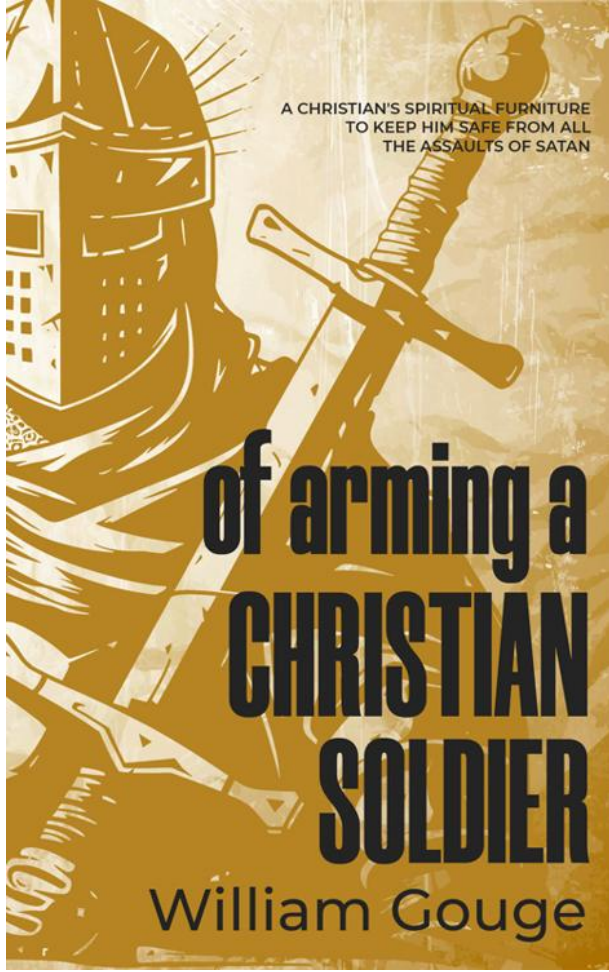




A CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL FURNITURE
TO KEEP HIM SAFE FROM ALL
THE ASSAULTS OF SATAN

of arming a
**CHRISTIAN
SOLDIER**

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Of Arming a Christian Soldier:

Or A Christian's Spiritual Furniture to Keep Him Safe from All the Assaults of Satan.

The Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged:

By William Gouge."

The First Treatise in The Whole Armor of God

Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

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Of Arming a Christian Soldier

The First Part:

The Fountain of Christian Courage

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. - Ephesians 6:10

§ 1. The Sum and Several Heads

Saint Paul, having delivered such doctrines of faith and precepts of manners (both general concerning all Christians, and particular concerning the distinct degrees of several persons in a family) as he thought most appropriate, in the closing up of his Epistle, gives a worthy direction for the better performing of them all; which is, to be courageous and well-furnished against all those difficulties and dangers with which they are likely to meet in their Christian course. Well knew the Apostle that the best Christians, while here they live in this world, are both prone to faint by reason of their own weakness, and also in hazard to be foiled by reason of their enemies' power; therefore, he takes upon him the person of a wise, vigilant, and valiant Captain; and in soldier-like terms animates the Lord's Soldiers, that they neither faint in themselves nor be daunted by their enemies.

This Direction is continued from verse 10 to 21.

The parts of it are two:

1. That we be courageous, verse 10.
2. That we be well prepared: v. 11, etc. In the former note,
3. The manner
4. The matter of the Apostle's exhortation. The manner is in these words, "Finally, my brethren."

The matter in these, "Be strong in the Lord, etc."

In the latter note,

1. The Means, how
2. The Motive, why we must be well prepared. The means is to be well-armed, which point is first in general laid down: and then in particular exemplified.

The general is once declared, verse 11, and again, (because of the necessity thereof) repeated verse 13, and in both places amplified by the end.

In the particular exemplification, there are six spiritual graces, fitly resembled to six pieces of armour.

Now because of ourselves, we are as children, and no better able to wield this Armour of God, than David the armour of Saul, the Apostle adds that heavenly exercise of prayer, teaching them how to pray for themselves and others: especially for him who was one of their chief guides.

The Motive is taken from the danger, in which we are by reason of our spiritual enemies, whom he describes verse 12. Almost every word in this Direction is of weight and worthy to be searched into.

§2. The Necessity of the Point

The first point in order is the manner of the Apostle's exhortation, which sets forth:

1. The necessity of the thing urged, "Finally."
2. The affection of the one urging it, "my brethren."

The original word translated as "finally" signifies a remainder and implies that there still remained one necessary point to be delivered before concluding, as if he had said with more words: Though I have sufficiently instructed you in doctrines of faith and precepts of manners, there is one needful point left behind. Without this, all will be in vain. There is still a remainder, the only remainder of all, by which you may make good use of all that has been delivered.

[Use] Is this direction so necessary? A point that cannot be omitted? Worthy of the last place, as most of all to be remembered? Then we ought to pay even more attention to it, lest we should let it slip. In hearing, we must heed it well; after we have heard it, we must keep it well and not let it slip like water put into a colander or split dish.

§ 3. The Apostle's Affection

To urge this point yet somewhat more forcefully, the Apostle next manifests his affection in these words, "My brethren," which declare both the humility of his mind and the gentleness of his spirit.

"Brother" is a word of equality: in calling them brethren, he makes himself equal to them, though he himself was one of the principal members of Christ's body, one of the eyes thereof, a Minister of the Word, an extraordinary Minister, an Apostle, a spiritual Father of many souls, a planter of many famous Churches, yea, the planter of this Church at Ephesus; and though many of them to whom he wrote were poor, mean men, handicraftsmen, such as laboured with their hands for their living; and many also servants and bondmen; yet without exception of any, he terms and counts them all his brethren, and so makes himself equal to those of the lower sort. Behold his humility: For if to affect titles of superiority, as Rabbi, Doctor, Father, be a note of arrogance (as it is, and therefore Christ in that respect taxes the Scribes and Pharisees), then to take and give titles of equality is a note of humility. The like notes of humility may be often noted both in other Epistles of this Apostle and in the Epistles of other Apostles; yea, and in all the Prophets also.

Well they knew, that notwithstanding there were diverse offices, places, and outward degrees among Christians: yet they all had one Father, and were fellow members of one and the same body, and in regard of their spiritual estate all one in Christ Jesus.

[Use] Take my brethren the Prophets, take the Apostles, yea, take Christ himself for an example of humility. For Christ, though He were Lord of all, yet for as much as He took part with us, and so all were of one, He was not ashamed to call us brethren. Who then can disdain to call any Saint brother? This point of humility and meekness Christ wills us after an especial manner to learn of Him. It is a grace which will highly grace us before God and man. It makes us amiable in God's eyes, who gives grace to the lowly; and it makes our company very acceptable to men. A humble-minded man who makes himself equal to those of the lower sort, and accounts all his

brethren, will be sociable and willing to converse with any for their mutual good. But proud and ambitious spirits are full of scorn and disdain, so as men cannot well endure their company, and God will resist them. Wherefore, to conclude this point, whatever your parts of nature or gifts of God's Spirit be, whatever your place or calling be, whatever excellency or eminency you have above others, remember that all Saints have one Father, all are of one body, all are one in Christ, therefore, all account one another brethren. Let magistrates, ministers, and all of all sorts apply this.

[Use 2] As for such profane persons who deride the Saints for giving this title brethren one to another, do they not through those Saints' sides strike the Prophets, the Apostles, yea, and Christ Himself?

Note further the gentle and mild spirit of the Apostle; "Brethren" is a title of kindness and love: "My," an attribute which adds emphasis thereunto. In other places, he uses other attributes, which add greater emphasis, as "My beloved brethren," "My brethren beloved and longed for." So likewise, other phrases which imply as great meekness and gentleness, as "My little children," "My beloved children," etc.

It was not a want of authority to command that made him thus gently exhort, but rather an earnest desire that he had to persuade, and even provoke them to do that which was their bounden duty and tended to their good. Mark how he deals with Philemon, verse 9, 10, 20, by this meekness he insinuates himself into them and shows that he seeks not himself and his own good so much as them and their good.

[Use] Learn ministers, masters, parents, and all Christians how to enforce your exhortations and persuasions: even with evidence of love, with all mildness and gentleness. ("The servants of the Lord

must not strive, but be gentle toward all men.") Thus shall you give them a pleasant savor and sweet relish, yea though the things whereunto you exhort be unpleasing to men's natural taste and carnal appetite. When fulsome potions or bitter pills are sweetened with sugar, they will the sooner be swallowed and better digested: so exhortations seasoned with terms of mildness and gentleness.

Thus much for the manner of the Apostle's direction.

§ 4. The Need of Christian Courage

The matter follows, the first part of which is in these words, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might"; wherein note, first, what is required, secondly, how that which is required may be performed.

The thing required is to be strong. The Apostle here speaks of an inward spiritual strength, the strength of the inward and new man, and his meaning is that we should be valorous and courageous in the performance of those Christian duties which we take in hand.

Christian valor and spiritual courage is a needful grace. Note with what variety of phrase the Apostle does exhort hereunto, 1 Cor. 16:13. "Stand fast, quit you like men, be strong": hereunto God persuades His servant Joshua, and David, his son Solomon. David had in him this holy valor and courage when he went against Goliath, and Paul when he was going to Jerusalem. But most valorous and strong did Christ our Captain show Himself, when He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer. The Evangelist says, He steadfastly set His face, He settled Himself fully to go: though it was to drink a most bitter cup, He would not be drawn from it. Because Peter labored to dissuade Him, He sharply rebuked him, and called him Satan.

The reasons why this spiritual valor is so needful are especially two.

First, because of our own indisposition, timorousness, dullness, and backwardness to all holy and good duties. What Christian finds not this by woeful experience in himself? When he would pray, hear God's word, partake of the Sacraments, sanctify the Sabbath, or perform any other like Christian duty, there is I know not what fearfulness in him, his flesh hangs back, as a bear when it is drawn to the stake. This the holy Apostle found in himself: so that for the rousing up of our own dullness we have need of valor.

Secondly, because of those many oppositions which we are likely to meet withal. We heard before how the flesh would hang back, and so labor to hinder us. The world will likewise do what it can, either by vain enticements to seduce us (as it drew away Demas), or else by reproach, trouble, and persecution, to terrify us (as those who forsook Paul). But above all the Devil will be ready to resist us (as he resisted Joshua) and to hinder us (as he hindered Paul), yea to buffet us (as he buffeted the same Paul). To omit other instances, most lively is this set forth in our Head and General, Christ Jesus. As soon as He was set apart to His public ministry, the Tempter came to Him: after He began to execute it, Satan stirred up the Rulers, Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and many others to hinder Him; yea, He moved Peter to dissuade Him, and when Christ was about to offer up Himself a sacrifice, then again came the Prince of this world to discourage Him. The like oppositions are all Christ's members to look for; so as there is no hope, no possibility of holding out and enduring to the end without this Christian valor and magnanimity here spoken of.

[Use 1] Justly may they be taxed, who either too timorously or too securely and carelessly enter into a Christian course and undertake

such Christian duties as are required at their hands. Hence it comes to pass that many duties are completely omitted by them, others intermitted and broken off before they are half done: and as for those which are done, so untowardly are they done, that little or no comfort can be found in doing them. Lamentable experience shows how small matters do discourage many who know the right way and are often in conscience moved to walk therein.

Such as lack this Christian courage would be better not giving up their names to be Christ's Soldiers, or profess that they intend to fight the Lord's battles: for by their timorousness and cowardliness they discourage other Soldiers of the Lord and hearten the enemy. The Lord would not suffer any that were fearful and fainthearted to fight His battles on earth against earthly enemies, lest they made others faint like themselves. Can we think that He will entertain fainthearted soldiers in His spiritual battles against spiritual enemies, in which combats His own honor, and His children's salvation are so deeply engaged?

As for the Enemy, he is like a wolf; if strongly resisted, he will flee; if timorously yielded unto, he will more eagerly pursue and insult.

[Use 2] Endeavour we therefore to get unto ourselves a holy courage and spiritual valor, shaking off our natural fearfulness, that in nothing we fear our adversaries, but (as Christ our General did) endure the cross, and despise the shame. We that will be Christ's soldiers must duly consider the advice which our Lord gives, Luke 14:31, which is, to observe what kind of enemies, how many, how mighty, we are to encounter withal. We shall hereafter hear how hard a battle we are to undertake, how many, mighty, malicious, subtle our enemies be: if notwithstanding all this we be minded to fight

under Christ's banner, then be we strong and courageous, bold as lions; so are the righteous.

§ 5. All Strength from God

But alas, what are we, weak flesh and blood? What strength can there be in us to fight against such enemies as will set upon us?

For removing this scruple, the Apostle adds this clause, "in the Lord, etc.", whereby he shows how we come to be strong, not by any strength in ourselves, but by seeking strength in the Lord, casting ourselves wholly and only on Him, and on His power.

The strength and valor whereby we are enabled to fight the Lord's battle is hidden in the Lord and to be had from Him. For all our sufficiency is of God; without Christ, we can do nothing. Hence it is that David says unto God, "I love thee dearly, O Lord my strength: The Lord is my rock and fortress," etc.

It is more evident than needs be proved that our Apostle was a strong and valiant champion of the Lord; but whence had he this strength? "I am able," says he, "to do all things through the help of Christ which strengthens me." That which in particular he says of himself, he also affirms of other Saints, who were strengthened with all might through God's glorious power.

The Lord has thus reserved all strength in Himself, and would have us strong in Him: partly for His own glory, and partly for our comfort.

1. For His glory, that in time of need we might fly unto Him, and in all straits cast ourselves on Him; and being preserved and

delivered, acknowledge Him our Saviour, and accordingly give Him the whole praise.

2. For our comfort, that in all distresses we might be the more confident. Much more bold may we be in the Lord than in ourselves. God's power being infinite, it is impossible that it should be matched by any adverse power, which at the greatest is finite: were our strength in ourselves, though for a time it might seem somewhat sufficient, yet would there be fear of decay: but being in God, we rest upon an omnipotency, and so have a far surer prop unto our faith, as we shall hear in the next Doctrine.

[Use 1] Learn we to renounce all confidence in ourselves, and to acknowledge our own inability and weakness. Thus shall we be brought to seek help out of ourselves. Those who overween themselves, and conceive that they are sufficiently able to help themselves, will be so far from seeking strength that they will foully scorn it when it is offered unto them. Mark what is said of the wicked man, who is proud in his own conceit, "He contemneth the Lord": as he that is full despiseth a honeycomb, so he that is confident in his own strength, despises help from any other.

[Use 2] Having seen our own weakness, and thereupon renounced all confidence in ourselves, our care must be to fly to a sure ground and rest thereon; so shall we be safe and sure, yea so may we be quiet and secure. This sure ground and safe rock is only the Lord: strong He is in Himself, and can both strengthen us and weaken our enemies. In this confidence did David come against Goliath and prevailed. Thus may we be sure of victory: "Through God we are more than conquerors."

[Use 3] But vain is the confidence of such as, trusting to themselves and their own strength, defy all their enemies. Proud boasters they are, whose pride at length shall have a fall. Such, in regard of outward power, were Goliath and Sennacherib. Intolerable is this presumption, even in outward strength: note their end, 1 Sam. 17:50 & Isa. 37:36-38. But more than most intolerable in spiritual strength, whereof we have not one dram in ourselves, but in that respect are as water spilled upon the ground. Peter was too confident therein: had he not seen his presumption after he began to be puffed up, and speedily humbled himself, fearful had been the issue thereof: for nothing more provokes God than spiritual pride, because nothing is more derogatory to His glory.

Vain also is their confidence who go from weak to weak, from themselves to other creatures; like the Israelites, who went to the Egyptians for help. Fitly does the Prophet compare them to a reed, whereupon if one lean, it breaks and rents his arm. Such are the silly Papists, among whom some think to be strong in Pope Gregory, Pope Boniface, Pope Alexander, and such others, whom without breach of charity we may think to be very fiends in hell: other in Saint George, Saint Christopher, and such other who never were: the histories of them are mere fictions: others (who think they have a far surer ground of confidence) in Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and such like holy and worthy Saints: but the best Saints that ever were had no strength to help others; they only had a sufficiency for themselves. Thus it comes to pass, that in their greatest need, when they seek and look for the best help, they are all like those who came to the wells and found no water: they returned with their vessels empty: they were ashamed and confounded and covered their heads.

