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VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

By W. B. Walker

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The Cry In The Night
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The Glory Of The Hereafter
Victory Over Suffering
The Gospel In The Wind
Saul -- The Man Who Did Not Come Back
What Think Ye Of Christ?

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Digital Edition 10/12/98
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DEDICATION

To those who are passing through the valley of temptation, to those who are fighting fierce battles to retain their faith, to those who are grievously misunderstood, to those who are sick and afflicted, to those who have ungrateful children, to those who are baffled at the strange providence of God, to those who are grappling with financial difficulties, to those who are young and facing the sinful pleasures of the world, to those who are getting older and facing some of the most trying

days of their life, to those who are wading through the waters of sorrow, and to those who are walking through the deep shadows of death, I affectionately dedicate this book.

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PREFACE

This is our sixteenth book to present to the reading public. In my evangelistic meetings, I try to bring one message in each revival on the theme of temptation. There has been such a favorable response to these messages, that I feel the Lord would have me present this little volume, with the title -- Victory Over Temptation.

While the salvation of a lost world is the mission of the church, yet, believers should be instructed everywhere how to meet the temptations of life. There is a genuine deliverance for the tempted -- a way of escape. For the Lord has graciously promised us victory over temptation. However, it is imperative that we fully comply with His provisions.

I humbly, and prayerfully, send this volume forth, trusting that thousands of believers shall read it, and thus have a clearer understanding how to overcome the fiery darts of Satan.

W. B. Walker
Box 527
Kansas City, Mo.

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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to know that the reading public is being favored with another book from the pen of Rev. W. B. Walker, an evangelist, a soul-winner, church builder, and who has had a splendid reward of success.

In this new book "Victory Over Temptation" Rev. Walker deals with a subject that is of vital interest to every Christian. It should prove a great blessing to every reader but especially to young converts who are not familiar with -- the difference between, sin and temptation, the perils of the carnal mind, and the varied, subtle attacks of Satan.

I trust and pray that "Victory Over Temptation" will have a wide circulation and that it shall prove to be a great blessing to the thousands who meet life temptations in their journey to a better land.

D. I. Vanderpool,
General Superintendent, Emeritus

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SCRIPTURE

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations" (Luke 22:28).

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the laying in wait of the Jews" (Acts 20:19).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (I Cor. 7:5).

"Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents" (I Car. 10:9).

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation" (I Peter 1:6).

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (I Peter 4:12).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all' the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

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01 -- REASONS WHY THIS SUBJECT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED

There are several reasons why the subject of temptation should be discussed.

1. Because Satan is the chief agent in temptation. Moses in the Book of Genesis says, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God made. And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden" (Gen. 3:1). We also read elsewhere that Satan said unto Jesus in the wilderness, "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread" (Matt. 4:3).

Paul, in writing to the Church located in Corinth said, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (I Cor. 2:11). Again, this great preacher said, "But fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). Still, the apostle, in writing to the church in Thessalonica says, "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain" (I Thess. 3:5).

We should know the nature, the cunningness, and the devices of Satan. All true believers should be rightly informed of the existence of Satan. For Satan is the source of sin, suffering, temptation, and sorrow and death. He was once a bright and shining light in Heaven. Isaiah said, "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations ?" (Isa. 14:12, 13). If there is no tempter, there could be no temptation. A man was talking to Uncle Buddie Robinson, and insisting there was no devil. Uncle Buddie replied, "If there is no devil, who then is carrying on his business?" A man was at the altar praying and crying for mercy. He had been decoyed away from the simplicity of the Gospel. After praying through, he said, "Never underestimate the power of the devil."

Several years ago, a great French man of science was crossing the Arabian desert under the influence of an Arab guide. When the sun was setting in the West, the guide spread his praying-rug down upon the ground and began to pray. When he had finished, the man of science stood looking at him with scorn, and asked what he was doing. He replied, "I am praying." The scientist said, "Praying! Praying to whom?" "To Allah, to God" replied the guide. The man of science said, "Did you see God?" "No!" "Did you hear God?" "No". "Did you ever put out your hands and touch and feel God?" "No!" "Then you are a great fool to believe in a God you never saw, a God you never heard, a God you never put out your hand and touched." The Arab guide said nothing.

They retired for the night, rose early the next morning, and a little before sunrise they went out from the tent. The man of science said to his guide, "There was a camel round this tent last night." With a peculiar look in his eyes, the guide said, "Did you see the camel?" "No". "Did you hear the camel?" "No." "Did you put out your hand and touch the camel?" "No." "Well, you are a

strange man of science to believe in a camel you never saw, a camel you never heard, a camel you never put out your hand and touched." "Oh", but said the scientist, "Here are his footprints all around the tent." Just then the sun was rising in all its oriental splendor, and with a graceful wave of his barbaric hand, the guide said, "Behold the footprints of the Creator, and know there is a God."

I think the untutored Arab had the best of the argument. Everywhere in this magnificent universe we see the footprints of the Creator. But, we also see everywhere in God's wonderful world, the footprints of Satan. Look at his devastating work everywhere. There is a devil -- cunning, subtle, masterly, marvelous -- who is more than a match for us in his cunning power. Yet, with Christ, we can win the victory.

2. Because of the universality of temptation. There is no race or color that is exempted from the blighting blow of temptation. There is no place of escape in this world. Here no favoritism is shown to any. If you were to travel to the most remote places of the earth, there you will be tempted and tried. In space, under the earth, on the mountains, and under the water, men will be fiercely tempted. The high and low, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate will meet the temptations of life. Thus, temptation is universal in its scope.

3. Because of the frequency of temptation. The greatest Saints of earth have been severely tempted. These temptations will come with great frequency. Surely no one will doubt the certainty of temptation. Believers in every age have been assailed by Satan. That great army of saints as recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were tempted and tried. The writer says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:37-38). Every saint will come face to face with the enticements of Satan. And each believer will come forth, either triumphant and victorious, or defeated and humiliated.

4. Because of the interest shown in a discussion of the subject. In my evangelistic meetings, I try to bring at least one message on the subject. Usually the people attend this service in large numbers, and are free to express their appreciation. One soul said, "Truly the Lord knew what I needed -- and He graciously supplied that need tonight." Another severely tempted person said, "I feel that I can better grapple with temptation since listening to this message tonight." Still another person said, "This message should be delivered in every revival". One family drove sixty miles to attend one of our evangelistic services, and at the close of the service, the mother said, "The Lord knew my need -- for I have been going through a period of severe temptation -- but tonight, the Lord has so graciously supplied my need."

While it is urgent to take the message of salvation to those who are deeply steeped in sin, yet, it is just as important to inform believers of the spiritual laws to be obeyed in order to fully develop the Christian life. Soul-winning is the mission of the church, yet, it is just as important to instruct the believer how to meet the temptations of life. We should never cease to win men to Christ, yet, we should instruct believers how to have victory over temptation. Since that every godly soul will be tempted, he should be informed of the necessary steps to be victorious.

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02 -- SOME IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS IN TEMPTATIONS

1. It is important to distinguish between temptation and sin. It is no sin to be tempted, seeing that our Lord was severely tempted in the wilderness, and yet without sin. It is only when the temptation is consented to, and the will yields to the suggestion and solicitation, that sin enters. Temptation is that which proceeds from the enemy -- sin is that which proceeds from the individual. It does not matter how severely one is tempted, if he does not yield to the temptation -- he has not committed sin.

