

# Schemes of the Devil

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. - Ephesians 6:11

## SATAN IS A "SCHEMER"

The English definitions of **SCHEME** are found below. Don't just passively read them, in one ear and out the other! **Think about how these definitions relate to demonic activity in your life as a follower of Christ. Try to put some of these definitions in the description of schemes in Ephesians 6:11 to help you meditate on important truth.**

**Definition** = a plan of action, an elaborate and systematic plan for a course of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim; a strategy (art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in a war or battle); a secret or underhanded plan; a plot or a plan to achieve some action; a carefully arranged and systematic program of action for attaining some object or end; a particular ordered system or arrangement; a large-scale systematic plan or arrangement for attaining some particular object or putting a particular idea into effect. **Synonyms:** plan, project, plan of action, program, strategy, stratagem, tactic, game plan, master plan, course/line of action.

**Etymology of scheme** - It is from Medieval Latin **schema** which means shape, figure, form, appearance and is from Greek schema which refers to appearance, as opposed to reality. This is a good description of the devil, the master deceiver.

### Related Resources:

- See article below by [Puritan Thomas Brooks on Satan's Devices to Draw the Soul to Sin](#) (and 12 remedies).
- [See links to the answers to 38 Questions on Satan](#)

**Schemes of the devil** - Here we encounter the commander in chief of the invisible army arrayed against us. He is our sworn, mortal enemy. This is not a video game or a fairy tale but a very real war with a very real, deceptive foe.

Paul had warned about the **devil's schemes** to disrupt the **unity of the body** writing that "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful

scheming." (Ep 4:14-note)

**The schemes of the devil** - Note Paul's use of the definite article in Greek ("**THE schemes**") which defines these as specific schemes, not just general schemes. It suggests that the devil and his minions have specific schemes, "tailor made" for each person, for he is aware of the sin that so easily entangles each of us (Hebrews 12:1+)! Note that these **schemes** involve shrewdly devious and intriguing methods that entail following an orderly, technical procedure in the handling of a subject. **Schemes** is used to describe a wild animal cunningly stalking and unexpectedly pouncing on prey (cp 1Pe 5:8-note). Satan's **schemes** to destroy us and do us harm are built around stealth and deception but as Paul writes to the Corinthians "we are not ignorant of his **schemes**." (2 Corinthians 2:11) In 2 Corinthians 2:11 the word **schemes** is not **methodeia** but **noema** [from **nous** = mind] and refers to the content of thinking and reasoning.

**Samuel Rutherford** reminds us that "Satan is only God's master fencer to teach us to use our weapons."

**Schemes** (3180) (**methodeia** from **methodeuo** = to work by method in turn from **meta** = with, after + **hodos** = a way) refers to an orderly, logical, effective arrangement, usually in steps followed to achieve an end. It describes deliberate planning or a systematic approach and can have a positive or negative connotation. The negative meaning of **methodeia** implies the use of clever methods or strategies to attain the desired end. The Scripture always uses **methodeia** with a negative connotation.

**Methodeia** has reference to planned, subtle, systematized error. Error organizes. It has its systems and its logic. Be alert! Be mature! Satan's scheming, crafty actions and artful designs have 'method' and purpose, for his aim is to mislead the immature who are not grounded on apostolic doctrine. Behind the evil men and women who seek to expound false teaching, there is also a supernatural evil power who seeks to deceive unwary saints with his "devilish" cunning.

Think about this simple definition in the context of spiritual warfare. Satan is orderly and logical in his steps employed against you to achieve his nefarious purposes. This realization should prompt each of us to be even more appreciative of the fact that we cannot stand against our invisible enemy in our own intelligence, our own strength or our own human "methods" or "schemes". We must put on the full armor that God supplies in Christ.

As alluded to above, the negative connotation of **methodeia** implies the use of cleverness, craftiness, cunning and deception. The "deceiver" uses **specific, subtle, stealthy** plans to target each individual, his goal being to **defeat, discourage** and **dishearten**. Stated another way, Satan's attacks are "tailor made" ("**the schemes**"), carefully and methodically selected to attack each person's specific weaknesses and vulnerabilities. His wiles and methods are usually attractive, always deceptive, and often ensnaring. Stay sober and alert!

**Spurgeon** has the following cautions regarding our Adversary, the devil writing that "He

will attack you sometimes by force and sometimes by fraud. By might or by sleight he will seek to overcome you, and no unarmed man can stand against him. Never go out without all your armor on, for you can never tell where you may meet the devil. He is not omnipresent, but nobody can tell where he is not, for he and his troops of devils appear to be found everywhere on this earth."

Puritan **Thomas Watson** wrote that "Satan tempts after some discoveries of God's love. As a pirate sets on a ship that is richly laden, so when a soul hath been laden with spiritual comforts the devil will be shooting at him, to rob him of all. The devil envies to see a soul feasted with spiritual joy."

**David Jeremiah** has an interesting thought on Satan's **methodia** writing that...

If you could sneak into Satan's office, wherever that might be (he's not in hell yet), and take a peek into his files, you might be surprised to find a file folder with your name on it. I'm not exaggerating. He keeps a file on you, and inside that file are all the strategies he's tried on you—the ones that have worked and the ones that have failed. He doesn't waste his time with the ones that don't work anymore. Instead, he uses variations on the strategies that have caused you to stumble in the past. As long as they keep working, he keeps using them. Somewhere in that file cabinet there's a file labeled: Jeremiah, David. In this file, I wouldn't be surprised at all if there was a notation that reads something like this: Subject may be prone to discouragement, especially if he becomes overly weary. This has worked several times before and seems a promising method of attack. Suggestion: Make sure he stays very busy, overcommitted, and physically tired. At all costs, keep him from extended times of Bible reading and prayer.

So what is Satan's strategy for me? He looks for ways to discourage me, and if possible, cause me some depression. He will use whatever people, means, or circumstances it takes to achieve his goal.

It's the same for you. Maybe your file says, "Frequently tempted to gossip," or "quick temper," or "prone to coveting and jealousy," or "weak in the area of lust."

Don't kid yourself, he knows very well where your vulnerabilities lie. It's all in his file. You've heard, perhaps, that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. That's very good news, but it is also true that Satan hates you and has a plan and strategy to destroy your walk with Jesus Christ.

That's one big reason why you experience struggle and discouragement in your Christian experience. Sometimes I hear people say,

"Well, if you're a Christian, you shouldn't have any struggles. You shouldn't ever feel discouraged. All is peace and joy and love and happiness."

I don't think so. I personally think that description fits better with life before you found salvation in Christ. Do you know why? Because you only had one influence in your life at that time. There was no contest for your heart. There was no tug-of-war for your soul. (Jeremiah, D. . God In You: Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Life. Multnomah

Publishers)

**Methodeia** is translated with a number of words as shown in the list below with each word followed by a definition. As you read through this list think about how each describes your mortal foe, the devil.

1. **Craftiness** - adept in the use of subtlety and cunning. No place in Scripture reveals Satan's schemes better than Genesis 3, which records Satan's initial contact with man.
2. **Cunning** - characterized by wiliness and trickery. It describes the faculty of executing well what one has devised.
3. **Scheming** - given to making plots; shrewdly devious and intriguing. Synonyms include artful, calculating, conniving, cunning, deceitful, designing, duplicitous, foxy, Machiavellian, slippery, sly, tricky, underhand, wily.
4. **Strategies** - careful plans or methods. Strategy can also refer to the art or science of the planning and conduct of a war. The Columbia Encyclopedia notes that "**strategy and tactics**, in warfare are related terms referring, respectively, to large-scale and small-scale planning to achieve military success. **Strategy** may be defined as the general scheme of the conduct of a war, **tactics** as the planning of means to achieve strategic objectives. Synonyms for **strategy** include: blueprint, design, game plan, project, scheme.
5. **Stratagems** - an artifice or trick in war for deceiving and outwitting the enemy. A cleverly contrived trick or scheme for gaining an end. Stratagem implies a ruse used to entrap, outwit, circumvent, or surprise an opponent or enemy.
6. **Tactics** - The derivation of the word tactic is very interesting and gives us some insight into the meaning of the devil's methods. The word "tactics" is from the Greek word taktikos which means "of order, of tactics, fit for arranging" and which in turn is derived from "tassein" which means to arrange or place in battle formation. Tactics is defined then as the science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat. It refers to the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish an end. In short, the tactics of the devil are calculated plans specifically designed to bring the downfall of God's people and His kingdom.
7. **Trickery** - the practice of crafty underhanded ingenuity to deceive or cheat. It implies ingenious acts intended to dupe or cheat.
8. **Wiles** - tricks or strategy carried out with the intent to entice, ensnare or deceive. Wiles suggests an attempt to entrap or deceive with false allurements. In short they are attractive!

**Friberg** states that **methodeia** can have a neutral or positive meaning referring simply to a "method or procedure (but) in the NT (is used) in a bad sense, (and refers to) scheming to deceive, craftiness, cunning, deception (see notes Ephesians 4:14); In the **plural** (as used in Ephesians 6:11) **methodeia** can refer to **stratagems, cunning attacks, tricks**" (Adapted from Friberg, T. Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books)

**John MacArthur** writes that **methodeia** ("wiles") conveys 'the idea of cleverness, crafty methods, cunning, and deception. Satan's schemes are propagated through the evil world system over which he rules, and are carried out by his demon hosts. "**Wiles**" is all-inclusive, encompassing every sin, immoral practice, false theology, false religion, and worldly enticement." ([MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word Pub](#))

**The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** has the following note on **methodeia** specifically commenting on its use in Ephesians 6:11 "The reference is to machinations or (in military terms) attacks against which one must be armed. The nature of the attacks (the **plural** suggests that they are constantly repeated or are of incalculable variety) constitutes their great danger, against which the armour of God is the only defence. They are distinguished not so much by technique or strategy as by refinement and insidiousness (Vulgate translates insidiae, Luther "cunning attacks," A.V. "wiles")" ([Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

The only other use of **methodeia** is in Ephesians 4:14 where as a result of being equipped and growing in maturity, the saints "are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by **craftiness** (**methodeia**) in deceitful scheming." (See **notes** Ephesians 4:14)

The **KJV** has a picturesque rendering of Ephesians 4:14 stating that "they **lie in wait** (methodeia) to deceive."

**Kenneth Wuest** writes that "**methodeia**" is derived "from the verbal form **methodeuo** "to follow up or investigate by method and settled plan, to follow craftily, frame devices, deceive." **Methodeia** was used to describe a wild animal who cunningly stalked and unexpectedly pounced on its prey, a vivid depiction of the Adversary's "methods" against believers. Satan's schemes are propagated through the evil world system over which he rules, and are carried out by his demon hosts. "**Wiles**" is all-inclusive, encompassing every sin, immoral practice, false theology, false religion, and worldly enticement. **Methodeia** is a Greek word that denotes a path or roadway that is traveled over. This is because the devil continuously attempts to secure a foothold so that he may begin construction of a roadway to your mind."

**Marvin Vincent** adds that "**methodeia** means a deliberate planning or system."

**Albert Barnes** writes that "**methodeia** means properly that which is traced out with "method;" that which is "methodized;" and then that which is well laid - art, skill, cunning." (Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible)

**Ray Stedman** in his excellent book "[Spiritual Warfare](#)" has this note regarding "methodeia":

"What are the tactics the devil employs? He destroys by **deceiving**, by **lying**, by **distorting**, by **counterfeiting**, by **masquerading**, by **clouding human minds with illusion and fantasy**. This is what Paul calls "**the devil's schemes**," or as some translations put it, "**the**

**wiles of the devil"** Read through the Bible and see how many times the work of the devil is referred to in that manner - the snares and the traps of the devil, the lies and illusions, the stratagems and the wiles. That is why we must look closely at the tactics the devil uses against us so that we can be strong and well-defended when he comes to us to defeat us, weaken us, and ruin our lives....

By far, the majority of attacks of the devil against Christians are not direct but indirect. That is why they are called the "**schemes**" of the devil. **Schemes** suggest deviousness or acting in a way that is subtle, secretive, and treacherous.

We need to examine this more thoroughly, for the major attack of the devil and his powers against human life is not by direct means, but indirectly by satanic suggestions through the natural and commonplace situations of life ([Click](#) for more in depth discussion)...

So we have an enormous responsibility before God and before the entire world to give ourselves, body and soul, to this great battle against the **schemes** of the evil one. We have a responsibility to battle the **schemes** of the devil in this world, and to point the way to the peace and security that lies ahead of us in the world to come...most often the devil comes in disguise, through the channel of "the flesh" our inner selves with silken, subtle, suggestive **schemes**. That is the avenue of satanic attack the apostle Paul warns us most strenuously about: the subtle schemes of the devil." ([Spiritual Warfare. Revised edition, 1999](#) -- highly recommended) (Bolding added)

**Stedman** goes on to write "Friend, in Christ there is nothing that more clearly indicates that we have succumbed to the **schemes** of the devil than to complain about our lot in life. Again and again, the Word of God shows that the mark of a Christian who has learned how to be a Christian is that he rejoices in everything and gives thanks in all things." (**Ed**: Only possible for one continually filled with the Spirit Eph 5:18+) ([Ibid](#)) (Bolding added)

**Murphy** writes that "The idea behind **methodeia** is deception. The apostle is warning us that the devil's entire system of warfare against us is based on deception. He fights not on a pitched field, but by sudden assault and secret and cunning onslaught." (Murphy, E. F. Handbook for Spiritual Warfare. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

**Eadie** in his classic commentary on Ephesians adds that "The great enemy of man, a veteran fierce and malignant, has a method of warfare peculiar to himself, for it consists of "wiles." His battles are the rush of a sudden ambushade (ambush). He fights not on a pitched field, but by sudden assault and secret and cunning onslaught. Vigilance, self-possession, and promptitude are therefore indispensable to meet him: and as his aim is to throw his opponents off their guard and then to surprise them, so there is need to be ever clothed in this complete armour of God. His "wiles" are seen in unsettling the mind of Eve by representing God as jealous of the first man and woman; in stirring up the warlike

aspirations of David to take a military census and force a conscription as the basis of a standing army; in inflaming the avaricious and sordid spirit of Judas; and in his assaults on our Lord by an appeal to appetite, piety, and ambition." (John Eadie, D., LL.D. The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians)

**Oswald Chambers** has a good word about the **methodeia** of the devil writing that "We cannot stand against the **wiles** of the devil by our **wits**. The devil only comes along the line that God understands, not along the lines we understand, and the only way we can be prepared for him is to do what God tells us, stand complete in his armor, indwelt by His Spirit, in complete obedience to Him." (Oswald Chambers 1874–1917)

**Jonathan Edwards** wrote that "the best protection one can have from the **devil** and his **schemes** is a humble heart."

**James Burns** writes that "The danger of listening to the voice of the **Tempter**, and the subtlety by which he accomplishes his **wiles**, is illustrated by R. Spencer Stanhope in a picture in the Manchester Art Gallery, entitled "**Eve**." In it he represents the Serpent whispering in her ear while she listening, plays with the sin within her mind. At the same time, unseen by her, he bends a branch of the tree with a coil of his body, and lo! as she dallies with the sin in her mind, an apple drops into her open hand. When the temptation has once been permitted to enter, the means of gratifying it is at hand." (Tan, P. L. Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations)

**MacDonald** warns that "the devil has various stratagems—discouragement, frustration, confusion, moral failure and doctrinal error. He knows our weakest point and aims for it. If he cannot disable us by one method, he will try for another...Most serious of all is the danger of deception. Those who are babes are unskillful in the word of righteousness, their senses are not exercised to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:13, 14). They inevitably meet some false cultist who impresses them by his zeal and apparent sincerity. Because he uses religious words, they think he must be a true Christian. If they had studied the Bible for themselves, they would be able to see through his deceitful juggling of words. But now they are carried about by his wind of doctrine and led by unprincipled cunning into a form of systematized error. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

The **Open Bible** defines our Adversary's "schemes" as "superhuman craftiness, capable of drawing careless Christians into sin."

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "The danger on the battlefield is that we do not take the enemy seriously and therefore fail to put on all of the armor. By faith, you put on the armor through prayer, which must be done at the beginning of every day. Never underestimate the **strategy** and strength of the devil." ([With the Word : The Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook](#))

Seldom does Satan ever attack openly with an overt frontal assault (and by the way most of us will probably never be attacked by Satan himself as he is a finite not omnipresent being. But he does command a host of fallen angels who share his evil design for mankind). In contrast, Satan's **Schemes** are nearly always unseen, shrewd, and perfectly



tailored to ensnare his victim like a fowler camouflaging his net to trap a bird ("methodical"). "Schemes, wiles and methods" speak of the trickery and subterfuge by which evil and temptation present themselves in our lives. Evil rarely looks evil until it accomplishes its goal. It gains entrance by appearing attractive, desirable, and perfectly legitimate. But to reiterate it is a baited and camouflaged trap. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 11:14, Satan masquerades as an angel of light.

## **A SUMMARY OF THE "METHODEIA" OF SATAN, OUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL**

God's Word teaches that Satan, our relentless, determined Adversary, the Devil, carries out the following with great craft and cunning (and even this long list is not exhaustive!)

### **(1) ACCUSES**

Job 1:6-11 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan** also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to **Satan**, "From where do you come?" Then **Satan** answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." 8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." 9 Then **Satan** answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 "But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face."

Job 2:1-7 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to **Satan**, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth, and walking around on it." 3 And the LORD said to **Satan**, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause." 4 And **Satan** answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "However, put forth Thy hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face." 6 So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." 7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Zechariah 3:1-2 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the **Angel of the LORD**, and **Satan** standing at his right hand to **accuse** (Hebrew = satan!) him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, **Satan**! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"



Revelation 12:10-11 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the **accuser** (kategoros - one who speaks openly against, to condemn or accuse mainly in a legal sense) of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 "And they **overcame** (nikao = get the victory, conquer, prevail, "Nike missile") him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. (See **notes [Revelation 12:10](#); [Revelation 12:11](#)**)

## (2) AFFLICTS

Job 1:12-19 Then the LORD said to **Satan**, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So **Satan** departed from the presence of the LORD. 13 Now it happened on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 that a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Job 2:6-7 So the LORD said to **Satan**, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." 7 Then **Satan** went out from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Luke 13:16 "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom **Satan has bound** for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Revelation 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the **devil is about to cast some of you into prison**, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (See **notes [Revelation 2:10](#)**)

## (3) CONQUERS

**Note:** Remember that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us." (NKJV, Ro 8:37)

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit

and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed (katadunasteuo = to tyrannize, rule over as a potentate, oppress harshly, exercise dominion against) by the **devil**; for God was with Him.

**Ephesians 6:16**; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the **evil one**.

2Timothy 2:25-26 (The Lord's bondservant) with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of **the truth**, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of **the devil**, having been held captive by him to do his will. (**Comment**: Note what sets the captive free - The Truth. The struggle is not a power struggle but a truth struggle!) (See **notes 2 Timothy 2:25; 2:26**)

#### (4) DECEIVES

**Genesis 3:1-6,13** Now the **serpent** was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" 4 And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate...13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The **serpent deceived** (beguiled, led astray, deluded, seduced) me, and I ate." (cf 1Ti 2:14 And it was not Adam who was **deceived**, but the woman **being quite deceived** (seduced into error, enticed into sin), fell into transgression.)

**John 8:44** "You are of your father the **devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a **murderer** from the beginning (see Genesis 3:1-6,13+), and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a **liar**, and the **father of lies**. (**Comment**: Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "*Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.*")

**Acts 13:10** (Saul known as Paul filled with the Holy Spirit spoke to Elymas the magician who was opposing the apostles) and said, "You who are full of all **deceit** (dolos = deliberate attempt to mislead other people by telling lies, duplicity, deliberate dishonesty, deceitful cunning) and **fraud** (recklessness, malignity, mischief, intrigue, unscrupulousness), you **son of the devil**, (in Acts 13:6 he is called "Bar-Jesus" = son of Jesus or son of Joshua! cf 2Cor 11:13-15 below) you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?