§ 6. God's Power Most Mighty

That we may be the more moved to renounce all vain confidence in ourselves or other creatures, and be bold, valiant, and strong in the Lord, casting our whole confidence in Him alone, the Apostle adds these next words ("in the power of His might") which are a very forceful amplification of this former point. Some distinguish these two words, power and might, as the cause and effect, attributing might to God, and power to the Saints, and so make God's might the cause of their power, as if he had said, be strong in that power which you receive from the might of God. But I take this distinction here to be, firstly, too curious, and without good ground; secondly, impertinent, because that which the Apostle aims at is to raise up our faith to God, and to settle it firmly in Him, and therefore he sets forth the power of God, as it is in God Himself; thirdly, not agreeable to the phrase, which is the same in this clause as in the former, "in the Lord, & in the power, &c.", which implies that the power here spoken of, is a power in the Lord, and that as the Lord Himself is without us, and above us, so is this power. The phrase therefore which the Apostle here uses, I take to be a Hebraism, which some for perspicuity's sake translate thus, "in His mighty power", and not unfitly. This very phrase is used before, and by most translated "his mighty power": this Hebraism "power of might", adds great emphasis, and implies, that might by an excellency and propriety belongs to God's power only; and that all other power in comparison of it, is mere weakness.

The point hence to be noted is this, that

The power of God whereunto we are to trust, is a most mighty and strong power, a power able to protect us against the might of all adverse power whatsoever. In this respect, the Apostle calls God's power, "an exceeding greatness of power". He searches after rare and high phrases to set forth this power of God, because of the infinite

greatness thereof, which cannot by ordinary and usual phrases be expressed.

According to God's greatness is His power, infinite, incomprehensible, inutterable, inconceivable: as a mighty wind which drives all before it; as a swift and strong stream against which none can swim; as a burning flaming fire which consumes and devours all; so is God's power. Whatsoever stands before it, and is opposed against it, is but as chaff before a strong wind, or bulrushes before a swift current, or stubble before a flaming fire; for all adverse power, though to our weakness it seems never so mighty, yet can it be but finite, being the power of creatures, and so a limited power, yea, a dependent power, subordinate to this power of might, of His might, who is Almighty, and so no proportion between them.

[Use 1] A strong prop is this unto our faith, and a good motive to make us perfectly trust unto the power of God without wavering or doubting, notwithstanding our own weakness, or our adversaries' power: though there be no strength in us, yet is there power in God: though we be on every side environed with strong and fierce enemies, our flesh and the violent lusts thereof, as headstrong rebels and traitors within us; the furious world, with the potent and raging persecutors thereof, on one side; that fierce Lion and cruel Dragon the Devil, with all his hellish host, on the other side; yea all these banding their forces together continually in arms against us, yet is there in God a power of might, in comparison whereof all the power of all our adversaries is but weakness. When we know not what to do, then may we, then must we with faithful Jehoshaphat turn our eyes to God, and to the power of His might. When we see potent enemies against us, and no outward means to defend us against them, we are ready to cry, "Alas how shall we do?" and with the Israelites to doubt of the power of God, and say, "Can God help in such straits? Can He

support such weaklings as we are? Can He subdue such and such enemies as assault us?" Against such doubts, we are to meditate on this mighty power of God. God's power being a power of might, He needs nothing to help Him. The weaker we are, the more is His power manifested: for it is made perfect in weakness: neither can God's power be weakened or hindered by any adverse power. Many and mighty enemies are to Him a few and weak ones: so that the more mighty His enemies be, the more honor redounds to Him in subduing them. Wherefore for strengthening our faith, that we may be strong in the Lord, pray we that God would open our eyes, that we may see what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe: so shall we neither fear because of our enemies' power, nor faint because of our own weakness, but stand still and behold the salvation of God.

[Use 2] It is no matter of presumption to be sure of victory, being strong in this mighty power. Indeed, if the ground of our assurance rested in, and on ourselves, it might justly be counted presumption; but the Lord, and the power of His might being the ground thereof, they either know not what is the might of His power, or else too too lightly esteem it, who account assured confidence thereon, presumption. No doubt but many so deemed of David's confidence when he undertook the combat with Goliath: yea, it is manifest that his eldest brother Eliab, and also Saul so judged: but David's eye was lifted up to God, he was strong in the power of God's might, which made him so bold and confident. Thus we with like confidence and assurance may trust unto the same mighty power, though all the world count us presumptuous for it. The truth is that our adversaries might well object this against us, if our confidence were in our own power, or rather weakness: but being in the power of God's might, unjustly they slander us, and most injuriously impeach God's mighty power.

§ 7. The Benefit of Confidence in God

To conclude this first general point of Christian courage and confidence in the Lord, and in the power of His might, great is the benefit thereof, and that in three respects especially;

1. It will remove causeless fear, as in Nehemiah. Solomon says, that a slothful, timorous man is loath to step out of doors, fearing that there is a lion without, when he has no cause so to fear; and that "The wicked flee when none pursues." But he that is strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, will make the utmost trial.
2. It will make bold in apparent danger. Instance the example of David. In this respect, the righteous are resembled to a lion.
3. It will recover a man's spirit, though he should by any occasion be wounded, stricken down, and foiled, so as at first he prevails not, yet it will make him rise up again and renew the battle, like the Israelites:

Thus, at length, shall we come to be Conquerors.

The Second Part:

The Means of Standing Sure

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against all the wiles of the Devil." - Ephesians 6:11

§1. The Heads of Those Means

The second part of the Apostle's direction, which outlines how we may be well prepared against all danger, now follows.

Here, we first need to consider the means by which we can be prepared.

In discussing these means, the Apostle reveals:

1. What the means are.
2. How they are to be used.

The means are represented using the metaphor of "Armor."

This Armor is further described by:

1. Its nature, as the "Armor of God."
2. Its completeness, as the "whole armor."

§ 2. Christians are Soldiers

For the metaphor, it is taken from soldiers, who in time of war, when they enter the field against their enemies, are subject to much danger and many annoyances of swords, spears, darts, arrows, bullets, and such like weapons of their enemies, and therefore for their better safeguard use to be well provided and fenced with good armour. In that the Apostle exhorts Christians to put on armour, he gives us to understand that,

A Christian's course of life is a warfare: for armour, especially the use of armour, is a token of war. Armour is not given to a man to sit with it at a fire, or to lie lazing on a bed, or wantonly to dance up and down, or follow pastimes and pleasures in it, but to fight. To this purpose, many like metaphors are used. Christians themselves are called soldiers; their course of life a fight; they which oppose against them enemies; the temptations wherewith they are annoyed assaults; in a word, this is a difference between the Church in Heaven and on earth, that this is militant, that triumphant.

Thus has God in wisdom disposed of our estate on earth for weighty reasons.

1. The more to manifest His pity, power, providence, and truth in keeping promise: the straits whereunto in this world we are brought, the promises which God has made to deliver us, and the many deliverances which we have, show that God pities us in our distresses, that He is provident and careful for our good, and wise in disposing of evil to good, that He is able to deliver us, and faithful in doing it. For this cause did God suffer the Israelites to go into Egypt, to be there kept in hard bondage, to be brought into many dangers, and set upon by many enemies.
2. To make proof of the gifts He bestows on His children. A soldier's valor is not known but in war: in time of peace what difference is seen between a valorous man, and a timorous coward? By that sore combat whereunto Job was brought, were the graces which God had bestowed on him evidently made known.
3. To wean them the better from this world: for so long as all things are quiet in the world, without troubles, oppositions, and assaults, we are exceedingly prone to delight in it, and to say, "It

is good to be here." Much prosperity makes many to be like that fool that bid his soul live at ease, etc.

4. To make Heaven the more longed for while we are on earth, and the more acceptable when we come to possess it. How earnestly does the soldier in tedious and dangerous combats desire victory? How welcome is triumph after war? As a safe haven to mariners tossed up and down in troublesome seas, is most welcome; so Heaven to Christians, whose life in this world is a warfare, a sea-fare.

[Use 1] Is our Christian estate a soldier-like estate, a warfare? Accordingly, let us carry ourselves; a little sleep, a little food is enough for a soldier, he lies not on beds of down, he pampers not his body with delicate fare: but he watches much, he fares hard, and lies hard. Thus, Christians may not suffer themselves to be overtaken with the vain delights and pleasures of this world. Note what the Apostle says of a Christian soldier, "No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Those having this armour think to take their ease, follow their pleasures, embrace the world, they pervert the main end of it: for it is given to stand and to resist; which if they do not, unworthy they are of armour, and shall be cashiered. Ease and rest is not here to be looked for, but rather temptations and assaults which we must watch against, and when one conflict is past, look for another, and resist all as they come: of all things, we must take heed of security, and provide that at any time we be not unfurnished: read the history of the people of Laish, and make a spiritual application thereof.

Thus much for the Metaphor.

§ 3. The Use of Spiritual Graces

Consider we now what is meant thereby. It is evident by the Apostle's exemplification hereof, that such spiritual sanctifying graces as God endows His Saints withal are the armour here meant. In that these are compared to armour, observe that

The graces of God's Spirit are for safeguard and defence. This is the main and principal end of armour, as the Apostle himself in this, and in the 13th verse, plainly shows: for in both places expressly he says, that we must put on and take to us the whole armour of God for this very end, to stand against, and to resist our enemies. Thus, righteousness as a breastplate, hope as a helmet, faith as a shield, all for defence, as we shall after more distinctly show: in the meantime, let this general observation be noted, both by such as yet have none of those graces, and also by such as have them, or at least think they have them.

[Use 1] For the first sort, with what care and diligence are they to desire and seek after them, being so needful and necessary? What rest can they give unto their souls, till they have obtained them? Would we not count him a mad man, or at least weary of his life, who should rush naked without any armour into the field among his deadly enemies? What then may we judge of those that live in this world, among the mortal enemies of their souls, utterly destitute of all saving graces? How many thousands thus live, as it were, weary of their souls, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life?

[Use 2] For the other sort which have these graces, they are to use them for their defence, as armour is used, and not for ostentation. Armour is not given to jet up and down in it, and be proud of it, as many are of apparel. Let those who have no better gifts than such as are called parts of nature, as wit, strength, beauty, and the like, boast in them, if they list: these are like light, slight, gay stuffs, which make

children and fools brag. God's graces are of a more sound and solid substance, and therefore to be used accordingly, and not made a matter of show and ostentation. Let this be noted by such as are over-conceited, and so proud of their knowledge, faith, patience, and other graces.

§ 4. Christians' Armour Spiritual

Thus, having handled the Metaphor and the meaning thereof, we come to the amplification. The first point whereof is the kind of armour here set forth. It is called the armour of God, and that in four especial respects,

1. It is made by God, even in heaven.
2. It is prescribed by God, even in His Word.
3. It is given by God, even by His Spirit.
4. It is agreeable to God, even to His will. All these do show that,

The armour wherewith Christians are fenced is divine and spiritual. In this respect, says the Apostle, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal": by denying one contrary, he affirms the other: not carnal, that is, spiritual. The several pieces mentioned afterwards do evidently prove this point.

Our enemies are spiritual, and their assaults spiritual: must not then our armour needs be spiritual? What other armour can stand us in good stead against such enemies, such assaults? As good have a sheet of paper on our naked breasts to keep off a musket shot, as use any other armour than spiritual, against the spiritual assaults of spiritual enemies.

[Use 1] Hereby is discovered the egregious folly of many in fencing themselves against spiritual enemies: as

1. Of Conjurers, Sorcerers, and such like, who imagine that the Devil may be driven away by charms, and they kept safe from him by spells, circles, etc.
2. Of superstitious Papists, who think to drive the Devil away with Holy water, Holy oil, Crosses, Crucifixes, Agnus Dei, etc.
3. Of sottish worldlings, who seek to arm themselves against the spiritual assaults of Satan by outward means, as against grief of mind and terror of conscience, by music, company, gaming, etc. The truth is, that by these means great advantage many times is given to the Devil: for thus he gets a surer possession in them.

Not much unlike to these are they, who think by physic to purge away trouble of conscience: as soon may an Ague be purged away by drinking cold water. All these are very childish and ridiculous toys, mere scarecrows, which the Devil laughs at.

[Use 2] For our parts, seeing there is an armour of God, let us be wise in distinguishing between this and all counterfeit armour: for this end observe we diligently God's word which describes it, and that so plainly as we may easily discern it: we have no warrant to use any other: neither can we safely trust to any other. Having therefore found which is the armour of God, seek we it from above of the Father of lights, from whom it comes down, and it shall be given. Having received it, give we the praise and glory thereof to Him that has given it, and use it according to His will, so may we confidently trust unto it.

§ 5. Christians' Armour Complete

The next point is the sufficiency of this armour, termed "whole armour." The Greek word is a compound word and signifies both all

manner of armour that is needful, and also such complete armour as covers all the body, and leaves no part naked or undefended. This is thus set down both to commend unto us this armour, and also to instruct us how to use it. In the first respect, I observe that

The armour of God is a complete armour, every way sufficient: sufficient to defend us in every part, and sufficient to keep off and thrust back every assault and every dart of our spiritual enemies. For the first, if we well note the particular pieces of this armour hereafter described, we shall find the Christian soldier armed from top to toe. For the last, the Apostle says of one piece, that by it all the fiery darts of the wicked may be quenched: if by one piece, much more by every piece jointly together, may all assaults be repelled. Hence it is that the Scripture which prescribes this armour is able to make the man of God absolute.

This armour being of God, it must necessarily be complete, or else question might be made of His power, as if He were not able to provide sufficient armour; or of His providence, as if He cared not to have His soldiers well-armed; or of His goodness, as if He were not moved with the wounds and foils of His servants, which for want of good armour they must necessarily receive: but God's power, providence, and goodness being without all defect, we may conclude that this armour of God is complete.

Never were any of the Saints so sufficiently armed: for the Devil has still found some part or other undefended, even in the best; and thereby wounded them. Instance Noah, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, etc.

Answer. The fault was not in the insufficiency of their armour, but in the negligent and careless use thereof, as if a soldier which has very good armour of proof, every way complete, should either not at all, or

very loosely put on his headpiece, or breastplate, or any other piece: and this is evident because in such parts where some were wounded, others were well fenced. Noah and some others failed in the use of their breastplate of righteousness: Peter failed in holding out his shield of faith. If the fault were in the armour, either in the weakness or want of this or that piece, then would the Devil without fail foil every Christian in one and the same part.

[Use 1] This sufficiency of God's armour ought to incite us diligently and carefully to seek after it. A soldier who is to go into a dangerous fight, if at least he has any care of his limbs and life, will not be quiet until he has got good and complete armour of proof. How careful was Saul to well furnish David when he was to enter combat with Goliath? Rather than he should want, Saul was ready to have afforded him his own, if it had been fit. Look here is the complete armour of God, sufficient to keep us safe: let us first labor to get it.

[Use 2] Having got it, let us be bold and confident in this armour of God because it is of proof and complete. It was this armour that made David so confident against Goliath, though he had no outward armour on him. Those who are well-armed and yet faint-hearted dishonor Him that gave them their armour, abuse the gift itself, and make themselves ridiculous to all that see or know them.

§ 6. The Armour of God to be Used

Hitherto we have handled the means appointed for our safety: now we are to declare how this armour is to be used. "Put on the whole armour."

Here are two points to be noted,

1. That we put on armour.

2. That we put on the whole armour. This word "put on" is a word of practice, by which the Apostle follows his former metaphor, taken from soldiers who are in the field: they do not, as householders in the time of peace, let their armour hang on the walls without use of it, till it rust, but they make use of it by putting it on, wearing it, and putting it to the proof; so

Christians ought to be well-furnished always and well-prepared with the graces of God's Spirit: they must ever have them in readiness at hand to use them and make proof of them. In this sense, this phrase of "putting on" is often used and applied to many particular graces, yea, to Christ Himself, whereby is implied that we should apply Christ to ourselves, and so make use of Him, and of all His actions and sufferings: yea, also of all those graces which He conveys into us. Other metaphors are also used to set forth the same point: "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (says the Apostle). The metaphor is taken from a fire, which is of little use when it is covered over and smothered up with ashes, but stirred and blown up, it is of great use. Again, our Lord uses another metaphor to the same purpose, "A good man (says He) brings forth good things." As a wise man that has a store of treasure will not let it lie rusting and cankering in his chest (this is a note of a covetous miser, who were as good to be without treasure as to have abundance, for he wants in his greatest abundance because he uses not what he has) but brings forth and employs it for his own and others' good: so does a good man with the treasure of grace which God has bestowed on him. Excellent metaphors to illustrate and urge this point.

All the benefit and good of a thing come from the use of it: as armour rusting by the wall's side, as fire smothered with ashes, as money cankering in chests, so are the graces of God's Spirit if they be not employed: though in themselves they be never so excellent, yet to us

and others they are fruitless and unprofitable, without a right use of them. This David, no doubt, well knew, and therefore did not hide God's righteousness in his heart.

