

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION, AND OURS

By H. S. Dow

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

I would have our readers note, that the three words in the above text, "we are yet" are written in italics, which indicates they were not in the original manuscript from which our English Bible was translated, but were supplied by the translators. Some Bible scholars think, that in supplying these three words, the translators missed the real meaning of the scripture text. Without the words, "we are yet" the text would read: "But was in all points tempted like as without sin," meaning that our Lord was in all points tempted like as we are when saved from sin.

It seems very reasonable, as well as scriptural, that Jesus was not tempted like a sinner is tempted, because there was no depraved, carnal nature in Him that Satan could appeal to. On one occasion He said: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). It also seems that in our Lord's temptation and trial His deity did not appear, but stood aside, as it were, to let Jesus' humanity take the full force of Satan's power. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:14). So it was the humanity of Jesus that was tempted, not His deity. He was the God-man.

Then, someone may ask, How was He tempted? He was tempted like a holy man is tempted, like as we are when saved from sin. Satan appealed to His natural, God-given desire. Our Lord had fasted forty days, did eat nothing, and afterwards hungered. See Luke 4. His human body doubtless was weakened and cried out for food. The human body has certain desires which are to operate according to God-given laws, for our good and His glory. At times these cry out for expression, and at such times Satan may appear and offer us a short cut to the gratification of our desire. "Command this stone that it be made bread." Getting satisfaction by Satan's suggestion, or temptation, is surely sin, and will cause guilt and great regrets.

When tempted, if our temptation is according to natural, God-given laws, we do well to remember that God has promised to supply all our needs, and to give us the desires of our heart if we delight ourselves in the Lord.

In His first temptation Jesus met and defeated Satan with the promise of God. See Luke 4:4. Our text says, He "was in all points tempted like as without sin." Note, please, as you read Luke 4, that there were three points at which Satan approached Jesus. First, to make bread of a stone; second, he showed Him the world with all its glory, and offered to give it all to Him if He would worship him; third, he tempted our Lord to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, with the promise that He would be upheld by angels and receive no harm.

It is interesting to note that these three temptations by Satan were not new, for it was at these three points that he tempted and defeated Mother Eve in the beginning. See Gen. 3:6: "And when the woman saw (that is, Satan showed to her) that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof."

Note also, the three points of attack referred to in the foregoing agree perfectly with what John says are the objects of temptation in the world. Read, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I. John 2:2-16).

Note please, the similarity between the temptations of Satan at different times. First, the woman saw the tree was good for food. (Gen. 3:6). Satan said to Jesus, "Command that this stone be made bread." He appealed to the natural desire for food. Second, the tree was pleasant to the eyes. (Gen. 3:6). Note the similarity. Satan showed Jesus the world with its power and glory. (Luke 4:6). Third, the woman saw that the tree was a tree desired to make one wise, self exaltation. Note similarity. Satan told our Lord to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and that angels would bear Him up. (Luke 4:5-6).

Note also how these temptations correspond to John's description in I John 2:16. First, lust, or desire of the flesh, natural desire for food; second, lust, or desire of the eyes. Satan showed Jesus the world with its power and glory. He knew that our Lord came to redeem the world, the desire of a great soul. Third temptation, John says, is pride of life, self exaltation. The tree was much desired to make one wise. (Gen. 3:6). Satan told Jesus: "Cast thyself down from hence . . . He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep thee." (Luke 4:10-11).

Now the question arises, how do these temptations apply to godly people who are saved from sin? Let us follow John's order given in I John 2:16: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These, as we have noted, correspond with the temptations of Eve, and of our Lord. First, Satan's appeal to a natural law, desire for food. Godly people are sometimes tempted to compromise and do a questionable thing, that is not scriptural, or that is forbidden to godly people. Business men sometimes do unnecessary work on Sunday and say, "Well, we have to have food to live." One preacher was thought to be quite radical in preaching the Word and some people waited on him and said, "You can't live here and preach like that." The preacher replied, "I don't have to live here, but I do have to preach like that." We have known some girls who had a strong desire for some young fellow, and in spite of the advice of godly parents and good friends, they went on and married him, and in a short while—a few months or years—they regretted the awful mistake they had made.

Second temptation, the lust of the eyes. Satan and the world still make things look very beautiful, and so tempt God's people to invest much money, money that could be used to send the gospel to the many thousands in other lands who have not heard it. Beautiful homes, furniture, cars, clothes in abundance to beautify their persons, all costing money which God could use to save the heathen.

Third temptation, the pride of life, self exaltation. We know of a church which had an excellent organ and two years ago installed a new forty-thousand dollar one, because they wanted to have the finest organ in Canada. There is also the temptation to use various means to attract people to our churches, when what we need first to have success is God. Duncan Campbell said: "The kingdom of heaven is not going to be advanced by our churches being filled with men, but by men in our churches

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thus renewed does not need an endless list of prohibitions to keep him out of sin, he has lost his love of sin, his will is on the side of law, and the law of God has superseded the love of the world. He is saved from guilt, from condemnation and the mastery of sin. He is saved unto a new life, unto divine love, and a life of obedience. But he is not yet saved from the motions of sin. There remains a bias of nature resultant from the fall—an infection dangerous and deadly. From this, he must be set free. The ever-living Christ comes now to his help in one of the supreme functions of His priestly office, namely that of cleansing. And we read that, "If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

Here is a cleansing that reaches the very springs and core of moral being. The center of life cleansed, by so much greater power and merit, as the blood of the God-man Jesus Christ is superior to, and more efficacious than, the blood of animals, by so much more as deity is incomparable with the creature. By so much more as the priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. By so much more as the priesthood of Jesus is an unchanging one over against the imperfect and changing one. By so much more as the reality is greater than the shadow—the anti-type greater than the type—the eternal than the instantaneously wrought experience, it is a process in which the great high priest is daily employed.

The work of transformation must succeed the work of life giving and cleansing. We are changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of God. The heavenly pattern is not completed until we are "like Him." That is the revealed goal. Transformed into the likeness of Christ, until we possess or are possessed of the mind which was in Christ. Oh, glorious hope and gracious reality. Saved to the uttermost! Let men and angels rejoice. God has triumphed over sin, and the priesthood of Jesus avails for our eternal progress in the knowledge and holiness of God. To His name let there be everlasting praise.—American Holiness Journal.

being filled with God."

Let us remember, friends, that it is not a sin to be tempted. The sin comes through yielding to the temptation. The apostle said: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." So, when you are tempted to do something and you are not sure whether it is right or wrong, stop and ask yourself this question: If I do this, will it glorify God, or will it gratify my own selfish desire? Will it bring the praise or worldly people to me, or am I doing it to exalt myself? If you cannot honestly say, I am doing it for the glory of God, then resist the tempter and do not yield. Wait on the Lord until He makes clear His will unto you, for He has promised to direct our paths and to guide us into all truth. Let us pray.