

# Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 275

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

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*Stand against the  
wiles of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:11

### **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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# 275

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# STUDY CHRIST & SATAN'S DEVICES

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

**B**ELOVED in our dearest Lord—Christ, the Scripture, your own hearts, and Satan's devices are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a watchman,<sup>1</sup> to do my best to make known the fulness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature,<sup>2</sup> and the snares of the great deceiver.

Beloved, Satan being fallen from light to darkness, from felicity to misery, from heaven to hell, from an angel to a devil is so full of malice and envy that he will leave no means unattempted by which he may make all others eternally miserable with himself. He...uses all his power and skill to bring all the sons of men into the same condition and condemnation with himself. Satan hath cast such sinful seed into our souls that now he can no sooner tempt, but we are ready to assent. He can no sooner have a plot *upon* us, but he makes a conquest *of* us. If he doth but show men a little of the beauty and bravery<sup>3</sup> of the world, how ready are they to fall down and worship him!

Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, the devil will help it forward. If David is proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them that he may be yet prouder (2Sa 24). If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying Christ to save his own skin (Mat 16:22; 26:69-75). If Ahab's prophets are given to flatter, the devil will straightway become a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them, and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin (1Ki 22). If Judas will be a traitor, Satan will quickly enter his heart and make him sell his master for money, which some heathens would never have done (Joh 13:2). If Ananias will lie for advantage, Satan will fill his heart that he may, with a witness, lie to the Holy Ghost (Act 5:3). Satan loves to sail with the wind and to suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations. If they be in prosperity, he will tempt them to deny God (Pro 30:9); if they be in adversity, he will tempt them to distrust God; if their knowledge be weak, he will tempt them to have low

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<sup>1</sup> **watchman** – person who watches over or guards a person or thing; in this case, a pastor.

<sup>2</sup> **emptiness of the creature** – *meaning*: Brooks uses this phrase to emphasize the insufficiency of all created things compared to Christ's fulness.

<sup>3</sup> **bravery** – glittering showiness; seductive splendor.

thoughts of God; if their conscience be tender, he will tempt to scrupulosity;<sup>4</sup> if large, to carnal security;<sup>5</sup> if bold-spirited, he will tempt to presumption;<sup>6</sup> if timorous, to desperation;<sup>7</sup> if flexible, to inconstancy;<sup>8</sup> if stiff, to impenitency.<sup>9</sup>

From the power, malice, and skill of Satan doth proceed all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems, and machinations<sup>10</sup> that are in the world. Several devices he hath to draw souls to sin, and several plots he hath to keep souls from all holy and heavenly services, and several stratagems he hath to keep souls in a mourning, staggering, doubting, and questioning condition.

He hath several devices to destroy the great and honorable, the wise and learned, the blind and ignorant, the rich and the poor, the real and the nominal saints.<sup>11</sup> One while he will restrain from tempting, so that we may think ourselves secure and neglect our watch; another while he will seem to flee, so that he may make us proud of the victory. One while he will fix men's eyes more on others' sins than their own, so that he may puff them up; another while he may fix their eyes more on others' graces than their own, so that he may overwhelm them.

A man may as well count the stars and number the sands of the sea as reckon up all the devices of Satan; yet those that are most considerable and by which he doth the most mischief to the precious souls of men are in the following treatise made known and the remedies against them prescribed...

My desires for you are, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:16-19); and "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might,

<sup>4</sup> **tender...scrupulosity** – A tender conscience will be tempted to excessive self-accusation.

<sup>5</sup> **large...security** – A morally loose conscience will be tempted to fleshly assurance.

<sup>6</sup> **bold-spirited...presumption** – An overconfident conscience will be tempted to think self-confidence is faith.

<sup>7</sup> **timorous...desperation** – A fearful conscience will be tempted to despair.

<sup>8</sup> **flexible...inconstancy** – An easily influenced conscience will be tempted to instability.

<sup>9</sup> **stiff...impenitency** – A hardened conscience will be tempted not to repent of sin.

<sup>10</sup> **plots...machinations** – concealed plans, psychological methods, ambush tactics, wicked schemes—all with evil intentions.

<sup>11</sup> **nominal saints** – Christians in name only, lacking repentance of sin and a life of holiness.

according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col 1:10-11); "That ye do no evil" (2Co 13:7); "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment...That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phi 1:27, 10); and "That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 1:11-12)...That your hearts may be kept upright, your judgments sound, and your lives unblameable. That as the fishes that live in the salt sea yet are fresh, so you, though you live in an uncharitable world, may yet be charitable and loving; that ye may, like the bee, suck honey out of every flower...That ye may be like the heavens, excellent in substance and beautiful in appearance; that so you may meet me with joy in that day wherein Christ shall say to His Father, "Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me" (Isa 8:18).

My desires to you are, that you would make it your business to study Christ, His Word, your own hearts, Satan's plots, and eternity more than ever; that ye would endeavor more to be inwardly sincere than outwardly glorious; to live, than to have a name to live; that ye would labor with all your might to be thankful under mercies, faithful in your places, humble under divine appearances, and fruitful under precious ordinances.

For a close, remember this: Your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure. Therefore, faint not, hold on and hold up in ways of well-doing, and heaven shall make amends for all.

From *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. A. B. Grosart, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: J. Nichol; J. Nisbet & Co.; G. Herbert, 1866), 3-7; in the public domain.

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**Thomas Brooks (1608-1680):** English Nonconformist Puritan preacher and advocate of Congregationalism; buried in Bunhill Fields, Islington, UK.



It is my belief, as I have tried to show in my exposition of the apostle's warnings, that the modern world, and especially the history of the present century, can only be understood in terms of the unusual activity of the devil and the "principalities and powers" of darkness. Indeed, I suggest that a belief in a personal devil and demon activities is the touchstone by which one can most easily test any profession of Christian faith today.

—D. M. Lloyd-Jones

# THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

*Fight the good fight of faith.—1 Timothy 6:12*

**T**HERE is warfare of far greater importance than any war that was ever waged by man. It is a warfare that concerns not two or three nations only, but every Christian man and woman born into the world. The warfare I speak of is *spiritual warfare*. It is the fight that everyone who would be saved *must* fight about his soul.

**This warfare, I am aware, is a thing of which many know *nothing*.** Talk to them about it, and they are ready to set you down as a madman, an enthusiast, or a fool. And yet it is as real and true as any war the world has ever seen. It has hand-to-hand conflicts and wounds. It has watchings<sup>1</sup> and fatigues.<sup>2</sup> It has sieges and assaults. It has victories and defeats. Above all, it has *consequences* that are awful, tremendous, and most peculiar.<sup>3</sup> In earthly warfare, the consequences to nations are often temporary and remediable.<sup>4</sup> In spiritual warfare, it is very different. The consequences of that warfare, when the fight is over, are unchangeable and eternal.

Paul spoke to Timothy of this warfare, when he wrote those burning words, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1Ti 6:12). I propose to speak of this warfare in this article. I hold the subject to be closely connected with that of sanctification and holiness. He that would understand the nature of true holiness must know that the Christian is "a man of war." If we would be holy, we *must* fight.

**The first thing I have to say is this: *True Christianity is a fight*.** True Christianity! Let us mind that word *true*. There is a vast quantity of religion current in the world that is not true, genuine Christianity. It passes muster;<sup>5</sup> it satisfies sleepy consciences; but it is not good money. It is not the real thing that was called Christianity eighteen hundred years ago. There are thousands of men and women who go to churches and chapels every Sunday and call themselves Christians. Their names are in the baptismal register. They are reckoned Christians while they

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<sup>1</sup> **watchings** – staying awake to pray, stay alert, or guard against spiritual danger.

<sup>2</sup> **fatigues** – weariness that comes from faithful duty to God.

<sup>3</sup> **are awful, tremendous...peculiar** – dreadful, far-reaching in effect, unlike anything else.

<sup>4</sup> **remediable** – able to be repaired; not hopeless.

<sup>5</sup> **passes muster** – seems acceptable to others, but not truly acceptable to God.

live. They are married with a Christian marriage service. They mean to be buried as Christians when they die. But you never see any “fight” about<sup>6</sup> their religion! Spiritual strife, exertion, conflict, self-denial, watchfulness, or warfare—they know literally nothing at all. Such Christianity may satisfy man, and those who say anything against it may be thought very hard and uncharitable; but it certainly is not the Christianity of the Bible. It is not the religion that the Lord Jesus founded, and His apostles preached. It is not the religion that produces real holiness. True Christianity is a *fight*.

The true Christian is called to be a soldier and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death. He is not meant to live a life of religious ease, indolence,<sup>7</sup> and security. He must never imagine for a moment that he can sleep and doze along the way to heaven, like one travelling in an easy carriage. If he takes his standard of Christianity from the children of this world, he may be content with such notions; but he will find no countenance for them in the Word of God. If the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He *must* fight.

**With whom is the Christian soldier meant to fight?** Not with other Christians. Wretched indeed is that man's idea of religion who fancies that it consists in perpetual controversy! He who is never satisfied unless he is engaged in some strife between church and church, chapel and chapel, sect and sect, faction and faction, party and party knows nothing yet as he ought to know (1Co 8:2)...The cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in quarreling with one another and spend their time in petty squabbles.

**No, indeed! The principal fight of the Christian is with the world, the flesh, and the devil.** These are his never-dying foes. These are the three chief enemies against whom he *must* wage war. Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain. If he had a nature like an angel and were not a fallen creature, the warfare would not be so essential. But with a corrupt heart, a busy devil, and an ensnaring world, he must either *fight* or be lost.

**He must fight the flesh.** Even after conversion, he carries within him a nature prone to evil and a heart weak and unstable as water. That heart will never be free from imperfection in this world, and it is a miserable delusion to expect it. To keep that heart from going astray, the Lord Jesus bids us “watch and pray” (Mat 26:41; Mar 13:33; 14:38; Luk

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<sup>6</sup> **about** – There is no active conflict in their religion.

<sup>7</sup> **indolence** – laziness.

21:36). The spirit may be ready, but the flesh is weak. There is need for daily struggle and daily wrestling in prayer. “I keep under my body,” cries Paul, “and bring it into subjection” (1Co 9:27). “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity...O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:23-24). “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal 5:24). “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Col 3:5).

**He must fight *the world*.** The subtle influence of that mighty enemy must be daily resisted and, without a daily battle, can never be overcome. The love of the world’s good things—the fear of the world’s laughter or blame, the secret desire to keep in with the world, the secret wish to do as others in the world do and not to run into extremes—all these are spiritual foes that beset the Christian continually on his way to heaven, and they must be conquered. “Friendship of the world is enmity with God...whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam 4:4). “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1Jo 2:15). “The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal 6:14). “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1Jo 5:4). “Be not conformed to this world” (Rom 12:2).

**He must fight *the devil*.** That old enemy of mankind is not dead. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, he has been “going to and fro in the earth, and...walking up and down in it” (Job 1:7) and striving to compass<sup>8</sup> one great end—the ruin of man’s soul. Never slumbering and never sleeping, he is always going about as a lion “seeking whom he may devour” (1Pe 5:8). An unseen enemy, he is always near us, about our path and about our bed, and spying out all our ways. “A murderer”—and a liar—“from the beginning” (Joh 8:44), he labors night and day to cast us down to hell. Sometimes by leading into superstition, sometimes by suggesting infidelity,<sup>9</sup> sometimes by one kind of tactic and sometimes by another, he is always carrying on a campaign against our souls. “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luk 22:31). This mighty adversary must be daily resisted if we wish to be saved. But “this kind goeth not out” (Mat 17:21) but by watching, praying, fighting, and putting on “the whole armour of God” (Eph 6:11). The strong man armed will never be kept out of our hearts without a daily battle.

**Some men may think these statements too strong.** You fancy that I

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<sup>8</sup> **compass** – achieve; accomplish.

