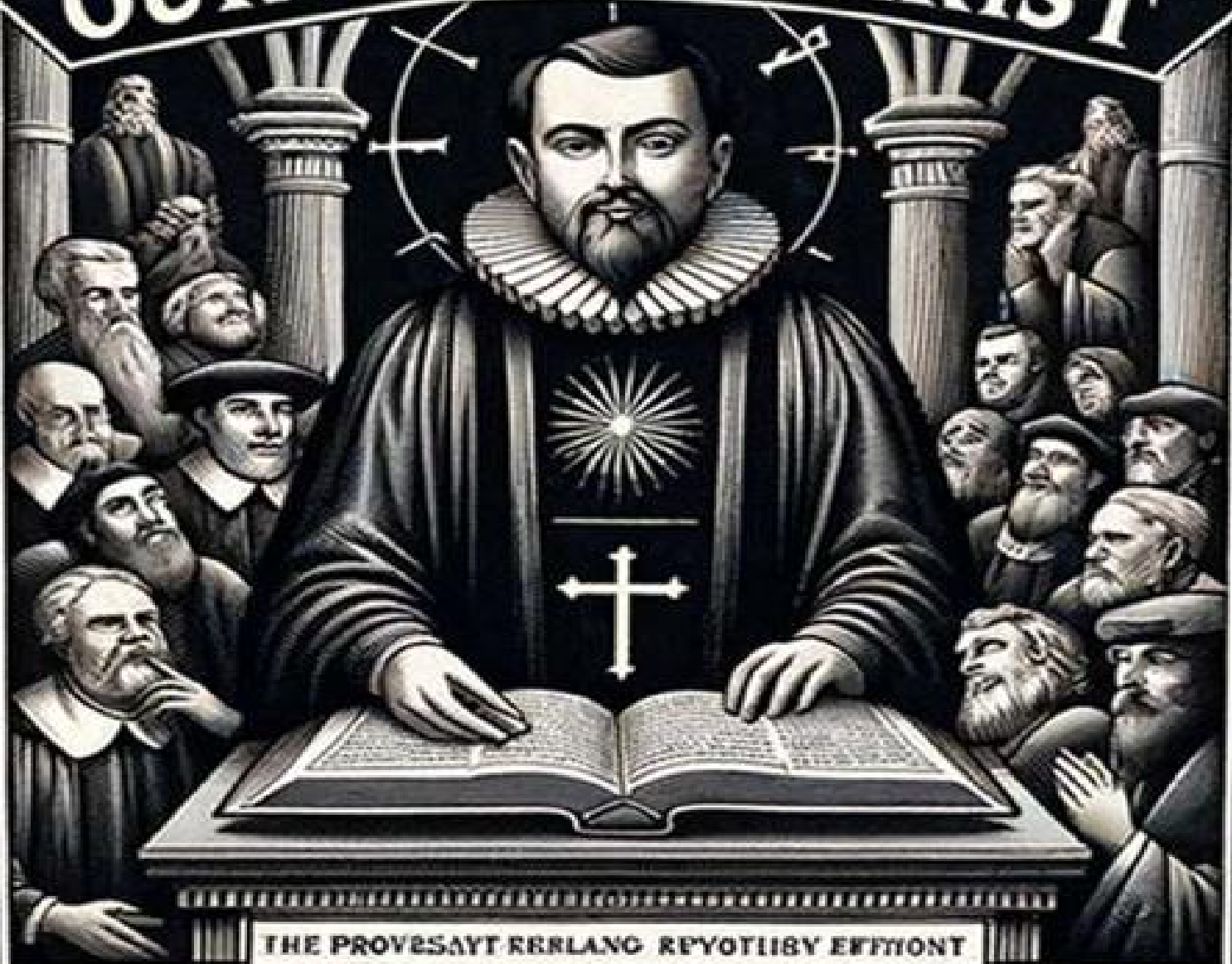


SATAN'S SOPHISTRY

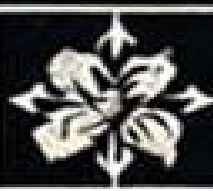
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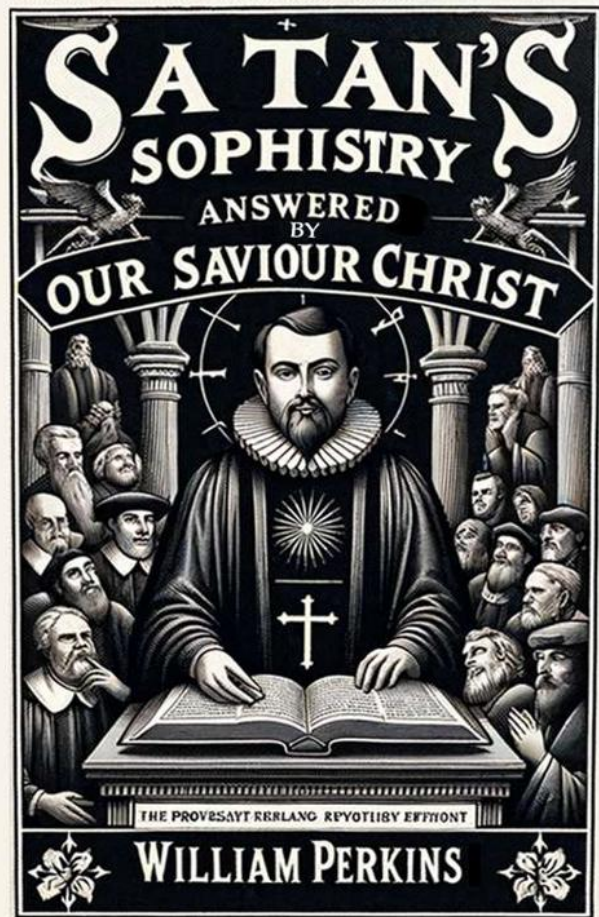
OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST



THE PROVESAYT REERLANG REYOTLIBY EFFYONT

WILLIAM PERKINS





SATAN'S SOPHISTRY

Answered by Our Saviour Christ

William Perkins

Monergism Books

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Satan's Sophistry Answered by Our Saviour Christ, and in various sermons further manifested by that worthy man Master William Perkins. To which is added, a Comfort for the Feeble Minded: wherein is set down the temptations of a Christian.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR
WILLIAM RUSSELL,

Lord Russell, Baron of Thornehaugh, younger son to that most Christian and Honourable Earl, Francis Earl of Bedford, with the virtuous Lady his wife: Grace and Peace.

RIGHT Honourable, as John the Baptist was in one desert,* so our Saviour Christ was in another:* but as these two differed in their being in the world: so did they not accord in their being in the wilderness. John was with some men, Christ with none; John was with wild men, Christ with wild beasts; John was preaching, Christ praying; John was baptizing, Christ fighting; John was feeding, Christ fasting; John was encountering with Devils incarnate, Christ did encounter with the Prince of those Devils. From John preaching in the desert, learn we diligence in our callings: from Christ tempted in the desert, see we troubles in our calling: Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all.

If it please you to give these after-lines the reading, you shall see set down that monomachy or single combat, which was hand to hand betwixt Christ and the Devil. And as for Christ Jesus, you shall see him fasting, fighting,

conquering. Fasting and hungry, to show he was a man: fighting and encountering, to show he was the Messiah; and conquering and triumphing, to show he was God. And as for the Devil, you shall see him objecting, answering, flying. Objecting, that Christ might despair; answering, that he might presume; and flying, when he could not overcome.

In Christ's temptations, we see the estate of the Church; in Satan's assault, we see his malice towards the Church. Is Christ tempted? think it not strange if we fall into temptations. For the grief of the head is the grief of the members: and the temptations of Christ show the temptations of Christians. It is true of Christ, that by many tribulations he did enter into the kingdom of God: that our High Priest was consecrated by afflictions, that so he must suffer and enter into his glory.

He is no sooner born into the world, but he is hunted by Herod; baptized at Jordan, but Satan sets on him; a Preacher for repentance, but the Scribes proscribe him; to work miracles, but the Pharisees slander him. He is no sooner to suffer, but the Devil assaults him; apprehended, but the Jews deliver him; delivered, but Herod derides him; derided, but Pilate condemns him; condemned, but the soldiers abuse him. Is he on the cross? the people will not pity him: is he risen? the high Priests will belie him. In a word, is he upon earth? he is tempted in his person; is he in heaven? he is tempted in his members. Thus the life of Christ was a warfare upon earth, and the life of Christians must be a warfare upon earth. We live here in a sea of troubles: the sea is the world, the waves are calamities, the Church is the ship, the anchor is hope, the sails are love, the Saints are passengers, the haven is heaven, and Christ is our Pilot. When the sea can continue without waves, the ship without tossings, and passengers not be sick upon the water,

then shall the Church of God be without trials. We begin this voyage as soon as we are born, and we must sail on till our dying day.

We do read in God's word of many kinds of temptations: God, Satan, Man, the World, and the Flesh are said to tempt. God tempts man to try his obedience, Satan tempts man to make him disobedient: men tempt men to try what is in them: and man tempts God, to try what is in him. The world is a tempter, to keep man from God: and the flesh is a tempter, to bring man to the Devil. So God tempted Abraham in the offering of his son: Satan tempted Job in the loss of his goods: a Queen tempted Solomon in trying his wisdom: men tempted God by distrust in the desert: the world tempted Demas, when he forsook the Apostles: and the flesh tempted David, when he fell by adultery. Does God tempt us? take heed of hypocrisy: does Satan tempt us? take heed of his subtlety: does man tempt man? take heed of dissembling: does man tempt God? take heed of inquiring: does the world tempt man? take heed of apostasy: does the flesh tempt man? take heed of carnality. But do we so? are we wary of these tempters? No, we are not, and therefore we fall. We fall on the right hand, by temptations in prosperity, and we fall on the left, by temptations in adversity. Of the one it may be said, it has slain thousands: of the other, that it has slain ten thousands.

When we come and see cities depopulated, houses defaced, and walls pulled down, we say, the soldier has been there: and when we see pride in the rich, discontent in the poor, and sin in all, we may justly say, the Tempter has been there.

Now of all other temptations, it pleases God to suffer his Church to be tempted with afflictions. It is never free either from the sword of Ishmael: which is a reviling tongue: or the sword of Esau, a persecuting hand. Neither was there yet ever a Christian man found, who had not his part in

the cup of affliction. We must drink of the same cup our master did: the disciple is not above his master.

The reasons why God does visit us thus with afflictions, are: 1. To humble us. 2. To wean us. 3. To winnow us. 4. To prevent us. 5. To teach us. 6. To enlighten us. 7. To honor us. 8. To cure us. 9. To crown us. 10. To comfort us. 11. To protect us. 12. To adopt us. And last of all, to teach and comfort others. To humble us, that we be not proud: to wean us, that we love not this world: to winnow us, that we be not chaff: to prevent us, that we do not sin: to teach us, that we be patient in adversity: to enlighten us, that we see our errors: to honor us, that our faith may be manifest: to cure us, that we surfeit not of security: to crown us, that we may live eternally: to comfort us, that he may send his spirit: to protect us, that he may guide us by his Angels: to adopt us, that we may be his sons: and to teach others, that they seeing how sin is punished in us, they may take heed it be not found in them: that they seeing our comforts in troubles, may not be discouraged in the like trials.

Thus a Christian man's diet is more sour than sweet: his physic is more aloes than honey: his life is more a pilgrimage than a progress: and his death is more despised than honoured. This, if men would think of before, afflictions would be as welcome to the soul of man as afflicted Ruth was to the field of Boaz. But because we look not for them before they come, think not on God's doing when they are come, and do desire to be happy both here and hereafter: therefore we can away with the name of Naomi, but in no case would we be called Mara. We see the sea, not the whale: the Egyptian, not the salvation: the lion's mouth, not him that stoppeth the lion's mouth. If we could see God in our troubles, as Elisha did in his, then would we say: There are more with us than there are against us. But because we do not, therefore at every assault of the Assyrians, we say, as the servant to

Elisha did: Alas master, what shall we do? and with the disciples: Carest thou not master that we perish? Yet it is good for us to suffer affliction. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. It is commanded by God, practised by Christ, yielded to by the Saints, assigned by God's providence, and good for us each way. We are God's trees, we shall grow better by pruning: God's pomander, smell better by rubbing: God's spice, be more profitable by bruising: and God's conduits, we are the better by running. Let us suffer afflictions, they are momentary in respect of time: favours, if we respect God's love, and a means to bring us to the kingdom of God. If they did consume us, we might wish them an end: but they do purge us, let us be content. They are God's fan, we are God's wheat: they are God's bolter, we are God's meal: they are God's flame, we are God's bush: they are God's cords, we are God's sacrifice: they are God's furnace, we are God's gold. The wheat will not be good without the fan, nor the meal without the bolter, nor the bush without the flame, nor the sacrifice without the cords, nor the gold without the furnace: they are trials, not punishments, if we be sons: punishments, not trials, if we be slaves. Let us then bear them, they will have an end: joy will follow: they show us our weakness: they move us to pray: they show we are in the pathway to heaven: and make us contemn this present world. By them we learn to repent of sin past, to take heed of sin present, and to foresee sin to come. By them we receive God's spirit, are like to Christ: are acquainted with God's power: have joy in deliverance: know the benefit of prosperity: made more hardy to suffer: and have cause to practise many excellent virtues. They cause us (as one saith) to seek out God's promise: the promise to seek faith: faith to seek prayer: and prayer to find God. Seek, and ye shall

find: call, and he will answer: wait, and he will come. I am to write an Epistle, I must not be long. Job's messengers came not so fast on him: but Job's afflictions may come as fast upon us. Hath David slain a bear? he shall encounter with a lion: hath he killed a lion? he must fight with Goliath: hath he subdued Goliath? he must make a raid upon the Philistines: are the Philistines conquered? Saul will assault him. Remember David's troubles, and foresee what may be our troubles. The more righteous we are, the more manifold are our troubles: and the better we are, the better we may endure them.

But as our troubles are many, so are our deliverances many: God will deliver us out of all. He that delivered Noah from the flood, Lot from Sodom, Jacob from Esau, Joseph from Potiphar, Moses from Pharaoh, Israel from Egypt, David from Saul, Elijah from Ahab, Elisha from the Syrians, Naaman from his leprosy, Hezekiah from the plague, the three children from the fire, Daniel from the lions, Joseph from Herod, the Apostles from the Jews, and Christ from the Devil: he, even he will either deliver us from trouble, or comfort us in trouble, or mitigate troubles when they come upon us.

He, he hath promised to do it, and he that hath promised is able to do it. And this he doth sometimes by no means, sometimes by small means, sometimes by ordinary means, sometimes by extraordinary, sometimes contrary to all means. By no means he cured a cripple at Bethesda: by small means he fed five thousand in the desert: by ordinary means he was brought from the pinnacle: by means extraordinary he was provided for in hunger, and contrary to all means were these three children preserved in the furnace of fire.

I have good cause to think of God's gracious deliverance, being myself delivered from a great trouble. Since the time I was unkindly dismissed from my poor charge, where I would have continued, if malice had not hindered me, I have lived in an end of this City: dangerously in respect of the sickness; poorly, in regard of maintenance; and painfully, in respect of my ministry: yet unto this time hath the Lord delivered me: and as Paul said: he will deliver me, if that he sees it be best for me.

Let man therefore comfort himself in the Lord: after two days he will revive us, and the third day he will raise us up again. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning. Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous: verily, God retains not his wrath forever. Could he overcome the world, and can he not overcome many troubles in the world? Yea, let one plague follow another, as one quail sings to another: yet as the viper leaped on Paul's hand, and forthwith leaped off again, so one trouble shall leap upon the righteous, and anon leap off again; though he fall, he shall rise again, the righteous shall not be forsaken forever.

If he hath delivered us from the guilt of our sins, he will deliver us from the punishment of our sins. Let us therefore be patient in trouble, constant in hope, rooted in love: let us wait, he will come, call and he will hear, believe and he will perform, repent of our evil committed against him, and he will repent of his evils intended against us. He is over us by his providence, about us by his Angels, in us by his spirit, with us by his word, under us by his power, and upon us by his Son. In him is our help, from him is our comfort, by him is our victory, and for him is our trouble. In thee have I trusted, saith a king: whoever was confounded that trusted in the Lord, said a friend? and as Elkanah was to Hannah in stead of many sons, so God is to his in stead of many comforters. Of other comforters, we may

say as Job did of his friends: Silly comforters are you all. They will leave us, as mice do a ruinous house: but the Lord (like Ruth to Naomi) will never leave us, nor forsake us. Especially in the hour of death, which is in remembrance bitter to great men: in that hour of death he will be with us, and command his Angels to take charge of our souls, the earth to be as a bed for our bodies: that so the one may go into glory, the other reserved in hope of like glory, and be made one day like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus. Thus right Honourable you have seen the righteous in afflictions: as Israel was in Babylon: and that the Lord like Zorobabel is ready to deliver them. Though in troubles Christ seems as in the ship to sleep, yet in deliverance he awakes as a man out of sleep, and as a Giant refreshed with wine. He will rebuke the waves and winds of troubles and persecution, and they shall fly before him as Sisera did before Deborah, and the Philistines before Jonathan and his servant. And as Christ asking the woman of her accusers, she answered: There was none: so in the end ask a Christian of his troubles, and he will say, There are none. He is a buckler for our left hand, and a sword in our right: he is a helmet on our head, and harness for our body. We shall look upon troubles, as Israel did on the Egyptians, as the Jews did on Goliath, and as the Greeks did on Hector, to triumph over them: and as the Angel said to Joseph: They are dead that sought the child's life, so the Spirit shall say to the afflicted, They are dead that did seek your life. A day of deliverance, a year of Jubilee will come, and then Joseph shall be out of prison, Jacob out of servitude, and Job shall lie no more in the dust of the earth: Let us comfort ourselves with these words.

THE PRINTER TO THE READER.

Gentle Reader, in the life of that worthy man Master Perkins, his books for the most part were printed at Cambridge. The only reason was, his desire to be Corrector to his own books. Since he departed this life, some good men have brought me certain labours of his. I desire not to print them to make gain to myself, but because I would not have his labours to be lost. He was heard of many by his speech, read of many in his writings, and his works have been translated into many languages. Mislike not this book, because it was printed at London, his auditors can tell it was as he spoke it. If you say, it was hard to write as he spoke: know this, that he observed his auditors, and so spoke, as a diligent Baruch might write verbatim all that was spoken by this Jeremiah. Use this, and communicate that which thou hast of his.

1

SATAN'S SOPHISTRY ANSWERED BY OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST

Then was Jesus led aside of the Spirit, etc. - MATTHEW
4:1.

In the eleven first verses of this Chapter, are recorded and set down unto us the several temptations of our Saviour Christ: and in them, we are to consider three especial points: First, the preparation unto the combat, verse 1 and 2. Secondly, the combat itself in three several temptations, verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Thirdly, the issue and effect of this combat, verse 11.

The preparation has two parts: first, the going forth of Christ into the wilderness, in the first verse. Secondly, his abode and conversation in the wilderness, in the second verse.

The going forth of Christ into the wilderness is set out by sundry circumstances: first, the time, then. Secondly, the moving cause, whereby

he was carried thither, namely, he was led by the spirit. Thirdly, the place, the wilderness. Fourthly, the end, to be tempted of the Devil.

Then was Jesus led: In the Chapter going before is set down the baptism of our Saviour Christ, as also the great honour of his Baptism. And it pleased him to be baptised, to show that he was now installed into the office of a Mediator: and for the greater solemnity of his baptism, he was proclaimed by the voice of God the Father from heaven, to be the chief Doctor and the true Prophet of the Church of God: for chapter 3:17 it is said: "There came a voice from heaven, saying, this is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And also it is said, that the Spirit of God in the likeness of a Dove descended and lighted upon him. Now so soon as Christ was installed into his office of Mediator, and thus solemnly baptised, and proclaimed, even from heaven, to be the sole Doctor and Prophet of the Church of God, presently without delay, as is Mark 1:12, he was led aside to be tempted of the Devil.

In that Christ is no sooner baptised, but he is presently tempted, it shows us that all those who have been baptised, and given up their names to Christ, must make account to be tempted, and look for temptations. For if Satan durst be so bold to set upon Jesus Christ the head, who was not only man but very God; how much more will he be bold to set upon us, who are but weak and sinful men? And therefore so soon as we have truly given up our names to God, and become the faithful soldiers of Christ, and refuse to serve sin and Satan, then will the Devil encounter us, and set upon us, and we must look for to be tempted, preparing ourselves for this spiritual battle, and putting on us the whole complete armour of God. Ephesians 6:11.

But most men will say, this doctrine is not true: for they never felt any such combat in themselves, though they have been baptized many years.

I answer; such men whatsoever they be, they have only the outward baptism of water, and never received the inward baptism of the Spirit: and such men do indeed wear Christ's livery, but do service to the Devil his enemy. And therefore let such persons reform themselves, turn from their wicked and sinful lives, and seek to serve the Lord, and then they shall find this doctrine most true. For the children of Israel so long as they lived under Pharaoh in Egypt, they were not persecuted by Pharaoh: but when they did set their faces towards the land of Canaan, then presently he pursued them with all his malice and might. So all the while men live in Egypt, that is, in sin and wickedness, and serve the Devil, he will let them be at quiet: but if ever we once set our hearts on that heavenly Canaan, and give ourselves to the service of God, then he will with open mouth pursue us, follow us with many armies, and cast a hundred temptations in our way. And as a poor bird which comes to the shop, and when she thinks to get away, then comes all her pain, and the net is spread over her: so when men begin to leave their evil courses, and to set themselves to serve the Lord, presently the Devil spreads his net to entangle them. This must teach us to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation.