**2Cor 4:3-4** And even if our gospel is veiled (kalupto = covered over and hence not visible), it is veiled to those who are perishing (apollumi = pertains to destruction but

not annihilation, to that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose), 4 in whose case **the god of this world (aion)** (cf 1John 5:19) has blinded (tuphloo - cf use in 1John 2:11) the minds of the **unbelieving** (note that this speaks of their rejection of the light of the gospel which leaves only one alternative, the darkness of unbelief!), that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God.

**2Cor 11:13-15** For such men (those who were boasting that their work was like Paul's and the real apostles) are **false apostles** (pseudapostolos), **deceitful** (dolios - guile filled, from dolos = one who deliberately attempt to mislead by telling lies with desire to gain advantage or preserve position) workers, **disguising** (metaschematizo from metá = change of place or condition + schematízo = change outward form without a change in the internal character as in metamorphoo = transfigure, transform, the outward here being truly representative of the inward nature) themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

**2Thess 2:8-10** And then that lawless one (Anti-Christ, man of lawlessness, son of destruction in [2Thess 2:3-4](#), the "little horn" of Da 7) will be revealed (apokalupto - he will be caused to be fully known, this "revelation" corresponding to the midpoint [3.5 years, time, times, half a time, 42 months, 1260 days] of Daniel's Seventieth Week) whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth (cf Rev 19:15, 20) and bring to an end by the appearance (epiphaneia - literally His "shining forth" or upon with the idea of sudden and unexpected!) of His coming (parousia - the Second Coming of Christ); 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity (energeia - operative power) of **Satan**, with all power and signs and **false** (pseudos = lying) wonders, 10 and with all the **deception** (apate = that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence; causes one to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the Truth) of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence (this is a Divine judicial decree, a reaping of their sowing, a consequence of their refusal to readily and deliberately make the choice to accept the Truth by which they could have been delivered and born again) so that they might believe what is false.

**Revelation 2:9** 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of **Satan**. (See **notes [Revelation 2:9](#)**)

**Revelation 3:9** 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of **Satan**, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie-- behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you. (See **notes [Revelation 3:9](#)**)

## (5) HINDERS

**1Thessalonians 2:18** For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and yet **Satan** thwarted (egkopto from en = in + kopto = cut down, strike. To hinder, impede,

detain. In classic Greek a military metaphor = to cut in on, throw obstacles in the way of or cut up the road so that normal movement is impossible!) us.

## (6) MURDERS

John 8:44 (See #4 above)

## (7) PERVERTS

Acts 13:10 (See #4 above)

2Th 2:9-10 (See #4 above)

## (8) PROMPTS

1Chr 21:1 Then **Satan** stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. (**Note:** Actually God permitted Satan to prompt David to take a census of the people, and David insisted on doing it, contrary to Joab's advice. **2 Sa 24:1** "*Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."*) The point is that Satan can only do what God allows! God here is said to have caused the action in the sense of permitting Satan to put David to the test. Be careful when you commit sins, for you are entering into Satan's domain of darkness!)

John 13:2,26-27, 30 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him... **26** Jesus therefore answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. **27** And after the morsel, **Satan** then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, "What you do, do quickly."... **30** And so after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night (an appropriate time for Judas who was now fully controlled by darkness, cf **Luke 22:53** "*While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power [exousia] of darkness are yours.*").

Acts 5:3, 9 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has **Satan** filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?...9 Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well."

## (9) SCHEMES

2Cor 2:11 (repent of an unforgiving spirit) in order that no advantage be taken of us by **Satan**; for we are not ignorant of his schemes. (**Comment:** When we sin and fail to repent we give the devil an opportunity. In this verse the sin is unforgiveness and it allows Satan to take advantage, to exploit, to cheat or to defraud. We need to get out of the darkness and walk in the light, where Satan cannot gain an advantage. If the church family—or any person in the family—carries an unforgiving spirit, then Satan will use

that attitude as a beachhead for new assaults against the church.

As someone has well said an **unforgiving spirit** is the devil's playground, and before long it becomes the Christian's battleground. If somebody hurts us, either deliberately or unintentionally, and we do not forgive them, then the potential is for us to develop bitterness, which hardens the heart. We should be tenderhearted and kind, but instead we are hardhearted and bitter. Actually, we are not hurting the person who hurt us but are only hurting ourselves. Bitterness in the heart makes us treat others the way Satan treats them, when we should treat others the way God has treated us. In His gracious kindness, God has forgiven us, and we should forgive others. God Himself is infinitely kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving, and we show those virtues by imitating their Source. We do not forgive for our sake or even for their sake, but for Jesus' sake. Learning how to forgive is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life and allows one to **stand firm against the schemes of the devil.**

**Ephesians 6:11** (see notes)

1Timothy 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the **snare (pagis** - a trap which is fixed or fastened by a noose or notch and which can fall unexpectedly or suddenly so that wild animals and birds are caught by surprise) of the **devil.**

## (10) STALKS

**1Peter 5:8-9** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the **devil**, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist **him**, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (See **notes** 1 Peter 5:8; 1 Peter 5:9)

## (11) STEALS

Mt 13:19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the **evil one** comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

Luke 8:12 "And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the **devil** comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

## (12) TEMPTS

Mark 1:12-13 And immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted (peirazo) by **Satan**; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Luke 4:1-13 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, **being tempted** (peirazo) by the **devil**. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the **devil** said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."4

And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" 5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the **devil** said to Him, "I will give You all this domain (exousia) and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish (Jesus did not correct Satan - the world system indeed had been given to him as John wrote "*We know that we are of God, and **the whole world** lies [asleep like a baby in a cradle!] in the power of the **evil one**" 1John 5:19).* 7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' 11 and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" (Here the devil misquotes Scripture to his advantage - this promise applies only to those whose ways are in God's will and Satan left that critical detail out of the verse when he quoted Ps 92:11-12) 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" 13 And when the **devil had finished every temptation**, he departed from Him **until an opportune time** (see study of kairos).

1Cor 7:5 Stop depriving (present imperative = with negative implies this practice was already ongoing) one another, except (1) by agreement (2) for a time (kairos - a specified aliquot of time) (3) that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest **Satan tempt (peirazo)** you because of your lack of self-control. (**Comment:** The general rule is that neither husband nor wife has the right to refuse the physical relationship of marriage. Here Paul presents a possible exception that applies if all three conditions are fulfilled = sexual abstinence is permissible if the couple agrees in advance, set a specific time limit, and does so for the purpose of prayer. The KJV adds "**fasting** and prayer". Sexual abstinence can become a tool of Satan and is never to be used as pretense for spiritual superiority or as a means of intimidating or manipulating one's spouse. Physical love is to be a normal and regular experience shared by both marriage partners and avoids "**the schemes of the devil**"!)

1Thess 3:5 For this reason (knowing they were going to suffer affliction which might have made them vulnerable to the schemes of the devil), when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the **tempter** (peirazo) might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain (empty, fruitless, without success).

### **(13) THREATENS**

Heb 2:14-15 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the **devil**; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. (**Comment:** The wages of sin are death, spiritually and eternally. Christ died as a satisfactory sacrifice [see Heb 2:16-17] and paid the price for our sins, the wages of which were death [Ro 6:23+] so that the devil no longer holds the power of death over believers and we no longer are held in bondage to that fear).



(See notes Hebrews 2:14; 2:15; 2:16; 2:17)

This list (which is not exhaustive) of the "wiles of the devil" should thoroughly convince each of us of our need to be totally dependent on the full of armor of God and His Spirit's strengthening of our inner man, causing us not to hesitate for even a moment to put on the **whole** armor! What are you waiting for dear Christian friend? Are any of the "pieces" missing or in disrepair. Then return and confess and repent and go forth into battle as more than a conqueror through Him Who loved us.

"**Repent** (aorist imperative = urgent. Do it now!) therefore and **return** (aorist imperative = urgent. Don't procrastinate!), that your sins may be wiped away (blotted out, erased, obliterated), in order that times of refreshing (literally recovery of breath and so revival) may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19) (**Comment:** This verse in context was Peter's call to the Jewish audience to be saved, but is still applicable in principle to believer's who have chosen momentarily to walk in darkness instead of the light.)

Men don't believe in a devil now  
As their fathers used to do,  
They reject one creed because it is old  
For another because it is new.

But who dogs the steps of the toiling saint?  
Who spreads the net for his feet?  
Who sows the tares in the world's broad fields,  
Where the Savior sows His wheat?

They may say the devil has never lived,  
They may say the devil has gone,  
But simple people would like to know  
Who carries the business on?  
Gem Cyclopedia

**A. T. Robertson** warns that the devil "is a crafty foe and knows the weak spots in the Christian's armor."

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** writes that "In the second century A.D. the church interpreted these (schemes or methodeia) as torture inflicted on the martyrs. But in the context of Ephesians they are more likely to have been deliberate attempts to destroy the unity of Christ's body (Eph 3:14-22; 4:1-16, 27) through the invasion of false doctrine and the fomenting of dissension (Eph 4:2, 21, 31, 32; 5:6). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

### **A few of the Devil's schemes...**

A. Makes us think money is more important than living sincerely before God.



- B. Defames God's character by accusing him of impure motives.
- C. Opposes the necessity of Christ's death for our salvation.
- D. Tries to cripple spiritual leaders.
- E. Prevents believers from meeting together in fellowship.
- F. Prevents non-Christians from understanding and believing the gospel.
- G. Sends his evil supporters to infiltrate the ranks of true Christians. (Discipleship Journal. Issue 2. Mar/Apr 1981)

[Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus](#)  
(Play)

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you,  
You dare not trust your own.

Put on the gospel armor,  
Each piece put on with prayer;  
Where duty calls or danger,  
Be never wanting there."

-----George Duffield

**The devil** ([1228](#))(**diabolos** from **diá** = through, between + **ballo** = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser, slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions). See the discussion on the background on spiritual warfare (Click Ephesians 6:12)

The New York Times, in reporting on a survey by the Barna Group, noted that two-thirds of Americans do not believe in the devil as a living entity. The Times called it "a result of fundamental, long-term shifts in the nation's religious culture."

**Ray Stedman** writes that "The devil is real, he is active, he is working day and night, trying to subvert and undo and defeat God's plan in human history. The devil is our enemy. And this is war. There is a spiritual war going on behind the scenes of history, and that spiritual war in the unseen world is driving events in our own visible world. There is no peace in the material world because there is a war now raging in the spiritual world. There is nothing more meaningful, more relevant, more real that we could be involved in than the cause of God in this vast spiritual war. The biblical teaching of spiritual warfare shines a spotlight of truth on the basic problem of human existence and human history. ([Stedman, Ray. Spiritual Warfare](#))

**Wuest** has an interesting comment that the literal meaning of "to throw through" means "to riddle one with accusations." (Golden Nuggets from the Greek New Testament: p.104. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

**Warren Wiersbe** makes an important point about dealing with the devil...

I was watching an electrician install a complex control panel. I said to the man, "It just amazes me how you fellows can calmly work on those lines with all of that power there. How do you do it?" The electrician smiled and said, "Well, the first thing you have to do is respect it. Then you can handle it."

Satan is a dangerous enemy. He is a serpent who can bite us when we least expect it. He is a destroyer (Rev 12:11; Abaddon and Apollyon both mean "destruction") and an accuser (Zech. 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Rev. 12:9, 10, 11). He has great power and intelligence, and a host of demons who assist him in his attacks against God's people (Eph 6:10ff). He is a formidable enemy; we must never joke about him, ignore him, or underestimate his ability. We must "be sober" and have our minds under control when it comes to our conflict with Satan.

A part of this soberness includes not blaming everything on the devil. Some people see a demon behind every bush and blame Satan for their headaches, flat tires, and high rent. While it is true that Satan can inflict physical sickness and pain (Luke 13:16; Job 1:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 - see especially Job 1:22!), we have no biblical authority for casting out "demons of headache" or "demons of backache." One lady phoned me long distance to inform me that Satan had caused her to shrink seven and a half inches. While I have great respect for the wiles and powers of the devil, I still feel we must get our information about him from the Bible and not from our own interpretation of experiences. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

In warfare knowledge of one's enemy is vital in order to assure victory in battle. General Erwin Rommel was known as the "Desert Fox" because of his military prowess, especially in the North African desert in WWII. It is said that one of the keys that eventually led to his defeat was the fact that the Allied command was able to "get inside his head" and gain a sense of how he would strategize. How did they do this? They studied his detailed memoirs which had been published and thus began to gain insights into his personality, and thus his methods! In the same way, although believers are not to focus on Satanology, they are called to be aware of his schemes. Paul emphasized the importance of forgiveness to the church at Corinth...

in order that no **advantage** (**pleonekteo** = from **pleion** = more + **echo** = have > the idea is to outwit, get the better of, cheat, exploit or defraud) be taken of us by Satan (literally = Adversary); for we are not ignorant (unaware, uninformed about) of his **schemes** (KJV = *devices* = noema = purposes conceived by thinking = designs, intentions, schemes, plots, stratagems). (2 Cor 2:11)

The works of the devil are defined as "**schemes**" (Ephesians 6:11), "**devices**" (KJV) (2Cor 2:11), "**snare**s" (2Ti 2:26-note). Our **adversary** beguiles, seduces, opposes, resists,

deceives, sows tares, hinders, buffets, tempts, persecutes, blasphemes. Our adversary is personal, aggressive, intelligent, cunning and destructive, and is to be reckoned with seriously, vigilantly and intelligently.

Be careful to avoid one of two extremes in regard to the devil. First, do not think that Satan causes everything and is everywhere. Satan is a created being and a controlled being (cf. see especially Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and is neither omnipresent nor omniscient. The other extreme is justly as dangerous and that is to think that there is no such being as the devil, but that he is imaginary or myth. He is very real and very wily believers need to be very wary (not frightened). As stated elsewhere in the notes the spiritual struggle believers face with the devil and his demonic henchmen is not a power struggle as much as it is a truth struggle and the primary battlefield is therefore our minds.

In Ephesians 2:1, 2:2 (see notes) we are introduced to him.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Ep 2:1, 2-notes)

**Comment:** Satan occupies a twofold in the earth and in the air; ruling over both evil men and evil spirits. Christ never acknowledged Satan as king, but three times he calls him "the prince of this world," thereby acknowledging his governmental authority. Ephesians teaches that he is the ruling spirit over "the sons of disobedience," which includes all unregenerate mankind.

In **John 8:44** Jesus said "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a **murderer** from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a **liar**, and the father of lies." (**Comment:** Because he is a **liar** and a **murderer**, the devil's work is to **deceive** and to **destroy**. There you have the explanation for all the misery, hatred, murder, war, and other evils that have taken place in human history. Whom the devil cannot deceive, he tries to destroy, and whom he cannot destroy, he attempts to deceive. That is the working of the devil)

The devil was once an angel in heaven, the most beautiful angel in heaven. He led a rebellion against God and, as a result, was cast into the lower heavens. He walks on this earth, but he still has access into heaven to accuse the brethren both day and night.

In **Genesis 3** we read that "the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1+)

The devil deceived the woman and caused the man to sin. By getting Adam to sin, sin entered the world and something else happened. Paul writes "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- (Ro 5:12-note)

As a result of the sin of Adam, the depravity of man, the authority of this earth, its inhabitants and its lower atmosphere became Satan's legally in the just system of God. When man sinned, it was like the world was turned over to the authority (exousia = now Satan had the right and might) of darkness, legally, because man chose to disobey his God. Death, the result of the curse of sin, was his weapon. His kingdom is a kingdom of darkness and deceit. Every person is born into his kingdom.

**Wayne Barber** writes that...

Before the cross and the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross, man lived in fear of the devil and death. But Jesus conquered them both. In Ephesians 1:20 it says that He, Jesus, was seated far above all principality and powers. As a matter of fact, look at verse 20:

which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. (See notes Ephesians 1:20; 1:21)

He didn't say He seated Him above, he said He seated Him "[far above](#)". Let me explain to you what that means. If you could take the power of Satan and put it on a scale next to the power of God, his doesn't even show up. God's is far above all principalities and powers. I want you to know that warfare is not a struggle against power. It is a struggle to maintain truth. We will see that as we walk through this. Satan is no equal to God. He is a creation. God is the Creator!

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE  
is not a struggle against  
POWER.**

**It is a struggle to maintain  
the TRUTH.**

Well, the believer needs to be aware that Satan is around. We are told that by Peter in his epistle. We need to be aware of the demonic. We need to be aware of darkness. We need to be aware that it has infected a world system and is in our face daily. We need to be aware of that, however, our focus is not to be on that. Our focus is to be on the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ and on His resurrection power in each individual life.

**FOCUS ON THE LIGHT**

Our FOCUS is to be on the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ and on His resurrection power in each individual life. That is our focus. We do not focus on darkness. We focus on light. The Prince and the power of light is the Lord Jesus Himself.

**1John 5:18-19** says "We know that no one who is born of God [transformed, delivered,

made into a new creature] sins [habitually = present tense] but He who was born of God [keeps](#) him, and the evil one **does not touch** him. We know that we are of God, and that the whole world (kosmos) **lies** (present tense = continually) in [the power of] the evil one." (**Comment:** Note that "[touch](#) him" means touch to do harm.)

**J Vernon McGee** has an interesting comment on "**lies**" in 1John 5:19 "This is the text of a sermon which I have preached on several occasions entitled "When the Devil Puts the Baby to Sleep." "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth [actually, lies asleep - e.g., see Lk 2:12,16] in wickedness [or, in the arms of the wicked one]." In other words, the Devil has the world asleep. The Devil is saying to Vernon McGee, "Sh-h-h. Hush! You're waking people up, and we don't want to do that! They are very comfortable. Many people in churches are dead in trespasses and sins, and we don't want to wake them up. Let's leave them alone." The Devil is concerned when people are awakened. You and I are living in a world that is asleep in the arms of the wicked one—if you look around today, you must agree with that statement. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Paul had warned about the wiles of the devil earlier writing " and **do not give** (stop giving = present imperative with a negative) the devil an opportunity. (Ep 4:27- note) (See Dwight Pentecost's comment)

**The KJV Commentary** warns that "Men dream of a devil that is a hideous, horned, and hooped monster who haunts the vice dens of the world; but God says he fashions himself into an angel of light and fashions his ministers as ministers of righteousness (2Cor 11:14,15). He is the champion of liberalism, ritualism, rationalism, and every other "ism" that seeks to displace Christ. His aim is to substitute something else and something different for the grace and truth of Christ. Never underestimate the enemy. ([Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

**John Eadie** writes that "The great enemy of man, a veteran fierce and malignant, has a method of warfare peculiar to himself, for it consists of "wiles." **His** battles are the rush of a sudden ambush. He fights not on a pitched field, but by sudden assault and secret and cunning onslaught. Vigilance, self-possession, and promptitude are therefore indispensable to meet him: and as his aim is to throw his opponents off their guard and then to surprise them, so there is need to be ever clothed in this complete armour of God. His "**wiles**" are seen in unsettling the mind of Eve by representing God as jealous of the first man and woman; in stirring up the warlike aspirations of David to take a military census and force a conscription as the basis of a standing army; in inflaming the avaricious and sordid spirit of Judas; and in his assaults on our Lord by an appeal to appetite, piety, and ambition. ([Ephesians 6 Commentary](#))

**Diabolos** is the noun form of the verb **diaballo** which describes not only those who bring a false charge against one, but also those who disseminate the truth concerning a man, and do so maliciously, insidiously and with hostility.

