of God’s people? Easily: if we are real Christians, we shall, by divine grace, resist and overcome the devil. But if we continue heeding his suggestions and yielding to his temptations and are thoroughly overcome by him, then no matter how much Scripture we know in our heads, or what our profession, we belong to the devil, and are his lawful captives.

This article is available as a tract from Chapel Library.

A.W. Pink (1886-1952): Pastor, itinerate Bible teacher, and author of *Studies in the Scriptures* and many books including his well-known *The Sovereignty of God*; born in Great Britain, immigrated to the U.S., and later returned to his homeland in 1934; born in Nottingham, England.



Sober you should be, and vigilant, but to the end that the body be kept in a proper frame. Yet with all this, the devil is not routed; this only suffices to afford the body less occasion to sin. The true sword is that ye be strong and firm in the faith. If you in heart lay hold on the Word of God and maintain your grasp by faith, then the devil cannot gain the advantage, but will be compelled to flee.

—*Martin Luther*

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, THE CONQUERING WEAPON

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”
—Revelation 12:11.

WHEREVER evil appears, it is to be fought with by the children of God in the name of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. When evil appeared in an angel, straightway there was war in heaven. Evil in mortal men is to be striven against by all regenerate men. If sin comes to us in the form of an angel of light we must still war with it. If it comes with all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness, we must not parley¹ for a single moment, but begin the battle forthwith, if indeed we belong to the armies of the Lord. Evil is at its very worst in Satan himself: with him we fight. He is no mean² adversary. The evil spirits which are under his control are, any one of them, terrible foes; but when Satan himself personally attacks a Christian, any one of us will be hard put to it.

When this dragon blocks our road, we shall need heavenly aid to force our passage. A pitched battle with Apollyon³ may not often occur, but when it does, you will know it painfully: you will record it in your diary as one of the darkest days you have ever lived, and you eternally praise your God when you overcome him. But even if Satan were ten times stronger and more crafty than he is, we are bound to wrestle with him; we cannot for a moment hesitate or offer him terms. Evil in its highest, strongest, and proudest form is to be assailed by the soldier of the Cross, and nothing must end the war but complete victory. Satan is *the* enemy, the enemy of enemies. That prayer of our Lord’s, which we usually render, “Deliver us from evil,” has the special significance of “Deliver us from the Evil One”; because he is the chief embodiment of evil, and in him evil is intensified and has come to its highest strength. That man [needs to] have Omnipotence with him who hopes to overcome the enemy of God and man. He would destroy all godly ones if he could; and though he cannot, such is his inveterate⁴ hate, that he worries those whom he cannot devour with a malicious eagerness.

In this chapter, the devil is called the “great red dragon.” He is great in capacity, intelligence, energy, and experience. Whether or not he was the chief of all angels before he fell I do not know. Some have thought that he was such, and that when he

¹ **parley** – to speak, talk, or confer (especially with an enemy).

² **mean** – average; of little importance or consequence.

³ **Apollyon** – Satan, as depicted in *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

⁴ **inveterate** – firmly established by long continuance.

heard that a man was to sit upon the throne of God, out of very jealousy he rebelled against the Most High. This is also conjecture. But we do know that he was and is an exceedingly great spirit as compared with us. He is a being great in evil: the prince of darkness, having the power of death. He shows his malice against the saints by accusing the brethren day and night before God. In the prophets we have the record of Satan standing to accuse Joshua the servant of God. Satan also accused Job of serving God from mercenary motives: “Hast not thou made an hedge about him...and all that he hath?” (Job 1:10).

This ever-active enemy desires to tempt as well as accuse: he would have us, and sift us as wheat. In calling him the dragon, the Holy Spirit seems to hint at his mysterious power and character. To us a spirit, such as he is, must ever be a mystery in his being and working. Satan is a mysterious personage though he is not a mythical one. We can never doubt his existence if we have once come into conflict with him; yet he is to us all the more real because so mysterious. If he were flesh and blood it would be far easier to contend with him; but to fight with this spiritual wickedness in high places is a terrible task. As a dragon, he is full of cunning and ferocity. In him, force is allied with craft; and if he cannot achieve his purpose at once by power, he waits his time. He deludes; he deceives—in fact, he is said to deceive the whole world. What a power of deception must reside in him, when under his influence the third part of the stars of heaven are made to fall, and myriads of men in all ages have worshipped demons and idols!