[Use 1] Far short come they of this Apostolical direction, who upon conceit that they have as good armour as the best, please themselves therein, and yet show forth no practice thereof: knowledge they have, and well are they able to discourse of the kinds of graces, and of the differences between current and counterfeit grace, as also of the many wiles of Satan, and of the means to avoid them, and yet no proof do they give of the soundness of any grace in themselves. For example, many imagine that they have very good and sound faith, and yet live altogether by sense: for while all things go well, according to their desire, they can believe and depend upon God: but when any cross falls upon them, then their shield of faith is to seek, every dart pierces them to the very heart. Others conceive they have a good breastplate of righteousness, and yet no practice of piety, none of charity, to be observed in them. They are like those of whom Saint James speaks, who can say to such as are naked and destitute of daily food, "Be you warmed and filled," notwithstanding they give them not those things which are needful for the body.

[Use 2] Let us for our parts make proof of the graces we have: what armour we seem to have, let it be seen on our backs. Think we that we have the shield of faith? Let us live by our faith, as the Patriarchs did: or the breastplate of righteousness? Let it cover us as a robe: let us be so conscientious in practicing the several duties thereof, that with the testimony of a good conscience we may say to God as Nehemiah did, "Remember me, O my God, for good, for all that I have done for Thy people." Or the girdle of truth? Let us so uprightly and sincerely behave ourselves, as we may with comfort say with honest Hezekiah, "Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in

truth." Thus may the general doctrine be applied in all the particular branches of this Christian armour: which that we may the rather do, note what is further required: that the whole armour be put on.

§ 7. Every Grace to be Used

As this particle, "whole," is annexed to armour, to commend unto us the sufficiency of the armour of God, whereof we have heard before: so this compound word, "whole armour," is inferred upon that action of putting on, to teach us that it is not sufficient to put on some parts and pieces thereof, but every part and piece, the whole armour must be put on. From the true scope of the Apostle's meaning, I gather that,

The power of every sanctifying grace must be manifest in the life of a Christian. This was it whereunto he exhorted before, saying, "Let us in all things grow up," etc. There he uses a metaphor taken from the members of a natural body, implying that spiritual graces are to the spirit as bodily members are to a body; now if the body grows in some parts only, and not in every part proportionally, (as if it should grow all in the head, and not answerably in the legs, or all in the shoulders, and not at all in the thighs) it would be but a monstrous body. Or if it abounds with noisome humours, which make it swell in some parts, those humours will be so far from preserving the body that they will rather impair the health, and shorten the life of it. So, if a Christian shall be hot in faith and cold in love; or have great knowledge and show little obedience; or be full of devotion and empty of discretion, surely he is a monstrous Christian: the want of some graces makes the others to be of no use. Such professors are a shame and dishonour to others; they are full of noisome and distempered humours, which will destroy that show of spiritual life which they seem to have. Fitly may they be compared to

Nebuchadnezzar's Image, whose head was of gold, but his feet of iron and clay: what was the end of that Image? The feet thereof were smitten, and so all broken together. Such is likely to be the end of all monstrous Christians.

But is it possible that any one Christian should have all sanctifying graces?

Yea, verily, it is not only possible, but also necessary that not only any one, but every one be endued with every kind of sanctifying grace, which appertains to the essential being of a Christian. For regeneration is as perfect in the kind thereof as our natural birth.

Men ordinarily are born with all the parts and members of a man: if not, they are either monsters or at least imperfect: but in the spiritual birth, which is from above, even of God, there is no imperfection of parts, there are no monsters: all that are born of the Spirit, have all the essential parts of the Spirit; and thus are all alike, though not in measure, yet in number of graces. For as the flesh has corrupted every power of the soul and part of the body, so does the Spirit renew every power and part of both. The Apostle testifies of the Corinthians, that in all things they were made rich, and not destitute of any gift.

Forceful and weighty motives there are to urge this point, as

[1] God makes nothing in vain. Now then, God having made this whole armour, whole armour must be put on. If a careful and wise Captain should provide sufficient armour for all his soldiers, and some of them be careless in putting on every piece thereof, might he not be offended with them, and that justly? Much more should we provoke God by neglecting anything which He, in His good providence, has provided for us.

[2] We stand in great need of every piece of this armour: for unless we put on every piece, we lie open to our enemies, even as if we had put on never a piece: for they are very subtle, they narrowly view us on every side, and soon can espy if any part be naked. What if a soldier have a helmet and want a breastplate, if a dart light upon his breast, and pierce to his heart, what good gets he by his headpiece? Or if he has a breastplate, and wants a girdle to knit it close, or tassets and cuisses to cover his belly? Thus, if faith, or hope, or righteousness, or truth, or any other part of the Christian armour be wanting, the Devil can thereby take his advantage to destroy the soul: so as not only duty to God, but the safety of ourselves may move us to put on the whole armour.

[3] True trial of the truth of those graces, which we seem to have, is made by the concurrence & meeting of all together. Single graces, that is, graces which stand alone, are counterfeit graces. Faith without righteousness is presumption; righteousness without truth is hypocrisy, and so in the rest. All come from the same fountain: he that has not all, has none at all.

How needful is it that we follow the counsel of Saint Peter, [Use 1] which is, to give all diligence to join one grace unto another, to knowledge faith, to faith hope, to hope righteousness, to righteousness truth, to truth patience, and so in the rest? Thus will it not repent the Lord to have provided whole armour for us when we shall use all. Thus shall we give no advantage to our spiritual enemies; thus shall we have evident proof of the Spirit's abode in us, and be assured that indeed we are born anew.

§ 8. Man's Endeavour to be Added to God's Assistance

The two general parts of the Apostle's direction have hitherto been distinctly handled: now let us consider them jointly together. The

first part is that we be strong in the Lord. The second, that we use those means which God has appointed for our safety. Whence observe that

God's assistance and man's endeavour concur together; they may not be severed. Without God's mighty power, man can do nothing; unless man puts on the whole armour of God, God will do nothing. This the Church knew right well, and therefore both prays unto God to be enabled by Him ("draw me") and also promises to do her utmost endeavour, and follow His direction ("we will run after thee"). The like we read of David: but most clearly is this point laid down by Christ, who having said, "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him" (whereby he shows that God must enable man to come to Him), adds, "Every man that has learned of the Father comes to me" (whereby he shows that man enabled by God adds his own endeavour).

Why God's powerful work is necessary has been shown before in verse 10, namely, because of our own utter inability to do anything of ourselves. Before God quickens us, we are dead in sins, no more able to do any spiritual function than a dead corpse to do any natural function; yea, after we are quickened, we are still supported by God's grace, which works in us. Yet being quickened, we must do our endeavour because of that order which the Lord has in wisdom appointed to bring us to glory.

For this end does God work in us both to will and to do, that we should work out our own salvation, Phil. 2:12-13. God works not upon us, as upon stocks or stones, but gives us life and ability, as when He raised the widow's son, the ruler's daughter, and Lazarus, He put life into them and enabled them to move, rise up, walk, eat, and do other functions of the living.

[Use 1] By this is discovered the error of proud, presumptuous Papists on the one side, and of secure, careless Libertines on the other. The Papists, to establish their own power and strength, hold and teach that after the first motion and stirring of the heart, which they acknowledge to be of God only, a man absolutely by his free will may do well if he will. But Christ says of the branches which were in the vine, whose hearts were stirred up, "Without me you can do nothing."

The care which the Apostle has to direct them unto the fountain of strength, the Lord, even then when especially he urges them to arm themselves, argues that without continual strength supplied to them from the Lord, they are not able to stand of themselves against the assaults of their enemies.

Libertines fall into another extreme; they, to pamper their flesh and pursue their carnal delights, so refer all to the work and power of God that they are altogether careless in using any means themselves, upon the conceit that God is able of Himself to save them, and that when God pleases, He will save them, do they in the meantime what they list. But fondly they argue from God's power, who neglect the means which God has appointed and revealed, wherein and whereby He will manifest His power. His revealed will is the ground of our faith and obedience: if we follow the direction of it, then may we safely trust to the power of God; otherwise, in attributing all to the grace of God, we abuse it, and turn it into wantonness. Were it not necessary for us to do what God enables us to do, as well as trust to the power of God's might, the Apostle needed not have been thus careful in stirring us up to arm ourselves.

[Use 2] As we presume not in trusting to our own strength, lest we provoke God to resist us, so neither tempt we God in neglect of the

means which He has appointed, lest we cause God to forsake us. But as we look for help and strength from God, so must we be careful in well-using all those means which God has ordained for our help and safety. To this purpose tend all the exhortations in the Scripture, whereby any duty is required at our hands. Note the complaint of our Lord against Jerusalem; "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not?" Be we not like to them, lest we be rejected as they were. Know we this for certain, that God will not with cart-ropes by force and violence, against our wills, draw us to Heaven.

To this end does God take out of us that stony and inflexible heart which is in us by nature, and gives us a heart of flesh which is flexible, that it, being made pliable by God's Spirit, should apply itself to God's work, as David did, Psal. 119:112. The truth is, that many Christians are wonderfully wounded and foiled by the Enemy, because of their own idleness and security, in that they are backward in putting forth themselves, and negligent in endeavouring to do what God enables them to do.

Lo, here is a complete armour of God provided for our defence and safety; be we careful in putting it on and well using it.

Thus much for the means to be used.

§9. The Purpose and Advantage of Christian Armor

The end why this means is to be used follows in these words; "That you may be able to stand, etc." In setting down this end, he declares the benefit of the aforementioned armour, which is an ability to stand, amplified by the enemy against whom we stand, the Devil, and his subtlety, in this word, "wiles".

The Apostle still follows and continues his metaphor taken from soldiers, who being every way well-fenced and prepared against their enemies, stand stoutly against them, neither fall down, fly away, nor give ground. Wherefore this word "stand" is a word of safety and freedom from danger; yea, of victory and conquest, implying that they who are well prepared with the armour of God, so long as they well use it, can neither be slain, nor taken captives, nor beaten down, nor made to fly, nor yet foiled or put back, and forced to give ground, but stand fast and safe upon their ground, yea stand fast in the field when their enemies are driven away, and so remain conquerors, as we shall after hear. And this is all the conquest which in this world we can look for, to keep ourselves safe, that we be not conquered or foiled, and that we give no advantage to our enemies. As for the utter subduing of the Devil and his host, that belongs to Christ our Captain and Champion.

This safe standing being laid down as the end why this armour of God is given, and declaring the benefit which follows upon the well using of the armour, these two doctrines naturally flow from thence,

1. There is no hope, no possibility of remaining safe without spiritual armour.
2. Those who well put on the armour of God, and use it as they ought, are safe and sure, and so may be secure.

§ 10. Who Are Without Armour, Can Have No Hope to Stand

For the first, that which the Prophet says of one piece of this armour, the shield of faith, I may well apply to the whole armour, "if you have it not on you, surely you shall not be established, you cannot stand."

Without this armour, we are naked and lie open to every dart and shot of our spiritual enemies: and are no more able to free ourselves from the power of the Devil than a poor silly lamb or kid from a roaring lion or ravenous bear. If being unfenced, we stand safe, it must be either by reason of the goodness of the Devil, that he pities us and cannot find in his heart to take any advantage against us; or of his carelessness and blindness, that he prys not about us, or observes when, & where we are fenced or naked; or of his weakness, that he is not able to pierce and wound us, though we be naked: but such is his malice, his subtlety, and sedulity; such also his power (as we shall after hear) that none can imagine there should be any such goodness, carelessness, blindness, or weakness in him.

Besides, by neglecting to use this armour provided by God, we provoke God to cast us into the power of our enemies, and to give them power over us, as He dealt with Ahab.

[Use 1] How egregiously do they deceive themselves, who conceive that though they have no part or piece of this armour of God, they can be as safe and sure, and may be as secure as those who have the whole armour on them; much like to the seven sons of Sceva, who overboldly ventured to adjure an evil spirit (Acts 19:14-16), but what was the issue? Being unarmed, they could not stand, they were overcome and forced to fly.

Many think there needeth no such care about faith, righteousness, sincerity, etc., as some do take:

For ought they see, they are most assaulted and most foiled, who are most busy and diligent in putting on this armour, and fitting it to them.

To grant that they who put on this whole armour of God are most assaulted because the Devil, without any great assaulting, prevails against such as have it not on; I utterly deny that they are most foiled: for those who are without it are clean vanquished and in the power of the Devil, which the others never shall be.

Yes, but say they, we find and feel no such matter; we are very quiet, no way molested.

I easily believe it: but what is the reason? Because the Devil has them in his power, he needeth not eagerly pursue them.

Miserable is that rest and quiet which they have: even like to that which the poor kid has when it is brought into the lion's den, or the mouse when it is in the cat's mouth. The cat can play with the mouse when she has once caught it: and the lion can let the kid lie quiet in his den, while he ranges and roars after that prey which is out of his clutches. But what security of life have those that are so taken? Their security is, that they are sure to be gnawed to pieces and devoured. This is the case of those who, being destitute of the armour of God, yet think themselves quiet and well. They are fast bound with the chains of sin and wholly in the Devil's power, where he ceases to molest them for a while but rather dallies with them while he eagerly pursues such as have on this armour, and are out of his power, and stand manfully against him. Against these, he casts all the darts he can, but all in vain, as the next doctrine shows.

§ 11. Who Well Use Their Armour Are Sure to Stand

They who well put on the armour of God and use it as they ought, are safe and sure, and may be secure. Saint Peter, exhorting Christians to seek after such graces as may be comprised under this armour, expressly says, "If you do these things, you shall never fall." Saint

John says of one piece of this armour, namely faith, that it is the victory which overcomes the world. What then may be said of this whole armour, of every piece of it together? Saint Paul goes yet further and says of himself, and of other Christians like himself, who have put on this armour, "We are more than conquerors."

The points which have been before delivered, that this is complete armour, the complete and whole armour of God, do sufficiently confirm this point.

[Use] A strong motive this is to persuade us to put on the whole armour of God. This is the main end which the Apostle aims at in laying down this end, to show that as this is armour of proof in itself, so it will sufficiently defend us, and keep us harmless. If at any time we be foiled, the fault is our own; we can blame none but ourselves, because the Lord gives such means whereby we may be able to stand. Is it a benefit to stand fast and safe? Is it a matter to be desired to be kept free from spiritual wounds and hurts, yea, from eternal bondage and slavery under sin, Satan, and other mortal enemies of our souls, and from everlasting torment and torture that follows thereupon? (how blind are they which see it not! how foolish are they which regard it not!) If this (I say) be a benefit, then take notice of the means whereby we may be enabled to stand fast in that liberty which Christ has purchased for us, and made free from the forenamed slavery: and withal make conscience, and give all diligence to use the means aright. It is a point of notorious folly to be desirous of a thing and careless in doing that whereby our desire may be accomplished. Yea, it is a cunning wile of the Devil in good things to make men separate the means from the end, but in evil, the end from the mean; as to make men desire and look for the good and happy end of righteousness, and yet be backward in walking in that way that leads thereto: and contrariwise, eagerly and swiftly to run in the way of sin,

and yet not fear the wages of sin, and the issue of that course. In the first kind, Balaam was deceived. In the second, Eve was deluded. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous; but careless he was in leading such a life as brought forth such a death. Eve was persuaded she should not die, and yet feared not to eat of that fruit, against which death was denounced. Let the fearful end of both these make us wise against these wiles. Worldly men are wise enough herein; if they observe a good benefit to be had, they will seek how it may be obtained, and do with all diligence that whereby it may be obtained. This makes them pass over sea and land to get such commodities as their own land affords not; this makes them when they fear enemies, to have all warlike provision ready; often to muster their men, to keep continual watch and ward at their chief port-towns, with the like. Now this end here laid down, being a matter of so great consequence (for if we stand not fast, but suffer ourselves to be foiled and overcome, no less damage and danger follow thereof, then loss of eternal happiness on the one side, and utter destruction on the other), why should we be more foolish in spiritual matters than worldlings are in temporal? They indeed are more sensible of temporal things, whether good or evil. Let us therefore in spiritual matters give the better heed to the direction of God's word: that faith may make us as wise as sense makes them.

§12. Satan, Our Adversary

Understanding the necessity and advantages of this armor becomes clearer when we consider the identity of our enemy and the nature of his assaults.

Our adversary, against whom God's complete armor equips us to stand, is the Devil. Known also as our Enemy, Tempter, Murderer, and more, the Devil's creation, nature, fall, and other aspects are rich

topics of discussion. However, I will focus on characteristics that underline how formidable and terrifying an enemy he is for our current discussion.

§ 13. Satan a Terrible Enemy

For the better understanding of this, know that the Devils, by creation, were good Angels, as powerful, wise, quick, speedy, invisible, immortal, etc., as any other Angels: equal in every respect, but inferior in no respect to the very best Angels.