Notice how the root words (**diá** = through + **ballo** = throw) picture what the devil does. He constantly throws between seeking to divide whether it be between a husband and wife, a

child and parent, a church, etc. Resist his divisive, condemnatory accusations firm in your faith. Wuest has an interesting comment that the literal meaning of "to throw through" means "to riddle one with accusations."

**Diabolos** is applied some 34 times to **Satan**, the god of this world, and in each case has the definite article in the Greek ("**the**" = defining a specific entity) and is never in the plural (the three uses below in the pastoral epistles are all plural) as when applied to men who, by opposing the cause of God, may be said to act the part of the devil or to side with him.

**Diabolos** is coupled with the word "**Satan**" (transliteration of Hebrew word meaning "adversary") in the Revelation, John recording that an angel from heaven "laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (Re 20:2-[note](#))

**Diabolos** is used of one who makes accusations and presses charges. In Revelation 12:9-10<sup>+</sup>, we read that "the **great dragon** was thrown down, the **serpent of old** who is called **the devil** and **Satan**, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for **the accuser** (kategor) of our brethren has been thrown down, who **accuses** (kategoréo - present tense = describes the devil's continual activity) them before our God day and night." How grateful saints can be that "There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Ro 8:1 +)

Are you safe and protected from the devil's accusations "**in Christ Jesus**" dear reader? If not, cry out this very moment to the Most High God for Him to give you His grace that you might this moment experience eternal security in Christ through your exercising of personal faith in Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection and sure, soon return. God is faithful.

**Constable** has an excellent summary of Satan's schemes - **Satan** has consistently aimed his personal attacks at getting people to **doubt**, to **deny**, to **disregard**, and to **disobey** the revealed will of God (cf. Gen. 3; Matt. 4). The **world** system seeks to get people to believe that they do not need God but can get along very well without Him (1 John 2). The **flesh** tempts us to think that we can find satisfaction, joy, and fulfillment on the physical, material level of life alone (Ro 7). ([Ephesians Expository Notes](#)) (Boding added)

**Wiersbe** gives us "A word of caution here: never discuss things with Satan or his associates. Eve made this mistake, and we all know the sad consequences. Also, never try to fight Satan in your own way. Resist him the way Jesus did, with the Word of God (Mt 4:1-11, **Ed**: Lk 4:1-11, 14+ - note that Jesus as fully man was giving us an example to follow and fended off the Devil's attacks by being filled with the Spirit and filled with the Word! See [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - If you are not memorizing the Word of God [see also [Memory Verses by Topic](#)], you are disregarding and discarding one of your primary weapons against the Devil, the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." -

Eph 6:17+). ([Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**William Evans** wrote that it is popular in some circles to day to spell the word devil with the letter "d" left off thus reducing the idea of an actual person called the devil to a mere influence called evil. The devil may be out of fashion, but he's not out of business and as Evans adds "If the devil can't mislead people that way, he would have them think of him as a horrible, monstrous-looking creature with a forked tail, dressed in a fiery red suit, and with horns protruding from his head. If the devil can get folks to think of him like that, then when he comes as an 'angel of light', he will not be recognized, and so find it easier to beguile his unsuspecting victims."

**Related Resources: from [Gotquestions.org](#) - excellent site!**

- [How, why, and when did Satan fall from heaven?](#)
- [Is Satan in hell? Where is Satan? How much power does Satan possess?](#)
- [Are Jesus and Satan brothers?](#)
- [Does Satan exist?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the accuser?](#)
- [Why did Satan think he could defeat God?](#)
- [Is Lucifer Satan? Does the fall of Lucifer describe Satan?](#)
- [What are the names of Satan?](#)
- [Was Satan an angel?](#)
- [Does Satan have to get God's permission before he can attack us?](#)
- [God vs. Satan - if God is all-powerful, why does He not just kill Satan?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [Did God create Satan?](#)
- [What does Satan look like? What do demons look like?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"?](#)
- [Why are both Jesus and Satan referred to as the morning star?](#)
- [Who is Satan? Who is the devil?](#)
- [Does a believer have authority over Satan?](#)
- [Does Satan still have access to Heaven? Why does God allow Satan to enter Heaven, as recorded in the Bible?](#)
- [Why does God allow Satan to attack us?](#)
- [Is the devil / Satan a person or a force / personification of evil?](#)
- [How is Satan god of this world \(2 Corinthians 4:4\)?](#)
- [Does Satan have the power to control the weather?](#)
- [Does God love Satan?](#)
- [Can Satan read our minds or know our thoughts?](#)
- [If God knew that Satan would rebel, why did He create him?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the father of lies \(John 8:44\)?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is prince of the power of the air \(Ephesians 2:2\)?](#)
- [Why did God allow Satan and the demons to sin?](#)
- [Was Satan in charge of music in Heaven?](#)
- [What is the synagogue of Satan in Revelation?](#)



- [Why is God going to release Satan after the 1000 years?](#)
  - [Why were Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses \(Jude 9\)?](#)
  - [Is the king of Tyre prophecy in Ezekiel 28 referring to Satan?](#)
  - [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
  - [Why did Jesus say to Peter, "Get behind me Satan"?](#)
  - [Was Satan the serpent in Genesis chapter 3?](#)
  - [What does it mean that Satan masquerades as an angel of light?](#)
  - [Did Jesus fight Satan for the keys to the kingdom?](#)
- 

**Brian Harbour** - In Ephesians 6:11, Paul made reference to the "schemes of the devil." Think of some of his schemes by which he tempts us to succumb to evil.

**Scheme # 1: The devil searches out our basic character flaws and comes with a design to ruin us at the point of our weakness.**

- To the sensual, he comes in skirts.
- To the bold, he bids us live by nerve and sensation.
- To the timid, he speaks about quietly withdrawing and playing it safe.
- To the intelligent, he tantalizes with the prospect of knowing good and evil.
- To the ambitious, he offers power.
- To the lazy, he whispers, "Why don't you do that tomorrow!"

Satan attacks us at the point of our weakness.

**Scheme #2: The devil points us to acceptable goals and then he tempts us to reach those goals in unacceptable ways.**

A prime example of this was Satan's approach to Jesus in the wilderness temptations recorded in Matthew 4. Satan held out before Jesus the very things Jesus had come to the earth to accomplish, but Satan tempted Jesus to accomplish these things in the wrong way. The conception that "the ends justifies the means" has been one of Satan's most effective ploys since the beginning of our history.

**Scheme # 3: The devil tempts us to be satisfied with less than our best. One man described this as "the lure of a lesser loyalty."**

"Don't be a fanatic," the devil whispers in our ear.

It's okay to be religious; just don't get too carried away with it.

It's okay to be a Christian; just don't make it your life.

Do just enough to get by but not enough to interfere with your own plans. Sometimes that is the devil's approach.

**Scheme #4: The devil urges us to make an exception.**

"I know what you believe," he says. "I know you have strong convictions, and that's all right. I respect you for that. But just this one time-what can one little exception possibly hurt?" C. S. Lewis in

the Screwtape Letters captured the essence of what I am saying when he wrote: “The greatest evil is not now done in those sordid ‘dens of crime’ that Dickens loved to paint. It is not done even in concentration camps and labour camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried, and minuted) in clean, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice.” Many through the centuries have been deceived by the work of Satan and have been persuaded to identify themselves with evil. Evil is present in our world, and it is deceptive. (Harbour Verse by Verse)

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**Ray Pritchard** - Satan does not observe the traditional rules of warfare. He uses anything and everything that he can to bring us down. This is part of what Paul meant when he spoke about the “**schemes of the devil**” in Ephesians 6:11. The word “schemes” might also be translated as “traps” or “tricks” or “tactics.” I am reminded of a certain Texas politician who was asked by a certain candidate had lost an election. “It happened because he forgot the first rule of knife fighting. There are no rules.” Satan doesn’t fight fair. He’s not going to give you an even break. He is a liar, a deceiver, a diabolical “angel of light” who comes to you in a thousand guises, tempting you to disobey the Lord. And he’s a lot smarter than you are. He knows your weak points better than you do. And because he is invisible, he can attack you any time of the day or night. (Read the full sermon [Asymmetric Spiritual Warfare](#))

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**Ray Pritchard - Satan Doesn’t Fight Fair.** In thinking about spiritual warfare from this perspective, keep two things in mind:

- 1) Satan’s goal is to discourage you so that you feel like giving up.
- 2) Satan doesn’t fight fair.

He does not observe the traditional rules of warfare. He uses anything and everything that he can to bring us down. This is part of what Paul meant when he spoke about the “schemes of the devil” in Ephesians 6:11. The word “schemes” might also be translated as “traps” or “tricks” or “tactics.” I am reminded of a Texas politician who was asked why a certain candidate had lost an election. “It happened because he forgot the first rule of knife fighting. There are no rules.” Satan doesn’t fight fair. He’s not going to give you an even break. He is a liar, a deceiver, a diabolical “angel of light” who comes to you in a thousand guises, tempting you to disobey the Lord. And he’s a lot smarter than you are. He knows your weak points better than you do. And he can attack you any time of the day or night.

**Satan doesn’t fight fair.** What is the mark of his diabolical work? We face opposition from the devil when there are . . .

1. Unusual or repeated temptations,

2. Attacks from an unexpected quarter,
3. Delays that hinder us from obeying God,
4. Inducements to doubt God's Word,
5. Circumstances that produce unusual pressure upon us,
6. Temptations to sin in areas that never troubled us before,
7. Prolonged bouts of discouragement,
8. Worries that seem to consume us,
9. Seductive appeals to sinful compromise,
10. Bitterness toward others,
11. Desires to give up on the Christian life,
12. Enticements to turn away from the means of grace,
13. Excuses made for lack of spiritual growth,
14. Critical comments about other believers,
15. Attempts to hide your behavior from others

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### From his message [How to Meet the Enemy](#)

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**Matthew Henry** - Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6:11

Make use of all the proper defenses and weapons for repelling the temptations and stratagems of Satan - get and exercise all the Christian graces, the whole armor, that no part be naked and exposed to the enemy. Those who would approve themselves to have true grace must aim at all grace, the whole armor. It is called the armor of God, because he both prepares and bestows it. We have no armor of our own that will be armor of proof in a trying time ... Faith, as relying on unseen objects, receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption, and so deriving grace from him, is like a shield, a defense every way. The devil is the wicked one. Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on the fire of hell, are darts Satan shoots at us, as are hard or difficult thoughts of God and as to ourselves. Faith applying the word of God and the grace of Christ quenches the darts of temptation. Salvation must be our helmet. A good hope of salvation, a Scriptural expectation of victory, will purify the soul, and keep it from being defiled by Satan. To the Christian armed for defense in battle, the apostle recommends only one weapon of attack; but it is enough, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It subdues and mortifies evil desires and blasphemous thoughts as they rise within; and answers unbelief and error as they assault from without. A single text, well understood, and rightly applied, at once destroys a temptation or an objection, and subdues the most formidable adversary. Prayer must fasten all the other parts of our Christian armor

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**Master Life** - An awareness of spiritual warfare helps you identify **major schemes of the devil**, such as accusation, deception, and manipulation. You can recognize when Satan attacks churches through division, distraction, and heresy, or when he controls individuals through confusion, discouragement, and despair. It prompts you to study the Scriptures to understand and overcome Satan's temptations, persecutions, and occult practices, and it helps you depend on God for victory.

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**Discipleship Journal** asked its readers to rank the areas of greatest spiritual challenge to them. The results came back in this order:

1. Materialism
2. Pride
3. Self-centeredness
4. Laziness
5. (Tie) Anger/Bitterness and Sexual lust
6. Envy
7. Gluttony
8. Lying

The respondents also noted that temptations were more potent when they had neglected their time with God (81 percent) and when they were physically tired (57 percent). Resisting temptation was accomplished by prayer (84 percent), avoiding compromising situations (76 percent), Bible study (66 percent), and being accountable to someone else (52 percent).

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**Spurgeon** said...:

Where he cannot destroy, there is no doubt that Satan's object is to worry. He does not like to see God's people happy. Martin Luther used to say, "Let us sing psalms and spite the devil," and I have no doubt Martin Luther was pretty nearly right; for that lover of discord hates harmonious, joyous praise.

As the worker in metals knows that one metal is to be worked at such a heat, and another at a different temperature; as those who have to deal with chemicals know that at a certain heat one fluid will boil, while another reaches the boiling-point much earlier, so Satan knows exactly the temperature at which to work us to his purpose. Small pots boil directly when they are put on the fire, and so little men of quick temper are soon in a passion; larger vessels require more time and coal before they will boil, but when they do boil, it is a boil indeed, not soon forgotten or abated. The enemy, like a fisherman, watches his fish, adapts his bait to his prey; and knows in what seasons and times the fish are most likely to bite.

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**Grant Richison** warns us that...

"The Devil uses stealth. He stalks every Christian. He is now on the

loose. He is on the prowl looking to trap you in his devices. The Devil always seeks opportunities to undermine our Christian walk. He is constantly on the prowl. He is not omnipresent for he can only be in one place at a time. However, he has a massive infrastructure of emissaries (demons) who do his bidding. They seek to seduce every one of us. The Devil says, "I am looking for the spiritually naive. I'm patrolling the earth for simple souls who think that I am not real." The idea that the Devil walks about in a red union suit, having a forked tail and cloven hoofs and carries a pitch fork is a religious fairy tale. He camouflages himself with this idea." ([The Devil](#))

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One of the Devil's most effective schemes or stratagems is to instill **doubts** about **God's goodness**. These seeds of "**doubt**" can grow into an ungrateful spirit that refuses to thank God at all times for all things. Doubts about God was one of Satan's greatest tools against Martin Luther. After the frightful Anfechtung (Contestation) of 1527 Luther wrote that "For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell." It is therefore no surprise that Luther's great hymn A Mighty Fortress Is Our God has such great stanzas on "spiritual warfare. Roland Bainton, Luther's biographer, writes: "The content of his depressions was always the same, the loss of faith that God is good and that He is good to me."

### **A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**

by Martin Luther

A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our helper he, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing:  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing:  
Dost ask who that might be?  
Christ Jesus, it is he;  
Lord Sabaoth, his name,  
From age to age the same,  
And he must win the battle.

And tho this world, with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,

We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph thro' us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim,  
We tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure.  
For lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word will fail him.

That word above all earthly pow'rs,  
No thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Thro' him who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindreds go,  
This mortal life also;  
The body they may kill:  
God's truth abidest still,  
His kingdom is forever.

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**The following devotional illustrations are all from Our Daily Bread ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))**

### **Shrike System Ephesians 6:10-18 April 4, 2006**

The ancient sport of falconry used trained hawks or falcons in the pursuit of wild game. When the "educated predator" was allowed to fly, however, it often rose too high for human eyes to see. So a hunter often carried a small caged bird called a shrike. By watching the antics of the little bird, the man could always tell where his hawk was, for the shrike instinctively feared the predator and cocked its head to keep it in view.

Christians desperately need an alert perception similar to that of the shrike to detect their spiritual enemy. Our adversary, Satan, "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Our responsibility, according to the apostle Peter, is to be sober and vigilant. In other words, we're to be always on the alert.

It would be nice if God had giant sirens to warn us of an attack by the devil. But He doesn't operate that way. Instead, we must read the Bible regularly, meditate on its truths, maintain a prayerful attitude throughout the day, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only then will we be sensitive to an imminent assault by the evil one, and be armed by grace to meet it. —Mart De Haan

The devil is clever, deceiving us all,  
He cunningly causes the strongest to fall;  
But we his sly methods are sure to discern  
By making God's warnings our daily concern. —D. De Haan

## **The Angel Of Music Ephesians 6:10-18 May 28, 2006**

In Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *The Phantom of the Opera*, a young chorus girl named Christine Daae receives voice training from a mysterious musician she calls the "Angel of Music." Christine believes this is the angel her dying father had promised to send to complete her musical training.

As the plot thickens, we find that her mysterious mentor is really a demented man who wants to carry her away into a bizarre underworld beneath the opera house. What the girl thinks is a supernatural agent sent by her beloved father is really a madman who wants to possess her for his own ends. The "Angel of Music" is evil masquerading as good.

The believer in Christ also faces an evil one who masquerades. One of Satan's key strategies is to look like someone who is good. Paul told us, "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (2Corinthians 11:14). The Greek word translated as "transforms" means "to change appearance, masquerade, or disguise oneself."

In preparing us to face the evil strategies of the devil, God has provided all the equipment we need to stand our ground. Protecting ourselves with the armor of God unmasks the evil that opposes us and stabilizes our spiritual walk (Ephesians 6:10-18). —Dennis Fisher

When you're making a decision,  
Evil sometimes wears a mask;  
Trust the Lord for true discernment—  
He'll give wisdom if you ask. —Hess

God's armor is tailor-made for us, but we must put it on.

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## **Blackbeard March 22, 2006 Ephesians 6:10-18**

As a young man in the late 1600s, Edward Teach joined the crew of a British ship that was headed to the Caribbean. Much later in his nautical career, he managed to capture a merchant vessel and turn it into a 40-gun warship. Teach soon became known as Blackbeard—the most feared pirate in the hemisphere.

Blackbeard had some success as a pirate, but his "career" abruptly ended when he encountered a contingent of the British Royal Navy. In a desperate battle, he and his fellow pirates were killed, putting an end to their terrorizing exploits.

Long ago in the heavenly places, an angel fell into spiritual piracy. Lucifer was a cherub who stood in the radiant glory of God (Ezekiel 28:11, 12, 13, 14, 15). But his own self-love replaced love for his Creator. Desiring to be like the Most High, he led a rebellion and was cast out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12, 13, 14, 15). Today he and his henchmen are doing whatever they can to commandeer the lives of human beings (Luke 8:12; 2Cor 4:4).



Even so, we don't need to be afraid. Satan is a dangerous enemy, but Jesus sealed his ultimate fate when He rose from the dead. And He has given us everything we need to withstand the devil's attacks (Ephesians 6:10-18). —Dennis Fisher

And though this world with devils filled  
Should threaten to undo us;  
We will not fear, for God has willed  
His truth to triumph through us. —Luther

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. —1John 4:4

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## **My Achilles Heel Ephesians 6:10-18 July 17, 2001**

Nobody is temptation-proof. Even mature Christians have weaknesses in their spiritual armor that make them vulnerable to a wounding attack by the enemy of their souls. Our pride can provide the very opening needed for the sharp thrust of a satanic dart. So can the love of money, a quick temper, a critical tongue, or chronic impatience.

What, after all, is temptation? It's any enticement to think, say, or do something contrary to God's holy will. It may be a weak impulse or a powerful urge. It's anything that's against what God approves or desires for us.

The ancient Greeks told a story of a warrior named Achilles. His mother had been warned that he would die of a wound, so she dipped him as an infant in the river Styx. That was supposed to make him invincible. But she held him by one heel which the protective waters didn't cover. And it was through that heel that he received his fatal wound.

Each of us must ask: What is my Achilles heel? We need to know our weaknesses, where we could easily be wounded spiritually. Then, as we rely on the Lord for His help, we will be protected from "the fiery darts of the wicked one" (Ephesians 6:16). —V C Grounds

Leave no unguarded place,  
No weakness of the soul;  
Take every virtue, every grace,  
And fortify the whole. —Wesley

Our greatest weakness may be our failure to ask for God's strength.

**SATAN'S DEVICES TO DRAW THE SOUL TO SIN**  
**Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices**  
**Thomas Brooks, (1608-1680)**

**12 devices and their remedies**

## **DEVICE 1. TO PRESENT THE BAIT AND HIDE THE HOOK**

Satan's first device to draw the soul into sin is, 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 to hide from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin. By this device he deceived our first parents, "And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die—for God does know, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and you 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 promises them the former—but intends the latter, and so Satan cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise, as he deals by thousands now-a-days.

