

# JESUS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS

by Adolphe Monod

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*Monod's detailed exposition of Christ's three temptations in the wilderness and His victory over each through Scripture and obedience, demonstrating the model of spiritual warfare that believers can follow in their own battles against temptation.*

3 Chapters

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## 01 - Lecture 01

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### Lecture 1 - The Combat

#### FIRST LECTURE. THE COMBAT.

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."--- Luke 4:1-13.

Read also Matthew 4:1-10, and Mark 1:12-13. MY DEAR FRIENDS, The Scriptures appear in a totally different light, according as they are perused with the eye of human wisdom or with that of faith; and nowhere is this difference more striking than in the passage we have just read. I can recollect the time when I could not read it without a sense of humiliation for my intellect, and almost for the Word of God itself, whereas now I seek it as a favorite place where my soul finds rich and abundant pasture. The reason is, that this portion of Scripture is as replete with salutary instructions for the little child, who simply accepts God's testimony, as it is full of mystery for the philosopher who pretends to judge the Scriptures instead of allowing himself to be judged by them.

There is mystery in the personal existence of the devil and in the pernicious influence he exercises over us. This influence is so clearly attested by the Scriptures that we cannot deny it without impeaching their veracity: but what is its origin, its nature, and extent?---of all this we know nothing, or almost nothing. There is mystery in the power granted to the devil to lay his wicked snares for the Son of God himself. That we should be tempted, we, who through sin are subjected to his empire, we can imagine; but how can we conceive that he should be permitted to tempt the "Lord of Lords and the Holy of holies," he "in whom he hath nothing?" (John 14:30) There is mystery in the nature of the temptation to which Jesus Christ is subjected. "He was tempted," and "that without sin." These two facts are expressly affirmed in the Scriptures: but try to go a step further, and you are arrested on all sides. How can we comprehend a temptation without any inward tendency for sin? how can we reconcile an inward tendency to sin with perfect holiness? If Jesus could not yield, where is the glory of His triumph?---and if He could, what becomes of His

divine nature? And, lastly, there is mystery in the manner in which the whole scene of the temptation takes place. All seems to indicate that the history is founded upon fact; the time of the narrative, the place where the event took place, the character of the book; and yet, whether we consider it as a whole, or whether we take the various details separately, we feel that it is altogether beyond the limits of human experience. How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction? Where does this struggle, which has the earth for its theater, while the actors are brought from heaven and from hell, take place? Is it in the visible or invisible world? or in some unknown, obscure region which separates them, partaking of the nature of both? Mystery upon mystery!

I shall not even attempt to penetrate these mysteries, but consider my subject only in its practical view, just as a child might grasp it as well as we, and perhaps far better than we can. Guided by these words of the Lord: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done," let us seek to know what are the instructions He here gives us for our conduct through life. Now, in this fearful struggle of the Son of God with the Spirit of darkness, we distinguish three principal points: the conflict, the victory, and the weapons. Each of the three will instruct us in its turn. By the conflict He carried on, Jesus teaches us that we must expect to be engaged in a similar warfare; by the victory He obtained, Jesus teaches us that we too can conquer; and by the weapons that He used, Jesus teaches by what means we also can overcome. The subject is so rich, that I will divide it into three discourses: we will limit that of today to the conflict that Jesus maintained in the wilderness. This conflict should reconcile us to that which we have to carry on: it is a response to an earnest longing of our renewed nature. Children of God, who have some experience in Christian life, I am not afraid of being contradicted by you when I say that the temptations with which it is so thickly sown are to you a matter of surprise, and sometimes cast a stumbling-block in your way. When we have set out on the Lord's highway, it seems to us that the devil should be kept at a distance, and prevented from touching us. When we feel his attacks, a secret dread takes possession of us, as if the Lord were withdrawing from us. Our distress increases if the temptation is prolonged or multiplied, if it returns at seasons of communion with the Lord,---if it does not seem to answer any special purpose of which we are conscious; so that at last we are reduced to a state bordering upon despair: the temptation of Jesus answers to all this.

Jesus is tempted. The conflict that you sustain, He sustained it before you. What do I say?---Your conflict does not deserve to be compared to His. There are divers kinds of temptation: for all are not equal, and the same temptation is not equal for all. To appreciate a temptation, we must consider not only what it is in itself, but especially what it is for him who is exposed to it. Do we attempt to appreciate the temptation itself? Amongst all your own, you cannot find one that can be compared to that by which Jesus was assailed. Set your mind upon it, and endeavor to imagine yourself in His place: far from human society, cast alone into a wilderness, surrounded by wild beasts, deprived of food, with the devil beside Him, laying snare upon snare, and all this going on for forty days and forty nights! (The evangelist's narrative shows that the Lord was tempted during forty days and forty nights; and it was at the end of this period that the devil tried a supreme effort, of which alone he gives us the details.) This situation, in which you would not even dare to imagine yourself, was that of your Savior. But let us go yet further into the subject. We cannot rightly appreciate temptation by outward circumstances; the true appreciation can be found only in the inward dispositions of him whom it visits. The cold, slimy touch of a serpent is very different for the

rough skin of the laborer, or for the delicate skin of a young child; and how different the assaults of the tempter for a sinner such as you or I, or for the "Holy of holies." And if it is terrible for us to come into close contact with the Spirit of darkness, say,---what must it have been for the Son of God? For us, who are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," and thus lawfully subjected to the "Prince of this world," his approach, his assaults, the blows he aims at us, are in the natural course of things. But is it not a strange anomaly that the "Only and well-beloved Son" should in His turn be exposed to all this? And must not His holy nature shrink with unutterable dread from the conflict in the wilderness? However that may be, He is engaged in it; children of God, behold the only and well-beloved Son contending, like you, with the eternal enemy of God and of His people.