He has steeped the minds of men in delusion, so that they cannot see that they should worship none but God, their Maker. He is styled “the old serpent”; and this reminds us how practiced he is in every evil art. He was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. After thousands of years of constant practice in deception he is much too cunning for us. If we think that we can match him by craft we are grievous fools, for he knows vastly more than the wisest of mortals; and if it once comes to a game of policies, he will certainly clear the board, and sweep our tricks into the bag.⁵ To this cunning, he adds great speed, so that he is quick to assail at any moment, darting down upon us like a hawk upon a poor chick. He is not everywhere present; but it is hard to say where he is not. He cannot be omnipresent; but yet, by that majestic craft of his, he so manages his army of fallen ones that, like a great general, he superintends the whole field of battle, and seems present at every point. No door can shut him out; no height of piety can rise beyond his reach. He meets us in all our weaknesses, and assails us from every point of the compass. He comes upon us unawares, and gives us wounds that are not easily healed.

But yet, dear friends, powerful as this infernal spirit certainly must be, his power is defeated when we are resolved never to be at peace with him. We must never dream of terms or truce with evil. To suppose that we can let him alone and all will be well

⁵ **game of policies...into the bag** – the allusion is to a novice, who does not know the game and has no skill at it, being completely at the mercy of an expert of the game.

is a deadly error. We must fight or perish: evil will slay us if we do not slay it. Our only safety will lie in a determined, vigorous opposition to sin, whatever shape it assumes, whatever it may threaten, whatever it may promise. The Holy Ghost alone can maintain in us this enmity to sin.

According to the text it is said of the saints, “They overcame him.” We are never to rest until it is said of us also, “They overcame him.” He is a foeman worthy of your steel. Do you refuse the conflict? Do you think of turning back? You have no armor for your back. To cease to fight is to be overcome. You have your choice between the two: *either to gird up the loins of your minds for a life-long resistance, or else to be Satan’s slaves forever*. I pray God that you may awake, arise, and give battle to the foe. Resolve once for all that by the grace of God you will be numbered with those who overcome the archenemy.

Our text brings before us a very important subject for consideration—*what is the conquering weapon?* With what sword did they fight who have overcome the great red dragon? Listen! “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” Secondly, *how do we use that weapon?* We do as they did who overcame “by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

I. WHAT IS THIS CONQUERING WEAPON? The blood of the Lamb signifies, first, the death of the Son of God. The sufferings of Jesus Christ might be set forth by some other figure, but His death on the Cross requires the mention of blood. Our Lord was not only bruised and smitten, but He was put to death. His heart’s blood was made to flow. He of Whom we speak was God over all, blessed for ever; but He condescended to take our manhood into union with His Godhead in a mysterious manner. He was born at Bethlehem a babe; He grew as a child; He ripened into manhood and lived here among us, eating and drinking, suffering and rejoicing, sleeping and laboring as men do. He died in very deed and of a truth, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa. That death was the grand fact that is set forth by the words “the blood of the Lamb.”

We are to view Jesus as the Lamb of God’s Passover: not merely separated from others, dedicated to be Israel’s memorial, and consecrated to divine service, but as the Lamb *slain*. Remember, that Christ viewed as living, and not as having died, is not a saving Christ. He Himself saith, “I am he that liveth *and was dead*” (Rev 1:18). The moderns cry, “Why not preach more about His life, and less about His death?” I reply, Preach His life as much as you will, but never apart from His death, for it is by His blood that we are redeemed. “We preach Christ.” Complete the sentence. “We preach Christ *crucified*,” says the apostle (1Co 1:23). Ah, yes! there is the point. It is the death of the Son of God that is the conquering weapon. Had He not poured forth His soul unto death, even to the death of the Cross—had He not been numbered with the transgressors, and put to a death of shame—we should have had no weapon with which to overcome the dragon prince. By “the blood of the Lamb” we understand the death of the Son of God. Hear it, O men! Because you have sinned, Jesus dies that you may be cleared from your sin. “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the

tree” (1Pe 2:24) and died that He might redeem us from all unrighteousness. The point is His death, and paradoxically, this death is the vital point of the Gospel. The death of Christ is the death of sin and the defeat of Satan, and hence it is the life of our hope and the assurance of His victory. Because He poured out His soul unto the death, He divides the spoil with the strong.