Secondly, in that our Saviour is no sooner baptized, and ordained to be the great Doctor of the Church, but he is presently tempted and encountered by Satan: hence we learn, that all those who are appointed by God to any special office in the Church or commonwealth, they must make account they shall be tempted, and look for Satan's temptations one way or another: it was that which befell the head, and therefore let us all that are his members reckon of it. An example of this we have in Moses, who so soon as he was newly called to be the guide and deliverer of the children of Israel, he was forced to flee when he had killed the Egyptian. And David

was no sooner appointed by God to be King of Israel, but Saul persecuted him. As soon as our Saviour Christ had called the Apostles to that office, he brought them to the sea, and there by his divine power raised a storm, so they cried out, "Master, save us, or else we perish."

And this the Lord does in great wisdom: for by this means he shows a man that he is not able of himself to execute the duties of his particular calling without the special grace of God: and by these temptations and trials, the Lord stirs up a greater love of his Majesty in the hearts of his children, and with it many other graces, as prayer, patience, etc. and makes these graces the better to show themselves.

Seeing that our Saviour Christ begins his prophetic office of teaching the Church of God with temptations: this should admonish the Ministers of the word of God that they, of all other men, are subject to Satan's temptations, because they are the Lord's Standard-bearers and his Lieutenants, against whom Satan and all his soldiers bend all their forces, as soldiers often do against the standard-bearer. When Jehoshua the high Priest stood before the Lord, Satan stood at his right hand to hinder him (Zach. 3. 1). He was a lying spirit in the mouth of four hundred false Prophets, and this old red Dragon, Revelation 12, with his tail draws down the third part of the stars of heaven. He desired to winnow Peter and to try him by temptations (Luke 22). And as the king of Aram said of Ahab, "Fight not against small or great, but against the king of Israel," so Satan fights not against any so much as the Prophets of Israel, the Ministers of the Church.

So then we may see that temptations are necessary for the Ministers of the word, that they may both know what they are and also learn how to comfort others in times of temptation. Also to teach us the true use of the word of God, and the force of it in resisting temptation. For certain it is that

temptations teach men many things which they could never learn by bare study. So that one said well: Reading, meditation, prayer, and temptations, these four make a Divine.

The second point to be considered is what was the cause that moved our Saviour Christ to go into the wilderness, which was the leading of the Spirit: "Jesus was led aside of the spirit" (Luke 4. 1), or as the word signifies, he was carried apart (Mark 1. 12), not by a forced but a voluntary motion. This was not a local transportation of the body of Christ, as that of Elijah and of Philip from the Eunuch, but by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost, he was moved and made willing to go, as the word which Luke 4. 1 uses shows plainly.

And by the Spirit here is not meant the Devil or an evil spirit, but the Holy Spirit of God, even the third person in the Trinity. And so we see that Christ may both guide the Spirit and be guided by the Spirit, for Christ as he is man is led and guided by the Spirit, but as he is God, he does guide and send his Spirit.

Objection: Christ sends the Holy Ghost, therefore cannot be led by it.
Answer: As Christ was a man, he was guided by God's Spirit; as he was God, he sent the Spirit.

Hence, we may behold the exceeding holiness of the manhood or human nature of Christ, who, as a man, was guided by the Spirit of God, even in His moving from one place to another. This is something everyone should desire—to be like our Saviour Christ in this, to allow ourselves to be guided and directed by God's Holy Spirit in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. For this is a true sign of God's children (Romans 8:14). But as many as are not led by the Spirit of God, they are not His (Romans 8:9). Therefore, let us all become pliable to the motions and directions of God's blessed Spirit, so that

we can say, as David said: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face: my heart answered unto thee: O Lord, I will seek thy face."

Again, from this fact that Christ was led into temptations by the Spirit of God, we learn that temptations do not come by chance or by the devil's will and appointment. For he could not touch Job or anything he had until he had permission from the Lord. He could not even enter into swine until Christ gave him leave. Temptations come by God's just permission and the special providence and appointment of God. Just as God decreed that He who had overcome all mankind should be overcome by Christ, so He has appointed this combat through temptations for all men. The world serves as a theatre, Christians as soldiers tried, Satan as our adversary, men and Angels as beholders, and the Lord Himself as the Judge or umpire. Therefore, when we are tempted, we should not think it strange, but rather count it exceeding joy when we are tempted for the trial of our faith and obedience (James 1:2). Since temptations come by God's appointment, it should encourage us all to endure them patiently, as they cannot be avoided.

Seeing Christ was led to be tempted, we learn that no man must willingly, of his own accord, cast himself into places of danger. Christ did not go into the place of temptation until He was led by the Spirit of God. Therefore, if a man finds himself moved by some extraordinary motion and instinct of the Spirit, he may offer himself into danger. For example, Paul went "bound in the spirit" to Jerusalem, meaning he willingly followed the motion of God's Spirit, which compelled him to go to Jerusalem. Many of the Martyrs also, though they could have fled, were moved by the inward motion of the Holy Ghost and chose to withstand the truth, abide the danger, and endure the fire. However, under normal circumstances, no one should knowingly cast himself into danger. If the Lord sends danger to a man in the performance

of his calling and vocation while walking according to God's Word, he is to patiently endure it and may not seek to avoid it.

Here, it may be asked whether a person can, with a good conscience and safely, stay in places known to be haunted and frequented by evil spirits.

Although some individuals are daring and fearless, it is neither wise nor lawful for people to frequent and stay in such places. Instead, they should avoid them, considering that the Lord has handed these places over to the power of the Devil. Therefore, those who knowingly visit such locations or consort with individuals known to be possessed are willfully tempting God and needlessly placing themselves in danger unless they have extraordinary divine guidance.

This can serve as a rebuke to those who claim they do not care about the company they keep, believing that no company can harm them. Such individuals should be cautious because they are likely to be influenced by the sins of those with whom they habitually associate. "He that walketh with the wise shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be like unto them. He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled: and if sinners entice thee, yield not unto them."

Furthermore, we see that as long as Christ lived a private life at home, working in His trade with His father, the Devil left Him alone, and He did not possess these gifts of the Holy Ghost. However, once He was installed into the office of a Mediator, the Devil immediately attacked Him. When Christ had to become a different kind of man to teach God's people, He was led by the Spirit of God and equipped for this high and excellent calling.

From this, we should learn that when God appoints us to any special office, whether in the Church or the commonwealth, we must become new individuals suitable for those positions and conduct ourselves accordingly.

For instance, when Saul was anointed to be king, he became a different man; when David transitioned from being a shepherd to a king, he behaved as a king. Similarly, the apostles were initially poor, ignorant fishermen, but upon being called as apostles, they left their old trade and became new men, serving as messengers of Christ to preach the Gospel to all nations.

This refutes those who claim to have extraordinary callings, such as those who call themselves Elijah, John the Baptist, etc. If they were such individuals and had extraordinary callings, they should possess extraordinary gifts suitable for their calling. However, this is not the case; in fact, they are just ordinary people.

Again, by nature, we are all born as children of wrath and enemies to God. Still, by grace, we are called to be Christians. Therefore, it is necessary for all of us to become new individuals, leading new lives that are fitting and suitable for our holy calling, dedicating ourselves wholly to the service and worship of God. If someone asks how Christ was furnished with these gifts, I answer, referring to Saint Luke, that He was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1). If someone further objects that if He was filled after His baptism, then He was not filled before, I respond once more that, as in His infancy, He had a measure of gifts suitable for that age, so over time, He increased in grace. After His baptism, He had a greater appearance and measure of gifts than before His calling to preach.

Moving on, it follows, "Into the wilderness." Here is the third circumstance, namely, the place – into the wilderness or desert place – which Christ deliberately chose to be tempted in. There are various opinions concerning this place; some think it to be a little wilderness between Jerusalem and Jericho, while others believe it to be the desert of Arabia, where Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights and where the children of

Israel wandered for forty years. However, since the Holy Ghost does not specify which wilderness it was, we should not inquire too curiously about it. We only need to know that it was a desert and a solitary place.

Instead, let us seek the reasons why He was tempted in the wilderness. Firstly, Christ came into the world to be our Mediator and took upon Himself the lowly condition of a servant, entering in humility. Therefore, after His baptism, He did not go to Jerusalem to publicise His glory. Instead, He went into the desert, a solitary wilderness.

Furthermore, He went into the wilderness so that He could more easily confront and more victoriously overcome His enemy, the Devil. For if Satan had seen Him in His glory, he would not have dared to set upon Him so fiercely and eagerly. Therefore, Christ, like a fisherman who hides the hook and only shows the bait, displayed His humanity but concealed His divinity under a mantle, so that the Devil, seeing Him in the humble state of humiliation, might be more fierce in his temptations, and Christ might achieve a more glorious victory.

Another reason why Christ was tempted in the wilderness was to give the Devil the advantage of the place. By overcoming him, Christ might give him a more significant defeat. In the wilderness, we lack the company and fellowship of others for comfort, and such places are known to be solitary and devoid of comfort, which Satan prefers. For when a person is alone and isolated, it is most conducive to the Devil's purposes. When the woman was alone, how quickly did the Devil overcome her! Therefore, our Saviour Christ, by going into the wilderness, granted the Devil's desire to have Him alone by Himself.

Fourthly, Christ wanted to be tempted in the wilderness, where there was no one to help or assist Him because the entire praise for the victory would

belong to Him alone.

Lastly, Christ went into the wilderness so that, after that experience, He might return with greater authority and reverence to preach the Gospel. We know that when someone has lived among us, departs for a time, and then returns, we receive them with greater respect and hold them in higher esteem.

The Papists draw from Christ's practice of going into the wilderness the idea that men may live monastic lives in cloisters, woods, dens, cells, etc., away from the company of other people. However, this deduction is unfounded, as can be seen from these reasons: firstly, Christ did this by the special motion and direction of God's Spirit, whereas they go into their cells without any warrant from God. Secondly, He went into the wilderness only once for a certain period, while they continue to live there permanently. Thirdly, during His stay in the wilderness, Christ fasted and abstained from all sustenance, whereas those among the Papists who live monastic and solitary lives indulge in all their pleasures and delights in eating and drinking. Therefore, although solitude at times is commendable for meditation, prayer, repentance, etc., living continually without the company and society of others is neither commendable nor permissible.

"To be tempted of the Devil": Here is the reason why Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, namely, to be tempted by the Devil.

Now, this action of tempting is ascribed to God, to man, and to the Devil. The Lord is said to tempt when He tests and tries His children to reveal what hidden things are in their hearts (Genesis 22:1, Abraham was tempted by God when he offered his son).

Secondly, man is said to tempt God when he tries the providence, power, mercy, and justice of God through unlawful means.

Thirdly, the Devil is said to tempt when he allures by some inward suggestion or by some external object. In this sense, it is understood here that the Devil tempted Christ, meaning he sought to entice Him by various means to sin. Although Christ could have confounded Satan with a word from His mouth, He willingly allowed and suffered him to tempt Him because He now stood in our place. This was a part of His willingness to be tempted by the Devil.

But how could Christ be tempted, given that he was most holy, even as a man? Answer: Despite his holiness, he could be tempted, just as our first parents were before they sinned.

The Devil tempts men either by conveying secret suggestions into their minds or by moving them with external objects to induce thoughts of sins he wishes them to commit. For example, the Devil cast the vile thought into Judas' heart to betray his master (John 13:27). Similarly, here, the Devil suggested these thoughts to Christ's mind to prompt unbelief, idolatry, and covetousness. However, there is a difference: firstly, Christ's most holy heart resisted all of Satan's temptations. Secondly, while these wicked thoughts trouble and disturb people's minds, causing distress, the same happened to our Saviour Christ, but without sin. Thirdly, when people are tempted, even if they do not fully accept and endorse the temptations, they are tainted by them to some extent. Yet Christ was never tainted in any way, nor did his holy heart ever approve of them. He consistently repelled them. Just as if a man were to throw a match into tinder, it would catch fire and burn; but if thrown into water, it would be extinguished. Similarly, when temptations enter our hearts, which are like tinder, we are easily tainted by them, even if we do not fully entertain them. However, the most holy heart of Christ was like water, quickly extinguishing them.

The Devil tempts men with various blasphemous, horrible, and impure thoughts. To discern them and prevent despair when we find them within us, we must understand that the mind generates many thoughts arising from the flesh and our own corrupt hearts, and these thoughts are sinful. In addition, there are other thoughts conveyed and suggested to us by the Devil, which are the Devil's temptations but not sins for us unless we entertain, receive, and approve of them. They are indeed our crosses but Satan's sins. In this manner, Christ was tempted by the Devil, but by resisting and repelling his temptations and not giving the slightest approval to them, He remained free from sin and remained holy after being tempted in this way.

The reasons why Christ was tempted are as follows:

First, because He was to conquer the devil in his own manner and with his own tactics. Just as the first Adam was overcome by his temptations, the second Adam, Christ Jesus, was to defeat him even in the midst of his most fierce temptations.

Secondly, He was tempted so that, by His example, He could teach us how to resist temptations and demonstrate what temptations are and the power they hold. Hence, the common notion that when someone is severely tempted, people consider them notorious sinners who have forsaken God is false and erroneous. Here, we see that even the most holy Son of God Himself was tempted.

Furthermore, since Christ, the head, was tempted, no member of Christ should expect to be free from temptation. We must be prepared to face temptations.

Lastly, our Saviour Christ was tempted so that, by experiencing the weight and danger of temptations, He could become a merciful High Priest

to assist us in our temptations, as attested by the Apostle.

The next point to note is the cause and author of His temptation: He was tempted by the Devil. The name Devil signifies a caviler, a slanderer, a secret accuser. He accuses God to man, as he did to Eve in Genesis 3:1-4 when he questioned God's words and motives. Secondly, the Devil accuses man to God and is therefore called the Accuser of the brethren, ceaselessly lodging accusations against us before God, as seen in his dealings with Job. Thirdly, the Devil accuses one person to another by sowing suspicions, fostering ill thoughts, and engaging in backbiting. Since the Holy Ghost refers to Satan as an accuser, let this be a warning to all not to accuse their brethren, slander, or backbite, for those who do become like the Devil.

Furthermore, it should remind everyone not to use accusations or slanders to dissuade people from embracing the Gospel, for those who employ such tactics make themselves incarnate devils. Acts 13:10 refers to Elymas the sorcerer in this manner, as Paul calls him the child of the Devil. This concludes the first part of the preparation. Now, we move to the second part, namely, Christ's stay in the wilderness, which is depicted through three circumstances: first, His fasting for forty days and forty nights; secondly, His companions there, namely, the wild beasts (Mark 1:12); lastly, the temptations He encountered during those forty days, as described in Luke 4:2, even though the specific temptations are not detailed by the Evangelists.

The first point is Christ's fasting in the wilderness for the space of forty days.

There are three sorts of fastings:

First, a daily fast, which is nothing else but the virtue of sobriety, or moderate use of God's creatures with abstinence. All people must

continually practice this kind of fasting, and avoid the abuse of God's creations through excess and drunkenness (Romans 13:12).

The second kind of fasting is a religious fast, where we abstain from food and drink for a specific period to better engage in acts of repentance, prayer, and religious duties. The Jews used this type of fasting at times for a single meal, two or three meals, or even for many days, as seen in 1 Samuel 31:13, where they fasted for seven days.

The third type is a miraculous fast, in which someone fasts for many days, beyond what is natural. Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights on the mountain, as did Elijah. Naturally, no one can fast for such an extended period. While it's true that physicians suggest a person can live for seventeen days without food, they cannot endure for more extended periods, like twenty or thirty days. However, our Saviour Christ fasted for forty days and nights without his appearance changing or his bodily strength weakening. He did not become hungry until the end, which demonstrates the miraculous nature of His fast.

There are some reasons why Christ fasted for precisely forty days and no longer:

First, it allowed Him to come to preach the Gospel with more authority and reverence, just as when Moses fasted for forty days and then presented the two tablets, the people received him with greater reverence. Similarly, when Elijah was to restore religion, he fasted for forty days and forty nights.

Secondly, He fasted for such a duration to correspond to the times that both Moses and Elijah fasted.

Thirdly, His fast did not exceed this duration so that no one would question His humanity. If He had fasted for sixty or a hundred days, some

might doubt whether He was truly human or not.

From this miraculous fast of Christ, the Papists mistakenly derive their superstitious fasting during Lent. It is merely an imitation of Christ, but their fasting is not true fasting, as they eat just as liberally and enjoy equally lavish meals as at any other time of the year. In contrast, Christ abstained from all food and drink.

Secondly, Christ was moved to fast by the prompting of God's Holy Spirit, but the Papists have no such divine command.

Thirdly, Christ observed this fast only once in His life, while their fasting is an annual practice. Therefore, these reasons demonstrate the frivolity of their assertion.

The second specific point to note about our Saviour Christ's time in the wilderness is His interaction with the wild beasts (Mark 1:13).

Some suggest that He spent time with wild beasts so that they might pay homage to Him as their Creator. However, this opinion lacks biblical support and is unlikely to be true. While Jesus Christ is indeed deserving of all homage, His purpose in coming into the world was not to receive such homage but rather to take on the form of a servant.

The true reason is this: there are two types of wilderness, one inhabited where John the Baptist baptized and preached, and the other uninhabited, home to various wild animals such as lions, tigers, bears, etc. Christ chose the uninhabited wilderness where only wild beasts kept Him company. He did so to demonstrate in this great battle against the Devil that He had no aid or comfort from any human being. Thus, He overcame through His own power, and all the honour and praise for the victory belong solely to Christ Jesus.

Besides, in the person of Christ, we can see the condition of God's church on earth. She lives here among wicked people who are no better than wild beasts, as Isaiah 11:6 testifies.

The third aspect that describes Christ's stay in the wilderness is the temptations that He faced within the forty days. Before the three major conflicts mentioned in Luke 4:2, there are references to other temptations, even though they are not detailed. It is quite likely that the Devil initially tempted Christ with several small, light, and weaker temptations as a way to pave the path for his fiercer and stronger temptations. It is the Devil's nature to progress gradually in his temptations. Just as he first instilled an angry thought against his brother Abel into Cain's mind, and later tempted him to commit murder, he didn't stop until he drove Cain to utter despair. Similarly, the Devil began with the thought of betraying His master in Judas's mind, and although Judas initially received this thought, the Devil continued to lead him step by step until he achieved his purpose. The Devil is subtle, and if he can insert even a small temptation, he will not rest until he has led you further into sin.

We should learn from this subtle strategy of the Devil, beginning with lesser temptations and advancing incrementally, to be wise and strive to halt the initial impulses and inclinations toward sin. We should resist sin at its very onset because if Satan gains ground in those initial temptations, he will proceed with more powerful ones.

The fourth and final point during Christ's stay in the wilderness is described in the words, "He was afterward hungry." This means that after fasting for forty days and nights through the divine power and virtue of His Godhood, He eventually became hungry. Christ did this for our benefit. Even though He was the Son of God, He willingly took on our nature and

became a true human being, similar to us in all respects except for sin. He possessed not only the will, mind, emotions, and conscience of a human but also assumed the weaknesses of human nature, to the extent that they are without sin. Therefore, He was susceptible to hunger and thirst.

The reasons why our Saviour Christ was hungry are as follows: Firstly, to demonstrate that He was truly a man and that He shared the weaknesses of human nature. This way, He silenced those who might argue that it was an easy feat for Him to endure such a long fast as the Son of God. To dispel any doubts about His humanity, He allowed Himself to experience hunger, a genuine human infirmity.

Secondly, He felt hunger so that it could serve as an object for the Devil to exploit, giving him an opportunity to intensify his assaults.

Then, the Tempter approached Him and said. This marks the beginning of the first confrontation between the Devil and Christ. In this, we should consider three main aspects: First, the Devil's preparation: Then came the Tempter and said.

Secondly, the actual temptation found in the words: "If thou be the Sonne of God, commaund that these stones be made bread."

Thirdly, Christ's response and rejection in verse 4.

In the preparation, notice the following: First, the author, the Tempter, as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 3:5. He is named thus because it is his desire, his study, and his continuous practice to tempt people and to do whatever he can to lead them away from God and into his kingdom. He does not spare any effort, tirelessly assaulting and tempting people to bring about their destruction. He prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Knowing that the Devil's relentless purpose is to tempt us day and night, we should all take this as a lesson and, for the sake of our souls, be vigilant and pray constantly, lest we fall into temptation and succumb to Satan.

Our duty is to strive to be as unlike the Devil as possible because he is the embodiment of all evil. As we can observe, the Devil's aim is to obstruct people from entering the kingdom of heaven and lead them to hell. Therefore, on the contrary, since he works to divert us from serving God, we should renew our commitment to God's service and worship. We should be more diligent in seeking the kingdom of God for ourselves and for others.

We must be cautious not to lead anyone away from embracing true religion or from serving and worshipping God. Doing so would make us akin to incarnate devils. When Christ was on His way to Jerusalem to accomplish the work of mankind's redemption, Peter attempted to dissuade Him and advised Him to take care of Himself. However, Christ rebuked him, saying, "Get thee behind me Satan."

