No. 176.

"Lead us not into temptation."
Matth. VII, 13. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

The meaning of this petition, as used by the disciples of Jesus, is this: “suffer us not to be overcome by the temptations of adversities, which may meet us in our course of duty, but enable us to escape from the temptations to evil, with which we are surrounded.” And it certainly was a petition of those they stood in need. The greatness of their trials was in proportion to the greatness of their task of office. When we consider how difficult and dangerous it was then to be a priest, how much more so to be a defender and preacher of it, we shall not wonder that Jesus taught the prayer for deliverance from temptation. Their situation was peculiar; of the inducements to serve from the line of fidelity were peculiar too. It is no easy task to hold on without wavering, when the whole world are against us; to have no regard to the suffering of hazard, to ask we shall be prepared by an un-
deviating adherence to duty, to despise fruitfulness, till death itself, as one in the faith of its cause, as with God's ancient leaders. There would be something in all this to make the stoutest heart shake, if the poorest pus, base more, such a cause would be surrounded with a thing of temptations, that none but the, all are subject, and with might in the inner man, and no one. In each scene, an all the first disciples were to act. In a human point of view, there was everything to discourage them, everything to undermine their own in the warfare of truth, everything to induce them to convince the cause, expose to the enemy. Some of the strongest motives, oh, operate in the human mind, were in powerful action to draw them away, from allegiance to their Master. What wonder, then, that those impressed upon their minds by the solemn petition in the text, the necessity of actual seeking divine assistance, what wonder that he directs them to pray to be delivered from the evil, that was arrayed against them, to be saved in the hour of trial, to be made strong against temptation, to be upheld by an Amis arm in the day of fancing, fear? But what shall we learn to be derived from this petition is a general one, may be profitably applied to all in all ages. We are all, as men by the very necessities of our condition, exposed to temptation; we all have need of the springs to be saved from falling. But as we consider this part of the springs in its application to ourselves, the petition as it stands in our Bible, is "Lead us not into temptation." At first sight, it would seem as if this would direct us to pray, that we might never be exposed to temptation. It is evident, however, that such cannot be its meaning; for to temptation or must we not be exposed, if we are any virtue that deserves the name, or any firmness, of principle. And we are led likewise to suppose, that such a word, is its meaning, from the philosophy of the whole petition. "Deliver us from evil" implies that evil is to be encountered; we cannot doubt, that we are understand it as a prayer, that we may avoid temptation altogether, but that we may not be overcome by it, that we may be enabled to rise above it, if you stronger by the contest. It is not possible, it is not desirable, to avoid all temptation. It is the atmosphere, in which good principles must be strengthened, stinister to. Exercise is necessary.
to give vigor to our limbs & health to our frames; not
less necessary is temptation to give vigor to health to
our love of goodness to our good habits... We are to exer-
cise our voluntary powers in choosing the good, avoiding
the evil; therefore both the good & evil must be present to
us. If these were nothing to be lost, there would be
nothing to be gained... If there were no hazards, there could
be no security... There is a worm for the crown of the
year; but it is to be menaced by an overturning. There is, it
is true, a set of smooth, of fair creatures at the end who
has resisted the buffeting of the storms of life; but this
is not the virtue, in which we choose a high, undaunting
confidence. The character, around which our best feelings of
respect & confidence gather, first of all, is that which
have been formed in the midst of temptation, have grown up
in scenes of trial, have met obstacles & overcome them;
have passed through the very furnace of suffering,
have come out, not only unscorched, but purified; we
have taken up the cross & borne it; till it has lost its
weight; it has not always sailed in smooth seas
with auspicious gales, but have been tossed in the waves
of distress; the fort of death, not death, of deformity &
impotence, of reproach & quicksands... This power is the stabil-

hardly virtue we value & reverence... the virtue of the
age... tried airline who is ripe for death of age. God leads
us to be tempted, as a thing in which we may turn to a blessing,
the steps, through which we must ascend. The one & only
are the steps of trial & hazard.

We are not to bring to be saved from temptation
another & not to be saved from danger by tempta-
tion... But this prayer supposed otherwise, in our part, to
take us then to consider some of the means of escaping from
the power of sinful allurements.