Next, by **“the blood of the Lamb”** we understand our Lord’s death as a **substitutionary sacrifice**. Let us be very clear here. It is not said that they overcame the arch-enemy by the blood of Jesus, or the blood of Christ, but by the blood *of the Lamb*; and the words are expressly chosen because, under the figure of a lamb, we have set before us a sacrifice. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed because of His courage for the truth, or out of pure philanthropy, or out of self-denial, conveys no special Gospel to men and has no peculiar power about it. Truly it is an example worthy to beget martyrs; but it is not the way of salvation for guilty men. If you proclaim the death of the Son of God, but do not show that He died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God, you have not preached the blood of the Lamb. You must make it known that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isa 53:5), and that “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:6), or you have not declared the meaning of the blood of the Lamb. *There is no overcoming sin without a substitutionary sacrifice*. The lamb under the old Law was brought by the offender to make atonement for his offence, and in his place it was slain: this was the type of Christ taking the sinner’s place, bearing the sinner’s sin, and suffering in the sinner’s stead, and thus vindicating the justice of God, making it possible for Him to be Just and the Justifier of him that believeth. I understand this to be the conquering weapon—the death of the Son of God set forth as the Propitiation⁶ for sin. Sin must be punished: it is punished in Christ’s death. Here is the Hope of men.

Furthermore, I understand by the expression, **“The blood of the Lamb,”** that our Lord’s death was effective for the taking away of sin. When John the Baptist first pointed to Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Joh 1:29). Our Lord Jesus has actually taken away sin by His death. Beloved, we are sure that He had offered an acceptable and effectual propitiation when he said, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30). Either He did put away sin, or He did not. If He did not, how will it ever be put away? If He did, then are believers clear. Altogether apart from anything that we do or are, our glorious Substitute took away our sin, as in the type the scapegoat carried the sin of Israel into the wilderness (16:8).

In the case of all those for whom our Lord offered Himself as a substitutionary Sacrifice, the justice of God finds no hindrance to its fullest flow: it is consistent with justice that God should bless the redeemed. Near nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus paid the dreadful debt of all His elect, and made a full atonement for the whole mass of the iniquities of them that shall believe in Him, thereby removing the whole tremendous load, and casting it by one lift of His pierced hand into the depths of the

⁶ **propitiation** – appeasement; a sin offering that turns away wrath.

sea. When Jesus died, an atonement was offered by Him and accepted by the Lord God, so that before the high court of heaven there was a distinct removal of sin from the whole body of which Christ is the head. In the fullness of time, each redeemed one individually accepts for himself the great Atonement by an act of personal faith, but the atonement itself was made long before.

I believe this to be one of the edges of the conquering weapon. We are to preach that the Son of God has come in the flesh and died for human sin, and that in dying He did not only make it possible for God to forgive, but He secured forgiveness for all who are in Him. He did not die to make men savable, but to save them. He came not that sin might be put aside at some future time, but to put it away there and then by the sacrifice of Himself; for by His death He finished transgressions, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:24) Believers may know that when Jesus died they were delivered from the claims of Law, and when He rose again their justification was secured. The blood of the Lamb is a real price, which did effectually ransom. The blood of the Lamb is a real cleansing, which did really purge away sin. This we believe and declare; and by this sign, we conquer. Christ crucified, Christ the Sacrifice for sin, Christ the effectual Redeemer of men, we will proclaim everywhere and thus put to rout the powers of darkness.

II. HOW DO WE USE IT? I have shown you the sword; I now come, in the second place, to speak to the question: *how do we use it?* “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb”...

