

The Trial & Triumph of Faith

SERMON 27

By Rev. Samuel Rutherford

And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out and her daughter laid upon the bed. Mark 7:30.

BECAUSE I haste to an end, and shall not now refute the dream of Papists, from this collecting the lawfulness of their bastard confirmation, and of confirming children by the unhallowed blessing of the prelate; only observe the case of the child. Mark saith, Beblemenen epi tes klines, Cast, in a violent manner, in a bed: for this is not to be a bed of rest and security, as some Papists collect, but to express how violent Satan is in his last farewell, as when he is to be cast out; "When the possessed child is brought to Jesus, and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming." (Mark 9:20.) The devil and the unclean spirits are not thrown out of a person, or land, but they must rage and foam.

1. The Lord saith, "I will cut off the names of idols out of the land, and they shall be no more remembered; and I will cause the prophets, and the unclean spirits, to pass out of the land;" (Zech. 13:2;) but this cannot be done but with great violence; the father and the mother shall thrust through "with a sword the false prophet," even their own son, before he be put out of the land, (verse 3.) The devil will not be removed without blood, sweating, and great violence. When the unclean spirits of men given to curious arts, and the idol, Diana, are preached down in Ephesus, "That whole great city was full of wrath, and they cry out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! And the whole city was filled with confusion." (Acts 19:18,19.) When Christ cometh to the crown and the throne, Jews and Gentiles, the kings and rulers of the earth, Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, are gathered together, (Acts 4:25-27). The word, Psalm 2:1, (Rageshu,) it is, to make a great tumult, as a furious multitude gathered together, that maketh a noise as the noise of a troubled sea. Therefore some, not without reason, say, the sons of Zebedee are called Benairegesci, Sons of Thunder. Luke, (Acts 2,) useth the word after the seventy ephryaxan which Budeus expoundeth of fierce and wild horses. And certainly Christ is crowned upon Mount Zion, with garments rolled in blood; this is a spoiling of, and a triumphing over principalities and powers. Christ dyed the black cross with red blood, when he performed this noble act of redemption, (Col. 2:14,15). So, when Christ entereth in any soul to dwell, there he must first bind the devil, and then spoil his

house, (Matt. 12:29). What wonder is it, that multitudes of heresies and sects, and many blasphemous and false ways arise now, when the Lord is to build up Zion? Satan, when Christ is to sail, and his kingdom a coming kingdom, (as we pray,) raiseth up storms and winds in the broad lake of brimstone, to drown the church of God. Christ hath not fair weather when he goeth to sea, (Matt. 8:23,24,) yet his journey is lawful. When Christ is upon acts of his priesthood, and standeth at the great high altar, with his censer of gold, to offer up the prayers of the saints to God, he casteth fire with the same censer down upon the earth, and there be then thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes; and hence followeth terrible judgments upon the earth, as hail, fire mingled with blood, and a mountain burning with fire, and the third part of the sea becomes blood; and a clear burning star, like a lamp, called Wormwood, making the third part of the waters bitter, doth fall from heaven, which is as much as, when Christ is upon acts of mercy toward his people, pestilent heresies of the popish clergy, and others, darken the third part of the sun and moon, that is, of the light of the gospel, (Rev. 8:1-12). Even as when our Lord Jesus standeth to intercede for the people, and to pray for fallen Jerusalem, which is as a fire-brand plucked out of the fire, Satan standeth at his right hand, his working hand, to hinder him, (Zech. 3:1-3).

