

## **'Your adversary the devil'.**

### **1 Peter 5. 8, 9.**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

I want to speak to you about 'your adversary the devil' – and, if I wanted a title for my message, I guess it would be 'Danger, devil at work'.

We often (and rightly) consider the cross of our Lord Jesus as the place of His decisive and spectacular victory ... the place where Satan's doom was settled ... the place where the 'prince' (the ruler) of this world was 'judged' – who now stands condemned, awaiting only, in God's time, the execution of his sentence.

And, just as we read of the devil for the first time in the third chapter from the beginning of the Bible, so we read of him for the last time in the third chapter from its end – when he is consigned for ever to the lake of fire.<sup>1</sup>

So, yes, it is true that God is still on the throne ... and, yes, He will have the last word ... and, yes, ultimate victory is assured for Him and for His people. These things we *know*.

But, let's not fool ourselves. Satan hasn't shut up shop. And in our day he is proving a very real and powerful foe.

And, frankly, we are not doing very well. We suffer many defeats. Witness the militant new atheism of the West. Witness the rising tide of Islam around the world. Witness the growth of interest in the occult. Witness the decline, not only of assemblies as we know them, but of evangelical testimony in general – in the UK at least.<sup>2</sup> Oh yes, the battle still rages all right.

I remember reading many years ago of a report produced in Argentina which highlighted the errors of the then President and his colleagues in ordering the invasion of the Falklands back in 1982.

The report specifically criticised the Argentine leaders for, and I quote, '*underestimating* British determination to retake the islands'. And '*underestimating the enemy*' is an error which, over the years, has led to the loss of many battles and campaigns, and even wars. And yet I have sneaking suspicion that we as Christians are in grave danger of making that very mistake.

But one thing is certain. Whether or not *we* are guilty of underestimating our Arch-Foe, the early church certainly did not! It is clear from the New Testament that *they* took the devil and his activities very seriously indeed. And the extent they did so can be easily gauged from the place which he occupies in their writings. I was surprised to find that, of the 27 books in the New Testament, no less than 20 refer to Satan directly – and that the seven which don't include the three shortest books. In all, you will find some 60 passages (many much longer than a single verse), which deal, in some way or another, with his wiles and his works.

At the close of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus warned His apostles that Satan had come to focus his attention on *them*. According to Luke 22 verse 31, 'the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has earnestly desired to have *you* (the 'you' is *plural*), to sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you (*singular*), that your faith fail not'.

The early Christians had no doubt whatever that Satan exercised imperceptible control over the world of unbelievers.<sup>3</sup> Paul reminded the Ephesians in the opening of chapter 2 of his letter that they had 'once walked according to the course (the age) of this world, according to the prince (the ruler) of the power (the authority) of the air, the spirit now *working in* the sons of disobedience'<sup>4</sup>– using the very same word translated 'working' as he does in Philippians 2, when he writes, 'it is God who *works in* you both to will and to work for His good pleasure'.<sup>5</sup>

And the apostle John tells us at the close of his first letter that 'the whole world lies in the evil one' – lies, that is, in his domain, within his sphere of influence.<sup>6</sup>

And in every way 'the evil one' merits the title Paul gave him in 2 Corinthians 4, 'the god of this age'.<sup>7</sup> And the fact that 'Public Enemy Number One' operates undetected behind the scenes doesn't mean that his power is any less real or his strategies any less successful.

And because the early church knew that Satan exercised sway over the world of unbelievers, it therefore viewed salvation, not only in terms of the forgiveness of sins and of escape from the coming wrath, but as a divine rescue operation from the authority and dominion of Satan. I note, for example, that Paul's commission (received on the Damascus Road from the ascended Lord) included a reference to 'the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power (the authority) of Satan to God'.<sup>8</sup> And, consistent with this, I note that, in Colossians 1, Paul prayed that the saints at Colosse would give thanks 'to the Father, who has made you fit (possibly, 'has qualified you') to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light; who delivered us out of the power (the authority) of darkness and translated us (transferred us) into the kingdom of the Son of His love'.<sup>9</sup>

For this reason, the early church regarded its gospel activity as an invasion of enemy territory, with the express objective, in effect, of liberating those who were held captive by the devil. And that is undoubtedly how Satan saw it too. And so the early Christians were aware that they could expect violent opposition. And they were *not* disappointed!

