

September 28

Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. 1Peter 5:8,9

THIS thought of Satan's opposition to us, and that we are contending not merely

TEMPTATIONS

R758 "You know that you have weaknesses; special points upon which you are aware by past experience you are specially liable to fail, under trial and temptation. It may be the...love of the world, which seem to draw your feet from the narrow way oftener. It may be that business has such an attraction to you that you have at times been almost swallowed up with its ambitions and cares, and that its demands upon your time and talent have been for a season almost overwhelming, and that you found your appetite for spiritual things forestalled by the earthly, and your consecrated time absorbed in labor for the meat that perisheth.

Or it may be that your special weakness is a love of approbation, which absorbs consecrated time in making your person, your home, and your family charming, as well as hinders you from engaging in service for the Lord and your fellow-saints...

Or your difficulty may be uncongenial family relationship and opposition to study and Christian growth from that quarter.

Or, it may be that seeming duties and necessities in your circumstances demand your time and keep you as they did Martha from communing with the Master, and from engaging in and enjoying the higher and

with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power, would be appalling to us did we not on the other hand realize that by positiveness of decision we acquire great helps and assistances by other unseen powers. From the moment of our positive re-

grander privilege of breaking to others spiritual food. No matter in which particular direction your besetment lies, rest assured that yours is not an exceptional case. Every soul knoweth its own burdens, and before each one Satan is permitted to lay obstacles and hindrances in order that each may be tried and thus have opportunity of *overcoming* and proving his love and his appreciation of the prize and of the Lord's approval, by faithfulness under adverse conditions.

What is your duty? What shall you do? Give up, because the way is not smooth? Why certainly you did not expect to be classed an "overcomer" without having something opposing you to overcome...

And do you not know that your temptation on these weak points of your besetment are daily becoming more absorbing, more difficult to resist? Do you not see that we are living in the "evil day" which is evil or full of special danger, because of its increase of temptation on every point of weakness to every member of the body? that the besetments of the world, the flesh and the devil are more subtle and deceptive, and more powerful than ever before?... What are you going to do about it? We answer, Break the bondage at any cost... Make straight paths for your feet. Remove from

sistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and His cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might, and greater is He that is for us than all that be against us. R3300:4

Hesitancy after the wrong is seen increases the power of the temptation. R2568:5

your pathway at once every hindrance and stumbling-block which the adversary may put in your way, and keep right on, running..."

R5184 "The Lord's people are to resist the Devil by not allowing his seductive arguments to have weight with us...

The experience of our Lord in the Wilderness affords a good example for all the people of God to follow. He did not seek to keep up the controversy, the discussion with the Adversary; but when the evil thought was presented, He promptly resisted it."

R5184 "Whoever thinks that he is able to battle alone with Satan surely must possess great self-conceit, or else must overestimate his own ability and underestimate that of the Adversary. In any contention, Satan would surely gain the victory."

R2249 "In the moment of temptation the heart should lift itself to the great Master... Asking for assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious."

R3296 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

SPECIAL TRIALS FOLLOW CONSECRATION

--MATT. 3:13-4:11.--JANUARY 17.--

Golden Text:--"And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."--Matt. 8:17.

THIS lesson, relating to our Lord's baptism unto death and his temptations in the wilderness, which immediately followed, illustrates the experiences of all who follow in his steps. In order to become Jesus' disciples at all, we must take a step which he did not take, namely, that of justification from our sins to divine favor and relationship through faith in the blood of Christ. Having taken this step the call of the Gospel age has been for such as are of right condition of heart to forsake all and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth--in trials, difficulties, oppositions and persecutions in this present life and into the glorious honors and divine favors of the life which is to come. Our Lord's experiences, therefore, furnish a good basis for reflection respecting what is to be expected and endured by all of his faithful.

Our Lord's baptism was more than "John's baptism." The latter was merely for sinners against the Mosaic Law, and indicated a return to harmony with that Law and to the relationship with God which that Law Covenant through Moses established. Our Lord Jesus needed no such repentance and reformation, being holy, harmless, and separate from sinners; hence it was that John was astonished when he presented himself for baptism. At first John declined, asserting that of the two he himself rather than Jesus needed that baptism, since they were both heartily obedient to the divine arrangement and had not at any time been open transgressors of the Law.

