

WORD AND WORK

THE CRUCIFIED ONE.

"The Christ who died and shed his blood,
On Calvary's cross my soul to save,
Went down to Hades and withstood,
Grim Satan and the fearsome grave.

"He snatched the keys of death and hell,
And holds them now in mighty power ;
And every saint, who fought and fell,
Shall rise and stand, in that glad hour.

"On Calvary's mount I laid my sin ;
The cleansing blood poured out, like balm,
And now I carry peace within,
And wait the grave with perfect calm.

"Or, should He come before I die,
I know I'll see His glorious face ;
And, in His likeness I shall cry,
All hail to Christ's atoning grace!"

—STEPHEN D. ECKSTEIN.

THE SECRET OF FIRST LOVE.

S. C.

That love which is in the sight of the Lord so precious is not a self-generated love. Man cannot manufacture it. It is from above. "For the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. Christian love and the Holy Spirit are as inseparable as cause and effect. If therefore we would fulfill the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians we must open up our hearts to the filling of the Holy Spirit and the thing is done. Better by far it is that we receive the Spirit's filling and thus love as we should than that we allow the "spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" to fill our hearts with anger, wrath, malice and such like and thus grieve the Spirit whose fruit is love. I *need* not fail of my privilege of being "filled with the Spirit" and thus fulfilling the law of love. "And above all these things put on love which is the bond of perfectness."

"Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above ;
And he's an heir of heaven who finds
His bosom glow with love."

WORDS IN SEASON.

R. H. B.

THE TESTING OF GOD'S MAN.

The question whether our Lord Jesus Christ *could have* sinned is one of those profitless metaphysical conundrums which men please to propound to themselves. Sufficient that He was tried and tested by every means and demonstrated to be pure gold. The fact that He did not sin showed that He could not sin—yet not because of any arbitrary limitation of His ability, but because He was what He was. The impossibility was a *moral* one, such as may be observed in a relative measure in the case of a good man who can by no means be brought even to consider the committing of a certain wrong. For when the Lord Jesus met the tempter, it was not as a Divine and impeccable Person (Satan knowing well enough that "God cannot be tempted," would never have undertaken to tempt Him in *that* capacity!) but as a *man*, with all that implies of need and weakness and liability, and with no sort of supernatural power to aid Him, except such as man in his normal state and in fellowship with God may have. It was a fair battle: as man and for man He was tempted, and so conquered sin.

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For there was something representative in the temptation of Christ. Just as the first man's temptation and sin was representative for all his race, so the last Adam also acted representatively; that, making in Him a new beginning, God might bring the blessing of His death on their behalf (for their redemption from their ruin) and the fruits of His obedience upon all who pertain to Him. For as by the transgression of the one the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous. (Rom. 5:19).

But how different were the circumstances! The first man's trial was very light. Surrounded by every blessing, and knowing no need, the test put to him was on the simplest ground of trust, obedience, and loyalty. The second Man, however, was in no Paradise—He was in the wilderness; not at ease and satisfied, but hungry and weakened by His long fast. Nor was His temptation of such an easy, plain, open-or-shut sort as that which was put up to the first man: it was far more subtle, more complicated, more diversified. It was not only a single, simple question whether He would obey or disobey, but whether He would be able to perceive the hidden crafty snares laid for Him. It was not just whether He would technically and outwardly comply with some plain injunction, but whether His heart was so devoted to God that He would carefully examine, and that He could perceive and refuse anything that was out of harmony with the perfect principle of God's will.

It is important to note that neither in the case of the first man, nor of the Last, did the suggestion of evil arise *from within*. It came in both instances from an outside party. Whatever may be the mystery that veils the origin of evil, it was not *man* that first gave it birth. The first Adam was drawn into it by one who was already previously identified with the principle of sin; and it was only *through* man as a channel, not *by* him, as the originator, that sin entered into our world, and death by sin. Nor did the suggestion of evil arise out of the pure heart of the new Adam, but it had to be insinuated to Him by another person who is called the Tempter, the Devil, and Satan.

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The first temptation was addressed to the bodily desires, now inflamed by long privation and want. "He hungered." What will not people do under the urge of extreme hunger? At a certain stress the principles of most men break down. Those who have been scrupulously honest lose consideration of property-rights of others; and those who have been unselfish and kind become fierce and brutal. A hungry man is proverbially as ferocious as a wolf, and far more dangerous. Yea, the strongest ties of human love give way in the presence of the maddening desire for food. (Deut. 28:56, 57). Under the lash of hunger a man may become a raving ravenous beast. In this trying physical state was the Lord Jesus. For forty days He had been in the wilderness, without food. If in some cases so long a fast may tend to deaden the senses, so that a man no longer feels the awful craving of his appetite, it was not so with Him: *He hungered*. (Matt. 4:2). And in this fact the tempter saw an opportunity. He approached Jesus first at the point of sore bodily need, which is the point of greatest weakness.

