No. 95.

On the source of temptation, & the means of resisting it.
James I, 15.14. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, nor tempteth the angels; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"It is one of the most common dispositions of men to say the blame of their woes is external, but when it should be said, Somebody besides ourselves is always in the wrong. We are very negligent in shewing how we should have done, had we not been under the influence of some cause beyond our power. No man loves to think self-accused self-condemned; rather than be placed in so unpleasant a situation, we are willing to seize an advantageous ground, which does not belong to us, and dwell idly on
of defense for our sins unto the sentence ofothers. In this world, to escape from blame, men have gone to a most unhappy extreme, yea, and to make the Most High himself, the author of sin, whose shielded themselves behind the excuse that they were driven to vice by an irresistible necessity, a necessity established by the Author of nature. They have preferred that God has formed them so, that they must yield them- selves to temptation, to the base design of ensnaring themselves to the sweetest of sinning. It seems that some delusion of this sort was abroad in the days of the Apos- tles, even then there were probably some that, who, in their wish to imagine themselves, under a magical spell of wickedness, more restless and very to be wrong. At least we have reason to think that it was an illusion to a certain degree, that it forms even the language of poets; as it is a deformed, painted, creature of all such falsehoods. Yet no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts & entices. It is probable, that in these words, the Apostle had of


to the pernicious trials, to a season of these days are excluded. It wished perhaps to tell them that however strong these trials might be, there was nothing in them as forc ed by God to compel them to yield or become unfaithful. But the principle is a general one, it should be considered a general right. In no sense, in no way, does God tempt us, so that we are under a necessity of committing sin. It is the doctrine of our text. And I have let us not confound together things that are different. There is a sense in which God taxes, or if we choose to use that language, tempt men; that is, when He puts our convinced, in a place, faith or otherwise, to the test, so calling us to meet temptation in one form or another; thus you is said to have tempteth His people, Abraham, when he commanded them to offer up his son, as to have tempted the Israelites to know what was on their hearts, whether they would be faith to his commandments or not. And in this sense God tries all of us, as much as he every year of our lives, as there is no more than a few. The place is in a state of probation to arise of good. This text is the scene really the motto, & the whole of the doctrine, & consequently it must be a season upon one.
shall be exposed to moral dangers, that we may eschew the
good principles by avoiding or overcoming them, or by accu-
merous facts the often before us, that we may exercise the
choice of a moral agent in selecting the right one. There
must be schools of conduct in the ocean of life, that we may
choose which is the best, and when to follow it. To discern
the dangers, before it be too late, we must ourselves learn
the lessons of nature and experience. It is necessary, that
effect of various appearances, some false some true, should be
placed before us, to make us able at the sight of a vigilant,
that we may not act
the great wrongs to the society, to the
of the false, as the true, of valuable
Prudence the mechanism
when confusion and of facts in one shape
of another, is the very fact, that we are placed here to pre-
sure for another condition of being, an obscure or truths, that shall
state of providence. For what is the constitution? What are the
being of vitatious, or the weakening of various principles?
As is this to be effected, but by finding something at hazard,
by being tempted, thus, by entering into a moral war-
fare we mean should we suggest it?

The answer to the above,
That burn before they are kindled.