1. We must neither have so much confidence as to ex-
pose ourselves rashly to meet its temptations, nei
nor much fear, as to suppose all temptations impossible. Both these
errors are dangerous; in some cases fatal to our moral
life. He, who is too confident in his strength, will rush
desperately to destruction. There is a caution necessary to bear
with regard to our moral enemies, as well as with regard to
ter their enemies. We know, there are some temptations,
even in all human calculation, will be too strong for us... from
it is better to flee, than to be led by them. No prudent
general would risk an engagement, in which he was made
certain of being defeated, if having his forces all captured,
no man, who wishes to retain his virtue, will voluntarily

put himself in the way of allurement to do wrong, he on any ground of probability, will be more than he can withstand. Temptation, I know, must be met - must be resisted; but there are necessary unavoidable temptations, especially at the commencement of a virtuous career. It is an excellent rule connected with this subject, to avoid as much as possible all those situations, in which our station now would lead as to find present good in doing something wrong. In most cases, we may be almost certain, whatever strength of resolution we may bring to such situations, that some of late or even future, would lead us astray; and if we have gradually, almost imperceptibly, strayed from the path of duty, it is far better to return to it, and by the constant practice of virtue, to strengthen our wills and our powers of resistance. In time we may become strong enough to throw aside, without any apparent danger, those evil principles which are now in the struggle. The utmost care must be taken with the utmost caution. The firmest resolutions, the determination that we will not once more fall into the sin of folly, with the confidence of this, we are safe. I am sure, as we imagine, for every hazard, but temptation comes. When folly and passion overcome us, and our principles, our resolutions, our hopes, become our dearest and most cherished of all, the voice of wisdom, the voice of reason, the voice of conscience, must be heard, and must be obeyed.
false of every temptation... No, thing, it is as impious, so it should be discouraging, to believe that we never give ourselves up to such enhuman weakness... but also we renounce all arrogant pretensions to strength, all self-sufficiency, basing our own strength... let us not forget that by the favour of God, encompassing us as we are, we may go forth, ready, fail as we are, to the contest, even back with the song of victory in our months, even the victory of those who put their trust in God.

2. Another reason to be used against the strength of temptation is, to act with decision. By this I mean, that one should not hold a party with various allusions, one act to discuss the question, the other to indulge, one step or the other indulgence in sin. In this respect, it is very true, that he who deliberates is probably lost. Everyone must that you reason with the enemy, the less reason, you are weakening your powers of resistance... because you are giving more... before... imagination... passing corrupt propensities to steal into the debate... give the false and delusive colouring to all the considerations... that are advanced. Have a man on the brink of a precipice, would stand there, reason with himself, whether he were better to retreat, or to strive to catch at some of the...
flowers, if any chance to grow over the edge? - No, bound

from the place; trembling for his safety, would block

back with the day on his escape. With no less earnestness shall

he flee, who finds himself coming near to the forbidden

ground of sin, so that he can already see the fruits &

hear the noises of the enchantress. Let them not delay a mo-

ment, for to delay is often to be ruined. When once we have

begun to consider whether we cannot in some way make

conscious head so far as to allow some little liberties, as

we have to be wrong, we may be sure, we are in most

imminent danger, the continuance of vice loses its defini-

ment, while we gaze upon it. We find endure, that help

than embrace. When we have thought of it awhile, there

appears to be something pleasant about it, but as we ac-

knowledge it to be; - there can be no harm, or say, in a little

indulgence, if this we take one step; when that is taken

the next is still easier, each ascending step becomes yet

more tempting, we have yet less and less strength of virtue,

till at last we are carried along by a dark spirit, till

we have no inclination to resist. May we know

not to what we expose ourselves, when once we begin to

yield to the charms of temptation. There is a giant more

hanging on, the steps of the first transgression we commit,

though it may be small; but in that are contained the

seeds shall all the black, fearful train, that may follow. We

you first enter the avenues to what you deemed the ideal

full mansion of pleasure, you may be charmed with the

gay allusions around you; but as you proceed, the

way becomes more narrow and dark; it is strown with the

beaching bones of notaries, who have been there before you, &

the scene is changed into a chamber house of vice. It is an

important rule then to resist, the beginnings of evils, for

after that, resistance may be in vain.

3. Again, we may furnish ourselves with arms against


temptation, by familiarizing our thoughts with the conse-

quences, too, the respective courses be fore we may lead.