Some, I fear, use the precious blood of Christ only as a quietus⁷ to their consciences. They say to themselves, “He made atonement for sin, therefore let me take my rest.” This is doing a grievous wrong to the great Sacrifice...See how the text puts it: “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb”: these saints used the doctrine of atonement not as a pillow to rest their weariness, but as a weapon to subdue their sin. O my brothers, to some of us atonement by blood is our battle-axe and weapon of war, by which we conquer in our struggle for purity and godliness—a struggle in which we have continued now these many years. By the atoning blood we withstand corruption within and temptation without. This is that weapon which nothing can resist.

Let me show you your battlefield. Our first place of conflict is in the heavenlies, and the second is down below on earth.

Battle with Satan in the heavenlies. First, then, my brothers and sisters who believe in the blood of Jesus, you have to do battle with Satan *in the heavenlies*; and there you must overcome him “by the blood of the Lamb.” “How?” say you. I will lead you into this subject.

First, you are to regard Satan this day as being already literally and *truly overcome through the death of the Lord Jesus*. Satan is already a vanquished enemy. By faith grasp your Lord’s victory as your own, since He triumphed in your nature and on

⁷ quietus – discharge or release.

your behalf...Thou needest not be afraid, but say, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 15:57). We have overcome sin, death, and hell in the Person and work of our great Lord; and we should be greatly encouraged by that which has been already wrought in our name. Already we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us. If Jesus had not overcome the enemy, certainly we never should have done so; but His personal triumph has secured ours...

I would have you overcome Satan in the heavenlies in another sense: *you must overcome him as the accuser.* At times you hear in your heart a voice arousing memory and startling conscience; a voice that seems in heaven to be a remembrance of your guilt. Hark to that deep, croaking voice, boding evil! Satan is urging before the throne of justice all your former sins. Can you hear him? He begins with your childish faults and your youthful follies—truly a black memory. He does not let one of your wickednesses drop out. Things that you had forgotten he cunningly revives. He knows your secret sins, for he had a hand in most of them. He knows the resistance that you offered to the Gospel, and the way in which you stifled conscience. He knows the sins of darkness, the sins of the bedchamber, the crimes of the inner chambers of imagery. Since you have been a Christian he has marked your wickedness, and asked in fierce sarcastic tones, "Is this a child of God? Is this an heir of heaven?" He hopes to convict us of hypocrisy or of apostasy.

The foul fiend tells out the wanderings of our hearts, the deadness of our desires in prayer, the filthy thoughts that dropped into our minds when we have been at worship. Alas! we have to confess that we have even tolerated...suspicions of the love and faithfulness of God. When the accuser is about his evil business, he does not have to look far for matter of accusation, nor for facts to support it. Do these accusations stagger you? Do you cry, "My God, how can I face Thee? for all this is true, and the iniquities now brought to my remembrance are such as I cannot deny. I have violated Thy Law in a thousand ways, and I cannot justify myself." Now is your opportunity for overcoming through the blood of the Lamb. When the accuser has said his say, and aggravated all your transgressions, be not ashamed to step forward and say, "But I have an Advocate as well as an accuser. O Jesus, my Savior, speak for me!" When He speaks, what does He plead but His own blood? "For all these sins I have made atonement," says He, "all these iniquities were laid on Me in the day of the Lord's anger, and I have taken them away." Brethren, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Jesus has borne the penalty due to us: He has discharged for us upon the Cross all our liabilities to the justice of God, and we are free forever, because our Surety suffered in our place. Where is the accuser now? That dragon voice is silenced by the blood of the Lamb. Nothing else can ever silence the accuser's cruel voice but the voice of the blood that tells of the infinite God accepting, in our behalf, the Sacrifice that He Himself supplied.

Justice decrees that the sinful shall be clear because the accepted Substitute has borne his sin in His own body on the tree. Come, brother or sister, the next time thou hast to do with Satan as an accuser in heavenly places, take care that thou defend thy-

self with no weapon but the Atonement. All comfort drawn from inward feelings or outward works will fall short; but the bleeding wounds of Jesus will plead with full and overwhelming argument, and answer all. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:33-34). Who, then, shall accuse the child of God? Every accuser shall be overcome by the invincible argument of the blood of the Lamb.