Satan with ease pawns falsehoods 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—but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. By a golden bait he labored to catch Christ (Matt. 4:8, 9). He shows him the beauty and the finery of a bewitching world, which doubtless would have taken many a carnal heart; but here the devil's fire fell upon wet tinder, and therefore did not ignite. 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 fallen forever by this vile strumpet the world, who, by laying forth her two fair breasts of PROFIT and PLEASURE, has wounded their souls, and cast them down into utter perdition. She has, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions; as the serpent Scytale, which, when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers, does, with her beautiful colors, dazzle and amaze them, so that they have no power to pass away until she has stung them to death! Adversity has slain her thousand—but prosperity her ten thousand.

Remedy (1). First, Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait which 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.

Anselm used to say, "That if he should see the shame of sin on the one hand, and 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," 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 fly from all appearance of evil (Proverbs 5:8, 1 Thess. 5:22). The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest

distance from it; he who will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink 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, and from playing with Satan's golden baits, and stands. David draws near, and plays with the bait, and falls, and swallows bait and hook! 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 fellowship with his God.

Sin is a plague, yes, the worst and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there who tremble at it--who keep at a distance from it! (1 Cor. 5:6)—"Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" As soon as one sin had seized upon Adam's heart, all sin entered into his soul and infested it. How has Adam's one sin spread over all mankind! (Romans 5:12)—"Therefore 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." Ah, how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband's infect the wife, the master's the servant! The sin that is in one man's heart is able to infect a whole world, it is of such a spreading and infectious nature.

The story of the Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him, and so at once murdered both body and soul, declares the unmixed malignity of sin; and oh! that what has been spoken upon this head may prevail with you, to stand at a distance from sin!

Remedy (2). Consider that sin is but a bitter sweet. That seeming sweet that is in sin will quickly vanish; and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof—"He enjoyed the taste of his wickedness, letting it melt under his tongue. He savored it, holding it long in his mouth. But suddenly, the food he has eaten turns sour within him, a poisonous venom in his stomach." (Job 20:12-14). Forbidden profits and pleasures are most pleasing to vain men, who count madness mirth. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not—but rend and consume the belly—and the soul that receives them. Many eat that on earth what they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those who devour them. Adam's apple was a bitter sweet; Esau's bowl of stew 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 does first tickle him so as it makes him laugh, until the poison, little by little, gets to the heart, and then it pains him more than ever it delighted him. So does sin; it may please a little at first—but it will pain the soul at last; yes, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no consummate hell, where men shall most completely 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 which is better than life, and the loss of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, and the loss of that

peace which passes understanding, and the loss of those divine influences by which the soul has been refreshed, quickened, raised, strengthened, and gladdened, and the loss of many outward desirable mercies, which otherwise the soul might have enjoyed.

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 'today', lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. 3:13. It will kiss the soul, and look enticing to the soul, and yet betray the soul forever. It will with Delilah 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 an advantage to accuse us and to lay claim to us, as those who wear his badge; it is of a very bewitching nature; it bewitches the soul, where it is upon the throne, that 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; let God strike and 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, as you may see 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, and will not, cease from sin.

When the physicians told Theotimus 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 with or nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

## **DEVICE 2. BY PAINTING SIN WITH VIRTUE'S COLORS.**

Satan knows that if he would present sin in its own nature and dress, the soul would rather fly from it than yield to it; and therefore he presents it unto us, not in its own proper colors—but painted and gilded over with the name and show of virtue, that we may the more easily be overcome by it, and take the more pleasure in committing of it. PRIDE, he presents to the soul under the name and notion of neatness and cleanliness; and COVETOUSNESS (which the apostle condemns for idolatry) to be but good business; and DRUNKENNESS to be good fellowship, and RIOTOUSNESS under the name and notion of liberality, and WANTONNESS as a trick of youth.

Remedy (1). Consider that sin is never a whit the less filthy, vile, and abominable—by its being colored and painted with virtue's colors. A poisonous pill is never a whit the less poisonous because it is gilded over with gold; nor a wolf is never a whit the less a wolf because he has put on a sheep's skin; nor the devil is never a whit the less a devil because he appears sometimes like an angel of light. So neither is sin any whit the less filthy and abominable by its being painted over with virtue's colors.

Remedy (2). That the more sin is painted forth under the color of virtue, the more dangerous it is to the souls of men. This we see evident in these days, by those very many souls that are turned out of the way that is holy—and in which their souls have had sweet and glorious communion with God—into ways of highest vanity and folly, by Satan's neat coloring over of sin, and painting forth vice under the name and color of virtue. This is so notoriously known that I need but name it. The most dangerous vermin is too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers, the fairest glove is often drawn upon the foulest hand, and the richest robes are often put upon the filthiest bodies. So are the fairest and sweetest names upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that be in the world. Ah! that we had not too many sad proofs of this among us!

Remedy (3). To look on sin with that eye with which within a short time, we shall see it. Ah, souls! when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat, sin shall be unmasked, and its dress and robes shall then be taken off, and then it shall appear more vile, filthy, and terrible than hell itself; then, that which formerly appeared most sweet will appear most bitter, and that which appeared most beautiful will appear most ugly, and that which appeared most delightful will then appear most dreadful to the soul. Ah, the shame, the pain, the gall, the bitterness, the horror, the hell that the sight of sin, when its dress is taken off, will raise in poor souls! Sin will surely prove evil and bitter to the soul when its robes are taken off. A man may have the stone who feels no fit of it. Conscience will work at last, though for the present one may feel no fit of accusation. Laban showed himself at parting. Sin will be bitterness in the latter end, when it shall appear to the soul in its own filthy nature.

The devil deals with men as the panther does with beasts; he hides his deformed head until his sweet scent has drawn them into his danger. Until we have sinned, Satan is a parasite; when we have sinned, he is a tyrant. O souls! the day is at hand when the devil will pull off the paint and garnish that he has put upon sin, and present that monster, sin, in such a monstrous shape to your souls, that will cause your thoughts to be troubled, your countenance to be changed, the joints of your loins to be loosed, and your knees to be dashed one against another, and your hearts to be so terrified, that you will be ready, with Ahithophel and Judas, to strangle and hang your bodies on earth, and your souls in hell, if the Lord has not more mercy on you than he had on them. Oh! therefore, look upon sin now as you must look upon it to all eternity, and as God, conscience, and Satan will present it to you another day!

Remedy (4). Seriously to consider, That even those very sins that Satan paints, and puts new names and colors upon, cost the best blood, the noblest blood, the life-blood, the heart-blood of the Lord Jesus. That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father to a region of sorrow and death; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature; that he who was clothed with glory should be wrapped with rags of flesh; he who filled heaven and earth with his glory should be cradled in a manger; that the almighty God should flee from weak man—the God of Israel into Egypt; that the God of the law should be subject to the law, the God of the circumcision circumcised, the God who made the heavens working at Joseph's homely trade; that he who binds the devils in

chains should be tempted; that he, whose is the world, and the fullness thereof, should hunger and thirst; that the God of strength should be weary, the Judge of all flesh condemned, the God of life put to death; that he who is one with his Father should cry out of misery, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46); that he who had the keys of hell and death at his belt should lie imprisoned in the sepulcher of another, having in his lifetime nowhere to lay his head, nor after death to lay his body; that that HEAD, before which the angels do cast down their crowns, should be crowned with thorns, and those EYES, purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death; those EARS, which hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, to hear the blasphemies of the multitude; that FACE, which was fairer than the sons of men, to be spit on by those beastly wretched Jews; that MOUTH and TONGUE, which spoke as never man spoke, accused for blasphemy; those HANDS, which freely swayed the scepter of heaven, nailed to the cross; those FEET, "like unto fine brass," nailed to the cross for man's sins; each sense pained with a spear and nails; his SMELL, with stinking odor, being crucified on Golgotha, the place of skulls; his TASTE, with vinegar and gall; his HEARING, with reproaches, and SIGHT of his mother and disciples bemoaning him; his SOUL, comfortless and forsaken; and all this for those very sins that Satan paints and puts fine colors upon! Oh! how should the consideration of this stir up the soul against sin, and work the soul to fly from it, and to use all holy means whereby sin may be subdued and destroyed!

After Julius Caesar was murdered, Antonius brought forth his coat, all bloody and cut, and laid it before the people, saying, "Look, here you have the emperor's coat thus bloody and torn"—whereupon the people were presently in an uproar, and cried out to slay those murderers; and they took their tables and stools which were in the place, and set them on fire, and ran to the houses of those who had slain Caesar, and burnt them. So that when we consider that sin has slain our Lord Jesus, ah, how should it provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin—which has murdered the Lord of glory, and has done that mischief that all the devils in hell could never have done?

It was good counsel one gave, "Never let go out of your minds the thoughts of a crucified Christ." Let these be food and drink unto you; let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your life, death, and resurrection.

### **DEVICE 3. BY EXTENUATING AND LESSENING OF SIN**

Ah! says Satan, it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness, etc. As Lot said of Zoar, "It is but a little one, and my soul shall live" (Gen. 19:20). Alas! says Satan, it is but a very little sin that you stick so at. You may commit it without any danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live.

Remedy (1). First, Solemnly consider, that those sins which we are apt to account small, have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God, as the eating of an apple, gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day, and touching of the ark. Oh! the dreadful wrath that these sins brought down upon the heads and hearts of men! The least sin is contrary to the law

of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore it is often punished severely by God; and do not we see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, states, families, and souls of men—for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely if we are not utterly forsaken by God, and blinded by Satan—we cannot but see it! Oh! therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one—you must say, Oh! but those sins which you call little, are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners as he did upon the Sodomites!

Remedy (2). Seriously to consider, That the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater sin. He who, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. If we commit one sin to avoid another, it is just we should avoid neither, we having not law nor power in our own hands to keep off sin as we please; and we, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, until it has the soul to the very height of sin. David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. Jacob and Peter, and other saints, have found this true by woeful experience, that the yielding to a lesser sin has been the ushering in of a greater. The little thief will open the door, and make way for the greater; and the little wedge knocked in, will make way for the greater.

Satan will first draw you to sit with the drunkard, and then to sip with the drunkard, and then at last to be drunk with the drunkard. He will first draw you to be unclean in your thoughts, and then to be unclean in your looks, and then to be unclean in your words, and at last to be unclean in your practices. He will first draw you to look upon the golden wedge, and then to desire the golden wedge, and then to handle the golden wedge, and then at last by wicked ways to take the golden wedge, though you run the hazard of losing God and your soul forever; as you may see in Gehazi, Achan, and Judas, and many in these our days. Sin is never at a stand-still (Psalm 1:1), first ungodly, then sinners, then scorners. Here they go on from sin to sin, until they come to the top of sin, that is, to sit in the seat of scorners.

By all this we see, that the yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the committing of greater. Ah! how many in these days have fallen, first to have low thoughts of Scripture and ordinances, and then to slight Scripture and ordinances, and then to make a nose of wax of Scripture and ordinances, and then to cast off Scripture and ordinances, and then at last to advance and lift up themselves, and their Christ-dishonoring and soul-damning opinions, above Scripture and ordinances.

Sin gains upon man's soul by insensible degrees. "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talking is mischievous madness." (Eccles. 10:13) Corruption in the heart, when it breaks forth, is like a breach in the sea, which begins in a narrow passage, until it eats through, and cast down all before it. The debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended; and that may be done in a moment that may undo a man forever. When a man has begun to sin, he knows not where, or when, or how he shall make a stop of sin. Usually the soul goes on from evil to evil, from folly to folly, until it is ripe for



eternal misery!

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this third device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is solemnly to consider, That it is sad to sin against God for a trifle. Dives would not give a crumb, therefore he should not receive a drop (Luke 16:21). It is the greatest folly in the world—to adventure the going to hell for a small matter. "I tasted but a little honey," said Jonathan, "and I must die" (1 Sam. 14:29). It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to break with God, for a little. Little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin, and then a man shows most viciousness and unkindness, when he sins on a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without a temptation; it is little less than devilish to sin on a little occasion. The less the temptation is to sin—the greater is that sin. Saul's sin in not waiting for Samuel, was not so much in the matter—but it was much in the malice of it; for though Samuel had not come at all, yet Saul should not have offered sacrifice; but this cost him dear—his soul and kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to a friend, to venture the complaining, bleeding, and grieving of his soul—upon a light and a slight occasion. So it is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to God, Christ, and the Spirit, for a soul to put God upon complaining, Christ upon bleeding, and the Spirit upon grieving—by yielding to little sins. Therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one, you must answer—that oftentimes there is the greatest unkindness showed to God's glorious majesty, in the acting of the least folly, and therefore you will not displease your best and greatest friend—by yielding to his greatest enemy.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That there is great danger, yes, many times most danger—in the smallest sins. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). If the serpent sneaks in his head, he will draw in his whole body after him. Greater sins do sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul. There is oftentimes greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for removing of them, until they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. So there is most danger often in the least sins.

We are apt to take no notice of them, and to neglect those heavenly helps whereby they should be weakened and destroyed, until they are grown to that strength, that we are ready to cry out, the medicine is too weak for the disease! I would pray, and I would hear—but I am afraid that sin is grown up by degrees to such a head, that I shall never be able to prevail over it; but as I have begun to fall, so I shall utterly fall before it, and at last perish in it, unless the power and free grace of Christ acts gloriously, beyond my present apprehension and expectation. The viper is killed by the little young ones that are nourished and cherished in her belly—so are many men eternally killed and betrayed by the little sins, as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms.

I know not, says one, whether the nurture of the least sin be not worse than the commission of the greatest—for this may be of frailty, that argues obstinacy. A little hole in the ship sinks it. A small breach in a dyke carries away all before it. A little stab at the heart kills a man. A little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man!

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan, is solemnly to consider, That other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments, rather than commit the least sin, that is, such as the world accounts little sins. So as you may see in Daniel and his companions, that would rather choose to burn, and be cast to the lions—than they would bow to the idol which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this 'slight offense', in the world's account, and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, that they must either fall into sin, or be cast into the fiery furnace—such was their tenderness of the honor and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin! They knew that it was far better to burn for their not sinning, than that God and conscience should raise a hell, a fire in their bosoms for sin.

I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who had been the cause of overthrowing an idol's temple; afterwards, when Julian came to be emperor, he would force the people of that place to build it up again. They were ready to do it—but Marcus refused; whereupon those who were his own people, to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and abused his naked body, and gave it up to the children, to lance it with their pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and drenched his naked body with honey, and set him in the sun, to be stung with wasps. And all this cruelty they showed, because he would not do anything towards the building up of this idol temple! No, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a half-penny to it, they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a half-penny might have saved his life; and in doing this, he did but live up to that principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess—but few come up to, that is—that we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict, than to commit the least sin whereby God should be dishonored, our consciences wounded, religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin, when God shall set it home upon the soul. The least sin will press and sink the stoutest sinner as low as hell, when God shall open the eyes of a sinner, and make him see the horrid filthiness and abominable vileness that is in sin! What so little, base, and vile creatures—as lice or gnats—and yet by these little poor creatures, God so plagued stout-hearted Pharaoh, and all Egypt, that, fainting under it, they were forced to cry out, "This is the finger of God!" (Exod. 8:16; 10. 19). When little creatures, yes, the least creatures, shall be armed with a power from God, they shall press and sink down the greatest, proudest, and stoutest tyrants who breathe!

So when God shall cast a sword into the hand of a little sin, and arm it against the soul, the

soul will faint and fall under it. Some, who have but contemplated adultery, without any actual acting it; and others, having found a trifle, and made no conscience to restore it, knowing, by the light of natural conscience, that they did not do as they would be done by; and others, that have had some unworthy thought of God, have been so frightened, amazed, and terrified for those sins, which are small in men's account, that they have wished they had never been born; that they could take no delight in any earthly comfort, that they have been put to their wits' end, ready to make away themselves, wishing themselves annihilated.

William Perkins mentions a good man—but very poor, who, being ready to starve, stole a lamb, and being about to eat it with his poor children, and as his manner was afore eating, to ask God's blessing, dare not do it—but fell into a great perplexity of conscience, and acknowledged his fault to the owner, promising payment if ever he should be able.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device is, solemnly to consider, That there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction; and this appears as clear as the sun, by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who let all the vials of his fiercest wrath upon him, and that for the least sin as well as for the greatest.

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23); of ALL sin, whether great or small, Oh! how should this make us tremble—as much at the least spark of lust as at hell itself; considering that God the Father would not spare his bosom Son, no, not for the least sin—but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath!

And so much for the remedies that may fence and preserve our souls from being drawn to sin by this third device of Satan.

**DEVICE 4. By presenting to the soul the best men's sins, and by hiding from the soul their virtues; by showing the soul their sins, and by hiding from the soul their sorrows and repentance: as by setting before the soul the adultery of David, the pride of Hezekiah, the impatience of Job, the drunkenness of Noah, the blasphemy of Peter, etc., and by hiding from the soul the tears, the sighs, the groans, the meltings, the humblings, and repentings of these precious souls.**

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the Spirit of the Lord has been as careful to note the saints' rising by repentance out of sin, as he has to note their falling into sins. David falls fearfully—but by repentance he rises sweetly. 'Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow; deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation.' It is true, Hezekiah's heart was lifted up under the abundance of mercy that God had cast in upon him; and it is as true that Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon him, nor upon Jerusalem, in the days of Hezekiah. It is true, Job curses the day of

his birth, and it is as true that he rises by repentance: 'Behold, I am vile,' says he; 'what shall I answer you? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken—but I will not answer; yes twice—but I will proceed no further. I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear—but now my eye sees you; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes' (Job 40:4, 5; 42:5, 6). Tertullian says that he was born for no other purpose but to repent.

Peter falls dreadfully—but rises by repentance sweetly; a look of love from Christ melts him into tears. He knew that repentance was the key to the kingdom of grace. As once his faith was so great that he leaped, as it were, into a sea of waters to come to Christ; so now his repentance was so great that he leaped, as it were, into a sea of tears, because he had denied Christ. Some say that, after his sad fall, he was ever and always weeping, and that his face was even furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner took in poison but he vomited it up again, before it got to the vitals; he had no sooner handled this serpent but he turned it into a rod to scourge his soul with remorse for sinning against such clear light, and strong love, and sweet discoveries of the heart of Christ to him. Luther confesses that, before his conversion, he met not with a more displeasing word in all his study of divinity than repent—but afterward he took delight in the word. Clement notes that Peter so repented, that all his life after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees, and, weeping bitterly, would beg pardon of his sin. Ah, souls, you can easily sin as the saints—but can you repent with the saints? Many can sin with David and Peter, that cannot repent with David and Peter—and so must perish forever!