If you had been living in Judea eighteen-hundred years ago, and had been told that the promised Messiah was somewhere in the world, where would you have sought Him? I know not; but certainly it would not have been where He was. You would not have sought Him in the carpenter's humble workshop; you would not have sought Him amongst those that John had baptized upon the banks of Jordan; and, above all, you would not have sought Him in the wilderness, engaged in a conflict with the devil. And yet it is there that He must be sought to be found; and during forty days and forty nights you would vainly have sought Him elsewhere. . . . But if at last you had found Him there, would not the sight of His temptation have explained the inexplicable mystery of yours? Ah! I now understand: the struggle from which I shrunk, and the warfare in which I was ready to faint, is the lot of humanity; and a lot so inevitable that even His, though a partaker of the divine nature, must pass through it. Henceforth if temptations arise, even in their most appalling, most humbling aspect, they can neither surprise nor alarm me! It is in the wilderness that we must seek Jesus Christ, Jacob at the ford of Jabbok, Moses at Massah and at Meribah, Daniel in the lions' den, St. John in his exile, St. Chrysostom in his disgrace, John Huss at the Council of Constance, and Luther at the diet of Worms!

Jesus "was tempted"---and how?---"He was tempted in all points like as we are," (Hebrews 4:15) is the answer of the Holy Ghost---yea, truly, "in all points;" follow Him in the light of my text, and you will, see Him tempted in all times, in all places, and in all ways. In all times. "These are the beginnings of sorrows,"---that the sequel will complete. When the devil had ended all the temptation for this time, "he departed from Him," but, "for a season." He will return to the attack, you need not doubt it; he will return, and return during all the human life of Jesus; he will return, and especially as the great decisive moment approaches. After having "bruised his heel" in the wilderness, he will strike a second blow at Golgotha, that Jesus, who had begun to "tread upon the serpent" in His solitude, may "bruise his head" upon the cross. Thus we find placed at the beginning and at the close of the ministry of the Son of God, two of the most terrible temptations, opening and terminating the series of all those that assailed Him successively during three years and a half: the first a temptation of lust or covetousness, all that the earth or world can offer to be rejected; the second a temptation of suffering, all the rage of hell and the wrath of heaven itself, to bear. This twofold temptation, that of the wilderness and that of the cross, will present themselves upon our path, and in general will appear in the self-same order. At the beginning of the Christian career, worldly desires to overcome by self-denial; later, and especially in the last struggle, the anguish of the flesh and spirit to overcome by patience: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross." (Matthew 16:24) In all places. Here we have only to follow our subject: we find Jesus tempted in the wilderness, tempted on the mountain, tempted in the

holy city. There are men who have retired into deserts to escape temptation. Strange delusion! Had they forgotten that it was in the wilderness that the Lord was tempted? you may avoid the society of your fellow-men, but how can you escape from Satan and your own heart? This outward enemy and this inward foe, leagued together against you, will follow you wherever you may fly. In the wilderness, upon the mountain, in the holy city,---that is to say, you will everywhere find temptations, in solitude, in the world, in the church, everywhere you will find it, and the difficulty is not to flee but to fight. It is not to exchange the temptations of one position for those of another, which may prove the more dangerous perhaps, because you have chosen and sought them, but to stand fast against the temptations of the situation in which God has placed you.