When they fell, they did not lose their natural substance and the essential properties thereof, no more than man lost his when he fell: for as man remained to be not only flesh and blood but also a living, yea, and a reasonable creature after his fall, so the Devil remains to be a spirit, invisible, immortal, quick, speedy, etc., as before: only the quality of his nature and properties is altered from good to evil: as powerful as he was before to good, so powerful is he now to evil; invisible and quick he is, wonderfully close and speedy in working mischief, he was not more desirous of good before his fall, than since he is mischievous, and even set upon evil.

There are four especial things which make the Devil very fearful;

First, his power.

Secondly, his malice.

Thirdly, his subtlety.

Fourthly, his sedulity and speed.

Who fears not a powerful enemy? This made Goliath seem so terrible. If an enemy be malicious, even for his malice, he is feared as

Doeg: or if he be crafty and subtle, for which Achitophel was feared: yea, also the enemies of Israel were accounted fearful in regard to their swiftness, "That they came hastily with speed." How terrible will all these make an enemy, when they all meet together? It may be thought that if an enemy be malicious and wants power, he may consume himself with malice, and do little hurt to others: or if he be powerful and malicious but wants wit, craft, and subtlety, he may like an unbridled horse run headlong in his powerful malice to his own ruin and destruction: or though to his power and malice, subtlety be also added, yet if he be slow and careless, he is the less feared, in hope that he may be prevented in all his enterprises. But where malice is strengthened by might, might whetted on by malice; both malice and power guided by craft, craft and all stirred up by diligence, sedulity, and speed, who can stand against such an enemy?

Now, all these do in a very high degree concur in the Devil, as Saint Peter does notably set them down in this description of the Devil; "Your adversary the Devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." His name "Devil," and that which he seeks for, "to devour," show his malice. The beast whereunto he is resembled, lion, shows his power and craft, and the attribute, "roaring," adds terror thereunto: lastly, his walking up and down, shows his sedulity. Of his power, malice, and sedulity, I shall have occasion more distinctly to speak on the 12th verse.

§14. The Devil's Wiles

Satan's subtlety is particularly expressed under this word, "wiles." The Greek word signifies artificial, crafty, cunning conveyances of matters, windings up and down, and turning every way to get the greatest advantage. Fittingly is this word used by the Apostle, for his temptations and assaults are very cunning, full of much deceit, of

many windings, which make him so mightily prevail against the greatest sort of the world, even against all that are not strong in the Lord, and wise in well using the whole armour of God.

The titles which in Scripture are given to the Devil, do evidently imply his great craft. He is termed a Dragon, and a Serpent, which of all other beasts are counted the craftiest and wisest: yea, to show that he has had a long time of experience to make him more subtle and crafty; he is called an old Serpent, a great red Dragon. There are names in Greek which we ordinarily translate Devil, that yet further signify his great subtlety, for they note out his great knowledge and experienced skill.

As his names are, so is his practice, full of many windings, full of much craft. It is an infinite task, a matter of impossibility, to discover all his cunning stratagems and subtle devices. He has old tricks, which he has long used, because by long continued experience, he has found that silly men are soon deceived with them, and that the harm of some cannot warn others: and yet does he daily invent new upon new, ever shifting from one to another: if one will not serve, he has another presently in readiness. For diverse persons, diverse conditions, and dispositions, he has diverse temptations. Sometimes he plays the part of a roaring ravenous Lion; sometimes of a crafty fawning Fox; sometimes appearing in his own shape, sometimes changing himself into an Angel of light, doing anything for his advantage. Because the Apostle holds himself close to the metaphor taken from war, I will also follow it, and under it discover some few particular stratagems, leaving it to the particular meditation of others to find out others.

1. He can well tell how to marshal and set his army in array; he well knows how to order his temptations: For first, he uses to

make the onset with light skirmishes and begin with small temptations; and then by degrees follow with greater and mightier forces. Thus he came to Eve; first, only he made a question whether God had forbidden them any of the trees: and then by degrees, he came directly to contradict the express word of God. So when he tempted Christ, he began with a doubt whether Christ were the Son of God or no, and lastly tempted Him to monstrous idolatry.

Thus, he makes men careless at first, and his temptation lightly to be regarded, till he has gotten some advantage; which when he has gotten, he will follow with all the might and main that possibly he can.

2. If thus he prevails not, but at first, he is put back, he can change his ranks and weapons: he can alter his temptations, and begin with fierce and violent assaults. Thus he set on Job. If he cannot seduce men by moving them to make light account of sin, he will persuade them that every sin is most heinous, that their sins are unpardonable. If he cannot make them superstitious, he will strive to make them profane: and thus help one temptation with another.
3. If he observes the forces of the Lord's Soldiers to be strong and well-ordered and fortified, then his endeavour will be politically to allure some out of their ranks, and so make a breach; it seems that thus he prevailed much, and got great advantage in the Church of Corinth. For thus he bred schisms and contentions among them. Whereupon the Apostle exhorts every man to abide in the same vocation wherein he was called. Thus, in these our days, has he caused much trouble in God's Churches by the inordinate walking of many persons; who leaving their own

places, have caused divisions, sects, and separations from the Church.

4. If he observes some provident Captain, watchful over the Lord's armies, and careful to keep his soldiers in good order, animating and encouraging them, then will the Devil use the King of Aram's stratagem: all his forces shall be bent against that Captain. Thus he fiercely set upon our chief Captain in the wilderness, and throughout the whole course of his life; but especially in the Garden, and on the Cross. Thus did he desire to winnow the Apostles: Thus does he sorely tempt Magistrates, Ministers, & such as have charge over others.
5. If he does not prevail against them, rather than fail, he will set upon the weakest. Thus, he dealt by the ministry of Heretics, who led captive simple women. And thus, in our days, he deals through the ministry of Papists, Anabaptists, Separatists, and all other Sectaries.
6. If by none of these means he can accomplish his plots, as he desires, face to face, or force against force, then he will lay some secret ambushments or other, to set on the Lord's soldiers unawares behind their back, akin to the strategy of Joshua and the Israelites: as when he allows Christians to go on in doing the work of the Lord and performing such duties as belong to them but will come behind and cast into their hearts some conceits of merit and pride. Thus, he gave Paul a back-blow. Thus, he overcomes the Papists and many ignorant persons among us. Sometimes also, he will cast lustful and worldly thoughts and cares into them, and so choke all.
7. If the Lord's soldiers are so circumspect, as neither by force nor fraud he can prevail, he will not hesitate to change his flag: and

seem to fight under the Lord's banner, as Tobiah, Sanballat, and other deadly enemies of the Jews endeavoured to do. In this respect, the Apostle says, Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light, and his Ministers into the Apostles of Christ. Thus, oftentimes he prevails with those of tender consciences to make many needless scruples, by accounting such things to be sin, which God's word never made sin, and by thinking many things to be necessary duties, which belong not at all to them.

Thus, we have a taste of some of his wiles. I will not further range forth into this spacious field, lest I be too tedious.

[Use] Having such an enemy as the Devil, had we not need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might? This enemy having so many wiles, had we not need to be always prepared with the whole armour of God? Assuredly if we are not strong in the power of God's might, there is no standing against the Devil. If at any time we are without the whole armour of God, doubtless we shall soon be overtaken with some of his wiles.

[Use 2] How does this, which has been said of the Devil and his wiles, commend unto us the provident care of God over us, who keeps us safe from such an enemy, and from such wiles? And how does it set forth the excellency of the forenamed whole armour of God? Very excellent must that armour be, which is able to keep us safe from so potent and malicious an enemy, who has so many wiles to deceive us. This shows it to be very complete and every way sufficient, for while we have it on, well-fitted to us, all the craft of the Devil cannot find a naked place where to wound us, his strength is not able to pierce it; no, though his craft and strength are both whetted on with malice. Is there not now great reason we should put

it on and always keep it on? That we neither wake nor sleep, be alone or in company without it?

[Use 3] Labor to have our eyes enlightened (that we may discern those wiles of the Devil) and to be filled with spiritual prudence and wisdom, that we may escape these snares. Let us preserve in us a holy jealousy over ourselves, and suspicion of the Devil and his wiles, fearing lest he should find us somewhere unarmed, and sometime unprepared (for otherwise we are safe). God's word is able to afford unto us wisdom enough to avoid his wiles. For David thereby was made wiser than his enemies. Let us exercise ourselves therein, and withal pray with David, that God would turn the wiles and counsels of the Devil into foolishness: For God catches the wise in their own craftiness.

The Third Part

The Reason Why We Must Be Well Armed

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." - Ephesians 6:12

§ 1. The Coherence

In this verse, the motive which the Apostle uses to urge the previously mentioned direction is laid out. It may have a dual reference: First, generally to the earlier exhortation, "Be strong, etc.,

and put on the whole armour, etc.," because we face such enemies as are here described. Secondly, particularly to the last part of the previous verse, where it was shown that we were to stand against the Devil. So, it serves as an amplification of them: for if the question be asked, what is the Devil, that we should be so prepared against him? These words present him; not flesh and blood, but principalities, etc. The first word "for," being a causal particle that indicates a reason, implies the first reference: the immediate connection of this verse to the last part of the previous verse implies the second. Both can coexist: for both convey one and the same message: namely, that because we face such dreadful and deadly enemies, we ought to be well prepared against them.

§ 2. Danger Makes Watchful

From the inference of this verse, and from the strength of the Apostle's argument, I deduce that the greater danger we are subject to, the more watchful and careful we must be for our safety. When Christ saw the severe agony he was about to enter into, he did not only watch and pray himself but also called upon his Disciples to watch and pray: and because they did not, he rebuked them for their sluggishness. Saint Peter urges this duty of watchfulness for a similar reason; namely, because we have such a fearful enemy. External, temporal dangers make natural men watchful and careful for their temporal estates and lives, as the histories of all times and ages show. Seeing then that spiritual dangers are much more fearful, should we not be much more careful?

If we are, we do not only show that we care for our souls and seek their wellbeing, but also we will procure much good for them, and prevent and keep away much harm from them.

[Application] What false conclusions do most draw from that spiritual danger, to which they understand they are subject because of their spiritual enemies? Even completely contrary to this inference of the Apostle, and the wisdom thereby taught to us; and that in two extremes: one of presumption, the other of despair: for some, when they hear of such enemies as are described, they too vainly, carelessly, and proudly disdain them, like Gaal; others too meekly, basely, and slavishly dread them, like Ahaz.

§3. Against Presumption

The former extreme, which is presumption, arises partly from too great a notion of ourselves and of our own strength, and partly from too ready a belief of what is recorded about the Devil.

This self-belief makes us foolishly imagine that we are fully capable of resisting all temptations of the Devil or any of his agents. Whereupon many are ready to say (when they are advised to be wary of the Devil and his strong temptations), "I defy the Devil and all his wicked crew; he can do no harm to me: I can (I thank God) easily evade his temptations; the gates of hell shall not prevail against me." And yet, these proud foolish individuals are overtaken and defeated by every minor temptation. Peter (though otherwise a man of good abilities) was somewhat too full of himself, and too much inclined to this extreme, and yet, when he needed to stand firm, was intimidated by a mere girl.

A too ready belief makes us think the Devil cannot be as terrifying as he is portrayed; but that the things written and said about him and his schemes are merely scare tactics to frighten people, akin to old wives' tales about ghosts, fairies, hobgoblins, etc. This disbelief greatly diminishes the impact of such exhortations, directions, admonitions, and reprimands, which are provided for our benefit.

Both Peter and the other Disciples were somewhat affected by this: for when Christ told them all that they would all be led astray by him, and that Peter in particular would deny him, none of them would believe it. Peter said, "Even if all fall away, I will not." And again, "Even if I have to die, I will not deny you." And so said all the Disciples.

§4. Against Despair

The latter extreme, which is despair, arises partly from an overly intense perception of the power of the Devil (as if his power were infinite, and he were able to do whatever his malice prompted him to, and thus could do what he wanted; or unlimited, God allowing him free rein, and not restraining him any more than He wished, and so he might do what he could, like an untamed horse that is not curbed and bridled) and partly from too slight a regard for the power that is available in God, and for the great help and benefit which the whole armour of God provides, as if God were not capable of making us strong enough, nor that whole armour sufficient to make us safe.

These two causes of despair led the Israelites many times to make the most desperate statements against God: for when they heard that in Canaan (the Land given to them for an inheritance), the people were strong, that there were men of great stature, even Giants there, that the cities were walled and exceedingly large, they desperately questioned the Lord, why he had brought them into that Land to die by the sword, and in despair of ever possessing Canaan, wished to return to Egypt: and another time they openly doubted God's power, saying, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Can he provide bread?" As these Israelites grumbled against God, and doubted His power and truthfulness in fulfilling His promises, in light of their temporal enemies, whom they judged to be too strong for them: so

do many in regard to their spiritual enemies. Thus, we see how prone we are to misuse those things intended for our instruction, leading to our destruction. Here the Apostle outlines both the means for our defence and also the danger to which we are subject, that we should be more diligent in arming ourselves: we either presumptuously challenge our enemies, neglecting any means of protection; or else are too timidly frightened by our enemies, thinking the Lord's defence can offer us no help.

Therefore, in hearing about the great danger we are in because of our enemies as described here, we should not take this as an occasion to fall into any of these extremes, but rather more diligently avoid them, and keep to the middle path, which is, all the more earnestly to seek the power of God's might, and all the more diligently to hold fast to the whole armour of God. I thought it good to deliver this instruction beforehand, which naturally arises from the force of the Apostle's arguments.

Now, let us come to handle the words themselves more distinctly.

§ 5. Exposition of the Words

In this verse, we have a description of a Christian's battle.

The parts are twofold. Firstly, the kind of battle is noted as a wrestle. Secondly, the combatants or the persons who maintain the battle on either side are set forth. These are on one side the defenders; on the other side the attackers, which are described in detail; both negatively, not flesh and blood, and affirmatively, but principalities, etc.

The first point to be addressed is the kind of battle, implied under the term wrestle. In the original language, it is stated verbatim as

"There is a wrestling." We must not think that this refers to a matter of sport, as our English word 'wrestling' might imply. Although the Greek word, like the English, can be attributed to a sporting contest, it is also used for a serious and fierce fight. The Greek term signifies such a struggle that causes the body of the one striving to tremble.

It implies then that the battle spoken of here is not a light skirmish with distant enemies, but a grappling with them hand to hand; making it all the more fierce and dangerous. If they were far from us, shooting or throwing their weapons, we might think to spot their darts before they hit us, or they might miss their mark. But being a grappling hand to hand, all such hopes vanish; for they are close enough to find where to harm us, thus assaulting us more fiercely.

§ 6. The Danger of a Christian's Combat

Our spiritual warfare is severe, fierce, and dangerous. It's a kind of combat that will test our prowess and courage, soon revealing whether our armor is indeed protective, and whether we have donned the full armor. The truth of this was demonstrated in Christ our leader, whom the devil took from wilderness to pinnacle, and from pinnacle to mountain. What the devil did to Christ outwardly and visibly, he does to others inwardly and secretly. The life and condition of Christ on earth are a vivid depiction of the state and condition of His Church in this world. Peter experienced such a wrestling, so did Paul, as do all who do not willingly yield themselves to the power of the Devil.

God orders our state to 1) further reveal and glorify the power of His might and the adequacy of His armor. The harsher the fight and the more perilous, the greater that strength appears, and the more exceptional the means by which we are supported. 2) Encourage us to depend on Him with greater and firmer confidence, like David and

Jehoshaphat did. 3) Prompt us to more diligently use the appointed means, like the Jews who prepared against their enemies even while working.

[Use 1] This can help us assess our condition: if all is calm within us, with no wrestling or fighting, or at most occasional light skirmishes, it's worrisome that our enemies have overtaken us, and we have submissively surrendered to them, making a pact with them. Intense combats give us more assurance that the Lord is still our God, and we His soldiers, than light or no attacks. If the Devil rules over us, he can let us be at peace; but if he's our enemy, we will assuredly feel his influence.

[Use 2] This explains why so many falter and are defeated. It would be no significant challenge to withstand light and easy battles. But when we are truly tested, standing firm is a sign of exceptional bravery. This is what tested the patience and courage of Job.

[Use 3] Don't think we've done enough when we've overcome some minor trials; prepare for greater ones. We must face a wrestling. Consider what the Apostle says about those who endured a great fight, "You need patience;" and again, "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."

[Use 4] For our comfort, note that though wrestling implies a severe combat, it does not suggest defeat. There's no need to fear conquest, for Christ our leader has vanquished our enemy and defeated him who had the power of death, to liberate all those who, for fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He has led captivity captive and delivered us from the power of darkness, so that we might be free from being overcome, though not from wrestling.

