

SIX PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING SATAN AND HIS DEVICES

And now, to prevent objections, I shall lay down some propositions or conclusions concerning Satan and his devices, and then give you the reasons of the point, and so come to make some use and application of the whole to ourselves.

Proposition (1). That though Satan has his devices to draw souls to sin, yet we must be careful that we do not lay all our temptations upon Satan, that we do not wrong the devil, and father that upon him that is to be fathered upon our own base hearts.

I think that oftentimes men charge that upon the devil that which is to be charged upon their own hearts. 'And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat' (Gen. 3:13). Sin and shifting of sin, came into the world together. This is no small baseness of our hearts, that they will blame that naughtiness upon Satan. Man has an evil root within him; that were there no devil to tempt him, nor no wicked men in the world to entice him, yet that root of bitterness, that cursed sinful nature which is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand that 'the wages of sin is eternal death' (Rom. 6:23). 'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies' (Matt. 15:19). The whole frame of man is out of frame. The understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory slippery, the affections crooked, the conscience corrupted, the tongue poisoned, and the heart wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil. Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice people to vanity or folly, yet they could not but sin against him, by reason of that cursed nature that is in them, that will still be a-provoking them to those sins that will provoke and stir up the anger of God against them (Jude 15, 16).

Satan has only a persuading sleight, not an enforcing might. He may tempt us—but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us—but without ourselves he cannot hurt us. Our hearts carry the greatest guilt in every sin. Satan can never undo a man without himself; but a man may easily undo himself without Satan. Satan can only present the golden cup—but he has no power to force us to drink the poison that is in the cup; he can only present to us the glory of the world, he cannot force us to fall down and worship him, to enjoy the world; he can only spread his snares, he has no power to force us to walk in the midst of his snares. Therefore do the devil so much right, as not to excuse yourselves, by your accusing him, and laying the load upon him, that you should lay upon your own hearts.

We are no sooner born, than buried in a bog of wickedness (Cicero).

The fire is our wood, though it be the devil's flame (Nazianzen).

Prop. (2). That Satan has a great hand and stroke in most sins. It was Satan who tempted our first parents to rebellion. It was Satan who provoked David to number the people. It was Satan who put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore says Christ, 'Get behind me, Satan'. It was Satan

who put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel, therefore it is that he is called 'a murderer from the beginning'. It was Satan who put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ, 'And supper being ended, the devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him'. It was Satan who put Ananias upon lying; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' (Gen. 3:1-5; 1 Chron. 21:1; Matt. 16:22, 23; John 8:44, 13:2; Acts 5:3)

As the hand of Joab was in the tale of the woman of Tekoah, so Satan's hand is usually in all the sins that men commit. Such is Satan's malice against God, and his envy against man, that he will have a hand one way or other in all the sins, though he knows that all the sins he provokes others to shall be charged upon him to his greater woe, and eternal torment.

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ and challenging Judas as his own: 'He is not yours, Lord Jesus, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with you—but is fed by me: he takes bread from you—but money from me; he drinks wine with you, and sells your blood to me.' Such is his malice against Christ, and his wrath and rage against man, that he will take all advantages to draw men to that which may give him advantage to triumph over men's souls forever.

Prop. (3). That Satan must have a double permission before he can do anything against us.

He must have permission from God, and permission from ourselves, before he can do anything against our happiness. He must have his permission from God, as you may see in the example of Job (Job 1:11, 12; 2:3-5). Though the devil had malice enough to destroy him, yet he had not so much as power to touch him, until God gave him permission.

They could not so much as enter into the swine without permission from Christ (Luke 8:32). Satan would gladly have combated with Peter—but this he could not do without leave. 'Satan has desired to have you, to winnow you' (Luke 22:31). So Satan could never have overthrown Ahab and Saul—but by permission from God (1 Kings 22). Ah! what a cordial, what a comfort should this be to the saints—that their greatest, subtlest, and most vigilant enemy cannot hurt nor harm them, without permission from him who is their sweetest Savior, their dearest husband, and their choicest friend.