Finally, and this is my principal remark, in all ways. Here again I return to my text. The devil stops only when "the temptation was ended." Of all the temptations to which Jesus was subjected, that of the wilderness is the most complete and the best delineated. We here see concentrated all the efforts of the enemy, exhausting one after another all the means and all the resources he has at his disposal. It is more than a temptation, it is "the temptation;" it is a system, and, as it were, a regular series of temptations. For the devil has a plan of which we should not be ignorant, and that the Holy Spirit has revealed to us: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." (1 John 2:14.---The order in which the apostle names the three great carnal lusts of humanity cannot have been stated by chance, for we see the same order observed in the temptation of Eve as in that of Jesus, as it is given us by St. Luke. It seems as if the three temptations were here presented according to the deceitfulness of their nature; the first is a temptation of the flesh, the second a temptation of the eyes, and the third a temptation of the mind.) He followed this plan with Eve, who yielded to the temptation on seeing, first "that the fruit was good for food;" then, "that it was pleasant to the eyes;" and, lastly, "that it is to be desired to make one wise." He follows the same plan with Jesus, whom he tempts at first by the necessities of the flesh, then by the spectacle of worldly pomp; and, lastly, by the pride of a splendid miracle. And his intention will be still more evident if, instead of considering the object of the temptation, you penetrate into the spirit of it. Satan endeavors to make the Lord fall, first, by a spirit of distrust in God; then by a spirit of infidelity towards God; and, lastly, by a spirit of rash confidence in God; he thus appeals to a want of faith, the forgetfulness of faith, and the abuse of faith: how well is all this calculated and combined, and carried out to the end! And this is not all. There is nothing that the tempter does not use as an instrument. What may be wanting in his own resources he borrows from the weapons used to resist him, and finds arms in what is opposed to him. Jesus has just heard a voice declaring Him to be the Son of God: the devil seeks to seduce Him by this glorious title. Jesus has been endowed by the Holy Spirit with sovereign power: the devil endeavors to make him misuse this power. Jesus fasts: the devil endeavors to overcome Him by hunger. And the better to succeed, the traitor transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14) He pretends to sanctity, and employs holy things; the holy city, the holy temple, and even the holy Word of God; all is turned to account in his treacherous hands.

Observe especially the use he makes of the name of Messiah given to Jesus. It is this name that he takes for the basis of the temptation. He is willing that Jesus should appear as the Messiah, provided it is not the Messiah described by the holy prophets, but a Messiah such as the carnal Jews imagined; in this he hoped the better to succeed, because in addressing Jesus he addressed a Jew, and a Jew interested in justifying the expectations of his fellow-countrymen. As the Messiah

possesses a power greatly superior to that of man, Satan will have him make use of it, not as the prophets had foretold, to save the souls of men, but as the carnal Jews would, to satisfy his own desires and theirs: "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The Messiah was to inherit all the kingdoms of the world; Satan will have Him receive them, not as the prophets had foretold, from His Father, and as the price of His sacrifice, but as the carnal Jews would, without conflict, and from the Prince of this world: "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, all shall be thine." And, lastly, the Messiah has magnificent promises of protection and deliverance; Satan would have Him take advantage of them, not as the prophets had foretold, to accomplish His work of mercy, notwithstanding all obstacles,---notwithstanding Satan himself, but as the carnal Jews would, to advance His own glory and that of His people. "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence." Such are the wiles of this fallen spirit! Such are the folds of the serpent; and so true it is, that He spared nothing to make Jesus fall, if He could have fallen!

Oh ye, then, who are assailed, and as it were overwhelmed by temptations, cease to complain. Though all should seem leagued against you; though your efforts, your precautions, your props, even your prayers should become a snare; though you should feel yourselves without comfort, without strength, abandoned by men, separated from God, and ready to faint with anguish---cast a look, a single look upon Jesus in the wilderness, and believe that a moment spent with Him during those forty days of anguish would have left you recollections that would have forever preserved you from the doubts that the manifold temptations might suggest, and from the murmurs that they might draw forth. Replace this moment of sight by faith, and your drooping courage will be raised. What has happened to you that did not happen to Jesus? What happens to you that is not infinitely below what happened to Him? No, no, children of God, your Father has not forgotten you, He treats you as He treated "His only-begotten and well-beloved Son." It is now that you are "conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Romans 8:29) "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:15-16) Jesus is tempted,---and when?---after what, and before what?

After His baptism, after a fervent prayer, after the heaven opening over His head, after the Holy Ghost descending upon Him, after that voice came from heaven which said: "Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased;" after all that, and according to St. Mark, "immediately after." (Mark 1:12) It is this time of glory and spiritual blessing that is chosen for the temptation: chosen by Satan, because it is at this moment that the Son of God excites in the highest degree his rage and jealousy; but chosen likewise by God, because it is then that His Son is strengthened and best fitted to resist the assaults of the Enemy. Beware not to think yourself abandoned by God, because you are the prey of temptation: Satan is perhaps employing all his forces against you, only because the signal graces you have received have marked you for his attacks, while at the same time they prepare you to resist them. Temptations are the lot of humanity, we say, and we may add that extraordinary temptations are the privilege of the best. It is a trial that God reserves for those heroes of faith that no obstacle can arrest, and no difficulty surprise: for a Moses, a Samuel, a Jeremiah, a poor Canaanite, a centurion of Capernaum, a St. Peter, a St. Paul. And this is not all: He not only reserves it for the strongest, but for the time of their greatest strength. They were spared during the first period of their spiritual career, in which they could advance only sup-