§ 7. None Exempt from the Fight

The defendants who maintain this wrestling are encompassed within this term "we," which includes the author and all similar to him, along with those to whom he wrote, and all similar to them. This means that all of every type are to engage in and fight this spiritual battle. Neither ministers nor laity, poor nor rich, male nor female, newly converted nor long-established, none of any rank, condition, status, age, or quality are exempted. Whoever is of the seed of the woman must anticipate having his heel bruised. There is enmity between the two seeds; the Devil did not spare the woman, who was the weaker vessel, nor did he fear the head, Christ Himself, who was the strongest of all. Who then might think to be spared? Who can imagine that Satan will fear to wrestle with him?

God intends for all of every type to be tested, and the Devil bears equal hatred against all: he seeks whom he may devour. So long as he can devour them, he cares not who they are: like a wolf spares none of the flock, ram, sheep, or lamb that he can catch.

[Use 1] Let all, ministers and people, strong and weak, everyone of every kind, apply all the exhortations and instructions here provided to themselves. Let not the weaker group dismiss them under the belief that fierce combats are only for strong Christians; Satan, hoping most to overcome the weakest, will surely attack them. Nor should the stronger dismiss them, thinking the devil dares not engage with them. For although there may be differences between them and the weaker Christians, yet the strength of the strongest is negligible compared to the devil's might if they rely on it and not on the Lord's strength. Moreover, Satan, knowing that their fall would dishearten others, will launch the greatest assaults against them.

[Use 2] Let ministers remember that the precepts they impart to others also apply to themselves, which the Apostle implies here. Though his instructions were in the second person ("be strong, put on"), he introduces the motive in the first person ("we") to indicate that he faced as much danger as they, that he required as much assistance as they; and therefore, the aforementioned instructions applied to him as well as to them. Ministers are human as well as others, prone to the same passions as others. If they do not preach to themselves, what means of edification, direction, and encouragement belong to them? Hence, just as the laity should not assume that matters of spiritual warfare only concern ministers, as if they alone were the Lord's soldiers, so neither should ministers deflect these concerns from themselves to the laity, as if they were merely to observe, and the people to fight. Instead, everyone should apply them to themselves.

§ 8. Exposition of Words

We have heard of the Defendants. Who then are the challengers and assaulters? They are described negatively as not flesh and blood. The term "not" relates to this latter clause, as if there were a comma between "wrestle" and "not," thus, "we wrestle, not with flesh, etc."

By "flesh and blood," we mean creatures that possess a bodily substance consisting of flesh and blood, in which respect man is termed "flesh," and Christ is said to have been made "flesh" because He took on a bodily form. This differentiates a spirit from a body.

Do we then have no enemies with bodily forms in this spiritual combat? Are only spirits our adversaries?

Our own flesh is an adversary to us. Other people are also enemies: there are many adversaries, such as infidels, idolaters, heretics, materialists, all types of persecutors, and even false brethren.

Why then is "flesh and blood" here excluded?

They are not excluded entirely, for this negative clause should not be taken literally, but:

1. Comparatively, not so much with flesh and blood as with principalities. It's with these we primarily wrestle. Thus, when the Apostle forbids servants from serving "men," he means not exclusively but in addition to others. Or, as Christ says, "call not thy friends to dinner," meaning not them alone but also the poor. Or not with flesh and blood alone, in its own weak and frail state, but as empowered, assisted, and guided by spirits. As if English soldiers served under the Turk or Spaniard, against whom we maintain war, though they battle against us, it might be said we do not fight with English men.
2. By way of exposition, not with those who are weak, frail, foolish, visible, and mortal, as flesh and blood are. Thus, the horses of the Egyptians are called "flesh," that is, weak, as opposed to "spirit": so this phrase "not flesh and blood" implies more than, or other than, merely flesh and blood.

§ 9. How Our Spiritual Enemies Exceed Flesh and Blood

Our deadliest enemies are more than flesh and blood, surpassing in number, greater in power, craftier in their strategies, of longer continuance, more envious, malicious, fierce, and cruel. They are not

as open and visible but invisible, covert, and secretive, and in many other aspects more fearsome and dangerous.

1. Among flesh and blood, no one is so mighty that they cannot be confronted, as shown in Daniel's visions of the beasts. The great monarchs of the world have been vanquished by others, but no flesh and blood can stand against the Devil.
2. Among flesh and blood, none so politically astute that they do not eventually find their match, even outmanoeuvred. Achitophel, whose counsel was esteemed as an oracle, was surpassed by Hushai. Yet, all the world's wit cannot equal the subtlety of the Devil.
3. Assume that among flesh and blood some are so mighty, unrivalled in their strength, so subtle that none can surpass them, yet they are persuadable, their fury can be allayed by fair means, as David did by wise Abigail; even the wicked Saul was appeased by David's humility and plea of innocence. But the Devil lacks such flexibility; his malice is unyielding, unmoved unless it serves a greater advantage.
4. Suppose some among men are relentless, their fury might still be escaped by flight, as David fled from Saul, Elijah from Jezebel, Joseph and Mary from Herod. From the Devils, we cannot escape; they are omnipresent, swiftly overtaking us.
5. Even if no means of escape were possible, and we were subjected to the rage of flesh and blood, in their peak of pride, power, and fury, they can be utterly vanquished by death, as were Pharaoh and his army drowned, as died Herod the Great and the other Herod who persecuted the Apostles. However, our spiritual enemies are not subject to death. In many other respects,

comparing flesh and blood with Spirits shows there is no comparison; these entities are not flesh and blood but infinitely more terrifying.

[Use 1] This significantly intensifies the dread of our spiritual enemies: if the wrath of a King (who is but flesh and blood) is like the roaring of a Lion; if a man of great strength, like Goliath, is frightening; if a cunning man, like Achitophel, induces fear and trepidation; if a malicious individual, like Doeg, is harmful; if an army of flesh and blood is formidable; how much more so are these enemies that are not flesh and blood?

[Use 2] It is no trivial task to overcome them or evade their attacks. Not outward bravery and strength, not physical might, the force of a sword, troops of armed men, not statecraft or military cunning can harm them or shield us from them. To pit the wit or power of flesh and blood against those who are not flesh and blood is to set dry straw against raging fire. The weapons of our warfare must not be physical but spiritual, powerful through God, to safeguard us from these adversaries. For since our enemies are not flesh and blood, any armour that protects only against flesh and blood is utterly ineffective.

§ 10. The Devil's Role in Every Temptation

In battles, even those against flesh and blood, our primary adversary is Satan. Flesh and blood serves merely as Satan's instrument; he is the general, the captain, setting flesh and blood to task, supporting them so that he is both the originator and culmination of the evil they perpetrate. Though they act as his vassals, seeking to harm us,

our true battle is not with them but with a higher power. When the Serpent tempted Eve, it was actually the Devil she contended with, hence why the Devil is labeled a murderer from the beginning. The Sabaeans and Chaldeans robbed Job, yet Satan was deemed responsible. Though a maid and a man led Peter to deny his Master, it was Satan who sifted him. Christ addressed Peter, who tempted him, as Satan. The persecuting Jews obstructed Paul's journey to the Thessalonians, yet he identified Satan as the hinderer. Satan is accused of incarcerating some of the Smyrnians, though it was men-persecutors who acted. This is why he is termed the god of this world, the father of murderers, a spirit operating in the children of disobedience, and false apostles as ministers of Satan. The influence of flesh and blood in prompting sin or deterring from good applies equally to our internal corruption and evil desires, stirred by Satan; he is the mischief's architect and finisher, making those temptations arising from our flesh Satan's domain. Thus, the Apostle, advising against anger, cautions against giving the Devil a foothold. When greed led Ananias to deceit, Saint Peter questioned why Satan had filled his heart. David's pride, prompting a census, was instigated by Satan, for as the Spirit of God propels us towards good, so does the devil's spirit urge every evil.

[Use] Learn from the Arameans' wisdom. In all conflicts, whether against our own sins or against evil men—persecutors, seducers, and alike—strive to repel the Devil with spiritual armour, praying for God's rebuke. Flesh and blood's harm is minimal if Satan is resisted. Historical records of battles across ages reveal that once generals and captains fall, the rank and file soon capitulate or flee.

The Devil fans the flames of lust, pride, greed, and other vices within us, presenting tempting evils suited to our nature, inflaming persecutors, blinding idolaters, leading heretics astray. Recognizing

this should inspire pity towards flesh and blood that opposes us rather than envy; it should prevent us from futilely lashing out.

[Use 2] The plight of those fighting against Christians could be detailed, showcasing their servitude under Satan's banner and their doomed recompense of death, but further discussion will ensue under "worldly-governors."

§ 11. Facing Principalities and Powers

The affirmation of our adversaries' description follows, juxtaposed to flesh and blood with "but," indicating our enemies, with whom we wrestle, are far more formidable than flesh and blood. This assertion, previously established, will become clearer as we dissect this description further. One observation suffices here.

[Use 1] Those daunted by mere flesh and blood cannot hope to withstand these spiritual foes. A person frightened by a small dog's bark would be terrified by a lion's roar; someone who cannot in faith declare fearlessness against humans will falter against principalities. This serves as a caution to those swayed from righteousness by human threats, scorn, and maltreatment: do not expect to triumph and reign with Christ. The Sabaeans, Chaldeans, and all machinations of flesh and blood could not defeat Job. Thus, when faced with human adversaries, remind ourselves of even greater foes lurking: if we falter here, how will we endure against them? Let this bolster our courage against anything flesh and blood might unleash.

§ 12. Exposition of Words

Now, let us consider the specific elements of this description of our enemies, which are distinguished by the term "against." This description is fraught with complexity and ambiguity, which I will attempt to clarify as simply as possible.

From these various segments, many infer different and distinct orders of Devils, arranged hierarchically, similar to human societal structures with Kings, Dukes, Earls, Barons, etc. They regard the Devil mentioned earlier as the supreme ruler, with Principalities beneath him, Powers beneath those, and so on. Personally, I find these distinctions overly meticulous in this context. While I do not refute the existence of a hierarchy among Devils, akin to that among thieves, pirates, and con artists, with a leading figure among them (as the Devil and his angels are referenced), the notion of distinct and specific roles among them (such as tempters, accusers, executors of vengeance) is plausible. However, the idea that certain demons are perpetually bound to one place, person, or function is both uncertain and improbable. Furthermore, the interpretation of so many ranks and categories of Devils in this passage as distinct entities is also uncertain, with no solid basis for such a deduction.

I interpret these titles used by the Apostle more as representations of their conditions and effects rather than a strict hierarchical order.

The first title, Principalities or governments, refers to their significant rule, power, and dominion, less over other Devils and more over wicked humans.

The second title, Powers, emphasizes that their principality is substantial, equipped with power enabling them to exert significant influence.

These two titles, principalities and powers, are chosen to magnify both aspects.

The third title is worldly Governors, likely clarifying or limiting the first title to indicate over whom the Devils hold sway: not over God's chosen and called, but over the worldly. Hence, the Apostle employs a compound term indicating both their governance and their subjects.

However, the elect are also considered part of the world during their earthly lives, due to their upbringing and residence here. They are in the world but not of it, once effectively called. For clarity, the Apostle adds "of the darkness of this world," specifying the realm of the Devils' dominion as those engulfed in ignorance and wickedness—specifically, the ignorant and wicked people of the world.

The fourth title, spiritual wickedness, reveals their nature as spirits and their condition as evil and malicious. The original phrasing used by the Apostle, "Spirituals of wickedness," implies they are egregiously wicked spirits.

Lastly, an ambiguous phrase, "in heavenly places," lacks a direct reference point. Some interpretations add "places," suggesting these evil spirits inhabit the air above us. Scripture refers to three "heavens": the atmosphere where birds fly, the firmament of stars, and the divine realm of God's throne. If referring to the location of spirits, "heavenly places" likely denotes the air, the lowest heaven, as they are barred from the highest heaven. Others suggest adding "things" to imply the combat is over not earthly matters but heavenly, spiritual treasures.

Regarding these four segments, the first and third generally highlight the Devils' dominion, while the fourth encompasses three aspects:

the nature, quality, and realm or cause of the conflict.

Thus, in this affirmative part, our enemies are described by five characteristics: 1. Their governance. 2. Their power. 3. Their nature. 4. Their quality. 5. Their abode or cause of conflict.

§ 13. Of Satan's Dominion

Firstly, the term "principalities," when attributed to Devils, indicates that our spiritual adversaries possess dominion, rule, and governance. This title, typically reserved for those in authority due to their power to govern, underscores the control wielded by Devils, who are explicitly called governors in this context and elsewhere described as a prince and a god.

Question: How did Devils attain their regime? Is their governance ordained by God?

Answer: In response, one might recall Christ's explanation to Pilate, suggesting Devils would have no authority if it were not permitted from above. Therefore, their dominion exists by God's allowance, who, in just judgement and as punishment for the wicked, has granted Devils the liberty to rule over them. As God delivered rebellious Israelites into the hands of harsh rulers as a form of punishment, so does he allow the world to fall under the Devil's influence.

However, Devils do not possess a legitimate claim to their rule, as if directly appointed by God, unlike the governance of lawful kings and magistrates on Earth. Similar to foreign invaders who temporarily dominated Israel and served as instruments of punishment (yet were considered oppressors), the Devils' rule is similarly unauthorized.

Their dominion stems partly from their own usurpation and ambition and partly from the willful submission of their followers—the wicked of the world—who freely succumb to their tyranny.

[Use 1] Beware of granting the Devil any foothold, for he is exceedingly ambitious and will establish his reign wherever he gains entry. His tyranny knows no bounds; if given the slightest concession, he will assert complete control. Reflect on the misery of those under earthly tyrants and recognize that the Devil's malice far surpasses any worldly despot, illustrating the despair of those under Satan's sway.

[Use 2] The folly of those who consider the Devil their subordinate, a common delusion among witches, conjurers, and sorcerers, as well as many profane individuals, is profound. Though the Devil may feign servitude, it is merely a strategy to deepen his dominion over them. To believe in mastering the Devil is a gross misunderstanding of both his nature and one's own.

[Use 3] We must instead pledge our allegiance to Lord Christ as our sovereign, to defend us against these dark principalities. No king tolerates rival dominion over his subjects; if Christ reigns over us, he will not permit the rule of enemies, especially those opposed to him. Failure to accept Christ's sovereignty invites divine judgement, leaving us vulnerable to Satan's tyranny. The absence of a middle ground between Christ's kingdom and Satan's domain is clear: those not aligned with Christ fall under the Devil's rule. This will be just with the Lord to give them over to Satan's power, who rebel against him; that so by their hard bondage under him, they might the better see their folly, and if they have so much grace, bewail it, and become wiser.

§ 14. Of Satan's Power

The second characteristic by which Devils are described is their power. This demonstrates that our spiritual enemies not only possess a dominion but also have the power to maintain it. They are capable of keeping their subjects and captives in subjugation. Satan is often referred to as a "Prince of power," with many titles in Scripture underscoring his might, such as the strong man armed, the roaring lion, the great red dragon, and the god of this world. Job's ordeal clearly illustrates Satan's significant influence and strength.

The Lord allows Satan to wield such power:

1. To more profoundly manifest His divine power through the defeat of such a formidable foe.
2. To provide a rigorous test of His saints and children's bravery and strength, as exemplified by Job.
3. To administer more severe punishment upon the wicked.

Having established that the Devil is a powerful entity, let's explore some specifics about the nature and extent of Satan's power through addressing several questions:

1. Can Devils accomplish whatever they desire?
2. If their will is limited, can they perform acts beyond natural laws?
3. If their abilities do not surpass natural order, what constitutes their exceptional power?
4. Has their power diminished since their fall from grace?
5. Are they always free to exercise their capabilities?

§ 15. Of the Restraint of Satan's Power

1. Firstly, the Devil cannot achieve everything he wishes; this capability is exclusive to God, whose power is limitless. Were Satan able to enact his will entirely, it would imply that God lacks authority over him, contradicting the fact that Satan is a created being with inherent limitations.
2. Secondly, Satan cannot directly contravene or surpass the natural laws ordained by God for His creation. All creatures are bound to these laws, with the exclusive right to alter them reserved for God, the master of nature. Consequently, the Devil:
 - Cannot perform genuine miracles.
 - Cannot override human free will.
 - Cannot discern the secrets of the heart.
 - Cannot predict future events.

These acts are either beyond or directly against the natural order, emphasizing the limitations placed upon Satan's power.

§ 16. Of Satan's Power in Miracles

Regarding miracles, it's stated that the Devil cannot perform any true miracles. Miracles performed by Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles were clear indications of divine power, distinguishing them as servants of God. If the Devil were capable of performing miracles, these acts wouldn't serve as such definitive evidence of God's power. Even the sorcerers in Moses' time recognized divine intervention, acknowledging, "This is the finger of God."

Objection: It's argued that the sorcerers replicated some miracles performed by Moses.

