

tween what we are and what we know we ought to be.

What are they? We have said that it is no use to make a catalogue of them; but still we can see that there are three places they can come from, and that those which come from each place have a likeness of their own.

(1) They come from outside. We get up in the morning, and in our prayers ask earnestly for strength to pass the day in the "practice of the presence of God"; and we go down to our work filled with good intentions. Some fellow comes along with a temptation of one kind or another, and before we know it we are down. We looked too long at the temptation, and that's a terrible mistake. For it is always and everywhere true that if we look at a sin or a temptation it grows less dreadful to us, and the longer we look the less great seems the sin—

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with his face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Each one of us can think of scores of hindrances that come to us from outside—and they are the ones which make us angry, for they seem so unnecessary.

(2) They come from inside, of our own selves. We have a pet sin. We try hard to root it out, or think we're trying hard; but after awhile we think we're safe, and begin to feel that it is a grand thing to be free, and that our will must be stronger. We grow to be quite proud of ourselves, when down we go again worse than ever. Self-indulgence is a terrible hindrance. In these days fasting and bodily discipline are not practised as they ought to be, and the result is that our bodies are a very real obstacle to us in leading the Christian life. They say that often a man who has been a slave makes the hardest kind of master when he's promoted.

So it is with the body. It ought to be "kept under." It should be a slave, but if it isn't watched it soon becomes the hardest kind of a master. So much, then, for hindrances that come from within.

(3) But there is a third place to which we have to look for perhaps the worst hindrances of all.

We are kneeling at the altar, thinking of the great mercy and goodness of our Saviour in coming so close to us: and we are striving with all our might to keep from us everything, every thought, except of Him and our faith in Him, and at this holy place, in these sacred surroundings, when we think that everything should be holy and good and pure, there comes into our minds an evil thought—it may be of hatred, it may be of impurity, it may be of deceit; we are startled and shocked at it. Where does it come from? Not from the

world outside, for that is shut away from us in this holy place. Not from ourselves, for we are trying to get rid of it and cannot. Yes, and we notice that this form of hindrance comes to us just at the most sacred times, or just at the times of our highest effort.

Where does it come from? Surely it comes straight from Satan himself, our old adversary the devil, who has such a strange way of getting himself forgotten. Ah! but he's a clever one. You remember how the hymn says:

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Yes, he trembles, and yet often he sees just at such a time the opportunity he wants, and up he comes from his realm of sin, and sends the poisoned dart straight through our souls and wounds them.

Three places the hindrances come from, and, brothers, you must by this time have recognized that all I have done is just to expand and put in plain everyday words those words you know so well which tell us how it is our duty to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, for they are the sources of all our hindrances; those outside—the world; those inside—the flesh; and that other class—the devil.

I have kept you long enough, perhaps, and yet I cannot stop without applying the story about the race to these hindrances, with a view to our overcoming them.

"No. 1" is our model. Never mind the hindrances themselves. Don't examine them, or try to find out how big they are. Don't look at the ones far ahead. As surely as you begin to think, "That hindrance is too big, nobody could expect a little fellow like me to tackle that," the hindrance becomes a barrier that you can never get over.

No. *Respice finem*,—look to the end. What is it? "The stature of the perfect man, Christ Jesus." Keep Him ever before you. Study Him; feed on Him; pray to Him; count all things loss for Him, crucify the flesh for Him, with its affections and lusts, so that you may be able to say (and remember they are the words of a man of like passions with yourself), "And now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

These are the hindrances. Great they certainly are, and impossible for us to get over by ourselves, but with eyes and heart and mind and strength all on the goal, let us "remember that all things are possible to him that believeth," and that we "can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth" us.

A boy, hearing his father pray for the missionary cause, and especially for the wants of the missionaries, that their institutions might be supplied with abundant means, said to him: "Father, I wish I had your money." "Why, my son, what would you do with it?" "I would answer your prayers."