<sup>9</sup> **infidelity** – atheism.

am going too far and laying on the colors too thickly.<sup>10</sup> You are secretly saying to yourself that men and women in England may surely get to heaven without all this trouble, warfare, and fighting. Listen to me for a few minutes, and I will show you that I have something to say on God's behalf. Remember the maxim<sup>11</sup> of the wisest general that ever lived in England: "In time of war, it is the worst mistake to underrate your enemy, and try to make a little war."<sup>12</sup> This Christian warfare is no light matter. Give me your attention and consider what I say. What saith the Scripture? "Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life" (1Ti 6:12). "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Ti 2:3). "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 you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand" (Eph 6:11-13). "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luk 13:24). "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (Joh 6:27). "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Mat 10:34). "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (Luk 22:36). "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1Co 16:13). "War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience" (1Ti 1:18-19). Words such as these appear to me clear, plain, and unmistakable. They all teach one and the same great lesson, if we are willing to receive it. The lesson is that true Christianity is a struggle, a fight, and warfare. He that pretends to condemn "fighting" and teaches that we ought to sit still and "yield ourselves to God," appears to me to misunderstand his Bible and to make a great mistake...

One thing is certain—this Christian warfare is a great reality and a subject of vast importance. It is not a matter like church government and ceremonial, about which men may differ and yet reach heaven at last. Necessity is laid upon us. *We must fight.*

There are no promises in the Lord Jesus Christ's epistles to the seven churches (Rev 2-3), except to those who "overcome." The believer is a soldier. There is no holiness without warfare. Saved souls will always be found to have fought a fight.

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<sup>10</sup> **laying...thickly** – *meaning*: "You imagine I am exaggerating the seriousness of my subject."

<sup>11</sup> **maxim** – fundamental rule, truth, or guideline for action or conduct.

<sup>12</sup> **The Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley** (1769–1852) – British general who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

**It is a fight of *absolute necessity*.** Let us not think that in this war we can remain neutral and sit still. Such a line of action may be possible in the strife of nations, but it is utterly impossible in the conflict that concerns the soul. The boasted policy of non-interference—the “masterly inactivity” that pleases so many statesmen—the plan of keeping quiet and letting things alone—all this will never do in the Christian warfare. Here, at any rate, no one can escape serving under the plea that he is “a man of peace.” To be at peace with the world, the flesh, and the devil is to be at enmity with God, and in the broad way that leadeth to destruction (Mat 7:13). We have no choice or option. We must either fight or be lost.

**It is a fight of *universal necessity*.** No rank, class, or age can plead exemption or escape the battle. Ministers and people, preachers and hearers, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, kings and subjects, landlords and tenants, learned and unlearned—all alike must carry arms and go to war. All have by nature a *heart* full of pride, unbelief, sloth, worldliness, and sin. All are living in a *world* beset with snares, traps, and pitfalls for the soul. All have near them a busy, restless, malicious *devil*. All—from the Queen in her palace down to the pauper in the workhouse—all *must* fight, if they would be saved.

**It is a fight of *perpetual necessity*.** It admits no breathing time, no armistice,<sup>13</sup> no truce. On weekdays as well as on Sundays, in private as well as in public, at home by the family fireside as well as abroad, in little things like management of tongue and temper, as well as in great ones like the government of kingdoms—the Christian’s warfare must unceasingly go on. The foe we have to do with keeps no holidays, never slumbers, and never sleeps. So long as we have breath in our bodies we must keep on our armour and remember we are on an enemy’s ground. “Even on the brink of Jordan,” said a dying saint, “I find Satan nibbling at my heels.” We *must* fight until we die.

Let us consider well these propositions. Let us take care that our own personal religion is real, genuine, and true. The saddest symptom about many so-called Christians is the utter absence of anything like conflict and fight in their Christianity. They eat, they drink, they dress, they work, they amuse themselves, they get money, they spend money, they go through a scanty round of formal religious services once or twice every week. But of the great spiritual warfare—its watchings and strugglings, its agonies and anxieties, its battles and contests—of all this, they appear to know *nothing* at all. Let us take care that this case

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<sup>13</sup> **armistice** – temporary cessation of fighting by agreement between the warring parties.

is not our own. The worst state of soul is “when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luk 11:21)—when he leads men and women “captive...at his will” (2Ti 2:26), and they make no resistance. The worst chains are those that are neither felt nor seen by the prisoner.

We may take comfort about our souls if we know anything of an inward fight and conflict. It is the invariable companion of genuine Christian holiness. I am well aware that it is not everything, but it is *something*. Do we find in our heart of hearts a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things we would? (Gal 5:17). Are we conscious of two principles within us contending for the mastery? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the great work of sanctification. All true saints are soldiers. Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness, and indifference. We are in a better state than many. The most part of so-called Christians have no feeling at all. We are evidently no friends of Satan. Like the kings of this world, he does not war against his own subjects. The very fact that he assaults us should fill our minds with hope. I say again, let us take comfort...The child of God has two great marks about him, and of these two, we have one. HE MAY BE KNOWN BY HIS INWARD WARFARE, AS WELL AS BY HIS INWARD PEACE.

From *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*  
(London: William Hunt and Company, 1889), 74-96;  
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**J. C. Ryle (1816-1900):** Bishop of the Anglican Church; born at Macclesfield, Cheshire County, England, UK.



Must all God's people war with devils? Then consider what religion will cost you. Saints must be winnowed, buffeted, tried, and tempted.—*John Flavel*

Consider the Christian warfare and what success you are having therein. Here we shall certainly err and draw a wrong conclusion unless we pay close attention to the language of Holy Writ. That which we are called to engage in is “the good fight of faith” (1Ti 6:12); but if we seek to gauge our progress therein by the testimony of our senses, a false verdict will inevitably be given. The faith of God's elect has the Scriptures for its sole ground and Christ as its immediate object. Your success in this fight is to be determined by whether—despite all failures—you are continuing therein and whether you confidently look forward to the final issue—that you will triumph through Christ.—*A. W. Pink*

# OUR WARFARE AND ARMOR

James Ussher (1581-1656)

**W**HAT is **spiritual warfare**? The daily exercise of our spiritual strength and armor against all adversaries with assured confidence of victory. For the state of the faithful in this life is such that they are sure in Christ, yet they fight against sin: for joined with repentance is a continual fighting and struggling against the assaults of a man's own flesh, the motions of the devil, and the enticements of the world.

**How shall we overcome these enemies?** By a living faith in Christ Jesus.

**What then is our principal strength?** The powerful assistance of God in Christ (2Co 12:9; Phi 4:13), Who hath loved us: whereby we become more than conquerors (Rom 8:37).

**What is our spiritual armor?** The complete equipment of saving and sanctifying graces, called therefore the *armor of righteousness* (2Co 6:7) and the panoply<sup>1</sup> or the whole armor of God (Eph 6:11, 14): (1) The girdle of verity or *sincerity*; (2) the breastplate of righteousness, that is, *holiness of life and a good conscience*; (3) the shoes of the preparation (or resolution to go through with the profession) of the gospel of peace; (4) the shield of faith; (5) the helmet of the hope of salvation; (6) the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, that is, *the sound knowledge and wise application of it*; finally, (7) continual and instant<sup>2</sup> prayer in the Spirit.

**Who are our adversaries in the spiritual conflict?** They are either our friends proving us or our enemies seducing and endangering us.

**Who is that friend of ours who, for our probation,<sup>3</sup> entereth into conflict with us?** God Himself Who—though He tempt no man unto evil, no more than He Himself can be tempted (Jam 1:13)—as a Master of defense, enureth<sup>4</sup> us to the conflict by contending with us, even in His own person; viz.,<sup>5</sup> sometimes by probatory commandments<sup>6</sup> (Gen 22:1)

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<sup>1</sup> **panoply** – complete armor or defense.

<sup>2</sup> **instant** – persistent and never-ceasing.

<sup>3</sup> **probation** – testing; proving.

<sup>4</sup> **enureth** – trains, disciplines, or accustoms someone through repeated trials or conflict.

<sup>5</sup> **viz.** – from Latin *videlicet*: that is to say; namely.

<sup>6</sup> **probatory commandments** – difficult commands by which God tests, proves, and refines a person's faith.

or sensible apparitions<sup>7</sup> (Gen 32:24), but more ordinarily by striking our hearts with His terrors (Job 6:4), withdrawing the comfort of His gracious presence (Psa 77:7), leaving us for a time to ourselves (2Ch 32:31) that by our falls we may acknowledge our own weakness, finally training us under the cross and yoke of outward afflictions (Heb 12:5-6; Rev 3:19).

**How must we contend<sup>8</sup> with God?** Not otherwise than Jacob (Hos 12:3-4) and other holy men have, that is, by obedience, humility, patience, and fervent prayer unto God. He only enableth us to prevail with Himself, giving us the blessing and name of *Israel* (Gen 32:28).

**What are those enemies of ours that seek to seduce and endanger us?** Whatsoever marcheth under the banner of Satan, the god and prince of the darkness of this world (2Co 4:4; Eph 6:12). He sometimes assaileth us immediately<sup>9</sup> with impious and odious<sup>10</sup> suggestions (2Co 12:7; Zec 3:1), but more often employeth his forces or attendants—the world (1Jo 2:15) and the flesh (Gal 5:24)—so that the faithful in this life have battle both *without*, by the temptations of Satan and the world, and *within*, by the battle of the flesh against the Spirit.

**How do these enemies fight against our souls?** By employing all force and fraud to draw us by sin from the obedience and favor of God to damnation (1Jo 2:15).

**What must we do being thus assaulted?** We must stand fast being strong in the Lord, in the power of His might, and taking unto us the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-12) that we may be able to resist in the evil day and to lead our captivity captive.

**How shall we overcome?** By a living faith in Jesus Christ.

**To come then to those enemies in particular. What do you call Satan?** The adversary or enemy of God and His people.

**How may we be able to stand against his assaults?** First, we must labor to inform ourselves that we may not be ignorant of his enterprises or stratagems<sup>11</sup> (2Co 2:11). Secondly, we must boldly resist (Jam 4:7; 1Pe 5:9), that is, not give place or ground unto him (Eph 4:27) or admit any conference<sup>12</sup> with him, but rather neglect and despise his suggestions. Thirdly, we must take the shield of faith in Christ and His

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<sup>7</sup> **sensible apparitions** – manifestations of God experienced through bodily senses.

<sup>8</sup> **contend** – *meaning*: not as adversaries, but a holy wrestling or clinging to God in prayer.

<sup>9</sup> **immediately** – directly, that is, personally.

<sup>10</sup> **impious and odious** – ungodly and hateful.

<sup>11</sup> **enterprises or stratagems** – bold undertakings or crafty plans meant to outwit or surprise.

<sup>12</sup> **admit any conference** – *meaning*: give any audience at all or engage him in thought.

assistance, setting Him on our right hand Who is mighty to save (Psa 16:8; Isa 63:1). By Him, we may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph 6:16). Fourthly, we must brandish<sup>13</sup> against him the sword of the Spirit, that is, the Word of God (Eph 6:17), after the example of our Savior (Mat 4:1-11), keeping ourselves to that only which God revealeth to us and requireth of us.

**What is the first assault of Satan against us?** By subtlety he allureth us to sin, therefore he is called a tempter and a serpent.

**How shall we overcome him in these temptations?** First, by faith in Jesus Christ, Who overcame all Satan's temptations in His own person, so that we might overcome in Him. Secondly, by resisting the inward motions and outward occasions of sin.

**How shall we do that?** By believing that we are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:1-23).

**What is the second assault of Satan against us?** He layeth fearfully to our charge our sins committed; therefore, he is called the devil—an accuser.

**How shall we overcome him in these accusations?** First, by faith in Jesus Christ, Who hath justified us from all the sins for which Satan can accuse us. Secondly, by all those comfortable promises of forgiveness of sins, which in Christ's name are made unto us.

**What is the third assault of Satan against us?** He seeketh by manifold inward terrors and outward troubles to swallow us up and, therefore, is called a roaring lion.

**How shall we overcome him in these terrors and troubles?** First, by faith in Jesus Christ, Who was heard in all His troubles to give us assurance that we shall not be overcome in them. Secondly, by faith in God's providence, whereby we know that Satan can do no more harm to us than the Lord directeth him for our good.

**So much of Satan the first enemy: what do you call the *world*?** The corrupt state and condition of men and of the rest of the creatures, which Satan abuseth as his storehouse and armory<sup>14</sup> of temptations (1Jo 2:15).