LIKE A DOVE

Without explaining to John what the latter would not have understood respecting the new dispensation and the appropriateness of water immersion as a symbol of his consecration unto death, our Lord merely said, Permit the service to proceed, John. I have a reason for so desiring it, and it is proper that I should do it in the fulfillment of certain things which I recognize to be right. Then John baptized him, and immediately after Jesus' baptism was finished and he had come up from the water John beheld and heard peculiar things, which apparently others thereabouts knew nothing of. He saw as it were an opening in the heavens, and something which he understood to represent the holy Spirit, the power of God, descending upon Jesus. This was possibly a stream of light, which came not violently,

like the lightning, but gently, like a dove, and he heard a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Whatever sentiments John entertained toward his cousin Jesus previously, he was now convinced by what he witnessed that his cousin was the Messiah. Then he bore record, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and testified that when he was sent with the mission to baptize, and to preach the Kingdom of heaven at hand, he was distinctly informed that in due time he would know the Messiah by seeing the holy Spirit from God come upon him. Nothing in the account indicates that others than John saw this vision, nor was it necessary for others to see it. John was to bear record, and those who heard him had the same opportunity that we today have of knowing about this matter.

CONSECRATION AND BEGETTING

To Jesus this was a great moment--the moment of his begetting of the Spirit. He had left the spirit condition that he might fulfil the Father's will and plan by becoming man's representative, substitute, ransom price; but he had been promised that the faithful performance of this would bring to him again the spirit nature, with added glory and greatness and divine favor. Now at thirty years of age, as soon as was possible for him to begin his ministries under the Law, he had made a full consecration of himself as a man--to give his time, his influence, his energy, his life, "all that he had," to purchase the forfeited life and inheritance of father Adam and his entire posterity. The consecration made by our Lord at the moment of his baptism is represented in the Scriptures in these words, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will O my God; thy law is written in my heart." This full consecration to death involved every human power, and there--as sealing the engagement--the Father gave him the holy Spirit as a firstfruits of the new spiritual nature, which he would receive completely in his resurrection. That anointing of the holy Spirit was the begetting which, in due time, our Lord being faithful, would bring him to the birth of the Spirit in the resurrection. We know from the Scriptures that he was faithful and thus became the firstfruits of them that slept, the firstborn from the dead.

Immediately he was led into the wilderness--Mark expresses it "driven into the wilderness"--by the Spirit, the holy Spirit, which was now his own spirit or mind or will. We can readily understand why the spirit thus forced him away from the society of others. Jesus realized that he had a special mission in the world, different from others; that he had left the spirit plane of being and had become a man, that he might accomplish a work for mankind. He realized that this work was an important one in the Father's sight, and that already for centuries his coming and the great work he was to do had been foretold in the types of the Law and in the words of the prophecies. Even at the early age of twelve years he had felt anxious to be about the Father's business, and as soon as the legal age for his engaging in the Father's business had arrived, he had hastened to make his vow of consecration to do the Father's will in everything. As a man he could not understand and comprehend clearly and fully the meaning of the various prophecies, even as the prophets did not themselves understand these; and, although familiar with the letter of the Scriptures, he had been obliged to wait for a clear understanding of them until the time of his anointing of the spirit;--because "the natural man [however pure and perfect] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."-- 1 Cor. 2:10.

"LORD WHAT WOULDST THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

Jesus then hastened into the wilderness, away from friends and acquaintances and every distracting thing, that he might make use of the power of the holy Spirit that had come upon him, that he might use the new sight. The eyes of his understanding had been opened to comprehend the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love and plan which he was to fulfil. He must not confer with flesh and blood respecting his future course, even if there had been any one perfect like himself with whom he might have conferred. He must confer with the Father. He must take the Father's words through the prophecies, and the lessons through the types, and must hear and see in these the great work mapped out for him. He must make no mistake at the beginning of his mission. He must not hastily conclude that the suggestions of others respecting the course Messiah would pursue were correct. He must not even take his own previous conceptions of his work. He must look at everything from the new standpoint of the spirit. No wonder he wished to be alone with God, and with the Word of God, which he had treasured up in his heart from infancy, and which, having a perfect mind, he unquestionably had before him as plainly as though he had the printed book.