Theodosius the emperor, pressing that he might receive the Lord's supper, excuses his own foul act by David's doing the like; to which Ambrose replies, You have followed David transgressing, follow David repenting, and then think you of the table of the Lord.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That these saints did not make a trade of sin. They fell once or twice, and rose by repentance, that they might keep the closer to Christ forever. They fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctancy; and you sin presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. The saints cannot sin with a whole will—but, as it were, with a half-will, an unwillingness; not with a full consent—but with a dissenting consent. You have, by your making a trade of sin, contracted upon your soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, that you can as well cease to be, or cease to live, as you can cease to sin. Sin is, by custom, become as another nature to you, which you can not, which you will not lay aside, though you know that if you do not lay sin aside, God will lay your soul aside forever; though you know that if sin and your soul do not part, Christ and your soul can never meet. If you will make a trade of sin, and cry out—Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus? No! their hearts turned aside to folly one day—but your heart turns aside to folly every day (2 Peter 2:14, Prov. 4:6); and when they were fallen, they rise by repentance, and by the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ. But you fall, and have no strength nor will to rise—but wallow in sin, and will eternally die in your sins, unless the Lord be the more merciful to your soul. Do you think, O soul, this is good reasoning? — Such a one tasted poison but once, and yet narrowly escaped; but I daily drink poison, yet I shall escape. Yet such is the mad reasoning of vain souls. David and Peter sinned once foully

and fearfully; they tasted poison but once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet shall not taste of eternal death. Remember, O souls! that the day is at hand when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yes, self-murderers! Though sin dwells in the regenerate, yet it does not reign over the regenerate; they rise by repentance.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That though God does not, nor never will, disinherit his people for their sins, yet he has severely punished his people for their sins. David sins, and God breaks his bones for his sin: 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which you have broken may rejoice' (Psalm 51:8). 'And because you have done this, the sword shall never depart from your house, to the day of your death' (2 Sam. 12:10). Though God will not utterly take from them his loving-kindness, nor allow his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, yet will he 'visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes' (Psalm 89:30, 35). The Scripture abounds with instances of this kind. This is so known a truth among all that know anything of truth, that to cite more scriptures to prove it would be to light a candle to see the sun at noon. Josephus reports that, not long after the Jews had crucified Christ on the cross, so many of them were condemned to be crucified that there were not places enough for crosses nor crosses enough for the bodies that were to be hung thereon.

The Jews have a proverb, 'That there is no punishment comes upon Israel in which there is not one ounce of the golden calf'; meaning that that was so great a sin, as that in every plague God remembered it; that it had an influence into every trouble that befell them. Every man's heart may say to him in his sufferings, as the heart of Apollodorus in the kettle, 'I have been the cause of this.' God is most angry when he shows no anger. God keep me from this mercy; this kind of mercy is worse than all other kind of misery.

One writing to a dead friend has this expression: 'I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable.' Luther says, 'There is not a Christian that carries not his cross.' It is mercy that our affliction is not execution—but a correction. He who has deserved hanging, may be glad if he escape with a whipping. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our admonitions. And to note this, both the Hebrews and the Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word (Musar, Paideia),\*\*\* because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Whence Luther fitly calls affliction The Christian man's divinity.' So says Job (Chap. 33:14-19), 'But God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it. He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night when deep sleep falls on people as they lie in bed. He whispers in their ear and terrifies them with his warning. He causes them to change their minds; he keeps them from pride. He keeps them from the grave, from crossing over the river of death. Or God disciplines people with sickness and pain, with ceaseless aching in their bones.' When Satan shall tell you of other men's sins to draw you to sin—then think of the same men's sufferings to keep you from sin. Lay your hand upon your heart, and say, O my soul! if you sin with David, you must suffer with David!

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there are but two main ends of God's recording of the falls of his saints.

And the one is, to keep those from fainting, sinking, and despair, under the burden of their sins, who fall through weakness and infirmity.

And the other is, that their falls may be as landmarks to warn others to take heed lest they fall. It never entered into the heart of God to record his children's sins, that others might be encouraged to sin—but that others might look to themselves, and hang the faster upon the skirts of Christ, and avoid all occasions and temptations that may occasion the soul to fall, as others have fallen, when they have been left by Christ. The Lord has made their sins as landmarks, to warn his people to take heed how they come near those sands and rocks, those snares and baits, that have been fatal to the choicest treasures, namely—the joy, peace, comfort, and glorious enjoyments of the bravest spirits and noblest souls that ever sailed through the ocean of this sinful troublesome world; as you may see in David, Job, and Peter. There is nothing in the world that can so notoriously cross the grand end of God's recording of the sins of his saints, than for any from thence to take encouragement to sin; and wherever you find such a soul, you may write him Christless, graceless, a soul cast off by God, a soul that Satan has by the hand, and the eternal God knows where he will lead him. I have known a good man, says Bernard, who, when he heard of any that had committed some notorious sin, he was accustomed to say with himself—he fell today, so may I tomorrow.

#### **DEVICE 5. To present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy.**

Oh! says Satan, you need not make such a matter of sin, you need not be so fearful of sin, not so unwilling to sin; for God is a God of mercy, a God full of mercy, a God that delights in mercy, a God that is ready to show mercy, a God that is never weary of showing mercy, a God more prone to pardon his people than to punish his people; and therefore he will not take advantage against the soul; and why then, says Satan, should you make such a matter of sin?

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, seriously to consider, That it is the greatest judgment in the world to be left to sin, upon any pretense whatever. O unhappy man! when God leaves you to yourself, and does not resist you in your sins. Woe, woe to him at whose sins God does wink. When God lets the way to hell be a smooth and pleasant way, that is hell on this side hell, and a dreadful sign of God's indignation against a man; a token of his rejection, and that God does not intend good unto him. That is a sad word, 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone' (Hosea 4:17); he will be unteachable and incorrigible; he has made a match with mischief, he shall have his bellyful of it; he falls with open eyes; let him fall at his own peril. And that is a terrible saying, 'So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels' (Psalm 81:12). A soul given up to sin is a soul ripe for hell, a soul hastening to destruction!

Ah Lord! this mercy! humbly beg, that whatever you give me up to, you will not give me up to the ways of my own heart; if you will give me up to be afflicted, or tempted, or

reproached, I will patiently sit down, and say, It is the Lord; let him do with me what seems good in his own eyes. Do anything with me, lay what burden you will upon me, so you do not give me up to the ways of my own heart.

Augustine says, 'It is a human thing to fall into sin, devilish to persevere therein, and divine to rise from it. Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man—myself!

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That God is as JUST, as he is merciful. As the Scriptures speak Him out to be a very merciful God, so they speak Him out to be a very just God. Witness His casting the angels out of heaven and His binding them in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.\* Witness His turning Adam out of Paradise. Witness His drowning of the old world. Witness His raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom. Witness all the troubles, losses, sicknesses, and diseases, which are in the world. Witness Tophet, which "has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze." (Isaiah 30:33) Witness His treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath. But above all, witness the pouring forth of all His wrath upon His bosom Son, when Jesus bore the sins of His people, and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

\*God hanged them up in gibbets, as it were, that others might hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That sins against God's mercy will bring the greatest and sorest judgments upon men's heads and hearts. Mercy is God's Alpha, justice is His Omega. David, speaking of these attributes, places mercy in the forefront, and justice in the rearward, saying, "I will sing of Your love and justice." (Psalm 101:1). When God's mercy is despised, then His justice takes the throne!\* God is like a prince, who sends not his army against rebels before he has sent his pardon, and proclaimed it by a herald of arms: he first hangs out the white flag of mercy; if this wins men in, they are happy forever; but if they remain rebellious, then God will put forth his red flag of justice and judgment. If His mercy is despised, His justice shall be felt!

The higher we are in dignity, the more grievous is our fall and misery.

God is slow to anger—but he recompenses his slowness with grievousness of punishment. If we abuse His mercy to serve our lust, then, in Salvian's phrase, God will rain hell out of heaven, rather than not visit for such sins.

See this in the Israelites. He loved them and chose them when they were in their blood, and most unlovely. He multiplied them, not by means—but by miracle; from seventy souls they grew in few years to six hundred thousand; the more they were oppressed, the more they prospered. Like camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it; or like a palm-tree, the more it is pressed, the further it spreads; or like fire, the more it is raked, the more it burns. Their mercies came in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of the other: He put off their sackcloth, and girded them with gladness, and 'compassed them about with songs of deliverance'; he 'carried them on the wings of

eagles'; he kept them 'as the apple of his eye.' (Psalm 32:7; Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:10) But they, abusing his mercy, became the greatest objects of his wrath. As I know not the man who can reckon up his mercies; so I know not the man who can sum up the miseries which are coming upon him for their sins!

For as our Savior prophesied concerning Jerusalem, 'that a stone should not be left upon a stone,' so it was fulfilled forty years after his ascension, by Vespasian the emperor and his son Titus, who, having besieged Jerusalem, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died, partly by the sword and partly by the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort; two thousand in one night were slaughtered; six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple; the whole city was sacked and burned, and laid level to the ground; and ninety-seven thousand taken captives, and forced to base and miserable service, as Eusebius and Josephus says. (Vespasian broke into their city at Kedron, where they took Christ, on the same feast day that Christ was taken; he whipped them where they whipped Christ; he sold twenty Jews for a penny, as they sold Christ for thirty pence.) And to this day, in all parts of the world, are they not the offscouring of the world? None more abhorred, than they. Men shall be deeper in hell, because heaven was offered unto them; but they abused God's mercy. Men's offences are increased by their obligations.

And so Capernaum, that was lifted up to heaven, was threatened to be thrown down to hell. No souls fall so low into hell, if they fall, as those souls that by a hand of mercy are lifted up nearest to heaven. You who are so apt to abuse God's mercy, consider this, that in the gospel days, the plagues that God inflicts upon the despisers and abusers of mercy are usually spiritual plagues; as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, benumbedness of conscience, which are ten thousand times worse than the worst of outward plagues which can befall you. And therefore, though you may escape temporal judgments, yet you shall not escape spiritual judgments: 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' (Heb. 2:3) says the apostle. Oh! therefore, whenever Satan shall present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy, that he may draw you to do wickedly, say unto him, that sins against God's mercy, will bring upon the soul the greatest misery; and therefore whatever becomes of you, you will not sin against mercy.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That though God's general mercy is over all his works, yet his special mercy is confined to those who are divinely qualified. Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some—but gold to others whom his heart was most set upon. So God, by a hand of general mercy, gives these poor trifles—outward blessings, to those who he least loves; but his gold, special mercy, is only towards those who his heart is most set upon. So in Exodus 34:6, 7: 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, patient, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' Exodus 20:6, 'And showing mercy unto thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments.' Psalm 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' Psalm 32:10, 'Many sorrows shall be to the



wicked: but he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' Psalm 33:18, 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy.' Psalm 103:11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him.' Ver. 17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him.'

When Satan attempts to draw you to sin by presenting God as a God all made up of mercy, oh then reply, that though God's general mercy extend to all the works of his hand, yet his special mercy is confined to those who are divinely qualified, to those who love him and keep his commandments, to those who trust in him, that by hope hang upon him, and who fear him; and that you must be such a one here, or else you can never be happy hereafter; you must partake of his special mercy, or else eternally perish in everlasting misery, notwithstanding God's general mercy.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That those who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, did look upon the mercy of God as the most powerful argument to preserve them from sin, and to fence their souls against sin; and not as an encouragement to sin. Psalm 26:3-5: 'For I am constantly aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.'

So Joseph strengthens himself against sin from the remembrance of mercy: 'How then can I,' says he, 'do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' (Gen. 39:9). He had his eye fixed upon mercy, and therefore sin could not enter, though the irons entered into his soul; his soul being taken with mercy, was not moved with his mistress's impudence. Satan knocked often at the door—but the sight of mercy would not allow him to answer or open. Joseph, like a pearl in a puddle, keeps his virtue still. (The stone called Pontaurus, is of that virtue, that it preserves him who carries it, from taking any hurt by poison. The mercy of God in Christ to our souls is the most precious stone or pearl in the world, to prevent us from being poisoned with sin.)

Likewise with Paul: 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' (Rom. 6:1, 2). There is nothing in the world that renders a man more unlike to a saint, and more like to Satan—than to argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty; from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is the devil's logic, and in whomever you find it, you may write, 'This soul is lost!' A man may as truly say, 'the sea burns', or 'the fire cools'—as that God's free grace and mercy should make a truly gracious soul to live wickedly.

So the same apostle: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. 12:1). So John: 'These things I write unto you, that you sin not (1 John 2:1, 2). What was it that he wrote? He wrote: 'That we might have fellowship with the Father and his Son; and that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin; and that if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; and that if we do sin, we have

an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' These choice favors and mercies the apostle holds forth as the choicest means to preserve the soul from sin, and to keep at the greatest distance from sin; and if this will not do it—you may write the man void of Christ and grace, and undone forever!

**DEVICE 6. By persuading the soul that the work of repentance is an easy work; and that therefore the soul need not make such a matter of sin. Why! Suppose you do sin, says Satan, it is no such difficult thing to return, and confess, and be sorrowful, and beg pardon, and cry, 'Lord, have mercy upon me!' and if you do but this, God will forgive your debt, and pardon your sins, and save your souls.**

By this device Satan draws many a soul to sin, and makes many millions of souls servants of sin, or rather slaves to sin.

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, seriously to consider, That repentance is a mighty work, a difficult work, a work that is above our power. There is no power below that power which raised Christ from the dead, and which made the world—which can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner! You are as well able to melt adamant, as to melt your own heart; to turn a flint into flesh, as to turn your own heart to the Lord; to raise the dead and to make a world, as to repent. Repentance is a flower which does not grow in nature's garden! 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.' (Jer. 13:23). Repentance is a gift that comes down from above. Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths: (Acts 5:31): 'Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior—to give repentance.' Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:25-26) It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure. Some ignorant deluded souls vainly conceit that these five words, 'Lord! have mercy upon me,' are efficacious to send them to heaven; but as many are undone by buying a counterfeit jewel, so many are in hell by mistake of their repentance. Many rest in their repentance, which caused on to say, 'Repentance damns more than sin!' It was a vain brag of king Cyrus, that caused it to be written upon his tombstone, 'I can do all things!' So could Paul, too—but it was 'through Christ, who strengthened him.'

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider of the nature of true repentance. Repentance is some other thing, than what vain men conceive. The Hebrew word for repentance signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It denotes a turning or converting from one thing to another, from sin to God. The Greeks have two words by which they express the nature of repentance, one signifies to be careful, anxious, solicitous, after a thing is done; the other word denotes after-wisdom, the mind's recovering of wisdom, or growing wiser after our folly.

True repentance is a thorough change both of the mind and life. Repentance for sin is nothing worth without repentance from sin. "If you repent with a contradiction," says Tertullian, "God will pardon you with a contradiction; if you repent and yet continue in your sin, God will pardon you, and yet send you to hell—there is a pardon with a contradiction. Negative goodness serves no man's turn, to save him from the axe."

Repentance is sometimes taken, in a more strict and narrow sense, for godly sorrow; sometimes repentance is taken, in a large sense, for amendment of life. Repentance has in it three things, namely, the act, subject, and terms.

(1) The formal ACT of repentance is a changing and converting. It is often set forth in Scripture by turning. 'Turn me, and I shall be turned,' says Ephraim; 'after I was turned, I repented,' says he (Jer. 31:18, 19). It is a turning from darkness to light.

(2) The SUBJECT changed and converted is the whole man; it is both the sinner's heart and life: first his heart, then his life; first his person, then his practice and lifestyle. 'Wash, be clean,' there is the change of their persons; 'Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well' (Is. 1:16, 17); there is the change of their practices. 'Cast away,' says Ezekiel, 'all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed;' there is the change of the life; 'and make you a new heart and a new spirit' (18:31); there is the change of the heart.

(3) The TERMS of this change and conversion, from which and to which both heart and life must be changed; from sin to God. The heart must be changed from the state and power of sin, the life from the acts of sin—but both unto God; the heart to be under his power in a state of grace, the life to be under his rule in all new obedience; and the apostle speaks, 'To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God' (Acts 26:18). So the prophet Isaiah says, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord' (55:7).

Thus much of the nature of evangelical repentance. Now, souls, tell me whether it be such an easy thing to repent, as Satan does suggest. Besides what has been spoken, I desire that you will take notice, that repentance does include turning from the most darling sin. Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' (Hosea 14:8). Yes, it is a turning from all sin to God (Ezek. 18:30): 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.'

Herod turned from many—but turned not from his Herodias, which was his ruin. Judas turned from all visible wickedness, yet he would not cast out that golden devil 'covetousness', and therefore was cast into the hottest place in hell. He who turns not from every sin, turns not aright from any one sin. Every sin strikes at the honor of God, the being of God, the glory of God, the heart of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of a man's conscience; and therefore a soul truly penitent strikes at all, hates all, conflicts with all, and will labor to draw strength from a crucified Christ to crucify all sins. A true penitent knows neither father nor mother, neither right eye nor right hand—but will pluck out the one and cut off the other. Saul spared but one Agag, and that cost him his soul and his

kingdom (1 Sam. 15:9).

Besides, repentance is not only a turning from all sin—but also a turning to all good; to a love of all good, to a prizing of all good, and to a following after all good (Ezek. 18:21): 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Mere negative righteousness and holiness is neither true righteousness nor true holiness. The evil servant did not use his one talent in debauchery (Matt. 25:18). Those reprobates (Matt. 25:41-45), did not rob the saints—but merely did not help them. For this they must eternally perish.

David fulfilled all the will of God, and had respect unto all his commandments, and so had Zacharias and Elizabeth. It is not enough that the tree does not bear bad fruit; but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be 'cut down and cast into the fire' (Luke 13:7). So it is not enough that you are not thus and thus wicked—but you must be thus and thus gracious and godly, else divine justice will put the axe of divine vengeance to the root of your souls, and cut you off forever. 'The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.' (Matt. 3:10). Besides, repentance does include a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness—how opposite and contrary sin is to the blessed God. God is light, sin is darkness; God is life, sin is death; God is heaven, sin is hell; God is beauty, sin is deformity.

Also true repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's destructiveness; how it cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how it laid the first cornerstone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries, that are in the world; and how it makes men liable to all temporal, spiritual and eternal wrath; how it has made men Godless, Christless, hopeless and heavenless.

Further, true repentance includes sorrow for sin, contrition of heart. It breaks the heart with sighs, and sobs, and groans—that by sin—a loving God and Father is offended; a blessed Savior afresh crucified, and the sweet Comforter, the Spirit, grieved and vexed.

Again, repentance does include, not only a loathing of sin—but also a loathing of ourselves for sin. As a man does not only loathe poison—but he loathes the very dish or vessel that has the smell of the poison; so a true penitent does not only loathe his sin—but he loathes himself, the vessel that smells of it; so Ezek. 20:43: 'And there shall you remember your ways and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins—but to loathe yourselves.

True repentance is a sorrowing for sin, as it is an offence to God and against God. Repentance both comes from God, and drives a man to God, as it did the church in the Canticles, and the prodigal.

Again, true repentance does not only work a man to loathe himself for his sins—but it makes him ashamed of his sin also: 'What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed?' says the apostle (Rom. 6:21). So Ezekiel: 'And you shall be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward

you for all that you have done, says the Lord God' (16:63). When a penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, the divine justice satisfied, then he sits down and blushes, as one ashamed. 'So much the more God has been displeased with the blackness of sin, the more will he be pleased with the blushing of the sinner' (Bernard). Those who do not burn now in zeal against sin must before long burn in hell for sin.

Yes, true repentance makes a man to deny his sinful self, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in Paul, the jailor, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shows in 2 Cor. 7:10, 11: 'Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.'

Now souls, sum up all these things together, and tell me whether it would be such an easy thing to repent as Satan would make the soul to believe, and I am confident your heart will answer that it is as hard a thing to repent as it is to make a world, or raise the dead!

I shall conclude this second remedy with a worthy saying of a precious holy man: 'Repentance,' says he, 'strips us stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as a shirt behind.' In this rotten building it leaves not a stone upon a stone. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most darling sins.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider, That repentance is a continued act. The word repent implies the continuation of it. Anselm confesses, that all his life was either damnable for sin committed, or unprofitable for good omitted; and at last concludes, "Oh, what then remains, but in our whole life—but to lament the sins of our whole life." True repentance inclines a man's heart to perform God's statutes always, even unto the end. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength; he must never stand still nor turn back. Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing: 'My sin is ever before me' (Psalm 51:3). A true penitent is often casting his eyes back to the days of his former vanity, and this makes him morning and evening to 'water his couch with his tears.' 'Remember not against me the sins of my youth,' says one blessed penitent; and 'I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man,' says another penitent.