ported by the fervent piety of the new convert, as by a touching law of Moses a newly-married man was discharged of military service, that he might "be free at home one year to cheer up the wife which he hath taken." (Deuteronomy 24:5) But when the vivacity of a new sentiment has given place to another more matured and less subject to variation, that of the faith that "against hope believeth in hope," (Romans 4:18) then comes the time for the fatigues of war; then the Lord calls His children to rougher combats that keep up and develop their holy courage. You have just been baptized with a new baptism of the Holy Spirit; you have just been pouring out your heart before God in humble and fervent prayer; you have in some measure beheld the heavens opened over your head; you have heard the voice of God "bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God:" you think that at least at this time you are in safety against the assaults of the evil one:---undeceive yourself. It is the very moment in which you may expect him, and in which you require a double guard around your heart: watch then, and pray; it is also the time for which God has taken care to strengthen you beforehand: therefore take courage. It is when Paul had been "caught up to the third heaven" that "there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him." (2 Corinthians 12:7) And before what is Jesus tempted? Before, immediately before, the beginning of His ministry, just before He entered upon this life, wholly consecrated to the glory of God, to the salvation of men, to the most holy labor that was ever undertaken. As long as Jesus remained at Nazareth, hidden in the privacy of Joseph's workshop, we do not hear that He was molested by the devil; but as soon as He enters into His public life, and gives Himself up to the mission He had received from His heavenly Father, He is arrested at the first step. Be not then surprised if, when you lend your aid to some good work, to the founding of some Christian establishment, to some undertaking approved by God and men, you should see temptations arise and thicken around you. And more especially you, young servants of the Lord, who are preparing to exercise in His Church the ministry of the Word, "think it not strange" if the time that you spend in this holy preparation should be a time of peculiar trial for your soul. As long as you lived retired, unknown, under the paternal roof, the faith that was instilled into you from your birth, and that had become, as it were, a second nature, appeared so firmly rooted that no storm could ever shake it. But now, deprived of the vigilant direction of a father, and of the tender advice of a faithful mother; now, placed in the midst of an incredulous and profane world, that bears with everything except what is holy and true; now, having penetrated sufficiently into the science of holy things to raise more than one difficult question, but not sufficiently to solve them, you are frightened at the unbelieving thoughts that creep into your heart. . . . My young friend, be not alarmed: this is the common experience of all those that have preceded you in the ministry; it is the experience even of the most holy, the most faithful. It is "the enemy that doeth this;" and he does it because he sees you so usefully occupied. He would perhaps consent to trouble you less, if you would consent to hide the talent that you have received from the Lord; for then, causing you to fall, it would be yourself only that he would injure; but now, it is your future ministry that he hopes to hinder; it is a multitude of souls that he hopes to deprive of the Word of Life, if he deprives you of your "holy faith;" that is what makes him so vigilant and so active. The work of the Holy Spirit and that of the devil are, often very near one to the other; the first provokes the second, and in the invisible world heaven and hell border upon each other. The Holy Ghost leads Jesus into the wilderness, where He is tempted by the devil; and Satan, before tempting Job, went with the "sons of God to, present himself before the Lord." \*(Job 1:6) Warned, as you are, by the example of the Lord himself, expect the tempter, standing firm. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) Does

he seek to cool your ardor for the reading of the Word of God?---Meditate upon it still more attentively. Does he discourage you in prayer?---Pray with still more fervor and perseverance. Does he endeavor to turn you from the simplicity of your faith?---Apply yourself to obtain more of the spirit of the little child, while at the same time you increase in the knowledge of the theologian. When the enemy sees that you thus take advantage of his attacks, to strengthen your own faith, he will become weary of attacking, and will leave you quiet rather than do you so much good. And in all cases he can never undertake anything against you that the temptation of Jesus Christ has not enabled you to foresee. The rulers of the synagogue, too, may here instruct you. You will find in the beginning of the second chapter of Ecclesiastes, one of their apocryphical books, the following words: "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation."

Finally, Jesus was tempted; and why? A full answer to this question touches on those mysteries into which we would not penetrate. But the Scriptures tell us "that it behooved Him" to be tempted. The apostle informs us expressly that "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:17-18) It was also necessary to justify by Jesus Christ's victory the condemnation of man, overcome in a similar conflict; it was necessary to fill up the measure of the vicarious sufferings of Messiah; it was necessary to begin to show in Him, to earth, and heaven, and hell, "This Son of God who came to destroy the works of the devil; " (1 John 3:8) and for aught we know, perhaps to reveal it fully to Himself, to make Him perfect through suffering, and thus to enable Him to go forth "conquering and to conquer." (Revelation 6:2) One thing is certain, "it behooved Him to be tempted;" that suffices me. The temptation was not an accident in His life, nor in His ministry; it was requisite, indispensable; it entered into the plan of our redemption. All the images under which the prophets had portrayed the Messiah who was to come, had revealed, between Him and the spirit of darkness, the struggle of which the history related in my text is only the prelude. Coming to establish a kingdom, but to establish it upon the ruins of an usurped power; the Messiah, that true Joshua, could establish his dominion only by conquest, and receive "the nations for His inheritance" only by wresting them forcibly from the "Prince of this world." The Jews themselves had understood this, and it was an article of their theology that the Messiah must be tempted by Satan on entering upon His ministry. Our text also recognizes in the temptation this same character of necessity: all is here foreseen, combined, willed by God. Jesus is "led," or, according to St. Mark, "the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness" to be tempted of Satan. (Mark 1:12 ---The expression of the evangelist has a particularly energetic signification,---thrown, cast.) The devil tempts Him, and then "when he had ended the temptation, he departed from Him, "as if he had finished the part he had to act; for, in tempting Him, he could not, any more than in crucifying Him, do more than what the "hand and counsel" of God had "determined before to be done." (Acts 4:28)