So it is with human character; it must pass through terri-
tory dangers, before it can stand erect in the strength of
permanence. Many all the God dangers are blest to mankind;
we are not to think that He interferes in a supernatural
way to try us, but He has so arranged the constitution,
thing, as to make it necessary that we should be exposed
to the dangers of daily rising, as well as have the chance
giving right, that wise should have its allurements and
its authority. But all this, if rightly viewed,
will not lead us to reason, as it will cause us to water, to
to a heaven of peace. This then, is not the kind
traitor, in the slightest means, when he says, "let men do
that he is tempted of God." So, in our temptation, it is to lead
us to say, or as refute, that God tempts us, as measured
de, in order to draw us on to sin, or with such soulful
distractions, that resistance is impossible. We are not in
any sense, if so, directly by implication, to charge upon
God; we may not with a fir-fence hear, have got the box
of guilt into the bosom of the throne of heaven. One
would think that we should hardly mind the preaching
of an Apostle, to verbal and impurity as this, if that was
never have the madness to say, that he is tempted by God, in a bad sense... And yet this is often concluded, indeed directly and plainly, from hence: yea, and some ingenious and subtle reason on the ground, that it is human nature to sin, and that no human power can secure them from the unavoidable weakness and corruption of guilt, and therefore, they must too indulge, that the chain, or bounds them, though it may pass through various windings, is ultimately held by the hand of the Almighty: yea, that as this is, so many indulgent applications to the breast of the Holy One, that we are tempted by God. One of the most common places with those who have allowed themselves to sink down into vicious indulgence till they no longer wish, till both enjoy and are unable to escape, is that these vices are constitut
And what is this but impiously to invulge the moral delinquencies of the Deity, and make even the throne of the Most High a refuge for iniquity? or to declare, who thinks it worth while to reason at all on the subject, every sinner himself behind this defense, seeks in triumph that help in his excuse. Far from us then be such thoughts as these... Let us remember that it is ourselves who are to blame, every man is tempted, when he is drawn aside by his own lusts and propensities. It is not by the appointment of God, but by the wantonness of man, that temptation becomes too strong for virtue. We suffer the enemy to approach, we are our own baiters, yea, then a drowsy, slothful, and captive? God has placed us in a world, where there are allurements to draw us aside from duty, though He enables us to turn a deaf ear to their invitations, where there are strong and powerful temptations, but at the same time strong and powerful resistances. We are moral agents, and of course free agents, free to obey or disobey the call of God. To go astray is wrong, but not compelled to do so; there is the nature of our moral condition, yet being so... Cannot in any sense be the author of sin. This as a real proposition we shall doubtless all be willing to allow. Yet each man is ready to imagine that his own case is a peculiar one; there is some temptation which assaults him with more force than usual, in some with more evidence, than it ever did any one else. As passion has come against him armed with ten fold more powers than usual. In general he admits the truth of the Scripture assertion that "you will be tempted as beyond what we are able to bear;" but yet he thinks there are exceptions, if his peculiar case is one of them. He can readily then know how easily he could resist the temptation, they are more otherwise than they are. If he considers that his strength does not meet his trials and foes, he has in abundance, and if he has no light, yet, when, while his neighbor in his trial knows his own weakness but is being enabled to such passion, temptation, as more remote, human beings can ever. Thus we allow ourselves to claim all the privileges in the peculiar situation, yet we presume that though they might have come in the context to us, they have been exempted, yet that it could not be expected of us to...
cause we have stronger propensities of more violent passions to contend with. This plea of reasons to exist in so side that sympathy, and so naturally feel its extraordinay difficulties and new Horoscope, is generally only another form of saying that we are tempted by God. We must not treat it simply as if it were the true nature of it to think not or test our own minds. If we are at all God's, we cannot but feel and be affected by the presence of his indulgence, or of a lasting wish to secure the blessing of his indulgence, without incurring the谴责. After all these, probably not the shadow of a fortune for it; for the temptations of spirits, we call the heaviest to ourselves, are shared by thousands, of our fellow men, each one of whom feels the contest to be as difficult as we do. Let us beware how we indulge this excuse. For when we have once come to the opinion that our vices are intrinsically every motive, that should prompt us to war against them is immediately chilled. To a man in such a state of mind, it is vain to point out for encouragement, the means by which we have fought and vanquished in the

field of temptation; when there seems a fearful battle

against them—his answer is ready—they were never tempted as I am. Had they been, they could not have done better. Since, therefore, this plea of fearlessness in temptation is so seldom just it is always so precious a tendency, let us learn to treasure it, in order to make we use for our sins.