Take Paul as an example. The apostle soon became a marked man. Luke tells us in Acts 19 that at Ephesus, famous (or infamous, more like) for its magical arts<sup>10</sup>, 'some itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches'. 'Seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva', Luke adds, 'were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know (I know of<sup>11</sup>, I am acquainted with); but who are you?'<sup>12</sup> Clearly the forces of darkness were familiar with Paul's name.

And so it is hardly surprising that we find the apostle's service for God under frequent attack from the enemy. We find, for instance, that, in some way – possibly through the hostility of the local Jews – Paul's proposed visits to Thessalonica were hindered again and again by Satan. 'We, brethren', the apostle wrote at the close of 1 Thessalonians 2, 'having been bereaved of you for a short time ... endeavoured very eagerly to see your face ... but Satan hindered us', – the word Paul used being that for the breaking up of a road to hinder or prevent progress.<sup>13</sup>

Again, in 2 Corinthians 12, Paul informed the Corinthians about the time, then 14 years earlier, when 'a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a *messenger of Satan* to buffet me (to strike me continually with the fist)<sup>14</sup> – the thorn clearly being some affliction intended by the devil to harass the apostle and to hamper his work for the Lord.

But I have enjoyed noting how Satan overreached himself on both these occasions. In the first instance, because Satan repeatedly hindered the apostle from reaching Thessalonica, Paul was compelled to make do with sending them a letter (which we know as 1 Thessalonians). And where would we be without the exposition he gives there of that which is going to happen when 'the Lord Himself will descend from heaven'<sup>15</sup>

And then, in the second instance, under the good hand of God, as the apostle could later see with hindsight, his thorn in the flesh had kept him humble those fourteen years before; 'lest', as he now wrote, 'I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations' (and thereby maintained him in a condition of soul in which God could continue to use him) ... that very thorn being used by the Lord to prick the balloon of this converted Pharisee's pride.

Again, not surprisingly, we find that Paul's steps were dogged by the devil's agents throughout his missionary work.

So that his gospel work was opposed, for example, by a *Jewish magician* at Paphos in Acts 13, and by a *gentile medium* at Philippi in Acts 16. The one Paul blinded temporarily, and the other he set free permanently. But we can have no doubt who it was had worked through both.

How then we ought to pray for (and do everything we can to actively support) all aspects of gospel work, whether at home or overseas. For it is not a game. The stakes couldn't be higher.

But the early church didn't need to be told that someone's conversion wasn't the end of the story as far as the devil was concerned. Far from it. For they knew from experience that

Satan was not one to concede defeat graciously. Indeed, in one sense, it was then that the sparks really began to fly, as the convert became the object of the devil's attack.

This attack could, and often did, as our reading in 1 Peter 5 makes clear, take the form of **persecution**.

'Your adversary the devil', we read, 'as a roaring lion, walks about<sup>16</sup>, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that *the same afflictions* (the same sufferings) are accomplished in your brethren<sup>17</sup> that are in (better 'throughout') the world'.

Some thirty years *later*, the apostle John conveyed our Lord's words to the church at Smyrna, 'the devil is about to cast some of you into prison'.<sup>18</sup>

And, some time *earlier*, the apostle Paul had explained to the church at Thessalonica, in the opening of chapter 3 of his first letter, that he had sent Timothy to them because the affliction which he had predicted had broken out on them<sup>19</sup>, and, as he said, 'when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, **lest by any means** (lest somehow) the tempter had tempted you, and our labour (our toil) be in vain'.<sup>20</sup> Paul was clearly concerned that the devil would exploit their sufferings for Christ to discourage and defeat them.

