

self-despondency. "There hath no temptation taken you," he says, "but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Let me, therefore, say a few encouraging words from this text to those who are likely to be discouraged under trial.

I. The first word of encouragement which the Apostle gives us here is this: that trial under temptation is the common lot of humanity. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." When men are translated by grace into the Kingdom of God's dear Son on the earth, they are not there and then, in that great rule which admits of so few exceptions, translated into heaven. No; the Saviour asked concerning His disciples, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world; but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Men are left in the world after conversion, right in the midst of the circumstances and relationships in which the grace of God finds them. And, moreover, the world in which they receive their new birth is not changed in any particular to suit them. The paths they have to tread, the road they have to travel are not altered. They are changed, but the world is not. The Christian's lot is not an isolated one. He enjoys no immunity in this respect among men. He is no exotic, no hot-house plant, that cannot grow, that cannot thrive in the open sunshine and outside air, and in the face, too, of the cold and frost of the natural world. He is made, by his very Christianity, more able to bear up against all of these things.

Now, to apply this practically. You have things in your home life that tend to worry you; you have things in your business life that tend to perplex you; you have things in your intercourse with your fellow-men that tend greatly to dishearten you. Are you therefore discouraged and disheartened on account of these things? If you are, just first ask yourself this question, "Am I an exception in this re-

spect in the world? Is my lot of trial a strange, a singular one?" And then, for an answer to it, go out into the world; look around you; see how other men live; get a glimpse of their inner life; talk with them about their home life, their business life, their social life, and you will find, if you are but a fair, an impartial observer, that you are but one of a great brotherhood, a great multitude, upon whom falls not only the sunshine and the rain, but all the ills, all the sorrows, all the difficulties which belong to man as man—a sinner in a sinful world. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man."

My brethren, I do think the reason of discouragement in the great majority of cases is because of the little world in which we live. We shut ourselves up in a narrow house and look not upon the things of other men. Ours is indeed a veritable microcosm—a little world—a world which shuts out everything but self. We are discontented with our lot because we do not know the lot of other men. We think our burden too heavy for our backs because we do not see the loads that lie upon other shoulders. Many of us, perhaps, remember the story of "Little Dot." We remember how the rich, but discontented, discouraged, disheartened lady, residing not far from the city of New York, was at last prevailed upon by some of the Christian workers in connection with the Fresh Air Fund to entertain at her home for a few weeks some of the poor children of the great city. We remember how the opening up before her of the misery and the wretchedness and the want of these poor children was a new revelation to her. We remember how it led her out of the microcosm of her own narrow selfishness into the spiritual world of God, into the glorious life and liberty and love of the Saviour. Yes, when we know the burdens which other men bear, our own are lightened. When we see the lot that has fallen to others, we have reason to thank God that the lines have fallen to us in more pleasant places.

II. The next word of encouragement which the Apostle gives us

here is this: That there is no escape without trial; no salvation without deliverance from something. "God is faithful who will . . . with the temptation also make a way of escape." The temptation and the escape go together. The very same divine act makes both the trial and the way out of it. He will with the temptation, never apart from it, make the way of escape. Have you ever thought of that? These two things must go together. It is just because we are tried, just because we feel the force of the temptation, that we long for deliverance. It is the trial that makes the escape desirable. It would be nonsense to speak of the escape of a person who was in no danger, no difficulty, no distress.

Notice how the trial and the escape, the need and the supply, go together. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The rest promised there is only for a certain class, for those who labour and are heavy laden. The blessing promised is suited to the need felt. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." We speak of that promise as containing the freeness of gospel blessing for the world; and so it does. But, nevertheless, the invitation given is limited in its blessedness to a certain class—to those only who are thirsty. You may induce an unthirsty man to go to the spiritual fountain, but you cannot make him drink. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Yes, only that which was lost. And then think of that other promise which has comforted and strengthened so many of the Lord's people in all ages of the Church: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Think of the fulness of that four-sided promise: "I will be with thee," "the rivers shall not overflow thee," "thou shalt not be burned," "neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." How that provision of grace wraps a man all round in the sheltering arms of God. But