Let us learn from hence, my dear friends, that for us too, the temptations of which we complain are useful, indispensable, for the perfecting of our sanctification, and to prepare us for every good work that God may give us to do in the world. "God," says St. James, "cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man;" but He may "lead us into temptation, as He did His Son, to try us, and to know what was in our heart." (Deuteronomy 8:2) "If we resist temptation, we come out of the furnace stronger, more faithful, purified as gold in the fire." If we yield, we must bear the

punishment of our sin; but, even then, if we repent, and turn again, we have learnt to know our own weakness, and to seek all our strength in the Lord. It is in this incessant struggle, going from victory to victory, or alas! if not always conquerors, from alternate triumphs and defeats, that the salutary exercise and development of our faith goes on. The storm roots up and overturns the tree that is not firmly fixed in the soil! but the hurricane that shakes the gnarled oak only compels it to cast its thousand roots deeper into the earth, which, by the same effort, it more firmly grasps and penetrates. "Tribulation," says the apostle, "worketh patience! and patience, experience; and experience, hope." (Romans 5:4.---To comprehend fully these significant words, we must remember that tribulation here means, not affliction, properly speaking, but the trial that affliction makes of our faith, and that ripened character which it communicates; and hope, not an expectation more or less uncertain, but the firm assurance of a blessed future that we possess at present only by faith, (Romans 8:23-24) When we are afflicted, we are exercised to patience; when we have suffered with patience, we know that our faith is what it ought to be; and when our faith has been thus tried, we have a firm and glorious assurance in the grace of the Lord. )

What is here said of afflictions, the species of temptations about which the Word of God is the most explicit, is also true of all other trials. For this reason it is that the apostle James, in the energetic and paradoxical language that is peculiar to him, exhorts us to "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations;" and calls "blessed," not the man who is not tempted, but he "that endureth temptation;" (James 1:12.---The words endure and tried offer rather an equivocal meaning; but in the original both suppose that the trial has succeeded, and the temptation been overcome. ) that is, he who bears it without yielding: for, "when he is tried," that is to say, when he has resisted the trial, "he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to those that love Him."

If temptation was necessary for Jesus, it is as necessary for us; the devices of Satan are necessary to perfect the work of the Holy Spirit; and nothing can attain perfection in this lower world without the devil's cooperation. It was necessary, in order that Job's faith should be enlightened, his heart strengthened, and his joy perfected, that he should encounter the direst display of Satan's malice. It was necessary that Daniel should have those perfidious enemies who had him cast into the lions' den, to reveal to him, during that peaceful night, spent among wild beasts of prey, the power and faithfulness of his God. It was necessary for St. Paul to have "a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet him," to keep him humble, and to prevent his "being exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations;" and to suggest to him that blessed thought which was his own consolation, as it will be that of all those that are sanctified, till the end of time:

"When I am weak, then am I strong." It was necessary that St. Peter should pass through the court of the high priests' palace to make him feel his own weakness, and to make him appear to the Church, after the confession and the pardon of his sin, more worthy than before, of the honor that the Lord had conferred upon him, and that he maintained, notwithstanding his fall. It was necessary that Chrysostom should encounter the anger of his master, and St Augustine the perils of his youth; that Luther should endure the mortal anguish of his soul, and Calvin contend against his feeble constitution and his implacable enemies. And you, dear brother, that Satan seems to have chosen as the object of his most formidable attacks; you, in whose defeat he seems to have engaged all his pride; you, who think that you are reduced to the last extremity, and ready to give

up all for lost; you, who are ready to join in the cry of distress uttered by Messiah in the Psalms: "I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; my eyes fail while I wait for my God!" (Psalms 69:2-3) Believe that you needed all this to teach you to serve God, to confound the great adversary, and to "rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory." You are a child of God, His well beloved and favored child; and, indeed, if we knew how to rise above flesh and sense, and judge according to the Word of God, we should be more inclined to envy than to pity you. "Hold fast, then, your hope, that shall receive so great a recompense of reward;" resist, hold firm to the end, give glory to God, and abound in thanksgivings.