2. It is also important to distinguish between evil thoughts, and thoughts of evil. Some souls have failed to make this distinction, and have suffered even to the loss of their souls. Thoughts about evil are suggested from without, and cannot be avoided since evil is all about us. But evil thoughts originate within, and are the product and the evidence of an evil heart. Mark says, "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, murders" (Mark 7:21).

A Christian worker was speaking to a large crowd of young people. The speaker said, "Young people, you cannot help it if the devil brings his brats and puts them on your porch, but thank God, you don't have to take them in and rear them for him!" Satan will bring suggestions, and try to fire our natural desires, but it is our business to slam the door in his face and refuse to take them in. We must say "No" to these suggestions and desires, and if we say "No" to them we have not sinned. We cannot any more keep these suggestions from coming to us, than we can control a group of men standing on the street, using bad language and telling smutty stories. Of course, we can hear them, but we do not have to stop and join in with them. We cannot keep birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building nests in our hair.

Medical science tells us that the average heart beats about seventy-two times a minute. Each time it beats it pumps between five and six ounces of blood through the human body. Therefore, in a period of twenty-four hours it would pump nineteen tons of blood through the body. And over a span of threescore and ten years it would pump more than four hundred and seventy-eight million tons through the body.

Next to the heart, the mind is the most active part of the body. The mind is a wonderful thing. It is amazing to trace its activities. Even while we are asleep, the mind will dream, and many times will solve problems while we rest. The mind is going to think on something -- it refuses to be a vacuum. If it does not think on good things, then it will think on evil things. It is our duty to control the mind. The mighty Paul says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

3. We should distinguish between temptation and trials. The common use of the word "temptation" is a Satanic enticement to evil. And this enticement will come to every true Christian along the way of life. This enticement is from without, and is not from within. Then the word "trial" denotes a test, a challenge, as in Genesis 22:1, where it reads, "And it came to pass after

these things that God did tempt (or try) Abraham." This was no solicitation nor enticement to evil -- it was purely a test and trial of his faith, in the offering up of his son Isaac.

4. We should be careful to distinguish between the accusations of Satan and the reproofs of the Holy Ghost. The accusations of Satan should be instantly resisted and rejected -- whereas, the reproof of the Spirit should be instantly heeded. Satan is the accuser of the Brethren (Rev. 12:10).

The Holy Spirit never taunts and torments the soul by accusing, criticizing, and insinuating against it -- that is always the work of Satan. Satan has been accusing the people of God ever since he was cast out of Heaven. Often he will secretly bring his suggestions, and then will accuse us of having sinned. A Christian lady was helping serve the table at a large religious gathering. She held back part of the desert for those who were serving. Unintentionally, she put a larger piece of pie at her own plate. Immediately Satan accused her of being selfish. Yes, Satan will dump a lot of things on our door steps. But we can resist him and win the victory. James says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

The Holy Spirit is faithful to bring to us new light. However, if we persistently refuse to walk in it, we will grieve, wound, and eventually drive the Spirit away, leaving the soul in desolation and darkness. Paul, the peerless missionary says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). Phillips says, in his translation of this passage, "Hurt not the Holy Spirit of God". The Spirit is a person, and can be grieved, insulted, and finally sinned against. Someone has said, "We anger a stranger, but we grieve a friend."

Often Satan brings his accusations to the believer even down to the hour of death. Rev. Charles L. Henbest lived in Rogers, Arkansas. He suffered with that incurable disease of cancer of the spine and heart trouble. He passed away in the early fall of 1960 in the Hillcrest Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Brother Henbest related this story to his beloved wife before he went to his eternal home. He said, "On two or three occasions the devil came into my room. It was just as real as life is real. He brought such accusations as these to me: 'Henbest, you've been a Christian for many years now, haven't you? You have preached in many states, haven't you? You have prayed for many people to be healed, haven't you? Why doesn't God hear your prayer and heal your body?'"

After Satan had so falsely accused him and tormented him, Brother Henbest said, "One day the Lord came to visit me, and beckoned me to come to Him. The Lord took me as it were, upon a great high mountain with a deep valley below. In the valley was a great host of people. The Lord said unto me: 'Henbest, do you see those people? And do you remember what you asked Me when you first started in the ministry?' It seemed the Lord took me on a tour from the time He saved me, to every preaching place, and to every revival I had conducted.

"Then the Lord said unto me: 'You asked Me for twenty years in which to preach the gospel; and you asked Me for twenty thousand souls. I have given you twenty-five years to preach My Word, and I have given you eighty thousand souls. And those uplifted hands in the multitude, are your converts who are now in the ministry'. Then the Lord showed me His hands which were

folded, and as He began to open them, they were crimson red. And in the middle of one of the Lord's hands, there was something that looked like a pearl. Again, the Lord said, 'See that pearl. It is your soul -- I have washed and cleansed it. If you will keep trusting Me, I'll see you through to eternal victory.'"

Satan continued his accusations to the very last, but God took His faithful child through to glorious victory. Thank God, He will also take us through regardless of the accusations of Satan. We can have the victory over Him! The Psalmist David said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4).

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03 -- THE PURPOSE OF TEMPTATION

Temptations are a part of the Christian's curriculum, and are essential to the development of Christian character. Temptations serve as monitors, reminding us of our utter weakness, and necessary dependence upon God for aid. They teach us, and wean us from the world, human dependencies, and drive us to prayer and reliance upon God. They develop the iron graces of faith, patience, fidelity, and thus save us from becoming jelly-fish and soft.

If it were not for the trials and temptations of life we would become weak and utterly fail. It was when the sky looked most threatening, and all human props were swept away, that we prayed earnestly, and the promises of God became precious to us. It was then that we leaned the hardest upon the strong arm of the Lord. Not many people can endure continued prosperity and affluence without becoming self-reliant and self-sufficient.

The mighty Moses said, "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation" (Deut. 32:-15). The inspired David said, "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired early after God" (Psalms 78:34).

A good soldier must learn to take blows as well as to give blows -- a good sailor must learn to utilize a head-wind. Temptations are to the Christian, as exercise is in a gymnasium to build up the physical life. It is through fiery temptation and baffling trials that we learn to be useful. Having passed through the ordeal ourselves, we know better how to help, and how to sympathize with others who are passing through similar testings. The Hebrew writer says in speaking of the temptations of Jesus, "Himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

It is by trials and temptations that the Lord "proves" us, and discovers the sincerity of our purpose, and the fidelity and loyalty of our hearts. Moses said to the children of Israel, "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no" (Deut. 8:2). Not only does the Lord "prove" us, but in the hour of temptation we "prove" Him. The Psalmist David says, "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works" (Psalms 95:9).

This also demonstrates to others the faithfulness of God, and the reality of His saving grace. Peter says, "That the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7). Therefore, without temptation we could never develop the kind of character that God wants us to have. It is only by meeting temptation, and wrestling with it and overcoming it, that we grow and develop into our best. This leads us to see that temptation is absolutely necessary for the development of genuine Christian character.

When God created man He had the power to create him in any way He saw best. If the Lord had so desired He could have created man so that he would have been governed by his instincts like the other animals, and he would have instinctively done right at all times. But, if he had been thus created, there would be no virtue in doing right. We do not give the animals of the field any credit for doing the things they do, for we know they have no choice in the matter. God saw fit to create man differently, because He wanted some creatures in His universe that would serve Him, not because they had to, but because they wanted to. In doing this, the Lord took a tremendous risk, and threw a great responsibility on us. He has given us the power and privilege of choosing between right and wrong. Moses said, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil" (Deut. 30:15). We can either accept the bad and reject the good, or we can choose the good and reject the bad. In every choice like this, we show to God and to the world that we will serve God, not because we must, but because it is our desire, and in every choice there is a moral worth and significance.