Forty days passed, yet so intent was he upon the study of the work the Father had given him to do, and so perfect was he physically, that he did not hunger until then, as it is written, "He afterward hungered." The season had been a precious one, and undoubtedly the close of that forty-day period saw the Lord fairly well equipped in an understanding of the divine arrangement respecting the necessity for his death. He understood that the payment of the ransom price for the world was a prerequisite to his coming reign of glory and to its privilege of blessing all the families of the earth with an opportunity for attaining all that had been lost through father Adam's disobedience. But just at that juncture, when he was weak from his long fast and probably also from lack of sleep--for he probably was so deeply engrossed respecting the study of the divine plan that he neither ate nor slept those forty days--at this juncture of his extreme physical enervation came the adversary's chief besetments. True, through the forty days, while thinking of the divine arrangements, there were opportunities for questioning the wisdom of the divine arrangement; but these apparently were all nullified in the Lord's zeal to know and do the Father's will, and hence the temptations that are recorded are those following the fasting.

"HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING"

We may well suppose that the great Adversary-- through whose deception mother Eve fell into disobedience, which brought in its train the wreck and ruin of the race--was an interested spectator in everything pertaining to the divine plan. Of course he knew the prophecies. Of course he knew of our Lord's birth and the annunciation of the heavenly hosts that the babe born at Bethlehem was to be the Savior of the world, the one whose coming was intimated to mother Eve--the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. No doubt Satan had watched Jesus in all of his course up to this present time, had seen his baptism of consecration and had seen the Father's recognition of him by the anointing of the Spirit. No doubt he had kept track of him while in the wilderness. All this is intimated in the words of one of the fallen angels or demons, who subsequently said, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." It may be noted here, however, that the Greek word *daimonion* (demons) is the word generally translated devils when speaking of the evil spirits which our Lord and the apostles cast out of many,

but in the narrative of our lesson this is not the word used. Here we have the word *diabolus*, preceded by the Greek article thus making it the *diabolus*, the devil, the one whom the Jews sometimes called Beelzebub, the prince of the devils--the one referred to in the Hebrew as Satan, an opponent of God and of righteousness.

Satan realized that the most favorable time for an attack upon the anointed Jesus would be when he was weak from his long fast and vigilance, and hence it was at the close of the forty days that the temptations mentioned in this lesson were set before the Lord. It may be wondered by some why the Father would permit temptations, or why they would be necessary, or how they could be temptations to a perfect one. There is a difference between temptations which the Father considers proper and the temptations which come of the adversary. The former are tests of loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness, and are intended to be a blessing and a help to all those who withstand them, and who thus demonstrate their loyalty to righteousness. The temptations of Satan, on the contrary, are in the nature of pitfalls and snares in evil and wrongdoing, temptations to make right appear wrong and wrong right, putting light for darkness and darkness for light. In this sense of misrepresentation and ensnarements in evil, God tempteth no man. (Jas. 1:12,13.) It was necessary that our Lord should be tested, and he was tested all through the three and one-half years of his ministry. Since he had consecrated himself and entered upon his work, it was necessary that these testings should begin at once, for if he manifested disloyalty to the Father, if he had a will of his own, a will that was not fully submitted to the Father's will in all points, he would not be worthy to be the Leader, the Captain of salvation to the many sons God intended to bring to glory. And unless proved perfect by testing his death should not have been accepted as an offset, the ransom price for the sin of Adam and for the sins of the whole world. To experience temptation does not imply sin, but it does imply liberty and freedom of will.

The three temptations here recorded practically illustrate all the temptations that came to our Lord during his three and a half years of self sacrifice, and likewise they illustrate all the trials and temptations that come to his followers. We are not to think of the Lord Jesus as being tempted by the weaknesses of the flesh, for he had no such weakness. We are not to think of his being tempted as a father, for he was not a father. We are to remember the statement that he was tempted in all points as we are--not we the world, not we believers merely, but we the consecrated believers, who are likewise begotten of the Spirit and therefore subject to the besetments of the adversary along the lines in which the interests of the Spirit clash with the interests of the flesh, however good and pure the latter may be.