Young servants of God, if temptations are necessary for all, they are doubly so for you. The conflict that you are commencing against the opposition of the world, and above all against the natural unbelief of your own heart, must not alarm you; it is the narrow way in which you must walk to attain a stronger faith, and by which you must learn, as your Savior did, by the anguish of temptation, to sympathize in later years with the infirmities of others, and to help those who are tempted. Hear what a great master in matters of Christian experience said upon this subject; one who had struggled valiantly against the powers of the world and of hell. Luther, writing to a young theologian, makes him remark, in the 119th Psalm, three principal means which the psalmist uses to strengthen himself in a holy life: prayer, the meditation of the Scriptures, temptation; he thus expresses himself upon the last of the three:---

"Temptation is the touchstone that will not only make you know and understand, but also feel, how true, how upright, how sweet, how amiable, how powerful, how consoling, how much wiser than any other wisdom, is the Word of God. Without temptation, there can be no good preachers, only talkers, who know not themselves of what they talk, nor why, as St. Paul says to Timothy: (Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.' (1 Timothy 1:7) And you see David often complains in our Psalm of all sorts of enemies, oppressors, obstinate and rebellious spirits that he must bear with, because he carries with him everywhere the Word of God. You will no sooner have begun to bear testimony to the Word of God than the devil will begin to tempt you, to make of you a good teacher, and to instruct you, by the trials that he will create around you, to seek and to love this Word of life. I am much indebted to my Papists, who, through all the wiles of Satan, have so ill-treated me, and reduced me to such an extremity of distress, that they have made me a better theologian than I should ever have been without them; and as to what they have gained over me, I abandon most willingly their honors, victories, and triumphs, which is all they desire."

Lord Jesus, we will no more complain of temptations. We have found Thee today in the wilderness; we will not refuse to follow Thee there. We have had a glance of what Thou hast suffered, being tempted; and we have been moved to our inmost soul. Thou hast suffered to be made like unto us: shall we not consent to suffer to be made like unto Thee?---We distrust ourselves, Lord, and we say to Thee, as Thou hast taught us: "Lead us not into temptation!" But if we must be led into the furnace, we will add with confidence, as Thou hast also taught us: "Deliver us from evil!" It is enough for us to remember that we have in Thee" a merciful and faithful high priest, who having suffered, being tempted, is able to succor them that are tempted." Ah! how consoling is this thought to us, Lord! to know that whatever may be our temptations, Thou hast experienced them before we did, and beforehand---Thou hast conquered them for us! For this

reason, Oh compassionate Savior, we will unburden our heart before Thee with a holy liberty; and if it were possible that we should be tormented as Thou wast, "we would come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." It is not against us that Thy enemy and ours would fight, it is Thee, yea, Thee only that he attacks in us: it is, then, Thou that must defend us! Triumph over him in us! and since Thou hast been tempted like us, make us conquer like Thee! Amen.

## 02 - Lecture 02

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### Lecture 2 - The Victory

#### SECOND LECTURE. THE VICTORY.

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. "--- Luke 4:1-13. Read also Matthew 4:1-10; Mark 1:12-13. MY DEAR FRIENDS, The combat of Jesus has reconciled us with that which we ourselves are called on to sustain; His victory will give us the assurance that we may conquer in our turn.

It is our uncertainty as to the result of the warfare which makes us so weak in the hour of temptation. Nothing would be too hard for us, if we were assured of the victory; but we doubt the issue, and this bitter doubt damps our courage. You are tempted by a spirit of languor: you desire to become "fervent in spirit" and "persevering in prayer;" but you feel doubtful whether you can surmount your spiritual slothfulness,---and you go on in spite of your resolutions, dragging yourself wearily along the way in which God would have you to run. You are tempted by a spirit of murmur: under the heavy load of a painful and protracted affliction, you would fain abound in thanksgiving; but you are uncertain whether it will be possible for you to bear up under the grief that crushes you down---and your life is thus wasted in unprofitable regret. You are tempted by a spirit of unbelief: you desire to rest on the Word of God with an unwavering confidence; you feel that there only is your peace, your strength, your sanctification; but you doubt if you will be able to rid yourself of a certain slowness to believe which has been fostered by temperament, by education, by example, by habit---and thus you go on floating between God's truth and the caviling of your natural heart. You are tempted by a spirit of sensuality: while you abstain from those gross excesses that would dishonor your Christian profession, "you mind the things of the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof," and you feel yourself weighed down under a humiliating yoke which you wish to shake off; but you doubt whether you will be able to accustom yourself to a life of sacrifice and self-denial---and you

go on indulging in a selfish and enervating life.

Oh ye who recognize yourselves in this sad picture, come and learn from the history before us that there is no temptation which you may not overcome. Jesus was tempted even as you are; and while the first Adam was vanquished in the garden of Eden, the second Adam conquered in the wilderness. His victory is complete. After forty days of unceasing attacks, after a last desperate assault, the adversary sees himself compelled to raise the siege, crest-fallen and convinced of powerlessness; and Jesus has acquired the right to say, "The Prince of this world hath nothing in me." (John 14:30) Not one of the "fiery darts" of the wicked one could pierce His armor. It is written, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin:" (Hebrews 4:15) no sin before the temptation which may conduce to it; no sin after the temptation proceeding from it. In Him we have "an high priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26) Well, if Jesus has thus conquered, we may conquer also.