And as Satan must have permission from God, so he must have permission from us. When he tempts, we must assent; when he makes offers, we must hearken; when he commands, we must obey, or else all his labor and temptations will be frustrated, and the evil that he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage in Acts 5:3, 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' He does not expostulate the matter with Satan; he does not say, Satan, 'Why have you filled Ananias's heart to make him lie to the Holy Spirit?' but he expostulates the case with Ananias; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' Why have you given him an advantage to fill your heart with infidelity, hypocrisy, and obstinate audacity, to lie to the Holy Spirit? As if he had said, Satan could never have done this in you, which will now forever undo you, unless you had given him permission. If, when a temptation comes, a man cries out, and says, "Ah, Lord! here is a temptation that would force me, that would deflower my soul, and I have no strength to withstand it! Oh! help! help! for your honor's sake, for your Son's sake, for your promise's sake!" it is a sign that Satan

has not gained your consent—but committed a rape upon your souls, which he shall dearly pay for.

Prop. (4). That no weapons but spiritual weapons will be useful and serviceable to the soul in fighting and combating with the devil.

This the apostle shows: 'Therefore take unto you,' says he, 'the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand' (Eph. 6:13). So the same apostle tells you, 'That the weapons of your warfare are not carnal—but mighty through God, to the casting down of strongholds' (2 Cor. 10:4). You have not to do with a weak—but with a mighty enemy, and therefore you had need to look to it, that your weapons are mighty—which they cannot be, unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no power in them towards the making of a conquest upon Satan. It was not David's sling nor stone that gave him the honor and advantage of setting his feet upon Goliath—but his faith in the name of the Lord Almighty. 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield—but I have come to you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied' (1 Sam. 17:45).

He who fights against Satan, in the strength of his own resolutions, constitution or education, will certainly fly and fall before him. Satan will be too hard for such a soul, and lead him captive at his pleasure. The only way to stand, conquer, and triumph, is still to plead, 'It is written,' as Christ did (Matt. 4:10). There is no sword but the two-edged sword of the Spirit, that will be found to be metal of proof when a soul comes to engage against Satan; therefore, when you are tempted to impurity, plead, 'It is written, be holy, as I am holy' (1 Peter 1:16); and, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord' (2 Cor. 7:1). If he tempts you to distrust God's providence and fatherly care of you, plead, 'It is written, 'Those who fear the Lord shall lack no good thing.' (Psalm 34:9).

We read of many that, out of fortitude, could subdue nature—but were at a loss when they came to deal with a corruption or a temptation. Heraclitus's motto was, 'A Deo victoria!' It is God that gives victory; and that should be every Christian's motto.

It is written, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those who live purely' (Psalm 84:11).

If he tempts you to fear that you shall faint, and fall, and never be able to run to the end of the race that is set before you, plead, 'It is written, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger' (Job. 17:9).

It is written, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good—but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me' (Jer. 32:40).

It is written, 'Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint' (Is. 40:31).

If Satan tempts you to think that because your sun for the present is set in a cloud, that therefore it will rise no more, and that the face of God will shine upon you no more; that your best days are now at an end, and that you must spend all your time in sorrow and sighing; plead,

It is written, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, and cast all our sins into the depth of the sea' (Micah 7:19).

It is written, 'For a small moment have I forsaken you—but with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment—but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer' (Is. 54:8, 10).

It is written, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed—but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord who has mercy on you.'

It is written, 'Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will not I forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands, your walls are continually before me' (Is. 49:15, 16).

If ever you would be too hard for Satan, and after all his assaults, have your bow abide in strength, then take to yourself the Word of God, which is 'the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil' (Eph. 6:17). It is not spitting at Satan's name, nor crossing yourselves, nor leaning to your own resolutions, that will get you the victory.

Luther reports of Staupitius, a German minister, that he acknowledged himself, that before he came to understand aright the free and powerful grace of God, he vowed and resolved a hundred times against some particular sin, and never could get power over it. At last he saw the reason to be his trusting to his own resolution. Therefore be skillful in the word of righteousness, and in the actings of faith upon Christ and his victory, and that crown of glory which is set before you, and Satan will certainly fly from you (James 4:7).