"COMMAND THAT THESE STONES BE MADE BREAD"

The first of these temptations related to the Lord's hunger. He had possibly been hungry before, but not until endued with the holy Spirit after his baptism had he that divine miraculous power at his command which would have permitted him to turn stones into bread. This temptation, therefore, did not signify that it is wrong to eat nor that bread is an improper food, but merely that the method of obtaining the food would not have been a proper or legitimate one. But why not, if he had the power, if he were the Son of God and God had given him this ability--why not use this power to satisfy his legitimate cravings? We reply, that the power that was given him was to enable him to carry out the consecration which he had made, and which involved the sacrifice of his flesh instead of its preservation. He might use this holy power upon others, to demonstrate his mission and to draw the attention of the people to the glorious restitution times prefigured in his miracles; but he might not use this holy power in any selfish manner for anything personal. To have done so would have been to misuse it and would therefore have meant sin.

Let us stop here and notice the lesson there is in this temptation for the Lord's followers. We also have received of the begetting of the Spirit; and although we have the Spirit in less measure than our Master, it is for the same purpose--not to be used selfishly for the feeding of our material bodies nor for the healing of our bodily ailments, but simply and only for the service of the Lord, the brethren, the Truth. As our Lord declared in the garden, he could have asked the Father and have had twelve legions of angels to protect him; and so he could have asked the Father and have had the stones turned into bread, which would have nourished his body; but as our Lord declined to do both of these possible things, so should his followers, having consecrated their lives to the Lord, refuse to ask for divine interference for their own personal and temporal convenience or advantage. To do so would be to ask amiss, to ask selfishly, to ask what would be in opposition to the consecration made.

"THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD"

Satan then tried another plan, suggesting a use of our Lord's divine protection which would bring him suddenly into notoriety amongst the people, and demonstrate that he was not an ordinary person but a special object of divine care. The suggestion was that he should go to the highest part of the temple structure, which overlooked the Valley of Hinnom, at a height of six hundred feet from its bottom--that he should leap from this prominent place in the sight of the people, and thus demonstrate his own faith in the Lord and in his mission as the Messiah, and attach to himself the awe and reverence of the people who would see the transaction or hear about it;--for all would know that without divine protection such a leap would mean certain death. The temptation had its plausible side. It seemed to imply great faith in the Almighty, and a refusal to follow the thought would seem to imply doubt on our Lord's part respecting his Messiahship and lack of faith in the divine power. It was a shrewdly put proposition. Additionally, it was backed up by Scripture texts: for Satan can quote Scripture when it suits his purpose just as, under his guidance, Spiritualists and Christian Scientists and other rejectors of the Word of God are ready at times to quote what they think will serve their purposes. The Scripture quoted was a very able one, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up lest at any time thou shouldst dash thy foot against a stone." (Psa. 91:11,12.) It would almost appear that this Scripture implied that our Lord was to make such an exhibit as Satan proposed.

First we inquire wherein such a course would have been an improper one--what Scriptural injunction or righteous principle would have been violated? We reply that if our Lord had been pushed from the pinnacle of the temple, or if he had been in a dangerous position in discharge of duty and his foot had slipped, and he thus had been precipitated to the valley below, he would have been quite right in assuming that the divine power could protect his interests and cause that all things should work for his good according to promise. But to deliberately place oneself in danger and to call upon or expect God to offset the deliberate act with divine protection would be a mistake. It would be tempting God. And this was our Lord's reply to Satan, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

We are here furnished a practical lesson in the interpretation of Scripture. Where two Scriptures seem to conflict we must examine the principles which underlie them, and the spirit of a sound mind, the holy spirit of loyalty to God and reverence for him, must assist us in determining the proper relationship of these Scriptures, or which one should be followed when they seem to be in conflict. It is quite possible that the time had not yet come for the Scripture which Satan quoted to be rightly understood. It is possible, therefore, that our Lord at that time did not know the proper interpretation of the words quoted by Satan; for if he had there would have been little temptation in the suggestion. He was guided by the principles of righteousness as well as by the Scriptural testimony which he quoted. He perceived that it would be wrong to do a foolish act and to tempt the Lord to shield him from the natural consequences of the act. This conclusion of our Lord's mind was fully backed up by the Scripture which he quoted.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