Here, again, we must commence by setting aside the mysterious part of our subject, and the questions more interesting than profitable to which it has given rise. The analogy between Christ's temptation and ours cannot be complete; for as the children of a fallen race, lust, that was unknown to Him, dwelleth in our hearts. Though He took upon Himself those infirmities that sin has brought upon our nature, far be it from us to suppose that He participated in the smallest degree in any unruly inclinations. We may distinguish between three sorts of temptation; that of Jesus, that of Adam, and our own; the first that was without sin both before and after the trial; the second that was without sin before the trial but not after it; and the third that is not without sin either before or after the trial, as St. James teaches us in his Epistle when he says, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." (James 1:14-15) From hence discussions have arisen in the Church concerning the moral character of temptation, and the degree of holiness to which we may attain in this life; but these are questions which seem to us unnecessary, and impossible to solve. However that may be, I shall confine myself here to the application which concerns us in our actual condition, and leave our subject on the practical footing where St. James has placed it in the words I have just quoted. What we must avoid is that lust should "conceive, and bring forth sin:" this you can always do. In all the temptations that you meet with on your way, there is not one which you may not conquer, as Jesus overcame His temptation, and as Adam might have triumphed over his. So you who are tempted by a spirit of languor, you may "have life, and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) You who are tempted to murmur, you can "rejoice evermore," and "publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all His wondrous works." (1 Thessalonians 5:16; Psalms 26:7.) You who are tempted to unbelief, you can "continue in the faith, grounded, steadfast, unmoveable," (Colossians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 15:58) And you who are tempted by a spirit of sensuality, you can "keep under your body and bring it into subjection," and mortify its deeds through the spirit. (1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 8:13) You can do it: for, what you have to do, Jesus has already done.

You will say perhaps: Jesus was the Son of God; His victory is no example for us.---If this objection were well founded here, it might as easily be brought forward elsewhere; we must give up placing the example of Jesus before men, and the Holy Ghost would have said in vain that He has "left us an example that we should follow His steps." But this objection arises from a cause which is the key to many other errors both in doctrine and in practice: that is, the losing sight of the Lord's humanity, which is not less important than His divinity. Yes, Jesus was the Son of God; but

He was also the Son of man; and as it was in His human nature that He was tempted, it was also in His human nature that He overcame temptation. In speaking thus, we do not wish to lay aside the fact of the Divine nature of the Lord in the history before us. We do not forget that, immediately before the temptation, Jesus had been declared 'Son of God, filled with the Holy Ghost, and thus strengthened for the conflict which awaited Him. I only wish to draw your attention, my dear friends, to the encouraging truth, that during the conflict itself, the Son of man only appears in Jesus, while the Son of God is, as it were, in the background. Yet not altogether so; He shows Himself but in Satan's discourses. He reminds Jesus of His title, and makes use of it to tempt Him, first to doubt, then to presumption, and, finally, to ambition; but Jesus does not make use of it to defend Himself. Had He chosen here to display His divine power, He could, as He himself declared in that other dark hour of temptation towards the close of His ministry, "pray to His Father, who would have given Him more than twelve legions of angels." What do I say? He needed no angel; He had but one word to utter and Satan would have fallen to the ground, like the emissaries of the Sanhedrim (John 18:6) in the garden of Gethsemane.---But He does nothing of the kind; He confines Himself to a human sphere of action. He contends against Satan with man's weaknesses, and with the weapons which are at man's disposal. He endures hunger, and allows Himself to be approached, addressed, tempted, like a mere man! He upholds Himself by faith in God, and triumphs in the strength Of God (Ephesians 6:10, and following. St. John seems in this passage to make allusion to the combat of Jesus.) like a man. He quotes the Scriptures written by men for men, like a man. As we see Him elsewhere strengthened by an angel in His hour of agony, He whom the angels of God worship, we see Him here leaning upon Moses, He, the Master and Lord of Moses. Wonderful and surprising story! Was it necessary for Him to seek, like us, in the writings of His servant, for answers to the insidious seductions of the evil one? Could He not have found them in the treasures of His own wisdom? Is He not "the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," "who is in heaven," and "who speaketh from heaven?" (John 1:18; John 3:13; Hebrews 12:25) Yes; but it was necessary here that He should speak "from the earth," that He might serve as an example to those who are of the earth. (John 3:31) This is so true, that, not content with quoting from the Scriptures only, He chooses in the Scriptures only those passages which apply equally to all believers; while He quotes none of those innumerable testimonies contained in the Scriptures which refer exclusively to Messiah, and assure His final victory: (Psalms 110:1-7; Isaiah 63:1-19, &c. so determined does He appear to draw only from the treasure open to the whole Church. The stranger this may appear to us, the more manifest is the intention. Jesus obtains a human victory, over a human temptation, by human means, in order to teach men that they may overcome as He himself overcame. But more than this. Not only has Jesus conquered in humanity, but also for humanity. Engaged in the conflict in the wilderness as the Savior and representative of man, it was in the name and for the sake of man that He gained a victory, whose glorious results will be reaped by all those who hope in His name. And if He had not conquered for us, how could He strengthen us by His victory to bear the tribulations of this life: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world?" (John 16:33) He only could "bind the strong man;" but the strong man once bound, He does not enter alone "into his house to spoil his goods," (Matthew 12:29) we also enter behind Him. Satan is already vanquished before he attacks us, and he is rendered the more powerless by finding within us, Him, by whom he was vanquished in the wilderness. In Jesus our victory is so fully secured that the Scriptures speak of it as already won: "Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye

have overcome the wicked one." (1 John 2:14; Romans 8:36) In Jesus all has been accomplished; "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us;" it only remains for us to share His victory; and to share it we have only to believe in His name. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4) The "roaring lion that walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," (1 Peter 5:8) is doubtless a dangerous adversary; but he has vainly tried his strength against "the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, who hath prevailed," (Revelation 5:5) and to whom the spirit of prophecy speaks thus: "From the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" (Genesis 49:9) He alone is invincible, and He it is who combats for us: "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me! Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof," (Isaiah 31:4) Fear not; "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4, compare this passage with 2 Kings 6:16, and 2 Chronicles 32:7)