Prop. (5). That we may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the diverse names and epithets that are given him in the Scripture.

Sometimes he is called Behemoth, whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil is figured (Job 40:15). Those evil spirits are sometimes called accusers, for their calumnies and slanders; and evil ones, for their malice. Satan is Adversarius, an adversary, that troubles and molests (1 Pet. 5:8). Abaddon is a destroyer (Rev. 9:11). They are tempters, for their suggestion; lions, for their devouring; dragons, for their cruelty; and serpents, for their subtlety. As his names are, so is he; as face answers to face, so do Satan's names answer to his nature. He has the worst names and the worst nature of all created creatures.

Prop. (6). That God will shortly tread down Satan under the saints' feet.

Christ, our champion, has already won the field, and will shortly set our feet upon the necks of our spiritual enemies. Satan is a foiled adversary. Christ has led him captive, and triumphed over him upon the cross. Christ has already overcome him, and put weapons into your hands, that you may overcome him also, and set your feet upon his neck. Though Satan be a roaring lion, yet Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, will make Satan fly and fall before you. Let Satan do his worst, yet you shall have the honor and the happiness to triumph over him. Cheer up, you precious sons of Zion, for the certainty and sweetness of victory will abundantly recompense you for all the pains you have taken in making resistance against Satan's temptations. The broken

horns of Satan shall be trumpets of our triumph and the coronets of our joy.

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Romans 16:20. The Greek word signifies to break or crash a thing to pieces. Being applied to the feet—it means that crushing which is by stamping upon a thing.

FIVE REASONS OF THE POINT

Now I shall come to the reasons of the point, and so draw to a close.

Reason (1). That their hearts may be kept in a humble, praying, watching frame.

Oh! has Satan so many devices to ensnare and undo the souls of men? How should this awaken dull, drowsy souls, and make them stand upon their watch! A Christian should be like the seraphim, beset all over with eyes and lights, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in the hour of temptation.

The Lord has in the Scripture discovered the several snares, plots, and devices that the devil has to undo the souls of men, that so, being forewarned, they may be forearmed; that they may be always upon their watch-tower, and hold their weapons in their hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

The philosopher had a ball of brass in his hand; if he chanced to sleep it fell into a basin and awaked him to his studies. You are wise and know how to apply it.

Reason (2). From that malice, envy, and enmity that is in Satan against the souls of men.

Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, fancies, and callings of men, that so he may make them as miserable as himself.

Malice cares not what it says or does, just so that it may kill or gall.

The Russians are so malicious, that they have a man hide some of his own goods in the house of him whom he hates, and then accuse him for the stealing of them. So does Satan, out of malice to the souls of men, hide his goods, his wares, as I may say, in the souls of men, and then go and accuse them before the Lord; and a thousand, thousand other ways Satan's malice, envy, and enmity puts him upon, eternally to undo the precious souls of men.

An envious heart and plotting head, are inseparable companions.

Reason (3). The third reason is drawn from that long experience that Satan has had.

He is a spirit of mighty abilities; and his abilities to lay snares before us are mightily increased by that long standing of his. He is a spirit of over five thousand years' standing. He has had time enough to study all those ways and methods which tend most to ensnare and undo the souls of men. And as he has time enough, so he has made it his whole study, his only study, his constant study, to find out snares, traps, and stratagems, to entangle and overthrow the souls of men. When he was but a young serpent, he did easily deceive and outwit our first parents. But now he is grown into that 'old serpent,' as John speaks (Rev. 12:9). He is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience.

Reason (4). In judgment to the men of the world, that they may stumble and fall, and be ensnared forever.

Wicked men who withstand the offers of mercy, and despise the Spirit of grace; who will not open, though God knocks ever so hard by his Word and rod, by his Spirit and conscience—are given up by a hand of justice, to be hardened, deceived, and ensnared by Satan, to their everlasting ruin (1 Kings 22:23). And what can be more just than that they should be taken and charmed with Satan's wiles, who have frequently refused to be charmed by the Spirit of grace, though he has charmed ever so wisely, and ever so sweetly?