The second aspect is the timing of the Devil's attack on Christ, which occurred when he perceived Christ to be at His weakest, believing Him unable to resist. This illustrates the cunning of Satan, who chooses the most opportune moment to launch his temptations. Thus, in Christ's example, we can discern the Devil's extraordinary cunning in tempting people, as he selects the most suitable times to introduce his temptations. He observes and spies on men and women, and when he finds us at our weakest and least able to resist, he is most formidable in tempting us, especially at the hour of death and during times of affliction when he directs the full force of his temptations against us.

This should serve as a reminder for us to prepare ourselves for the day of affliction and the throes of death. We should remain steadfast in our faith, ensure the certainty of our calling and election, so that we may never ultimately fall away. We should implore the Lord that when we appear to be at our weakest, He will aid and strengthen us by His Holy Spirit to resist Satan's assaults.

The third aspect in the Devil's preparation is the occasion that particularly moved him to tempt Christ, which was His hunger. Such was Satan's malice against the Lord Jesus that when he found no sin in Him, he seized the opportunity of Christ's vulnerability, seeing Him hungry, and began to tempt Him to use unlawful means to satisfy His hunger.

Now, since the Devil seizes the opportunity to tempt Christ, even from the infirmity of His human nature as a man, we can learn where the Devil derives the basis for all his temptations. He derives them from us and our own nature, and we ourselves provide him with the material for his temptations. He brings the fire and kindles it, but we provide him with the fuel to ignite it. The Devil observes the nature of humans, their dispositions, inclinations, and behaviors. He continually spies on their actions, much like a prudent captain besieging a city who identifies its weakest and least defended points. There, he concentrates all his forces and deploys his most powerful artillery. Similarly, the Devil watches us and our conduct to determine which sin we are most inclined towards and naturally inclined to commit. Then he tailors his temptations to suit our inclinations.

In fact, the Devil is so skilled, after countless years of experience, that he delves into people's temperaments and the very constitutions of their bodies. By identifying the predominant humour, he can make an educated guess about a person's inclination toward sin. For instance, if he discerns that

someone has a choleric temperament, the Devil will provoke them to quarrels, fights, and violence. If a person has a sanguine temperament, he seeks to entice them with vain and ungodly mirth, or at the very least, excessive merriment. If a person is susceptible to melancholy, he will torment them with heavy, gloomy thoughts and intense fears and anxieties. This is how he dealt with the poor man who was a lunatic; the Devil took advantage of the man's bodily humours and the phases of the moon to prompt him to throw himself into fire and water. In summary, the more weaknesses and infirmities we possess, the more opportunities we provide the Devil to harm us. We furnish him with the material for all his temptations, and he exploits our weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Considering the cunning and tactics of Satan, it is imperative for every individual to examine their own heart and identify their specific weaknesses and corruptions to which they are most prone by nature. Once recognized, we must exert effort to combat and subdue these weaknesses, or else they will become weapons and darts that Satan will turn against us, causing harm and injury. It is therefore wise to weaken these infirmities and employ all means to thwart the Devil in his high temptations.

The fourth aspect in the Devil's preparation for his temptations is his approach to Christ. The statement that "the Tempter came unto Him" suggests that he came in some visible form, just as he appeared to Eve in the guise of a serpent. It is very likely that he manifested in some bodily form when he came to speak to our Saviour Christ, as indicated here.

"If thou be the Son of God, etc.," the Devil, having made this solemn preparation and chosen the most suitable place and time while taking advantage of our Saviour Christ's infirmity, now attacks Him and confronts Christ with His first temptation. In this temptation, the cunning Devil

argues like a subtle sophist, using syllogistic reasoning. His syllogism can be formulated as follows: "If thou be the Sonne of God, then thou canst commaund that these stones be made bread; but thou canst not make these stones bread, therefore thou art not the son of God."

The primary aim of the Devil's argument in this first temptation is to make Christ doubt His Father's providence and undermine Christ's faith. The Devil seeks to shake the faith of Christ, that is, the gift within Christ by which, as a man, He believed in God His Father and relied on Him.

In observing the Devil's interaction with Christ, we can discern the central and principal goal of all Satan's temptations directed at the children of God. His ultimate aim, if possible, is to wreck their faith, the belief in the truth of God's word. This is precisely how he dealt with Eve in Genesis 3; he strived to make her question God's word and doubt its credibility. The same approach is employed with all people, trying to keep them in ignorance, blindness, error, or wickedness, preventing them from believing the truth of God's word and obeying it.

The specific part of God's word that the Devil targeted and attempted to discredit was the voice of God the Father from heaven: "This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased."

Here we witness Satan's tactics against all faithful children of God, akin to how he dealt with our Saviour Christ. He endeavours, if possible, to persuade them that they are not the sons and daughters of God, casting doubt on their adoption.

Given that Satan's primary aim is to overturn our faith in God's promises, we should all be prompted to earnestly ensure our calling and election are secure, confirmed by a comforting assurance in our souls. This will provide great solace in times of affliction, if we possess the blessed and firm

conviction that we are the sons and daughters of God. The Devil does not care about outward professions or even the possession of common gifts of God's Spirit, such as hearing the word, understanding it, and giving assent, as long as individuals lack this blessed assurance of God's special love in Christ.

Again, in this first temptation, the Devil tempts Christ to practice an act of unbelief. Now, as Christ lacked bread, the Devil tempts Him, in the absence and need of bread, to transform stones into bread, thus resorting to unlawful means to provide for Himself. Just as the Devil dealt with Christ here, tempting Him to engage in an act of unbelief, so does he approach us, urging men and women in times of distress to resort to illicit and unlawful methods to help themselves. For instance, in times of poverty and scarcity, when people cannot find ordinary means to satisfy their desires, he tempts them to fend for themselves, to steal and pilfer from their neighbors, and to obtain bread through dishonest means. In times of illness, when people cannot find relief through the lawful use of medicine, he strives to lead them to seek help from the Devil, directing them to consult "wise men and women" (as they call them), thus resorting to wicked means to regain their health.

"If thou be the Sonne of God," what prompted the Devil to pose this question to Christ rather than any other? Answer: Firstly, because the Devil knew very well that if Christ were the Son of God, He would be the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world. If He were indeed the promised Messiah, then the Devil was aware that Christ was the one destined to crush the Serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). Of all things, the Devil could not tolerate the prospect of this, so he selected this question above all

others to attempt to prove, or at least to try to prove, that Christ was not the Son of God.

Another reason may be this: since the Devil's fall and his banishment from heaven due to his pride, he harbours a deadly hatred against the Lord God Himself. We shall see that in this question, he unmistakably exposes his spite against God. When the Lord had spoken from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased," the Devil comes and contradicts the voice of God, even attempting to prove God a liar by trying to make Christ believe that He was not truly the Son of God.

From this practice of Satan, we can learn to identify false teachers. Many outstanding and learned individuals have denied Christ to be the Son of God, such as Ebion and Cerinthus, merely asserting that Christ was an excellent man and a worthy Prophet. Since they deny Jesus Christ as the true Son of God, they reveal themselves as false teachers and pupils of the Devil. As the Apostle John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Furthermore, in the Devil's attempt to persuade Christ that He is not the Son of God (even though God had immediately proclaimed Him to be His Son by His own voice from heaven), we can perceive Satan's audacious malice, as he seeks to contradict God in all things. When the Lord pronounces a blessing upon someone, the Devil promptly declares curses and damnation. If God bears witness to a person's soul that they are a child of God, the Devil will endeavour to convince them that they are not. If the Lord affirms that a wicked individual is out of His favour and not a child of God, the Devil will work to persuade them that they are in good standing

and will be saved, filling their hearts with excessive presumption and making them bolder than they ought to be.

"Command": That is, as if Satan were saying to Christ, "Give the command, or simply speak the word, and it shall be done." In this, we can see the remarkable cunning of Satan, who, in these few words (to better achieve his purpose), touches on three important points of divinity. First, that the Son of God is true God, equal to the Father, a fact many heretics have denied, and the Pharisees did not acknowledge; for working a miracle is the unique and exclusive work of God alone. Secondly, the Devil acknowledges that God can create all things out of nothing, without any means, material, or helpers, through His almighty power. Thirdly, he admits that God can perform a true miracle, which is exclusive to God alone, and no creature whatsoever can work a miracle.

Now, when the Devil acknowledged all this, one might have thought he intended no harm with these words. However, the truth is that we will see, in proposing these points, his cunning was to undermine the faith of Christ. He presented the truth not out of love or approval but to more easily deceive our Saviour and make Him doubt whether He truly was the Son of God or not.

This should remind us not to always believe and listen to the Devil, even when he speaks the truth. Satan's cunning is such that when he seems to be speaking the truth, he actually intends to deceive us the most. By speaking the truth, he seeks to undermine our faith in the truth. Just as our Saviour Christ rejected their testimony, even though the devils spoke the truth, and as Paul did not allow the Devil to speak through a girl, though the Devil acknowledged the Apostles as servants of the true God, we must be cautious when listening to Satan, even when he speaks the truth. He never speaks the

truth because he loves it but rather to be more readily believed and to more easily deceive us and cause us greater harm.

"That these stones": Saint Luke mentions "this stone" in the singular number. To reconcile these two accounts, when Matthew speaks in the plural number of many stones, we must understand that he is referring to Satan's temptations as he initially approached Christ. In the beginning of his temptation, Satan asks Christ to turn all these stones into bread. When Luke uses the singular "this stone," it should be understood that Satan emphasized and enforced his temptation to better persuade Christ to yield to it. It is as if the Devil were saying, "You may think it's too much to turn all these stones (there are so many) into bread, but just turn this one stone into bread, so I won't trouble you too much. This way, I may believe that you are the Son of God."

By this conduct of the devil towards Christ, we can learn that once the devil has initiated his temptation, he becomes more insistent in pressing it. He is reluctant to be repulsed and will persist and pursue it. If he can gain even a small concession, especially in some minor matter, he would be content. In this case, he tried to persuade Christ to turn just one stone into bread, even though Christ had refused to turn many stones into bread. Therefore, we must understand that just as the devil is very persistent in enforcing and pressing his temptations, we must be equally persistent in resisting them and not yield, even in the slightest matter he tempts us with.

Verse 4. But he answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." These words contain the wise and heavenly response of our Saviour Christ to the first temptation by the devil. In this answer, we can observe three points: firstly, the answer itself, "And Jesus answering said"; secondly, the source from which our

Saviour Christ derived His response, "It is written"; thirdly, the actual words of His answer, "Man shall not live, etc."

First, the Spirit of God records Christ's response to demonstrate that He was not only willing to confront the devil but also fully capable of overcoming and defeating him.

What a great comfort this is to God's Church and His children! We should remember that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was in this lowly state of a servant when He lived on Earth, yet He was fully able to confront and overcome Satan, despite all his power and malice. How much more able is Jesus Christ now, having been exalted to the right hand of God the Father in Heaven, possessing all power and majesty, and reigning as King of Kings and Lord of all Lords? He is much more capable of confounding Satan and destroying all the works of the devil in His followers. This should provide immense comfort to every believer in the midst of temptations.

"It is written" – This is where our Saviour Christ derived His response. Even though Christ could have confounded Satan with a mere word from His mouth and could have called upon many legions of angels from Heaven to protect Him, being the true and only Son of God, He chose this weapon: "It is written." He did this to teach us that the most effective weapon to repel all of Satan's temptations and extinguish all the devil's fiery darts is the written word of God. Therefore, He instructs us to take up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, both to defend ourselves and to put Satan to flight (Ephesians 6:16).

Hence, from the example of Christ, we can learn several important lessons. Firstly, since He chose the Word of God as the most effective weapon to repel Satan, it condemns the vain and futile practice of the Roman Catholic Church, which, instead of the Word of God, puts other

worthless tools into people's hands, such as holy water and the sign of the cross, claiming that these are sufficient weapons to scare away the Devil. Alas, the Devil is not so easily frightened by a drop of water or the waving of a straw. Our Saviour Christ demonstrates what truly constitutes a sufficient weapon to repel all of Satan's temptations that he might hurl against us. Therefore, it is wicked practice by the Papists to keep the Word of God from the people, hiding it in an unknown tongue, and thereby betraying the poor souls of the people into the hands of the Devil.

We can see the wretched state of all those men and women who either disdain or neglect the knowledge of the Word of God. They willingly expose themselves into the hands of the Devil, making themselves an easy prey for him. Since they possess no weapon to defend themselves or repel Satan, he strikes them, wounds them, and even slits the throats of their poor souls before they even realize it.

From here, we can deduce the reason why so many sins proliferate in every place, namely, the vile and profound ignorance of the Word of God. The absence of knowledge of the Gospel and the Word of God is precisely why sin prevails everywhere. For the Word of God should be to us like Saul's spear, which he kept by his bedside, so that if any enemy suddenly attacked us, our weapon would always be readily at hand, prepared to answer the Devil and his agents when they tempt us to commit any sin. Just as Christ said, "It is written," we must respond by saying, "I may not lie, swear, commit adultery," etc., for it is written, etc.

Seeing Christ, by His own practice, teaches us that the written Word of God, believed, understood, and correctly applied, is the most powerful and all-sufficient weapon to resist the Devil, how should this motivate all people to engage in a serious study of the Word of God? It should prompt

everyone, as they value their souls, to strive for a sound knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scripture, as this is the best weapon to defeat the Devil. If we were aware that someone had vowed to take our lives and sought our destruction, how diligently would we seek the best weapons we could find, and how earnestly would we learn how to wield them to defend ourselves when we encounter our enemy? Therefore, let us not be ignorant that the Devil is the sworn enemy of our souls, lying in wait continually, seeking our spiritual destruction. Oh, if people cared for their souls as they ought, how prudent it would make them to equip themselves with this most sufficient weapon – a true understanding of the Word of God! Hence, it should motivate all of us to cherish the Word, to study it diligently, to store it in our hearts against the time of need, and to use it to resist the Devil when he attacks us.

It is truly lamentable to consider how many poor, ignorant people deceive themselves. They delude themselves by boasting that they defy the Devil, spitting at him. But alas, what if two enemies were to meet, one well-armed with deadly weapons and the other having nothing to defend himself but defying words and spitting? Will this protect him? Will it not result in the well-armed adversary wounding and killing him? Similarly, though ignorant people may declare that they defy the Devil and spit at him, he will show them no mercy but inflict upon them their fatal wounds, and they will never realize who harmed them until it is too late.

Now, let us turn to the words of Christ's response: "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." This reply from Christ is derived from Deuteronomy 8:3, where Moses instructs the children of Israel, who were facing severe famine and lacked sustenance, that the Lord provided them with manna. This was to teach

them that man does not live solely by bread but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

"Man shall not live" means that man cannot sustain his natural or temporal life in this world. It refers to his natural or temporal life, as opposed to his spiritual life. "By bread only" signifies all things necessary for the natural life of man, such as food, drink, clothing, sleep, health, and so on. It encompasses all the natural and ordinary means employed by man for his temporal life.

"But by every word," he does not say in general "by the word," but "by every word." The term "word" has various meanings in the scriptures: firstly, it is used for the second person in the Trinity (John 1:1). Secondly, it represents the word of God (Isaiah 40:6). However, neither of these meanings applies in this context. Thirdly, "word" is taken to mean the decree and will of God, His providence, and the good will and pleasure of God. We should understand it this way in this context, where our Saviour Christ states that man shall live by every word, meaning every decree and blessing of God for the life of man. This interpretation is found in Hebrews 1:3, where it is said that Christ upholds all things by His mighty word, signifying that just as the Lord has created all things, He also sustains and preserves them through His decree and providence.

God's word and decree concerning the life of man can be distinguished as follows: firstly, God has decreed that some men should live by bread, meaning by ordinary means; secondly, some should live without ordinary bread, i.e., without any ordinary means; thirdly, some should live without any means at all, either ordinary or extraordinary, as exemplified by Moses, Elijah, and our Saviour Christ during their forty-day fasts; fourthly, some

should live against means and contrary to the course of nature, as Daniel in the lions' den and the three children in the fiery furnace.

"Which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" means by every decree of God, by every blessing and decree that God issues concerning the life of man. Thus, we understand the meaning of these words.

If someone were to say, "It seems we must live solely by the word of God, without food or drink, relying only on the scriptures and the written word," I would respond, "No, but we must live and preserve our lives by every word, meaning every decree that God issues to sustain human life." Therefore, without the special decree and blessing of God, nothing could preserve and maintain human life. Our food could not nourish us, our clothing could not warm us, and so forth.

Now, let us consider how Christ's response is applied to the Devil's temptation. The Devil had endeavored to prove that Christ was not the Son of God. His argument was as follows: "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But you cannot make these stones into bread, so you are not the Son of God."

Our Saviour Christ cites this passage of Scripture and denies the proposition or the first part of the devil's argument. The Devil assumes that if a person is hungry, they must have bread by any means to preserve their life. Christ responds that it is not necessary because a person's life is not preserved by bread alone; rather, it is sustained by the special decree and blessing of God. Indeed, this is a crucial lesson, as the Lord spent no less than forty years teaching it to the children of Israel, as seen in Deuteronomy 8:3.

The application of this doctrine is multifaceted. Firstly, we learn to consider the creatures of God correctly, understanding that we should not

merely look at their outward substance but also recognise the secret blessing of God upon His creatures, proceeding from His word, which is His decree. For instance, we should not only see the outward substance of bread but also consider the blessing and decree of God that bread should be the means to nourish humans. Beyond the bread itself, there is the "staff of bread," signifying the power and ability it has to nourish and sustain life, which it derives from God's decree and blessing upon it. Just as an old, weak man relies on his staff and would stumble without it, if the Lord removes the staff of bread, His secret blessing, even if a person has all the finest foods, their life would wane amid them all. The fragile human life must inevitably fail and decline if the Lord withdraws the staff of bread.

Why is it that bread, which lacks life itself, nourishes our bodies, gives life and strength to us? Or that clothing, which lacks warmth, keeps us warm? It is all due to God's word and decree and His blessing upon them. To emphasise that it is not so much the bread itself that preserves human life but rather God's blessing upon the bread through His word and decree, we can observe that a poor man's child, who fares meagrely and is modestly clothed, is just as healthy, active, and content as a prince's child. This equality is because God's blessing is the primary factor for the poor child's well-being, just as it is for the child of the king.

Furthermore, since it is not merely bread but God's blessing upon bread that sustains human life, we should exercise moderation in our use of God's creations. Neither food, nor drink, nor clothing can benefit us unless the Lord sends out His word and decree and bestows a blessing upon them, even upon every morsel of bread we consume. If we misuse God's good creations through excess and gluttony, how can we expect the Lord to bless them for us? Instead, we should be concerned that He might curse them for

our abuse and intemperance, causing them to harm us rather than doing us good.

We should learn from this to invoke God's name for a blessing upon His creatures before using them. Since it is not the substance of bread that nourishes us but God's blessing upon it, we should understand that before partaking of God's creations, we ought to seek His blessing upon them.

This should also teach us to be content with our circumstances, to moderate our desires, and to avoid an insatiable craving for abundance. God's blessing is sufficient wealth and does not come with the anxieties associated with worldly riches. Someone with a modest estate may be just as blessed by God as someone with great abundance. Seeking excessive wealth demonstrates a lack of trust in God's providence.

You might argue that food, drink, clothing, and such things are essential for your livelihood, and you cannot survive without them. I reply that our lives do not rely solely on these things but, primarily, on God's blessing upon these means. Without His blessing, even if you had control over all the world's resources, they would be of no benefit. Furthermore, the Lord can preserve our lives not only through bread but even without any means, should He choose to do so against all odds. Therefore, since our lives do not depend solely on these means but, most importantly, on God's blessing upon them, we should first seek God's blessing. Without His blessing, all these means become useless and unprofitable to us. It is not wise to be overly eager in seeking worldly possessions, given that our lives do not solely rely on them. As Christ said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12).

Since man's life is not solely sustained by bread and these outward means but by God's blessing upon them, this should teach us all to be content with

the circumstances the Lord has ordained for us, even if they are humble and modest. We must also learn patience in the face of extreme suffering and afflictions. If the Lord deals with us as He did with His servant Job, taking everything away from us, we must still find contentment and guard against being consumed by excessive grief. For our lives are not upheld by these outward means in themselves but by God's blessing upon them, which is everything. Even when all means fail, the Lord can preserve our lives without bread and even against all odds. Indeed, if a person lacked both the outward means and the inward means, namely, God's blessing, then there would be cause for grief. However, since the Lord can save our lives both without all outward means and against them, even if we lack bread, let us place our trust in the Lord and never doubt His mercy. Let us declare with Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." We should also be aware that the Lord can multiply the poor woman's jar of oil and make it last as well as the abundant wealth of the rich man.

This should instruct us all to moderate our affections and maintain an even keel, so that neither in times of wealth and abundance are we consumed by pride, nor in times of poverty are we overwhelmed by sorrow. For having abundance does not necessarily mean one is blessed, nor does lacking riches mean one is cursed and deprived of God's blessing. In both wealth and poverty, God's blessing is paramount in making people happy.