**How doth the world fight against us?** By alluring<sup>15</sup> us and withdrawing us to the corruption thereof.

<sup>13</sup> **brandish** – wave as a threat or use for defense.

<sup>14</sup> **storehouse and armory** – *meaning*: Satan abuses God's world as the place where he stock-piles his schemes and weapons of spiritual war against Christ's saints.

<sup>15</sup> **alluring us** – drawing us in by attractive temptations.

**What means doth it use?** First, it allureth us to evil with hope of false pleasures, gain and profit, preferment<sup>16</sup> and glory of this world, from our obedience to God (1Jo 2:16). Secondly, other whiles<sup>17</sup> with fear of pains, troubles, losses, reproaches, etc., it discourageth us from our duty and allureth us to distrust God's promise (Joh 16:33).

**How may we withstand the temptations of the world?** By our faith (1Jo 5:4), which setteth a better world, even God's heavenly kingdom, before our eyes! Faith enableth us both to condemn (Heb 11:24) and crucify (Gal 6:14) the love of this present world and to endure manfully the threats and wrongs thereof (Heb 11:36-37), both confessing Christ in peril and suffering martyrdom for His sake—if we be called thereto (Rev 12:11).

**How are then the pleasures, profits, and glory of this world to be overcome?** First, by a *true* faith in Jesus Christ, Who despised all these things to work our salvation and to make us overcome them; secondly, by faith in God's Word that feareth us from doing anything that is against His will.

**And how shall we overcome the pains, losses, and reproaches of this world?** First, by a *living* faith in Jesus Christ, Who suffered all these things to accomplish our salvation and to enable us to suffer them. Secondly, by a *steadfast* faith in God's promises and providence that we shall lack no good things, and that all things seeming hurtful shall be turned to the furtherance of our salvation.

**So much for the world; now the second enemy: what do you call the flesh?** The corruption of our nature wherein we were born and conceived.

**Doth that remain after regeneration?**<sup>18</sup> Yes, it dwelleth in us and cleaveth fast unto us so long as we carry the outward flesh about us.

**How doth the flesh fight against the Spirit?** As a treacherous part outside us, being stirred up by Satan and inveigled<sup>19</sup> with the baits of the world, or discouraged with the evil entreaty<sup>20</sup> thereof, it fighteth on his side against our soul (1Pe 2:11)—that is, our spiritual life—and welfare; by continual lusting against the Spirit (Gal 5:17).

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<sup>16</sup> **allurement...preferment...to God** – *meaning*: drawing believers from obedience to God by actively deceiving and seducing them with the pleasures, wealth, status, and fame of the world.

<sup>17</sup> **whiles** – times.

<sup>18</sup> **regeneration** – God's gracious act of creating spiritual life in a sinner by the Holy Spirit's power; being born or begotten again by the Spirit.

<sup>19</sup> **inveigled** – persuaded by deception or flattery.

<sup>20</sup> **evil entreaty** – harsh or discouraging treatment from the world.

**How is that?** First, by hindering or corrupting us in the good motions,<sup>21</sup> word, and deeds of the Spirit; *secondly*, by continually moving us to evil motions, words, and deeds.

**What do you call the Spirit?** The Holy Spirit, which God in Christ hath given us, whereby we are begotten again.<sup>22</sup>

**Do we not receive the Spirit in full measure and in perfection at the first?** No, but first, we receive the first fruits and afterwards daily increase of the same until the end, if the fault is not in ourselves.<sup>23</sup>

**How doth the Spirit fight in us?** By lusting against the flesh (Gal 5:17).

**How doth it lust against the flesh?** First, partly by rebuking and partly by restraining in us the evil motions and deeds of the flesh. Secondly, by continual enlightening and affecting us with thoughts, words, and deeds agreeable to God's will.

**How may we withstand the temptations of our flesh?** By setting before our eyes the pattern of the death of Christ and arming ourselves with the same mind, so that it is also fitting for us to suffer in the flesh, ceasing from sin (1Pe 4:1); and to this end, craving and employing the power of the same death of Christ to subdue and crucify our carnal lusts and affections (Rom 6:2ff); and to this same end belongeth the help of abstinence for the repressing of the inordinate desires of nature<sup>24</sup> (1Co 9:26ff).

**So much for the spiritual fight. What followeth after a man hath gotten the victory in any temptation or affliction?** Experience of God's love in Christ, and so an increase of peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom 5:3; 2Co 1:5).

From *A Body of Divinity: Or, the Sum and Substance of Christian Religion*, Eighth Edition (London: R. J.; Jonathan Robinson; A. and J. Churchill; J. Taylor; J. Wyatt, 1702), 360-363; in the public domain.

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**James Ussher (1581-1656):** Anglo-Irish Anglican theologian and minister, Archbishop of Armagh; born in Dublin, Ireland, UK.



Faith is the key to success in the Christian warfare.—*J. C. Ryle*

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<sup>21</sup> **good motions** – the Spirit's inner working in the thoughts, desires, and will that leads to good outward words and deeds.

<sup>22</sup> **begotten again** – see "regeneration" above.

<sup>23</sup> **if the fault...ourselves** – *meaning*: if we have not grieved, resisted, or quenched the Spirit.

<sup>24</sup> **abstinence...desires of nature** – self-denial used to restrain the excessive desires of our sinful nature.

# ORIGIN OF THE WARFARE

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

**W**HAT is the origin of the devil, the principalities and powers, the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places, the world rulers of the darkness of this world? Before we look at the biblical answer to the question, let me remind you that this is a problem that has engaged the minds and the thoughts of men throughout the running centuries. There was a view held for a long time in the ancient world that evil came from a god who was virtually equal to the Lord God Almighty in power and in strength. They said there was a good god, and there was an evil god whom they called a *demiurge*.<sup>1</sup> They believed that that was the explanation of evil and that these two gods were equal in their being and in their powers. Many of them believed that it was the evil god that had created this material world. Others believed it was the good god who had created the world but that the other had interfered with it, and so on. Others have believed, and many still believe, in the eternity of evil. They say evil is something that is in the very warp and woof<sup>2</sup> of the whole creation—it is not something that has come into being, it was always there. They do not attempt to explain its origin; they just postulate<sup>3</sup> that evil is something that always has been, something that is eternal in and of itself.

The prevailing view today, however, is that there is no such thing as evil at all—that what has been called evil is really just the absence of good or the absence of perfection. This is the view that arises inevitably out of the theory or supposition<sup>4</sup> of evolution. According to this view everything is developing, growing, and advancing. But obviously, they say, we have not arrived at absolute perfection yet, and until you arrive at perfection there will be certain defects and blemishes; there will be an element of incompleteness. That is, they say, what has always been called “evil.” But it was wrong to regard it as positive; it is only negative. The trouble is that things are not what they ought to be; they have not arrived at this ultimate perfection. What has always been called

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<sup>1</sup> **demiurge** – In Gnostic and certain other philosophical systems: a supernatural being who creates or shapes the material universe, yet is subordinate to and distinct from the supreme, ultimate God.

<sup>2</sup> **warp and woof** – essential, interwoven qualities of something.

<sup>3</sup> **postulate** – assume as a basis for reasoning or belief.

<sup>4</sup> **supposition** – idea held to be true without proof or certain knowledge.

evil is but a lack of qualities rather than a positive entity in and of itself, a mere negative condition rather than a positive one.

If this view is true, all we need is great patience. Of course, we may need to wait a few million years before this great process terminates in perfection! But in any case, it is going to happen; so we must put up with things as they are, exhort one another to make the best of it while we are here, and consider ourselves unfortunate that we are living now and not in a number of millennia to come. And this, of course, immediately affects one's whole view of man and his ultimate destiny, of life and what can be done with the world at this present time. There, then, are some of the views concerning evil and its origin, found amongst those who do not go to the Bible and rely upon it for instruction in these matters.

**Now let us turn to the biblical view and be positive.** I do not propose to waste your time in refuting those other theories in detail; they are hardly worthy of it, as we shall see as we now look at the biblical teaching. The Bible starts with God: “In the beginning God” (Gen 1:1)—God over all; God from everlasting to everlasting; God self-subsistent and existent within Himself; God in His own inscrutable<sup>5</sup> wisdom beginning to create, and first creating the hosts of heaven—angelic beings. God created the hosts of heaven for His own purpose, for His own ends, in order that they might serve certain functions and carry out His behests.<sup>6</sup> The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “Are they not all ministering spirits?” (Heb 1:14), and he is referring to angels. In other words, the Bible teaches that, first and foremost, God created the heavens and these citizens of the heavenly regions, who seem to be divided into “angels and authorities and powers.” These were all made and created by God, and they were all, of course, perfect<sup>7</sup> and complete. That is the starting point. We are not talking about the earth, but about these heavenly realms and regions, and how God created these spiritual entities—angels, principalities, powers. We are not given any details about them, but if you look at the Book of Revelation, you will read there—it is all in symbols—about certain beasts and elders and so on. There are clearly gradations<sup>8</sup> in these beings; there are diversities of office that we do not understand perfectly, but we can sum it up thus:

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<sup>5</sup> **inscrutable** – mysterious; impossible to understand.

<sup>6</sup> **behests** – authoritative commands or orders.

<sup>7</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Some prefer the word *sinless* rather than *perfect*, since *perfection* is an attribute of God, associated with His immutability and absolute moral uprightness. God created Adam, Eve, and angels *sinless*, though capable of falling.

<sup>8</sup> **gradations** – degrees of rank or authority.

angels, principalities, powers—all perfect, all glorious, and all under God, ministering for God and to God. But what happened to them in course of time?

**Here, we come to the very essence of the biblical teaching about this whole matter of evil and sin.** We start with the person and personality of the devil. Clearly, the devil was originally one of these bright angelic creatures made by God. If you want proof of that you will find it in Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:1-19. But it is found also in the Book of Job, the first chapter and the sixth verse: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.” The phrase *the sons of God* in the Old Testament generally stands for the angels; here we are told that a day came when the angels presented themselves before God, and amongst these sons of God was Satan—the devil. In the same way, Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 compel us to come to the same conclusion. “Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isa 14:12). These descriptions, though primarily, perhaps, meant to apply to Tyre and to Babylon, are generally agreed to have a much wider meaning. That is something that is quite customary in prophecy. You start with the immediate, but it is also a foreshadowing of something bigger that is to come. This happens regarding good as well as evil. There are many prophecies in the Psalms that appear to relate to King David alone, but obviously they go beyond David and point to the Messiah. There are promises made to the children of Israel that primarily refer to their coming back from the Babylonian captivity; but they are too big for that alone—they are at the same time pictures of Christian salvation and the salvation of the soul. That is why they are quoted so frequently in the New Testament—to show the fulfillment of prophecy.

It is exactly the same regarding this matter of evil. In describing the fall of Tyrus or of Babylon, the prophets were inspired to suggest something bigger. Tyrus and Babylon are not merely earthly powers that are opposed to God; they are also symbols, as it were, of the power of the devil and his forces. So, what is said about them is really applicable to him. Hence, we find that this great power is described as wandering backwards and forwards, and that he was in the Garden of Eden. In other words, the impression given is that the devil was one of these great angels, one of these created powers that God brought into being that they might serve Him and be used to His honor and glory. That is the great original picture.

**But something has obviously happened.** How do you explain the origin of evil? The answer that is given is that there was what has been

described as “a pre-cosmic fall.” When I say “cosmic,” I am thinking of this universe that you and I dwell in—the universe as we know it. But, according to the Bible, before this cosmos was created, there was a tremendous calamity—a fall, a pre-cosmic fall. That is surely what is described in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. For a reference to the same thing in the New Testament, we turn to the First Epistle to Timothy in the third chapter and the sixth verse. The apostle is telling Timothy not to ordain a novice as an elder or as a bishop. He says, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” A most significant statement! Take that with the two passages from the prophets, and this is the result. Here amidst all these bright angelic beings was this outstanding one, “Lucifer, son of the morning!”—one of the greatest, ablest, and most powerful of them all. He became ambitious. He became dissatisfied with his position of subservience to God and desired to be as God Himself. So, he rebelled against God; he raised himself up against God in his ambition! “Lifted up with pride,” as Paul expresses it in writing to Timothy, he withstood God, he became a rebel. And the result of this was that he fell. He was punished by God by being degraded. And not only so, but he lost his perfection and the freedom he had formerly enjoyed.