The Scripture quoted by Satan we may now understand clearly, and this proves that the due time for its comprehension has come. We now see that the Psalm from which this is taken refers to the whole Church of this Gospel age--Jesus the Head, and his faithful, the members of the body. We now see that while there have been feet members in some respects all the way down through this Gospel age, yet in a particular sense the Lord's people of this present time are the "feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace." (Isa. 52:7.) We see that as the feet, the last members of the Jewish house, stumbled over Christ as the stone of stumbling and rock of offence in the end of the Jewish age, so now we see the feet members of the spiritual Israel in the harvest or end of this Gospel age will be in danger of stumbling over the rock of offence. As it is written, "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel"--the fleshly and the spiritual. (Isa. 8:1,4.) We see that as the fleshly house stumbled over the cross (1 Cor. 1:23), so the spiritual house is to stumble over the same obstacle--the cross.

We see this stumbling now taking place, that higher criticism is undermining true faith in all denominations, and that the Evolution theories are making the cross of Christ of none effect--implying that Jesus and the sacrifice for sins was wholly unnecessary, that men have been evolving and progressing upward under a natural law of progression and evolution, that he needed no redemption, and that restitution to a former estate (Acts. 3:21) would be the worst thing which could happen to him. We see that in fulfilment of this promise the Lord has given his ministers a message for the feet class, de-

signed to be helpful to them and to assist them over these peculiar stumbling stones of our day--to enable them to "stand" (Eph. 6:13); and this we see corresponds exactly to the assistance rendered to the feet members of the Jewish house--the Israelites indeed of that time. We remember how the Lord's dark sayings were not for any except those in a special attitude of heart, so that others hearing might hear and not understand, and seeing they might not perceive. So it is now: the great mass of Churchianity hear not, see not, and rejoice in conditions which they fail to recognize as stumblings and in falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints.

"TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS LIKE AS WE ARE"

Coming back now to the temptation, let us see whether or not there are temptations before the body of Christ similar to this one recorded of our Head. There are. Temptations continually assail the Lord's people--suggestions to do some wonderful works in his name, and to thus prove to themselves and to others that they are heaven's favorites. The lesson for us to learn is that the work which the Father has given us to do is not a work of convincing the world of showing his favor toward us and our greatness in him, but rather--"Hast thou faith, have it to thyself," as the Apostle says. Rather that we should quietly and humbly, yet as effectively as reason and propriety will permit, let our lights shine, and show forth the praises of him who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light, and from a desire to be wonder-workers to the reasonable position of servants, ministers of the Truth. Let us fix our Lord's answer clearly in our minds, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Let us as members of the feet of Christ not accept outward deliverances from the trials and difficulties and responsibilities of life, but expect that our protection, our upholding, will be along spiritual lines--that we shall be kept from falling and from injury as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, because our faith is stayed on him.

We do not know that Satan was personally visible to our Lord during these temptations: we must assume that he was not visible, that he did not appear as a man, nor in any other tangible form. Undoubtedly, as the holy angels had power to appear as men, Satan and the fallen angels at one time had the same power or privilege. But the divine sentence against them after the flood is distinctly recorded in the Scriptures. They are "restrained in chains of darkness" until the judgment of the great day, until the dawning of the Millennial morning. However, it matters not to us in what way Satan communicated to our Lord these tempting suggestions. In the third temptation, however, it is evident that the taking of our Lord to a high mountain and showing him therefrom all the kingdoms of the earth, was not a literal taking, but a taking in spirit or in mind or in thought. There is no mountain in the world from which all the earth could be seen, and even if the Roman world were understood there was no mountain anywhere in Palestine from which any considerable portion of the Roman world could be seen. But the mind can be projected to any part of the world in an instant or to any part of the universe in imagination.

Satan called to our Lord's mind, imagination, a great mountain or great kingdom, having supervision of the entire world. He suggested to our Lord that his mission would be accomplished if he should succeed in thus establishing a kingdom over all the kingdoms of the earth. This to some extent is the spirit of prophecy; namely that it is God's purpose to establish through Christ a world dominion which will rule all the people of the earth to their blessing and uplifting from sin and degradation to life, joy, and peace--or so many of them as will respond to the blessed influences of that Millennial Kingdom. Our Lord certainly understood that this was his mission--to lay the foundation for such a Kingdom: we cannot, however, suppose that he as yet fully understood or comprehended all the steps incidental to that Kingdom's establishment. Had he understood this, there would have been no temptation in Satan's presentation.

