

long for. However the meaning of this passage may be twofold,—either, that this treasure, which entices the very angels into the desire of it, since it is a spectacle especially joyful to them, is unlocked to us in the gospel; or, that the kingdom of Christ, whose living image is set forth in the gospel, is an object which they eagerly desire to behold. And this second meaning seems better suited to the context.

J. Sr. C.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED ON THE MONDAY EVENING AFTER COMMUNION SABBATH, IN THE U. P. CHURCH, BAY STREET, TORONTO

BY REV. R. IRVINE.

The temptations to which the man of God is exposed, and the support, the promised support, on which he may rely—after he has been at a communion table—may not be inappropriate topics at such a season as the present.

It seems to be the rule which the Adversary invariably follows, that the nearer the believer clings to God, the nearer will Satan cling to him; and it seems to be a rule invariably pursued by the Advocate, that the nearer Satan clings to the believer, the closer does Christ stand to him—thus fulfilling the great gospel promise—as thy day is so shall thy strength be. These two principles are beautifully illustrated in one of the visions of Zechariah—“He showed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.” Joshua was one of the “anointed ones;” he had the holy unction upon him, and, as the High Priest, stood *officially, vicariously, and symbolically*, before the angel of the Lord—his person and office were sacred—his post was honorable and enviable, and, no doubt, it was peculiarly tempting and vexatious to Satan to see him there. To see a believer drawing near before God, and standing close by him in holy communion—to see a Christian in his closet, or to behold him drawing near to God at a communion table, is a source of grief, and a cause of great annoyance to the enemy of your souls, and on this account you may lay it down as a fixed rule, that the nearer you cling to God, the more closely will Satan pursue you—he will hunt you to your knees—to your family altars—to your pews—to your ordinances—and while, with trembling hand and fearful heart, you grasp the bread and wine of the holy communion, “Satan will stand at your right hand to resist you.”

Is not this fact written in the history of God's children in all ages? When the children of Israel heard the intention of God to give them laws and ordinances, and to establish among them a standing system of ecclesiastical rule, they prepared themselves for the receipt of the same, by setting bounds to the mount, and by setting themselves apart for the special solemnities of the occasion; and then they had fully complied, as they supposed, with all the regulations preparatory to the receipt of the law, they addressed Moses, saying, “go thou near and hear all that the Lord thy God shall say unto thee, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord thy God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it;” and Moses went near, but Satan followed. The camp was bounded by Divine command, but Satan was within the bounds. The Church was drawing near before God in her visible head, but Satan was standing by to resist her. And on the return of Moses to the encampment, lo! he discovered that Satan had found his way into her sacred precincts, and converted the whole Church to idolatry. At that very moment, when the whole congregation of Israel were gazing at the cloud encircled mount, and pondering with wrapped amazement upon those mysterious scenes which mingled with the thick darkness where God was—at that very moment, the enemy was creating an insurrection, and stirring up a want of confidence in the King and Head of the Church.

It was immediately after our Blessed Lord had received the ordinance of Baptism, that he retired to the wilderness, and Satan pursued him thither, and commenced his assault by way of temptation. It was just because Paul had been exalted to the “third heaven,” and had seen ineffable visions, that there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. It is unnecessary to prolong this line of illustration; the principle is as truly experimental as it is scriptural. I appeal to the children of God before me, and put the question to their consciences: Have you never felt, in the closet, when alone, that some

evil thought, some messenger of Satan coiled in between God and you? Have you never felt, in the performance of the domestic duties of religion, a coldness—a want of fervour? Have you never been pursued into the very temple of God, by the cares of the world? Have you never felt, on sitting down at a communion table, as though Satan were standing at your right hand, to mangle your communion cup with worm-wood and gall? Oh! have you never felt your souls disturbed, and your spirituality marred, at the very moment when you wished to be lifted up to the third heavens? This was Satan standing at your right hand to resist you—for the closer you cling to God, the closer will Satan cling to you.

Let me proceed to point to the succour and support on which you may rely in the circumstances to which we have adverted. The Lord said, “the Lord rebuke thee, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee,—is not this a brand plucked out of the fire,” &c., &c. See the converted one—look at my Church—a brand *plucked* out of the fire by the strong arm of Sovereign grace—yet even the hand that plucked it out was severely scorched in the act—a brand plucked out of the fire, see the marks of the fire upon it—lo! it is blackened and singed by the flame, but it is *out of the fire*; and now a fair mitre is set upon his head, for the believer is a priest to God, and must offer his daily sacrifices; and, lo! his filthy garments are taken away, the rags of Adam's righteousness are torn from the soul, and a change of raiment is provided and put on. The believer is now a new man—now without—new within—for the holy garments enrobe him. This is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is unto all and upon all them that believe.” In this state, you have the defence of grace within, and the protection of providence without; both are promised to you—both will be given you; but mark you, both must be sought by you. This should be a time of prayer.

The messenger of Satan, which was sent to buffet Paul, chased him to his closet and to his knees, and caused him to beseech the Lord thrice, that the thorn might be taken out of his flesh. God said, “no,” the thorn must remain. I'll not take it out of your flesh. What then? Why, “my grace is sufficient for you,” and for you too, ye tempted communicants. Keep you praying, and I'll keep supplying. In the Pilgrim's Progress, you will no doubt remember the singular phenomenon of a large fire blazing against a wall, and Satan standing by and pouring immense quantities of water upon the flame, and, strange to say, the more water Satan poured on, the higher the flame ascended! this was a mystery which justly staggered Christian, but when he turned and looked behind the wall against which the flame was burning, he beheld Christ standing with a large caldron of oil, and, through a secret pipe, pouring in large quantities of oil, and by this invisible process keeping the flame up.

This fire is divine grace in the heart. Satan is throwing on his temptations and attempting to quench it; but here is Christ secretly pouring in the oil through the invisible channels of communion, and keeping up the flame in the bosom of every saint. Now this grace is promised, just as it is needed; but you are, moreover, to beseech the Lord for it. The grace of the Lord will languish and droop if it be not supplied. It is as much required to recruit and refresh your souls, as the rains and dew of heaven are needed to produce the fruits of the earth; hence the imperative necessity of prayer.

Your warning and your succour are now before you; your enemy is at your door; “Satan is going about.” The tempter is at hand; the sound of the feet of the foe is heard; the clang of arms reverberates in the atmosphere; there comes the Adversary. Flee to your closet; draw your weapons from the armoury of heaven. Seek the alliance of angels as you have the sympathies of the redeemed, and the victory is yours. You remember what Hezekiah did—“go and do likewise”—Sennacherib sent him an insulting message. There he stood at the very gates of the palace, and around his royal person no less than 185,000 warriors. Before another sun-shine, the capital shall be in flames—the monarch captured or killed, and the empire of Hezekiah dismembered. In this perilous moment, the monarch sent not for his privy council—He cited not his officers of war. He conferred not with flesh and blood, but he went into his closet, and he spread out the challenge before the God of Israel, whose armies Sennacherib had defied;