Lastly, this should prompt each of us to strive throughout our lives to understand God's providence and rely upon it in all life's circumstances, whatever the Lord may send our way. When we can discern God's providence, we must then cling to it, whether in adversity or prosperity, in sickness and health, in life and death. While people may acknowledge God's providence in times of prosperity, we must learn to recognize it

equally in adversity and place our complete faith in it. We should roll ourselves entirely onto it and entrust ourselves and all our ways to the Lord. The Israelites took forty years to learn this lesson, underscoring its profound importance and the challenges it presents. Given its great utility and necessity, let us diligently study and comprehend God's providence and demonstrate its true application in our lives and conduct.

Then the Devil took him into the holy city, etc: The second conflict between the Devil and Christ unfolds in verses 5, 6, and 7. Although Luke places this temptation last in chapter 4, there is no significant difference between the Evangelists. Luke, when recounting the words and deeds of Christ, presents them in the order guided by the Spirit of God, not strictly adhering to the chronological sequence of events. In contrast, Matthew records them in the order in which they occurred in the life of our Saviour.

Now, in this second confrontation, we should consider three aspects: first, the Devil's preparation for the battle (verse 5); second, the actual temptation (verse 6); and third, Christ's response (verse 7).

Regarding the Devil's preparation, two elements must be examined: first, the timing; second, the components of his preparation. First, as soon as Satan suffered a defeat and was thwarted by Christ in the wilderness, he immediately launches a fresh attack, carrying Him to the holy city for this new temptation.

From this, we can discern the Devil's malice. As soon as he concludes one temptation, he does not cease but promptly devises another. The Devil never negotiates a truce with humanity; he is always either actively tempting us or scheming to present new temptations. He is never idle.

Furthermore, we learn that when we overcome one temptation, we should immediately brace ourselves for another. We should not anticipate a respite

after giving the Devil a setback, for he will launch a fresh assault and tempt us repeatedly. Our life is an ongoing battle against sin and Satan, so we must remain prepared to confront our adversary.

If people could internalise and practice this lesson, they would exhibit greater patience when facing temptations. Temptations would become easier to endure, and individuals would willingly and cheerfully withstand them, no matter how numerous they may be.

The Devil took him to the holy city: This marks the first part of the Devil's preparation. By the holy city, Jerusalem is meant, as made clear in Luke 4:9.

But how did the Devil carry our Saviour Christ from the wilderness to Jerusalem? He might have done this in three ways: first, through a vision; secondly, by the ordinary means; thirdly, by lifting Him through the air.

First, by vision, as was customary in the time of the prophets. For instance, Jeremiah was carried in vision to the river Euphrates. However, Christ could not have been carried in a vision from the wilderness to Jerusalem in this manner, for it would not have been a temptation for Him in a vision alone to cast Himself from the top of the temple.

Secondly, our Saviour Christ might have been led by the ordinary means, and indeed, the words could support this interpretation. But I believe this is not the intended meaning of this passage. For if the Devil led our Saviour from the wilderness to Jerusalem, it would have been either voluntarily or involuntarily, either of His own accord or at the Devil's persuasion. He did not go voluntarily, for since He was led into the wilderness and tempted there, still being in the midst of the conflict and it not yet concluded, He would not have willingly departed to Jerusalem. Secondly, He would not have gone at the Devil's persuasion, for we never read that He would do

anything at the Devil's persuasion, even though it may have been lawful in itself.

Thirdly, the Devil might have conveyed and transported the body of our Saviour Christ through the air from the wilderness to Jerusalem. This is the opinion of the most reputable theologians, that the Devil had the power, by God's permission, to transport Christ's body through the air from the wilderness to the holy city. This interpretation appears to be supported by the subsequent words where it is stated that the Devil set Him on a pinnacle of the temple. It seems as likely that he carried Christ from the wilderness to Jerusalem as that the Devil had the power to place and set Him on top of the temple.

Therefore, if the Devil had permission to transport Christ's body from the wilderness to Jerusalem, this supports the common belief that the Devil can transport a person from one place to another if God allows it. However, it's important to note that he cannot do it as swiftly and expediently as some imagine. Some foolishly believe that he can carry someone hundreds of miles in an hour, which is impossible, as such violent motion would cause a person to lose their breath. For instance, if a person falls from the top of a high steeple, their breath is gone before they reach halfway to the ground.

Furthermore, we see from this that the Devil may, by God's permission, have power over the bodies of godly men, even those with the greatest graces and strongest faith in God. Since he had power over Christ's body to transport it from place to place with God's permission, why couldn't he, with God's permission, have power over anyone's body, even if they were true believers? If he had power over Job's body, to torment it, to kill his children, and destroy them, although they were undoubtedly faithful servants of God, then why couldn't the Devil have power over our bodies to

transport a person from one place to another? If the Devil, by God's permission, could torment the body of someone who was a daughter of faithful Abraham, causing her suffering for 18 years, so that she was bent and bowed by Satan, then undoubtedly he can do less, such as moving people's bodies from one place to another.

And this may serve to admonish those who think their faith is so strong that the devil cannot annoy them or bewitch them in any way. But if the Devil has the power, by God's permission, to torment the bodies of the faithful, even to destroy the bodies of Job's children, who were undoubtedly true servants of God, he may, if God allows it, bewitch the godliest person who lives. For we know what the Holy Ghost says: that all things happen, and all things come alike to the good and the bad, and there is often no difference in outward circumstances between the children of God and the wicked.

To the holy city: That is, Jerusalem, as mentioned in Luke 4:9. Now this city was called holy for several reasons. First, because in Jerusalem was the temple of the Lord where the sacrifices and other ceremonies prescribed by God for His own worship took place. Secondly, in the temple, they had the law of God and the books of Moses and the Prophets read and explained to them. Thirdly, because Jerusalem was a mother Church, from which true religion flowed and was dispersed into many places around the world. Therefore, Jerusalem is called the holy city for these reasons.

This church in Jerusalem, although it had many corruptions within it, our Saviour Christ still referred to as holy, and it was a true Church of God. From this, I conclude that the Church of God in England, despite its many flaws and corruptions, may indeed be the true Church of God. For the Church of God in England is comparable to the Church in Jerusalem. Just

as they had Moses and the Prophets read and explained, so do we. Moreover, we have the Gospel now being preached soundly, which they did not have in such a plain and abundant manner as we do. They had the sacraments of the Old Testament, and we have Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Their Church was a mother church from which religion spread to many other places, and although our Church may not be called a mother church, it can truly be called a nurturing church for many neighbouring churches around us.

Just as Christ and His Apostles did not separate themselves from or refuse to join in the service of God with the Church in Jerusalem because of its corruptions, but instead taught and preached in the Temple, likewise, no one should separate themselves or refuse to join with God's people in His service and worship because of a few corruptions that may exist. In fact, those who separate themselves from God's people because of such corruptions are cutting themselves off from Christ Himself, as they are separating from the Church of God.

If anyone claims that the Church of Rome is the true Church of God, just like the Church of Jerusalem, citing the numerous privileges of the Roman Church, I would respond that upon closer examination, this claim is unfounded. Firstly, the Church of Rome boasts of its apostolic succession, but I counter that succession from individuals, without succession in the Apostles' doctrine, cannot be a true mark of the Church. Secondly, while the Church of Rome administers the sacrament of Baptism, this alone does not prove its authenticity as the true Church. There were instances in Samaria and elsewhere where the sacrament of circumcision was practiced, but it cannot be proven that those were true Churches of God. Furthermore, I argue that the Church of Rome possesses Baptism only in an external sense,

akin to how a thief possesses a true man's purse. However, it cannot be said that a thief is a true man solely because he possesses a genuine man's purse. Lastly, although the Church of Rome administers outward Baptism, its doctrine subverts the inward Baptism, namely, the true imputed justification and inherent sanctification of Christ through the Spirit.

1. The Church of Rome recites the Apostles' Creed, but this is only in word. In reality, the deity they worship is an idol, and their concept of Christ is false and counterfeit, a product of their own invention, as is evident to those who scrutinize their doctrine.
2. They claim to uphold the Word of God and the writings of the Apostles, yet their writings reveal that they uphold them only superficially, not genuinely. In matters of core religious doctrines, they undermine the teachings of the Prophets and Apostles. Furthermore, they regard the Scriptures merely as a lantern holds a candle, not for its intrinsic value but for the benefit of God's children who remain hidden within the midst of Popery.
3. They boast of being the mother church to many other churches. However, we must distinguish between the Rome that once was and the Rome that exists now. The ancient Rome in the time of Paul was the true Church of God, but that old Rome is now defunct, while the present-day Rome is identified as the whore of Babylon, far from being a mother church but rather a cruel stepmother to religion. Thus, it is evident that the contemporary

Church of Rome is not a true Church of God but only in name and outward appearance.

Considering that the Devil tempted our Saviour Christ in the holy city, we learn that no place is so holy that the Devil cannot introduce his temptations into it. This refutes the unfounded beliefs of the Church of Rome, which teaches that their consecrated holy water, their blessed bread, the sign of the cross, and similar practices can ward off the Devil from their homes and persons. Here we see that neither the holiness of Christ's person nor the sacredness of the location prevented Satan from tempting Him.

Again, it is of little use to change the place or the air to escape temptations, for there is no place so holy or so pure where Satan cannot and will not set his temptations in motion and assail us. While changing the environment may alleviate bodily ailments, it has no power to cure the conscience or heal the spiritual maladies of the soul.

"And set him on a pinnacle of the temple." This marks the second part of the Devil's preparation. After conveying Christ from the wilderness to Jerusalem, the Devil places Him on a pinnacle of the temple, a precarious location. Some believe it was a sharp spire used for specific purposes, while others suggest it was the battlements built by God's command to prevent people from falling off the flat-roofed houses. Regardless, it was a perilous spot.

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," etc. In this verse, we encounter the second temptation. It can be logically framed as follows: If you are the Son of God, then cast yourself down. But you claim and are convinced that you are the Son of God; therefore, you may cast yourself down.

In this second temptation, we must observe the Devil's aim – to tempt our Saviour Christ into presumption, persuading Him to presume upon God's mercy and enticing Him into vain confidence in His Father's protection without using lawful means.

This second temptation reveals a crucial aspect of the Devil's strategy, which is to lead Christ into vain presumption of God's mercy. In our times, we see how the Devil often succeeds with a similar argument. Some cry out, "God is merciful," and use this as an excuse to grow secure in sin, presuming on God's mercy. Others argue, "I am either elected or rejected. If I am elected, I will be saved no matter how I live; if I am rejected, I will perish no matter how well I live." Such people live as they please. Still, others say, "I trust the Lord will provide for me," and refuse to engage in any meaningful work. Some who profess the Gospel are tempted by the Devil to believe that mere profession is enough, even if they neglect to practice the duties of their faith, resembling the foolish virgins who held lamps but lacked the oil to keep them burning.

Knowing this, we should be vigilant and not fall into Satan's snare of presumption. The Devil understands our human nature and recognises that presuming well of ourselves is a natural inclination. Despair, on the other hand, is troubling and often leads to a greater awareness of one's misery. In truth, the Devil prevails with many more individuals through presumption than through despair. Despair may destroy thousands, but complacency can ensnare tens of thousands.

And it is to be noted that when the Devil, in the previous temptation, had strived to induce Christ to despair of His Father's providence, he now endeavours to achieve the opposite – to lead Him into presuming upon God's providence. Here, we can observe the Devil's remarkable cunning as

he attempts to steer our Saviour Christ from one extreme to another. This is how the Devil deals with all people, aiming to draw them either into presumption or despair and seeking to shift them from one extreme to another, such as from covetousness to prodigality, and so on. Therefore, we must strive to avoid both extremes, neither presuming too much nor succumbing to despair, but maintaining the golden mean, just as Christ does in this instance.

"Cast thyself down." The Devil wanted Christ to perform a miracle rather than demonstrate it through His teaching, desiring visible proof of His divine nature. This illustrates the nature of all wicked individuals – they are indifferent to God's doctrine but clamour for miracles. This tendency can be seen in Herod, who wished to witness a miracle performed by Christ but disregarded His word and teaching. Similarly, the Jews who persecuted Christ and His Gospel insisted on witnessing a miracle, even when He was crucified and nailed to the cross. All wicked individuals share this trait, prioritising and desiring miracles over the blessed teachings of Jesus Christ.

"Cast thyself down." Having previously established the unwavering faith of Christ, demonstrating that He did not doubt His Father's providence even in the most trying circumstances, the Devil now exploits the graces and gifts of Christ to lead Him into presumption and foster vain confidence in His Father's protection. The Devil employs a similar strategy with all the followers of Christ. If he cannot succeed in causing us to despair through our weaknesses, he seizes upon the graces and gifts he observes in us to induce presumption. Often, he prevails through this method, causing individuals to become inflated with satanic pride and excessive self-esteem due to the particular gifts they possess, such as learning, intelligence, eloquence, etc.

"Then cast thyself down." The Lord granted the Devil permission to place Christ in a perilous situation. However, the Devil had no power to cast Him down himself; he could only persuade Christ to do so. This demonstrates that the Devil's power is limited; it is not as great as his malice toward humanity. The Lord restricts Satan's power and takes care of His own children, ensuring that Satan cannot harm them. Even though the Devil placed Christ on the top of the temple, he could not, for his life, cast Him down. This shows that the Devil, despite his malice, cannot go beyond the limits set by God. This should provide us with comfort. Just as God the Father restricts Satan concerning Christ, our head, He does the same for us, His members.

"Now follows the reason which the Devil uses to persuade Christ to yield to his temptation: 'For it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee.'" When the Devil heard our Saviour Christ quoting Scripture, he imitated Christ and began to cite Scripture as well as He did. Therefore, we must be cautious about accepting the doctrines of heretics and false teachers, even if they seem to support them with Scripture. The Devil has his "scriptum est" (it is written) at the ready. We must learn to test the spirits, that is, evaluate whether the doctrines of people are from God or not (1 John 4:1), lest the Devil and wicked individuals deceive us. Here, we see how the Devil can quote Scripture aptly to further his own purposes. It is a subtle tactic of the Devil to cite Scripture to persuade people to accept his damnable doctrines, leading them into heresy and schism. For this purpose, he grossly misuses the Scriptures. Even when he seeks to convince people to continue living in sin, he has his "Scriptum est" readily available, quoting phrases like, "At whatever time a sinner repents of his sin, he shall have mercy." By misusing Scripture, he successfully deceives many.

The words the Devil cites are taken from the eighty-first Psalm, verse eleven: "For he shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," etc. In presenting these words, the Devil is very precise and careful in repeating them, not even omitting the particle "For," which could have been omitted. However, he ultimately leaves out an entire clause, which is the main point and foundation of God's promise, namely, "to keep thee in all thy ways." This shows how the Devil shamefully abuses God's Scriptures. It is common for him to add, omit, or in some way distort the Scriptures in his quotations, corrupting their meaning to serve his own purposes.

"And as this is the devil's manner in his alleging and dealing with the Scriptures, so do the Papists as his scholars. For though in word they hold the Scriptures, yet it is usual with them to put in, or leave out, or by some means to corrupt and deprave them in the sense and meaning, as might be shown by example.

Well, seeing the Devil is so skilful in the Scriptures and can allege them so readily and so aptly for his purpose, and with all is so malicious to mince them and deprave them, it should make all men study the holy Scriptures, so we might be acquainted with them and be able to disclose and to discern Satan's fallacies and subtleties. We should wish, with Moses, that all the Lord's people could prophesy. But especially the Ministers of the Word, they must labour to be thoroughly acquainted with the book of God, to observe even the circumstances of the text; else the Devil will cast a mist before their eyes and beguile them with his subtle fallacies. Therefore, they must do as Ezekiel did, eat up the book of God.

And that we might not perceive Satan's subtleties and deceit, he labours to keep men in ignorance of the word and by all means to have the Scriptures

hidden and dark. And if it were possible, to root out the schools of learning and that the Bible might be burned. And as he prevails in Popery to bring men to this, that all religion and the Scriptures might hang on men's devices and man's learning, as they do in Popery ground all upon Lombard, the master of the Sentences, and bar the common people from the Scriptures, locking them up in an unknown tongue. So, with Christians, he takes the like course, for he persuades them that the Scriptures are hard to be understood and very obscure and troublesome. Therefore he draws men's minds from the study of them to read the writings of men because they seem to be more pleasant and delectable. So that people, not being acquainted with the text, might not discern his deceits and subtleties.

Again, seeing the Devil can allege the Word of God and say, 'It is written,' and that he can bring in Scripture fit for his purpose, what a shame is it for Christians if they do not labour so to know the Scriptures of God that they may allege them as occasion shall serve! And that not as some do, to heap place upon place without all reason, but to allege them fittingly and to the purpose?"

"Lastly, since this is a devilish and satanic practice, in alleging the Scriptures to deprave and corrupt them, to leave out and put in at his pleasure, it must warn us that when we are lawfully called, we do speak and utter the words of other men, even all, and no more than all, neither putting to them nor taking from them, and that without changing their words or the sense and meaning of them.

'He shall give his Angels charge over thee.' The true sense of the place is this, that the Lord had a special care of his people, and when he sent any judgment upon the Israelites, he gave them this comfortable promise that in the midst of all their troubles, he himself would protect them. And as this

promise was made to them, so it is general to the whole Church of God and belongs to us. For in all common judgments and calamities, the children of God who walk in his ways shall be sure to have protection and security, for the Angels of God, by his appointment, do hold them up, as it were, in their hands. In these words, there is a comparison taken from nurses who, having children committed to their care, hold them very carefully and tenderly in their hands and dare not let them go out of their arms. Even so, the Angels of God, by his appointment, become like nurses to his children in all their lawful ways and attend upon them, being very careful to protect them from danger as long as they keep themselves within the compass of God's word.

It is true indeed that judgment begins at the house of God, and he often afflicts his dearest children to try their faith and patience. Yet it is most certain that in common calamities, the children of God shall have protection and security. Yes, the Angels of God, like nurses, shall hold them in their hands and defend them as long as they keep themselves within the ways of God and within the compass of his will in his word. But if they leave the way of God's commandments, wander in by-paths, and go out of their lawful callings, they have no assurance of God's protection, and God's Angels have no charge to watch over them.

Seeing then God has made such a merciful promise of protection to all who walk in his ways and within the compass of his commandments, it should warn us all to beware of going out of our ways and lawful callings. Instead, we should study the law of God and, as we look for his protection, keep within the compass of it."

"Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' In these words is contained the answer of our Saviour Christ to the second temptation of the Devil, wherein he opposes Scripture against

Scripture. But to expound that place which the Devil alleged, and to show how vilely Satan abuses the word of God, he alleges another place of Scripture. In this response, our Saviour Christ affirms that it is true that God has made various promises in his word regarding the protection of his people. However, these promises are conditional. If his people refuse to walk in God's commandments and use lawful means prescribed in his word, he is not bound to fulfil these promises.

'Again, it is written,' Seeing our Saviour Christ alleges another place of Scripture to explain the one Satan brought against him and to expose its abuse, we gather that the Holy Scriptures are, in themselves, sufficient to interpret themselves. Christ uses another text of Scripture to clarify the one Satan cited and refute his misuse of it. We find a similar practice in the Old Testament, where Ezra expounded the law of God and provided its sense through the Scriptures, explaining one by another (Nehemiah 8:9, Junius). If the servants of God could do this in the Old Testament, how much more can we do so in the New Testament, where many things are plainly elucidated and explained by Christ and his Apostles?

However, the Papists cannot accept this doctrine, as they maintain that the interpreter of the Scriptures must have judicial power and authority to determine their meaning. They argue that the Scriptures are merely inanimate letters and, therefore, incapable of interpreting themselves. Despite their stance, we see, through the example of our Saviour Christ, that the Scriptures possess sufficient power to elucidate their own meaning and interpret themselves, even though they do not speak audibly. Just as a person can communicate their thoughts to a friend through letters and writing, the Lord God communicates to his people through the Scriptures,

just as effectively as he did in ancient times through his own voice from heaven.

If the Papists persist in denying the power of the Scriptures to judge and determine their own meaning, then who, they may ask, possesses this authority? Their answer is that the Church has the authority to judge and determine the meaning of the Scriptures. However, this is false because the Lord has not granted such power to the Church to determine the meaning of the Scriptures at its discretion. Instead, he has given this responsibility to the ministry of the word, to open and expound the Scriptures by the Scriptures themselves. Just as a lawyer does not have the authority to judge the law of his Prince and interpret it however he pleases, but only to expound the law and provide its sense based on the words of the law and other relevant circumstances."

"The Church of Rome claims further that they can determine the sense of the Scriptures either by the rule of faith or the consent of the fathers. If they fail in this, then the Pope is supposed to determine them as one who cannot err.

1. Regarding the rule of Faith (which they understand as unwritten traditions), how can they be suitable judges to determine the sense of the Scriptures unless we give more authority to unwritten truths than to the written word of God? The Scriptures alone must be the rule of faith, and only the Scriptures can judge and determine their own meaning.
2. The consensus of the Fathers is not a sufficient rule to pass judgment and determine the sense of the Scriptures. We know that these fathers, being human, and many of them lacking

knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, especially in the interpretation of the word, are subject to error and sometimes err. By the same logic, the Pope is not a suitable person to judge the Scriptures and determine their meaning since he is subject to numerous errors, and many Popes have erred in the foundations of religion.

Now, let's turn to Christ's response, which is taken from Deuteronomy 6:16: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' First, we must examine what the word 'to tempt' signifies. Second, we need to understand how God is said to be tempted. Third, we should explore the cause and root of this tempting of God.