The great principle that we must lay hold of is that God, in His own inscrutable wisdom, allowed this to happen. Though we cannot understand finally and must always be careful about speculation, it does not seem to me to be very difficult to understand—if one may speak with reverence—why God allowed the devil to fall. I have reminded you that these angelic beings were created perfect, and anything that is perfect must have complete freedom of will. So obviously, these beings had complete “freedom of will.” Anything that is perfect must be free. Adam was created perfect and was free. Adam had free will. No other man has ever had it since; but Adam had it. And it is this very quality that contains the possibility of rebellion and of falling, and therefore of the origin of evil. Thus, it came to pass that this perfect being exercised the freedom of his will in a wrong direction through pride and being lifted up; and so [he] fell and came under condemnation and punishment.

But the story does not end there. In addition to doing this himself, it is made clear that, at the same time, the devil persuaded certain other of these angelic beings, powers, and principalities to follow him in the course he had taken. The scriptural warrant for this belief is found, for instance, in the Book of Revelation, chapter 12 verse 4. Remember, however, that it is put there in symbolic form and that it is imagery.

John is talking about “a great dragon,” the devil: “His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” That is surely a symbolic way of saying that the devil, when he himself fell, dragged down with him the third part of these great powers whom God had created. Again, there is a statement in the Second Epistle of Peter, chapter 2 verse 4: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” What I am emphasizing is that some of the angels sinned and were cast into darkness, to hell, and were delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. You find the same truth in the sixth verse of the Epistle of Jude.

**This, then, is the picture that is given, bearing in mind that all this is before the creation of the world.** The devil influenced these others, and together they rebel against God. And so they fell; they became evil and came under God’s condemnation. But they are sufficiently great in power and in number to form and to establish a kingdom, a kingdom of evil, a kingdom of darkness; and the whole ambition and object of all the activities of the devil and his cohorts is to fight against God. The devil, “lifted up with pride,” fell; and ever since, of course, because of his fall, he has been animated by an intense hatred of God. He has only one ambition, namely, to destroy God’s works and to produce chaos. God is a God of order. The devil is intent upon producing chaos. Now, we begin to see the relevance of this teaching. The world since those events has always been a place of chaos. We know it as a place of chaos today. In Scripture, and in Scripture alone, do we find the explanation of the matter. These great powers have established a kingdom, and now there is a great warfare—God and His bright angelic hosts are fighting against the kingdom of the devil, the kingdom of darkness, and against the forces and spirits of evil that are set against God.

There, in its essence, is the biblical explanation of the origin of evil. But if you want to understand the twentieth century, the first thing you must do is to go back not only to the beginning of history in Eden, but into eternity before the world was ever made.

From *The Christian Warfare: An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-13*;  
(The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1976), 68-73;  
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**David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981):** Welsh expository preacher and author; born in Cardiff, Wales, UK.



# BE STRONG IN THE LORD

William Gurnall (1616-1679)

*Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—Ephesians 6:10*

**H**AVING exhorted the saints at Ephesus, and in them all believers, to a holy resolution and courage in their warfare—lest this should be mistaken and beget in them an opinion of their own strength for the battle—the apostle leads them out of themselves for this strength, even to the Lord: “Be strong in the Lord.” From whence observe,

**DOCTRINE: The Christian’s strength lies in the Lord, not in himself.** The strength of the general in other armies lies in his troops. “He flies,” as a great commander once said to his soldiers, “upon their wings; if their feathers be clipped—their power broken—he is lost.” But in the army of saints, the strength of every saint, yes, of the whole host of saints, lies in the Lord of hosts. God can overcome His enemies without their hands, but they cannot so much as defend themselves without His arm.

One of God’s names is “The Strength of Israel” (1Sa 15:29). He was the strength of David’s heart. Without Him, this valiant man—who, when held up in God’s arms, could defy Goliath who defied a whole army—behaves himself strangely for fear of a word or two that fell from the Philistine’s mouth. God was the strength of his hands: He taught his fingers to fight (Psa 144:1), and He is the strength of all His saints in this war against sin and Satan. Some propound<sup>1</sup> a question, whether there is a sin committed in the world in which Satan hath not a part? But if the question were whether there is any holy action performed without the special assistance of God concurring,<sup>2</sup> it is resolved: “Without me you can do nothing” (Joh 15:5). Thinking strength of God,<sup>3</sup> “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2Co 3:5). We apostles—we saints—have habitual grace,<sup>4</sup> yet this lies like water at the bottom of a well, which will not ascend with all our pumping until God pour in His exciting grace,<sup>5</sup> and then it comes. To will is more than to think; to exert our

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<sup>1</sup> **propound** – put forward for consideration.

<sup>2</sup> **concurring** – cooperating; working together with.

<sup>3</sup> **Thinking...God** – *meaning*: even the ability to think holy thoughts comes from God.

<sup>4</sup> **habitual grace** – the Spirit’s indwelling, resident grace; grace *possessed*.

<sup>5</sup> **exciting/actuating grace** – the Spirit’s energizing, activating grace; grace *activated*.

will into action is more than both; these are of God: “It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phi 2:13).

He makes the heart new; and having made it for heavenly motion,<sup>6</sup> He sets every wheel, as it were, in its right place. He then winds it up by His actuating grace and sets it going—the thoughts to stir, the will to move, and to make them toward the holy object presented.<sup>7</sup> Yet even here the chariot stands still and cannot ascend the hill of action until God puts His shoulder to the wheel. “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom 7:18). God is at the bottom of the ladder and at the top also, “the author and finisher” (Heb 12:2)—helping and lifting the soul at every rung in its ascent to any holy action.

Well, now the Christian is set to work; how long will he stay at it? Alas, poor soul, no longer than he is held up by the same hand that empowered him at first! He soon spends the strength he received; therefore, to maintain the ongoing pursuit of a holy life, there must be renewing strength from heaven every moment. David knew this. So when his heart was in as holy a frame<sup>8</sup> as he ever felt it, and his people—by their freewill offering—declared the same, even then he prays that God would “keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee” (1Ch 29:18). David adored the mercy that made them willing; then he implores God’s further grace to strengthen them and to tie the knot, that these precious pearls—newly strung on their hearts—might not slip off. When filled with divine communications, the Christian is but a glass without a foot:<sup>9</sup> he cannot stand or hold what he hath received any longer than God holds him in His strong hand. Therefore Christ, when bound for heaven and ready to take leave of His children, intercedes for His Father’s care of them in His absence: “Father, keep them” (see Joh 17:12), as if He had said, “They must not be left alone; they are poor, shiftless<sup>10</sup> children and can neither stand nor go without help. They will lose the grace I have given them and fall into those temptations that I kept them from while I was with them, if they are out of Thine eye or arms but one moment—therefore, ‘Father, keep them.’”

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<sup>6</sup> **heavenly motion** – spiritual activity directed toward God and holiness of life.

<sup>7</sup> **to make...presented** – *meaning*: God influences the thought, stimulates the will, and moves them toward holy action.

<sup>8</sup> **frame** – spiritual condition.

<sup>9</sup> **glass...foot** – drinking glass without a base, therefore, unable to stand or hold anything on its own.

<sup>10</sup> **shiftless** – helpless; unable to help oneself.

**Again—consider the Christian as he addresses himself to any duty of God’s worship:** His strength is still in the Lord. Would he pray? Where will he find the words for his prayer? Alas! He knows not “what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom 8:26). Left to himself, he would soon pray himself into some temptation or other, and cry for that which would be cruelty in God to give. Therefore, God puts words in our mouths: “Take with you words, and...say unto him” (Hos 14:2). Well, now He hath put words into his mouth—alas!—they will freeze in his very lips, if he hath not some heart-heating affections to thaw the tap.<sup>11</sup> And where shall this fire be had? Not a spark is to be found on his own hearth, except it be some strange fire of natural desires, which will not serve.<sup>12</sup> Whence then must the fire come to thaw the iciness of the heart but from heaven? The Spirit must stretch Himself upon the soul, as the prophet on the child (2Ki 4:32-35), and then the soul will come to some kind warmth and heavenly heat in his affections. The Spirit must groan, and then the soul will groan. He helps us to these sighs and groans that turn the sails of prayer. He melts the heart, and then prayer bursts out of it by groans of the lips, by heavenly rhetoric;<sup>13</sup> with tears out of the eyes as from a floodgate.

Yet now that the creature<sup>14</sup> is enabled to wrestle with God in prayer, what will he get by all this? Suppose he is weak in grace—is he able to pray himself strong or pray his corruption weak? No, this is not to be found in prayer as an act of the creature. This drops from heaven also, “In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul” (Psa 138:3). David received it *in* duty, but had it not *from* his duty, but from his God. He did not pray himself strong, but God strengthened him in his prayer.

**Well, cast your eye once more upon the Christian, as engaging in another ordinance of hearing the Word preached.** The soul’s strength to hear the Word is from God: He opens the heart to attend (Act 16:14). He opens the understanding of the saint to receive the Word to conceive what it meant. It is like Samson’s riddle, which we cannot unfold without his heifer (Jdg 14:12-18); he opens the womb of the soul to conceive by it, as He opens the understanding to conceive of it that the barren soul becomes a joyful mother of children. David sat for half a

<sup>11</sup> **thaw...tap** – warm the heart to melt the frozen source so prayer can flow.

<sup>12</sup> **Not...serve** – Gurnall uses the *fireplace* as a metaphor for the heart; *meaning*: The believer finds no spiritual fire in himself, only desires from his sinful nature, which cannot serve spiritual purposes.

<sup>13</sup> **heavenly rhetoric** – Spirit-given words in prayer.

<sup>14</sup> **creature** – *meaning*: Gurnall is highlighting the vast difference between the self-existent, sovereign Creator and His weak, sinful, created human beings.

year under the public lectures of the law, but the womb of his heart remained shut until Nathan came—and God with him. Then came the time of life:<sup>15</sup> David conceived at once and brought it forth on the same day. He fell immediately into the bitter pangs of sorrow for his sins, which went not over<sup>16</sup> until he had cast them forth in that sweet Psalm 51. Why should this one word work more than all the former? Because God now struck His Word into David’s heart, which He did not before. God is therefore said to teach His people to profit (see Isa 48:17). He that teacheth *hearts* sits in heaven. When God’s Spirit, Who is the Headmaster, calls a soul from his usher<sup>17</sup> to Himself, and says, “Soul, you have not gone the way of thriving merely by hearing the Word—trying this and that, grasping such a truth, applying such a promise”—immediately the eyes of his understanding open, and his heart burns within him while God speaks to him. Thus you see the truth of this point: The Christian’s strength is in the Lord.

From *The Christian in Complete Armour* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845), 7-9; in the public domain.

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**William Gurnall (1616-1679):** English Anglican clergyman; born at King’s Lynn, Norfolk, England, UK.



In a world of collapsing institutions, moral chaos, and increasing violence, never was it more important to trace the hand of “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” and then, not only learn how to wrestle with him and his forces, but also how to overcome them “by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.” If we cannot discern the chief cause of our ills, how can we hope to cure them?—*David Martin Lloyd-Jones*

All the people of God, from first to last, are and must be engaged in this spiritual warfare and can say, “We do not war after the flesh...the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” Such has been the language of the saints in all ages. They were all in the war, even the most holy of them all: Job, Moses and Aaron, Lot and David, the patriarchs and the prophets—all had their fiery trials. And so those under the gospel: Peter was winnowed, Paul was buffeted, and even Christ Himself was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.—*Isaac Ambrose*

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<sup>15</sup> **the time of life** – *meaning*: a scriptural phrase used for the moment when conception becomes possible, when birth is imminent, or when life is brought forth. Gurnall applies it to the moment when David spiritually “conceived and gave birth” to repentance.

<sup>16</sup> **went not over** – did not ease or pass away.