Repentance is a continued act of turning, a repentance never to be repented of, a turning never to turn again to folly. A true penitent has ever something within him to turn from; he can never get near enough to God; no, not so near him as once he was; and therefore he is still turning and turning that he may get nearer and nearer to him, who is his chief good and his only happiness, optimum maximum, the best and the greatest. They are every day a-crying out, 'O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death!' (Rom. 7:24). They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing of themselves for sin. Repentance is no transient act—but a

continued act of the soul.

And tell me, O tempted soul, whether it be such an easy thing as Satan would make you believe, to be every day a-turning more and more from sin, and a-turning nearer and nearer to God, your choicest blessedness. A true penitent can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or one act of love, as he can content himself with one act of repentance.

A Jewish Rabbi, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, and exhorting them to be sure to repent the day before they died, one of them replied, that the day of any man's death was very uncertain. 'Repent, therefore, every day,' said the Rabbi, 'and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die.' You are wise, and know how to apply it to your own advantage.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, That if the work of repentance were such an easy work as Satan would make it to be, then certainly so many would not lie roaring and crying out of wrath and eternal ruin under the horrors and terrors of conscience, for not repenting! Yes, doubtless, so many millions would not go to hell for not repenting, if it were such an easy thing to repent. Ah, do not poor souls under horror of conscience cry out and say, Were all this world a lump of gold, and in our hand to dispose of—we would give it for the least particle of true repentance! And will you say it is an easy thing to repent?

When a poor sinner, whose conscience is awakened, shall judge the exchange of all the world for the least particle of repentance to be the happiest exchange that ever a sinner made; tell me, O soul, is it good going to hell? Is it good dwelling with the devouring fire, with everlasting burnings? Is it good to be forever separated from the blessed and glorious presence of God, and saints, and to be forever shut out from those good things of eternal life, which are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they exceed all estimation? We know it is the greatest misery that can befall the sons of men; and would they not prevent this by repentance, if it were such an easy thing to repent as Satan would have it?

Well, then, do not run the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, and your soul forever, by hearkening to this device of Satan—that is, that it is an easy thing to repent. If it be so easy, why, then, do wicked men's hearts so rise against those who press the doctrine of repentance upon them in the sweetest way, and by the strongest and the choicest arguments that the Scriptures afford? And why do they kill two at once: the faithful laborer's name and their own souls, by their wicked words and actings, because they are put upon repenting, which Satan tells them is so easy a thing? Surely, were repentance so easy, wicked men would not be so much enraged when that doctrine is, by evangelical considerations, pressed upon them.

"If you be backward in the thoughts of repentance, be forward in the thoughts of hell, the flames whereof only the streams of the penitent eye can extinguish" (Tertullian). "Oh, how shall you tear and rend yourself! how shall you lament fruitless repenting! What will you say? Woe is me, that I have not cast off the burden of sin; woe is me, that I have not

washed away my spots—but am now pierced with my iniquities; now have I lost the surpassing joy of angels!" (Basil).

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider, That to repent of sin is as great a work of grace, as not to sin. (Yet it is better to be kept from sin than cured of sin by repentance; as it is better for a man to be preserved from a disease than to be cured of the disease.) By our sinful falls—the powers of the soul are weakened; the strength of grace is decayed; our evidences for heaven are blotted; fears and doubts in the soul are raised (will God once more pardon this scarlet sin, and show mercy to this wretched soul?); the corruptions in the heart are more advantaged and confirmed; and the conscience of a man after falls is the more enraged or the more benumbed. Now for a soul, notwithstanding all this, to repent of his falls—this shows that it is as great a work of grace to repent of sin as it is not to sin.

Repentance is the vomit of the soul; and of all purgatives, none so difficult and hard as it is to vomit. The same means that tends to preserve the soul from sin, the same means works the soul to rise by repentance when it is fallen into sin. We know the mercy and loving-kindness of God is one special means to keep the soul from sin; as David spoke, 'I am constantly aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.' (Psalm 26:3-5). So by the same means the soul is raised by repentance out of sin, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, who loved much, and wept much, because much was forgiven her (Luke 7:37-39). So those in Hosea: 'Come, let us return to the LORD! He has torn us in pieces; now he will heal us. He has injured us; now he will bandage our wounds. In just a short time, he will restore us so we can live in his presence.' (Hos. 6:1, 2); as the Hebrew has it, 'in his favor'. Confidence in God's mercy and love, that he would heal them, and bind up their wounds, and revive their dejected spirits, and cause them to live in his favor, was that which worked their hearts to repent and return unto him.

I might further show you this truth in many other particulars—but this may suffice: only remember this in the general, that there is as much of the power of God, and love of God, and faith in God, and fear of God, and care to please God, zeal for the glory of God (2 Cor. 7:11) requisite to work a man to repent of sin, as there is to keep a man from sin; by which you may easily judge, that to repent of sin is as great a work as not to sin. And now tell me, O soul, is it an easy thing not to sin? We know then certainly it is not an easy thing to repent of sin.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That he who now tempts you to sin upon this account, that repentance is easy, will, before long, to work you to despair, and forever to break the neck of your soul, present repentance as the most difficult and hardest work in the world; and to this purpose he will set your sins in order before you, and make them to say, 'We are yours, and we must follow you.' Bede tells of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered that he would not repent yet; for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him; but growing more and more sick, his friends pressed him again to repent—but then he told

them it was too late, for now, said he; I am judged and condemned.

Now, Satan will help to work the soul to look up, and see God angry; and to look inward, and to see conscience accusing and condemning; and to look downwards, and see hell's mouth open to receive the impenitent soul: and all this to render the work of repentance impossible to the soul. What, says Satan, do you think that that is easy which the whole power of grace cannot conquer while we are in this world? Is it easy, says Satan, to turn from some outward act of sin to which you have been addicted? Do you not remember that you have often complained against such and such particular sins, and resolved to leave them? And yet, to this hour, you have not, you cannot! What will it then be to turn from every sin? Yes, to mortify and cut off those sins, those darling lusts, which are as joints and limbs, which are as right hands and right eyes? Have you not loved your sins above your Savior? Have you not preferred earth before heaven? Have you not all along neglected the means of grace? and despised the offers of grace? and vexed the Spirit of grace? There would be no end, if I would set before you the infinite evils that you have committed, and the innumerable good services that you have omitted, and the frequent checks of your own conscience that you have condemned; and therefore you may well conclude that you can never repent, that you shall never repent.

Now, says Satan, do but a little consider your numberless sins, and the greatness of your sins, the foulness of your sins, the heinousness of your sins, the circumstances of your sins—and you shall easily see that those sins that you thought to be but motes, are indeed mountains; and is it not now in vain to repent of them? Surely, says Satan, if you should seek repentance and grace with tears, as Esau, you shall not find it! Your sand has run through the hour-glass, your sun has set, the door of mercy is shut, the golden scepter is withdrawn; and now you that have despised mercy, shall be forever destroyed by justice. For such a wretch as you are to attempt repentance is to attempt a thing impossible. It is impossible that you, that in all your life could never conquer one sin, should master such a numberless number of sins; which are so near, so dear, so necessary, and so profitable to you, that have so long bedded and boarded with you, that have been old acquaintance and companions with you. Have you not often purposed, promised, vowed, and resolved to enter upon the practice of repentance—but to this day could never attain it? Surely it is in vain to strive against the stream, where it is so impossible to overcome; you are lost and cast off forever; to hell you must go, to hell you shall go! Ah, souls! he who now tempts you to sin, by suggesting to you the easiness of repentance, will at last work you to despair, and present repentance as the hardest work in all the world, and a work as far above man as heaven is above hell, as light is above darkness. Oh that you were wise, to break off your sins by timely repentance. Repentance is a work that must be timely done, or utterly undone forever.

**DEVICE 7. By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin.**

Says Satan, You may walk by the harlot's door though you won't go into the harlot's bed; you may sit and sup with the drunkard, though you won't be drunk with the drunkard; you



may look upon Jezebel's beauty, and you may play and toy with Delilah, though you do not commit wickedness with the one or the other; you may with Achan handle the golden wedge, though you do not steal the golden wedge.

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, solemnly to dwell upon those scriptures which expressly command us to avoid the occasions of sin, and the least appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22): 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' Whatever is heterodox, unsound and unsavory, shun it, as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your food. Epiphanius says that in the old law, when any dead body was carried by any house, they were enjoined to shut their doors and windows. Theodosius tore the Arian's arguments presented to him in writing, because he found them repugnant to the Scriptures. Augustine retracted even ironies, because they had the appearance of lying.

When God had commanded the Jews to abstain from swine's flesh, they would not so much as name it—but in their common talk would call a sow another thing. To abstain from all appearance of evil, is to do nothing wherein sin appears, or which has a shadow of sin. Bernard 'Abstained from whatever is of evil show, or of ill report, that he may neither wound conscience nor credit.' We must shun and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin, if either we have a regard to. our credit abroad, or our comfort at home.

It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus: 'It behooves you not only not to do wrong—but not to seem to do so.' So Jude 23, 'And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.' It is a phrase taken from legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, the garments, of unclean people. Under the law, men might not touch a menstruous cloth, nor would God accept of a blemished peace-offering. So we must not only hate and avoid gross sins—but everything that may carry a savor or suspicion of sin; we must abhor the very signs and tokens of sin. So in Prov. 5:8, 'Remove your way far from her, and come not near the door of her house.' He who would not be burnt, must dread the fire; he who would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope. One speaks of two young men that flung away their belts, when, being in an idol's temple, the laving water fell upon them, detesting, says the historian, the garment spotted by the flesh. One said, As often as I have been among vain men, I returned home less a man than I was before.

To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is all one as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then to pray that it might not be burnt. So, in Prov. 4:14, 15, you have another command: 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' This triple gradation of Solomon shows with a great emphasis, how necessary it is for men to flee from all appearance of sin, as the seaman shuns rocks and shelves; and as men shun those who have the plague-sores running upon them. As weeds endanger the corn, as an infection endangers the blood, or as an infected house endanger the neighborhood; so does the company of the wicked endanger the godly. Friendship with wicked consorts is one of the strongest chains of hell, and binds us to a participation in both their sin and their punishment.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That ordinarily there is no conquest over sin, without the soul turning from the occasion of sin. It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin—who plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation to sin, except you turn from the occasion of sin. It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit, who will adventure to dance upon the brink of the pit, and that he should be a slave to sin, that will not flee from the occasions of sin. As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure. He who has gunpowder about him had need keep far enough off from sparks. To rush upon the occasions of sin is both to tempt ourselves, and to tempt Satan to tempt our souls! It is very rare that any soul plays with the occasions of sin—but that soul is then ensnared by sin!

The fable says, that the butterfly asked the owl how she should deal with the fire which had singed her wings, who counseled her not to behold so much as its smoke.

It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, who will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He who adventures upon the occasions of sin, is as he who would quench the fire with gasoline. Ah, souls, often remember how frequently you have been overcome by sin, when you have boldly gone upon the occasions of sin! Look back, souls, to the days of your vanity, wherein you have been as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted—when you have played with the occasions of sin. As you would for the future be kept from the acting of sin, and be made victorious over sin, oh! flee from the occasions of sin!

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That other precious saints, who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have turned from the occasion of sin, as hell itself; as you may see in Joseph (Gen. 39:10), 'And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.' Joseph was famous for all the four cardinal virtues, if ever any were. In this one temptation you may see his fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence, in that he shuns the occasion: for he would not so much as be with her. And what a man is indeed, that he is in a temptation, which is but a tap to give vent to corruption. The Nazarite might not only not drink wine—but not taste a grape, or the husk of a grape. The leper was to shave his hair, and pare his nails.

The devil knows that corrupt nature has a seed-plot for all sin, which being drawn forth and watered by some sinful occasion, is soon set a-work to the producing of death and destruction. God will not remove the temptation, until we remove the occasion to temptation. A bird while aloft is safe—but she comes not near the snare, without danger. The shunning the occasions of sin renders a man most like the godliest of men. A soul eminently gracious dares not come near the temptation. So Job 31:1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust upon a young woman.' I set a watch at the entrance of my senses, that my soul might not by them be infected or endangered. The eye is the window of the soul, and if that should be always open, the soul might smart for it. A man may not look intently upon that, that he may not love entirely. The disciples were set a-

gog, by beholding the beauty of the temple. It is best and safest to have the eye always fixed upon the highest and noblest objects: as the mariner's eye is fixed upon the star, when their hand is on the stern. So David, when he was himself, he shuns the occasion of sin (Psalm 26:4, 5): 'I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.'

Stories speak of some who could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The highest and choicest examples are to some, and should be to all, very quickening and provoking; and oh that the examples of those worthy saints, David, Joseph, and Job, might prevail with all your souls to shun and avoid the occasions of sin! Everyone should strive to be like them in grace, that they desire to be equal with in glory. He who shoots at the sun, though he be far short, will shoot higher than he who aims at a shrub. It is best, and it speaks out much of Christ within, to eye the highest and the worthiest examples.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the avoiding the occasions of sin, is an evidence of grace, and that which lifts up a man above most other men in the world. That a man is indeed, which he is in temptation; and when sinful occasions present themselves before the soul, this speaks out both the truth and the strength of grace; when with Lot, a man can be chaste in Sodom, and with Timothy can live temperate in Asia, among the luxurious Ephesians; and with Job can walk uprightly in the land of Uz, where the people were profane in their lives, and superstitious in their worship; and with Daniel can be holy in Babylon; and with Abraham, righteous in Chaldea; and with Nehemiah, zealous in Damascus, etc.

Many a wicked man is full of corruption—but shows it not for lack of occasion; but that man is surely godly, who in his course will not be bad, though tempted by occasions to sin. A Christless soul is so far from refusing occasions to sin, when they come in his way, that he looks and longs after them, and rather than he will go without them he will buy them, not only with love or money—but also with the loss of his soul! Nothing but grace can fence a man against the occasions of sin, when he is strongly tempted thereunto. Therefore, as you would cherish a precious evidence in your own bosoms of the truth and strength of your graces, shun all sinful occasions.

Plutarch says of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors—but not so at imitating them. Oh that this were not applicable to many professors in our times!

**DEVICE 8. By representing to the soul the outward mercies that vain men enjoy, and the outward miseries that they are freed from, while they have walked in the ways of sin.**

Says Satan, Do you see, O soul, the many blessings that such and such enjoy, who walk in those very ways that your soul startles to think of, and the many crosses that they are delivered from, even such as makes other men, who say they dare not walk in such ways, to spend their days in sighing, weeping, groaning, and mourning? and therefore, says

Satan, if ever you would be freed from the dark night of adversity, and enjoy the sunshine of prosperity—you must walk in their ways.

By this stratagem the devil took those in Jer. 44:16-18, "We will not listen to your messages from the Lord! We will do whatever we want. We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and sacrifice to her just as much as we like—just as we and our ancestors did before us, and as our kings and princes have always done in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For in those days we had plenty to eat, and we were well off and had no troubles! But ever since we quit burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and stopped worshiping her, we have been in great trouble and have suffered the effects of war and famine." This is just the language of a world of ignorant, profane, and superstitious souls, who would have returned to bondage, yes, to that bondage that was worse than that the Israelites groaned under.

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, solemnly to consider, That no man knows how the heart of God stands towards a person, by his outward blessings to that person. His hand of mercy may be towards a man, when his heart may be against that man, as you may see in Saul and others; and the hand of God may be set against a man, when the heart of God is dearly set upon a man, as you may see in Job and Ephraim. The hand of God was severely set against them, and yet the heart and affections of God were strongly working towards them.

No man knows either the love or hatred of God—by his outward mercy or misery towards them; for all things come alike to all, to the righteous and to the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean. The sun of prosperity shines as well upon brambles of the wilderness—as upon fruit-trees of the orchard; the snow and hail of adversity comes upon the best garden—as well as upon the stinking ash-heap or the wild waste. Ahab's and Josiah's ends concur in the very circumstances. Saul and Jonathan, though different in their natures, deserts, and deportments; yet in their deaths they were not divided. Health, wealth, honors, crosses, sicknesses, losses, are cast upon good men and bad men promiscuously. Moses dies in the wilderness—as well as those who murmured. Nabal is rich—as well as Abraham. Ahithophel wise—as well as Solomon. Doeg is honored by Saul—as well as Joseph was by Pharaoh. Usually the worst of men have most of these outward things. Usually the holiest of men have least of earth, though most of heaven.

Cicero judged the Jews' religion to be nothing, because they were so often overcome, and impoverished, and afflicted; and the religion of Rome to be right, because the Romans prospered and became rulers of the world; and yet, though the Romans had God's hand, yet the Jews had his heart, for they were dearly beloved, though severely afflicted.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That there is nothing in the world that so provokes God to be wroth and angry, as men's taking encouragement from God's goodness and mercy—to do wickedly. This you may see by that deluge of wrath which fell upon the old world, and by God's raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is clear in Jeremiah 44:20-28. The words are worthy of

your best meditation. Oh that they were engraven in all your hearts, and constant in all your thoughts! Though they are too large for me to transcribe them, yet they are not too large for me to remember them. To argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty—is the devil's logic—and such logicians do ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up! No such soul can ever avert or avoid the wrath of God. This is wickedness at the height—for a man to be very bad, because God is very good. There is not a worse spirit than this in hell. Ah, Lord, does not wrath, yes, the greatest wrath, lie at this man's door? Are not the strongest chains of darkness prepared for such a soul? To sin against mercy is bestial; no, it is worse. To render good for evil is divine, to render good for good is human, to render evil for evil is brutish; but to render evil for good is devilish; and from this evil deliver my soul, O God.

Such souls make God into a mere doll—one that will not do as he says; but they shall find God to be as severe in punishing as he is to others gracious in pardoning. Good turns aggravate unkindnesses, and our guilt is increased by our obligations.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there is no greater misery in this life, than not to be in misery; no greater affliction, than not to be afflicted. Woe, woe to that soul that God will not spend a rod upon! This is the saddest stroke of all—when God refuses to strike at all! (Hos. 4:17), 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' 'Why should you be smitten any more? you will revolt more and more' (Is. 1:5). When the physician gives up the patient, you say, 'Ring out his knell—the man is dead.' So when God gives over a soul to sin without control, you may truly say, 'This soul is lost,' you may ring out his knell, for he is twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.

Freedom from chastisement is the mother of carnal security, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness, and the introducer of wickedness. 'Nothing,' said one, 'seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity has happened.' Outward mercies often times prove a snare to our souls. 'I will lay a stumbling block' (Ezek. 3:20). Vatablus's note there is, 'I will prosper him in all things, and not by affliction restrain him from sin.' Prosperity has been a stumbling-block, at which millions have stumbled and fallen, and broke the neck of their souls forever! "Religion brought forth riches, and the daughter soon devoured the mother," said Augustine. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:8-10

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the lack of wicked men, under all their outward mercy and freedom from adversity, is far greater than all their outward enjoyments. They have many mercies, yet they lack more than they enjoy. The mercies which they enjoy are nothing to the mercies they lack. It is true, they have honors and riches, and pleasures and friends, and are mighty in power; their family is established, and their offspring are before their eyes. 'Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.' 'They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of

the organ.' 'They spend their days in wealth, their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish: and they have no bands in their death—but their strength is firm; they are not in trouble as other men.'