2. This resolveth to many their state. Many are free of the devil. 'I thank God,' saith one, 'I know not Satan, nor any of his works: I have peace; Satan did never tear me, nor cause me to fall to the earth, nor doth he torment me.' But this is a fearful condition: (1.) It is an argument of a false peace. When the strong man is within, the house is in peace. Not to be tempted of the devil, is the greatest temptation out of hell; and if there be any choice of devils, a raging and a roaring devil, is better than the calm and sleeping devil. When the devil is within, he sleepeth and is silent, and the house or soul he is in is silent, and there is a covenant with Death and Hell, (Isaiah 28:15). Now, hell keepeth true to a natural man for a time; cessation of arms between the soul and Satan, is security for a time, but it is not peace. The devil's war is better than the devil's peace. Carnal hypocrisy is a dumb and silent thing, but it is terrible to be carried to hell without any noise of feet. The wheels of Satan's chariot are oiled with carnal rest, and they go without rattling and noise. The devil carrieth few to hell with shouting and crying; suspect dumb holiness: when the dog is kept out of doors he howls to be in again. The covenant of Satan to Eve, ("sin and you shall not die,") standeth with all men by nature, till Jesus Christ break peace between us and Satan. (2.) Contraries meeting, such as hot and dry fire, and cold and moist water, they conflict one with another; and where Satan findeth a sanctified heart, he tempteth with much importunity; as at one time, Christ findeth three mighty temptations, and he departed from him only for a little time, (Luke 4:13). Where there is most of God and of Christ, there, there are strong injections and firebrands cast in at the windows, so as some [persons] of much faith have been tempted to doubt, "Is there a Deity that ruleth all; and where is he? We see him not." Another is often assaulted with this, "Is there a heaven for saints? Is there a hell for devils and wicked men? We never spoke with a messenger come from any of these two

countries." A third is troubled with this, "Such a business I have expedite, whether God will or not." The flower of the soul, the high lamp of the light of the mind, is frequently darkened with foggy and misty spirits coming up from the bottomless pit, and darkening any beams and irradiations of light that come from the Sun of Righteousness. Faith is more assaulted than any other grace: Satan shaketh other graces; but this is winnowed between heaven and earth, (Luke 22:31,32). Satan's first arrow shot at Christ, laboureth to put a terrible if upon his light; "If thou be the Son of God." It is as much as, if God be God, if the Son of God be the Son of God. It is not the evidence and certainty of fundamentals, nor the strength of grace, that privilege souls from Satan's shafts. Strength of saving light putteth the saints often under the gunshot of Satan, that he may find a shot at them: there is only law-surety against temptations, up in heaven, when you are over score out of time, within eternity's lists; never till then.

3. Not to be troubled thus, argueth a house not watched. The gates are open night and day, as the gates of hell, that want key and lock; and the soul so secure, that the person seeth not what devils come in, what go out. But the watch set by God's fear, examineth all messengers that come in, all motions, all suggestions, all angels white and black, all rises, falls, ebbings and flowings of love, joy, desire, fear, sorrow, come under search and scrutiny; "Whence come ye? from heaven or hell?" It is time of war with the saints in this life; and then, all cities keep watch, and strangers without a pass are examined, searched, and tried, what correspondence they have with the enemy.

4. God's way of hardening by Satan, is often mysterious, silent, dumb, and speaketh not. "For judgment I came into this world," (John 9:39); but what a judgment!—such as walketh in the dark, and killeth in a midnight sleep, that "they that see may be made blind." This judgment speaketh not. Oh, terrible! God hath put out the man's two eyes; but how, or when, he cannot tell. The nerves and eye-strings of the man's soul are broken; but there was not a crack, nor any noise heard, when God snapped them in two pieces. Christ came when the man was sleeping, and his serjeant, the devil, with him, and put his hand on his heart, and gave the lock, the sprents, and wards of the heart a throw and a crook, and all the keys in heaven and earth cannot shut or open his heart. And this was done without noise or pain;—the man was never put to his bed for the business; the conveyance of the business was spiritual, but invisible. Oh, sleeping world! awake out of your rotten and false peace. Oh, the Lord bindeth men, and they cry not! and the devil bindeth many and they cry not. Pharaoh knew not when his heart was hardened; the conscience saw it not; even as a stone groweth in the bladder without our sense of it: the business was transacted without one cry, or any witness. Carnal hellish security is dumb-born. 'Let my child sleep,' saith the devil, 'and awake him not till the heat of the furnace of hell melt away his false peace.' Why? But men may be deluded, having no bands in their death, as they lived deluded. Wrath and justice are moving to many souls sleeping in death, without noise of feet; the sword of God is crying to souls without any voice; the wheels of the fiery chariots of God's indignation are moving over slain men in

Scotland and England, without the rattling or prancing of the horses. O pity!—a tempest, a devil comes, and steals away the man's soul and his conscience out of him in the night, and he knoweth not. Christ saith, 'Silence, waken him not, till he be over ears in the lake;' and Satan saith, 'Waken him not, till I be sure of him!' A dumb judgment is twice a judgment.

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