Still further, the believer will need to overcome the enemy in the heavenly places in reference to *access to God*. It may happen that when we are most intent upon communing with God, the adversary hinders us. Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, the living God; but from one cause or another we are unable to draw nigh unto the throne. The heart is heavy, sin is rampant, care is harassing, and Satanic insinuation is busy. You seem shut out from God, and the enemy triumphs over you. You feel very near the world, very near the flesh, and very near the devil: but you mourn your miserable distance from God. You are like a child who cannot reach his father's door because a black dog barks at him from the door. What is the way of access? If the foul fiend will not move out of the way, can we force our passage? By what weapon can we drive away the adversary so as to come to God? Is it not written that we are made nigh by the blood (Eph 2:13)? Is there not a new and living way consecrated for us? Have we not boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? We are sure of God's love when we see that Christ died for us; we are sure of God's favor when we see how that Atonement has removed our transgressions far from us. We perceive our liberty to come to the Father...

Pleading the propitiation made by the blood of the Lamb, we dare draw nigh to God. Behold, the evil spirit makes way before us. The sacred name of Jesus is one before which he flees. This will drive away his blasphemous suggestions and foul insinuations better than anything that you can invent. The dog of hell knows the dread Name that makes him lie down: we must confront him with the authority, and specially with the atonement of the Lamb of God. He will rage and rave all the more if we send Moses to him, for he derives his power from our breaches of the Law. We cannot silence him unless we bring to him the great Lord Who has kept the Law, and made it honorable.

We next must *overcome the enemy in prayer*. Alas! we cannot always pray as we would. Do you never feel, when you are in prayer, as if something choked your utterance—and, what is worse, deadened your heart? Instead of having wings as of an eagle to mount to heaven, a secret evil clips your wings, and you cannot rise...Whenever you are in this condition fly to the blood of the Lamb as your chief remedy. When you plead this master argument you will arouse yourself, and you will prevail with God...This is the way in which you should use this plea. Say, "My God, I am utterly unworthy, and I own it; but, I beseech Thee, hear me for the honor of Thy dear Son. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious

death and burial, I beseech Thee hear me! O Lord, let the blood of Thine Only-begotten prevail with Thee! Canst Thou put aside His groans, His tears, His death, when they speak on my behalf?" If you can thus come to pleading terms with God upon this ground, you must and will prevail. Jesus must be heard in heaven. The voice of His blood is eloquent with God...

You must first overcome in the heavenly places before the throne; and when you have been thus triumphant with God in prayer, you will have grace to go forth to service and to defeat evil among your fellow-men. How often have I personally found that the battle must first be fought above! *We must overcome* in order to service...Faith, having once made sure that Jesus is hers, helps herself out of the treasury of God to all that she needs. Satan would deny her, but in the power of the blood she takes possession of covenant blessings.

You say to yourself, "I am weak, but in the Lord, my God, there is power: I take it to myself. I am hard and cold, but here is tenderness and warmth, and I appropriate it. It pleased the Father that in Jesus should all fullness dwell, and by virtue of His precious blood, I take out of that fullness what I need, and then with help thus obtained I meet the enemy and overcome him"...Having access with confidence, we also take with freedom whatsoever we need, and thus we are provided against all necessities, and armed against all assaults through the atoning Sacrifice. This is the fountain of supply, and the shield of security: this, indeed, is the channel through which we receive strength for victory.

We overcome the great enemy by *laying hold upon the all-sufficiency of God*, when we really feel the power of the precious blood of Christ. Thus, being victorious in the heavenlies...made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Having overcome Satan at the throne of grace, we see him like lightning fall from heaven, even before our feeble instrumentality. We speak, and God speaks with us; we long for souls, and God's great heart is yearning with us. We importune men to come, and the Lord also pleads with them to come, so that they no longer resist. Spiritual power of a holy kind rests upon us to overcome the spiritual power of an evil kind that is exerted by Satan, the world, and the flesh. The Lord scatters the power of the enemy, and breaks the spell that holds men captive...