Yet all this is nothing to what they lack. They lack a saving interest in God, Christ, the Spirit, the promises, the covenant of grace, and everlasting glory. They lack acceptance and reconciliation with God; they lack righteousness, justification, sanctification, adoption, and redemption. They lack the pardon of sin, and power against sin, and freedom from the dominion of sin. They lack that favor with God, which is better than life, and that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, and that peace which passes understanding, and that grace, the least spark of which is more worth than heaven and earth. They lack a house that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They lack those riches that perish not, the glory that fades not, that kingdom that shakes not.

Wicked men are the most needy men in the world, yes, they lack those two things that should render their mercies sweet, that is, the blessing of God, and contentment with their condition! Without these things, their heaven is but hell on this side hell. (Psalm 49:11, 73:7; Job 21:12) When their hearts are lifted up and grown big upon the thoughts of their abundance, if conscience does but put in a word and say, It is true, here is this and that outward mercy—Oh—but where is a saving interest in Christ? Where is the favor of God? Where are the comforts of the Holy Spirit? Where are the evidences for heaven? This word from conscience makes the man's countenance to change, his thoughts to be troubled, his heart to be amazed, and all his mercies on the right hand and left to be as dead and withered. Ah, were but the eyes of wicked men open to see their spiritual needs under their temporal abundance, they would cry out and say, as Absalom did, 'What are all these to me so long as I cannot see the king's face?' (2 Sam. 14:23, 32). What is honor, and riches, and the favor of creatures—so long as I lack the favor of God, the pardon of my sins, a saving interest in Christ, and the hope of glory! O Lord, give me these, or I die! Give me these, or else I shall eternally die!

Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized. A crown of gold cannot cure the headache; a velvet slipper cannot ease the gout; honor or riches cannot quiet and still the conscience. The heart of man is a three-sided triangle, which the whole round circle of the world cannot fill, as mathematicians say—but all the corners will complain of emptiness, and hunger for something else.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That outward things are not as they seem and are esteemed. They have, indeed, a glorious outside—but if you view their insides, you will easily find that they fill the head full of cares, and the heart full of fears. What if the fire should consume one part of my estate, and the sea should be a grave to swallow up another part of my estate! What if my servants should be unfaithful abroad, and my children should be deceitful at home! Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that does daily, yes hourly, attend those men's souls whose hands are full of worldly goods!

It was a good speech of an emperor: 'You,' said he, 'gaze on my purple robe and golden

crown—but did you know what cares are under it, you would not take it up from the ground to have it.' It was a true saying of Augustine on the 26th Psalm: 'Many are miserable by loving hurtful things—but they are more miserable by having them.' It is not what men enjoy—but the principle from whence it comes, that makes men happy. Much of these outward things do usually cause great distraction, great vexation, and great condemnation at last, to the possessors of them. If God gives them in his wrath, and does not sanctify them in his love, they will at last be witnesses against a man, and millstones forever to sink a man in that day when God shall call men to an account, not for the use—but for the abuse of mercy.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider the end and the design of God in heaping up mercy upon the heads of the wicked, and in giving them rest and quiet from those sorrows and sufferings that others sigh under. David shows the end and design of God in this. "When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will make them vanish from this life." Psalm 73:16-20. So in Psalm 92:7, "Although the wicked flourish like weeds, and evildoers blossom with success, there is only eternal destruction ahead of them." God's setting them up, is but in order to his casting them down; his raising them high, is but in order to his bringing them low. Exod. 9:16: 'And in very deed, for this cause have I raised you up, for to show in you my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.' I have constituted and set you up as a target—that I may let fly at you, and follow you close with plague upon plague, until I have beaten the very breath out of your body, and got myself a name, by setting my feet upon the neck of all your pride, power, pomp, and glory.

Ah, souls, what man in his wits would be lifted up that he might be cast down; would be set higher than others, when it is but in order to his being brought down lower than others? There is not a wicked man in the world that is set up with Lucifer, as high as heaven—but shall with Lucifer be brought down as low as hell. Can you think seriously of this, O soul, and not say, O Lord, I humbly crave that you will let me be little in this world, that I may be great in another world; and low here, that I may be high forever hereafter. Let me be low, and feed low, and live low, so I may live with you forever; let me now be clothed with rags, so you will clothe me at last with your robes; let me now be set upon a ash-heap, so I may at last be advanced to sit with you upon your throne. Lord, make me rather gracious than great, inwardly holy than outwardly happy, and rather turn me into my first nothing, yes, make me worse than nothing, rather than set me up for a time, that you may bring me low forever. "Grant us, Lord, that we may so partake of temporal felicity, that we may not lose eternal happiness." (Bernard).

Valens, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, king of Persia. Dionysius, king of Sicily, fell from his kingly glory to be a schoolmaster. The brave Queen Zenobia was brought to Rome in golden chains. Belisarius, a famous general, Henry the Fourth, Bajazet Pythias, great Pompey, and William the Conqueror, these, from being

very high were brought very low; they all fell from great glory and majesty to great poverty and misery.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, That God does often most plague and punish those whom others think he does most spare and love; that is, God does plague and punish them most with spiritual judgments—which are the greatest, the sorest, and the heaviest—whom he least punishes with temporal punishments. (Psalm 81:12, 78:26-31, 106:15) He gave them their requests—but sent leanness into their soul. It is a heavy plague to have a fat body and a lean soul; a house full of gold, and a heart full of sin. There are no men on earth so internally plagued as those who meet with least external plagues. Oh the blindness of mind, the hardness of heart, the searedness of conscience, that those souls are given up to, who, in the eye of the world, are reputed the most happy men, because they are not outwardly afflicted and plagued as other men.

Ah, souls, it were better that all the temporal plagues that ever befell the children of men since the fall of Adam should at once meet upon your souls, than that you should be given up to the least spiritual plague, to the least measure of spiritual blindness or spiritual hardness of heart. Nothing will better that man, nor move that man, who is given up to spiritual judgments. Let God smile or frown, stroke or strike, cut or kill—he minds it not, he regards it not; let life or death, heaven or hell, be set before him—it stirs him not; he is mad upon his sin, and God is fully set to do justice upon his soul. This man's preservation is but a reservation unto a greater condemnation; this man can set no bounds to himself; he is become a brat of fathomless perdition; he has guilt in his bosom and vengeance at his back wherever he goes. Neither ministry nor misery, neither miracle nor mercy, can mollify his heart! And if this soul be not in hell, on this side hell—who is? It is better to have an ulcerated body—than a seared conscience. It is better to have no heart—than a hard heart. It is better to have no mind—than a blind mind.

Remedy (8). The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell more upon that strict account that vain men must make for all that good that they do enjoy. "In that day men shall give an account of good things committed unto them, of good things neglected by them, of evil committed by them, and of evils allowed by them. Then shall a good conscience be more worth than all the world's good." (Bernard) Ah! did men dwell more upon that account that they must before long—give for all the mercies that they have enjoyed, and for all the favors that they have abused, and for all the sins they have committed—it would make their hearts to tremble and their lips to quiver, and rottenness to enter into their bones; it would cause their souls to cry out, and say, 'Oh that our mercies had been fewer and lesser, that our account might have been easier, and our torment and misery, for our abuse of so great mercy, not greater than we are able to bear. Oh cursed be the day wherein the crown of honor was set upon our heads, and the treasures of this world were cast into our laps; oh cursed be the day wherein the sun of prosperity shined so strong upon us, and this flattering world smiled so much upon us, as to occasion us to forget God, to slight Jesus Christ, to neglect our souls, and to put far from us the day of our account!'



Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professed, that he 'would rather lose his kingdom than offend God willingly.' Yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of his account he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words broke from him 'Oh! would to God I had never reigned. Oh that those years that I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a solitary life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely would I now have died! How much more confidently would I have gone to the throne of God! What does all my glory profit me—but that I have so much the more torment in my death?'

God keeps an exact account of every penny that is laid out upon him and his, and that is laid out against him and his; and this in the day of account men shall know and feel, though now they wink and will not understand. The sleeping of vengeance causes the overflowing of sin, and the overflowing of sin causes the awakening of vengeance. Abused mercy will certainly turn into fury. God's forbearance of sin, is not the overlooking of sin. The day is at hand when he will pay wicked men for the abuse of old and new mercies. If he seems to be slow, yet he is sure. He has leaden heels—but iron hands. The farther he stretches his bow, or draws his arrow, the deeper he will wound in the day of vengeance. Men's actions are all in print in heaven, and God will, in the day of account, read them aloud in the ears of all the world, that they may all say Amen to that righteous sentence that he shall pass upon all despisers and abusers of mercy.

Jerome still thought that voice was in his ears. 'Arise you dead, and come to judgment.' As often as I think on that day, how does my whole body quake, and my heart within me tremble.

**DEVICE 9. By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings, which daily attend those who walk in the ways of holiness. Says Satan, Do not you see that there are none in the world that are so vexed, afflicted, and tossed, as those who walk more circumspectly and holily than their neighbors? They are a byword at home, and a reproach abroad; their miseries come in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another, and there is no end of their sorrows and troubles. Therefore, says Satan, you were better to walk in ways that are less troublesome, and less afflicted, though they be more sinful; for who but a madman would spend his days in sorrow, vexation, and affliction, when it may be prevented by walking in the ways that I set before him?**

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That all the afflictions that attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit and glorious advantage. They shall discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, that yet the soul has never seen.

It was a speech of a German divine in his sickness, 'In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is; I never knew in my experience, who God was, nor what sin meant—until now.' Afflictions are a crystal glass, wherein the soul has the clearest

sight of the ugly face of sin. In this glass the soul comes to see sin to be but a bitter-sweet; yes, in this glass the soul comes to see sin not only to be an evil—but to be the greatest evil in the world, to be an evil far worse than hell itself.

Again, They shall contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins (Isa. 1:15, and 27:8, 9). Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses his people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine. Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases, better than all the remedies of physicians. Aloes kill worms; colds and frosts do destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, it is observed, there have been no idols found among them.

Again, Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin, which is a greater evil than hell itself. As Job spoke, 'Surely it is fit to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach me; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more. Once have I spoken foolishly, yes, twice, I will do so no more' (Job 34:31, 32; 40:5). The burnt child dreads the fire. Ah! says the soul under the rod, sin is but a bitter-sweet; and for the future I intend, by the strength of Christ, that I will not buy repentance at so dear a rate.

Salt brine preserves from putrefaction, and salt marshes keep the sheep from the rot: so do afflictions the saints from sin. The ball in the Emblem says, the harder you beat me down in affliction, the higher I shall bound in affection towards heaven and heavenly things.

The Rabbis, to scare their scholars from sin, were accustomed to tell them, 'That sin made God's head ache.' And saints under the rod have found by woeful experience, that sin makes not only their heads—but their hearts ache also.

Augustine, by wandering out of his way, escaped one that lay in wait to harm him. If afflictions did not put us out of our way, we would many times meet with some sin or other, that would harm our precious souls.

Again, They will work the saints to be more fruitful in holiness (Heb. 12:10, 11): 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning; the walnut tree is most fruitful when most beaten. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some 'the mother of virtue.' Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some Scriptures until he was in affliction. The Christ-cross is no letter, and yet that taught him more than all the letters in the row. God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that came about Stephen's ears did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven; and the higher the waters grew, the more near the ark was lifted up to heaven.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God (Hosea 2:14): 'Behold, I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her' (or rather, as

the Hebrew has it), 'I will earnestly or vehemently speak to her heart.' God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of his blessed self. When was it that Stephen saw the heavens open, and Christ standing at the right hand of God—but when the stones were about his ears, and there was but a short step between him and eternity? And when did God appear in his glory to Jacob—but in the day of his troubles, when the stones were his pillows, and the ground his bed, and the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy? Then he saw the angels of God ascending and descending in their glistening robes.

The plant grows with cutting; being cut, it flourishes; it contends with the axe, it lives by dying, and by cutting it grows. So do saints by their afflictions which befall them; they gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening of them, to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

It is reported of Tiberius the emperor that, passing by a place where he saw a cross lying in the ground upon a marble stone, and causing the stone to be dug up, he found a great deal of treasure under the cross. So many a precious saint has found much spiritual and heavenly treasure under the crosses they have met withal.

I have read of a fountain, that at noonday is cold, and at midnight it grows warm; so many a precious soul is cold God-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the day of prosperity; that grow warm God-wards and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the midnight of adversity.

Again, Afflictions serve to keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender (Lam. 3:19, 20): 'Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me,' or bowed down in me, as the original has it. So David, when he was under the rod, could say, 'I was mute, I opened not my mouth; because you did it' (Psalm 39:4).

I have read of Gregory Nazianzen, who, when anything fell out prosperously, would read over the Lamentation of Jeremiah, and that kept his heart tender, humbled, and low. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised—the sweeter scent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

Again, They serve to bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God. 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept your word.' 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.' 'I will be to Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away: I will take away, and none shall rescue him.' 'I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.' And so they did. 'Come,' say they, 'and let us return unto the Lord: for he has torn,

and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.' (Psalm 119:67, 71. Hosea 5:14, 15; 6:1, 2.)

So when God had hedged up their way with thorns, then they say, 'I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it with me better than now' (Hosea 2:6, 7). Ah the joy, the peace, the comfort, the delight, and contentment that did attend us, when we kept close communion with God, does bespeak our return to God. 'We will return to our first husband; for then was it with us better than now.'

When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, he drew out his sword, and defended himself; but when they told him that they came to carry him to the king, he willingly yielded. So, though a saint may at first stand a little out, yet when he remembers that afflictions are to carry him nearer to God, he yields, and kisses the rod. Afflictions are like the prick at the nightingale's bosom—which awakens her, and puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing.

Again, Afflictions serve to revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love that is cold, and they quicken that faith that is decaying, and they put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it. Those who are in adversity, says Luther, do better understand Scriptures; but those who are in prosperity read them as a verse in Ovid. Bees are killed with too much honey, but quickened with vinegar. The honey of prosperity kills our graces—but the vinegar of adversity quickens our graces. Musk, says one, when it has lost its fragrance, if it is put into the sink among filth—that recovers it. So do afflictions recover and revive decayed graces. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abases the loveliness of the world which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity; and it assists the soul in his quarrel to the two former, which tends much to the reviving and recovering of decayed graces.

Now, suppose afflictions and troubles attend the ways of holiness, yet seeing that they all work for the great profit and singular advantage of the saints, let no soul be so mad as to leave an afflicted way of holiness, to walk in a smooth path of wickedness.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, that all the afflictions which befall the saints, only reach their worse part; they reach not, they hurt not, their noble part, their best part. 'And who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good,' says the apostle (1 Peter 3:13). That is, none shall harm you. They may thus and thus afflict you—but they shall never harm you. The Christian soldier shall ever be master of the day. He may suffer death—but never conquest.

It was the speech of an heathen, when as by a tyrant he was commanded to be put into a mortar, and to be beaten to pieces with an iron pestle, he cries out to his persecutors: 'You

do but beat the vessel, the case, the husk; you do not beat me.' His body was to him but as a case, a husk; he counted his soul himself, which they could not reach. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Socrates said of his enemies, 'They may kill me—but they cannot hurt me.' So afflictions may kill us—but they cannot hurt us; they may take away my life—but they cannot take away my God, my Christ, my crown.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the afflictions which attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night—but joy comes in the morning' (Psalm 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm, this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown, between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream? Yes, so small a while does the hand of the Lord rest upon us, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it, for he calls it a very little cross that we bear. The prophet in Isaiah 26:20, says the indignation does not pass—but overpass. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of it is set forth by the travail of a woman (John 16:21). And that is a sweet scripture: 'For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.' 'For yet a little while, he who shall come will come, and will not tarry' (Heb. 10:36, 37). 'A little, little, little while.'

There are none of God's afflicted ones that have not their intermissions and respites whiles under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

When Athanasius's friends came to bewail him, because of his misery and banishment, he said, 'It is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone.' It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That the afflictions which befall the saints are such as proceed from God's dearest love. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten' (Rev. 3:19). Saints, says God, think not that I hate you, because I thus chide you. He who escapes discipline may suspect his adoption. God had one Son without corruption—but no son without correction. A gracious soul may look through the darkest cloud, and see God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction to the sweetness of his countenance; even as by the rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun's light in the midst of a dark and watery cloud.

Augustine asks—If he were beloved, how came he to be sick? So are wicked men apt to say, because they know not that corrections are pledges of our adoption, and badges of our sonship. God had one Son without sin—but none without sorrow.

When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, 'These are God's gems and jewels, with which he decks his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world.' A soul at first conversion is but rough cast; but God by afflictions does square and fit, and fashion it for that glory above, which shows that discipline flows from precious love; therefore the afflictions which attend the people of God should be no bar to holiness, nor no motive to draw the soul to ways of wickedness.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That it is our duty and glory not to measure afflictions by the smart—but by the end. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with gold and ear-rings (Exod. 11:3); so the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon with gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils (Ezra 1:7-11). Look more at the latter end of a Christian—than the beginning of his affliction. Consider the patience of Job, and what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives's door—but lying in Abraham's bosom. Look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could see neither sun, moon, nor stars; but behold him at last made ruler over Egypt. Look not upon David as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by some, and slighted and despised by others; but behold him seated in his royal throne, and dying in his bed of honor, and his son Solomon and all his glistening nobles about him.

Afflictions, they are but as a dark entry into your Father's house; they are but as a dirty lane to a royal palace. Now, tell me, souls, whether it be not very great madness to shun the ways of holiness, and to walk in the ways of wickedness, because of those afflictions which attend the ways of holiness.

Afflictions, they are but our Father's goldsmiths, who are working to add pearls to our crowns. Tiberius saw paradise when he walked upon hot burning coals. Herodotus said of the Assyrians, Let them drink nothing but wormwood all their life long; when they die, they shall swim in honey. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the design of God in all the afflictions which befall them, is only to try them; it is not to wrong them, nor to ruin them, as ignorant souls are apt to think. 'He knows the way that I take: and when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold,' says patient Job, 33:10. So in Deut. 8:2, 'And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.' God afflicted them thus, that he might make known to themselves and others what was in their hearts. When fire is put to green wood, there comes out abundance of watery stuff that before appeared not; when the pond is empty, the mud, filth, and toads come to light. The snow covers many a ash-heap, so does prosperity many a rotten heart. It is easy to wade in a warm bath, and every bird can sing in a sunshine day. Hard weather tries what health we have; afflictions try what sap we have, what grace we have. Withered leaves soon fall off in windy weather,

rotten boughs quickly break with heavy weights. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Afflictions are like pinching frosts, which will search us; where we are most unsound, we shall soonest complain, and where most corruptions lie, we shall most shrink. We try metal by knocking; if it sound well, then we like it. So God tries his by knocking, and if under knocks they yield a pleasant sound, God will turn their night into day, and their bitter into sweet, and their cross into a crown; and they shall hear that voice, 'Arise, and shine; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon you, and favors of the Lord are flowing in on you' (Is. 60:1).

Dunghills raked send out a filthy stream; ointments crushed send out a sweet perfume. This is applicable to sinners and saints under the rod.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the afflictions, wrath, and misery which attend the ways of wickedness, are far greater and heavier than those which attend the ways of holiness. Oh, the galling, girding, lashing, and gnawing of conscience, which attend souls in a way of wickedness! 'The wicked,' says Isaiah, 'are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.' 'There is no peace to the wicked, says my God.'