<sup>17</sup> **usher** – assistant or secondary teacher; *meaning*: Gurnall uses a schoolroom comparison: lesser teachers—God’s law, the Word preached, conscience, outward ordinances—can teach and convict externally, but they cannot change the heart. Such change comes only by the Headmaster—the Holy Spirit.

# THE WILES OF THE DEVIL

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

*That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.—Ephesians 6:11*

**D**OCTRINE: Satan hath his several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men.

I shall, (1) prove the point; (2) show you his various devices; and (3) the remedies against them; (4) explain how it comes to pass that he hath so many different devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men, and (5) lay down some propositions concerning Satan's devices.

**For the *proof of the point*, take these few Scriptures:** "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:11). The Greek word that is here rendered *wiles* is a notable emphatic word.<sup>1</sup>

(1) It signifies such snares as are laid behind one, such treacheries as come upon one's back at unawares.<sup>2</sup> It notes the methods or waylayings<sup>3</sup> of that old subtle serpent, who, like Dan's adder "in the path," biteth the heels of passengers, and thereby transfuseth his venom to the head and heart.<sup>4</sup> The word *methodeia*<sup>5</sup> signifies an ambush or stratagem of war, whereby the enemy sets upon a man at unawares.

(2) It signifies such snares as are set to catch one in one's road.<sup>6</sup> A man walks in his road and thinks not of it; suddenly he is caught by thieves or falls into a pit.

(3) It signifies such as are purposely, artificially,<sup>7</sup> and craftily set for the taking the prey at the greatest advantage that can be...Julian,<sup>8</sup> by his craftiness, drew more from the faith than all his persecuting

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<sup>1</sup> **notable emphatic word** – word worthy of special attention or emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> **treacheries...unawares** – surprise attacks that come from behind without warning.

<sup>3</sup> **waylayings** – acts of waiting in hiding to attack; ambushes.

<sup>4</sup> **Genesis 49:17** – "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."

<sup>5</sup> **methodeia** (Greek μεθοδεια) – deliberate, crafty strategies of deception.

<sup>6</sup> **to catch...road** – to trap someone in his path.

<sup>7</sup> **artificially** – designed for deceit.

<sup>8</sup> **Julian the Apostate or Flavius Claudius Julianus** (c. 331-363) – Roman emperor who deceitfully attempted to restore paganism throughout the empire after Constantine established religious tolerance.

predecessors could do by their cruelty. So doth Satan more hurt in his sheep's skin than by roaring like a lion.

**Take one scripture more for the proof of the point:** “And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2Ti 2:26). The Greek word that is here rendered *recover themselves* signifies to awaken themselves. The apostle alludeth to<sup>9</sup> one that is asleep or drunk, who is to be awakened and restored to his senses; and the Greek word that is here rendered *taken captive* signifies to be taken alive. The word is properly a warlike word and signifies to be taken alive, as soldiers are taken alive in the wars, or as birds are taken alive and ensnared in the fowler's net. Satan hath snares for the wise and snares for the simple; snares for hypocrites, and snares for the upright; snares for generous souls, and snares for timorous<sup>10</sup> souls; snares for the rich, and snares for the poor; snares for the aged, and snares for youth. Happy are those souls that are not taken and held in the snares that he hath laid!

**Take one proof more, and then I will proceed to the opening of the point:** “But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden, but...[to] hold fast till I come” (Rev 2:24). Those poor souls called their opinions the depths of God, when indeed, they were the depths of Satan. You call your opinions depths, and so they are; but they are such depths as Satan hath brought out of hell. They are the whisperings and hissings of that serpent, not the inspirations of God.

**Now, the second thing that I am to show you is his several<sup>11</sup> devices.** and herein I shall first show you the several devices that he hath to draw the soul to sin. I shall instance in these twelve, which may bespeak<sup>12</sup> our most serious consideration.

**Device (1) To present the bait and hide the hook;** to present the golden cup and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin; and by hiding from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin. By this device, he took our first parents: “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye

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<sup>9</sup> **alludeth to** – refers to; Paul commands Timothy to preach the truth the Ephesians once believed to restore them to right thinking.

<sup>10</sup> **timorous** – fearful.

<sup>11</sup> **several** – various.

<sup>12</sup> **bespeak** – engage; call for.

shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5). Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods! Here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. Oh, but he hides the hook—the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow!

There is an opening of the eyes of the mind to contemplation and joy, and there is an opening of the eyes of the body to shame and confusion. He promiseth them the former, but intends the latter, and so cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise, as he deals by thousands nowadays. Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool’s paradise. He promises the soul honor, pleasure, profit, etc., but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. By a golden bait, he labored to catch Christ (Mat 4:8-9). He shows Him the beauty and the bravery of a bewitching world, which doubtless would have taken many a carnal heart; but here the devil’s fire fell upon wet tinder<sup>13</sup> and therefore took not. These tempting objects did not at all win upon His affections, nor dazzle His eyes, though many have eternally died of the wound of the eye, and have fallen forever by this vile strumpet<sup>14</sup> the world; she, by laying forth her two fair breasts of profit and pleasure, hath wounded their souls, and cast them down into utter perdition.<sup>15</sup> She hath, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions; as the serpent Scytale,<sup>16</sup> which—when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers—doth astonish and amaze them with her beautiful colors, so that they have no power to pass away<sup>17</sup> until she have stung them to death. Adversity hath slain her thousand, but prosperity her ten thousand. Now, the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

**Remedy (1) *Keep at the greatest distance from sin and from playing with the golden bait that Satan holds forth to catch you.*** For this, you have Romans 12:9: “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” When we meet with anything extremely evil and contrary to us, nature abhors it and retires as far as it can from it. The Greek word that is there rendered *abhor* is very significant; it signifies to hate it as hell itself, to hate it with horror.

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<sup>13</sup> **wet tinder** – material that cannot easily be ignited; Christ’s heart was resistant to the devil’s temptations and could not catch fire in the soul of Lord Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> **strumpet** – prostitute.

<sup>15</sup> **perdition** – eternal ruin, loss, and damnation; hell.

<sup>16</sup> **Scytale** or **Scitalis** – legendary serpent whose brilliant, shimmering skin so mesmerized those who looked at it that they became motionless, allowing the slow-moving serpent to kill or capture them.

<sup>17</sup> **pass away** – get away; escape.

Anselm used to say, “That if he should see the shame of sin on the one hand, the pains of hell on the other, and must of necessity choose one, he would rather be thrust into hell without sin than to go into heaven with sin”<sup>18</sup>—so great was his hatred and detestation of sin. It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the farthest distance from sin—not to go near the house of the harlot, but to flee from all appearance of evil (Pro 5:8; 1Th 5:22). The best way to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance. He that will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the edge of the pit may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit. Joseph keeps at a distance from sin, from playing with Satan’s golden baits, and stands. David draws near, plays with the bait, falls, and swallows bait and hook with a witness (2Sa 11:2-3). David comes near the snare and is taken in it, to the breaking of his bones, the wounding of his conscience, and the loss of his God.

**Sin is the plague, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world!** Yet—ah! How few there are that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it! “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1Co 5:6). As soon as one sin had seized upon Adam’s heart, all sin entered his soul and overspread it. How hath Adam’s one sin spread over all mankind! “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom 5:12). Ah, how doth the father’s sin infect the child, the husband’s infect the wife, the master’s the servant! The sin in one man’s heart is of such a spreading and infectious nature, it can infect a whole world.

The story of the Italian—who first made his enemy deny God and then stabbed him, murdering both body and soul at once—declares the perfect malignity of sin. Oh, that what hath been spoken on this head<sup>19</sup> may prevail with you to stand at a distance from sin!

**Remedy (2) *To consider that sin is but a bitter sweet.*** The seeming sweet in sin will quickly vanish; and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof: “Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; Though he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth: Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him” (Job 20:12-14). Forbidden profits and pleasures are most pleasing to vain men, who count

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<sup>18</sup> Brooks cites this as a saying of the Italian monk, Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), following a long tradition of devotional writers who attributed it to him. No known Anselm text contains the wording, though the sentiment reflects themes in his moral theology.

<sup>19</sup> on this head – on this point or subject.

madness mirth. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not, but tear and consume the belly, the soul,<sup>20</sup> that receives them. Many eat on earth what they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those that devour them. Adam's apple was a bitter sweet;<sup>21</sup> Esau's mess was a bitter sweet; the Israelites' quails a bitter sweet; Jonathan's honey a bitter sweet; and Adonijah's dainties a bitter sweet. After the meal is ended, then comes the reckoning. Men must not think to dance and dine with the devil, and then to sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; to feed upon the poison of asps, and yet that the viper's tongue should not slay them. When the asp stings a man, it doth first tickle him so as it makes him laugh, until the poison, by little and little, gets to the heart; then it pains him more than ever it delighted him. So doth sin; it may please a little at first, but it will pain the soul with a witness at last; if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly be tormented with their sin.

**Remedy (3) Solemnly to consider that sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses that can be upon our souls.** It will usher in the loss of that divine favor that is better than life; the loss of the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; the loss of that peace that passeth understanding; the loss of the divine influences by which the soul hath been refreshed, quickened, raised, strengthened, and gladdened; and the loss of many outward desirable mercies, which otherwise the soul might have enjoyed.

Ah, England! My constant prayer for thee is that thou mayest not sin away thy mercies into the hands of those that cannot call mercy *mercy*, and that would joy in nothing more than to see thy sorrow and misery, and to see His hand make thee naked Who hath clothed thee with much mercy and glory.<sup>22</sup>

**Remedy (4) Seriously to consider that sin is of a very deceitful and bewitching nature.** Sin is from the greatest deceiver—it is a child of his own begetting, it is the ground of all the deceit in the world, and it is in its own nature exceeding deceitful. “But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13). It will kiss the soul, pretend fair to the soul, and yet betray the soul forever. With Delilah, it will smile upon us that it may betray us into the hands of the devil, as she did Samson into the hands of the Philistines. Sin gives Satan a power over us and

<sup>20</sup> **the belly, the soul** – the part of a person that craves and consumes sinful pleasure and the inner person corrupted by it.

<sup>21</sup> **a bitter sweet** – a sweet that turned bitter.

<sup>22</sup> **EDITOR'S NOTE:** The same prayer and lament should be offered up for America.

an advantage to accuse us and to lay claim to us, as those that wear his badge. It is of a very bewitching nature; it bewitches the soul, and where it is upon the throne, the soul cannot leave it, though it perish eternally by it. Sin so bewitches the soul that it makes the soul call evil good and good evil; bitter sweet and sweet bitter, light darkness and darkness light; and a soul thus bewitched with sin will stand it out to the death, at the sword's point with God;<sup>23</sup> let God strike, wound, and cut to the very bone, yet the bewitched soul cares not—*fears* not—but will still hold on in a course of wickedness. You may see it in Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas. Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill when it is not killed, that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally, yet the bewitched soul cannot nor will not cease from sin.

When the physicians told Theotimus<sup>24</sup> that except he did abstain from drunkenness and uncleanness, he would lose his eyes, his heart was so bewitched to his sins that he answered, “Then farewell sweet light.” He had rather lose his eyes than leave his sin. So a man bewitched with sin had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul than part with his sin. Oh, therefore, forever take heed of playing or nibbling at Satan's golden baits.

From *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. A. B. Grosart, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: J. Nichol; J. Nisbet & Co.; G. Herbert, 1866), 11-16;  
in the public domain.



“The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name” (Exo 15:3). We find in daily life and by experience that we are in a condition of conflict. We see that the world is in a state of warfare against God, and Scripture confirms our observation that God is engaged in war and is continually at battle. How it ennobles us to find it is *our* warfare. It is God's warfare, but it is ours also. You and I, brethren, are linked with God. The battle is the Lord's, but the battle is ours too. Enlisted under the banner of the King of kings with Immanuel for our Prince, we have become soldiers of the cross; and the battle is not now simply that of divinity against His rebellious subjects, but of divinity and restored creatures against the fallen ones. The battle is not now with God alone, but against God and the whole company of His elect whom He hath redeemed, who stand side by side with Him in the conflict. What an honor!—*Charles H. Spurgeon*

No furloughs are granted the soldiers of Jesus Christ, for their enemies take none. Our spiritual warfare calls for incessant alertness.