Answer: While there might appear to be a superficial resemblance between the actions of Moses and the sorcerers, such as turning rods into serpents, water into blood, and summoning frogs, significant differences underlie these acts. Moses' actions were genuine miracles. The sorcerers' feats, on the other hand, could have been achieved through natural means (e.g., the secret introduction of serpents, blood, and frogs into Egypt) or were merely illusions—deceptive visions without substance. This latter explanation is supported by specific details from these accounts, such as Aaron's rod consuming the sorcerers' rods, indicating a true transformation on Moses' part, unlike the sorcerers' rods which offered no resistance and were thus likely not genuinely transformed.

§ 17. Of Satan's Power Over Man's Will

Regarding human will, the Devil cannot directly coerce it. Compromising the will's freedom would essentially nullify its very essence. Hence, in converting sinners, God doesn't force the will but instead inspires the desire to change.

Objection: It's noted that Satan can bend the will of natural men to his desires.

Answer: Satan influences the will through enticements and fears, employing external means to persuade individuals to succumb to his will. Not everyone succumbs to these influences at all times. If Satan could forcibly control the will, he would draw everyone to his cause.

This distinction between God's approach to influencing human will and Satan's tactics highlights the inherent freedom of choice granted to humanity. While Satan can tempt and deceive, he cannot override the fundamental liberty that characterizes human volition.

§ 18. Of Satan's Power over Man's Heart

Concerning the human heart, a bottomless pit of unsearchable depth and deceit, only God possesses the inherent attribute of scrutinizing hearts, a truth that led Nathanael to recognize Christ as the Son of God.

Objection: It's noted that many of Satan's temptations align closely with the inner dispositions and secret intentions of individuals.

Answer: While Satan cannot directly know these secrets, he is adept at inferring them. This inference is not only based on meticulous observation of outward speech and actions but also on understanding the internal humors, temperament, and physical constitution, which he, being a spirit, discerns as readily as visible behaviors.

§ 19. Of Satan's Power in Foretelling Things to Come

Predicting future events without relying on natural signs, effects, or causes is beyond natural capabilities, a divine prerogative that validates the true Jehovah and authenticates His prophets. Satan lacks this ability.

Objection: Instances are cited where Satan and his agents have seemingly predicted future events, as in the encounters with Saul and the divining maid, suggesting even God acknowledges their predictive capacities.

Answer: Satan and his instruments might predict events that can be deduced from natural causes or previously revealed divine secrets.

The Devil's extensive knowledge and experience with natural processes allow him to extrapolate outcomes from minimal information, akin to retrieving a bucket from a well by sequentially pulling up a chain link by link. Moreover, he pays close attention to divine revelations, enabling him to appear prescient about matters already divinely foretold. Predictions by the divining maid and similar figures likely stem from subtle natural indications or are mere conjectures.

§ 20. Of the Extent of Satan's Power

Satan's extraordinary capabilities are confined to the realm of natural phenomena, allowing him to execute actions that can be achieved through natural means. For instance, he can manipulate the weather, causing tempests, thunder, and extraordinary fires; disturb the seas to the point of engulfing ships and lives; provoke floods by causing waters to overflow; on land, he can trigger earthquakes, demolish structures, uproot trees, and transport objects, including humans and animals, through the air. He can enter bodies, inducing self-destructive behaviors or inflicting diseases, possess individuals causing them to become mute, deaf, blind, or exhibit violent behavior. He can provoke negative emotions like anger, pride, greed, and lust; manipulate dispositions to lay or lead into temptations; cloud judgement, and incite mental distress to unbearable levels. Additionally, Satan can fuel conflicts among men, kingdoms, and within political hierarchies, leading to wars, treasons, and other societal chaos. His capacity for causing harm is as vast in variety as it is in number, encompassing a wide array of afflictions and discord.

§ 21. Of the Power of Evil Angels Compared to Good

When comparing Devils with good Angels, to whom they were initially equal in power, it's clear their strength has somewhat diminished following their fall. Whenever conflict arises between good and evil Angels, the latter are consistently outmatched, unable to withstand the former. However, relative to other creatures, their power remains formidable, appearing undiminished by their fall and maintaining their capacity for malevolence.

§ 22. Of the Restraint of Satan's Power

Despite the liberty implied by the power attributed to Devils, it's undeniable that their capabilities are curtailed by a higher authority, the power of God. This limitation prevents them from exercising their full potential or acting entirely as they please, akin to the sea restrained by God's command to go no further. This concept is metaphorically represented by the notion of Devils being "chained," restricted in their ability to harm as one would restrain a dangerous dog.

God's restraint on Satan is evident through several biblical instances, from limiting the Serpent's damage to bruising the heel rather than crushing the head, to specific examples where Satan's influence is clearly checked or permitted by God, such as in the cases of Saul, Ahab, and notably, Job, where Satan's actions are expressly limited to what God allows.

Objection: Some argue that Satan is now "loosed" and enjoys greater freedom to enact his will.

Answer: This perceived loosening is relative, akin to extending a chained dog's leash rather than an absolute freedom. God's

limitations serve to distinguish His infinite power from Satan's and assert His sovereignty over all, including those who resist Him.

For humanity, made in God's image, these restrictions are a mercy, preventing Satan from causing utter destruction. Without these bounds, Satan's wrath would be as unchecked as the sea without shores, potentially overwhelming all creation.

Understanding both the extent and limitations of the Devil's power is crucial. It warns us not to underestimate him, encouraging vigilance and seeking strength beyond ourselves, as advised in the scriptures. Yet, knowing that his power is not absolute nor unchecked by God, we should not despair. Like Job, who endured Satan's assaults but ultimately prevailed, we're reminded of the balance between acknowledging the threat and trusting in God's protective restraints.

§ 23. Of the Place Where Satan Rules

This section reveals further restrictions on the Devil's power by identifying those under his dominion, initially referred to as "worldly governors" and further explicated thereafter.

From the general observation, we deduce that the dominion of Devils is confined to this world and its inhabitants. Their influence stretches no further than this lower world beneath the heavens and lasts no longer than the lifespan of this earthly realm. The Devil's dominion, therefore, is limited to the air, and he is specifically called the god of this world. With the conclusion of this world, Christ will abolish his authority and power.

The Lord has designated this world and its duration as a period of testing to determine who is suited for His kingdom and who is not.

Part of this test involves allowing Satan to exercise dominion and power within this world.

Use: This understanding serves as a significant source of encouragement for us to endure patiently and steadfastly all challenges brought upon us by the Devil's malice and power in this world. These trials cannot extend beyond the bounds of this world; upon departing from it, we escape their jurisdiction and join Christ, our leader, in victory over these principalities. In Heaven, where Christ's physical presence resides, along with the spirits of just and perfect men and the assembly of good Angels, Devils have no place; they have been expelled. Just as Christ, after enduring Satan's assaults in this world, ascended and triumphed over them, so too, if we endure, we shall reign with Him. Death marks our transition from this battleground to a realm of triumph, the final adversary, with its throes being the last conflicts. Reflecting on this, we are inspired to resist steadfastly, even to the point of bloodshed and death.

§ 24. Of the Parties Over Whom Satan Rules

Yet more distinctly are the parties over whom Satan rules, expressed in these words, "Darkness of this world," whereby are meant such ignorant and wicked men as have no light of spiritual understanding, no life of grace in them, and therefore deservedly called darkness.

The Devil's rule and dominion are properly and principally over ignorant and evil men: even such as are described in Chapter 4, verse 18-19, and before that called children of disobedience, or of unbelief, for the original word will bear both. For ignorant men, the Devil is

said to be the god of those who are blinded. For the wicked, those who commit sin are said to be of the Devil.

These resist him not but yield to him: for ignorant persons know not his power, malice, subtlety, diligence, mischievous enterprises, with the like: no marvel therefore that they suffer themselves to be guided and governed by Satan. When the men of Aram were stricken with blindness, they were easily, without any resistance, led into the midst of the chiefest and strongest city of their enemies, for they saw not where they went. So, ignorant men, not seeing in whose power they are, suffer themselves to be there.

Wicked persons believe not that the Devil is so cruel a tyrant as he is reported to be: They think him to be the best lord because he suffers them to do as they list, and his temptations are agreeable to their corrupt humors and carnal desires; they take most delight in doing the work of the Devil; yea, as Christ says, they will do the lusts of their father the Devil. Is it then any marvel that the Devil is their governor?

Neither ignorant nor wicked persons will subject themselves to the Lord's government: not ignorant, because they know not the benefit of it; not wicked, because they think it too strict, too much crossing their licentious humor. Therefore, in justice, God gives them over to the rule of the Devil.

Hereby may trial be made whether we are under the rule and power of the Devil or not. If we love darkness more than light, if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, we are in the power of the Prince of darkness. Hearken to this, O ignorant persons, you that are neglecters and despisers of the light of God's Word, that cry out against so much preaching: if at least your ears be better than your eyes, and you can believe that which by others is declared unto

you. Hearken to this also, O you wicked persons, who pursue so eagerly the evil desires of your hearts, and the foolish customs of the vain world; if at least your evil hearts will let you yield to anything that may turn to your good. Oh, if it were possible, for these two sorts of persons, to see in what a miserable plight they are by those governors under whom they live, then would the ignorant learn knowledge, and sinners enter into a new course. Fondly they think they live in great liberty, whereas in truth, they live in most slavish bondage. I may justly in this case take up the complaint of Wisdom, and say, "O you foolish, how long will you love foolishness," etc.

[Use 2] Hereby also men may learn how to come out of Satan's power; namely, by coming out of darkness into light. So long as we live and lie in darkness, there is no hope, no possibility of freeing ourselves from the tyranny of Satan. God first delivers us from the power of darkness and then translates us into the kingdom of His Son.

This use provides a good direction to magistrates, ministers, to all who have charge of others, and to private persons.

To magistrates, that they take order to establish the ministry of the Word in such places as are under their rule.

To ministers, that they be diligent and faithful in preaching it.

To all who have charge, that they bring such as are under them to the Word.

To private persons, that they be willing to hear, and careful to practice what they hear.

Note what Christ says of the issue and power of the Word preached by his disciples, "He saw Satan fall down like lightning": for by it, men's minds are enlightened, and their hearts converted, so that Satan cannot bear such sway over them, as he does over ignorant and wicked persons.

That which is in general said of freeing men from the tyranny of Satan may particularly be applied to those who are in bondage under his great Vice-roy on earth, even Antichrist, which deceives the greatest part of the world. His kingdom is a kingdom of darkness: where the light of the Gospel shines forth, the clouds and mists of that darkness vanish away. Experience shows that where the preaching of the Word is rare, there is the greatest number of Antichrist's vassals. God grant this may be duly considered by them, who for the safety of the kingdom, and the furtherance of religion, do treat of means whereby the number of Papists may be diminished.

For ourselves, let us first labor for the light of knowledge to enlighten us, and then for the light of grace to renew us; so shall we be freed from the kingdom of darkness. For attaining hereunto, we must diligently attend to the light of God's word, and also pray for the spirit of revelation and sanctification.

They who have sure evidence that they are light in the Lord may from this reap comfort, in that thereby they may be assured that though they live in the world, yet they are not under the rule of the god of this world: he is Prince only of the darkness of this world. Live, therefore, as children of light, as the Lord's freemen: have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness. For what communion has light with darkness?

§ 25. Of the Nature of Devils

Devils are described as spiritual beings, consistently referred to as spirits throughout both the Old and New Testament. Despite their fall, they remain spiritual entities, as changing their essence would mean the nature that sinned couldn't be held accountable.

Use 1: Misunderstanding the nature of Devils as merely bad qualities or emotions arising from human flesh is a profound error. By defining them as something more substantial than mere affections, the Apostle clarifies that spiritual beings can be true substances, not merely qualities or sensations. The actions Devils perform, their dwellings, the power they wield, and the suffering they endure, all point to them being substantial entities. Rejecting this understanding diminishes the serious nature of teachings about Devils, turning profound truths into mere myths.

§ 26. Of the Advantage Which Satan Has

The spiritual nature of devils aggravates their terror in many ways. For they being spirits, it follows that they are:

1. Invisible: though they see us in every place and on every side within and without, yet they cannot be seen by us. And as their nature is, so are their assaults, such as cannot be seen by the eyes of flesh and blood. Consider what advantage one who sees has against a blind man. The Sodomites, who fiercely assaulted Lot's house, being stricken with blindness, could do no harm. Elisha himself, alone, led an army of his enemies (being made blind) wherever he wished. To spirits, we are as blind men: we can neither see them nor their assaults. I speak of men as they are flesh and blood, natural men. God gives to those who are born of the Spirit spiritual eyes to discern them and avoid them.

2. Privy to whatever we do or speak, whether we are in company or alone, in light or darkness: scarcely a thought can pass from us, but they can shrewdly guess it. They can soon discern all our devices against them. The King of Aram found it to be a great disadvantage that his enemy had one who could disclose the words he spoke in his private chamber; and his heart was troubled for this thing. What a great advantage these spiritual enemies have against us, who are flesh and blood!

3. Not hindered by any bodily impediments: no sensible substance can in any way impede their course or slacken their enterprise. They can pass through or pass over all such things that would stop and hinder us: armies of men, stone walls, iron gates, woods, waters, yes, seas, and oceans, and the like. They need not such space of time to pass from place to place as we do; but can suddenly be in diverse places, which are many millions of miles asunder. For they have no corporeal gravity to hinder them, neither can they be stopped by any bodily obstacle. The sun is not swifter than they: the sight of a man's eye, the lightning from heaven is not more quick or speedy. This also is a very great advantage.

4. Not subject to any fainting, wearisomeness, failing, or decaying, as bodies are: for they are simple substances, not formed of any external matter or contrary qualities, which cause fainting, decaying, etc. Hence it is that after they have done many thousand great exploits, they are as fresh and ready to do many more as they were at first. They need no resting time, but continually, night and day, they assault men without intermission and without ceasing. Some comfort it is to those who are sorely assaulted by bodily enemies that the night comes on, which usually causes some respite. But in the combat with

spiritual enemies, there is no hope of any such matter. No, they are not subject to death: from the beginning of the world, they have assaulted man; and to the end of the world, they shall continue: whereby they must gather much experience, which is a great disadvantage.

I might further proceed to set down other particular points of advantage they have against us, in this respect that they are spiritual beings. But these may suffice, and surely these may be enough to discourage many and make them say;

§ 27. Of the Help We Have Against Satan's Advantages

Despite the formidable advantages our spiritual enemies possess, there's hope in resisting and fighting against them. God, the supreme Spirit and essence of infinite might, surpasses all, including the Devils. His invisibility to them, His omnipresence, and His eternal nature far exceed their capabilities. God endows His followers with the Holy Spirit, granting them spiritual vision to recognize and evade demonic temptations, unveiling the enemy's schemes, and offering divine protection through His angelic hosts.

Use 3: The spiritual nature of our adversaries compellingly reminds us to seek refuge in God, depend on His strength, and arm ourselves with spiritual armor against their attacks.

§. 28. Of Satan's evil quality.

The fourth argument by which the devils are described is their quality, which is wickedness.

Some restrain this to their malice in particular. Their malice has been in part laid forth by discovering their manifold wiles, and shall further be declared in the last clause of this verse. Here I will speak of their wickedness in general, for so I take the extent of this word in this place.

The devils are extremely evil: they are wholly and only set upon mischief and wickedness. Therefore, as by a kind of exaggeration they are here called spirits of wickedness, so elsewhere Satan is termed by a kind of propriety that wicked one. Many attributes in Scripture are given to them to set forth their wickedness, as unclean, evil, foul spirits, and the like.

In many respects, the Devil may be accounted most monstrously wicked.

1. Because he was the first author of wickedness: that which Christ says of one particular branch of wickedness may be applied to the general; he is the father of wickedness, and in that respect is said to be a murderer from the beginning.
2. Because by nature he is most impure: no jot, no dram of goodness in him. If that is true of a natural man, "That all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually," much more is it true of the Devil.
3. Because he is most willing and forward unto evil, taking delight therein. Not unfitly may I apply the words of the Psalmist to him, "He loves evil more than good, and lies more than to speak truth." He is so set on mischief that he needs none to egg him forward, neither does it ever repent him of any evil that he does.

4. Because evil is his continual practice: whatever good he can, he hinders, and draws as many as he can to evil: all his temptations are to wickedness. First, he tempted man to sin, and ever since, he ceases not more and more to stir him up thereunto, and that not only by himself but also by his instruments—the flesh, the world, persecutors, idolaters, heretics, profane men, etc.

[Use 1] Hereby may we take notice of the Devil's meddling with us when he prevails against us: Whenever we are solicited to any wickedness, then is the Devil at our elbow; when we commit any wickedness, then has the Devil beguiled us and prevailed against us. As by our disposition to righteousness and the fruits of holiness, we may know the powerful work of the Spirit on us, so we may know the rule of Satan in us by the works of wickedness. Christ proves that the Jews were of their father the Devil because they did the lusts of their father the Devil. For he that commits sin is of the Devil, who works in the children of disobedience.