This is one place where we think our good friends, who teach unconditional security, go astray. For they virtually teach that when a person is converted, his probation ends and the whole thing is now in the hands of God. This means that, by one choice of the will, a person puts himself where it is impossible to do anything that will change his eternal destiny.

It seems to me that this would mean that probation ends with conversion. But we do not believe that probation ends with conversion, but we believe it ends at death. We believe that there is not only that initial choice that we must make at the time of conversion, but there are many other choices that must be made along the way. We also believe that enough wrong choices can be made along the way to cancel out that first choice. It appears to us that, if being converted is a guarantee of always being in grace, then all the warnings and exhortations of the Scriptures are all unnecessary. A man was talking to Rev. Bud Robinson about always being in grace, and the quaint Uncle Buddy replied, "He will always be in grace or disgrace."

We develop our muscles by using them. If you were to place your right hand in a sling, and carry it across your breast for five years, the muscles in that hand would become so weak and flabby that you could not lift your hand to your face. The same thing is true with reference to our moral character. It is through the testings, temptations, and misunderstandings of life that we develop moral strength.

Medical science has discovered that the human body is so constructed that when it is exposed to certain diseases, it is not only able to fight off the disease, but it builds up a resistance to that particular disease. If you were to go to your doctor and let him inject a few thousand

smallpox germs into your blood stream, immediately the body would begin to battle those germs, and would eventually destroy them. But, while the struggle was going on it would build up a resistance that would practically immune you from the disease. Here in this world we are exposed to sin. And by the grace of God and the use of our will power, we are able to overcome these attacks. In this moral struggle against Satan, we will build up a resistance against evil. This does not mean that Satan will cease to tempt us, but, in resisting and overcoming temptation, we can more easily overcome Satan the next time.

The ancient Job passed from one blinding experience to another. The Lord pronounced him a perfect man, but he came face to face with tremendous struggles and disappointments. His children were taken away with one mighty stroke, his property was all swept away, his body was greatly afflicted, his best earthly friends cruelly misunderstood him, and his wife blatantly suggested to him to throw his faith overboard and die.

Job was not tempted to sin, but he went through a series of severe trials that tested the fibers of his faith. The blight of these trials did not draw him away from God, but they drew him closer to God. These trials tested his faith, and brought him nearer to the heart of God. Job reached the sublime heights of utter resignation to God. In the highest moments of his trust in God, he declared, "When he has tried me, then will I come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Again he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job 13:15). This tested soul was determined to go through regardless of the cost. He believed the Lord knew the purpose of his heart, when he said, "He knoweth the way that I take" (Job 23:10).

Man seems to grow strong physically, mentally, and spiritually when he is compelled to meet temptation and to overcome difficulties. As the sea gull rises against the wind, so shall the spirit of man rise with adversity. The brave become chivalrous because of danger and hardships. This is true in every walk of life -- even the game fish swims up stream against the current. The pithy palm tree grows in the moist, warm jungles, that is protected from the tempest and the forest -- the hardwood grows in the North, and from the onslaughts of many blasts it develops resistance and power.

Did you know that the finest violins are made from the wood that comes from the north side of trees which have been subjected to the twisting and bending of the winds? Just as in fear we have the only occasion for courage, therefore, virtue is developed only in the presence of strain and temptations.

The trials and temptations of this life will help to develop our Christian character, if we react right toward them. It does not matter what happens to the Christian, but it does matter as to his attitude to things. If we face the temptations with courage, they will develop us into nobler characters. The Lord does not have any use for hot houses to shelter believers from the cold, biting winds from the north, nor the bitter frost by night.

The Lord has a grand purpose in permitting the testings and temptations of life to come our way. Quite often we do not understand why they come, nor why they are permitted. Yet, the Master has a purpose in them. Oh, that we will rightly react to them.

The late Alexander Maclaren tells us that when he was sixteen years of age he accepted his first job in Glasgow. He lived six miles from the big city. Between his home and Glasgow there was a deep ravine that was supposed to be haunted. Some really terrible things had happened in it and he was afraid to go through, even in the daytime. At night it was out of the question.

On Monday morning his father walked with him to work, and in parting he said, "Alec, come home as fast as you can when you get off Saturday night."

Thinking of that deep ravine, Maclaren said he answered his father, "Father, I will be awfully tired Saturday night, and I will come home early Sunday morning."

But his father was adamant, "No, Alec. You have never been away from home before, and these five days are going to seem like a year to me. Come home Saturday night."

Reluctantly Alec answered, "All right, Father, Saturday night." All the week long Alec said he worried about that black ravine. When Saturday night came, he was more scared than ever, but he wrapped up his belongings and went out to the end of the gulch. He said, "I whistled to keep my courage up, but when I looked down into that inky blackness I knew I couldn't go. The tears came unbidden, and then suddenly, I heard footsteps in the ravine coming up the path. I started to run but hesitated, for those footsteps were very familiar.

"Up out of the darkness into the pale light, as I watched, came the head and shoulders of the grandest man on earth. He was bound to have known I was scared, but he only said, 'Alec, I wanted to see you so badly that I came to meet you.' So shoulder to shoulder we went down into the valley and I was not afraid of anything that walked."

Most of us have had our black valleys in life. But the presence of the Lord has enabled us to be not afraid of the dark shadows. Some of us have passed through the dark valley in the loss of loved ones. The Lord saw best to take our little son of eight years. We came from the funeral, and found half-worn clothes in the closet, and his tracks still in the back yard. But the Master came to us and helped us through this dark ravine of life. His presence is the guarantee of our victory.

When the dark and unknown passages of life come, Christ will also come. Wasn't it Lawrence Sterne, one of the first English novelists who wrote, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb?" The Lord said unto Moses, "As thy days, are, shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25).

Therefore, the more fierce the Christian is tested and tried, the more glorious will be the victory over temptation. Yes, the trials of life are necessary to develop the moral fiber in the soul. Let us bravely face the temptations and trials as the little boat in anchor faces the incoming tide. There is danger in running from the conflict. For there is no armor for the back -- so let us face the fiery trials of Satan.

A gentleman wished to add an emperor moth to his vast collection. He obtained a cocoon and hung it in his house during the winter. In the spring he noticed the moth trying to get out of its winter house. The hole was so small that the owner clipped the hole larger. The moth got out. It was a fine, large moth, but it never flew. The owner afterward learned that the hard struggle was

necessary to force the juices of the body into the moth's wings. Having saved it from struggle, he robbed it of its strength and power.

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04 -- THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

There are three sources of temptation in the life of the believer:

1. Temptations come to the unsanctified soul through the carnal nature. Sin is twofold in its nature. We have all sinned (the act), but the Bible teaches that there is a sin nature in us, that comes to us as the result of the fall of Adam. Therefore, every child that is born into this world is born with a sinful or depraved nature. Paul says, "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). David, the sweet singer of Israel says, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin, did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5).

We not only need our sins forgiven as a sinner, but we also need to be cleansed from that old sinful nature that is in us. When we are regenerated, our sins are blotted out, and we are born into the Kingdom of God. We have had new spiritual life imparted into our soul. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus our Lord (II Cor. 5:17).