First, 'to tempt God' means to test or make a trial to determine whether God is as the Scriptures describe Him to be. It is to assess whether He is as just, merciful, and mighty as the Word of God portrays Him. The Prophet David interprets it this way in Psalm 95:9: 'Your fathers tempted me and proved me in the desert,' where 'to tempt' means to test God's justice and mercy, verifying if He is as just and merciful as the Word portrays and promises.

Second, concerning the manner, 'to tempt God' is not simply to test and experiment with God but specifically to test God by making unnecessary trials of His power and goodness when there is no reason to test the Lord unnecessarily."

"Thirdly, the cause that prompts people to tempt God is a distrustful and unbelieving heart, stemming from a lack of faith. For instance, the Israelites tempted God in Psalm 78:18, 22. They tempted God in their hearts and asked for food to satisfy their desires. The reason for this can be found in

verse 22, as they did not believe in God, trust in His help, or rely on His care and providence. Therefore, unbelief was the root of their temptation of God.

To tempt God is to make unnecessary and unwarranted trials and experiments of His mercy, goodness, power, and justice, driven by a heart filled with distrust.

Now, God may be tempted in five different ways. Firstly, when people try to dictate to God the timing, location, and manner in which He must help them and fulfill His promises to them. For example, when the Israelites in the wilderness lacked water, they questioned whether the Lord was among them, implying that unless He provided water immediately in their time of need, they would not trust His promise. Similarly, in Psalm 78:20, even though the Lord had given them water, they asked, 'Can He also give bread or provide meat for His people?' This shows that unless the Lord satisfied their desires and sent them food according to their preferences, they were ready to doubt His providence.

This should remind us that in our requests and prayers, we must not stipulate to God the time, place, or means by which we expect assistance in times of poverty, illness, or other circumstances. Instead, we should continue in prayer, trust in the Lord's timing, and leave these details to His good will and pleasure.

Secondly, God is tempted when people refuse to believe His word and demand signs and wonders from heaven, as the Scribes and Pharisees did when they tempted our Saviour Christ in John 2:18. They did not believe His doctrine unless He confirmed it with miracles. In this way, anyone who rejects God's teaching because it is not confirmed by signs and wonders is tempting God.

But one might ask, 'Is it not permissible to ask for a sign from God?' Yes, there are times when it is appropriate to request a sign from the Lord. For instance, Gideon asked God for a sign and did not sin in doing so. Hezekiah also requested a sign in 2 Kings 20:8.

There are two cases in which a person may ask for a sign from the Lord. First, when the Lord commands someone to ask for a sign, it is permissible to do so. Thus, when the Lord instructed Ahaz to ask for a sign, Ahaz sinned by refusing.

Secondly, one may request a sign from God when it is necessary for confirming a person's extraordinary calling. This was the case with Gideon, who had been exceptionally appointed by God as the captain and deliverer of His people. Although Gideon was not entirely convinced of his calling, he asked for a sign from God, not out of unbelief, but to strengthen his resolve regarding God's commission. Similarly, Hezekiah sought a sign from God to assure himself of God's extraordinary deliverance from an unusual illness."

The third way in which people tempt God is by persistently living in sin without repentance, effectively testing God's mercy. This is how the Israelites tempted God in Numbers 14:18. Those who continue to live in sin day after day without repentance are indeed tempting God and abusing His patience, as stated in Malachi 3:15.

Therefore, since living in sin without repentance is a form of tempting God, it should serve as a warning to all of us to be cautious about persisting in sin. Instead, we should promptly repent and break free from the grip of our sins. As long as we live in sin without repentance, we are tempting God, and in such a state, we cannot expect safety or the protection of God's angels. Instead, we expose ourselves to God's severe judgments.

The fourth way of tempting God is to impose upon people the observance of the ceremonial law, as evident in Acts 15:10. The Jews are accused of tempting God by insisting on the observance of Moses's ceremonial laws.

This provides insight into the current state of the Church of Rome and its religion, which largely relies on empty and superstitious ceremonies. What's worse is that it resembles a blend of Judaism and paganism.

The final way in which people tempt God is by neglecting to use the lawful and ordinary means that God has appointed, both for the well-being of their souls and their physical bodies. This is implied when Christ says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When we refuse the lawful and ordinary means that the Lord has provided and instead opt for extraordinary methods, it is akin to tempting God. For instance, if there is a bridge readily available to cross a river, but a person chooses to jump into the water, they are tempting God. Similarly, when someone has a set of stairs to descend from a tall structure but chooses to jump from the top, they are also tempting God. Likewise, those who disregard the word of God and refuse to listen are effectively tempting God, as they reject the preaching of the word, which is the ordinary means of saving souls.

And thus, Satan tempted our Saviour Christ to tempt God. Having placed Him on the top of the temple in a perilous position, he persuades Him to cast Himself down. He adds that He may do so boldly because God has given His Angels the charge to watch over Him, ensuring He comes to no harm. However, our Saviour Christ responds, stating that it would be tempting God since He has a lawful and ordinary way to descend using the stairs. Therefore, He has no reason to cast Himself down.

In summary, all those who either refuse the ordinary means appointed by God or willfully put themselves in danger without God's calling are

tempting God. For example, Peter, without a divine calling, went and inserted himself into Caiaphas' hall to see what would happen to his Master. Similarly, the three men ventured through the Philistine army to fetch water at the well of Bethlehem for David, although they could have obtained it without danger at home.

Some may wonder about those who walk on ropes in high places or on the roofs of houses, questioning whether they sin or not. The answer depends on whether they do it with or without a calling. Those who perform such tasks by virtue of their legitimate occupations, such as masons and builders working on high places due to the nature of their trades, cannot be said to tempt God. On the contrary, as long as they faithfully carry out their lawful callings, they may expect God's blessing and protection.

However, those who walk on ropes or rooftops to display their agility or for entertainment purposes, without a divine calling to do so, cannot anticipate God's protection. In fact, they tempt God by subjecting themselves to danger needlessly. Even our Saviour Christ, who could have easily followed Satan's suggestion in this instance, refrained from putting Himself in needless peril, lest He tempt God. Therefore, no one else should take such risks.

In the way our Saviour Christ chose to use the ordinary means, the stairs, we can learn that if anyone seeks God's protection and blessing, they must also ensure to use the lawful and ordinary means that God has ordained. They must stay within the bounds of their calling. Furthermore, if we desire to find comfort in any of God's gracious promises, we must be vigilant in obeying God's commandments. If we stray from them, we will find no true comfort, nor can we expect God's protection. However, as long as we walk in obedience to God's commandments and within the scope of our callings,

we have the blessed promise from God that His angels will take care of us, guarding and defending us.

Again, the Devil takes him to an exceedingly high mountain. In the seven verses preceding this, we have heard of the first two temptations of our Saviour Christ; now, the third follows. In this third temptation, we need to consider three crucial points: first, the Devil's preparation in verse 8; second, the temptation itself in verse 9; and third, Christ's response in verse 10.

First of all, since the Devil arms himself and comes prepared three times in three separate temptations, it should teach all of us to continually prepare ourselves and be ready to resist his temptations.

Regarding the Devil's preparation, note two aspects: first, he takes him to an exceedingly high mountain, and second, he shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

But how could the Devil carry our Saviour Christ to this high mountain? I answer, he might do it in two ways: first, by vision; second, by actually transporting his body from Jerusalem to this mountain. Some believe that this was only in vision, but I am inclined to think that our Saviour Christ was physically and really transported, for his temptations are not imaginary but genuine and real temptations. The words suggest no less than a real and physical transportation from the city to the mountain.

The reasons why the Devil took our Saviour Christ to the mountain are as follows: First, because the Devil always desires to imitate God in all things and to become, in a way, God's imitator. Now, we read that the Lord took Moses to Mount Nebo to show him all the land of Canaan. So, to imitate God and, by imitating God, to challenge Him and thus discredit the Lord,

the Devil took our Saviour Christ to the mountain, presumably to mimic God's dealings with Moses.

Secondly, the Devil took our Saviour Christ to this high mountain as a most fitting and convenient place to present this third and final temptation that he had in mind.

In that the Devil carries our Saviour Christ from Jerusalem to this hill locally, we learn that he may, by God's permission, have similar power over the beloved children of God, not just once, but two or three times, and often. We see this true in our Saviour Christ, the head. Therefore, if the Lord allows Satan and, by His permission, grants the Devil the freedom to transport our bodies from place to place, we must not be discouraged. Since the same thing happened to the head, it may also happen to His members, which we are.

The second part of the Devil's preparation is that he shows him all the kingdoms of the world, etc. Now, concerning this, we must not think that the Devil could actually and truly show Christ all the various kingdoms of the world as they are placed on Earth, for that is an impossible feat. There is no hill so high that a person could see them all. Even if a person were as high as the Sun and could see very clearly, they could only see half of the Earth. Therefore, we must understand that he showed them in a counterfeit vision.

Now, these visions from the Devil can either pertain to the outward senses or the understanding. Outward senses refer to the delusions of the Devil, making people believe they see things they do not actually see. For instance, the Devil is said to show Samuel to Saul in a vision in his proper appearance. This was indeed only a counterfeit Samuel, not the actual

Samuel, who lay in the grave concerning his body and was in heaven concerning his soul.

Secondly, there are false visions and delusions of the understanding. The Lord speaks of making false prophets ashamed of their lying visions. Some of these visions come to people while they are sleeping, called dreams. Others occur while they are awake, often experienced by those with deranged minds who may think themselves to be kings or prophets. Concerning the vision of Christ offered by the Devil, it was not just presented to Christ's mind but also to his outward eye, visibly.

Through this practice of the Devil, we can see his remarkable skill and power in that he can simulate, to the outward senses, such strange and grand phenomena as he pleases. This is also accomplished by magicians and conjurers who, with the help of the Devil, can reveal and display distant or lost objects in a mirror or simulate things long past to the outward senses in a mirror or the air. Therefore, those who believe that they cannot do such things are deceived, for if the Devil could show Christ all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in such a short time, then he can certainly show a particular thing to the eye and senses of man.

Now, let us examine the devil's intention in this temptation, where he presents this splendid and glorious sight before Christ's eyes. Surely, it was his aim to more easily infiltrate Christ's heart. Therefore, he places these things before Christ's eyes, hoping that Christ might be moved by them, take delight in them, desire them, and ultimately, Satan might overcome and ensnare him.

This has been the ancient practice of the devil, as seen in Genesis 3. First, he tempted Eve to cast her eye upon the apple, to admire its beauty, then to like it, desire it, and eventually taste it. He used a similar strategy with

Christ: firstly, he displays this glorious sight and the beauty of all these things, hoping to stir in Christ a desire for them and make his temptation effective.

Recognizing this ancient subtlety of Satan, we must be vigilant with our outward senses, especially the two senses of learning: sight and hearing. Our eyes and ears are the windows of the soul. If the devil can gain entry through them, he can easily infiltrate our entire being and corrupt our souls.

We need to guard our hearts diligently, placing them under constant watch and ward. We must always be mindful of who and what enters our eyes and ears and maintain careful control over these gates. We should pray, as David did, "O Lord, set a watch before my mouth and keep the door of my lips," and, following the example of Job, "make a covenant with our eyes that they behold no vanity." By doing so, we can prevent death from entering through these doors and windows and preserve the purity of our souls.

When the devil shows our Saviour Christ this splendid display, let us take note of his method. He reveals to Christ all the beauty, glory, and delight of these things, concealing the troubles, vexations, calamities, and dangers associated with them. The devil will employ a similar tactic with us. When he wants to tempt someone to commit a sin, he never reveals the miseries, dangers, curses, and calamities that will result from that sin. Instead, he highlights the profit, gain, pleasure, delight, and convenience that the sin will supposedly provide. His goal is to manipulate individuals into sinning. However, once he achieves his purpose and leads a person into sin, he will then expose the sin's ugly consequences and present the horror and punishment that await, attempting to drive the sinner into despair.

Furthermore, observe how the cunning devil did not display these splendid and glorious sights in the first or second temptation but reserved

them for the last, and that with great subtlety. The devil knew very well that if he were to succeed, then surely the desire for honour, advancement, profit, and pleasure would move the heart of Christ.

In this subtlety, he shows that this is an exceedingly dangerous temptation that comes from the right-hand side, signifying profit, pleasure, preferment, and honour. Through this temptation, he prevailed more against David than he could when David was in great conflict and persecuted by Saul.

Similarly, prosperity and ease in the Primitive Church during the days of Constantine were more effective in influencing Christians than persecution and tribulation had been for nearly three hundred years before. Those who could not be swayed by other means were often overcome and influenced by the hope of honour, profit, and pleasure. Thus, ease leads foolish individuals to their downfall, prosperity is like a slippery path, and few who enjoy rest are truly edified and walk in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:31).

In Luke chapter 4, verse 5, he adds the circumstance of time, stating that the devil showed all this to Christ in a point or moment of time, as briefly as possible, with marvellous speed and swiftness. The devil did this with cunning, aiming to further inflame Christ's heart with desire for these things. Therefore, he displayed his offerings as if in a fleeting glimpse, allowing Christ to behold their beauty momentarily. As we can observe, when people catch a brief and beautiful glimpse of something, their desire for it intensifies, and they more eagerly seek it. Likewise, the devil would have dealt with our Saviour Christ, attempting to captivate His heart with this sudden and glorious spectacle.

Now follows the temptation itself, expressed in these words: "And said unto him, All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

In this temptation, we must first examine the aim and purpose of the Devil. In the first temptation, he sought to lead Christ into distrust and unbelief; in the second, to inflate Him with vain confidence and presumption. Now, in this third temptation, he tempted Christ to commit idolatry, even to worship the Devil.

Truly, this has always been the Devil's strategy, attempting to undermine religion and good conscience through these three things: honour, profit, and pleasures. Among Protestants and Protestant Ministers, he has often succeeded using these means. Many ministers of the Word, in pursuit of profit and advancement, have forsaken true religion and even taught beliefs contrary to Protestantism, adopting positions held and taught by the Papists. Protestant merchants, motivated by the hope of gain, have also transported merchandise such as wax to the Church of Rome, which the Papists use to sustain their superstitions and idolatry.

Among common believers, many have changed their religious beliefs based on the changing times, be it Papists or Protestants, like chameleons changing colours. We experienced this during Queen Mary's reign, where few great men remained Protestants and yielded to the idolatry of those times.

This third temptation has two parts: first, a promise; second, a condition. Here, the Devil does not say, "I will procure these things for you from God," but instead, in his own name, he declares, "I will give you all these." This is designed to make Christ depend on him for these things, to trust in him, forsake confidence in God, and rely on the Devil for earthly possessions.

In this vile scheme of the Devil, we witness his shameless audacity as he dares to offer Christ all these things conditionally, should He worship him.

In reality, these possessions rightfully belonged to Jesus Christ Himself, and Satan had no legitimate claim to them; he possessed them only through usurpation.

Just as the Devil tempted Christ here, he deals with most people in the world, tempting them to depend on him for worldly wealth and make the Devil their god. Although people may verbally deny this and claim that all they have is a gift from God for which they are thankful, their wicked actions tell a different story. Many acquire their wealth through dishonest means: using false weights and measures, practicing deceit, fraud, trickery, lying, swearing falsely, and perjury. Obtaining their possessions through such vile and wicked means plainly demonstrates that they have received everything from the Devil and depend on him for their prosperity, making him their god, despite verbal denials.

Secondly, the Devil knew that Christ was a King, and His kingdom was not of this world but spiritual, exercised primarily within people's consciences. The Devil attempted to tempt Christ to become an earthly King, knowing that if Christ had yielded to this, He could not be the true Messiah destined to reign spiritually in people's consciences.

Similarly, the Devil deals with the members of Christ's Church. The Church of God has a spiritual kingdom, established through the Word of God. However, the Devil works to corrupt this by turning the ministry of the Word preached into an earthly kingdom, driven not by spirituality but by worldly desires, and not by the power of the Spirit but by human eloquence. He aims to subvert the true kingdom of Christ by all means.

Thirdly, we see how the Devil makes grand promises, even though he had no intention of fulfilling them and indeed could not do so even if he wanted to.

This should teach us to be the opposite of the Devil. We should carefully consider the promises we make, ensuring that the things we promise are lawful and within our power. We should make these promises with sincere hearts, devoid of deceit, and with the intention of being as good as our word. When we make promises, we should strive to fulfill them, for this is a characteristic of God's children and a fruit of the Spirit and true faith, fulfilling our equitable duties.

Moreover, the fact that the Devil could show all these different kingdoms of the world to Christ, revealing their various glories and beauties in such a short time, demonstrates his knowledge of them. He was well-acquainted with them and had traveled through them, as he himself confessed in John 1:7. His ability to display the chief splendors and attractions of these kingdoms quickly underscores his cunning and familiarity with the different states and conditions of these realms.

And we observe that when the Devil presented all these glorious kingdoms to Christ, he was tempting Him with ambition, hoping that Christ would set His heart on them and desire them. In this, we can recognize one of the Devil's primary strategies, which is the subversion of kingdoms. The Devil desires to cause the greatest harm and mischief possible. When a kingdom falls, many suffer ruin. To achieve this, he constantly strives to inflate people's ambitions, making them crave power and honour.

In our kingdom, the Lord has graciously placed a virtuous monarch and a Christian Queen. The Devil has long envied our prosperity and has sought various clandestine schemes and numerous plots to overthrow our state, decapitate our rulers, and bring our monarchy to ruin. He has stirred up many wicked and rebellious subjects for this purpose. However, the Lord, in His mercy, has thwarted all these attempts. Therefore, we should all be

grateful for this great mercy of God in defending both our sovereign and our people, foiling the treacherous plots and schemes of ambitious individuals. To show our gratitude, we must engage in acts of repentance and sincere obedience.

Secondly, we must continuously pray to God for the preservation of our monarch and kingdom, asking Him to confound and thwart all of Satan's strategies, the vile plots, and schemes of ambitious individuals. As a token of genuine joy and gratitude, we should follow the example of the people in the days of Solomon, who shouted so loudly that the earth resounded with their cry, "God save King Solomon!" In the same spirit, all true Christians should express the joy in their hearts by fervently praying, day and night, "God save Queen Elizabeth."

Our comfort lies in the fact that, despite the Devil's malicious intentions to destroy both our monarch and people, along with the entire kingdom, the Lord God has His angels who care for His Church and people. These angels surround and protect them, whether by sea or by land, rendering all the devils in hell powerless to harm them. The angels of God shield His children at home and repel any invading enemies.

"All these will I give thee." These words are reminiscent of the claims made by the Pope of Rome, who, as Satan's representative, assumes the authority of Christ but speaks with the voice of the Dragon. He elevates himself to the status of God, asserting that he can send individuals to heaven or hell, elevate and depose rulers, do as he pleases, and possess the power to open and close at his discretion. These claims align with the language of Satan and the Ashdod, not that of Canaan.

In Luke 4:6, the Devil adds another reason to persuade Christ, asserting, "All these kingdoms are mine, and I can give them to whom I will." Here,

the Devil tells a blatant lie by claiming ownership of all the kingdoms of the world, a right belonging solely to the Lord. In Daniel 4:25, the Lord proclaims that He alone holds dominion over kingdoms and grants them to whomever He pleases. Therefore, the Devil lacks the authority to bestow them at his whim; this prerogative rests solely with God. Nevertheless, Satan persists as a usurper.

Furthermore, observe the Devil's arrogance and shameless boasting as he audaciously asserts his claim over all the kingdoms of the earth, acting as if he were their sovereign lord with the authority to do as he pleases. Let us all learn from this shameless lying and blatant boasting of the Devil to guard against emulating him in these sins. We must strive to be the opposite of him by speaking the truth consistently and avoiding boasting. Instead, let us cultivate humility and think as humbly and modestly of ourselves as possible, which serves to humble our proud hearts. Those prone to lying and vain boasting should recognise that such behaviour signifies great pride, making them resemble the Devil in this regard.

"If thou wilt fall down and worship me." This marks the second part of the temptation, the condition. The primary objective of the Devil in these words is to lead our Saviour Christ into manifest idolatry, prompting Him to worship the Devil himself.

First, since the Devil dared to tempt our Saviour Christ to engage in idolatry and worship him, we can infer that his primary goal is to corrupt religion and the true worship and service of God. Consequently, he assails the Church of God and tempts individuals to embrace heresies, schisms, and idolatry in order to destroy the Church. As a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred false prophets at one time, he exemplifies this strategy. When the high priest Jehoshua entered the temple to perform God's worship, the

Devil stood in opposition while he prayed for the good of the Church. Similarly, in the present day, he actively seeks to obstruct the work of God's ministers in building up His Church. When Christ sows good wheat, the Devil sows tares. When Paul sought to preach the Gospel to the Thessalonians, the Devil hindered him. Thus, the Devil consistently attempts to impede the ministry of the Gospel and hinder the work of God's ministers. This is evident in Revelation 2:10, where it is stated that the Devil imprisoned many of God's ministers.

Revelation 16:13-14 mentions the emergence of three evil and unclean spirits from the mouth of the beast. These spirits infiltrate the households of kings with the aim of diverting them from embracing the Gospel. Kings can either become steadfast supporters of the Gospel or, if Satan's influence prevails, the most formidable adversaries who hinder the spread of the Gospel. These "frogs" symbolize individuals like seminary priests, monks, friars, and popish Jesuits, who frequently conceal themselves in royal courts and positions of power.