We come then, to the principle, that to throw the blame of our vices on the material infirmity of our constitution is an effect, to accuse our Maker, it says that we are tempted of God. The true statement of the case is, that we are tempted only when we are driven away by our own lusts and passions; i.e. that temptation has no force but when we ourselves give it, by our negligence, by corrupt desires. In all our glance at affairs of the means of resisting temptation successfully.

One way of gaining strength to withstand temptation is, to acquire the habit of connecting all our ideas of happiness with pure and worthy objects. This is a habit of real importance, if the earlier it is established, the more
he thinks of pleasure only as it connected with the less gratifying emotions of his nature. In saying apples, still less
least from this false region of ideas, he becomes the pupil
gint of every temptation, without a struggle
of vice, of pleasures to accidents, without a struggle
mayth glass. It is the part of wisdom, then, if
would prevent our nature against temptation, to form as
early as possible, before we shall have lost the power.
by doing it, the habit of looking to have sources of pleas-
ures, of connecting pleasure with duty, of finding de-
light only in the path of obedience to heaven.

The man
who has accustomed himself to associate all his em-
tions of felicity with virtue, who thinks of gratification
as consisting in doing the will of the Almighty, whose
feelings of joy, of pleasure are linked to the faith-
ful performance of this duty, to the imitation of moder-
ence of nature, such a man has placed a sure wall of defense around the
good principles he has observed. Temptation of its pl,
it may come to him, but it comes weak, it
from the deeper sense of its own. To him the de
ting away its sting - the voice of the d
ing pleasures becomes merely
pleasure, and the more pleasure in accordance
still the temptation. It cannot prevent him from his course.
Another powerful source of strength against temptation is to be found in cultivating a lively sense of the presence of God. Unless we dare deny the existence and presence of the Almighty, if we have not cast off every feeling of reverence for the Creator of the Universe, the conviction that He exists as our thoughts and actions must operate as a strong guard against the allurements of carnal desire. It is in a great degree from the want of this sense of the presence of God, that man rush to impure gratifications as he delay's5 speedily. It is not because they do not acknowledge the Being of God, is that He governs the world, but because they do not bring home to their minds the truths which are so clearly believed. We have a disposition to place the Deity far from us in our thoughts, to see Him as it were only in the distant horizons of His glory, there is something so antithetical in the conception of this character, that we can hardly realize the nearness of such a Being to us, It requires more conviction, more effort to make our conviction of the omniscience and God, quickening presence operative, it is a habit of thought and feeling which must be cultivated and cherished, by making the character of God the subject of frequent and intense reflection.

But when it has acquired that ascendancy in our minds which it deserves, it must furnish the most powerful arms against the force of temptation. While we firmly believe and practically feel, that He, who is of purer eyes, to behold iniquity, is looking when we, we must hold back our steps, oppose to enter the forbidden ground of sin, War as we do, with the full conviction that the Almighty is by his side, would dare to disobey his laws.

When temptation arises with all its chains, we would draw to the battle of the devours, other person is urgent of clamorous gratification, when more futs in various form, is deceitful faces to decay us to ruin, then let that reflect inward, when God seek me, answer every invasion so gratification, every allurements, and every allurements, let it be written as an inscription on our hearts and minds, but to be effaced, let it be to us a shield of heavenly strength against the fiery darts, of the more awful assaults of vicious despair, and when we turn aside from the straight ways of our duties, let us remember there is One enough, who will mark our deviations, record it in the book of remembrance.
Once more; we may derive abundant strength from the use of the means of grace. The powers of temptation, from the use of the means of grace, begin in general, from contemplating the example of the wise and good. In order to resist its allurements, we must be supported by the means of grace. Mental prayer must be supported by the means of grace; we must not be content with the mere use of the means of grace. If we would give energy to our prayers, we must give attention to the means of grace. If they are like the pool of Bethesda, we shall find, in the use of the means of grace, that our hearts are filled with a new and a more permanent joy.

