

mand that these stones be made bread," said the enemy.

Through and beyond the veil of manhood Satan perceived that He to whom he thus spoke was the Son of God. He was man, but infinitely more. Hence he suggested to Him to command these stones to be made bread. Had the Son of God so commanded He would have taken Himself out of the state of absolute dependence for direction which marks perfect manhood. He, and He alone, was in that condition.

Hence His beautiful rejoinder, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That is the becoming attitude of man.

When we test ourselves by this standard what constant failure we must own. What a contrast are we to Him. As man He had no word to transform the stone to bread, and therefore He refused to act; and what a wonderful thought it is that He who had power to do so would not relieve His need without a direct Scripture for so doing. We, alas! often infringe Scripture to satisfy our wants. He would not break His fast without Scriptural permission; and to Him "every word" of Scripture was the word of God. Foiled in this first and most open assault, Satan conducts the Lord to the holy city, and sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple. Proof against "the lust of the flesh," would He yield to "the pride of life?"

To do exploits and make ourselves a name is pleasing to us, for we naturally love self-exaltation, but in this case such a feeling was unknown.

To cast Himself from the pinnacle,

even when Scripture seemed to provide for such a contingency, would have been a mere tempting of God, and would not have been a step in what are called in the psalm from which Satan quotes His ways. These ways were ways of dependence; this would have been one of presumption. The man of dependence does not tempt God. Such was Jesus, and again the enemy is foiled. But not yet hopeless of conquest, he takes the Lord to a high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, saying, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me!" "Worship me." That was the aim of the enemy. "All these things" for unfaithfulness to God! "It is written," said the Lord, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Here the foe showed his hand. He sought the worship that is due to God alone. The perfect Man, again quoting the Scriptures, gave the final stroke, saying as well, "Get thee hence, Satan." "Then the devil leaveth Him." He is defeated by One who had assumed manhood, and who used no other weapon than the word of God.

Perhaps nowhere does the perfection of manhood shine so brightly as in the temptation. For Satan to cope with Godhead were folly, but here is a Man, one too who was "an hungred," and who in His conflict did not resort to means beyond the reach of any. He simply quoted the written word of God, and that sufficed. Here was a Man perfectly controlled by the Word, and for such an one Satan was no match. The strong man was bound by the stronger.