

A Subtile Enemy

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WHEREIN IS SHEWED THE SUBTILTY OF SATAN, AS A TROUBLER AND AN ACCUSER FOR SIN; WHERE MANY OF HIS WILES AND POLICIES TO DISQUIET THE SAINTS' SPIRITS ARE DISCOVERED.

The second general in which Satan appears such a subtile enemy, is, in molesting the saints' peace, and disquieting the saints' spirit. As the Holy Spirit's work is not only to be a sanctifier, but also a comforter, whose fruits are righteousness and peace; so the evil spirit Satan is both a seducer unto sin, and an accuser for sin, a tempter and a troubler, and indeed in the same order. As the Holy Ghost is first the sanctifier, and then a comforter; so Satan first a tempter, then a troubler. Joseph's mistress first tries to draw him to gratify her lust; that string breaking, she had another, to trounce him and charge him; and for a plea, she hath his coat to cover her malice; nor is it hard for Satan to pick some hole in the saint's coat, when he walks most circumspectly.

The proper seat of sin is the will; of comfort, the conscience: Satan hath not absolute knowledge of or power over these, (being locked up from any other but God,) and therefore what he doth, either in defiling, tempting, or disquieting, is by wiles more than by open force, and he is not inferior in troubling to himself in tempting. Satan hath, as a serpent, a way by himself; other beasts, their motion is direct, right on, but the serpent goes askew, as we say, winding and wreathing its body, that when you see a serpent creeping along, you can hardly discern which way it tends; thus Satan in his vexing temptations hath many intricate policies, turning this way and that way, the better to conceal his designs from the saint...

(The Christian in Complete Armour; or, A Treatise on the Saints' War with the Devil... by William Gurnall, Revised and Corrected by John Campbell, London: Tyler & Reed, Printers, MDCCCXLV, 56-57, Paragraph Structure Modified)