Let us consider the consequences of sin. The loss of the light that shines from heaven; the loss of power, reason, mind; to a habit of reliance on our experience of God and of the love of God; to Him; let that question stand well in your hearts. What shall I do? The great sinfulness of sin against God. Our sins may be in some cases, degree, prepared to make the act, the word, the means, the means of temptation. And yet more; receive the heart, the spirit of that most essential doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of a future life. If there be any evidence that our feelings are sensitive to our sins, that they are liable to be caught with the seed of sin; if we are taught, that when vice holds at bay their elements, they spread their feast, and invite us to partake, it is not merely the present indulgence to which we are called, but we are to consider that every act of iniquity gratification does something towards making up that character of character in which we are to stand at the bar of God. The form of temptation has a long train of evil behind it; and though it induces us to the crime with any deceits, yet they do not speak there. They are the unseen world of the shall say, where their sacrifices may stand. When, therefore, the Lord discloses to us a future life, when all the monuments of our pride, of folly, of toils shall be forgotten, of earth, we shall present everything with looking back upon us. To the reader, there is only eternal possession man can achieve here, when the
religion of Jesus presents us with such prospects, it nave-
by furnishes us the best arms against temptation. We can
clothe ourselves in that armor only by combating the
spirit of this religion. Still further, from the evident
engagement you may see the spirit exemplified in
the lives of godly men, of those who have stood in
the pest of duty in times of darkness, or storm, who
have heard the storm promises, offer of flee with no feeling
that is seen, who have looked on the obtaining
rewards of the tempted, of woe and rest. Amore all these
are bright, holy examples to which they should look
for support. The example of Jesus, of him who was the
home of the heart of the multitude or multitudes
harassed by the arm of power, moved onward from the
line of duty, who could neither be allayed by temptati
nor driven by threats from the mighty for ever. I must
write the words of them so, was the language of his soul. I shall
then, turn to the example of the religion of x: here with
rigor all the means of religious improvement is play
for the blessing of God in your understandings. It is this way,
join this may way, that you can help in the influence of
the spirit of God. As these influences are not uncommon
superaturally, but through the medium of our own con-
deavors to know a do this will. "Wherefore, in this language
of St. Paul, "wherefore, take unto you the whole armor
of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil
day, of having been all the stand so."

Feb 3 1821

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Otho, who hast appointed us our condition here below, hast given us the means of doing thy will, we pray that we may learn to estimate as we ought our duties and our obligations. May we form true and worthy conceptions of the nature of this state of probation; remembering that there has been an assurance of the formation of character to prepare for reward or glory. Otho, who canst not be tempted with evil, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, save us, we beseech thee from ourselves, save us from our passions and vices. May we not yield to the force of temptation, but may we put on the whole armour of God, take the shield of faith in thee, that thus we may stand against the assaults of our mental enemies. We look to thee for strength of protection, fraught with the sense of thy presence ever be with us to animate and guard us. May we so reflect on the realities of a future life, as to be able in all temptations to come off as conquerors and more than conquerors.
At Mr. Trott's (Bot.) Feb. 25th, 1827, afternoon.
At Mr. Phipps (Bot.) March 1st, 1827, afternoon.
At home (March 11th, 1827, afternoon.
At Mr. Patchman's (Bot.) April 8th, 1827, afternoon.
At Brookline (Bot.) Sept. 9th, 1827, afternoon.
At Mr. Leake's (Bot.) Feb. 10th, 1829, afternoon.
At Mr. Goff's (Boston) Aug. 13th, 1827, afternoon.
At Dr. Porter's (Boston) Sept. 22nd, 1822, afternoon.
At Trego (Mr. Bickle) Nov. 10th, 1822, afternoon.
At Brookline (Bot.) June 20th, 1821, afternoon.
At home, April 17th, 1827, afternoon.