After being gloriously converted, there is an inward war that goes on, between the fleshly mind, and the Spirit of God. Paul says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). This causes a double-minded condition in the heart. There is the infusion of new spiritual life in the soul at conversion, but there is also the old man that dwells within. While the sin principle does not reign, yet it does remain.

The Apostle James speaks of it in the most practical language, "Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8). Again, James reminds us that the double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). Who is a double-minded person? It is not the sinner, for he is single-minded. He has but one mind, and that is the carnal mind. But the man who has become a Christian, has spiritual life in his soul, and yet the carnal mind within causes a warfare -- an inward struggle. Perhaps you have heard of the turtle that had two heads on its body. It was indeed a strange creature -- one head desired to go in one direction, but the other head desired to do something else. Thus it is in the divided heart of the believer, who has not experienced the fiery baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Thus the unsanctified Christian has two minds -- the carnal mind, and the spiritual mind. This indwelling principle will cause the believer to experience an inward conflict -- a cross pull in his nature. The words of the poet well describe this condition with some believers, when he said,

"Prone to wander, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love."

At one time in the railroad station in Cincinnati, Ohio was a large mural which portrayed in a startling way this tug of war inside of a believer who is not filled with the Spirit. It was a painting of two men wrestling. At first glance it was a puzzle, for the two men were identical. Their faces, heads, and physiques were exactly alike. One had thrown the other, and was standing with one foot on his neck, the other on his loin. It was, of course, a man fighting against himself. Below was written this thoughtful title: "The Eternal Tug of War."

The classic illustration of it in English literature is the story that Robert Stevenson told of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Some people call it a split personality. The psalmist and the prophet said that God could make our feet like hind's feet and give our lives perfect coordination. Thank God,. there is deliverance from this condition, through the sanctifying Spirit of God. (Romans 6:6); (I John 1:7); (Acts 15:-8, 9); (Acts 2:4).

The unsanctified believer struggles with this evil nature within, and is sometimes defeated, for which he is ashamed and repents with bitter remorse. This nature is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7). According to the Hebrew writer, this double-minded believer is in danger of being led astray by an inward root of bitterness. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God -- lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15). There are shoots of pride, envy, rebellion, and many other things that might spring up to trouble the believer.

Unless the believer gets deliverance from this dispositional sin in his heart, it will become a great source of temptation. It will be like the fifth columnist that steals in and betrays the soul in some time of weakness. This was the thing that tripped David up and caused him to commit the black sin of adultery. He recognized this fact, and confessed it in the fifty-first Psalm. He was born with something in him, that made him want to do the awful thing he did. In his prayer, he not only prayed that God would have mercy upon him and blot out his transgression, but he also prayed that God would create within him a pure heart and renew a right spirit within him (Psalms 51:10).

A great many people seem to feel that the experience of holiness is an elective course in Christian experience -- can either be taken or left off. A few people take the attitude that they have been converted and are getting along so well, that they do not need to press on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). This is not true, for the Bible says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thess. 4:3, 4). God's will is not complete in justification -- it has only begun. The Lord wants each true believer to go on and receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Yonder is a doctor who lives in a small town, enjoys a good practice, and is well thought of in the entire community. He was a fine Christian man, and belonged to the church. This man had been exhorted to seek the blessing of holiness. But each time he would reply, "I am having such a wonderful time in this new-found joy, that I do not feel my need to seek for holiness."

Rev. Bud Robinson was one of the workers in the annual camp meeting. The camp closed on Sunday night with many seekers at the altar. Among the altar workers was this fine doctor. On Monday morning the doctor took his gun, and rode out on his ranch. He met one of his renters, and a discussion ensued over a debt the renter owed the doctor. The renter became enraged over the difference in the amount of the debt. He assailed the doctor with bitter oaths, and the man who was

at the altar on Sunday night as a worker, leveled his gun and shot the man to death. That rebel which was in his heart, suddenly came to life, and the doctor committed the awful sin of murder. Later he said, "O what made me do it, what made me do it?"

2. We will be tempted through our natural desires and appetites. We may be ridden of the sin nature that we inherited, as a result of Adam's fall, and we may be done with this particular form of temptation. Yet, we are still human, and will have our natural desires and appetites. We may be Spirit-filled, but we will not be petrified nor dehumanized. We are still human beings, and will have our normal God-given desires. Adam did not have carnality before he fell. his temptations did not come from his carnal nature, but they came from without through the suggestions of Satan.

Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4:1). Doubtless these were not the only temptations that our Lord had. No doubt, He was tempted on many other occasions. The first temptation came to Him at the end of forty days of fasting. This first temptation was an appeal to the physical appetite. His second temptation came through the desire for the applause of men. The third temptation was through a normal desire to accomplish a worthwhile achievement.

These temptations came about exactly like those that came to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan used the same approach in both cases, the difference being that in Eve's case Satan was successful, but in the case of Jesus he was defeated. According to the record in Genesis, "The woman saw that the tree was good for food (an appeal to the physical), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (an appeal to the aesthetic or worthwhile), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (an appeal to the desire for recognition)" (Gen. 8:6). And then the Apostle John sets forth the same three principles of temptation in his first epistle: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of your Father but is of the world" (I John 2:16).

Let me remind you that temptation is not synonymous with sin. Some object to the idea of temptation in reference to Jesus, because in their minds temptation implies sin. To such people the temptation of Jesus was not real. But temptation does not always involve sin, and certainly did not in the case of Jesus. Temptation does not always appeal to the base and the ignoble in man. The temptations of Jesus appealed to that which was normal and good. The danger was in the appeal to gratify a good desire by using improper methods. Here we come to the essence of sin -- the perversion of the good.

There are those who ask this question: "Could Jesus, Who was the Son of God, be tempted?" These take the position that since Jesus was divine He could not sin -- therefore, the temptations could not be real. We cannot agree with any such thinking. It is foolish to think that God would record for us an experience in the life of Jesus which was nothing more than a mere stage play. There is every reason to believe that the temptations of Jesus were real, as real as any temptation that ever came to man. So, the writer of the Book of Hebrews says of Jesus, "But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Thus the temptations that will come to a believer, will appeal to that which is normal and good. The appetites and desires in man are God-given, and constitutional. Sin is not in our normal, God-given desires, but in our satisfying these desires through improper methods. Sin comes in the misuse of the good things that God has given us. Therefore, the perversion of our natural desires becomes sin.

It is not wrong for a healthy boy to stand before a glass window and his mouth water for ripe oranges on the inside of the window. But, if he does not have any money to purchase the oranges, and is determined to satisfy his appetite, even if he has to steal them, he has committed sin in his heart.

The late Dr. R. T. Williams says, "All temptation has within it the element of desire. Without desire there can be no temptation. One could not be tempted to eat food that does not exist, or one of which he never heard. Desire is not necessarily sinful within itself. It was not wrong for Eve to desire the delicious fruit. It is not sinful for a robust, and healthy boy to desire a red delicious apple, nor a well-cooked beefsteak. It is not sinful for a healthy man, full of life and vigor, to feel waves of passion within his body, but it is a sin to break over lawful bounds within or without.

"Sin enters with a decision to satisfy desire by unlawful means or illegitimate methods. The harm is not in the desire for fruit, but it is in the consent to satisfy that desire unlawfully. It is not a sin to have the flash of passion, but when a man looketh upon a woman to lust after her, to satisfy his desire if he had the opportunity, he has already committed adultery in his heart.