Reason (5). That the excellency and power of God's grace may be more illustrated and manifested, by making his people able to grapple with this mighty adversary, and that notwithstanding all the plots, devices, and stratagems of Satan, yet he will make them victorious here, and crown them with glory hereafter.

The greater and the subtler the enemies of the children of Israel were—the more did divine power, wisdom, and goodness, sparkle and shine; and that, notwithstanding all their power, plots, and stratagems, yet to Canaan God would bring them at last. When Paul had weighed this, he sits down and glories in his infirmities and distresses and Satan's buffetings—that the power of Christ might rest upon him (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

CONCLUSION: TEN SPECIAL HELPS AND RULES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES

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

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

The first help. If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then walk by rule of the Word of God. (Prov. 12:24; Gal. 6:16) He who walks by rule, walks most safely; he who walks by rule, walks most honorably; he who walks by rule, walks most sweetly. When men throw off the Word, then God throws them off, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure. He who thinks himself too good to be ruled by the Word, will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God does not, or will not own him—Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him. Those who keep to the rule, shall be kept in the hour of temptation. 'Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.' (Rev. 3:10)

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

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

The third help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor for more heavenly wisdom. Ah, souls! you are much in the dark, you have but a little wisdom compared to

what others have, and compared to that you might have had. There are many educated souls—but but there are but a few wise souls. There is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge, where there is but a little wisdom to improve that knowledge. It is not the most knowing Christian—but the most wise Christian, who sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares. 'The way of life leads upward for the wise,' says Solomon, 'that he may depart from hell beneath' (Prov. 15:24). Heavenly wisdom makes a man delight to fly high; and the higher any man flies, the more he is out of the reach of Satan's snares.

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

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

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

The fifth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power; and what can a soul do without light and power against spiritual wickedness in high places? (Eph. 6:12). It is not enough that you have the Spirit—but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else Satan, that evil spirit, will be too hard for you, and his plots will prosper against you. That is a sweet word of the apostle, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18); that is, labor for abundance of the Spirit. He who thinks he has enough of the Holy Spirit, will quickly find himself vanquished by the evil spirit. Satan has his snares to take you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company, when you come on to spiritual duties and when you come off from spiritual duties, and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently take you in his snares, and make a prey of you in spite of your souls. Therefore labor more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit than to have your heads filled with notions, your shops with wares, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold; so shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots.

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

The sixth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep humble. An humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and sooner part with all than the

peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading; as the low shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind, which shake and rend the taller trees. The devil has least power to fasten a temptation on him who is most humble. He who has a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's offers nor terrified with his threatenings.

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

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

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

Remember how Christ chid his sluggish disciples. 'What! could you not watch with me one hour?' what, cannot you watch with me? how will you then die with me? if you cannot endure words, how will you endure wounds? Satan always keeps a crafty and malicious watch, 'seeking whom he may devour.' 1 Peter 5:8. Satan is very envious of our condition, that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast, and out of which he shall be forever kept!

We must effectually mind these following scriptures, wherein this duty of watchfulness is so strictly enjoined: Matt 26:40; Mark 13:33, 34, 35, 37; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:7; Rev. 2:3.

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

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

Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere.

Watchfulness is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of what comes from without us and into us. Ah, souls! you are no longer safe and secure than when you are upon your watch. While Antipater kept the watch, Alexander was safe; and while we keep a strict watch, we are safe. A watchful soul is a soul upon the wing, a soul out of gun-shot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in God's everlasting arms!

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

The eighth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's snares and devices, then keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted—but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnishes the soul with the greatest and the choicest arguments to withstand Satan's temptations. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul, by divine influences, sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, elevating and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him—he goes on conquering and to conquer. But when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for 'spiritual wickedness in high places'; but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall, as others, before the face of every temptation.

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

The ninth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Certainly that soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high—will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter; he rested upon some old received strength—'Though all men should deny you, yet I will not!' (Matt. 26:35)—and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses and swears, and denies him thrice—who had thrice appeared gloriously to him. Ah, souls! when the snare is

spread, look up to Jesus Christ, who is lifted up in the gospel, as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness, and say to him, "Dear Lord! here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh! give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape the snares!"