SATAN AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT WOULD MISLEAD

Having stated the proposition in a form that would at once appeal to our Lord as being largely in accord with the Father's plans he had come to execute, Satan would have our Lord feel that he sympathized with Jehovah's project and with our Lord Jesus in the execution of it, and was willing to render co-operation and assistance. In effect he said, Such a universal Kingdom, for the civilization, enlightenment, uplifting and blessing of all the world I know is your proposition, and I am fully in sympathy with it; but there are different ways of getting at the matter. If you attempt this great work in the wrong way you will merely bring disaster upon yourself and failure to your plans, but if you get at the matter in the proper manner you will succeed. I am the master of the situation--the whole world is under my influence. I admit that in many respects it is a painful influence, and I shall be very glad indeed to have it rectified and the world's government made righteous. My leading of mankind into sin and rebellion and superstition was not so much because I

wish them evil as because I knew that only in this way could I hold my power over them. Now all that I ask for co-operation with you in this scheme of a great kingdom to bless the world is that I receive a share of the dignity and honor with you--that you recognize me. Let us be partners. I will recognize you and you will recognize me, and together we will effect this great work of reformation for the whole world, for which you have so grandly and nobly sacrificed every interest up to this moment. Now be wise, for I assure you that any other method will meet only with disaster and bring needless and fruitless pain upon yourself.

As already intimated, the Lord had been studying the Scriptures from childhood; his perfect memory had grasped every detail of the prophecies, and now, since his anointing with the holy Spirit, he had come into the wilderness to determine this very point--how the great object of his coming into the world was to be made effective to the blessing of mankind--how he must proceed in order to fulfill the divine projects and become King of kings and Lord of lords amongst men for their blessing and uplifting. He heard Satan's proposition carefully, he noted the weight of the argument, he realized the truthfulness of much that Satan had said; but he saw in the Scriptures enough to indicate to him that the Father's plan was not the smooth one that Satan had suggested. He noticed in the Scriptures suggestions not only about glory, honor, dominion and power, and the bowing of every knee, and the confessing of every tongue, and the desire of all nations coming, and the knowledge of the Lord filling the whole earth, and the time coming when there would be no need to say to one's neighbor and to one's brother, Know thou the Lord, because all should know him from the least even unto the greatest; but he noticed also Scriptures and types which clearly intimated that there was to be a sacrificing work accomplished. All the sin-offerings implied this, and the testimony, "he shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter," etc.

Reasoning on the question he could readily see that this sacrificing, slaughtering, etc. could not come after the glory and blessing and enlightenment of the world, and hence that it must precede the glory; for, as the Apostle Peter points out, the prophets "spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." Doubtless by this time the Lord had come to see that it was a clear teaching of Scripture that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins, and that this meant that in some manner he should die for the people. Supposing that he saw this at the time, it meant that the temptation he experienced was all the stronger, because here Satan was proposing to him a method for dealing with the question from the opposite standpoint, without suffering, with exaltation and honor from the very commencement.

COMPLETE CONSECRATION ESSENTIAL TO VICTORY

Our Lord was saved from any vacillation or manifestation of weakness on this subject by reason of the fulness, the completeness of his consecration, which he had symbolized at Jordan. There he had said, in heart at least, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is written in my heart." This desire to please the Father, to obey the divine law in his heart saved our dear Redeemer from any yielding to Satan's wiles, and similarly our consecration as members of his body must be thorough if we would hope to stand the testing which must come to each one of us as we pass along the narrow way, following in his footsteps, seeking the glory, honor and immortality which he has promised us. Our Lord's prompt and allsufficient answer was, Leave me, Adversary; for it is written, the Lord thy God shalt thou worship and him only shalt thou serve. I cannot be a co-worker with you in any sense of the word; to do so would be disloyalty to the great Jehovah. I must be loyal to the Lord and to the commission he has given me and to the doing of his will in his way whatever the cost.