But then the devil's attack might take the form, not of persecution, but of **deception** and false teaching, when he appears, not so much as a lion, but as a serpent. 'I am jealous over you with a God-like jealousy', Paul told the Corinthians in the opening of chapter 11 of his second letter, 'for I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste (a pure) virgin to Christ. But I fear, (and we note that next comes the very same expression Paul had used in 1 Thessalonians 3) **lest by any means** (lest somehow), as the serpent deceived Eve through his craftiness (his cunning), so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity (the singleness) that is in Christ' – that is, 'your minds may be seduced from single-minded devotion to Christ'.<sup>21</sup>

And, again, Paul wrote at the beginning of 1 Timothy 4 concerning those who 'depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons'.<sup>22</sup>

But then Satan's attack might take the form, not of *persecution* nor of *deception*, but of straightforward **temptation** to sin – as it did, for example, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5. For, just as, back in Genesis 3, the devil had successfully used a man and his wife to spoil the first creation, so now he attempted to do the same with the new creation. Having told us at the end of chapter 4 how Barnabas had sold land and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet, Luke tells how Ananias, together with Sapphira his wife, similarly sold a possession and laid money at the apostles' feet, but that he kept 'back part of the proceeds', while deliberately giving the impression that he and his wife had brought it all.

Clearly this couple wanted the credit and recognition which Barnabas had rightly been given, but without paying the full price for it. They wanted others to believe that they were more spiritual than they really were. But note how Peter detected the working of the enemy behind their deceit and hypocrisy; 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart', he asked, 'to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land?'<sup>23</sup> And the fact that Peter held Ananias responsible for his action shows that Ananias had *allowed* the devil to do it ... that the devil could only suggest and prompt – that he could not compel.<sup>24</sup>

And, in connection with Satan's temptations, Paul speaks (i) of *his 'wiles'* (or 'schemes') in Ephesians 6. 11, (ii) of *his 'devices'* (his ideas) in 2 Corinthians 2. 11, and (iii) of *his 'snares'* (the traps which he sets) in, for example, 2 Timothy 2. 26. In that last place, the apostle requires the Lord's servant to gently instruct those who oppose him, in the hope that 'God may perhaps grant them repentance, that they may come to a knowledge of the truth, and that they may return to soberness out of the *snare* of the devil (having been, as it were, intoxicated with error), having been taken captive ('having been captured alive', as the word is) by him to do his will'.<sup>25</sup>

And the apostle knew that the enemy stood ready to exploit *any* situation to his own advantage.

Paul could see the red light flashing, for example, in a believer's anger. 'Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (on your exasperation, your irritation)', he wrote in Ephesians 4, 'nor give place (give room, scope, opportunity) to the devil'.<sup>26</sup> Paul regarded anger nursed in the heart as sending Satan an open invitation to take advantage of the situation – and he knew that '*the tempter*' wouldn't need to be *tempted* twice!

And he knew too that Satan was a master of disguise – able, when it suited him, to masquerade as the champion of what was good and right. Speaking of false teachers at Corinth, the apostle wrote in 2 Corinthians 11, ‘such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ’. ‘And no wonder!’, he added, ‘for Satan transforms *himself* into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness’.<sup>27</sup>

And the New Testament makes it clear that nothing but nothing is sacred with the Arch-Deceiver – that he will gladly exploit for his own ends even the best intentions of believers.

Take just three brief examples:

(i) Firstly, he took advantage of Peter’s devotion to the Lord Jesus, at that time when, according to Matthew 16, Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be killed, when Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord; this shall not happen to you!’ And when the Lord turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are an offence to me (you are a hindrance, a stumblingblock to me)’.<sup>28</sup>

A little earlier, with reference to Peter’s great confession, our Lord had said, ‘I also say to you that you are Peter (the stone-like one), and on this rock I will build my church’.<sup>29</sup> It seems to me as if the devil was saying, ‘Oh, a stone-like man is he? Well I can tell you that stones are good, not only for building with, but for stumbling over. Try this one!’