Battle with Satan on this earth. It is time that I now showed you how this same fight is carried on *on earth*. Amongst men in these lower places of conflict saints overcome through the blood of the Lamb *by their testimony to that blood*. Every believer is to bear witness to the atoning Sacrifice and Its power to save. He is to tell out the doctrine; he is to emphasize it by earnest faith in it; and he is to support it and prove it by his experience of the effect of it. You cannot all speak from the pulpit, but you can all speak for Jesus as opportunity is given you. Our main business is to bear witness with the blood in the power of the Spirit. To this point we can all testify. You cannot go into all manner of deep doctrines or curious points, but you can tell to all those round about you that "There is life in a look at the Crucified One." You can bear wit-

ness to the power of the blood of Jesus in your own soul. If you do this, you will overcome men in many ways.

First, you will *arouse them out of apathy*. This age is more indifferent to true religion than almost any other has been. It is alive enough to error, but to the old faith it turns a deaf ear. Yet I have noticed persons captivated by the truth of substitution who would not listen to anything else. If any discourse can hold men, as the ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, it is the story of divine love, incarnate in the person of Jesus, bleeding and dying for guilty men. Try that story when attention flags. It has a fascination about it. The marvelous history of the Son of God, Who loved His enemies and died for them—this will arrest them. The history of the Holy One Who stood in the sinner's place, and was in consequence put to shame, agony, and death—this will touch them. The sight of the bleeding Savior overcomes obduracy and carelessness.

The doctrine of the blood of the Lamb *prevents or scatters error*. I do not think that by reasoning we often confute⁸ error to any practical purpose. We may confute it rhetorically and doctrinally, but men still stick to it. But the doctrine of the precious blood, when it once gets into the heart, drives error out of it, and sets up the throne of truth. You cannot be clinging to an atoning Sacrifice and still delight in modern heresies. Those who deny inspiration are sure to get rid of the vicarious⁹ atonement, because it will not allow their errors. Let us go on proclaiming the doctrine of the great Sacrifice, and this will kill the vipers of heresy. Let us uplift the Cross, and never mind what other people say. Perhaps we have taken too much notice of them already. Let the dogs bark, it is their nature to. Go on preaching Christ crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We also overcome men in this way, by *softening rebellious hearts*. Men stand out against the Law of God, and defy the vengeance of God; but the love of God in Christ Jesus disarms them. The Holy Spirit causes men to yield through the softening influence of the Cross. A bleeding Savior makes men throw down their weapons of rebellion. "If He loves me so," they say, "I cannot do other than love Him in return." We overcome men's obduracy¹⁰ by the blood, shed for many for the remission of sins.

How wonderfully this same blood of the Lamb *overcomes despair*. Have you never seen a man shut up in the iron cage? It has been my painful duty to talk with several of such prisoners. I have seen the captive shake the iron bars, but he could not break them, or break from them. He has implored us to set him free by some means; but we have been powerless. Glory be to God, the blood is a universal solvent, and it has dissolved the iron-bars of despair, until the poor captive conscience has been able to escape. How sweet for the desponding to sing—"I do believe, I will believe, That Jesus died for me"! Believing that, all doubts, fears, and despairs fly away, and the man is at ease.

⁸ **confute** – prove to be false or invalid.

⁹ **vicarious** – substitutionary; taking the place of another.

¹⁰ **obduracy** – stubborn resistance to moral influence.

There is nothing, indeed, dear friends, which the blood of the Lamb will not overcome; for see how it *overcomes vice*, and every form of sin. The world is foul with evil, like a stable that has long been the lair of filthy creatures. What can cleanse it? What but this matchless stream? Satan makes sin seem pleasurable, but the Cross reveals its bitterness. If Jesus died because of sin, men begin to see that sin must be a murderous thing. Even when sin was but imputed to the Savior, it made Him pour out His soul unto death; it must, then, be a hideous evil to those who are actually and personally guilty of it. If God's rod made Christ sweat great drops of blood, what will His axe do when He executes the capital sentence upon impenitent men! Yes, we overcome the deadly sweetness and destructive pleasurable-ness of sin by the blood of the Lamb.