"No act can have moral quality till the will has entered into the act. There is no virtue till the will has decided upon benevolent attitudes and conduct, neither is there guilt in the truest sense of the word till the will has made a choice, with right and wrong before it. The union of the will with a desire constitutes a motive.

"Desire within itself may be holy and perfectly legitimate. Sin enters in when the will consents to satisfy the desire by unlawful or wrong methods. The female desire, and the male will unite, conceiving. Whether the desire is ever satisfied or not, the will consents to it, and it becomes sin.

The Apostle James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15). We are told that the word "lust" means desire. We usually think of the word "lust" as an evil thing, but in many cases in the Bible it means desire.

Men therefore are tempted, when they are drawn away of their own desires and appetites. James does not say that a person has sinned because of his natural desires. Yet, he does say, that one is tempted. But sin has not as yet entered. Perhaps the man is now wrestling with the temptation that has come to him through his natural desires and appetites. Through these desires he

is tempted through the enticements of Satan. But it has not become sin, for James says in the next statement, "Then when lust (desire) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin."

The word "conceived" is a very striking and suggestive word. It is like a woman becoming pregnant, and after she has gone through the period of pregnancy, then she bringeth forth. The apostle says that is the way sin comes into being. The desire plants the seed in the mind, and if it finds fertile soil and is given the proper ground in which to grow, it will germinate, and finally bring forth sin -- but the temptation itself is not sin. The germ of desire can be killed in the early stages of temptation, and never conceive and bring forth sin.

Some Christians have supposed that if they were sanctified, they would henceforth have no more temptations and trials, but would have nothing to do but rejoice and shout the praises of God. They soon become disillusioned, for it is likely they will now experience more intense, if not more frequent assaults from the enemy than ever before.

This is on the principle that burglars will make a more determined effort to burglarize a mansion known to possess great wealth and riches, than they would to burglarize some vacant or dilapidated shack. Doubtless there are some persons whom Satan does not annoy or tempt because he knows they do not possess anything of value, and he is reasonably sure of them anyway -- why should he tempt them?

This reminds me of a hunter who said to a Christian Negro man, "Why is it that Satan is always after you, and he is never after me? For you are always reminding us of the severe temptations of Satan." The colored man replied, "You will remember that when you shoot into a bunch of ducks, you never run after the dead ducks, but you always chase the wounded ones. Satan knows you are a dead duck, and leaves you alone, and chases after me because I am still alive."

3. The Christian will be tempted from without. He will not only wrestle with his natural desires and appetites, but he will also have to contend with the forces of evil without. Paul says, "Put on God's complete armor so that you can successfully resist all the devil's methods of attack. For our fight is not against any physical enemy: It is against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil. Therefore, you must wear the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist evil in its day of power, and that even when you have fought to a standstill you may still stand your ground" (Eph. 6:11-13), (Phillips).

These principalities are the chief rulers of the highest rank and order in Satan's kingdom. The apostle refers to this same truth in Ephesians 1:21, when he says, "Far above principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Here is a reference to the authorities, who derive their power from and execute the will of the chief of rulers -- Satan.

This power is extended to the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, the spirit-world rulers. When the ancient Daniel prayed for an understanding of the vision concerning his people, his prayer was hindered. In fact, his prayer was delayed for twenty and one days. The prophet was greatly disturbed about the delay, and the Lord answered him in these words, "But the prince of the

kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (Dan. 10:13).

Still the Apostle Paul reminds us of spiritual wickedness, that of the wicked spirits of Satan in the heavenlies. Often Satan is transformed into an angel of light. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14); and Peter says, "Because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

Satan sometimes wears the garb of spirituality in order to decoy one away from Christ. Let us not forget, that Satan attends church to hinder, to detract, and to deceive those who worship God. Even Job and his family who gathered together for Christian worship, were confronted with Satan. The Lord said unto Satan, "Whence comest thou?" And Satan replied, "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7). Satan often attends church as a counselor, advisor, and deceiver.

This world is no friend to grace. There will be more people who will try to tone you down, and get you to compromise, than will get behind you to help you along with the struggles of life. There will be more people who will try to cool you off than will ever try to fire you up. In fact, many times our own loved ones and close friends will try to hinder us in being deeply spiritual. Many times you will have to grit your teeth, and seek God in prayer for grace to go through. We will have to contend with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Truly, we will be forced to realize that we are "soldiers of the cross and followers of the Lamb."

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05 -- THE PECULIAR TEMPTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED

There are many temptations that are peculiar to the Spirit-filled believer. These temptations are the same in appeal as the temptations that came to Christ in the wilderness, and to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Let us notice these peculiar temptations that will assail those who are sanctified wholly.

1. Spiritual pride. The "abundance of revelations" may become the occasion of temptation to spiritual pride, as in the case of Paul -- necessitating the "thorn in the flesh" lest he should become "exalted above measure" (II Cor. 12:7). There are at least four kinds of pride: Namely, race pride, face pride, place pride, and grace pride. And grace pride is perhaps the most subtle and dangerous of the four.

The person who prides himself in the fact that he has an experience in grace making him superior to the rest of the brethren, is almost certain to become an egotist, and a bigot -- assuming that he is a favorite with the Lord, and refuses to be advised and warned of peril until it is too late. It is usually this sort of pride that "goeth before destruction" and the "haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

Satan is not particular as to whether he disheartens, discourages, or causes us to be exalted and puffed up, as either will accomplish his purpose. The suggestion that one is superior to others,

always comes from the enemy, and will feed spiritual pride, if it is not instantly rejected. Paul says, "Being lifted up with pride, they fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Tim. 3:6).

If Satan can succeed in deceiving the believer into spiritual pride, the individual will likely become bossy over other people in spiritual matters. Among the lovely flowers of gratitude will grow the hemlock of pride. And he who exalts himself will never exalt Christ.

An old preacher said, "There are only two safe places for the believer -- the dust and Heaven, and of the two, the dust is the safer -- for angels fell from Heaven, but no man was ever known to fall from the dust."

2. The waning of ecstasies will be another peculiar temptation of the sanctified soul. No person can always feel the same -- even though he has been delivered from the principle of sin. Peter says, "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," nevertheless, we can still be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5, 6). Hence, there is no experience in grace where a person is exempt from temptation -- and "manifold temptations" will always bring "heaviness."

Therefore, the spirit of "heaviness" is perfectly compatible with the spirit of holiness. A person may enjoy the highest state of grace, and yet be in "heaviness" for a "season." This is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons for a sanctified soul to learn. When the fullness of joy, and the emotions are stirred, a person will think he is all right, but when the joy subsides, and the emotions settle down to normalcy, then will come his moments of depression, and Satan will then endeavor to make hurtful suggestions.

I have often compared the emotions of the soul to the tides of the ocean. I have stood upon the shores of the Atlantic, and watched the tide come in with mighty force. It washed the sea weeds upon the shore, and hit the shore with a mighty crash. Then, I have watched the tide go out, too. Spiritually-speaking, I have known the high tide of joy, when the exhilarating glory of the Lord rested upon my soul. Under the impact of such inspiration, I have preached, when it seemed that I was physically lifted into another realm. At times I have remained in this high state of spiritual illumination for several hours, before I came back to normalcy.

