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THE TEMPTED CHRIST.

In one sense, our Lord is His own perpetual theme. He is ever speaking of Himself, inasmuch as He is ever presenting what He is to us, and what He claims of us. In another sense, He scarcely ever speaks of Himself, inasmuch as deep silence, for the most part, lies over His own inward experiences. How precious, therefore, and how profoundly significant is that word here—"in My temptations"! So He summed up all His life. To feel the full force of the expression, it should be remembered that the temptation in the wilderness was past before His first disciple attached himself to Him, and that the conflict in Gethsemane had not yet come when these words were spoken. The period to which they refer, therefore, lies altogether within these limits, including neither. After the former, "Satan," we read, "departed from Him for a season." Before the latter, we read, "the prince of this world cometh." The space between, of which people are so apt to think as free from temptation, is the time of which our Lord is speaking now. The time when His followers "compared with Him" is to His consciousness the time of His "temptations."

That is not the point of view from which the Gospel narratives present it, for the plain reason that they are not autobiographies, and that Jesus said little about the continuous assaults to which He was exposed. It is not the point of view from which we often think of it. We are too apt to conceive of Christ's temptations as all gathered together—curdled and clotted, as it were, at the two ends of His life, leaving the space between free. But we cannot understand the meaning of that life nor feel aright the love and help that breathe from it, unless we think of it as a field of continual and diversified temptations.

How remarkable is the choice of the expression! To Christ, His life, looking back on it, does not so much present itself in the aspect of sorrow, difficulty or pain, as in that of temptation. He looked upon all outward things mainly with regard to their power to help or to hinder His life's work. So for us, sorrow or joy should matter comparatively little. The evil in the evil should be felt to be sin, and the true cross and burden of life should be to us, as to our Master, the appeals it makes to us to abandon our tasks, and fling away our filial dependence and submission.

This is not the place to plunge into the thorny questions which surround the thought of the tempted Christ. However these may be solved, the great fact remains, that His temptations were most real and unceasing. It was no sham fight which He fought. The story of the wilderness is the story of a most real conflict; and that conflict is waged all through his life. True, the traces of it are few. The battle was fought on both sides in grim silence, as sometimes men wage a mortal struggle without a sound. But if there were no other witness of the sore conflict, the Victor's shout at the close would be enough. His last words, "I have overcome the world," sound the note of triumph, and tells how sharp had been the strife. So long and hard had it been that He cannot forget it even in heaven, and from the throne holds forth to all the churches the hope of overcoming, "even as I also overcame." As on some battle-field whence all traces of the agony and fury have passed away, and harvests wave, and larks sing where blood ran and men

groaned their lives out, some grey stone raised by the victors remains, and only the trophy tells of the forgotten fight, so that monumental word, "I have overcome" stands to all ages as the record of the silent, lifelong conflict.

It is not for us to know how the sinless Christ was tempted. There are depths beyond our reach. This we can understand, that a sinless manhood is not above the reach of temptation; and this besides, that, to such a nature, the temptations must be suggested from without, not presented from within. The desire for food is simply a physical craving, but another personality than His own uses it to incite the Son to abandon dependence for his physical life on God. The trust in God's protection is holy and good, and it may be truest wisdom and piety to incur danger in dependence on it, when God's service calls, but a mocking voice without suggests, under the cloak of it, a needless rushing into peril at no call of conscience, and for no end of mercy, which is not religion but self-will. The desire to have the world for His own lay in Christ's deepest heart, but the enemy of Christ and man, who thought the world his already, used it as giving occasion to suggest a smoother and shorter road to win all men unto Him than the "Via dolorosa" of the Cross. So the sinless Christ was tempted at the beginning, and so the sinless Christ was tempted, in various forms of these first temptations, throughout His life. The path which He had to tread was ever before Him, the shadow of the Cross was flung along His road from the first. The pain and sorrow, the shame and spitting, the contradiction of sinners against Himself, the easier path which needed but a wish to become His, the shrinking of flesh—all these made their appeal to Him, and every step of the path which He trod for us was trodden by the power of a fresh consecration of Himself to His task and a fresh victory over temptation.

Let us not seek to analyse. Let us be content to worship, as we look. Let us think of the tempted Christ, that our conceptions of His sinlessness may be increased. His was no untried and cloistered virtue, pure because never brought into contact with seducing evil, but a militant and victorious goodness, that was able to withstand in the evil day. Let us think of the tempted Christ that our thankful thoughts of what He bore for us may be warmer and more adequate, as we stand afar off and look on at the mystery of His battle with our enemies and His. Let us think of the tempted Christ to make a lighter burden of our cross, and our less terrible conflict easier to bear and to wage. So will He "continue with us in our temptations," and patience and victory flow to us from Him.

AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY, THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

At the annual meeting in June, 1883, of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society, the Earl of Shaftesbury in the chair, in the midst of splendid speeches by men like the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Liverpool, was the following able, stirring and seasonable address by the Rev. Talbot Greaves:

He said:—My Lord, my dear Friends,—On this day, when our Church is commemorating the Ascension of our glorified Lord, we are met very appropriately to dwell upon that great gift whereby He was pleased to span, as with a bridge, the whole of that

DAILY CARES AND WORRIES.

When you are sore bewildered,
Not knowing what to do,
When all your schemes seem baffled,
And earthly helpers few,—

Go to the Lord for guidance
As well as for His grace;
Look up for His direction
And strength to run the race.

He will be very gracious
When unto Him you cry;
When He shall hear He'll answer,
To prove that He is nigh.

What tho' you cannot see it,
Each step is marked for you,
Planned in the light of His deep love
Who gave His life for you.

He knows your every sorrow,
Each little cross and care;
Each trifling daily worry
So difficult to bear.

'Twas just because He loved you
He left His throne on high;
To save you and redeem you,
To suffer and to die.

And still because He loves you
These little worries come,
That they may even tell you
You are not yet at "home."

But in this far-off country,
Where weary feet oft slide,
How restful to remember
Your Saviour is your guide.

Yes! Near each day to whisper
His words into your ear,
This is the way—walk in it;
Go forward—never fear.

Near you till life is over,
Near you by day and night,
Near you until He takes you
Into His perfect light.

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