Given the Devil's diligence in obstructing the Gospel, subverting true religion, and undermining the worship of God, ministers of the Word of God must be inspired to work diligently to counterbalance Satan's efforts and protect and promote true religion while building the Church of God.

Secondly, it is incumbent upon all Christians not only to pray for themselves but also, recognizing the Devil's attempts to subvert the Church by influencing rulers and influential figures, to pray for the well-being of God's Church and its members, including monarchs and queens. It is fitting to do so because the flourishing state of the Church benefits all its members.

Thirdly, if Satan dared to tempt the Son of God to commit idolatry and worship him, he will undoubtedly tempt sinful human beings to commit similar sins and encourage them to worship him, making him their God.

However, one might argue that no one is foolish enough to worship the Devil and make him their God, as they defiantly reject him.

It is true that people may verbally renounce the Devil and express their contempt for him. Nevertheless, an examination of their actions reveals that the Devil rules within their hearts as if he were God. A closer look at the three major religions in the world—the faiths of Muslims, Jews, and Catholics—reveals that many individuals unwittingly worship the Devil and make him their God. This occurs because:

1. Muslims are unaware of the true God.
2. Jews worship God the Father but reject Jesus Christ.
3. Catholics worship a false Christ of their own creation, one who is not found in the Word of God. They create a Christ who is only a partial Savior and is elevated to the status of Creator or Maker, which contradicts Scripture.

To demonstrate that these three groups do not truly worship God but, rather, the Devil, consider these two principles. First, any doctrine regarding the service and worship of God that contradicts God's Word is a doctrine of demons, as stated by Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1 and 4:3, where false teachers advocate doctrines of demons, such as forbidding marriage and designating certain foods as inherently holy or unholy. Second, any form of worship devised by humans that contradicts God's Word constitutes devilish doctrine. When Gentiles made offerings to idols, Paul asserted that they

were offering sacrifices to demons, not intentionally but as a result of their idolatrous practices.

Applying these principles, it becomes apparent that the worship of God by Muslims and Jews is not genuine but, rather, devilish, as both groups worship God the Father without the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ. Likewise, the worship in Catholicism, particularly the abominable Mass, is nothing more than devilish worship. Catholics worship God without the true Christ and instead create a false and counterfeit Christ, making their worship idolatrous and closer to the practices of Gentiles.

Now, some may argue that even if the Devil prevails in this manner with others, he cannot succeed with Protestants, and they cannot be accused of worshipping the Devil. I respond that, in truth, there are thousands of Protestants in the world who do worship the Devil. This includes those who outwardly profess true religion but, in their hearts, prioritize worldly pleasures, profits, and preferments. Such professing individuals indeed make the Devil their God and can be said to worship him. This is because whoever they give their hearts to is the object of their worship. By setting their hearts on worldly things and not truly loving or believing in God, they make the world their God and, in doing so, worship the Devil.

Fourthly, this Devil's practice refutes the notion that the Devil cannot form alliances with humans, as with witches and conjurers. We read and know that such things have happened, and here we have clear evidence of it. The Devil offers an alliance to Christ, and only Christ's refusal prevents it. If a sinful person were in Christ's place, undoubtedly there would have been an alliance, for the Devil would have ensured it for such significant gain.

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan," etc. Now follows our Saviour Christ's response. In presenting it, Christ begins with a speech of indignation and defiance towards the Devil and his offer: "Be gone, Satan." It is as if Christ were saying, "I have heard your blasphemies against both me and my Father, and I have endured you thus far. However, I will tolerate you no longer. Depart, Satan. I will no longer dignify your temptations with a response."

Note in Christ's response that while he was willing to endure the Devil's temptations and reproaches directed at his own person, he could not endure it when the Devil blasphemed God the Father. When the Devil laid claim to all the kingdoms of the world as if he were their Lord and could bestow them at will, he was, in fact, blaspheming God the Father.

Then, this teaches us that when we hear ungodly individuals blaspheme the name of God, we should not tolerate it but should be filled with indignation and strong disapproval. If we hear people utter profanities and curses, we should be deeply grieved to hear the glorious name of our God dishonoured. If the situation warrants, we should openly rebuke such behaviour. When Ahab and Jezebel, both wicked individuals, heard of Naboth's blasphemy against God, they tore their clothes as a sign of sorrow. Similarly, when Hezekiah heard the blasphemies of Rabshakeh, he rent his clothes and was greatly troubled. When David heard the Gentiles say, "Where is now their God?" this blasphemous speech deeply affected him, even to the point of tears. Likewise, the wicked words of the men of Sodom greatly distressed Lot and vexed his righteous soul (2 Peter 2:8).

Furthermore, all individuals, especially those who are in positions of authority and, in particular, heads of households, should be grieved to hear blasphemous words against the name of God. David, in Psalm 101, declared

that he would not allow a talebearer in his house, let alone a blasphemer. Magistrates, in particular, are obligated to address this issue, given that it is God's law that blasphemers should be stoned to death. This law is perpetual. If a person justly loses their life for speaking a derogatory word against the ruler's person, then one who blasphemes and speaks to the disgrace of the eternal God is much more deserving of death a thousand times over.

Secondly, we learn from Christ's response how to act when someone attempts to persuade us to depart from the true Church and renounce true religion. In such cases, we should regard them as instruments of Satan. If a father seeks to lead his own child away from true religion, the child should not spare the father but should be willing to take the first step against him, as outlined in Deuteronomy 13. Even when Peter attempted to dissuade Christ from going to Jerusalem, Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Although Peter was an excellent apostle, in this instance, Christ considered him as if he were the Devil himself.

Additionally, when Christ commands Satan to depart and refuses to engage in further debate, we should learn how to respond to the Devil in his temptations. While we may initially respond to his milder temptations with the Word of God, when Satan becomes more aggressive in his assaults, we should follow the example of our Saviour, bidding him to depart and refusing to continue the argument. Even when we are unable to provide a response to his accusations, we should hold fast to the fundamental truths found in the Word of God and not entertain further debate with him.

"It is written," Seeing our Saviour Christ, now the third time, answers the Devil by the scriptures, saying, "It is written," we learn that the written word, believed and understood, is the most sufficient weapon to confute and

confound Satan and his vile temptations. Otherwise, Christ would not have chosen this weapon for the third time, saying, "It is written again."

This refutes the Papists, who differentiate between two Scriptures: one unwritten and inward, which they call traditions and the consensus of the fathers throughout the ages, and the other written in the Holy Scriptures. They consider their unwritten scriptures and the consensus of the fathers to be of equal authority with the written word of God. However, our Saviour Christ demonstrates that the written word is the most powerful means to repel all of Satan's temptations. They dismiss the Holy Scriptures as a "dead letter" without power, whereas Christ alone wields it as the sword of the Spirit to confound Satan. Therefore, their doctrine, which abuses the Holy Scriptures and elevates erroneous traditions of sinful men, is damnable. If the written word were truly a lifeless text, our Saviour Christ would not have chosen it three separate times to confute Satan, responding each time with, "It is written."

Secondly, through Christ's response, saying, "It is written," we learn how to conduct ourselves when someone seeks to lead us away from true religion towards a false one. Even if we cannot counter their arguments and they use their wit and eloquence to deceive us, we must cling to the scriptures and hold fast to the text of the Bible. If we find even one sentence in the entire Bible that persuades us of the truth of our religion, we must grasp it with both hands and never let go. It should hold more weight and credibility with us than a thousand arguments that lean in the opposite direction.

"You shall worship the Lord your God only," In these words, our Saviour Christ responds to the third temptation of the Devil. The words are taken from Deuteronomy 6:13, where they are stated as, "You shall fear the Lord

your God and serve Him." There appears to be a slight difference in the words as quoted by Christ because in Deuteronomy, it says, "You shall fear the Lord your God," while our Saviour Christ says, "You shall worship." Furthermore, Christ adds a word that is not present in Moses' text, namely, "only." Moses' text does not include the word "only."

But if we understand two points concerning the quoting of scripture, there will appear to be no difference. The first point is that Christ and His Apostles, in their quoting of scripture, do not so rigidly adhere to the very words but rather aim at the sense of the scriptures they quote. The second thing is that our Saviour Christ, when quoting scripture, seeks to explain and expound it, aiming to open its meaning. In doing so, He may add a word when that word contributes significantly to the intended sense of the text.

In this case, Christ alters the word without making a mistake but rather to elucidate Moses' meaning. When Moses says, "Thou shalt fear the Lord," he implies a religious fear in which we both fear and worship God. Now, our Saviour Christ says, "Thou shalt worship," indicating that Moses meant that we should worship God with reverence, bodily gestures like bowing, and adoration, motivated by religious fear—whether it be in praying for what we lack or giving thanks for received blessings.

Furthermore, Christ, when quoting this scripture, adds a word, yet He does so faultlessly. While the word "alone" is not explicitly present in Moses' text, it is implicit and understood in its sense. In the thirteenth verse, Moses says, "Thou shalt fear the Lord," without elaboration, but in the fourteenth verse, he adds, "Thou shalt not walk after any other gods." Therefore, it is evident that Moses included it in meaning, though not in exact words. In this way, our Saviour Christ's quotation is justified.

In the scripture passage quoted by Christ, note two points: firstly, what this worship and fear entail, and secondly, to whom worship is due.

First, worship, in a general sense, refers to giving honour and reverence to another. This honour can be either civil or divine. Civil honour pertains to the outward respect we show to people by prostrating the body or bowing the knee. Its purpose is to acknowledge someone as our superior. Consequently, it is offered by subjects to princes or by inferiors to those who, by some means, hold a higher status. An example of this is seen when Jacob worshipped Esau seven times (Genesis 33:3) by offering him civil respect. Abraham similarly showed this reverence to the Hittites (Genesis 23:7), and Lot bowed down to the ground before the angels (Genesis 19:1), which indicated only civil honour. Therefore, it is evident through these examples that it is lawful to bow and kneel before princes to offer them this civil honour, signifying our recognition of their authority and status established by God in the world.

The second kind of honour is divine or religious worship, which occurs when we grant such honour to something that we attribute divinity and divine power to it. By doing so, we acknowledge that it is a divine entity above all other creatures. We engage in divine worship when, firstly, we attribute godhood to it and make it God. Secondly, when we ascribe God's attributes to it, such as omnipotence and providence. Thirdly, when we recognise it as the creator and maker of all things. Fourthly, when we acknowledge it as the provider of the good things we enjoy and the protector from evil.

This divine worship can be either internal, within the heart, or external, involving the body. Internal divine worship occurs when a person devotes their heart to something by believing in it, loving it, and finding joy in it

above all other creatures. This is because they believe it possesses godhood or divine nature, is God, exhibits divine attributes, acts as the Creator and defender of all things, or bestows all good things while safeguarding from evil.

External divine worship happens when a person, in various ways like prostration or bowing of the body, does so to express their faith, hope, love, trust, fear, or any inner disposition, thus confessing that the object of their worship is their Creator, defender, and preserver.

Therefore, there is a clear distinction between external civil worship and external divine worship. In civil worship, we merely acknowledge those to whom we show respect as our superiors. In contrast, external divine worship signifies our acknowledgment of the object of our worship as God, the Creator, and the defender of us and all other things.

In this context, our Saviour Christ does not refer to civil worship but rather to external divine worship.

Another aspect mentioned is servitude, which involves obeying another. This servitude can be either absolute or partial. Absolute servitude occurs when we obey another's command without exception, not only outwardly but also inwardly in our soul, will, affections, and conscience. This form of worship is reserved for God alone, and it cannot be given to any creature. Only God deserves this absolute worship, wherein we must obey Him without any reservations or doubts, both in body and soul, will, affections, and even in our conscience.

There is a second form of service, which is partial and may be given to men, such as the Magistrate in authority over us under God. God has granted them the authority to make laws and issue commands, which must be obeyed in civil matters, but with the condition "In the Lord," meaning as

long as their commands align with God's commandments. Furthermore, they can only be obeyed with our bodies; their laws cannot reach into the depths of men's hearts and consciences to bind them. In this context, we understand the form of obedience that is absolute, where we obey the command of the Lord without conditions or exceptions, even in all matters He commands. In this, we follow the example of our father Abraham, who, to obey the Lord, left his native country and was willing to offer his son, his only son, his beloved son, Isaac, the son of the promise.

Now we turn to the person to whom this worship must be given. Divine worship, whether outward or inward, is due to God alone, and it must not be given to any other creature, no matter how excellent. This is clearly taught by Christ's response, and it aligns with the first and second commandments, where we are explicitly forbidden to give divine and religious worship to any creature or idols. Instead, we are to acknowledge Jehovah as our God alone. In Revelation 19:10, when John was about to worship an angel and offer some form of divine worship, the angel forbade him, stating that he is a fellow servant and directing John to worship God alone.

Therefore, from this explanation, we can see how fittingly our Saviour Christ answered the Devil and cited this passage of Scripture to silence him. The Devil had shown Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, offering to bestow them all if Christ would acknowledge him as their giver. Christ responded that He cannot give the honour that belongs to God alone to anyone else.

First, we learn from Christ's answer that it is not lawful for us to give divine worship, either inward or outward, to any creature, no matter how excellent they may be. This applies to angels, saints, or any other being. Divine worship is unique and exclusive to God alone. Therefore, if anyone

bows before saints to pray to them, they attribute divine attributes to these saints, treating them as if they possess qualities only God has, such as the ability to search hearts, hear prayers, omnipresence (being present everywhere at once), and omnipotence. These attributes can only be attributed to God alone. Yet, this is a common practice among the Papists, who offer divine worship and adoration to saints, deceased individuals, and even women, which is contrary to Scripture.

But the Papists respond by saying that they do not worship saints with the same worship that belongs to God, nor do they worship them as gods. They argue that the Devil did not ask Christ to worship him as God but merely to acknowledge him as the giver of all the kingdoms of the earth. The Devil, they claim, only requires outward worship. Yet, our Saviour Christ tells him that this outward worship, which he demanded, is exclusive to God alone, and no one else may or should have it. The Papists, on the other hand, attribute to saints the power to deliver them from various diseases. They make saints not only patrons of individuals but also of entire kingdoms and countries, such as Saint Martin for Italy, Saint James for Spain, and Saint George for England. To be a patron of a kingdom is a greater role than to give a kingdom, as one can give a kingdom without being able to defend it.

In reality, no matter what the Papists claim, they make saints into gods. They pray to saints and make them intercessors with God to obtain favour concerning the afterlife. They even refer to the Virgin Mary as the Queen of heaven, making Christ subordinate to her. They pray to her to command her son and cause Him to hear their prayers, which is elevating her above God Himself. Thus, in truth, they give more to saints than the Devil asked of Christ.

The Papists also argue that if we can kneel and bow before earthly princes and show reverence to their throne, we should be able to do the same for saints in heaven. However, the response to this is that when we kneel and bow to earthly princes, we do so not primarily to honour their persons but to acknowledge the authority God has placed upon them. This gesture is meant to demonstrate our submission to them. Kneeling to saints, on the other hand, is not a sign of civil honour like the one given to earthly princes; it is a form of divine honour. By kneeling to saints, the Papists acknowledge that saints can hear their prayers, search hearts, possess omnipotence, and be present everywhere, which is honour due to God alone.

Nevertheless, while we may not adore saints as the Papists do, we do recognise a certain honour due to them. This honour consists of three aspects: firstly, thanking God for providing the Church with such worthy instruments in the past; secondly, having a reverent regard for them and considering them as friends of God; and thirdly, honouring them, though not with divine worship, by emulating their virtues. This is the extent of the honour we owe to departed saints.

If adoring saints is clearly unlawful and forbidden, then it is also unlawful to appoint and dedicate special days to them, to fast for them, or to worship their relics – all practices common among the Papists. The Church of Rome cannot rightly accuse us of similar actions, even though we have and retain the names of saints' days in the Church of England. This is because we dedicate those days not to the worship of saints, as they do, but to the service and worship of God alone.

We must note how our Saviour Christ, in citing and explaining Moses, links worship and fear together to demonstrate that none can truly worship God except those who genuinely fear Him.

Many people mistakenly believe they have fulfilled their duty by attending church on appointed days, listening to the word for a while, and receiving the Sacraments. They think that this constitutes all the worship of God required, even when they lack the fear of God in their hearts. However, all these actions are in vain if people lack the fear of God and engage in injustice in their specific callings. Read Isaiah 1:14, where it is stated that the Lord detests all the service and worship offered by the Jews. This isn't because these acts were inherently unlawful, for the Lord had commanded them. Instead, it was because they did not join their worship of God with the fear of God. Their hands were filled with cruelty and injustice, and they showed no mercy to others. Regardless of what people profess in their worship of God, if they do not exhibit the fear of God and conscientiousness in their individual roles and interactions with others, it is all mere hypocrisy.

While we teach that a man may be certainly persuaded by faith of his election and salvation, the Papists argue that we cannot prove it from the word of God. What if we cannot find this sentence in so many words, "I am elected"? Yet, just as our Saviour Christ gathered the sense of it by citing Scripture, we may, without blame, gather from the word that which is the same in sense, and which we hold in this regard.

We see that it is our duty not only to worship God with the outward worship of the body but also with inward worship in the soul, mind, will, affections, and conscience. Paul preached the Gospel of God to the Corinthians to bring their very thoughts into subjection, meaning that their thoughts should be so ordered that they might not think anything except that which was holy and in accordance with the will of God.

Then the Devil left him, etc. In this verse, the third and final part of Christ's conflicts with the Devil is set down—the outcome and result of these conflicts, which is the glorious victory and conquest that our Saviour Jesus Christ achieved over the Devil. This is the most significant part of all. For what comfort could we have had in Christ's temptations, in the preparation, in the conflicts and various temptations, unless Christ had conquered Satan and achieved victory? Indeed, all the comfort of God's children rests in this victory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for now Christ stood in our place and was tempted for our sakes. As our head and the victor over the Devil, the Church and every member of the Church in Jesus Christ also gained victory over Satan.

In the victory, we are to observe two things: Firstly, that the Devil departed from him; Secondly, the Angels ministered unto him. In the Devil's departure from Christ, we may behold the unspeakable goodness of God to His Church, for what happened to Christ also happens to the Church of God. After the Devil had tempted Christ in three separate and severe temptations, Christ resisted the Devil in all three, and then the Devil left Him and went away. Herein we see the endless love of God, as He puts an end to the afflictions of His Church. Though they may be many and severe, they shall only last for a time and come to an end.

The Lord spoke of Solomon in this manner: "If he sins, I will chastise him with the rods of men and with the plagues of the children of men," meaning that the afflictions would not be too extreme for him to bear. The Prophet Habakkuk, in the first chapter, expressed impatience regarding the Church's afflictions. However, in chapter 2, verse 3, the Lord instructed him to wait, assuring him that the situation would improve and that He would bring an end to their miseries. The Lord has promised not to allow His children to be

tempted beyond what they can bear and that they will find a blessed resolution to their temptations.

We can also see this through daily experience. Some of God's children are visited with grievous and fearful temptations, lasting for various durations, ranging from six months to several years. Yet, eventually, the Lord grants them a good outcome and puts an end to their misery. Instead of a troubled conscience, He sends them comfort, and instead of sorrow, they experience indescribable joy. Even if the Lord were to allow them to be tempted throughout their entire lives until their dying day, He would provide a blessed resolution to all their miseries and fill their souls with exceeding comfort.

Here we see a notable difference between the first Adam and the second Adam. The first Adam was tempted and yielded to Satan's temptations, allowing the Devil to enter his heart. On the other hand, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, was also tempted but did not yield to the slightest assault of the Devil. The Devil could never enter His holy heart but had to depart from Him.

Regarding the departure of the Devil from Christ, let's consider two aspects: when he departed and for how long he departed.

Firstly, the Devil left Him after the three temptations were concluded, and Christ, in great indignation, commanded him to leave because of his blasphemous speeches.

Here we find the most effective way to put the Devil to flight and repulse him: resist him from the beginning and give him no ground. As Saint James said, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." When we depend on God's Word and the blessed promises of the Gospel, praying for God's grace to resist Satan, he will never prevail against us but will depart. Therefore, it

is foolish to believe that he can be driven away by music, merry company, sports, pastimes, or similar vanities. The only means to make him depart is through the Word and prayer – these alone can resist him.

It is a wrong course of action for those who believe they can yield to Satan's temptations when they are young and intend to resist him in old age. If we ever yield to him, we open the door of our hearts to the Devil willingly and welcome him. In such a case, he will not easily be driven away. In fact, it may become a difficult or even impossible task to make him depart in old age. Just as individuals with dropsy, the more they drink, the more they desire, yielding to Satan's temptations only causes him to intensify his attacks.

After our Saviour Christ commands him to leave, the Devil promptly departs and obeys His command. Was this an act of virtue on the Devil's part? No, it was not virtuous in the Devil. There are two kinds of obedience to understand here: one is voluntary and cheerful, while the other is forced and compelled. Voluntary obedience occurs when any of God's creatures willingly, moved by God's grace, obey His commandments. This includes all the good Angels of God, Adam before his fall, and all the children of God who are effectually called, justified, and sanctified. They willingly and cheerfully yield obedience to God in part. On the other hand, there is compelled obedience, where one is urged and forced, against their will, to obey another. For instance, a malefactor condemned to death may obediently submit and yield himself to death because he has no choice. In this case, the Devil obeys Christ's voice and departs at His command, but this obedience in him is not virtuous because he was compelled to do it and had no other option.