Yet, there have been other times when the tide was going out, and I struggled to carry on successfully. It is often, when the tide is going out that Satan fires his loudest guns of discouragement. I fear we have not understood, as we should, the difference between the constant abiding of the Holy Ghost, and the manifestations of the Spirit. Both of these truths are found in John fourteen. In one verse the Master says, "He will abide with you forever" (V. 16). And in another verse He says, "I will manifest myself unto you" (V. 21).

Some people think the Spirit cannot abide in the heart, without manifesting Himself. The most of us want to live on physical manifestations all the time. Yes, unless the Lord blesses us with outward manifestations of the Spirit, we are tempted to believe that we do not have any grace in the heart. When the Lord sanctified my soul, I did not sleep very much the first night. There were two reasons for not sleeping. (1) I was rejoicing over the new found experience of heart purity. (2) I was afraid that the Spirit would depart from my heart while I was sleeping. I had heard someone

say that it was possible for the Spirit to depart while we were asleep. But thank God for the day that my eyes fell upon these words of Jesus: "I will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

Yes, He will abide when we are nervous, if we will behave ourselves. Then, He will abide when we do not have sufficient money to pay our bills, if we will continue to be honest. Neither will He forsake us when our body is not well, if we will continue to trust Him. He will continue to be our Comforter when our loved ones are taken from us. So long as we keep our all upon the altar, He will not depart. Satan often says to a soul that is beset with trials and battles, "You do not feel as you once did -- you do not feel as other people say they feel." But just keep trusting the Blood of Christ (I John 1:7).

3. One of the early temptations that will come to the newly-sanctified soul, is to be indefinite and evasive in giving a clear testimony to the experience. Such a one will be tempted to call it the Higher life, a great blessing, a special anointing, or some other name, rather than come out in the clear, and call it entire sanctification. John Wesley said that the word "sanctification" is peculiarly hated by the devil.

The sainted John Fletcher said that he lost the experience of holiness five or six times because he failed to give a clear testimony to it. Some might be tempted to feel that if the life is lived sincerely, that is sufficient. While it is highly important to live the beautiful life of heart holiness, yet, it is just as important that one should testify to the experience.

The Apostle Paul says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). And in the Book of Revelation, John says, "They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:-11). If Satan can get us to refuse to give a clear testimony to what God has done for us, he has gained the victory.

Here is an instructive command given to the children of Israel: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord giveth thee, and shall put in a basket, and thou shalt go into the place (the church) which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest (the pastor) that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us" (Deut. 26:1-3).

These people might have reasoned, "What is the use of us saying, 'I profess this day'? Would not the fruit in the basket be a sufficient witness and proof that we are in the land?" But God commands the testimony, as well as the fruit -- teaching us that life and lip -- the testimony, and the fruit are inseparable.

He who does not live the experience of holiness will not long have a clear testimony -- and he who is not faithful in testimony will not long live the life consistently. The golden bell and the pomegranate, alternately, on the hem of the robe of the ephod that was worn by the high priest while ministering in the holy of holies (Exo. 28:33-35), teach precisely the same lesson. The

pomegranate signified the fruit of the sanctified life, and the golden bells the testimony -- they must not be separated.

4. There is also the temptation to be impatient toward those who do not seek heart holiness immediately after conversion. Because of the clarified vision and the increase of light, and the new impetus and accelerated movement that has resulted from the new found experience of holiness, there is likely to come the temptation to feel impatient with the dullness and sluggishness of such who do not seek the fiery baptism of the Spirit at once. Therefore, unless we are watchful, there will be the strong temptation to become critical and censorious, impugning the motives, and doubting the sincerity of such as do not immediately "walk in the light." If we do not guard ourselves closely at this point, we will become the sad spectacle of holiness people seeking to promote the beautiful experience of full salvation in an unholy way.

At such times we should remind ourselves of the dullness and density we were in, and perhaps for many years, before we sought and found the experience of full salvation. After all, the matter was not fully understood and appreciated by us until after there had been given to us an inward illumination and the revelation of the Holy Ghost, resulting in personal purity. The "light" we have thus received may yet be darkness to those about us. Not until the Spirit has illuminated the heart and mind, can we have a proper appreciation of that which has become so wonderful and glorious to us.

Because of this grave danger, we should be constantly on guard, with watchfulness, lest we become fault-finding, censorious, and injurious to the promotion of the experience of the baptism of the Spirit. We are told the "Good shepherd goeth before" His sheep to lead them -- not to drive them in the way they should go.

5. There is always the temptation to compromise. Because of the aloofness and withdrawal of sympathy -- oftentimes resulting in complete ostracism, from friends, we will be tempted to cool off, and let down in our standards. Very likely, because of the furtive glance of the eye, the significant shrug of the shoulder and the secret whisper among those whom we love and long to help, will cause a feeling of loneliness. It is at such a time, that Satan will suggest to you that perhaps you are too religious, and should compromise to prove to others that you are not an "old fogey", an "extremist", or a "fanatic", as they have supposed.

The temptation to become a little more liberal and broader in your views, so as to become more useful, is such a subtle and plausible suggestion that even some who are supposed to be mature Christians have been deceived and beguiled thereby. Compromise is the sure road to defeat.

It should be remembered that the way of holiness never was a popular way. This is because holiness runs directly counter to all the customs, fads, and fashions of this world. The narrative says, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Then James says, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). There can be no truce nor temporizing here. In order that Jesus "might sanctify the people with his own blood", went outside the gate -- and he who would enjoy this rich

experience of holiness must "go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 12:13).

6. The sanctified soul is confronted with the peculiar temptation of mistaking liberty for license. Human nature, like the pendulum of a clock, is inclined to swing from one extreme to the other. Having been in bondage and enslaved by sin so long a time, and now to be suddenly emerging into this glorious liberty, and the perfect freedom of the Spirit, there is great need of constant watchfulness, lest this liberty should be used as "an occasion to the flesh." There is liberty always to do anything and everything that is right, and pure, and holy -- but this must not be mistaken for license to do anything that is doubtful, sinful, or unholy.

Let us remember that irreverence, undue familiarity, insubordination, lightness, foolishness, inordinate affection, tending to free-loveism -- all these things are the temptations and devices of Satan, in order to destroy the souls of men. To love too much is just as fatal to spiritual life, as not loving enough. Paul, the great Apostle says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1).

7. There is the subtle temptation to cast away our confidence when new light comes to us. As the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind, and unfolds new duties, and new responsibilities -- indicating some things that should be done -- such as tithing, or fasting, or the call of God to certain types of service in the kingdom -- or He may reveal some things that should be left undone. There are some professed Christians who do not seem to have any conscientious scruples about reading pernicious literature, nor attending questionable places. As we walk in the light of the Lord, new duties will confront us, and new obligations will engage our attention. The true believer will rejoice over new light, and will obediently walk in it.

The sanctified soul has nothing to do but to walk in the light, to obey the plain written Word of God, and to stick to his original contract to which he agreed when he first made his commitment to the Lord. No person is expected to do better than he knows, nor is he condemned for what he has not known. But the believer is held responsible for the light he could have received, had he sought for it. And when the new light does come, the believer cannot evade personal responsibility. Let us remember, that light is ever the measure of responsibility.