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How simple and bland was Satan's suggestion. It puzzles us yet to see where the wrong of it lies. "If thou art the Son of God"—(the "if" was not to cast doubt, but it was argumentative)—"command that these stones become bread." The devil, as usual, used good logic. To the Son of God all things are subject. For "the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands." (John 3:35). Then why should He want or suffer when He might but speak the word and all His need would be supplied? Why not with all means at hand help yourself?

Just as we were puzzled by the devil's craftiness to perceive the evil of his suggestion, we are now unable to appreciate the Lord's quick and profound insight, and the perfect fitness of His answer: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How did that apply? How did that meet the tempter's suggestion? The devil, however, saw it instantly. He knew that Jesus had seen through him, and that the scripture the Lord had quoted hit the point. The devil is not of a sort to be easily discouraged; but he

does not need to be told when he is whipped, and when further attempt is useless. He gave up at once and absolutely. All of which is significant.

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Let us inquire then wherein lay the wrong of Satan's suggestion, and the fitness of Christ's repulse. The Lord Jesus went not into the wilderness of His own accord, but by the will of God. He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." He was in the place where His Father put Him. His one duty was to trust and obey. When a man is wholly in the path of God's will, all that comes to his lot is of God, and God assumes all responsibility for the outcome. In this instance, for reasons good and wise, it was the Father's will to leave the Son without sustenance for a time. You ask why? *He* knows; we do not. But it was His design that it should be so. Had the Son used miraculous power to feed Himself, it would have cast reflection on the Father's wisdom and goodness. It would have been to take Himself out of God's hands. And it would have marred God's good plan. No—He was there by the Father's will. His Father who put Him there knew His need. He had no orders to alter the conditions or to supply Himself. So soon as God saw necessary His want must be met.

We see then that the attack of Satan was directed against Jesus' childlike trust in His Father, to break it down and to commit Him to a course of self-will and disobedience. In a way it was typical of the oft-repeated temptation all His life, to refuse the burden and suffering the Father's hand had laid upon Him. To which He answer was from first to last, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This is also your victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

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That gives us a key to the hidden meaning of the Lord's answer. "It is written." The place where it is written is Deut. 8:2, 3. To Israel (God's typical Son, Exod. 4:22; comp. Hosea 11:1) it was said,

"And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live."

God had led His people into the wilderness where no food nor sustenance was; yea, He let them become quite hungry, that they might realize their utter dependence upon God alone; and then He supplied their necessities in a manner unlooked for and unheard of (for He is a God of incalculable ways and resources) by the mysterious manna—all to make them realize that a man's sustenance does not depend upon visible and available supplies

("for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," Luke 12:15) but upon the word and will of God. And a man lives, not by the direct seeking after food, but by faith and obedience toward God, in whose hands his very breath is. Hence also the teaching of the Lord Jesus, "Be not therefore anxious saying, What shall we eat, or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek [who are without God and without hope in the world, Eph. 2:12]; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:31-33.

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We mark that Jesus, though Son of God, availed Himself of no special privileges or prerogatives. As a man He took His stand, and as man He met the tempter and vanquished him through the Word of God, by faith and unswerving loyalty to it, and toward Him that spoke it, His Father in heaven. Of all scriptures this was the one and only one that was here required, and that absolutely met the question of the moment. "It is written"—how Satan quails before the sword of the Spirit when wielded by fit hands! "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The answer revealed such a depth of insight and such a breadth of understanding of God's ways, and withal so overwhelming a trust and devotion toward God, that Satan knew all further solicitation upon this point to be perfectly useless. At *such* an answer from the lips of a *hungry man*, Satan staggered and reeled away as under an awful blow.

I have been present in Board meetings of Christian organizations. Prominent men—prominent mainly on account of the great influence of their Bank-roll—are usually asked to adorn these Boards with their condescending presence, in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit's inspired injunction through James: "For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place;' and say unto the poor, 'Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool;' are ye not then partial to yourselves, and are become judges of evil thought?" (James 2:2-4).

"It is extraordinary power from God, not talent, that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual unction, not extraordinary mental power, that we need. Mental power may fill a chapel but spiritual power fills the church with soul anguish. Mental power may gather a large congregation, but only spiritual power will save souls. What we need is spiritual power."—Chas. H. Spurgeon.