What happened to the Devil here will happen to all wicked and unrepentant sinners if they do not obey Christ's command now, which is to repent and believe the Gospel. One day, despite their resistance, they will be compelled to obey that command on the last day of judgment when they hear, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." The consideration of this should motivate all people during the time of grace to offer sincere and willing obedience to the voice of Christ by repenting and turning to God. Let us act now, lest we are compelled to obey to our eternal condemnation.

In Luke 4:13, it is stated, "When the Devil had ended all the temptation, then he departed." From this, we can observe that before leaving our Saviour Christ, the Devil used all his might, skill, cunning, and deceit in tempting Christ. This malicious effort by the Devil indicates that Christ was not tempted lightly or with easy trials; rather, He was tempted to the highest degree possible. The Devil concluded his temptations before departing, having done everything in his power to tempt Him. In these three main temptations we have discussed, it is clear that the Devil tempted Christ as intensely as possible, demonstrating his utmost malice and cunning. This is further evident from the fact that Angels had to come and comfort our Saviour Christ. Therefore, He was not tempted with light or ordinary trials, but in the most extreme manner, causing anguish and grief within Him, yet without sin.

And this may provide comfort to the children of God. If anyone is tempted in a grievous and fearful manner, to the point of almost despair, let them not think that they are therefore cast away. Here, we see that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was tempted to the highest degree possible, so the dearest servants of God may also face extreme temptations.

We should learn from this to withhold our judgments. When we encounter someone who is fearfully tempted, and their temptations are extreme and grievous, causing them to believe they are castaways or already in hell, we must be cautious not to hastily condemn them. We should not speak or think of them as castaways. Our Saviour Christ was tempted to the greatest extent possible, so why can't these kinds of temptations befall the dearest children of God? Therefore, the judgment made about Francis Spira, that he was a reprobate and a castaway, was made inconsiderately, even though he asserted it about himself. For nothing happened to him that could not also happen to a child of God. We see that our Saviour Christ Himself was tempted to the greatest degree, and we have daily experience that some of God's dear children have been similarly assailed with despair, thinking themselves reprobates and castaways for a time. Yet, the Lord has often pleased to restore them to a sense of His love, and they have remained faithful servants of God until their dying day.

As it is said, the devil departed as soon as he had ended all his temptations, we can gather that these three temptations with which he assailed our Saviour Christ are the most principal temptations of the Devil and the very foundation of all his other temptations. Therefore, it is wise for us to recognize them and the danger they pose so that we can arm ourselves, following the example of Christ, especially against them.

The second circumstance to note in the Devil's departure is what Saint Luke adds, although it is not mentioned in Matthew: the Devil left Christ but for a season. We never read that the Devil tempted our Saviour Christ again after this, except once on the cross. However, it is important to understand that the Devil tempts either directly or through wicked men. Indeed, we do not read that the Devil ever directly tempted Christ again

after his departure, but he constantly stirred up wicked men to persecute Him. Similarly, the Devil tempted Eve directly only once, but undoubtedly, he tempted her many times afterward through other means.

Secondly, the Devil tempts through his instruments, namely, by wicked and ungodly men. Thus, he tempted Adam, not directly but through Eve. Similarly, he tempted Job, not only by himself, as seen in the destruction of Job's children and property, but also through his vile instruments, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, whom he incited to rob and plunder Job, and later through his misguided friends.

While we may not read that the Devil directly tempted Christ throughout His life after this, he certainly did so through his instruments. The Scribes and Pharisees, the cruel Jews, and even individuals like Herod, Pontius Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas were used by the Devil to continue tempting Him. These temptations through his vile instruments were indeed great and grievous to His sacred soul.

Considering that the Devil took this approach to tempt Christ and then depart for a while, only to return later, it illustrates the state of God's Church in this world. The Church of God on earth constantly experiences alternating periods of affliction and peace. Just as winter follows summer, so does joy follow affliction.

Given that this is the state of the Church on earth – a continuous cycle of afflictions – we must also understand our own individual state while living in the Church. It is a condition marked by a perpetual series of troubles and afflictions. If we currently enjoy peace and rest, we must be aware that it cannot last forever; a change will come. Therefore, during times of peace, we should prepare ourselves for future trials and persuade ourselves that the sun will not always shine – the state will change, and trials will come.

"And behold the Angels came and ministered unto him." Here begins the second part of the victory. After our Saviour Christ had defeated the Devil and driven him away, the Angels came to minister to Him, providing comfort after this arduous battle.

"Behold" is a word of wonder, indicating that something of significance follows. What is it? The wonder lies in the fact that the person whom the Devil despised and sought to trample underfoot is now attended to by the good Angels of God, who are ready to offer their service and come to comfort Him.

In this ministry of these Angels, consider, first, the reason that led them to attend to Christ; secondly, their number; and thirdly, the timing of their arrival.

First, the reason that compels these glorious Angels and heavenly spirits to serve and wait upon our Saviour Christ is that the man Christ, not just His humanity but Christ, who is both God and man, is the Lord of all creatures, even of the Angels in heaven. While the humanity of Christ may not be the Lord of Angels, it is still far more excellent than any creature, including the blessed Angels.

Here, we can witness the great goodness of God, who has exalted human nature, once marred by sin, to be even more excellent than any Angel in heaven when it is joined to the divinity in the person of Christ. Therefore, the Angels serve Christ, not only as a mere man but as the God-man, or God and man, and in the same way, they minister to all true members of Jesus Christ who are truly joined to His mystical body. Christ is the ladder of Jacob by which the Angels of God ascend and descend to serve all those who are genuinely united to Jesus Christ, as seen in Genesis 28.

This should make us all marvel at the boundless and indescribable goodness of God. He has not only granted us authority over heaven and earth through Christ but also made the glorious Angels, who are far superior to humans, to be our servants, ministering to us, providing comfort, and defending us.

This should motivate us all to conduct ourselves with reverence and holiness in all our actions and speech, considering that the blessed and holy Angels of God are waiting and attending to us. Indeed, this should lead us to exercise great care to ensure that no unseemly words or actions emanate from us since we are in the presence of these most excellent creatures of God. We should behave with greater reverence than we would in the presence of an earthly prince or a mighty monarch.

2 The number of them. It is not said that one Angel came, as in the garden, but rather, "the Angels came to him," indicating that there was more than one. In the Scriptures, we find that our Saviour Christ sometimes had one Angel attending to Him, while at other times, there were more. This applies to both good and evil Angels. For example, the wicked Angels sometimes came alone, as in Christ's temptations, and at other times, many came, as when Christ was on the cross, as described in Colossians 2:15. Similarly, good Angels of God sometimes appear alone and at other times, in groups.

If this is the case, then the notion that every person has two Angels—one evil Angel to tempt them and one good Angel to defend them—does not hold true. Instead, if God so wills, He may have a legion of bad Angels to torment the wicked and tens of thousands of good Angels to comfort the righteous.

The third point is the timing of when the Angels came to Christ: "Then," when the Devil had now ended all his temptations. Not during the time of the temptations when Christ was being tempted but immediately after they were concluded.

While it is true that the good Angels of God are always ready to attend to Christ and obey His will, here it is mentioned that they did not come to our Saviour until after His temptations. They arrived at the time when He needed them most, which was immediately after His temptations had concluded. It is possible that they took on some bodily form during this time, as the Devil did, in order to better serve Him.

In the person of our Saviour Christ, we can observe how God deals with His children, just as He did with Christ Himself. Sometimes, the Lord conceals His favour and withholds the accustomed mercy from His children, allowing them to endure a period of time without the comfortable sense and feeling of His presence to test them. In a way, the Lord behaves towards His children as a nurse does with her child – she sets it down and momentarily hides herself from it, allowing the child to sit still. During this time, the child might take a fall and even injure itself, causing it to bleed. However, the nurse does this not because she doesn't love her child but to ensure that when she takes it back into her arms, the child will love her more and cling to her more tightly. Similarly, the Lord deals with His children; He often withdraws the comforting feeling of His mercy, as if hiding Himself for a time, so that we may better understand our need for His mercy and value it more when He grants us the feeling of it again. This experience can lead us to love Him more earnestly and steadfastly thereafter.

In conclusion, some people may argue that they do not need the doctrine of temptations because they have never experienced such trials and are not familiar with them. They might even hope never to face such temptations and express gratitude for not having encountered them. However, these individuals should consider themselves fortunate but also recognize that they are in a pitiable and wretched state. Whoever belongs to Christ must, to some extent, be made conformable to Him. If they are truly members of Christ, they must be prepared to resemble their head, Christ, in enduring temptations. In fact, it is a cause for joy and rejoicing when we face temptations, especially if we are able, through the power of Christ, to resist those temptations as He did. As the Holy Spirit tells us in James 1:2, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

And as for those individuals who claim they have never been tempted throughout their entire lives, they are sadly under the judgment of God, their hearts hardened to such an extent that they do not perceive the temptations that the Devil constantly places before them, tempting them towards countless wickednesses and impieties. Just as the disciples of Christ, even though they witnessed His miracles and saw the bread multiplied in their hands, failed to comprehend it due to the hardness of their hearts, these spiritually blind souls remain unaware of the trials they face.

However, if these individuals would humble themselves and turn to the Word of God to acknowledge and feel their wretchedness, repenting and becoming new creations, their perspective would undoubtedly change. Therefore, let such individuals pray to God earnestly, seeking His mercy to grant them a revelation of their woeful condition. Pray that He may bestow upon them hearts that are tender and receptive, leading them to genuine

humility for their sins, thus allowing them to sense their need for His grace. Then, they will confess that it is indeed necessary for them to experience and withstand temptations. They will come to understand that without enduring these trials alongside Christ, they can never truly find joy or genuine comfort in Christ.

MASTER PERKINS' PRAYER BEFORE HIS SERMONS.

O Almighty Lord God, most merciful and loving Father in Jesus Christ, we are here assembled before Your glorious Majesty to partake in Your heavenly word, which, in Your infinite goodness and mercy, You have ordained as the ordinary means to work our salvation. We beseech You, therefore, most merciful Father, to bless each one of us in the hearing and speaking of Your holy word.

Good Lord, open our blind eyes, that we may understand it. And whereas our hearts are hardened, filled with sin and manifold rebellions, good Lord, soften our hard hearts. Grant that Your holy word may be the two-edged sword of the Spirit, cutting down sins and corruption within us, and making us new creatures in Jesus Christ.

Whereas we are troubled by many impediments in hearing Your word, such as wandering imaginations in our hearts, suggestions of Satan, and the dullness of our own flesh, good Lord, remove these hindrances. Give us attentive grace to hear Your word in fear and reverence, as if in Your

presence. Help us to receive it not as coming from man but as coming from Jesus Christ.

And when we have heard Your word, grant that it may not be the savor of death leading to deeper condemnation, but the savor of life bringing eternal comfort and salvation. Write Your word in each one of our hearts and transform us into obedience to it in our lives and conduct.

Because Satan is a deadly enemy of the ministry of Your word, good Lord, confound Satan. Dissolve in each one of us the cursed works of the Devil. Work Your own good works and show Yourself more merciful in blessing Your word than Satan is or can be malicious in hindering it.

Hear us, we beseech You, in these requests and grant these graces to each one of us, not because of our own merits (for we deserve nothing but eternal shame and confusion for our sins) but for the merits of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom You are well pleased.

To Him, with You and the Holy Spirit, be given by each one of us all praise, honor, and glory, both now and forevermore. Amen.

The voice of a person

1. Carnal,

- of Evil: I do it, and will do.
- Good: I do it not, nor will do.

1. Regenerate,

- of Evil: I do it, but would not do it.
- Good: I do not that I would.

1. Glorified of Evil:

- I do it not, neither will I do it.
- Good: I do it, and will do it.

To the right Honourable and virtuous Ladies, the Countess of Cumberland, and the Countess of Warwick, grace and peace.

Right Honourable, in the former discourse is the combat of Christ: in this latter is set down the combat of a Christian. He that fought with our head, will fight with the members, and he that assaulted Christ, will assail all Christians. But Christ did bear troubles, and was borne out of them: we must have troubles, and shall be borne out of them. If our afflictions were plagues, as to the Egyptians: curses, as to Ham: destruction, as to Sodom: desolation, as to Israel: then had we cause to flee from them, as Moses did from that miraculous serpent. But since they are but the trials of faith, corrections of a father, visitations from the Bishop of our souls: since they are as Phlebotomy to a Pleurisy, and a purgation to a Plethora, they are to be endured with all patience. How Christ did endure them, you may read in that Treatise: how a Christian must, you may see in this. The former Treatise I presented to your honourable brother: this latter to you most honourable sisters. I desired to annex this to the former discourse because it

is suitable to that present argument: and I know not to whom I may better present it than to you who have experience of this Christian warfare. If it pleases you but to read these holy meditations, and to entertain this poor mite into your rich treasury by the reading I doubt not but you shall have much comfort; and by your entertaining, the church shall have much good. Now that good God who has given your mind to know him, give you also a heart to love him: and as you are Honourable in the eyes of this world, so he make you most honourable in the eyes of his Majesty. And thus craving pardon, I commit you to the grace of that God who will honour them that love him, and comfort them that seek comfort from him.

Your Honours in the Lord, Robert Hill.

Δ COMFORT FOR THE FEEBLE- MINDED:

Wherein is Set Down that Spiritual Combat
Which is Between a Christian and Satan.

Lidia.

Sir, I heard you with much comfort when you preached upon the temptations of Christ. I pray you instruct me concerning the temptations of a Christian, and give me leave to ask you certain questions.

Paul.

Say on.

Lidia.

What is it which we call Christian warfare?

Paul.

Christian warfare is concerning the right way of fighting in the spiritual battle.

Lidia.

Which are the parts thereof?

Paul.

The parts thereof are the preparation for battle and the combat itself.

Lidia.

How may I prepare myself for it?

Paul.

For the preparation, you must use the complete armour of God (Eph. 6:13). For this cause, take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day; and having finished all things, stand fast.

Lidia.

How many parts does this armour have?

Paul.

The parts thereof are especially six: 1. truth; 2. justice; 3. Evangelical obedience; 4. faith; 5. the word of God; 6. continual and fervent prayer with watching, as you may read in Ephesians 6:14-18. Stand fast, therefore, your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; 16. Above all, take the shield of Faith, wherewith you may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; 17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; 18. And pray always with all manner of prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints. 1 Peter 5:8. Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring Lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.

Lidia.

What then is the combat?

Paul.

The combat is a mutual conflict of those who fight spiritually.

Lidia.

Who are the warriors?

Paul.

The warriors are the tempter and the Christian soldier (Eph. 6:12). For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, and against the worldly governors, the princes of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness which is in high places.

Lidia.

Whom do you call the tempter?

Paul.

The tempter is the Prince or his helpers. The Prince is Satan and his Angels, which are spiritual wickedness in high places. His helpers are the flesh and the world.

Lidia.

What is the conflict of these warriors?

Paul.

The conflict of all these is temptation, whereby a person is provoked to commit such wickedness as is harmful to the salvation of their soul (1 Pet. 2:11). Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which fight against the soul.

Lidia.

What must I note in this Christian soldier?

Paul.

In the soldier, two things are to be considered: his resisting and his fall.

Lidia.

What is his resistance?

Paul.

Resistance is an action whereby the soldier withstands temptation through grace working inwardly in him (1 John 2:14). I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked. (1 Pet. 5:8), (Eph. 6:16), (Psalms 91:13). Thou shalt walk upon the Lion and Asp, the young Lion and the Dragon shalt thou tread under feet.

Lidia.

How is this resistance confirmed?

Paul.

To confirm this, the following safeguards are very necessary:

When you are tempted to sin, not only abstain from it but earnestly love and pursue the opposite (John 8:44).

Never yield or consent to Satan's words, whether he speaks the truth, accuses falsely, or flatters dissemblingly (John 8:44). You are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father you will do: he has been a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him: when he speaks a lie, then he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (Mark 1:24) And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus the Son of the most high God? And Jesus said, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. (Acts 16:17) She followed Paul and us, and cried, saying: These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation, etc. (Augustine, sermon 241).

Expect one temptation after another, especially when your enemy, after setting his snares, is at rest, for the devil never ceases his malice (1 Peter 5:8).

Lidia.

I have heard how to resist; teach me, I pray you, what is his fall.

Paul.

The fall is when the soldier, through infirmity, faints, being subdued by the power of the enemy (Galatians 6:1). Brethren, if a man be fallen by occasion into any fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.

Lidia.

If I fall, how may I rise?

Paul.

To this pertains the spiritual remedy; now, a remedy is something that has the aptness to restore someone who has fallen to their former state (Galatians 6:1).

And here, two things must always be considered:

1. If there be a willing mind, everyone is accepted for the grace they have, not for what they do not have (2 Corinthians 8:12). For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man has and not according to what he does not have.
2. In all these things, whoever will lead a godly life in Christ, the power of God is to be made perfect through their infirmity (2 Corinthians 12:9). And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect through weakness: very gladly therefore will I rejoice rather in mine infirmities, that the power of God may dwell in me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in

anguish for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Lidia.

But since Satan is my adversary, instruct me how many his assaults are.

Paul.

Assaults are threefold.

Lidia.

Which is the first?

Paul.

The first is about the Christian man's effectual calling, and the temptation is the enterprise of the Devil to blindfold man's mind and harden his heart, lest the word of God should work in him to salvation (Matthew 13:4-7, 19). And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. And some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth, and anon they sprang up because they had no depth of earth. And when the sun rose up, they were parched, and for lack of rooting, withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them. Whenever a man hears the word of the kingdom and understands it not, the evil one comes and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which hath received the seed by the wayside.

Lidia.

How may I resist this assault?

Paul.

A resistance in those who are called is wrought by the Spirit of God, causing them to lend their ears to hear and grafting the word in their hearts, so that the immortal seed of regeneration may spring in them (Psalms 40:6;

John 6:44; Acts 16:14; James 1:21). Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and excess of maliciousness and receive with meekness the word that is grafted in you, which is able to save your souls (1 Peter 1:22). Since your souls are purified in obeying the truth through the spirit, love one another with a pure heart fervently, without hypocrisy (1 John 3:9).

A resistance in those who are to be called is when, in a sincere heart, they join the word they have heard with faith (Luke 8:15). Those that fell on good ground are the ones who, with an honest and good heart, hear the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience (Hebrews 4:2).

Lidia.

What certain preservatives are to be noted in this resistance?

Paul.

Consider the power and purpose of the Word in advance. Ecclesiastes 4:17 advises, "Take heed to thy feet when thou enterst into the house of the Lord, and be more neare to heare then to giue the sacrifice of fooles, for they know not that they do euil." Ecclesiastes 5:1 adds, "Be not rash with thy mouth, nor let thine heart be hasty to utter a thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou art upon the earth, therefore let thy words be few."

Pay diligent attention with your mind (Acts 16:14).

Cultivate a hunger and desire in your heart for the Word (John 7:37). "Now in the last and great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."

Maintain integrity in your life (Psalm 26:6).

Do not merely hear the Word but also act upon it. James 1:22 advises, "And be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls."

Ensure your heart aligns with the Word preached (Acts 2:37).

Store the Word in your heart to avoid sinning (Psalm 119:11). "I have hidden thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Approach the assembly of the Church with reverence and humility, trembling in the presence of God (Isaiah 66:2). Acts 10:33 demonstrates this attitude: "Then sent I for thee immediately, and thou hast well done to come; now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Lidia.

May the God of power preserve me from this assault using these preservatives. But how might I fall in this temptation?

Paul.

You may fall in this temptation either through a lack of enthusiasm in receiving the Word and neglecting it, or by falling into errors.

Lidia.

What, then, must be my remedy?

Paul.

The remedy for this is submission, which must be subjected to the judgment and assessment of the brethren and Ministers. Revelation 3:15 says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." Galatians 6:2 and 1 Timothy 1:20 also guide us: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme."

Lidia.

What is the second assault?

Paul.

The second assault concerns faith.

Lidia.

How might one be thus assaulted?

Paul.

By an illusion that the Devil casts into the hearts of godly individuals. For instance, when he says, "You are not among the elect; you are not justified; you have no faith; you will certainly be condemned for your sins." This is akin to what happened in Matthew 4:3 when the tempter came to Christ and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Just as he dealt with Christ, he will similarly tempt Christians.

Lidia.

What means does the Devil employ to strengthen such illusions?

Paul.

He uses adversity, such as dangers, losses, persecutions, jealousy, grievous offenses, and so on. We see this in Psalm 73:12 when David says, "Lo, these are the wicked, yet prosper they alway, and increase in riches." He also misuses the remembrance of past sins, as seen in Job 13:26, "For thou writest bitter things against me and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth." Additionally, he exploits a feeling of impending death.

Lidia.

How can I withstand these temptations?

Paul.

By having a true faith and applying Christ with all His merits in this manner: I firmly believe that I will not be condemned, but that I am elected and justified in Christ. I have no doubt that all my sins are pardoned. This is supported by passages such as Isaiah 53:11, "He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities," and Romans 8:38-39, "For I

am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Lidia.

Provide me with a preservative to resist.