The Master said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15:22). Again, the Lord spoke concerning their responsibility, when He said, "This is the condemnation, that light has come..., and men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3:19). Yes, when new light comes to the Spirit-filled soul, it does not mean that he should go to the altar, but that he should walk in the new light. However, if the believer refuses to walk in it, and deliberately disobeys, it will become condemnation to his soul. So, let us walk in the light, as the Beloved John says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we will have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Let us not throw away our confidence in the hour of temptation. The Hebrew writer says, "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"

(Heb. 3:6); "If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (V. 14); "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward" (Chapter 10:35).

8. The sanctified soul will be tempted to plunge into misguided zeal. Misguided zeal invariably leads to fanaticism. When Satan cannot keep a person in the cold ruts of dead formalism he will likely seek to rush him over the precipice into the snares of some soul-destroying fanaticism. While "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing", yet, Paul rebuked the Galatians for their misguided zeal. He said unto them, "They zealously affect you, but not well" (Gal. 4:17, 18). All fanaticism has in it some phase of truth -- but invariably it is distorted truth, and distorted truth is error. This strange condition will cause a person to place first what God places last.

Quite often misguided zeal will place undue emphasis upon demonstration, or some of the gifts of the Spirit-such as "healing", or the "speaking in tongues", or "miracles" -- and thus sidetrack the soul from the main line of that "charity", which is perfect love in a pure heart. A fanatic is not at first an evil-minded person, but one who has a misguided zeal for truth, but has lost his equilibrium. He has a "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

9. The sanctified soul will be severely tempted to doubt and discouragement. The writer to the Hebrews warned them against "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). Many believers speak of their doubts, as though it were an infirmity, or human weakness, and excuse themselves by saying, "I am just naturally a doubting Thomas." Yet, when we consider the seriousness of doubts, we will realize that doubt is not a human weakness, but devilishness.

To disbelieve God is to dishonor Him. A person should no more consent to be a doubter than he would consent to be a thief, or liar. A thief or a liar might be as readily counted a Christian, as one who doubts God. Doubts proceed from an evil heart. In the Spirit-filled heart, this "evil root of unbelief" is utterly destroyed. While the enemy may present or suggest the temptation to doubt, yet, it should be instantly rejected. There is no soil in a pure heart in which the seeds of doubt and unbelief can germinate and grow. "I do not doubt God, but I do doubt my own experience" says a believer.

The real question here is, Have you fully met the conditions? If so, there can be no doubt concerning the faithfulness of God, in doubting His part. You cannot retain a pure heart and doubt the faithfulness of God. The Hebrew writer says at this point, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Our wonderful Lord says, "According to your faith, so be it unto you" (Matt. 9:29).

Again Jesus speaks on the subject, when He said, "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt" (Matt. 14:31). This question of the Master is as full of significance now as it was on that stormy night in Galilee. For when the winds are contrary, and the seas stormy, doubts and fears are near at hand to overwhelm us as they were near at hand to Peter. And the words of Christ, "O thou of little faith", applies as definitely to believers in Christ now as they did to Peter in that day. Satan is ever trying to discourage the believer. This seems to be one of his greatest weapons. There appeared a

story in a magazine, in which the editor said: "This story below has been printed over two million times in the last twenty years." It seems that the devil decided to have an auction. Yes, he decided to go out of business and sell all his tools. The auction day came, and a great crowd of people gathered. He placed all his tools out on a red plush mat. The tools were envy, jealousy, greed, avarice, vengeance, resentment, hatred -- all of them.

Off to one side, he had a silver wedge. Someone asked him what it was, and he said, "That's a silver wedge. See how bright and shiny it is. I use it all of the time. I put it over there because it's the most valuable. It is worth more than all the other tools put together."

The people asked, "Well, how do you use it?"

Satan answered, "That is the wedge of discouragement. You can take the finest Christian, one who has received Jesus Christ into his life and who is trying to serve Him, and drive the wedge of discouragement into his Christian work and wreck his usefulness. Whatever the believer may face, if I can drive the wedge of discouragement in, and pry open a door, one that all the rest of my cohorts can enter, I can break that life down with discouragement."

After a moment someone asked, "Satan, are there any people in the world that you cannot use that wedge on?"

He answered, "Just one group."

And everybody pressed forward and said, "Who are they?"

"They are the thankful people -- the people who have gratitude in their hearts. They are the humble people. They are the people who thank their Heavenly Father for all the blessings of their lives. They are the people who have thrown wide open the doors of their hearts and let Jesus come in." Therefore, we should fight against the discouragements of Satan, for they are dangerous, and could bring disaster to the believer. We should keep our hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving to our wonderful Lord.

The great Apostle Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and therefore am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Cor. 1:12). If we knew the Lord as Paul did, we would be equally persuaded -- for we would see how utterly impossible it is for Him to fail us. Men may fail us, but God never! Every doubt, therefore, is in reality a libel against God -- for it is an implication that He Who has promised, is not faithful, but unfaithful, and that He cannot be trusted.

O believing soul, resist any encroachment of doubt! For, in doubting God, we are practically denying God. The Hebrew writer says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Let us believe God, for doubting is like the waves of the sea. James says, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like the waves of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:6).

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06 -- THE WAY OF ESCAPE IN TEMPTATION

Let us settle the matter forever -- God is faithful. Paul says, "God is faithful . . . also to make a way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13). He is not only able, but He will do it -- if we will seek His face, and trust in His blood. While He does permit the enemy to hedge us about occasionally with what seems to be insurmountable walls, yet, He will never allow him to place a roof over our heads. Thank God, the Christian can always look up for there is help from above. When all other ways are closed, thank God, the upper way is always open!

David said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalms 34:19). While there is no promise of immunity from temptation, yet, there are promises of strength. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25). Paul seems to emphasize the words "a way of escape."

We will never need to endure that which we cannot endure, seeing "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that ye are able." The way of escape does not always appear before entering into temptation, but it will come in the midst of it. God could have delivered the three Hebrew boys before they were cast into the fiery furnace, but such was not His plan -- the deliverance was granted to them in the midst of the fiery flame -- so that even a heathen king was compelled to acknowledge the presence of "the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" Who was with them. (Daniel 3:25).

I think that one of the thrills of Heaven will be the privilege to interview Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. If we should ask them about their richest experience while on earth, they would doubtless say it was at "the time when they made it hot for us" -- seeing the furnace was made "seven times" hotter "than it was before and God delivered us."

At times the way may seem bleak with darkness, but let us remember that the tunnel is simply the short cut to desired destination. The greater the conflict, the greater will be the victory. And the more intense is the temptation, the more glorious will be the deliverance. Jesus plainly told us that "in the world ye shall have tribulation; Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We are not always shielded from temptation, but "He giveth more grace" (James 4:6). Paul was praying for deliverance from the thorn in the flesh, and Jesus said unto him: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9). The Apostle Peter says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9). And the mighty Isaiah said, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19).

What are the weapons that a Christian should use in escaping temptation? While we cannot escape the fact of temptation, yet, we need not despair nor be defeated. Thank God, there is an escape -- a marvelous deliverance. How shall we meet temptation in order to escape it? This escape does not mean it is a by-pass to temptation. For Paul says, "Yea, all that will live godly in

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). No, there is no royal road around temptation, but, thank God, there is a marvelous escape, or deliverance. What weapons shall we use to defeat our foe?

1. Watch and pray. Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41). To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Be careful to keep off of the devil's territory. We fear some people actually tempt the devil to tempt them, by trespassing on his territory. They see how near they may walk on the danger line, and by so doing expose themselves to unnecessary temptations. We cannot prevent the enemy from assaulting us, but we can frequently avoid the occasion for temptation by keeping out of the danger zone, and attending strictly to our own business. To play with temptation is to invite defeat. While the Lord delivered Daniel when he was cast into the lion's den, yet, we do not believe that he would have thus been delivered, if he had deliberately jumped into the lion's den, as an experiment.

