

temptation by God's permission. He might have been left behind, or been sent away, but God had not planned it so. Must his fall be, therefore, charged on God? It is not to be so thought of for a moment. St Peter fell, not solely because God permitted Satan to tempt him. For God permitted Satan to tempt Jesus Himself, and Jesus did not fall. It is impossible, indeed, to lay too much stress upon this fact in this connection, "Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

Wherefore the explanation of St. Peter's failure is to be looked for here, that three times he was found sleeping in spite of the loving warnings of his Master of the need he had in such an hour to watch and pray. And be it noted for our instruction that, however grievous in its immediate circumstances, that failure was the making of St. Peter. It cured him of his self-confidence once for all. The process and the cure alike are typical. For in regard to self does "man, proud man," continually reveal himself as "most ignorant of what he's most assur'd." And not till he is disabused of this so dangerous ignorance, however rude the shock, however pitiless the assailing blast, however disastrous for the moment the moral subsidence, the resulting ruin,—not till he has got down through the rubbish-heaps of a complacent fancy, got low enough, down to the truth, down to hard naked fact, can he hope to rear on the basis of a real self-knowledge a building which future tempests shall spend themselves against in vain. So true is it what St. Augustine wrote, "*Diaboli tentationes ad utilitatem sanctorum convertit Deus.*" So true is it what another moralist has said, "One could not wish any man to fall into a fault; yet is it often precisely after a fault, or a crime even, that the morality which is in a man first unfolds itself, and what of strength he as a man possesses, now when all else is gone from him." (Quoted in Carlyle's *Miscellanies*—"Mirabeau.")

When I consider such cases as those of Job and the Apostle Peter, I often find myself recurring in thought to that scene in *Ivanhoe* when the knights challengers took up their position in the lists of Ashby prepared to do battle with