Poor Peter. Fancy letting himself become the mouthpiece of Satan, and that because of his genuine affection for the Saviour, together, of course, with his defective view of what Messiahship meant. Small wonder the same Peter admonishes us, ‘Be sober, be vigilant’.

(ii) Then we find that the devil can even take advantage of times set aside for prayer. In the rather delicate passage at the opening of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul asserts that sexual intercourse within marriage is the mutual right of both husband and wife. The husband and wife should abstain, he makes it clear, only in clearly defined circumstances; ‘that you may give yourselves to prayer’ – and then only by mutual consent – and then only for a short time – and this, he says, ‘lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control’. Paul knew that sensual attractions were rife at Corinth, and he knew Satan well enough to realise that he wouldn’t miss a trick – that there was the very real danger that if the saints didn’t adopt the God-appointed means of satisfying their desires they might easily succumb to Satan’s!

(iii) And, thirdly, we find that Satan is able to take advantage even of our zeal for the purity of the local assembly. In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul wrote concerning the once-guilty-now-repentant brother at Corinth, who had, largely in response to Paul’s first letter, eventually been disciplined by the assembly. ‘You ought’, Paul now writes, ‘forgive and encourage him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with excessive sorrow. Therefore I beseech you to confirm your love to him’, adding, ‘lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices’.<sup>30</sup>

Obviously, Paul could see that the assembly (which was now as reluctant to restore the man as once they had been to discipline him) was in real danger of being outmanoeuvred and outwitted by the devil. Paul could see the risk that ‘Satan should take advantage of us’ (‘should make a gain at our expense, should defraud us’, as the word is) not only by driving the repentant brother to despair, but by depriving the assembly of the contribution and usefulness of one of its number. But we are, Paul could say, wise to ‘his (Satan’s) devices’. Would that we could always say the same!

Remember that little word ‘lest’:

- (a) ‘lest by any means the tempter had tempted you’, from 1 Thessalonians 3.
- (b) ‘lest Satan tempt you through your lack of self control’, from 1 Corinthians 7.
- (c) ‘lest Satan should take advantage of us’, from 2 Corinthians 2.
- and
- (d) ‘lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve through his craftiness’, from 2 Corinthians 11.

You can’t miss it. Paul was for ever peering over his spiritual shoulder, ‘lest’, in some way or other, the devil managed to steal a march on him or on other believers.

Small wonder then that the early church developed a healthy respect for such a formidable foe.

There is no doubt, as our Lord Himself pointed out in His controversy with the Pharisees in Matthew 12, that the realm of darkness stands wholly united, but we know all too well that the Monarch of that realm is second to none when it comes to sowing seeds of division amongst the Lord's people!

You may well have heard the oft-told story about one Admiral Phipps back in the 1750s. The story runs that, when the British and French were fighting in Canada, Admiral Phipps, commander of the British fleet, was told to anchor outside Quebec. He was given orders to wait for the British land forces to arrive, and then support them when they attacked the city. Phipps' navy arrived early. As the admiral waited, he became irritated by the statues of the so-called saints which adorned the towers of a nearby cathedral. So he commanded his men to shoot at them with the ships' cannons. No one knows how many rounds were fired or how many statues were knocked out, but, when the land forces finally arrived and the signal was given to attack, the admiral was of no help. He had used up all his ammunition *shooting at the saints*'.<sup>31</sup>

It's a *good* story – although I have to say that I am unable to vouch for its accuracy, having failed to find one shred of evidence for it in any reliable historical source. But I can tell you with confidence that when *we* spend *our* time 'shooting at the saints', rather than in resisting the devil and assaulting his kingdom, he just sits back and laughs up his sleeve.