Ah, souls! remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received in the past—but from the fresh and renewed influences of heaven. You must lean more upon Christ than upon your duties; you must lean more upon Christ than upon your spiritual tastes and discoveries: you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces, or else Satan will lead you into captivity.

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

When Sennacherib and Haman had laid plots and snares to have destroyed the Jews, they prayed, and their souls were delivered, and Sennacherib and Haman destroyed. David had many snares laid for him, and this puts him upon prayer. "But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge--do not give me over to death. Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety." (Psalm 141:8-10).

"Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; protect me from men of violence who plan to trip my feet. Proud men have hidden a snare for me; they have spread out the cords of their net and have set traps for me along my path. O Lord, I say to you, 'You are my God.' Hear, O Lord, my cry for mercy." (Psalm 140:4-6). Saul and many others had laid snares for David, and this puts him upon prayer, and so the snares are broken and he is delivered.

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

way of heaven—and that is, the way of prayer, which is the only way left to escape Satan's snares.

USE. The next use is a use of thankfulness to those who escape Satan's snares—that they have not been taken by him at his will. Ah! Christians, it stands upon you with that princely prophet David, to call upon your souls, and say, 'Bless the Lord, O our souls; and all that is within us, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O our souls, and do not forget all his benefits!' (Psalm 103:1, 2). God has not given us to be a prey to Satan, and to be ensnared by those snares that he has laid for our souls! The sense of this great favor did work up David's heart to praises: "Praise be to the Lord, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 124:6-8).

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

Will you be thankful for the escaping the snares that men spread for your lives or estates, and will you not be much more thankful for escaping those snares that Satan has laid for your precious souls? "But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds." (Psalm 71:14-17).

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

USE. The last use of this point is, To encourage Christians to long to be at home with Jesus. Oh! long to be in the bosom of Christ! long to be in the land of Canaan! for this world, this wilderness, is full of snares; and all our employments are full of snares; and all our enjoyments are full of snares. In civil things, Satan has his snares to entrap us; and in all spiritual things, Satan has his snares to catch us. All places are full of snares, city and country, shop and closet, sea and land. Even our mercies are all surrounded with snares! There are snares about our tables and snares about our beds! Yes, Satan is so powerful and subtle that he will oftentimes make our greatest, nearest, and dearest mercies to become our greatest snares! Sometimes he will make the

wife that lies in the bosom to be a snare to a man, as Samson's was, and as Job's was. Sometimes he will make the child to be a snare, as Absalom was and Eli's sons were. And sometimes he will make the servant to be a snare, as Joseph was to his mistress.

Ah! souls, Satan is so cunning and artful, that he can turn your bread into snares, and your clothes into snares, and your houses into snares, and your gardens into snares, and all your recreations into snares. And oh! how should the consideration of these things work all your souls to say with the church, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young deer upon the mountain of spices,' and to love, and look, and long for the coming of Christ (Cant. 8:14). Shall the espoused maid long for the marriage day? Shall the servant long for his freedom? Shall the captive long for his ransom? Shall the traveler for long his inn, and the mariner for his harbor? And shall not the people of the Lord long much more to be in the bosom of Christ? there being nothing below the bosom of Christ that is not surrounded with Satan's snares (Phil. 1:23, and 2 Cor. 5:2, 4).

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

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

Is not Christ the star of Jacob, that 'gives light to those who are in darkness'? Is not Christ that Prince of peace who brings the olive branch to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth in him? Are not the petty excellencies and perfections of all created creatures epitomized in him? Is not he the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens? Oh then, be still a-longing after a full, clear, and constant enjoyment of Christ in heaven; for until then, Satan will still have plots and designs upon you. He acts by an untiring power, and will never let you rest until you are taken up to an everlasting rest in the bosom of Christ!

It is as easy to contain the sea in a nutshell—as to relate fully Christ's excellencies, or heaven's happiness!

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Ephesians 6:11-13