This also may serve as a strong motive to dissuade us from all wickedness because it is a diabolical quality: therein we are like not only to filthy swine but even to the infernal spirits. By committing wickedness, we make ourselves the Devil's instruments, yes, his imps and limbs, and we bear his image. If it is a good motive (as needs it must be a good motive, for oft it is urged by the Holy Ghost) to stir us up to holiness and righteousness because the Lord God is holy, because that is his image, that beseems his children; then by the consequence of contraries, it is also a good motive to keep us from wickedness because the Devil is a most wicked spirit.

Note this, all profane men, all impious despisers of God and of his holy ordinances, all cursed swearers and blasphemers, all cruel, malicious, rebellious, riotous, lascivious, beastly persons: in a word,

all wicked persons, note this; as here you carry the Devil's image, so assuredly shall you in hell partake of his punishment and torment if you repent not.

They who will have nothing to do with these spirits of wickedness must have nothing to do with wickedness itself. Whosoever lets wickedness reign in them, lets the Devil reign over them. Satan enters not into us but by wickedness.

§ 29. Of the Number of Devils

As a general amplification of all the forenamed arguments, in this description of our spiritual enemies, note how every branch is set down in the plural number: Principalities, Powers, Worldly Governors, Spirits, whereby is implied that

the devils are many. If the question be asked how many they be, I answer that it is a needless, a curious, and doubtful question: there is no ground in Scripture for the resolution of it. If the holy Scripture decides not this question, what Book can decide it? Yea, what need is there that it should be decided? Too curious and too bold they have been who have gone about to divide them into nine orders, opposite to their conceited nine orders of good Angels, and in every order to place certain millions.

But to let pass these uncertainties, certain it is that there are a very great number of hellish spirits: for they made a Host to fight against Michael and his Angels: yea, we read that there were not only seven Devils, but a whole legion in one Man: now a legion is computed to contain about 6666. If at once in one Man there were so many, how many were there in all the World besides: for we may suppose that no man is free at any time but has Devils attending on him to solicit

him to evil; so that it is evident, that though their just number cannot be reckoned up, yet that there is a very great number, yea (as the Apostle says of good Angels) an innumerable company.

Quest. Seeing there be so many Devils, how is it that oftentimes there is mention made but of one whom we are to resist, and stand against?

Answer. This shows that they have a head amongst them; and that he and they concur in the same mind, and all aim at the same end: their forces are so united and combined together, as if they were all but one Devil. Besides, this word Devil is a collective word, which comprises many under it: as Turk, Spaniard, etc. Thus we say, all Christendom together raised an army against the Turk: or England sent forth an army against the Spaniard. Whether, therefore, we use these words Satan, Devil, etc. in the singular number, or Principalities, Powers, etc. in the plural number, all is one. Under one many are comprised, and by many an united power is meant.

[Use] This their number aggravates all the former points: If it be a fearful and terrible thing to be under the bondage of one earthly Tyrant, what is it to be slaves to an innumerable company of Principalities, who have such power, are so malicious and mischievous, and are all spirits, and devils? One Devil is able to foil many armies of flesh and blood: what then is one poor man consisting of flesh, to legions of devils? who have no other hope but in flesh and blood, have no hope of safety at all, but are in a most miserable plight. This hellish Host (if it were seen) could not but be much more terrible to such, than the Host of the Syrians was to him that cried out; Alas master, how shall we do? But to us that fight under Christ's banner, there are two strong props. One, that they which are with us, are more than they which are with them. The

other, that there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few. That there are more with us than against us, is apparent: for all the good Angels are with us, watch over us, and fight for us. Now it is out of doubt that there are more good Angels than evil: for the Scripture speaks much more of the number of those, than of these. As the Devil had a host of evil Angels with him, so had Michael a host of good Angels with him. Mention is made of one legion of Devils in one man, but Christ could have had more than 12. legions of good Angels to guard him (which amount to about 80,000.) Daniel mentions a far greater number, as thousand thousands, yea, ten thousand thousands: yea, yet further, to show that all the set numbers which we can set, come short of their number, the Apostle terms them, A company of innumerable Angels: surely then there are more with us than against us: for the good Angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes, which shall be heirs of salvation.

The consideration of this is sufficient to uphold us, notwithstanding the multitude of devils. But the other prop for our faith is much stronger and surer; which is God's infinite power, whereby he is able to save as well against many as few. For when we consider that thousand thousands are as one to him, what need the number of millions astonish us, more than one? So that although the devils be many ways fearful to them that are out of the guard of good Angels, and protection of God, yet not to be feared of such as belong to Christ.

§ 30. Of Satan's Abode in the Air

The fifth and last argument whereby our enemies are described is in the last clause of this verse, which of all the rest is most doubtful.

Most interpreters so expound it, as if the place of the devils were here set down, namely, the air, which is often called heaven; which being so, hereby is implied, that they have a very great advantage against us, by reason of the place where they are. For the devils being in the air,

1 They are above us, over our heads, everywhere round about us, and so still ready to annoy us: this among men is counted a very great advantage: a few men on a hill, or on high walls and towers are able to do much mischief to a great army in a low valley beneath them.

2 They can espy all things that we do: so that in this respect we are to be the more circumspect over ourselves, and vigilant against them. They who have envious, malicious enemies, which overlook them, and so can see whatsoever they do, will be careful that they do nothing whereby those espers may take advantage to accuse them, or to work any mischief against them.

3 They are in their own kingdom: for the Devil is a prince that rules in the air: Now amongst men, they who are in their own dominion, where they have all at command, where they may still have new supply, have a great advantage. And they who war in their enemies' dominions, had need be backed with a far greater power than their enemies have: but we of ourselves are far weaker, and less in power than our spiritual enemies, and we fight with them in the air, which is their kingdom, where they have all at command: have they not then in this respect a great advantage? have not we need to be backed with a far greater power?

These and suchlike observations may be drawn from this circumstance of the place: which I have the rather noted because most do so interpret this clause.

§ 31. Of the Cause of Satan's Quarrel

But yet freely and ingenuously to make known my own judgment (with submission to better judgments) I rather think that the Apostle here means the cause or prize of this combat, for which it is maintained, as if it were thus translated, In heavenly things. My reasons are these:

1 In the original, places are not expressed, but indefinitely the Apostle says, In heavenlies. Now when an adjective is so set alone, most usually the substantive understood is thing or things.

2 In other places being thus indefinitely set down, it is taken for heavenly things, and so translated, as Heb. 8. 5. They serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.

3 This word, being often used in the New Testament, at least twenty several times, is never used in any man's opinion (this place only excepted) of any aerial place or thing, but of those things which are truly heavenly and spiritual: the word itself, according to the proper notation thereof, signifies the upper heavenlies: so as most improperly it is taken for the lowest Heavens, the air.

4 It is not a matter of so great weight and moment for spirits to be in high places over us, for they can as much annoy us being beside us, within us, beneath us, as above us: high places may be a help to men who are clogged with flesh and blood, to spirits they can be small advantages.

5 The words being expounded of heavenly things, this last clause adds as great weight to the description of our enemies as any of the former, as we shall see when we handle the Doctrine.

6 Both ancient and later divines, and those of good learning and judgment, have thus expounded this clause; so as it is no new or private conceit of mine.

Objection: This very word is often indefinitely used, as here; and yet it signifies Places, as Chap. 1. Vers. 3. 20. & 2. 6. &c.

Answer: Though it signifies heavenly places, yet not such as are in the lowest heaven the air, but the highest, which is not the place of devils; thither because the devil cannot come, I expound it Heavenly things.

Object. 2. The phrase will not bear this exposition: for the preposition in, is never put for the cause.

Answ. One of the Greek Fathers, who was very skillful in the propriety of that tongue, so expounds it. Besides, this particle is so used in other places of the New Testament: twice in one verse, namely Mat. 10. 32. Whosoever shall confess me, I will confess him, &c: word for word, in me, in him. Here the preposition in signifies the cause, as if he had said; he that shall make confession before men for my sake, I will make confession before my Father for his sake. So again, Mat. 11. 6. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me, that is, for my sake: and Mat. 26. 31. All ye shall be offended in me. The Kings Translators turn it, because of me. So in this my Text, this last clause having reference to the principal verb, may be thus translated; We wrestle because of heavenly things.

The Doctrine then which hence I gather is this:

The main things for which the devils fight against us are heavenly matters. Before I proceed further to prove or apply this point, I will a little more fully explain it.

1 By heavenly matters, I mean such as principally respect God's glory (for God being himself Heavenly, whatsoever tends to his Honour is in that respect Heavenly) and then such as respect our souls' salvation: for as the things which concern the temporal good of our body are earthly, so the things which concern the eternal good of our souls are Heavenly: for to Heaven they aspire, and in Heaven shall they enjoy their happiness.

2 Where (I say) the devils fight for heavenly matters, my meaning is, not that they desire to get them, but that they endeavour to spoil us of them: so that in this combat the prize propounded to us is heavenly; namely, whether we will serve our Heavenly Father, or the hellish foe: whether we will let go, or fast hold that heavenly treasure which Christ hath purchased for us, all those heavenly things whereby God is honoured, and our souls are saved.

For proof that they be heavenly things which Satan especially aims at, observe those several temptations recorded in the Scripture: I will give a taste of some. What aimed he at in tempting Adam and Eve? was it not to deface God's Image in them, and to strip them of that happiness wherein God had created them? The issue shows as much. What sought he in tempting Christ? was it not to make him doubt whether he were the Son of God or no? yea, and utterly renounce God, and worship the Devil? Was it not Peter's faith that he sought to winnow? Doth he not blind men's eyes, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the Image of God, should not shine unto them? As for earthly things, he makes not much account of them, he can be well content to let men enjoy them, he casts them to men as baits: we read how he offered to Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, if Christ would have worshipped him.

Objection: He deprived Job of his temporal estate.

Answer: It was a higher matter which Satan aimed at, namely, to bring him to deny God, and blaspheme him to his face; as may be gathered by Satan's answer to God.

He would make all like to himself. Through his pride he is fallen from Heaven, and utterly spoiled and deprived of all heavenly goodness and happiness; wherefore he seeks also to deprive man of the like.

Behold here the malice of the Devil: it is no good that he seeketh for himself by this fierce and long conflict which he maintaineth, but our woe and misery. He seeks whom to devour. Malice first moved him to assault man, and malice still whets him on to continue his fight against mankind. Durst he ever have ventured on Christ Jesus the Son of God, but that malice wholly possessed him? Not unfitly therefore are many titles given unto him in Scripture to set forth his malice, as Satan, which signifies an adversary; Devil, an accuser, Tempter, Evil one, Enemy, Murderer, and Father of lies. If the reasons of all these names (which are not hard to gather) be duly weighed, they will show that he is even made of malice.

Among other motives to stir us up to arm ourselves well, and constantly to stand and fight against the Devil, this is none of the least. It is no small matter that we fight for, but a matter of the greatest weight and consequence that can be. Satan could say (Job 2. 4.) All that a man hath will he give for his life: yet is life but a temporal and earthly matter. If all for his life, what for his soul, and the salvation thereof, which is a heavenly matter? so as there is no comparison betwixt them. What then shall it profit a man, though he should win the whole World, if he lose his own soul? or what shall a man give for recompense of his soul? When wise Captains see that a sore and fierce battle is to be fought, which with the very rumour

thereof may dishearten their soldiers, they use to hearten and encourage them by bringing to their mind, and setting before them the prize, or cause of their fight: some will say, Lo, ye fight for whole Towns, and Cities, and Kingdoms: others, Ye fight not to get that which is other men's, but to keep that which is your own; ye fight for your Country, your lands and inheritances, your wives and children: others, It is not honour and conquest, they are not goods and lands that ye fight for, but liberty and life: stand to it therefore, if the day be lost, ye are either dead men, or slaves.

Note how the Philistines encouraged one another, Be strong and play the men, O Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews. Now all these are but earthly matters; but I may say to the Lord's soldiers, It is the Lord of Heaven whose battles ye fight, his honour is engaged therein; it is your souls' salvation, and heavenly happiness, which is in hazard: your enemies seek to spoil you of the precious graces of God's sanctifying Spirit, and to deprive you of that rich & glorious inheritance, which Christ by no less price than his own blood hath purchased for you: if ye yield to your enemies, all these ye lose, and become vassals unto your mortal and malicious enemy the Devil, ye are even fire-brands of Hell. Be strong therefore, and of a valiant courage: fear not, but fight and stand it out to the uttermost; so shall ye be more than conquerors.

The things which especially we ought to look unto, to be watchful over, and to labour to keep safe, are the forenamed heavenly things: and that not only in regard of the excellency and worth of them, but also in regard of Satan's main opposition against them. What he in malice doth most assault, we in wisdom must most defend, and set foot to foot against him: if an enemy bring all his forces against the chiefest Tower of a City, wise Citizens will thither bring their best munition, and strongest defence: if thus we deal with Satan, we shall

oppose godly wisdom to his wicked subtlety, and so keep ourselves safe from all his assaults. This is the wisdom which the Apostle here teaches us by those several pieces of Armour, which follow to be handled: for they are all concerning heavenly things, and tend to the salvation of the soul.

The Fourth Part:

A Repetition of the Means

"For this reason, take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand." - Ephesians 6:13

§1. On Repeating the Same Thing

Here the Apostle returns again to the second part of his former direction, and repeats in effect the very same things which he delivered in verse 11: namely, how we may keep ourselves safe against the forenamed enemies.

We may not think that this repetition is vain and idle: for he was guided by God's Holy Spirit, who does nothing in vain. Note what Joseph says of the iteration of one and the same thing to Pharaoh in two dreams, "The dream was doubled the second time, because the thing is established by God, and God hastens to perform it." Many

good reasons may be given why here the Apostle repeats his direction, as, to show,

1. That what he had delivered before was upon very good advice delivered: not rashly, so as he doubted whether he might stand to it or not, but so as he dares avouch it again and again, as being an infallible truth, which he also knew to be a truth. Like to that thundering denunciation of a curse against all that should preach another Gospel, which he lays down twice together.
2. That it was a needful, behooveful, and profitable truth: a most sovereign and necessary means to keep us safe: necessary for us, in regard to our own inability to stand fast without it; sovereign in regard to the sufficiency of the means, which can and will (being rightly used) keep us safe. Mark the reason why it was not grievous to the Apostle to write the same things, even because to them to whom he wrote, it was safe.
3. That naturally we are backward and sluggish in using this armour: therefore he thought it not enough once to urge the point, but again presses it. Thus Solomon often repeats diverse exhortations. So Captains, when they see their soldiers loath to arm when there is great need they should arm, will call upon them again and again to arm.

Ministers may here learn, as just occasion is given, to call their people to the remembrance of weighty points, especially such as they observe their people most backward unto. It is not sufficient once to have delivered such a point, but again, and if need be, again it is to be urged. The Apostle having propounded Christ as a pattern of patience to the Hebrews, because he was a most worthy and perfect pattern, he calls them again to consider him. Thus shall Ministers

show that they make a difference between points of less or greater need; and that they have respect to the good of their people.

Objection. Many will say that Ministers want matter, and therefore repeat the same things.

Answer. The very same may be objected against the repetitions used by the Prophets, by Christ himself, by his Apostles, and other faithful and able Ministers. But let Ministers see that they do it not out of idleness, but just cause, and then need they not fear such cavils.

People must here learn patience, not to snuff or be discontent if they hear the same thing again, which before they heard. This impatience argues an itching ear, which cannot endure a repetition of anything, and it shows that they have more respect to the ear than to the heart: like the Israelites, who had more respect to their outward taste than to their inward nourishment, and thereupon loathed Manna because they had so often tasted of it. This makes people get them a heap of Teachers.

In particular concerning the present point in hand, persuade ourselves that it is a point worthy to be attended to with all diligence, and to be observed with good conscience; that so we may give the more earnest heed thereto, and not let it slip. Have we also a holy jealousy and suspicion over ourselves, fearing lest we should be too careless in using these means for our safety, yea, too incredulous in believing the good use and benefit of them. Therefore, rouse ourselves up: for where the Spirit is most earnest in urging a point, we must be most heedful in marking it.

§2. Danger Must Make Watchful

Before we come to the particular branches of this verse, note the inference of it upon the former, which is plainly implied in these words, "For this cause," that is, because you have such terrible enemies as have been described unto you, "Take the whole Armour," etc. By this inference, the Apostle gives us to understand that the more dreadful and dangerous our enemies are, the more careful we ought to be to stand upon our guard and to look to our defence. This is, in effect, the same as what was delivered in the beginning of verse 12; we will, therefore, no longer insist upon it..