We know that in reality the devil is already a defeated foe, with his fate assured,<sup>32</sup> and we have the promise of the God of peace no less that He 'will bruise ('crush') Satan under our feet shortly'.<sup>33</sup>

But in the interval, it is very much a case of 'Danger, devil at work'. For, like it or not, the world in which we live is a combat zone, and, as Christians, we are caught up in the clash between two diametrically opposed kingdoms. And, while the skirmishes and battles still rage, we need to be alive to the dangers, and to enlist in 'God's resistance movement' ... in Peter's words, 'whom resist steadfast in the faith'.<sup>34</sup>

And there are many ways of resisting our adversary. We can certainly learn much from our Lord's victory over temptation at the outset of His public ministry.

For example, not to deliberately expose ourselves to enemy attack. We ought rather to pray, as our Lord taught His disciples, 'do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'.<sup>35 36</sup>

I think of the example set by King Hezekiah of Judah over 2,700 years ago. For, as we read in 2 Chronicles 32, 'when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib (the King of Assyria) had come, and that he purposed to make war against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were outside the city ... saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?'<sup>37</sup> And, frankly, I am a fool if I provide my enemy with that which he can use to defeat me. As one of the Puritans put it, 'He that would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope'.<sup>38</sup>

And, still with our Lord's example in mind, if we wish, as He, to 'overcome the evil one', then, as the apostle John noted in 1 John 2. 14, the word of God must 'abide (must remain) in us' also. And the Saviour showed us that we must not only familiarise ourselves with that word (committing it to memory), but we must live in submission to it, applying it to ourselves individually and personally. And He showed us also that we must be careful how we interpret God's word (always having regard both to context and to what is taught in other passages, interpreting one scripture by another: 'it is written again').

Well did the psalmist write, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee', Psa. 119. 11 – which is, as I understand Mr. D. L. Moody once said, to have 'the right thing, in the right place, for the right reason'.

And last, but by no means least, we must avail ourselves of the help and strength of the Lord.<sup>39</sup> In the context of the terrifying spirit forces arrayed against us, Paul writes in Ephesians 6, 'My brethren, be strong ('be empowered') in the Lord and in the power of His might ('and in the might of His strength')'.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly none of us are a match for the devil in our own strength. I think of the words of the fearful rulers and elders of the city of Samaria when they found themselves under attack from Jehu in 2 Kings 10 (Jehu having recently killed both Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah<sup>41</sup>), 'Behold, two kings have not stood before him', they exclaimed, 'how then shall we

stand?'<sup>42</sup> Good point, gentlemen! And, make no mistake, our Arch-Foe has far more conquests and trophies to his name than Jehu ever did.

And Peter, who warns us to 'be vigilant (be *watchful*, that is)' once discovered to his cost, and contrary to his expectation, that he was by no means adequate in his own strength, failing himself to '*watch*' (the same word) even for one hour in Gethsemane.<sup>43</sup>

And I note that Paul concludes the section about the devil and his forces in Ephesians 6 with the exhortation, 'praying always', alerting us to the need of constant, unbroken communion.<sup>44</sup> 'Whatever you do', Paul is saying, 'don't put the receiver down'.<sup>45</sup> And I suspect that one of the Enemy's most effective ploys is to jam our communications with 'Headquarters'.

There is a great deal of truth in the words of William Cowper's hymn:

'Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;  
And *Satan trembles when he sees*  
The weakest saint upon his knees'.<sup>46</sup>

Make no mistake (if you will excuse the obvious pun) Satan is *devilishly* active in our day – still prowling about, as relentless as he is malicious. And, as the apostle Peter says to us in effect, we ought to be on constant red alert, knowing that 'the enemy' has us well and truly in his sights.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 20. 10.

<sup>2</sup> How often we have had to say, 'An enemy has done this', Matt. 13. 28.

<sup>3</sup> 'There are far fewer references to Satan's work outside the community than to his battle against it. In the world outside he holds undisputed sway except in so far as the witness of the community contests it', the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, article 'σατανᾶς'.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 2. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. 2. 13.