Members of the body of Christ following in his footsteps have temptations from the Adversary along similar lines. Not that he offers to divide the kingdom of earth with us, for so great a proposition would not appeal to us, being incredible; but to us he does propose deviation from the close following in the Master's footsteps. He suggests continually to the Lord's followers easier ways by which as much or more good can be accomplished and without sacrifice and self-denial. These ways of avoiding sacrifice and yet of seemingly attaining good ends always imply more or less of co-partnership with the Adversary directly or indirectly, an acknowledgment of him, a bending to evil--to evil men or evil principles.

Under such circumstances we should note carefully the Lord's method and walk in his steps. We should refuse to have any partnership with sin or evil influences or methods in our endeavors to serve the Lord and his Truth. Satan does not approach us in human form nor in diabolic form, but generally through human agencies, through human ambitions, parties, sects, etc. If our Lord had made inquiry of Satan as to what would be the program, doubtless he would have

advised him to become a Pharisee of the Pharisees at once, and through such steps gradually he would have proceeded to elevate our Lord over the Jewish people and ultimately over the world--if indeed he who was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth could be trusted in respect to any promise.

Similarly, today, he proposes to the Lord's followers identification with nominal Churchianity. He flatters them with some trifling office larger in name than in fact or service; he persuades them that they have a large influence and that to withdraw from Babylon would be to incur suffering upon themselves and their families and to do general injury to the work which they seek to forward. By this means, if he cannot lead them onward step by step to full co-operation with him in the blinding of others, he at least can hinder those who yield to his propositions from ever stepping out boldly and courageously on the Lord's side and in opposition to superstition and error. He can hinder them from being more than conquerors and having a place in the body of Christ. What shall our answer be to his suggestions? Let us answer with our Lord that we can enter into no partnership, be members of the institution, nor co-operate with any along lines that would be either dishonoring to the character of our heavenly Father or in any measure contrary to those which he has marked out as the pathway for those who love him--the pathway of self-denial, and incidentally of suffering for the cause of right and truth.

"ADD TO YOUR FAITH, FORTITUDE"

Another thought: one great difficulty with the Lord's people is that, even when determined for a right course and thus resisting the temptation, they do not take sufficiently positive action. Many say to the tempter, I have concluded not to yield at this time. Thus they leave in their own minds an opportunity open by which the tempter may return. Our Lord's course was the proper one: we should dismiss the tempter once and forever. We should take our stand so firmly that even the Adversary would not think it worth while to come back at us along that line; "Leave me, Adversary," I will worship and serve my God alone.

Our Lord's temptations thus terminated. Henceforth he had Satan for his Adversary, but the Father his protector and ultimately his deliverer. Had he not reached this final decision we may presume that Satan's temptations would have continued for days or weeks or years, and would have been a hindrance to the Lord in the work he had come to do. So with us, we must settle it if we would be on the Lord's side; we must decide that in no sense of the word will we yield to the Adversary, either from policy or to enter into any transaction either to protect life, name or fame. Our decision must be a firm one, somewhat as expressed by the poet:--

"Vain, delusive world, adieu,
With all thou callest good!
To my Lord I would be true,
Who bought me with his blood."

"MARVEL NOT IF THE WORLD HATE YOU"

When the Lord's followers take a firm stand on this subject as their Leader did, the results are the same. Satan is their implacable opponent; he will see to it that they do suffer, that there will be opposition not only by himself but by the world, which is largely under the influence of his spirit and in various ways. Taking this stand they must not marvel if the world hate them, and if all manner of evil be said against them falsely for Christ's sake. And the more prominent they may be, as in our Lord's case, the more virulent we may expect attacks against them to be--the more interested will the great Adversary be in overcoming them. ⁽²⁾This thought of Satan's opposition to us, and that we are contending not merely with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power, would be appalling to us did we not on the other hand realize that by this same positiveness of decision we acquire great helps and assistances by other unseen powers. From that moment of our positive resistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and his cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might, and greater is he that is for us than all that be against us.

It was so in our Lord's case. At once he was ministered to by the unseen messengers of Jehovah, and whatever terror lay in the intimated opposition of the Adversary was more than counterbalanced by the assurances of divine favor and assistance. So it is with us. If God be for us who can be against us--what will all the oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil amount to since God declares that we are his and all things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's?-- 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

⁽²⁾ ½ Sept. 28 Manna; See R2568:5 for the other half.