This blood overcomes *the natural lethargy of men towards obedience*; it stimulates them to holiness. If anything can make a man holy, it is a firm faith in the atoning Sacrifice. When a man knows that Jesus died for him, he feels that he is not his own, but bought with a price, and therefore he must live unto Him that died for him and rose again. In the atonement I see a motive equal to the greatest heroism; yes, a motive that will stimulate to perfect holiness. What manner of persons ought we to be for whom such a Sacrifice has been presented! Now are we quickened into intensity of zeal and devotion. See, dear brothers, how to use the blood of the Lamb in this lower sphere while contending with evil among men.

But I must close with this. It is not merely by testimony that we use this potent truth. *We must support that testimony by our zeal and energy.* We need concentrated, consecrated energy; for it is written, "They loved not their lives unto the death." We shall not overcome Satan if we are fine gentlemen, fond of ease and honor. As long as Christian people must needs enjoy the world, the devil will suffer little at their hands. They that overcame the world in the old days were humble men and woman, generally poor, always despised, who were never ashamed of Christ, who only lived to tell of His love, and died by tens of thousands rather than cease to bear testimony to the blood of the Lamb. They overcame by their heroism; their intense devotion to the cause secured the victory. Their lives to them were as nothing when compared with the honor of their Lord.

Brethren, if we are to win great victories we must have greater courage. Some of you hardly dare speak about the blood of Christ in any but the most godly company; and scarcely there. You are very retiring. You love yourselves too much to get into trouble through your religion. Surely you cannot be of that noble band that love not their own lives unto the death! Many dare not hold the old doctrine nowadays because they would be thought narrow and bigoted, and this would be too galling. They call us old fools. It is very likely we are; but we are not ashamed to be fools for Christ's sake and the truth's sake. We believe in the blood of the Lamb, despite the discoveries of science. We shall never give up the doctrine of atoning sacrifice to please modern culture. What little reputation we have is as dear to us as another man's character is to him; but we will cheerfully let it go in this struggle for the cen-

tral truth of revelation. It will be sweet to be forgotten and lost sight of, or to be vilified and abused, if the old faith in the substitutionary Sacrifice can be kept alive. This much we are resolved on, we will be true to our convictions concerning the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus; for if we give up this, what is there left?

God will not do anything by us if we are false to the Cross. He uses the men who spare not their reputations when these are called for in defense of truth. Oh to be at a *white heat*! Oh to flame with zeal for Jesus! O my brethren, hold you to the old faith, and say, "As for the respect of men, I can readily forfeit it; but as for the truth of God, that I can never give up." This is the day for men to be men; for, alas! The most are soft, molluscous¹¹ creatures. Now we need backbones as well as heads. To believe the truth concerning the Lamb of God, and truly to believe it, this is the essential of an overcoming life. Oh for courage, constancy, fixedness, self-denial, willingness to be made nothing of for Christ! God give us to be faithful witnesses to the blood of the Lamb in the midst of this ungodly world!

As for those of you who are not saved, does not this subject give you a hint? Your hope lies in the blood of the Lamb...The atoning Sacrifice, which is our glory, is your salvation. Trust in Him Whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin. Begin with this, and you are saved. Every good and holy thing that goes with salvation will follow after. But now, this morning, I pray you accept a present salvation through the blood of the Lamb. He that believeth in him "hath everlasting life" (Joh 6:47).

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at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington; available as
a booklet from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



So precious does [God] esteem [the blood of Christ] that He makes it the answer to the various doubts and perplexing sophistries with which self and Satan would entangle the soul, either when coming to God or after it has come. Do the sins of past years lie heavy on it? He says, "Behold the blood!" Does a sense of personal unworthiness darken it? He says again, "Behold the blood!" and in it that which fully makes up in My eyes for all such unworthiness! Do iniquities prevail—rushing in like a flood through every avenue of the soul? He says again, "Behold the blood; it cleanseth from all sin. No amount of defilement can dilute the efficacy of that blood or make it less free to the polluted soul.—*Horatius Bonar*

We may learn one reason why the devil so exceedingly opposes the conversion of sinners. It is because if they are once converted, they are forever converted and thus forever put beyond his reach, so that he can never overthrow and ruin them.—*Jonathan Edwards*

¹¹ **molluscous** – pertaining to mollusks; in this context, flabby with no backbone.