We should be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. The weapon of prayer is tremendous in the hour of temptation. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7, 8). James said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

It has been said, "Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon his knees." By prayer, we receive strength, for the conflicts, and, final deliverance in the hour of temptation. Like the little boy who was being taunted by his schoolmates, and knew that he could not withstand them alone. But having an elder brother in an adjoining room, he would run and call on his big brother for assistance. It is needless to say, that when the big brother appeared on the scene, the tormenting schoolmates would all disappear. We, too, have an "elder brother", and when we call upon Him in prayer, He always appears on the scene, and the enemy is soon discomfited and put to flight. Here is the reason: "Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

2. Study your Bible. Jesus met temptation, and triumphed over the worst that Satan could hurl at Him. How did He do it? He met Satan with these words: "It is written." His only weapon of defense was the Word of God which is "the Sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). Human arguments and human wisdom are not sufficient. He who is thoroughly equipped and fortified by the Word of God, has the surest way of escape. David said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalms 119:11).

To meet temptation with a "Thus saith the Lord", and with an unwavering faith in the promises of God, is the surest way to discomfit the foe, and to bring us to certain victory. Again, the Psalmist says, "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler" (Psalms 91:4). If we will study the Word for soul food, we can be assured of victory over temptation.

3. Have faith in God. Paul says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). The fiery darts from Satan, are missiles thrown, as the javelin, spear, arrow, or stone from a sling. The fiery darts perhaps refer to the combustible arrowheads that would set fire to the fortifications, ships, houses, and even the shields of the enemy that was made of wood or leather.

To quench these fiery darts, the shields were covered with metal. As applied to the Christian warfare, they refer to evil thoughts, lusts, passions, and temptations of various kinds. This shield of faith is of vast importance to the Christian. We are not only converted and sanctified by faith, but this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith (I John 5:4).

There has never been any artillery invented in earth or hell, that can penetrate "the shield of faith." Ever since the Master said, "According to your faith, be it unto you", this has been the victory that overcometh (Matt. 9:29); (I John 5:4). All the mighty warriors, whose portraits are hung up in the gallery of fame -- the eleventh chapter of Hebrews -- obtained their "good report through faith" (Hebrews 11:11-39).

Jesus said, "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:-26), and "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Thus you can see, that faith couples us up with the arms of Omnipotence, and assures the Christian of triumph over the foe. Peter said, "kept by the power of God through faith" (I Peter 1:5). The "shield of faith" makes the Christian invulnerable, invincible, and unconquerable. "By faith we stand" says Paul (II Cor. 1:24).

Since there is a way of victory over temptation -- regardless of the circumstances -- there can be no reasonable excuse for failure or defeat. Again, let me remind you of what Paul said: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above ye are able -- but will with the temptation also make a way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13). With this assurance, the soul that is buffeted and beaten by Satan, can meet temptation in "quietness and confidence," knowing that the greater the conflict, the more glorious will be the victory. So then, with Paul, we can say, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Cor. 2:14).

Let us remember that regardless of the severity of the temptation, we can lean on Jesus. The poet expressed this wonderful truth in these beautiful words:

In every condition -- in sickness, in health;
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad; on the land, or on the sea--
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

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07 -- THE REWARD OF THE TEMPTED

The Apostle Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). In overcoming temptations, we not only develop soul fiber, but our patience is enriched, our faith is strengthened, and our capital is enhanced to better carry on for God. By overcoming the temptations of life, we shall receive greater blessedness in the world to come. "They work for us," which means we shall receive greater honors and a larger pension when this holy war is over.

The soldier who never endured hardness, and suffered losses, cannot hope to receive the same consideration at the close of the war as does the battle-scarred soldier who returns from the conflict with an armless sleeve or some ghastly wound. And, of course, there is no reward at all for the man who is shot in the back while fleeing from the foe. The laurels of the victor are determined by the fierceness of the battle and the faithfulness of the soldier.

Yes, even now, great trials and temptations make way for great grace -- for "As ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, so shall ye be also of consolation" (II Cor. 1:7). After we have thus suffered with Him, we shall be "joint-heirs with Christ", and "shall also reign with him" (Romans 8:7); (II Tim. 2:12). Therefore, the promised rewards to the "overcomer" are beyond human computation, or infinite comprehension.

In the Book of Revelation, the Lord has promised some great rewards to the overcomers. John was banished to the lonely island of Patmos. There the Lord appeared unto him, and gave him seven messages to the seven churches in Asia Minor. At the conclusion of these messages, the Lord gave a glorious promise to each overcomer. He said, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:10, 11). To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and shall give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth" (Rev. 2:17). He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron -- and I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2:26-28).

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5).

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

No wonder the Apostle Paul said, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). What a glorious day it will be when the tempted saints of earth shall come forth to meet their Lord. The beloved John saw this great army of saints in glory. He said, in describing them, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:14-17).

Again, John speaks of the day that all sorrow and crying shall be done away with. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

In that glorious day the Lord will bestow crowns to those who merit them. Peter says, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4). Earthly crowns will fade with the passing of the years, but this crown will be enriched and beautified.

The mighty Paul says, "Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day" (II Tim. 4:8). When the apostle looked toward the future, his eyes brightened, his bosom heaved, his heart beat a little faster, and his hope enlarged. He saw Jesus, Who will bestow this blessed crown of righteousness.

The practical James says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 2:12).

Friends may fail us, circumstances may discourage us, and all human props swept away with one mighty stroke. But when it is so dark that we cannot see our way before us, there is a light beyond the hills. The troubled waters of this life may be about our feet, and it may seem that we shall be submerged, yet, there comes Jesus walking across the turbulent waves of our night, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6:50).

Yonder comes a countless multitude of tempted and tried saints of this earth. They have borne burdens, and carried crushing loads. Often they have needed encouragement that never came. Had this mighty army failed, the Church of Jesus Christ would have failed. So, fight on, struggle on, believe on, toil on, and pray on ye faithful and noble souls! There is a better day coming I know -- it will not always be so. Soon this holy war will be over, and the faithful, battle-scarred soldiers of the cross will be coming from the fields of conflict to the grand home-coming over yonder. What does it all mean? War is over! No more burdens, no more difficulties, no more misunderstandings, no more hard financial loads, and no more bitter attacks from the enemy. Look up, for there is a glad tomorrow for the tempted and tried saints of this world!

It was a high day in London when the Crimean War came to an end in 1855. Great galleries had been erected for Parliament and the royal family. Queen Victoria sat on the throne, and through her secretary, gave out the medals to those heroes who fought in the war. One soldier had lost his leg, but took hold of a tree, drew his sword ready to fight on, when another cannon ball took off the other leg. He had been carried before the Queen on a stretcher -- his face was thin and pale. The Queen arose and with her own hands pinned the medal on his breast, while tears of grateful love fell on the brave soldier's face. Multitudes waved their hands, wept, and shouted, "God save the Queen!" One of these days the tempted and tried saints of earth will come forth, and will march in grand review before the Lord Jesus Christ. And with His own nail-pierced hands He will give out the crowns of glory. In that glorious day, we will cast our crowns at His blessed feet, and crown Him Lord of all.

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THE END