There is much in this; at least, there is much in it; too

mind, that is not too far gone in the degradation of

vice. I know there is a state of the heart, in which no re-

gard is paid to consequences, a hardened insensibility to all

the sufferings we may bring on ourselves or others

by our guilty pursuits. To such, I know no words lan-

guage can be addressed; for if common motives deter-

menishes they are wholly unacceptable. This indeed is

true. A worthy soul, if knowledge can send us from its

shuddering...
all fellowship with the works of darkness. Are you not? In fact, then, that you have parents, who are dead, may perhaps be embittered by your vices, and who may bring sin on their graves, because they have been detained by their affection or carelessly spurned with unkindness. Are you a parent? Remember, then, you have children, whose character and happiness for life may be ruined or impaired by your guilty presence, who may be made wretched hereafter by the inheritance of shame and vice, whoso specially afflicts them. So with regard to yourself; remember that the consequences of vice do not cease with this life; they will go with you into the unseen world, and shall say, "Where then were your easy virtue?" If now, then, is much in this picture to deter, there is surely something in the opposite picture to allure. Look at the bliss of virtue and purity: if you will want me to address you farther, I would give you the same advice. - Have then, in these considerations, the memory of vice on the one hand, the happiness of virtue on the other. You will find the temptations to vice more alluring. You will say to yourself, "I cannot resist vice with all its consequence; itself it might have some attractions; but..." But there are many who have gone to sin in this particular form, who have still some moral feelings, that can be touched and softened by a sense of the evils they are bringing on themselves or others. So with Dagon, if you will better arm your soul to return to the good path, you may find motives of great power, in reflecting on the bad consequences of such an unhappy course must in the end conduct you. Stand still a moment, I look at this picture: you are self-despised, despised, diseased, - with infamy, disease, and death hanging on your steps; your friends, those who still love you, when perhaps you have weeping tears of bitter- ness over your course, participating in your shame, your sufferings, your privation. Look at this long enough to realize it. Would you be the man, in whom all these consequences should take place? - Great, then avoid the temptation of vice, as you avoid the path to hell. And in the thought in your mind, if you will be furnished with sufficient answers to every invitation, every allurement, you will say to yourself, "I cannot resist vice with all its consequence; itself it might have some attractions; but..."
From a deeply rooted, will do more than any thing else, to aim the young heart in simply divine against the assaults of temptation.

One other ground against the face of temptation, is, I shall mention is false founded on the common errors of religion. ... And this is rightly applied, of the greatest power in importance. The motives of men are healing to purifying; if we drink of them, we shall not thirst for the enchanting cup of guilty pleasure... the consideration of religion dwell in your own souls, let them be the daily food of your souls, if you will have an answer for every allurement. "One of the great instruments of withstand any temptation is a firm belief in a perfect accord to the promises of the gospel. For the scriptures speak great things concerning faith. It quenches the fiery darts of the enemy, with St. Paul: it overcomes the mind, St. James, for it is temerity, it is a weapon, St. Paul is a great seat: by faith God is pleased. By faith are some things: by faith we are saved. It gives great patience to suffer: it inspires mighty confidence to hope; it communicates strength to perform; it imparts in fallible certainty to enjoy. But then it is not pr
must observe a notion of opinion situated merely in the understanding, but a principle productive of duty which not only a believing in the propositions of scripture, as we believe in a proposition of science, for what we are called to the better nor the worse: but a firm belief of things so great, that no man who can choose, I think, should act a desire towards a definite object. can possibly neglect them: this faith which justifies the faithful, confirms the just & cures the matter: this faith & work, placing us above the sad & sad condition of the world, will make heaven the end of our desires. God the object of our worship, the scriptures the rule of our actions, "the spirit of God in me might conquer his assistant". Hence then, a strong weapon towards against temptation. The intimation of the gospel are the things one should love for their utility in the hour of temptation, if for nothing else: they will guard us from the evil of the shame of being seduced by allurements of vice: let us then sanctify & ennoble them in our minds, let us guard them with jealousy: encompass them about with nice feelings: let us watch them with kindly af-

prehensions; I love them, glory in them, preserve them as the children of Israel preserved the ark, the Spirit keeps the gates of paradise", back to that form of glory, which is hard for the servant. who stands at the post of duty on that morning: you will be strong them to despise the transient glitter of the prizes of earthy things.

... have sketched to you, thou, a few of the ways in which you may hope to resist temptation successfully. May that God, the never deserts the humble, sanctify him, that in the hour of trial turns out its foremost page to him, enable us to begin the resistance in earnest: the strength of our will be neither damped away its triumphs. the dead, one victory will secure another, and our will bring new pleasure: "still we shall stand for this, the woman of God as conqueror is more than conqueror with him who hath loved us." Jan. 1823.

Feb 4th 1820. Athens, fine morning.

Athens, Dec. 6th 1833. Fine day.