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 5. 19. The only other time we read of 'the whole world' is in 1 John 2. 2: 'we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world'. That is, He is the propitiation – though not the substitute – for those in His enemy's kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. 4. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 26. 17-18.

<sup>9</sup> Col. 1. 9-13.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 19. 19.

<sup>11</sup> W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, article 'Know'.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 19. 13-16.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Thess. 2. 17-18. 'Paul does not connect every illness of Christians or fellow-workers with the devil (Phil. 2. 25–30), nor does he attribute every blocked journey to Satan (Rom. 1. 13). One can only say that in his ministry the apostle thought he could detect the hampering of Satan as well as the guidance of God', the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, article 'σατανᾶς'.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Cor. 12. 7.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.

<sup>16</sup> Remember, he had been 'walking up and down' in Job 1. 7 and Job 2. 2.

<sup>17</sup> 'Your brotherhood', literally.

<sup>18</sup> Rev. 2. 10.

<sup>19</sup> And, possibly, because the church might be discouraged because of the sufferings of the apostle, who was being hounded from city to city.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Thess. 3. 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Cor. 11. 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Acts 4. 36-5. 3.

<sup>24</sup> As an aside, I note that the first internal attack on the church came by way of money – as it had on Israel when the nation first entered the land of Canaan, Joshua 7. And, interestingly, the second attack also came by way of money matters, by which the enemy sought to cause division over the distribution of church funds to the widows, Acts 6. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Compare, 'I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan', 1 Tim. 5. 14-15. More generally, see the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament article 'σατανᾶς'.

<sup>26</sup> Eph. 4. 26-27.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Cor. 11. 13-14. Satan once used a snake as his mouthpiece. Since then he has used men; see 2 Cor. 11. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4. 1-2; cf. 2 Tim. 3. 13; Eph. 5. 6; Eph. 4. 14.

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 16. 21-23.

<sup>29</sup> Matt. 16. 18.

<sup>30</sup> 2 Cor. 2. 7-11.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/criticism.htm>; [www.preceptaustin.org/philippians\\_illustrations\\_4.htm](http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_illustrations_4.htm). But I can trace no historical basis for the story..

<sup>32</sup> 'His doom is writ', Martin Luther.

<sup>33</sup> Rom. 16. 20.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Pet. 5. 9. A slightly different word is used of God 'resisting' the proud, 1 Pet. 5. 5.

<sup>35</sup> It has been well said, 'Flee temptation and don't leave a forwarding address!'

<sup>36</sup> 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts', was how Paul put it in Romans 13. As far as Joseph was able, he avoided not only the bed, but the company of Potiphar's wife, Gen. 39. 10. The Nazarite was not only to avoid drinking wine, but eating the grape, indeed eating anything made of the vine tree – 'from the kernels even to the husk', Num. 6. 3-4. The wise man warns us to avoid those things that tend and expose us to sin; especially the sin of uncleanness. 'Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? So, whosoever touches her (the immoral woman) shall not be innocent', Prov. 6. 27.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 2-4.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Brooks, '*Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*', page 67. It has been well said, 'Give Satan an inch and he'll soon become a ruler'.

<sup>39</sup> Even Michael hides himself behind the Lord; 'when Michael the archangel, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare pronounce a reviling judgement on him, but said, The Lord rebuke you!', Jude 9.

<sup>40</sup> Eph. 6. 10, where Paul near exhausts his vocabulary for power, just as he had at the end of chapter 1; speaking there of 'the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places', Eph. 1. 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> 2 Kings 9. 24, 27.

<sup>42</sup> 2 Kings 10. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Matt. 26. 38, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Prayer at all times and in all places may be lifted to the Lord with just an upward look and an inward attitude, even when no words are spoken.

<sup>45</sup> 'The very gates of hell cannot make us stumble unless we choose to remove ourselves from (God's) protection and power', Steve Farrar, '*Finishing Strong*', page 29, quoting Larry Libby.

<sup>46</sup> William Cowper's hymn begins, 'What various hindrances we meet'.