Paul.

Your best preservative is, in times of temptation, not to focus on faith itself, but on the object of faith, which is Christ. This is how Paul approached it in Philippians 3:12-14, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow, that I may comprehend that for whose sake also I am comprehended by Christ Jesus. One thing I do, I forget that which is behind and endeavour myself to that which is before. And follow hard toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This approach is essential for all, as stated in John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that he that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Lid.

What is my falling in this assault?

Paul.

Your falling is doubtfulness and distrust of your election and of God's mercy. As in Psalm 77:6-8, "I called to remembrance my song in the night: I communed with mine own heart and my spirit searched diligently. Will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he show no more favour? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?" Similarly, David expressed his sense of abandonment in Psalm 22:1, saying, "My

God, my God; why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my health, and from the words of my roaring?"

Lid.

What is my remedy?

Paul.

The remedy is twofold:

First, the operation of the Holy Spirit, stirring up faith and increasing it. As stated in Philippians 1:6, "I am persuaded of this same thing, that he that hath begun this good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Also, in Luke 17:5, the Apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

The second is holy meditation, which is manifold:

1. That it is the commandment of God that we should believe in Christ. 1 John 3:23 states, "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave commandment."
2. That the Evangelical promises are indefinite and do not exclude anyone, unless perhaps someone excludes themselves. Isaiah 55:1 says, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and ye that have no silver, come, buy, and eat: come, I say, buy wine and milk without silver and without money." Matthew 11:28 declares, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you." John 3:15 states, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Also, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper individually apply indefinite promises to everyone, and therefore, they are

very effective in providing particular assurance or full assurance of forgiveness of sins.

3. That doubtfulness and despair are most grievous sins.
4. That contrary to hope, people must believe with hope, just like Abraham did. Romans 4:18 describes Abraham's faith, "Which Abraham, above hope, believed under hope, that he should be the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken to him, So shall thy seed be."
5. That the mercy of God and the merit of Christ's obedience, being both God and man, are infinite. Isaiah 54:10 says, "For the mountains shall remove, and the hills shall fall down: but my mercy shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace fall away, saith the Lord, that hath compassion on thee." Psalm 103:11 declares, "For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." 1 John 2:1 states, "My babes, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. And He is the reconciliation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Psalm 137:7 says, "Let Israel wait on the Lord: for the Lord is mercy, and with Him is great redemption."
6. That God measures the obedience due to Him more by the affection and desire to obey than by the act and performance of it. Romans 8:5 states, "For they that are after the flesh, savour the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit, the

things of the spirit. Because the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 7:20-22 continues, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me. I find then by the law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, concerning the inner man." Malachi 3:17 adds, "I will spare them, as a man spareth his son that reverenceth him."

7. When one sin is forgiven, all the rest are remitted as well because forgiveness, once given, without any prescription of time, is given forever. Romans 11:29 affirms, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Acts 10:43 also states, "To him also give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, all that believe in him shall receive remission of sins."
8. Grace and faith are not taken away by falls of infirmity, but thereby are declared and made manifest. Romans 5:20 says, "Moreover, the law entered thereupon, that the offence should abound: nevertheless, where sin abounded, there grace abounded much more." 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 provides an example, "And lest I should be exalted out of measure, etc., there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. He said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'"
9. That all the works of God are accomplished through contrary means. 2 Corinthians 12:9 declares, "My power is made perfect

through weakness."

Lidia.

By the blessing of God, I will not forget to practice these sovereign remedies if Satan at any time seeks to take away my faith, and to cut off this hand by which I must apply, or to blindfold this eye by which I may behold Christ sitting at God's right hand, as Stephen did. Please, tell me about the third assault and what it concerns.

Paul.

The third assault concerns Sanctification.

Lidia.

What is this temptation?

Paul.

The temptation is a provoking to sin, according to the disposition of every man and as occasion presents itself. 1 Chronicles 21:1 illustrates this, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." John 13:2 also shows an example, "And when supper was done, the Devil had now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him."

Lidia.

Let me not be ignorant of Satan's schemes. How will he allure to sin?

Paul.

In this temptation, the Devil greatly diminishes and minimises the sins which men are about to commit. He does this partly by closely presenting the mercy of God and partly by concealing or hiding the punishment that is due for the sin. Additionally, there are factors that help the Devil in this temptation. First, there is the flesh, which lusts against the spirit, sometimes by generating evil thoughts and desires and sometimes by overwhelming

and suppressing good intentions and impulses. Galatians 5:17 explains this: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to another, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would." It also lists the works of the flesh, including adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, seditions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, gluttony, and more.

Secondly, there is the world, which leads people to disobedience through pleasure, profit, honour, and bad examples. Ephesians 2:3 describes this: "Among whom we also had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of the flesh, in fulfilling the will of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, as well as others." 1 John 2:16 also warns about the world's influence: "For all that is in the world, as the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Lidia.

How can I resist this temptation?

Paul.

Resistance is achieved through the desire of the spirit, which produces good thoughts and affections in the faithful and drives out the evil. Galatians 5:22 describes the fruits of the spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, and envying one another.

Lidia.

Please provide me with some preservatives to resist this temptation.

Paul.

Here are some preservatives:

1. Do not consider any sin as light or small. Galatians 5:9 warns, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
2. Avoid all occasions of sin. As the proverb goes, "longè, tardè, citò" (far away, slowly, quickly). 1 Thessalonians 5:22 advises, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Jude 1:23 instructs to save others with fear, pulling them out of the fire, and to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh.
3. Train yourself to overcome smaller sins so that you may also conquer the greater ones. Romans 13:4 suggests this approach.
4. Engage in your appointed calling and always stay busy with something related to it.
5. Use the law, God's judgments, the last judgment, the glorious presence of God, and similar considerations to resist the rebellion and looseness of the flesh. Proverbs 28:14 emphasises the value of fearing always, while Genesis 39:9 illustrates the idea of refusing to sin against God.

Lidia.

But alas, I see Satan foils me in many sins. Instruct me, I pray you, with some rules against them. Say I become angry unadvisedly or desire to revenge wrongs done to me. How may I remedy this sin?

Paul.

Against unjust anger or a private desire for revenge, meditate on the following:

1. Consider that injuries happen to us by the Lord's appointment for our good (2 Samuel 16:10).
2. Reflect on God's great goodness in forgiving us far more sins than we could ever forgive in others.
3. Remember that Christian love dictates that we forgive others.
4. Realize that we must not desire to destroy those whom Christ has redeemed by His precious blood.
5. Understand that we ourselves are in danger of God's wrath if we allow our anger to burn against our brother. As Jesus said, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven."
6. Recognize that we do not know all the circumstances of the facts, including the intentions and purposes of those against whom we are angry.

External remedies or methods to bridle anger include:

1. Imitating the Lord's clemency, who often tolerates the wicked for a significant period. "Learn from me, for I am humble and meek."
2. Introducing a pause or delay between feeling anger and acting upon it. Athenodorus advised Augustus to recite all the letters

of the alphabet or A, B, C before speaking or doing anything in anger.

3. Avoiding places where those who provoke our anger are present.
4. Refraining from engaging in contention, both in words and actions. "Do nothing through contention."

Lidia.

Suppose I sin out of covetousness and ambition. What must I do?

Paul

Remedies against those bad desires for riches and honor are as follows:

1. God even in times of famine quickens and revives those who fear Him (Psalm 33:18-19).
2. Godliness is great gain if one's mind can find contentment in it (1 Timothy 6:6).
3. We anticipate the resurrection of the body and eternal life, so we should not overly worry about this present mortal life.
4. We are servants in our Father's house, and whatever is suitable for us, He will lovingly provide.
5. An ambitious mind desires to be exalted, fearing a fall from a high position, displaying palpable blindness.
6. Adam's ambition to challenge God brought him and his posterity to destruction.

7. It is exceedingly ambitious to rob God of the commendation that belongs exclusively to the Lord.

Lidia.

Suppose Satan tempts me towards carnal uncleanness. How can I preserve myself to enter with the wise virgins to meet the bridegroom?

Paul.

Preservatives against the desires of the flesh include:

1. Taking up one's cross daily to be Christ's disciple (Luke 9:23).
2. Those who follow the Spirit will focus on things that are according to the Spirit (Romans 8:5).
3. We should conduct ourselves as citizens of the kingdom of heaven (Philippians 3:20).
4. Recognizing that we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16), and our members are members of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15).
5. Not grieving the Spirit of Christ who dwells within us (Ephesians 4:30).

Lid.

How might I fall into this temptation?

Paul.

You may fall into this temptation when you are caught in some offence (Galatians 6:1).

Lidia.

What does Satan do when one has fallen in this way?

Paul.

In such a situation, Satan greatly magnifies the committed offence and accuses and terrifies the offender with God's judgments. For example, when Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood," but they replied, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Judas then threw down the silver pieces in the temple, left, and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

Lidia.

What remedy is there if I fall in this way?

Paul.

The remedy is renewed repentance, which begins with sorrow for the sin in relation to God. The fruits of this repentance are especially sevenfold, as described in 2 Corinthians 7:9-11:

1. Sorrow that leads to repentance.
2. Godly sorrow that results in salvation and is not to be regretted.
3. Sorrow that produces a clearing of oneself.
4. Indignation.
5. Fear.
6. Great desire.
7. Zeal, punishment, and a demonstration of purity in the matter.

Lid.

Please repeat the seven fruits of repentance from this passage.

Paul.

Certainly, here are the seven fruits of repentance:

1. A desire to do well.
2. Apology, which means confessing the sin before God and requesting forgiveness for the offense. For example, Psalm 32:5 says, "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.' And you forgave the guilt of my sin." Also, 2 Samuel 12:13 records David's confession: "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan replied, 'The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.'"
3. Indignation against oneself for the offense.
4. Fear, not so much fear of punishment, but fear of offending the Lord. As in Psalm 130:3, "If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?"
5. A desire for complete renewal and deliverance from sin.
6. A fervent zeal to love God and embrace and obey all His commandments.
7. A commitment to self-control and discipline to prevent such offenses in the future.

Lidia.

I am grateful to God for teaching me through you. Now, let me inquire about the patient endurance of hardships that I read about in the Scriptures. What can it teach me?

Paul:

The patient bearing of the cross teaches how Christians should undergo their burdens.

Lidia:

Could you please explain what the cross signifies?

Paul:

The cross represents a certain measure of afflictions that God appoints to each of the faithful. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Also, in Colossians 1:24, it is mentioned, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church."

Lidia:

How should one go about taking up this cross?

Paul:

We should willingly take up this cross, even with both hands, when God places it upon us. Once we have taken it up, we must bear it with patience and perseverance. As stated in Colossians 1:11, "May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy." Additionally, in Luke 21:19, it is advised, "By your endurance, you will gain your lives."

Lidia:

How can I maintain patience?

Paul:

The preservatives of patience include first the strength provided by the Holy Ghost. As mentioned in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Also, in Philippians 1:29, it is said, "For it has

been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake." Secondly, there is the practice of holy meditation, which is multifaceted:

1. Recognize that the afflictions faced by the faithful are not random but are part of God's counsel and providence, wherein He arranges all things excellently. For example, in Genesis 45:4-5, it is acknowledged that God sent Joseph into Egypt. Similarly, in 2 Samuel 16:10, it is stated that the Lord instructed Shimei to curse David. Psalm 119:71 reflects that affliction can be beneficial as it leads to a deeper understanding of God's statutes. Therefore, it is evident that afflictions are inevitable for the godly, as mentioned in Acts 14:21 and Matthew 7:14.
2. Realize that despite the heaviness of afflictions, they are ultimately good and profitable. They serve as a means to humble individuals for their sins before God, enabling them to attain peace and holiness in life. Various passages like 2 Corinthians 1:9, Isaiah 26:16, Hosea 5:15, Psalm 78:34, Jeremiah 31:18, Hebrews 12:11, Psalm 30:5, John 15:2, and 1 Peter 1:6 emphasise the transformative power of afflictions. Just as we allow surgeons to perform painful procedures to heal our physical ailments, we should permit God to use afflictions to cure the deeper diseases of our souls.

Lidia:

What can be inferred from this?

Paul:

From this, we can infer that the afflictions experienced by the godly serve as signs of their adoption into the family of God. As stated in Hebrews 12:6, "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." If you endure such discipline, it is an indication that God is treating you as His children. Additionally, these afflictions are the chosen path to heaven. James 1:12 declares, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." Moreover, the apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 4:17 that our present momentary afflictions will lead to an eternal weight of glory.

Furthermore, we should understand that God has promised His favour, a lessening of punishment, His presence, and deliverance to those who endure trials. As seen in Philippians 1:29 and 1 Corinthians 10:13, God is faithful and provides a way out of temptation. Psalm 50:15 assures us that if we call upon God in times of trouble, He will deliver us. Psalm 121:4 affirms that God watches over His people without slumber or sleep. Isaiah 43:2 states that God is with us even in the midst of challenging circumstances, assuring our safety.

Additionally, we can take comfort in the knowledge that in all the troubles faced by the faithful, Christ is their companion. As mentioned in 1 Peter 4:13, we share in Christ's sufferings, and in 2 Corinthians 4:10, it is said that we carry the death of Christ in our bodies, revealing His life through us. Colossians 1:21 further highlights this aspect.

Lastly, we should be aware that angels are ready to defend those who fear God. Psalm 34:8 and 2 Kings 6:16 remind us that there are more heavenly forces with us than against us.

Lidia:

But of all calamities, the remembrance of death is fearful to me. Could you please provide me with some advice or remedies against this fear?

Paul:

Against the fear of death, consider these remedies:

Firstly, death liberates the godly from the tyranny of Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, and eternal damnation. It also delivers them from innumerable perils and losses, placing them safely and happily under the protective shadow of Christ's wings.

Secondly, Christ, through His death, has sanctified death and the grave for us.

1. For the godly, Christ is a source of gain both in life and death (Philippians 1:12).
2. The consolations provided by the Spirit of Christ to the souls of the faithful surpass the pains of death.
3. The desire to behold God's glory and the presence of departed saints provide comfort.
4. Instead of our earthly bodies, we will be clothed in glory (2 Corinthians 5:1).
5. The sting of death, which is sin, is removed, rendering it powerless (1 Corinthians 15:55). Hebrews 2:15 states that Christ came to free those who, through the fear of death, were subject to bondage.
6. Rather than obsessing over our death, we should evaluate our life. A life lived well leads to a peaceful death, while a life

lived poorly often results in a troubled death.

7. Angels are present to swiftly transport the souls of the departed saints to heaven upon their passing.

Souls, once in heaven, remain there until the last day of judgment. During their time in heaven, they both glorify the name of God and wait and pray for the consummation of the kingdom of glory and complete happiness in body and soul. This is evident in Revelation 5:8, which says, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints." They sing and praise God, as seen in Revelation 14:2-3.

Lidia:

Nevertheless, during times of temptation and especially at the hour of death, Satan will try to persuade me that these blessings do not belong to me. What should I do in such moments?

Paul:

In times of doubt, examine your own heart to see if you have the Spirit of God testifying to you that you are God's child. Those who possess the Spirit of God are indeed His children.

Lidia:

How can I distinguish whether this testimony comes from the Spirit of God or from mere presumption?

Paul:

Firstly, you will have a deep conviction and assurance of your status as God's child. The Holy Spirit does not merely state it but persuades you with certainty, which is beyond what the flesh can accomplish. Secondly,

consider the manner of persuasion. The Holy Spirit does not base this assurance on your works or worthiness but on God's favour and love. This differs significantly from the persuasion used by Satan. Lastly, observe the effects of this testimony. If it arises from presumption, it will be lifeless. In contrast, if it comes from the Holy Spirit, it will be vibrant and motivating. Those who are convinced that they are elected and adopted as God's children will love Him, trust Him, and wholeheartedly call upon Him.

Lidia:

Alas, I find this testimony to be remarkably weak within me. Are there other means by which I can find comfort in this temptation from Satan, where I doubt whether I am truly God's child?

Paul:

Indeed, there are other means. If you do not feel the fervour of God's Spirit within you, then you can judge it by the heat of your sanctification. If you observe the effects of sanctification in your life, you can be assured that you are in a state of grace.

Lidia:

What are these effects, if I may ask?

Paul:

To discern your adoption, you can consider the following effects of sanctification: Firstly, if you recognize your shortcomings and grieve over offending God with every sin. Secondly, if you strive against the flesh, resisting and hating its initial impulses, and view them as burdensome and troublesome. Thirdly, if you earnestly desire and long for God's grace and the merit of Christ to attain eternal life. Fourthly, when you have obtained it, you regard it as a precious treasure, valuing it above all else, and considering all things as worthless in comparison, as expressed in

Philippians 3:9. Fifthly, if you love a minister of the Gospel for his ministry and a fellow Christian for their faith, being willing to give your life for them if necessary, as mentioned in 1 John 3:16. Sixthly, if you fervently call upon God, even shedding tears in your prayers. Seventhly, if you eagerly anticipate the coming of Christ for judgment, longing for an end to these sinful days. Eighthly, if you avoid all occasions of sin and strive for a life of renewal. Lastly, if you persevere in these things until your last breath. As someone once said, "He who will serve God must believe what he cannot see, hope for what is deferred, love God when He seems an enemy, and remain faithful until the end."

Lidia:

Indeed, these are sure effects of sanctification, but even these seem weak in me, just like the previous ones.

Paul:

Is that so? Then understand that God is working in you, although it may not be with great strength. You should not be discouraged, for it is certain that if you have faith as small as a grain of mustard seed and are as weak as a young infant, it is sufficient to graft you into Christ. Therefore, you must not doubt your own election because of your weakness. A child holding a staff in their hand can do so as effectively as an adult, even though they lack the same strength. Similarly, when you lay hold of Christ through faith, even if it seems weak, it is enough for your salvation. Moreover, if someone has not yet experienced these effects in their heart, they should not conclude that they are reprobate. Instead, they should engage with the Word of God and the Sacraments to experience the power of Christ drawing them near and gain assurance of their redemption through Christ's death and passion.

Lidia:

May the One who opened Lidia's heart to hear Paul also open my heart to understand and practice these things.

Paul:

Amen.

SUNDRY NECESSARY OBSERVATIONS SUITABLE FOR A CHRISTIAN,

Published long ago by some religious man.

I. That you keep a close watch over your heart, words, and deeds continually. Psalm 93:1, Matthew 24:42, Luke 12:36, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 15, 34, 16:13, Colossians 3:17.

II. That you redeem the time that has been idly, carelessly, and unprofitably spent with great care. Ephesians 5:16, Colossians 4:5.

III. That private prayer and meditation be made at least once a day. Psalm 119:164, Daniel 6:10, Luke 18:1, Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2.

IV. That you strive to do good and receive good in the company of others. 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

V. That your family is diligently and Christianly instructed, watched over, and governed. Genesis 18:19, Deuteronomy 4:5, 6, 7, Proverbs 31:27, Ephesians 6:4.

VI. That you do not spend more care on worldly matters than necessary. Matthew 6:31, Colossians 3:1, 1 John 2:15.

VII. That you stir yourselves to be generous to God's Saints. Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 13:16.

VIII. That you prepare yourselves to bear the cross by whatever means God chooses to test you. Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:13, 24:27.

IX. That you do not entertain wandering thoughts. Job 31:1, Ephesians 5:3.

X. That you spend some time in mourning, not only for your own sins but also for the time and age in which you live. Ezekiel 9:4, Psalm 119:136.

XI. That you daily anticipate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for your full deliverance from this world. Matthew 24:44.

XII. That you establish a relationship with a godly person with whom you can confer about your Christian condition and share your doubts to invigorate God's graces within you. James 5:16.

XIII. That you observe the departure of people from this life, their mortality, the vanity and alteration of things below, to help you despise the world more and increase your longing for the life to come. Isaiah 57:1, Philippians 3:3, 1 Peter 1:24, Revelation 22:20.

XIV. That you meditate frequently on your death and departure from this life, considering how you will lie in the grave, turn to dust, leave all glory and wealth, and use this to humble any pride of life within you. Ecclesiastes 7:4, 12:1.

XV. That you read something daily from the holy Scriptures to further your knowledge. Matthew 22:29, John 5:39, Acts 17:11.

XVI. That you make a covenant with the Lord to strive against all sins, especially against the specific sins and corruptions of your heart and life in which you have most dishonoured God. Carefully ensure that your covenant is kept and continued. Nehemiah 9:38, 2 Chronicles 34:31.

XVII. That you observe how sin dies and weakens within you, and that you do not return to your old sins. Matthew 18:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 2 Peter 2:22.

XVIII. That you do not fall away from your initial love but continue to have affection for God's Word and all the holy exercises of religion. Diligently listen to it and faithfully practice it, prepare yourself beforehand, meditate on what you have heard, either alone or with others, and observe your daily progress in religion. Hebrews 3:12, 12:15, Revelation 2:4.

XIX. That you are often occupied with meditating on God's benefits and works and praise Him for them.

XX. That you exercise your faith by taking delight in the great benefit of your redemption by Christ and the experience of God's presence in His glorious and blessed kingdom. Psalm 116:12, 13, 118:15, Ephesians 5:20.

XXI. Lastly, that you do not make these holy practices of repentance commonplace for the time or use them merely for the sake of appearances. Luke 8:13.

In Adam, we were able not to die; in Christ, we cannot die.

FINISH.