—*A. W. Pink*

<sup>23</sup> **a soul...with God** – a sin-bewitched heart will stubbornly resist God, will refuse to surrender, will fight Him as the enemy, even if such resistance leads to eternal damnation.

<sup>24</sup> **Theotimus** – a character that Ambrose of Milan (c. 339-397) uses in *De Poenitentia* (On Repentance) to illustrate the bewitching power of sin and its eternal ruin of the soul.

# THE ENEMY IS NOT FLESH & BLOOD

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.—Ephesians 6:11*

**L**ET us look at these forces and start with the terms that are used. The first is *the devil*. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph 6:11). We must start with him because, according to the teaching of the Scripture, he is the chief of all the powers that are set against us. Many names are ascribed to him. Here he is called “the devil.” He is also called “Satan.” That is the term that is commonly used in the Old Testament. You will also find it in the New Testament. But there are many other names ascribed to him—“Beelzebub,” “Belial,” “the evil one,” “the wicked one,” “the strong man armed,” and so on. They are used in order that we may understand something about the devil and his nature.

**Scripture makes it clear that we must think of the devil in a personal sense.** It is wrong to think of him simply as a force or a power. The same error is committed regarding the Holy Spirit. There are many who do not believe in the Person of the Holy Spirit; they talk about “It.” But the Holy Spirit is a person, the Third Person in the blessed Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not merely a power, not just an influence...The Holy Spirit is a *person*! So is the devil. Hence, we must start by realizing that he has personality and is a distinct and separate entity. Not only so, but we are also given to understand very clearly that the devil is a superhuman personality, bigger than man, stronger than man, greater than man. Yet, at the same time, it is made plain and clear that he is not divine.

**Another truth to be emphasized is that which stands out prominently here, namely, the *power* of the devil.** You need to put on the whole armor of God, says the apostle, that “you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Let us remind ourselves of the terms that are used in the Scripture to bring out this element of *power*. One of them is found in the second chapter of this epistle, in the second verse, where the devil is referred to as “the prince of the power of the air”—the leader, the chieftain—“the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” The apostle uses a similar expression concerning him in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he talks about “the god of this world” (4:4). “If our gospel be hid,” he says, “it

is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world..." However, the apostle is not contradicting himself; he is not saying that the devil is God. He is saying, as we shall see in detail later, that he is, as it were, the god of this world. That gives us some impression of his might, his authority, and his power—"the god of this world"!

**Then take another term used by our Lord Himself in the eleventh chapter of Luke's Gospel, "the strong man armed."** The devil—the one with whom we are confronted—is comparable to a very powerful and strong man armed who "keepeth his goods in peace" (Luk 11:21-22). It is all suggestive of the devil's tremendous power and authority.

The apostle Peter describes him in these terms: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion..." (1Pe 5:8). The lion...is the mightiest of all the animals, and there is nothing that gives us such an impression of strength, force, and latent power<sup>1</sup> as a roaring lion. He roars and all creation trembles! Well, says Peter, the devil is like that.

**Then there is the designation used in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation: "A great red dragon!"** A dragon again conjures up a picture of might and power. "A great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth" (Rev 12:3-4). In the same book, chapter 20, we find the dragon termed "that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" (Rev 20:2).

These descriptions convey ideas not only of subtlety but of strength and of great power. Indeed, it is clear from the Bible that the power of the devil is second only to that of the Godhead, undeniably so...How vitally important it is that we should realize all this—that we have an adversary, that there is someone who is always set against us, tempting us, trying to drag us down and to destroy us—someone who is ever ready to accuse us. Such is the teaching of Scripture. But we must not stop even at that...

**The devil, this mighty "prince of the power of the air," this king who has a kingdom, also has servants, emissaries, followers—"principalities and powers and rulers" against which we wrestle.** It is a veritable kingdom of great power with hordes of servants. But what are these? It is interesting to notice that the apostle uses exactly the same terms in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of this epistle, where he shows that he is concerned that we should realize "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his

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<sup>1</sup> **latent power** – strength beneath the surface, ready to burst forth.

mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:19-21). *Principalties and powers*—the very words we have here! Yet clearly and obviously, he is not referring to the same powers. The very context makes it clear that in chapter one he is referring to principalties and powers that surround the throne of God. They are described also in chapters 4 and 5 of the Book of Revelation, where we read of the beasts and the elders and of myriads<sup>2</sup> of principalties and powers surrounding the throne of God. They are God’s agents and emissaries,<sup>3</sup> part of His great eternal kingdom.

What is being emphasized by the apostle here is that just as God is surrounded by such powers, *so is the devil*. The devil is not a solitary power. He has his agents and his agencies. But these are very different from those surrounding the throne of God. They are evil, as we shall see. But the important thing for us to realize is that you and I—Christian people passing through this world of time—are being confronted by the devil and by all these principalties and powers that are ready to do his behest. As the angels of God are ready to go on their journeys and to minister to our well-being, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us (1:14), so the devil has agents that he can send here and there, hither and thither—*principalties and powers*. And further, what is emphasized concerning them is their great power and authority. They have a governmental position, and they have real authority and power in an executive sense. You may ask, “Why does he talk about principalties *and* powers?” Why the two words? There is a distinction between them. The idea of *principality* carries the notion of inherent<sup>4</sup> power. The word *power* suggests rather the expression, the manifestation of that power. So then, there are these mighty powers which can execute the orders of the “prince of the power of the air,” that is, the devil.

**Then we come to this next phrase that is so significant today—“against the rulers of the darkness of this world.”** That is the translation given by the Authorized Version (KJV). But most scholars would agree that a better translation would be, “against the world rulers of this darkness.” The term *world rulers* is designed to bring out the extent and the scope of power and of authority. We use this term in a political

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<sup>2</sup> **myriads** – countless numbers.

<sup>3</sup> **emissaries** – persons sent on a special mission as representatives of someone else.

<sup>4</sup> **inherent** – essential to something by its nature.

sense. There have been certain people in the course of history who have stood out as “world rulers.” It was the ambition of Hitler<sup>5</sup> to be a world ruler. He was not content with merely ruling one country in one continent. Similarly, Napoleon<sup>6</sup> had the ambition to become a world ruler, governing the whole world, commanding it, controlling it, determining its affairs and the welfare or ill of its people. The term *world rulers* as used here is one word in the original (Greek text). It is a very powerful word that conjures up<sup>7</sup> the notion of power to govern and to rule the whole world.

The word *world* here has a very special connotation and means the world outside of, or the world not submitting to, the government of God. We use that expression quite commonly in this sense. We say that a man is now in the church whereas formerly he was in “the world.” Of course, a Christian is still in the world *in a physical sense*; so, when you say that a Christian is no longer in “the world,” you are speaking in a spiritual sense... What the apostle is saying therefore is that we are confronted and opposed by powers that are really governing and controlling that world, the world as it is in opposition against God, the world outside God and His blessing.

**This is surely a most vital matter for us to understand and to grasp and to realize at a time like this.** We often say we are “up against the world, the flesh, and the devil.” And by “the world,” we do not mean the material universe. People *qua*<sup>8</sup> people are not against us: but “the world” is against us, and the “world” means that outlook, that whole organization, that tremendous power of evil in which we are living, as it were, and which is everywhere round and about us. Our business is to be “in the world, but not of it.” These “powers” are the rulers, the governors, the controllers of that mind, that outlook, which we call “the world.”

But fortunately for us, the apostle defines the term still more closely. He says that we are wrestling against the world rulers of “this darkness.” That again is a most significant expression. The “world” about which he is writing is a place of “darkness.” Once more, here is the term that is universally employed in the Scriptures to define that mind,

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<sup>5</sup> **Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) – Austrian-born leader of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (Nazi Party) who became dictator of Germany and established the totalitarian Third Reich in 1933.

<sup>6</sup> **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821) – French military leader who declared himself emperor in 1804 and built an empire extending from Spain to Poland.

<sup>7</sup> **conjures up** – brings to mind or stirs the imagination.

<sup>8</sup> **qua** – meaning: “people, considered simply as human beings, are not our real enemies.”

that outlook, that way of living that is not governed and controlled by God. We find it in this epistle in chapter four, where we read in verse seventeen: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened.” *Darkened!* It is in the dark, and therefore it is darkened. In chapter five verse eight, Paul says the same thing still more specifically: “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” Observe that there he does not merely say that they were once “in the dark”; he says that the darkness was in them—“ye were darkness”...

**Such is the state of *the world*.** It is the common description of it everywhere. Look at it, for example, in the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter one verse thirteen. He is reminding the Colossians of what God has done to them: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Do you normally, habitually, think of yourself as one who has been delivered from “the powers of darkness”? What is your view of salvation? What happens when you are converted and become a Christian? “Ah,” you say, “my sins are forgiven.” I agree. Thank God that it is so, for otherwise we would be undone. But do you always add this—“delivered from the power of darkness”? You were once held by that power. You were once the *slaves* of that power. It is vital that we should realize this.

It is not surprising that the apostle puts it in this way, and constantly puts it like this, because this was a part of his great commission. Remember how our Lord met him on the road to Damascus and said to him: “Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.” What for? “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Act 26:16-18).

**Then we come to the last term, “against spiritual wickedness in high places,” as it is found in the Authorized Version...**Perhaps the best translation is this: “We are up against spiritual bands of evil.” Or still better, “spiritual cohorts of evil”...Their nature is evil, their commission is evil, and their work is evil. They are evil in their object and purpose, and in all that they bring to pass.

**But according to our English Authorized Version, they are in “high places.”** Why did the translators say “high places” here?...The idea

meant to be conveyed is surely this: the term used is intended to present a contrast with the earth. We normally speak about “heaven and earth.” In other words, “the high places” means “the heavenly places” in contradistinction<sup>9</sup> to earth. “The heavenlies” really means that the powers, which are opposed to us, against us, and are making war on us as the saints of God, are not on our earthly level. We must get rid of the notion that we are only wrestling against “flesh and blood” on earth. Our wrestling is essentially in the spiritual realm, the realm of the heavenlies... There, then, says the apostle, is the starting point—the point of departure—the thing that you must realize before you go any further. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood.” What then? “Against the devil,” the god of this world, “against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spirits of evil in the heavenly realm.”

Thank God that the apostle introduces all this by saying, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” If, after considering all this, you feel discouraged, it means that you have not understood it. I am saying that you must realize that this is the enemy. Yes, but he has already told us, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Take unto you the whole armour of God.” This is the glory of the Christian position, that though I am confronted by such an enemy, I need not be afraid. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” “Your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” What am I to do? Am I hopeless? Do I run away and cry? Not at all! “Whom resist steadfast in the faith” (1Pe 5:8-9). “They overcame him”—the old dragon himself—“by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Rev 12:11). But do not allow that thought, or the misunderstanding of that thought, to make you feel that you need not be vigilant in respect of the enemy. Remember, says Paul, that you must stand after every victory. Do not relax, do not go on holiday. There is no holiday in the spiritual realm. Stand, pray, be steadfast, hold on! But as you must stand you are offered the armor and the ability to “stand,” to “withstand,” and “having done all, to stand.”

From *The Christian Warfare: An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-13*;  
(The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1976), 68-73;  
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There is no devil in hell or out of hell who does not tremble at Christ's presence.—*Charles H. Spurgeon*

<sup>9</sup> **contradistinction** – contrast drawn between two things.

# THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

John Calvin (1509-1564)

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.  
Put on the whole armour of God.—Ephesians 6:10-18*

**W**HEN our weakness is considered, an exhortation like this would have no effect unless “the Lord” were present and stretched out His hand to render assistance, or rather, unless He supplied us with all the power. Paul therefore adds, “in the Lord,” as if he had said, “You have no right to reply that you have not the ability; for all that I require of you is ‘be strong in the Lord.’” To explain his meaning more fully, he adds, “in the power of his might,” which tends greatly to increase our confidence, particularly as it shows the remarkable assistance that God usually bestows upon believers. If the Lord aids us by His mighty power, we have no reason to shrink from the combat. But it will be asked, “What purpose did it serve to enjoin the Ephesians to be strong in the Lord’s mighty power, which they could not of themselves accomplish?” I answer, there are two clauses here that must be considered. He exhorts them to be courageous, but at the same time reminds them to ask God to supply what they lack and promises that, in answer to their prayers, the power of God will be displayed.