There are snares in all their mercies, and curses and crosses attend all their comforts, both at home and abroad. What is a fine suit of clothes with the plague in it? and what is a golden cup when there is poison at the bottom? or what is a silken stocking with a broken leg in it? The curse of God, the wrath of God, the hatred of God, and the fierce indignation of God—always attend sinners walking in a way of wickedness. Turn to Deuteronomy 28, and read from ver. 15 to the end of the chapter; and turn to Leviticus 26, and read from ver. 14 to the end of the chapter, and then you shall see how the curse of God haunts the wicked, as it were a fury, in all his ways. In the city it attends him, in the country hovers over him; coming in, it accompanies him; going forth, it follows him, and in travel it is his comrade. It fills his heart with strife, and mingles the wrath of God with his sweetest morsels. It is a moth in his wardrobe, disease among his cattle, mildew in the field, rot among sheep, and oftentimes makes his children, his greatest vexation and confusion. There is no solid joy, nor lasting peace, nor pure comfort, which attends sinners in their sinful ways. There is a sword of vengeance that every moment hang over their heads by a small thread! And what joy and contentment can attend such souls, if the eye of conscience be but so far open as to see the sword? Ah! the horrors and terrors, the tremblings and shakings, that attend their souls!

Sin brings in sorrow and sickness. The Rabbis say, that when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, his head ached. Sirens are said to sing curiously while they live—but to roar horribly when they die. So do the wicked.

(Sin oftentimes makes men insensible of the wrath of the Almighty. Sin transforms many a man, as it were, into those bears in Pliny, that could not be stirred with the sharpest prickles; or those fish in Aristotle, that though they have spears thrust into their sides, yet they awake not.)

**DEVICE 10. By working them to be frequent in comparing themselves and their ways, with those who are reputed or reported to be worse than themselves.**

By this device the devil drew the proud pharisee to bless himself in a cursed condition, 'God, I thank you that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-collector' (Luke 18:11). Why, says Satan—you are now and then a little lustful—but such and such do daily defile and pollute themselves by actual immorality and filthiness; you deceive and take advantage your neighbors in things that are but as toys and trifles—but such and such deceive and take advantage of others in things of greatest concernment, even to their ruin and undoing; you do but sit, and chat, and sip with the drunkard—but such and such sit and drink and are drunk with the drunkard; you are only a little proud in heart and habit, in looks and words.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider this, That there is not a greater nor a clearer argument to prove a man a hypocrite, than to be quick-sighted abroad—and blind at home, than to see 'a mote in another man's eye, and not a beam in his own eye' (Matt. 7:3, 4); than to use spectacles to behold other men's sins rather than looking-glasses to behold his own; rather to be always holding his finger upon other men's sores, and to be amplifying and aggravating other men's sins—and mitigating of his own.

History speaks of a kind of witches that, stirring abroad, would put on their eyes—but returning home they boxed them up again. So do hypocrites.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To spend more time in comparing of your internal and external actions with the Rule, with the Word, by which you must be judged at last—than in comparing of yourselves with those who are worse than yourselves. That man who, comparing his self with others that are worse than himself, may seem, to himself and others, to be an angel. Yet comparing himself with the word of God, may see himself to be like the devil, yes, a very devil. 'Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?' (John 6:70). Such men are like him, as if they were spit out of his mouth.

The nearer we draw to God and his Word the more rottenness we shall find in our bones. The more any man looks into the body of the sun, the less he sees when he looks down again. It is said of the basilisk, that if he looks into a mirror he presently dies; so will sin, and a sinner (in a spiritual sense), when the soul looks into the Word, which is God's mirror.

Satan is called 'the god of this world' (2 Cor. 4:4), because, as God at first did but speak the word, and it was done, so, if the devil does but hold up his finger, give the least hint—they will obey his will, though they undo their souls forever. Ah, what monsters would these men appear to be, did they but compare themselves with a righteous rule, and not with the most unrighteous men; they would appear to be as black as hell itself.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That



though your sins be not as great as those of others, yet without sound repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on God's side—you will be as certainly damned as others, though not equally tormented with others. What though hell shall not be so hot to you as to others, yet you must as certainly go to hell as others—unless the glorious grace of God shines forth upon you in the face of Christ. God will suit men's punishments to their sins; the greatest sins shall be attended with the greatest punishments, and lesser sins with lesser punishments. (As in heaven one is more glorious than another, so in hell one shall be more miserable than another—Augustine.)

Alas, what a poor comfort will this be to you when you come to die, to consider that you shall not be equally tormented with others, yet must be forever shut out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels, and saints, and from those good things of eternal life, that are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they exceed estimation! Sure it is, that the tears of hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven; the worm of grief gnaws as painful as the fire burns. If those souls (Acts 20:37) wept because they should see Paul's face no more, how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beautiful vision! The gate of blessedness, the gate of hope, the gate of mercy, the gate of glory, the gate of consolation, and the gate of salvation—will be forever shut against them (Matt. 25:10).

But this is not all: you shall not be only shut out of heaven—but shut up in hell forever; not only shut out from the presence of God and angels—but shut up with devils and damned spirits for ever; not only shut out from those sweet, surpassing, unexpressible, and everlasting pleasures that are at God's right hand—but shut up forever under those torments that are ceaseless, remediless and endless. Ah, souls, were it not ten thousand times better for you to break off your sins by repentance, than to go on in your sins until you feel the truth of what now you hear? It was a good saying of Chrysostom, speaking of hell: 'Let us not seek to figure out where it is—but how we shall escape it!'

God is very merciful. Ah, that you would repent and return, that your souls might live forever! Remember this, grievous is the torment of the damned for the bitterness of the punishments—but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments! For to be tormented without end—this is that which goes beyond the bounds of all desperation. Ah, how do the thoughts of this make the damned to roar and cry out for unquietness of heart, and tear their hair, and gnash their teeth, and rage for madness, that they must dwell in 'everlasting burnings' forever!

Surely one good means to escape hell is to take a turn or two in hell by our daily meditations.

**DEVICE 11. By polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors, which in their proper tendency tend to carry the souls of men to all looseness and wickedness, as woeful experience does abundantly evidence.**

Ah, how many are there filled with these and suchlike Christ-dishonoring and soul-undoing opinions, that is—that the Scriptures are full of fallacies and uncertainties, and no further to be heeded, than they agree with their own carnal thoughts; that it is a poor, low thing, if not idolatry too, to worship God in a Mediator; that the resurrection is already past; that there was never any such man or person as Jesus Christ—but that all is an allegory; that there is no God nor devil, heaven nor hell—but what is within us; that sin and grace are equally good—with a hundred other horrid opinions, which have caused wickedness to break in as a flood among us.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That an erroneous, vain MIND is as odious to God as a wicked LIFE. He who had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean (Levit. 13:44). Gross errors make the heart foolish, and render the life loose. Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a leper in the sight of God. The breath of the erroneous is infectious, and, like the dogs of Congo—they bite though they bark not.

It was God's heavy and dreadful plague upon the Gentiles, to be given up to a mind void of judgment, or an injudicious mind, or a mind rejected, disallowed, abhorred of God, or a mind that none have cause to glory in—but rather to be ashamed of (Rom. 1:28). I think that in these days God punishes many men's former wickednesses, by giving them up to soul-ruining errors. Ah, Lord, this mercy I humbly beg, that you would rather take me into your own hand, and do anything with me, than give me up to those sad errors to which thousands have married their souls and are in the way of perishing forever. It were best that we never erred; next to that, that we amended our error. To persist in error is diabolical.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To receive the truth affectionately, and let it dwell in your souls plenteously. When men stand out against the truth, when truth would enter, and men bar the door of their souls against the truth, God in justice gives up such souls to be deluded and deceived by error, to their eternal undoing (2 Thess. 2:10-12): 'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions (or, as the Greek has it, "the efficacy of error,") that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth—but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'

Ah, sirs, as you love your souls, do not tempt God, do not provoke God, by your withstanding truth—to give you up to believe a lie, that you may be damned. There are no men on earth so fenced against error as those are that receive the truth in the love of it. Such souls are not 'easily tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, wherein they lie in wait to deceive' (The Greek, signifies such sleights as cheaters and false gamesters use at dice.) It is not he who receives most of the truth unto his head—but he who receives most of the truth affectionately into his heart—who shall enjoy the happiness of having his judgment sound and clear, when others shall be deluded and deceived by them, who make it their business to infect the judgments and to undo the souls of men. The greatest sinners are sure to be

the greatest sufferers.

Ah, souls, as you would not have your judgments polluted and defiled with error, 'Let the word of the Lord,' which is more precious than gold, yes than fine gold, 'dwell plenteously in you' (Col. 3:16). Let it well in you as an ingrafted word incorporated into your souls, so digested by you, as that you turn it into a part of yourselves. It is not the hearing of truth, nor the knowing of truth, nor the commending of truth, nor the talking of truth—but the indwelling of truth in your souls—which will keep your judgments chaste and sound, in the midst of all those glittering errors that betray many souls into his hands, who can easily 'transform himself into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14), that he may draw others to lie in chains of darkness with him forever. Oh, let not the Word be a stranger—but make it your choicest familiar! Then will you be able to stand in the day wherein many shall fall on your right hand, and on your left, by the subtlety of those who shall say, 'Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there is Christ.'

Ah, souls, if truth dwell plenteously in you, you are happy; if not, you are unhappy under all your greatest felicity. Truth at last triumphs.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That error makes the owner to suffer loss. All the pains and labor that men take to defend and maintain their errors, to spread abroad and infect the world with their errors, shall bring no profit, nor no comfort to them in that day, wherein 'every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try it of what sort it is,' as the apostle shows in that remarkable scripture (1 Cor. 3:11-15). Ah, that all those who rise early and go to bed late, that spend their time, their strength, their spirits, their all—to advance and spread abroad God-dishonoring and soul-undoing opinions, would seriously consider of this, that they shall lose all the pains, cost and charge that they have been, or shall be at, for the propagating of error; and if they are ever saved, it shall be by fire, as the apostle there shows. Ah, sirs, is it nothing to lay out your money for that which is not bread? and your strength for that which will not, which cannot, profit you in the day that you must make up your account, and all your works must be tried by fire? Error as a glass, is bright, but brittle, and cannot endure the hammer, or fire—as gold can, which, though rubbed or melted, remains firm and lustrous.

Ah, that such souls would now at last 'buy the truth, and sell it not' (Prov. 23:23). Remember you can never over-buy it, whatever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you should have all the world in exchange for it.

It is said of Caesar, that 'he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes,' for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters—but lost his robes. Ah, what are Caesar's books to God's books? Well, remember this, that one day, yes, one hour spent in the study of truth, or spreading abroad of truth, will yield the soul more comfort and profit than many thousand years spent in the study and spreading abroad of corrupt and vain opinions, which have their rise from hell, and not from heaven, from the god of this world and not from the God who shall at last judge this world, and all the corrupt opinions of men.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, To hate, reject and abominate all those doctrines and opinions which are contrary to godliness, and which open a door to profaneness, and all such doctrines and opinions which require men to hold forth a strictness above what the Scripture requires; and all such doctrines and opinions which advance and lift up corrupted nature to the doing of supernatural things, which none can do but by that supernatural power that raised Christ from the grave; and such opinions which lift our own righteousness in the room of Christ's righteousness, which place good works in the throne of Christ, and makes them co-partners with Christ. And all those opinions and doctrines which so set up and cry up Christ and his righteousness, as to cry down all duties of holiness and righteousness, and all those doctrines and opinions which make the glorious and blessed privileges of believers in the days of the gospel to be lesser, fewer and weaker, than they were in the time of the law. Ah, did your souls arise with a holy hatred, and a strong indignation against such doctrines and opinions, you would stand when others fall, and you would shine as the sun in his glory, when many who were once as shining stars may go forth as stinking snuffs. Gideon had seventy sons, and but one illegitimate child, and yet that illegitimate child destroyed all the rest (Judges 8:13, et seq.). One turn may bring a man quite out of the way. One old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counterfeits, and one old truth of God's more than a thousand new errors. True hatred is against all errors! It is sad to frown upon one error and smile upon another.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, To hold fast the truth. As men take no hold on the arm of flesh—until they let go the arm of God (Jer. 17:5); so men take no hold on error until they have let go their hold of truth; therefore hold fast the truth (2 Tim. 1:13, and Titus 1:9). Truth is your crown, hold fast your crown, and let no man take your crown from you. Has not God made truth sweet to your soul, yes, sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb? and will not you go on to heaven, feeding upon truth, that heavenly honeycomb, as Samson did of his honeycomb.

Ah, souls, have you not found truth sweetening your spirits, and cheering your spirits, and warming your spirits, and raising your spirits, and corroborating your spirits? Have not you found truth a guide to lead you, a staff to uphold you, a cordial to strengthen you, and a medicine to heal you? And will not you hold fast the truth? Has not truth been your best friend in your worst days? Has not truth stood by you when friends have forsaken you? Has not truth done more for you than all the world could do against you, and will you not hold fast the truth? Is not truth your right eye, without which you cannot see for Christ? And your right hand, without which you cannot do for Christ? And your right foot, without which you cannot walk with Christ? And will you not hold truth fast? Oh! hold fast the truth in your judgments and understandings, in your wills and affections, in your profession and conversation.

Truth is more precious than gold or rubies, 'and all the things you can desire are not to be compared to her' (Prov. 3:15). Truth is that heavenly mirror wherein we may see the luster and glory of divine wisdom, power, greatness, love and mercifulness. In this mirror you may see the face of Christ, the favor of Christ, the riches of Christ, and the heart of Christ—

beating and working sweetly towards your souls. Oh! let your souls cleave to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi (Ruth 1:15, 16), and say, 'I will not leave truth, nor return from following after truth; but where truth goes I will go, and where truth lodges I will lodge; and nothing but death shall part truth and my soul.'

What John said to the church of Philadelphia I may say to you, 'Hold fast that which you have, that no man take your crown' (Rev. 3:11). The crown is the top of royalties: such a thing is truth: 'Let no man take your crown.' 'Hold fast the faithful word,' as Titus speaks. Hold fast as with tooth and nail, against those who would snatch it from us. It is better to let go of anything, rather than truth! It is better to let go, of your honors and riches, your friends and pleasures, and the world's favors; yes, your nearest and dearest relations, yes, your very lives—than to let go of the truth. Oh, keep the truth, and truth will make you safe and happy forever. Blessed are those who are kept by truth. 'Though I cannot dispute for the truth, yet I can die for the truth,' said a blessed martyr.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, To keep humble. Humility will keep the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and erroneous snares of his spreading. As low trees and shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind which shake and tear the taller trees, so humble souls are free from those gusts and blasts of error which shake and tear proud, lofty souls. Satan and the world have least power to fasten errors upon humble souls. The God of light and truth delights to dwell with the humble; and the more light and truth dwells in the soul, the further off darkness and error will stand from the soul. The God of grace pours in grace into humble souls, as men pour drink into empty vessels; and the more grace is poured into the soul, the less error shall be able to overpower the soul, or to infect the soul.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision so many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, he sat down mourning, and said within himself, Who shall pass through these? whereupon he heard a voice answering, Humility shall pass through them.

That is a sweet word in Psalm 25:9, 'The humble, he will guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.' And certainly souls guided by God, and taught by God, are not easily drawn aside into ways of error. Oh, take heed of spiritual pride! Pride fills our fancies, and weakens our graces, and makes room in our hearts for error. There are no men on earth so soon entangled, and so easily conquered by error—as proud souls. Oh, it is dangerous to love to be wise above what is written, to be curious and unsober in your desire of knowledge, and to trust to your own capacities and abilities to undertake to pry into all secrets, and to be puffed up with a carnal mind. Souls that are thus a-soaring up above the bounds and limits of humility, usually fall into the very worst of errors, as experience does daily evidence. The proud soul is like him who gazed upon the moon—but fell into the pit. You know how to apply it.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, The great evils that errors have produced. Error is a fruitful mother, and has brought forth such monstrous children as has set towns, cities and nations on fire. Errors in conscience produce many great evils, not only in men's own souls—but also in human affairs. Error is

that whorish woman that has cast down many, wounded many, yes, slain many strong men, many great men, and many learned men, and many professing men in former times and in our time, as is too evident to all who are not destitute of the truth, and blinded by Satan. Oh, the graces that error has weakened, and the sweet joys and comforts that error has clouded, if not buried! Oh, the hands that error has weakened, the eyes that error has blinded, the judgments of men that error has perverted, the minds that error has darkened, the hearts that error has hardened, the affections that error has cooled, the consciences that error has seared, and the lives of men that error has polluted! Ah, souls! can you solemnly consider of this, and not tremble more at error, than at hell itself?

**DEVICE 12. To choose wicked company, to keep wicked society.**

And oh! the horrid impieties and wickedness that Satan has drawn men to sin—by moving them to sit and associate themselves with vain people.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell, until your hearts are affected, upon those commands of God which expressly require us to shun the society of the wicked (Eph. 5:11): 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness—but rather reprove them'; (Prov. 5:14-16): 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' 1 Cor. 5:9-11, 2 Thess. 3:6, Prov. 1:10-15. Turn to these Scriptures, and let your souls dwell upon them, until a holy indignation be raised in your souls against fellowship with vain men. 'God will not take the wicked by the hand,' as Job speaks (34:20; 30:24). Why then should you? God's commands are not like those who are easily reversed—but they are like those of the Medes, they cannot be changed. If these commands be not now observed by you, they will at last be witnesses against you, and millstones to sink you, in that day that Christ shall judge you. The commands of God must outweigh all authority and example of men. (Jerome).

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That their company is very infectious and dangerous, as is clear from the scripture above mentioned. Ah, how many have lost their names, and lost their estates, and strength, and God, and heaven, and souls—by society with wicked men! As you shun a stinking carcass; as the seaman shuns sands and rocks, and shoals; as you shun those who have the plague-sores running upon them, so should you shun the society of wicked men. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad infections endanger the body, or as an infected house the neighborhood—so does wicked company the soul. (Prov. 13:20).

Eusebius reports of John the Evangelist, that he would not allow Cerinthus, the heretic, in the same bath with him, lest some judgment should abide them both. A man who keeps ill company is like him that walks in the sun—tanned insensibly.

Bias, a heathen man, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked men in the ship calling upon the gods: 'Oh,' said he, 'refrain prayer, hold your tongues; I would not have your gods take notice that you are here; they sure will drown us all if they could.' Ah, sirs, could a heathen see so much danger in the society of wicked men, and can you see

none?

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, To look always upon wicked men, under those names and notions which the Scripture describes them. The Scripture calls them lions for their fierceness, and bears for their cruelty, and dragons for their hideousness, and dogs for their filthiness, and wolves for their subtleness. The Scripture styles them scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum. (2 Tim. 4:17, Is. 11:7, Ezek. 3:10, Matt. 7:6, Rev. 22:15, Luke 13:32, Is. 10:17, Ezek. 2:6, Judges 9:14, Job 21:18, Psalm 83:13, Psalm 18:42, Ezek. 22:18, 19, Is. 65:5, Ezek. 24:6.)

It is not safe to look upon wicked men under those names and notions which they set out themselves by, or which flatterers set them out by; this may delude the soul—but the looking upon them under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out by, may preserve the soul from frequenting their company and delighting in their society. Do not tell me what this man calls them, or how such and such count them; but tell me how does the Scripture call them, how does the Scripture count them? As Nabal's name was, so was his nature (1 Sam. 25:25), and, as wicked men's names are, so are their natures. You may know well enough what is within them, by the apt names that the Holy Spirit has given them. Such monsters are wicked men—which should render their company to all who have tasted of the sweetness of divine love, a burden and not a delight.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is, solemnly to consider, That the society and company of wicked men have been a great grief and burden to those precious souls that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven (Psalm 120:5, 6): 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul has long dwelt with him that hates peace.' So Jeremiah: 'Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men' (Jer. 9:2). So they vexed Lot's righteous soul by their filthy conversation' (2 Pet. 2:7); they made his life a burden, they made death more desirable to him than life, yes, they made his life a lingering death. Guilt or grief is all that godly gracious souls get by conversing with wicked men.

'O Lord, let me not go to hell, where the wicked are: for Lord, you know I never loved their company here'—said a gracious gentlewoman, when she was to die.