§3. A Resolution of the Verse

This verse may be divided and branched forth as verse 11 was.

The sum of it is a direction to instruct us how to defend and keep ourselves safe against the Devil.

The parts are two. The first shows what are the means of safety. The second declares the end why these means are to be used.

In the first, he declares, 1. What the means are. 2. How to use them.

The means are the very same as were delivered in verse 11, namely, the whole Armour of God. I shall need to speak no more thereof.

For using the means, the Apostle sets down another word than before: there he said, "Put on." Here, "take unto you." Both words, in general, imply one and the same thing. This latter word is a compound word and signifies sometimes to take up or to take unto yourselves; sometimes to take again or recover. We are said to take up unto ourselves such things as we have not of ourselves and to take again or recover that which we have lost or let go. Both significations may be here applied.

§ 4. Whence Our Defence Cometh From the first I gather that,

The graces whereby we are armed are not virtues or qualities which arise from ourselves; for then it would be improperly said; Take unto you. These graces are some of those special gifts which come from above, which we receive.

By nature, we are born in our souls as naked and destitute of spiritual armour, as in our bodies of outward clothing. Read Ezekiel 16:4-5, etc.

[Use] If we find ourselves destitute of this armour, we must seek it, not in ourselves, but outside of ourselves, even where it is to be had; and that is in the Lord: for every perfect gift comes from the Father of lights. He gives it to such as seek it by faithful prayer in the means appointed by Him, which are His holy word and Sacraments. When there is news of the enemy's coming to invade our Land, and thereupon Proclamations and Edicts are sent forth to charge all to arm themselves: then everyone that either regards his own safety, or his Sovereign's charge, seeks out armour: and to the Armouries do they who have none, resort. We have the same motives to stir us up to seek spiritual armour.

§ 5. Of the Repair of Grace From the second I gather that,

The graces which are decayed in us, or seem to be lost, may be resumed and recovered. Thus much intimates Christ unto Peter, saying, When thou art converted, etc. This cannot be meant of his first conversion, which long before was wrought in him, but of his recovery. The Prophets often call upon God's people, who had made themselves naked, and fallen off from their Lord and Captain the Lord God, to return again unto Him. Very express and direct for this

purpose is the charge of Christ to Ephesus, Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Was it not the recovery of grace which David so earnestly prayed for? In faith he prayed, and was heard.

Two strong props there be to strengthen our faith in the recovery of grace. One without us, which is the Author of grace. The other within us, which is the seed of grace.

1. It is God who is the author of grace, who as in His nature, so likewise in His properties, is unchangeable: so that the same cause which moved God to bestow the graces of His Spirit on a man, still remains in Him to make him renew His Spirit, and that is His mercy and goodness, which can no more be turned from His children than the Sun can be pulled out of Heaven. A cloud may hinder the bright beams of the Sun, yet still it shines, and will at length break forth: so the beams of God's kindness by the clouds of our infirmities may be kept from us, but still there remains mercy in God, which will at length break through those clouds. For whom God once loves He loves unto the end: and in this respect, the graces of His holy Spirit are termed gifts without repentance.
2. The seed of grace is not corruptible, but incorruptible. The Apostle calls it the seed of God: this seed is the holy sanctifying Spirit of God, which Christ very fitly compares to a springing well, out of which flow rivers of water of life, whereby supply and repair of grace, if it fails, may be made. Now this seed remaining in them who are born of God, who can doubt but that which is decayed or impaired in them through negligence, security, pride, or any infirmity, may by repentance be renewed and recovered?

This highly commends the riches of God's mercy, who contents not Himself that once He hath well armed and prepared His soldiers against their enemies, but is still ready to make repair of that which is battered, shattered, or lost through the violent assaults of the enemy, or through their own negligence. One would think it sufficient that once He bestowed on us whole Armour, even such as is sufficient to keep us safe, if ourselves be not in fault. But when through our default any of the pieces thereof are faulty or missing, to make it all up whole again, much amplifies His goodness.

This also shows a main difference betwixt the Law and the Gospel. 'For the Law leaves no place for repentance, nor affords any means to resume that which is lost, or recover that which is decayed, but utterly condemns a man for that which is lost or decayed: for it says; Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. Galatians 3:10: But the voice of the Gospel is Repent, sin no more, Turn you, turn you from your wicked ways; for why will you die? I may in this respect resemble the Law to Abishai, the Gospel to David: Both of them found their enemy: Abishai would presently have smote him stark dead: but David wakes him, tells him in what danger he was, admonishes him to look better to himself. Thus the Law sets forth the rigour of God's justice, the Gospel the riches of His mercy.

§ 6. Why the Whole Armour is to be Used

The reason why this whole armour is to be used now follows. It consists of two branches, first to withstand, which implies a fight. Secondly, to stand fast, which implies the issue of the fight, victory, and conquest: both of them amplified with a circumstance of time, but in a differing manner. The first has respect to the present time (in the evil day). The second to the past time (having done all). In

setting down the end, he also declares the benefit of this armour (that you may be able) whereof we have spoken in the 1st verse.

The word whereby the end in the first branch is expressed, is not altogether the same that was used in the 11th verse. The word there used was simple to stand. Here it is compound to withstand, or stand against. This is a word of defiance and combat, and it also implies the manner of fight, which is face to face, hand to hand, foot to foot, not yielding an hair's breadth to the enemy.

§ 7. Of Manful Standing

Here then are two duties to be observed by all such as have taken unto them the whole Armour of God.

1. That stoutly they stand against their enemies, and bid them defiance: Hereof we shall speak more on the first word of the next verse.
2. That they give no place unto them. This is a duty which the Apostle in express words commands. Often it is implied under this word that is here used. A worthy pattern we have hereof in the example of our Lord and General, Christ Jesus, who still withstood Satan in every assault, and would not yield any whit at all in any of his temptations.

Our arch-enemy is both crafty as a fox, and cruel as a lion: his craft will make him soon espy and take advantage: his cruelty will make him follow it to the utmost.

Great is their folly who first yield a little, and then think well enough to acquit themselves: they much deceive themselves: for after they have once yielded, they have neither will nor power to stand, as they

had before. For as Satan is subtle, so is sin deceitful: whoever once has tasted of it, will scarcely content himself with a taste, but will still more and more hunger after it. Thousands are deceived therewith, and by small yieldings at first, at length are completely overthrown. An especial point of wisdom it is to duly consider our own folly and weakness together with the devil's craft and power, how in ourselves (without this armour) there is no comparison between us and our enemies: yea, also to consider the nature of sin, and our proneness thereto; that so we may resolutely set ourselves against all temptations, not yielding any whit at all to any. Who almost finds not by woeful experience that a little yielding has caused a great overthrow?

§ 8. Of the Evil Day

The time against which the aforementioned armour is prepared is next to be handled. It is here termed the evil day. By evil is meant not so much sin as trouble; and day is put for any continuance of time. Some take the evil day for the whole time of a man's life, yea, for the continuance of this world, all which time Satan assaults us, but no longer.

This I take to be too large an extent of this phrase, for in the original there is to each word adjoined an article, that day, that evil day, which implies some set and distinct time; wherefore others restrain it to the day of a man's death: but that I take to be too strict a restraint: there are many other days and times wherein use is to be made of armour. Wherefore, in the mean between both, I expound the evil day to be that time wherein Satan shall any way set upon us and assault us, whether by outward afflictions or otherwise. All his temptations tend to evil; and therefore, the time wherein he assaults us may well be termed an evil day.

Question: When comes that day?

Answer: It is no more known beforehand than the day of death or the day of judgement. Whenever the Lord lets loose the reins to Satan, then is that evil day. That time wherein the Devil deprived Job of all he had, smote his body with sore boils, vexed him by his wife and friends, were evil days to Job.

§ 9. Of Satan's Being Loose

In that the Apostle tells us of an evil day, he implies

There are times appointed wherein the Devil shall be let loose, and have liberty to assault us. This the Apostle expressly foretold, saying, "There shall come perilous times." Mark the answer that was made to the souls under the altar, "That they should rest until their brethren who should be killed as they were, were fulfilled." Thereby is declared, that as they who were dead had their evil days, so the living should have their evil days. The Apostle makes a necessity hereof, and puts a must unto it, saying; "We must through many afflictions enter into the Kingdom of God." As there are common times of trial for whole Churches, so for particular persons. There is little reason for anyone to doubt hereof, but it is a point of good wisdom for all to look for it. For who is there that has not felt some experience hereof, and by his own experience can verify the truth of this point?

The Lord will have all his tried: for so is His own power, mercy, and wisdom the more manifested in His Saints; and so are His enemies the more confounded. Besides, the Lord will hereby make a difference between His Church here on earth and in Heaven.

Be not secure, as if no evil day could or would come: this is a most dangerous conceit, whereby the Devil gets great advantage, for thus

he suddenly surprises many: and yet it is the conceit of too too many; In their peace and prosperity, they think there shall be no alteration, they shall never be moved: not only careless worldlings, but oftentimes God's children fall into this conceit, as David. Take heed hereof, though for a while we think all well, yet always it shall not be so: the evil day comes sooner upon some; later upon others; longer it tarries with some, shorter with others, yet it comes upon all: though it be uncertain when it comes, and how long it tarries, yet most certain it is that it will come.

§ 10. Of Preparation Against Trial

As another use of this, note the next point, for in regard hereof the Apostle counsels us to prepare against it: yea, he mentions the evil day, as a motive to make us watchful and careful to arm ourselves against it. Now then, in that he bids us take armour, that we may stand in the evil day, his counsel is that

Preparation must be made beforehand, against the time of trial. The care which Job had for his children beforehand, must we have for ourselves. It would seem that he himself looked for the evil days that came upon him: for he says; "The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me," etc. And this was what made him so well endure such sore assaults. Very careful was Christ in preparing the disciples against his departure, because he knew there were evil days coming upon them. The last petition of the Lord's Prayer tends to this purpose.

If preparation is not made beforehand, we may suddenly be surprised and overcome, like the people of Laish. But if we are well prepared, we may well be more secure.

What is likely to be the outcome for those who put the evil day far away from them, and never think of resisting the evil one until he sets upon them? Many thus plunge themselves into much misery. The children of this world are in this respect wiser than many Christians: for they use in times of peace to have their trainings, musterings, tiltings, and many other martial exercises, that thus they may be beforehand prepared for war.

Let us in the time of our greatest tranquillity meditate on the evil to come: and for our help herein, observe what evil falls upon others, and consider the like or worse might have befallen, or may afterwards befall us: and therefore thoroughly examine ourselves, and search what faith, what hope, what righteousness, what sincerity, what other good and needful graces we have in us, that we be not found wanting in our armour when the Devil comes to assault us.

Hitherto of the first branch, concerning the end of arming ourselves.

§ 11. Of the Multitude of Trials

The second follows, wherein the circumstance of Time is first laid down, and first to be handled: It is in these words, "having done all things"; that is, having well passed over all those challenges, whereunto you shall be brought, and well acquitted yourselves.

Here first the Apostle implies that

Many trials are to be undergone, many assaults to be withstood, before we can look to be free and safe. Through many afflictions, we must enter into the Kingdom of God. Many are the troubles of the righteous. This was presented to us in Christ our head, and in all His faithful members in all ages, in Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, etc.

The ancient Jews were a special type hereof. Canaan, a place of rest and quiet, was promised to them; but before they entered into it, they went into Egypt, and were there bondsmen; from thence they came into the Wilderness, where they were brought to many straits and difficulties; and lastly, many sore battles fought, before they could have rest in Canaan.

This partly arises from God's good and wise ordering of matters to His own glory, and His children's good: and partly from Satan's insatiable cruelty, who never thinks he has assaulted enough, so long as a Christian soldier stands: It was a sore blow he gave Job when he deprived him of all his goods and children; a blow that might have struck another down, yea, stark dead: but because he stood stoutly, he lent him another blow, which was much sorer; yea, still he laid on with all his might, till God would suffer him to strike no longer. The like insatiableness is manifested in his instruments: Instance Saul's pursuing of David, and the Pharisees persecuting of Christ: they were never satisfied.

Think not the Christian combat ended when some few battles are fought, and that you are now out of all danger, because through God's mercy and power you have hitherto been delivered; rather expect and prepare for more. No doubt but Peter thought himself safe enough, when one maid who would have betrayed him was gone away: but we read that a second came to him, yea others also. Wherefore, so long as Satan has liberty, (which will be so long as we, or any other man lives in this world) let us be watchful, and still prepared for many assaults one after another. Many stout victorious monarchs have been overthrown, because after a conquest they feared no fresh assault, and so have been suddenly surprised. It would seem that Belshazzar was so overtaken, because the same day

that he made his royal feast, he himself was slain, and his kingdom taken by Darius.

[Use 2] Many think, that by reason of those many assaults which the Devil makes against them, and the many trials whereunto they are brought, God has utterly forsaken them, and given them over to the power of their enemies; this then may serve for their comfort, and as a prop to uphold them, that God does thus order the estate of His children, that many things must be done and finished before we can look for rest.

§ 12. Of Holding Out

The word which the Apostle uses to set down the time of conquest is a word of perfection and implies a full and final ending of a matter: to it, he adds a very general particle, all; whereby he teaches us that,

It is not sufficient to begin the fight well and make a good onset, nor yet to hold out the brunt of some assaults, but all, however many and of whatever kind, must be held out; all must be finished before we can look for victory. He that says all, excepts not any at all. This perfect finishing of all is what the Apostle so earnestly exhorts the Hebrews to and plainly tells them, that yet longer they were to endure, because they had not resisted unto blood, and therefore not finished all. In this respect, says Saint James, "Let patience have her perfect work." This was Christ's care, to finish all; therefore, when he was going to his triumph, he said, "I have finished the work," etc., and again, "It is finished." So the Apostle (who would have us follow him, as he followed Christ) "I have fought a good fight, and have finished my course."

The promises of reward are restrained to this condition, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto death, and I

will give thee the crown of life." To all those seven Churches of Asia, to which Christ wrote, he promised a reward, but with a proviso of overcoming. He that prevails in some conflicts, and is at length overthrown, cannot properly be said to overcome: so that all which is done, is in vain, if all be not done. For mark what the Lord says; "If any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Saul fought many of the Lord's battles valiantly; but he withdrew himself, and the Lord forsook him, so as at length he was overthrown. Was not the glory of all the former victories utterly dashed hereby? Did not the Philistines as much (if not more so) insult over him? So will the Devil.

Be careful to add constancy to courage if you desire the crown of conquest; and though you have done many things, yet give not over so long as there remains anything to be done. Do not so much consider what conflicts have been endured as how many are yet still to be endured. Regard what is to come, rather than what is past. This was Saint Paul's mindset. Many in all ages, who have done many things, have lost the crown of glory because they have not done all. I wish the times and ages wherein we live did not afford so many examples of backsliding as they do. Many have fallen, more are likely to fall: the times are evil, men are weak, all of us prone to faint.

§ 13. Of the Issue of Constancy

Yet for our encouragement, note the last word of this verse, "to stand," wherein the second branch of the end here propounded is laid down. To stand, in this place, is a note of victory; it implies that Satan, notwithstanding all his power, malice, subtlety, fury, diligence, and the like, cannot overthrow those that are well-armed; but as conquerors, when all the conflicts are ended, they shall stand safe and sure, even the last in the field. It is here added as the issue

of the former point, as if he should have said; "If manfully you withstand your enemies, at length you shall stand as conquerors over them." The point here to be noted is this, that courage and constancy bring assured conquest and victory. The promises before mentioned intimate as much. That which Saint James lays down as the issue of resisting the Devil is in effect the very same which is here laid down. There it is said; the Devil will flee; here, we shall be able to stand: The Devil's flight and our standing both imply a conquest. This was the end which we know the Lord made at the end of Job's patience. Hence it is that the Apostle counts the man blessed that endures temptation.

God's honor is otherwise impeached if those who finish all are not crowned as conquerors: of all men, Christ's soldiers are otherwise the most miserable. Where then is the privilege of enduring? Wherein lies the difference between those who fight under Christ's banner and others, if not in prevailing? For the time, Christ's soldiers are commonly much more sorely assaulted. But herein consists the difference, that they are never forsaken, that the Lord will give a good issue; that though they are brought unto temptation, yet they are never cast into it: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest on the lot of the righteous."

In all conflicts, have an eye to this end; though your enemies be many and fierce, yet fear not, you shall stand when they shall flee. Patiently wait, and faint not. "He that believeth shall not make haste:" for God, who alone can end the fight, stands by: he orders all the assaults, for number, measure, kind, continuance, and every other circumstance; and knows when and how to determine all. Therefore, courageously withstand your enemies, that you may victoriously stand. For to give no place to the devil is to overcome the devil.

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