**11. *Put on the whole armor.*** God has furnished us with various defensive weapons, provided we do not indolently<sup>1</sup> refuse what is offered. But we are almost all chargeable with carelessness and hesitation in using the offered grace; just as if a soldier, about to meet the enemy, should take his helmet and neglect his shield. To correct this security,<sup>2</sup> or, we should rather say, this indolence, Paul borrows a comparison from the military art and bids us “put on the whole armour of God.” We ought to be prepared on all sides so that we lack nothing. The Lord offers to us arms for repelling every kind of attack. It remains for us to apply them to use and not leave them hanging on the wall. To quicken our vigilance,<sup>3</sup> he reminds us that we must not only engage in open warfare, but that we have a crafty and insidious<sup>4</sup> foe to encounter, who

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<sup>1</sup> **indolently** – spiritually negligent or careless.

<sup>2</sup> **security** – careless confidence; false sense of safety.

<sup>3</sup> **quicken our vigilance** – stir up or arouse our watchfulness.

<sup>4</sup> **insidious** – subtly harmful; advancing in a slow, hidden, or deceptive way.

frequently lies in ambush; for such is the import of the apostle's phrase, "the wiles of the devil."

12. *For we wrestle<sup>5</sup> not.* To impress them still more deeply with their danger, he points out the nature of the enemy, which he illustrates by a comparative statement: "Not against flesh and blood." The meaning is that our difficulties are far greater than if we had to fight with men. There we resist human strength, sword is opposed to sword, man contends with man, force is met by force and skill by skill; but here the case is widely different. All amounts to this, that our enemies are such as no human power can withstand. By "flesh and blood," the apostle denotes men, who are so denominated<sup>6</sup> to contrast them with spiritual assailants. This is no bodily struggle.

Let us remember this when the injurious treatment of others provokes us to revenge. Our natural disposition would lead us to direct all our exertions against the men themselves; but this foolish desire will be restrained by the consideration that the men who annoy us are nothing more than darts thrown by the hand of Satan. While we are employed in destroying those darts, we lay ourselves open to being wounded on all sides. To "wrestle with flesh and blood" will not only be useless, but highly pernicious.<sup>7</sup> We must go straight to the enemy, who attacks and wounds us from his concealment—who slays before he appears.

But to return to Paul. He describes our enemy as formidable, not to overwhelm us with fear, but to quicken our diligence and earnestness; for there is a middle course to be observed. When the enemy is neglected, he does his utmost to oppress us with sloth and afterwards disarms us by terror; so that, before the engagement has commenced, we are vanquished. By speaking of the power of the enemy, Paul labors to keep us more on the alert. He had already called him "the devil," but now employs a variety of epithets<sup>8</sup> to make the reader understand that this is not an enemy who may be safely despised.

"Against principalities, against powers." Still, his object in producing alarm is not to fill us with dismay, but to excite us to caution. He calls them "princes of the world"; but he explains himself more fully by adding "of the darkness of this world." The devil reigns in the world because the world is nothing else than darkness. Hence it follows that

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<sup>5</sup> **wrestle** – (Greek = Πάλη) gymnastic term; the apostle often unites military with athletic metaphors.

<sup>6</sup> **denominated** – called; named; designated.

<sup>7</sup> **pernicious** – destructive; harmful.

<sup>8</sup> **epithets** – descriptive phrases expressing some quality of a person or thing.

the corruption of the world gives way to the kingdom of the devil; for he could not reside in a pure and upright creature<sup>9</sup> of God, but all arises from the sinfulness of men. By “darkness”—it is almost unnecessary to say—are meant *unbelief* and *ignorance* of God, with the consequences to which they lead. As the whole world is covered with darkness, the devil is called “the prince of this world” (Joh 14:30.)

By calling it *wickedness*, he denotes the malignity and cruelty of the devil and, at the same time, reminds us that the utmost caution is necessary to prevent him from gaining an advantage. For the same reason, the epithet *spiritual* is applied; for when the enemy is invisible, our danger is greater. There is emphasis, too, in the phrase “in heavenly places”; for the elevated station from which the attack is made gives us greater trouble and difficulty...

**13. *Wherefore take unto you.*** Though our enemy is so powerful, Paul does not infer that we must throw away our spears, but that we must prepare our minds for the battle. A promise of victory is, indeed, involved in the exhortation, “that ye may be able.” If we only “put on the whole armour of God,” and fight valiantly to the end, we shall certainly “stand.” On any other supposition,<sup>10</sup> we would be discouraged by the number and variety of the contests;<sup>11</sup> therefore he adds, “in the evil day.” By this expression, he rouses them from security, bids them prepare themselves for hard, painful, and dangerous conflicts, and, at the same time, animates them with the hope of victory; for amidst the greatest dangers, they will be safe. “And having done all.” They are thus directed to cherish confidence through the whole course of life. There will be no danger that may not be successfully met by the power of God; nor will any who fight against Satan with this assistance fail in the day of battle.

**14. *Stand therefore.*** Now follows a description of the arms that they were enjoined to wear. We must not, however, inquire very minutely<sup>12</sup> into the meaning of each word; for an allusion<sup>13</sup> to military customs is all that was intended. Nothing can be more idle than the extraordinary pains that some have taken to discover the reason why *righteousness* is made a “breastplate,” instead of a girdle. Paul’s design was to touch

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<sup>9</sup> **creature** – *meaning*: God’s original pure creation; not a beast or a person, but the created realm.

<sup>10</sup> **On...supposition** – *meaning*: if we assume an alternative way of understanding the situation; in this context, the alternative would be our own strength.

<sup>11</sup> **contests** – battles.

<sup>12</sup> **very minutely** – too precisely; in overly fine detail.

<sup>13</sup> **allusion** – indirect reference.

briefly on the most important points required in a Christian, and to adapt them to the comparison that he had already used.

**Truth**, which means sincerity of mind, is compared to a “girdle.”<sup>14</sup> Now, a girdle was, in ancient times, one of the most important parts of military armor. Our attention is thus directed to the fountain of sincerity; for the purity of the gospel ought to remove all guile from our minds and all hypocrisy from our hearts. Secondly, he recommends “righteousness,” and desires that it should be a “breastplate” for protecting the breast. Some imagine that this refers to a freely bestowed righteousness, or the imputation of righteousness, by which pardon of sin is obtained. But such matters ought not, I think, to have been mentioned on the present occasion; for the subject now under discussion is a blameless life. He enjoins us to be adorned, first, with integrity and next with a devout and holy life.

**15. And your feet shod.** The allusion, if I am not mistaken, is to the military “greaves”;<sup>15</sup> for they were always reckoned a part of the armor and were even used for domestic purposes. As soldiers covered their legs and feet to protect them against cold and other injuries, so we must be shod “with the gospel,” if we would pass unhurt through the world. It is “the gospel of peace,” and it is so called, as every reader must perceive, from its effects; for it is the message of our reconciliation to God, and nothing else gives peace to the conscience. But what is the meaning of the word *preparation*? Some explain it as an injunction<sup>16</sup> to be *prepared* for the gospel; but it is the *effect* of the gospel that I consider to be likewise expressed by this term. We are enjoined to lay aside every hinderance, and to be prepared both for journey and for war. By nature, we dislike exertion and want agility.<sup>17</sup> A rough road and many other obstacles retard our progress, and we are discouraged by the smallest annoyance. On these accounts, Paul holds out the gospel as the fittest means for undertaking and performing the expedition. Erasmus<sup>18</sup> proposes a circumlocution,<sup>19</sup> “that ye may be prepared”; but this does not appear to convey the true meaning.

**16. Taking the shield of faith.** Though “faith” and “the word of God” are one, yet Paul assigns to them two distinct offices. I call them one because the Word is the object of faith and cannot be applied to our

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<sup>14</sup> **girdle** – belt in ancient armor, which held everything together and enabled readiness.

<sup>15</sup> **greaves** – pieces of armor that protect the legs below the knee.

<sup>16</sup> **injunction** – formal command.

<sup>17</sup> **want agility** – lack the ability to move quickly or easily.

<sup>18</sup> **Desiderius Erasmus** (c. 1466-1536) – Roman Catholic humanist and theologian.

<sup>19</sup> **circumlocution** – using more words than necessary to express a simple idea.

use but by faith; as faith again is nothing and can do nothing without the Word. But Paul, neglecting so subtle a distinction, allowed himself to expatiate<sup>20</sup> at large on the military armor. In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, he gives both to faith and to love the name of a “breastplate”—“putting on the breastplate of faith and love” (1Th 5:8.) All that was intended, therefore, was obviously this: “He who possesses the excellencies of character that are here described is protected on every hand.”

And yet it is not without reason that the most necessary instruments of warfare—a sword and a shield—are compared to faith and to the Word of God. In spiritual combat, these two hold the highest rank. By faith, we repel all the attacks of the devil; and by the Word of God, the enemy himself is slain. If the Word of God shall have its efficacy<sup>21</sup> upon us through faith, we shall be more than sufficiently armed both for opposing the enemy and for putting him to flight. And what shall we say of those who take from a Christian people the Word of God? Do they not rob them of the necessary armor and leave them to perish without a struggle? There is no man of any rank who is not bound to be a soldier of Christ. But if we enter the field unarmed, if we lack our sword, how shall we sustain that character?

“Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the...darts.” But *quench* appears not to be the proper word. Why did he not use, instead of it, “ward off” or “shake off,” or some such word? *Quench* is far more expressive, for it is adapted to the epithet applied to *darts*. “The darts” of Satan are not only sharp and penetrating, but—what makes them more destructive—they are *fiery*. Faith will be found capable, not only of blunting their edge, but of *quenching* their heat. “This,” says John, “is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1Jo 5:4).

**17. *And take the helmet of salvation.*** In a passage already quoted (1Th 5:8), “the *hope* of salvation” is said to be a “helmet,” which I consider to be in the same sense as this passage. The head is protected by the best helmet, when, elevated by *hope*, we look up towards heaven to the salvation that is promised. It is only therefore by becoming the object of *hope* that “salvation” is a “helmet.”

**18. *Praying always with all prayer.*** Having instructed the Ephesians to put on their armor, he now enjoins them to fight by prayer. This is the true method. To call upon God is the chief exercise of faith and hope; and it is in this way that we obtain from God every blessing.

<sup>20</sup> **expatiate** – write at great length.

<sup>21</sup> **efficacy** – power to produce an intended result; in other words, to make something work.

*Prayer* and *supplication*<sup>22</sup> are not greatly different from each other, except that supplication is only one branch of prayer.

“With all perseverance.” We are exhorted to persevere in prayer. Every tendency to weariness must be counteracted by a cheerful performance of the duty. With unabated ardor,<sup>23</sup> we must continue our prayers, though we do not immediately obtain what we desire. If, instead of “with all perseverance,” some would render it, “with all earnestness,” I would have no objection to the change.

But what is the meaning of “always”? Having already spoken of continued application, does he twice repeat the same thing? I think not. When everything flows on prosperously—when we are easy and cheerful, we seldom feel any strong excitement to prayer—or rather, we never flee to God, but when we are driven by some kind of distress. Paul therefore desires us to allow no opportunity to pass—on no occasion to neglect prayer; so that “praying always” is the same thing with praying both in prosperity and in adversity.

“For all saints.” There is not a moment of our life at which the duty of prayer may not be urged by our own needs. But unremitting<sup>24</sup> prayer may likewise be enforced by the consideration that the necessities of our brethren ought to move our sympathy. And when is it that some members of the church are not suffering distress and needing our assistance? If, at any time, we are colder or more indifferent about prayer than we ought to be, because we do not feel the pressure of immediate necessity, let us instantly reflect on how many of our brethren are worn out by varied and heavy afflictions—are weighed down by sore perplexity, or are reduced to the lowest distress. If reflections like these do not rouse us from our lethargy, we must have hearts of stone. But are we to pray for believers only? Though the apostle states the claims of the godly, he does not exclude others. And yet in prayer, as in all other duties of love, our first care unquestionably is due to the saints.

From *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*,  
Originally printed for the Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh,  
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**John Calvin (1509-1564):** French theologian, pastor, and important leader during the Protestant Reformation; born in in Noyon, Picardie, France.



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<sup>22</sup> **supplication** – humble and earnest request, often with a sense of urgency.

<sup>23</sup> **unabated ardor** – persistent, fiery intensity.

<sup>24</sup> **unremitting** – constant and continuous; never letting up.

# SATAN'S HEAD CRUSHED

Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

*It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—Genesis 3:15*

**E**VERY private Christian<sup>1</sup> is one of Christ's soldiers, for we give up our faculties and powers as weapons: "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments"—or weapons—"of righteousness unto God" (Rom 6:13). And the graces of the Spirit are called armor of light: "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom 13:12). And we are bidden to "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" (Eph 6:11-12). Ministers and those in a public station<sup>2</sup> are leaders under Christ the General; by office and employment, they are engaged in this warfare against the kingdom of the devil. Therefore, the apostle biddeth Timothy to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Ti 2:3); and the apostle says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2Co 10:4). They must set themselves against the devil and his kingdom.

Satan hath a tyrannical usurped power.<sup>3</sup> So the devils are called "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph 6:12), the blind, idolatrous, superstitious world; and Satan is called "the prince of this world" (Joh 14:30) and "the god of this world" (2Co 4:4). God made him an executioner, but we make him a prince, a ruler, and a god. Now as a priest, Christ annuls Satan's legal power by His death and the merit of His sacrifice; as a true king and head both of men and angels, Christ pulls down Satan as a usurper and delivers the poor captive souls out of his power; as a prophet, He revealeth Satan's cheats and delusions.

**IN THIS CONFLICT, CHRIST'S HEEL WAS WOUNDED, BITTEN, OR BRUISED BY THE SERPENT.**

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<sup>1</sup> **private Christian** – church member who holds no public office in the church, yet is fully enlisted in Christ's service.

<sup>2</sup> **public station** – authoritative role in the church that carries public responsibilities.

<sup>3</sup> **usurped power** – power taken without authority.

1. **It is certain that Christ was bruised in the enterprise.** This showeth how much we should value our salvation, since it so dearly cost the precious blood of the incarnate Son of God: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1Pe 1:18-19). He did not think His whole humiliation, from first to last, too much to overthrow the devil’s kingdom, nor any price too dear to redeem poor captive souls.

2. **But how was He bruised by the serpent?** On one hand, Christ’s sufferings were the certain effects of man’s sin, God’s hatred against sin, and His governing justice; for it is said, “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him” (Isa 53:10). Unless it had pleased the Lord to bruise Him, Satan could *never* have bruised Him. On the other hand, Christ’s sufferings were also the effects of the malice and rage of the devil and his instruments,<sup>4</sup> who were now with the sword’s point and closing stroke with Christ,<sup>5</sup> and doing the worst he could against Him. In Christ’s whole life, He endured many outward troubles from Satan’s instruments; for all His life long, He was a man of sorrows—wounded and bruised by Satan and his instruments: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Joh 8:44). But the closing stroke was at last; then did the serpent most eminently bruise His heel. When Judas contrived the plot, it is said, the devil entered him: “Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve” (Luk 22:3). When the high priest’s servants come to take Him, He telleth them, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luk 22:53). The power of darkness at length did prevail so far as to cause His shameful death; this was their day.

3. **It was only His heel that was bruised.** It could go no further; for though His bodily life was taken away, yet His head and mediatory<sup>6</sup> power was not touched: “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Act 2:36). Again, His bodily life

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<sup>4</sup> **instruments** – persons or schemes used to accomplish a purpose, i.e., the Jews and Romans who did not believe Jesus to be the Christ, the King of the Jews.

<sup>5</sup> **sword’s point and closing stroke** – *meaning*: Satan’s nearest, full-frontal assault and murderous blow to Christ by provoking the unbelieving Jews and Romans to crucify Him.

<sup>6</sup> **mediatory** – referring to a mediator, a go-between who intervenes between two hostile parties to restore them to a relationship of harmony and unity.

was taken away but for a while. God would not leave His soul in the grave: “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psa 16:10). The counsel and purpose of God concerning man’s redemption would then have been wholly frustrated: “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1Co 15:17). Once more, though Christ was bruised, yet He was not conquered. When the Jews and Roman soldiers were spoiling Him, and parting His garments, then He was spoiling principalities and powers;<sup>7</sup> and when Satan and his instruments were triumphing over the Son of God, then was He triumphing over all the devils in hell, for by death He destroyed him that had the power of death. This was a necessary means of conquest; and Christ must overcome Satan by suffering Himself to be overcome visibly by him. The devil doth not conquer Christ by death, but Christ doth conquer him. And still all the temptations of the devil are but the wounding of the heel; the loss is not great to Christ or His members: as Dan is compared to “a serpent by the way, or an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward” (Gen 49:17). Such is the craft of Satan; he doth not usually bring temptations before our reason, but they enter in at the backdoor of sensual appetite; but though he bites the heel, the life of grace is secured. Satan prevailed so far against Christ that his wicked instruments brought Him to the cross, pursued Him to the death there. But, “Though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God” (2Co 13:4), or, as it is in “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened<sup>8</sup> by the Spirit” (1Pe 3:18). So for Christians, he may wound and afflict us in diverse ways in our outward interests, but the inner man is safe: “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2Co 4:16). Nay, we may be bruised in the heel by divers temptations and slips into sin; yet the vitals of grace are not hurt, there is no total extinction of our love to God.

**I should come now to the fourth branch, that though Christ was bruised in the conflict, yet it endeth in Satan’s total overthrow.** His heel was bruised, but Satan’s head was crushed. But of that anon.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime, by way of use, let me press you cheerfully to remember and celebrate this victory of Christ. The duty we are engaging

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<sup>7</sup> **spoiling Him...spoiling principalities** – stripping Jesus as if they had conquered Him by the crucifixion; yet by His crucifixion and resurrection He stripped Satan and his demons of their power and triumphed over them.

<sup>8</sup> **quickened** – made alive.

<sup>9</sup> **But...anon** – *meaning*: shortly; in a moment; soon to be discussed again.

in is an eucharist,<sup>10</sup> and we come to rejoice in God our Savior. Let me bespeak you, in the psalmist's words, "O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory" (Psa 98:1); or "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly" (Psa 118:15-16); "Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can show forth all his praise?" (Psa 106:2).

**[1] The conqueror is the seed of the woman—the Son of God incarnate.** Oh! Let us bless God for so great a mercy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way" (Luk 1:68-76). What! Shall the Son of God come from heaven to subdue the kingdom of Satan and to deliver men from this bondage, and shall we be no more affected with it?<sup>11</sup>

**[2] The manner of overcoming: It is by suffering a shameful, painful, and accursed death.** "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev 1:5-6). Again, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev 5:12); and, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev 5:9), that by a death He did not deserve, He should destroy the death we deserve.

**[3] Who is overcome? The devil.** "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for

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<sup>10</sup> **The duty...Eucharist** – *meaning*: Manton is preaching in the context of participating in the eucharist, "the thanksgiving"—the Lord's Supper.

<sup>11</sup> **shall...affected with it** – *meaning*: With something so astonishing, are we moved so little?

the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev 12:10). “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” (Rev 12:11). “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev 12:12). O Christians! What will raise your hearts in thanksgiving to God, if not these three arguments that I have plainly mentioned to you? For the matter needeth no descants.<sup>12</sup> The incarnation of the Son of God, Who came as the seed of the woman, that He might free mankind from the power the devil had over them by sin. Then the merit and satisfaction of our Savior, for He was bruised in His heel. And then the dissolution of Satan’s power and the freeing of mankind out of his hands, either as a tempter or a tormentor.

[4] **The effects of Christ’s victory when it is applied to us.** I shall mention three:

(1) **Our conversion to God and the destruction of sin in our hearts, or our actual deliverance from Satan:** “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luk 11:21-22), This was our condition: all was in a sinful quiet and peace. When wind and tide go together, no wonder if there is calm. Satan’s suggestions and our corruptions suited the one with the other. But blessed be God that this carnal security is disturbed, that the kingdom of God is come upon us; that Christ, by a sacred rescue, hath dispossessed Satan and destroyed sin. Oh! Let us give thanks “unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col 1:12-13).

(2) **Remission of sins:** “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Act 26:18). “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13-14). Christ’s subjects have the privileges of His kingdom. Now, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that

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<sup>12</sup> **descants** – *meaning*: the truth is strong enough on its own and does not need fancy extras.

is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psa 103:1-3).

**(3) Our own personal victory over Satan's temptations.** In part now: We renew that covenant now, wherein we engaged to fight against Satan: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1Jo 2:14). Fully hereafter: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom 16:20)—the God of peace, as pacified in Christ. Now this is matter of thanksgiving: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 15:57)—that Christ will take us along with Him in His triumphant chariot, that He will strengthen our weak faith and faint hope, and that we may conquer the tempter and accuser.

Though Christ's heel was bruised in the conflict, yet it endeth in Satan's final overthrow; for His head was crushed, which signifieth the subversion<sup>13</sup> of his power and kingdom.

From *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*, Vol. 17 (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1874), 246–251; in the public domain.

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**Thomas Manton (1620-1677):** English Presbyterian Puritan preacher; born in Lawrence-Lydiat, Somerset, England, UK.



Soldiers of Christ, be aware that you are highly advanced in God's creation, that you occupy an important station, that you have an arduous work allotted to you, and that you have neither time nor talent to throw away. For you are enlisted under the banner of Christ; you have entered the armies of the Most High and have taken the oath of allegiance to the King of Sion; and you have bound yourselves by an oath to fight the good fight of faith against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. What formidable enemies are these! You must encounter all the powers of hell, and their name is Legion. You must fight them now, for you have put on the armor and taken the field to fight all the enemies of God and man. When you survey the enemies' camp and see their strength, their number, their stratagems, and inveterate malice, and are then made to feel your own weakness and nothingness, you tremble and say, "How shall I go against these mighty hosts! Yet I must conquer them all or die an eternal death." O soldiers of Christ! Banish all your guilty fears. There is, after all, far more for you than against you. You are on the Lord's side, Who fighteth for you. He is your refuge and strength, your sun and shield.

He is with you in the field to teach your hands to war and to cover your head in the day of battle and hath promised you the victory.—*Thomas Jones*

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<sup>13</sup> **subversion** – complete destruction.

# STRIKE A BLOW FOR JESUS AND HOLINESS

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you  
against your enemies, to save you.—Deuteronomy 20:4*

**W**E have no enemies but the enemies of God. Our fights are not against men, but against spiritual wickednesses. We war with the devil and the blasphemy, error, and despair that he brings into the field of battle. We fight with all the armies of sin—impurity, drunkenness, oppression, infidelity, and ungodliness. With these we contend earnestly, but not with sword or spear; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Jehovah—our God—abhors everything that is evil, and therefore He goeth with us to fight for us in this crusade. He will save us, and He will give us grace to war a good warfare and win the victory. We may depend upon it: if we are on God's side, God is on our side. With such an august<sup>1</sup> ally, the conflict is never in the least degree doubtful. It is not that truth is mighty and must prevail, but that might lies with the Father Who is Almighty, with Jesus Who has all power in heaven and in earth, and with the Holy Spirit Who worketh His will among men.

Soldiers of Christ, gird on your armor! Strike home in the name of the God of holiness, and by faith, grasp His salvation. Let not this day pass without striking a blow for Jesus and holiness.

From *Faith's Checkbook*, in the public domain.



There will be no mourning in heaven. They have sown in tears, the reaping time of joy is come, and "God shall wipe all tears from their eyes" (Rev 21:4). No need for mortification there, and self-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch anymore; the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect work, and there is no use for it there. Faith is turned into sight, and hope is swallowed up in the ocean of sensible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are subdued; the saints sit quietly on their throne; and so the forces, mindful in the time of the spiritual warfare, are disbanded; they carry on their triumph in the profoundest peace.

—Thomas Boston

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<sup>1</sup> **august** – majestic; awe inspiring.