Let us cleave to the certainty that the victory of Jesus ensures ours, and that we shall find in Him a never-failing help, because He has Himself endured and overcome temptation. This is the view of the Holy Ghost in the two passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews that we have already quoted: "For in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted;" and again, because "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

I might stop here, so powerful is this doctrine, resting firmly as it does on this history, which is the subject of my discourse; but the "weary and heavy laden" soul does not yield so easily, and has need of further encouragement which I cannot refuse. In the hour of temptation two things trouble us: our own utter weakness, and the strength of the temptation. If we look within, we feel ourselves too weak to resist the smallest temptation; and if we fix our mind upon the temptation itself, we find it strong enough to overcome us even in our firmest moods. But let us once again contemplate Jesus in the wilderness, and His triumph will reassure us on both these heads.

You are weak, my dear brother; so weak, so languid, so worn out in mind and body, that you feel yourself unable to resist the smallest temptation. You would indeed be incapable had you to conquer in your own strength: but do you think it was by His own might that your Lord conquered in the wilderness? You fancy Him perhaps a stranger to your weaknesses, calm, unmovable; but who has represented Him thus? Your own imagination, not the Scriptures. They portray the Messiah as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." They are silent, it is true, on the state of His mind during the conflict in the wilderness, and we have no right to make up for this deficiency, or to calculate to what extent a fast of forty days had exhausted His strength or shaken His courage. But these same Scriptures show Him to us elsewhere in an anguish of spirit that you could never know: in the garden of Gethsemene "sorrowful even unto death," falling on His face, and "His sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground," and on the cross crying out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Where does He find His support?---in God. The whole object of the temptation is to separate Him from God: first by supplying His own wants without the intervention of God's providence; then by receiving the inheritance of the nations without God's gift; and, finally, by displaying His divine glory without God's command. But Jesus

stays Himself entirely upon God; it is not in His own strength that He combats and conquers: it is in the strength of His Father.

Receive instruction, my dear friends. If you are less mighty than Jesus, your God is not weaker than the God of Jesus; let His rock be your rock, and His strength will be your strength. For Jesus, for Adam, for you, this is not a question of strength, but a question of faith. Your own strength cannot deliver you if you do not believe, nor your inherent weakness harm you if you do. This very feebleness can be turned to good account if you know how to make use of it; and your sense of your own weakness compelling you to seek all your strength in God, will cause you to experience all the power of that word: "When I am weak, then am I strong!". Strange paradox! Sublime truth! Instead of wasting your time in discussing it, believe it, live it. You are, my dear brother, feeble, languid, worn out in mind and body, unable to resist the smallest temptation? Well: you are in the very conditions in which you may conquer. It is now that, cured of the illusions of your proud spirit and despairing of yourself, you are ready to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:10-11) Cling fast to God, like the branches to the vine: in Him you will find "grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) In time of need, mark well these words: it is for the time that you will require strength that strength is promised. You would rather receive it beforehand, in order that, casting a complacent glance on your spiritual store, you might lull to rest every apprehension regarding the future. But such is not the Lord's way. He does not give today provision for tomorrow; but He will certainly give today for today, and tomorrow for tomorrow, The man with the withered hand to whom Jesus said, "Stretch forth thine hand," would never have extended it, had he waited before he obeyed the summons to receive beforehand the power to make the requisite effort; but, at the Lord's command, he stretched it forth, and lo! he is healed. "If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." But you will say again, temptation is strong, terrible, overwhelming. Think you that that of Jesus was less dreadful? Compare His temptation with Adam's: Scripture invites us to make this comparison; for surely it is not unintentionally that one of these temptations is placed at the beginning of the Old Testament, the other at the beginning of the New, contrasting here, as in all things, the "last Adam" with the "first Adam." Adam was tempted in Eden; Jesus in the wilderness: Adam in the abundance of all things; Jesus in hunger and want: Adam was tempted once, and fell; Jesus was tempted three times, we may say more, tempted during forty days, and He resisted. And what a temptation! how subtle, how treacherous! mingling so artfully truth and falsehood, good and evil, that it seemed impossible to divide them. This is indeed the masterpiece of the spirit of darkness. We cannot, it is true, weigh in the same balance the Lord's temptation with Adam's, or with our own; but we know that there was a struggle in His mind, that by some unfathomable mystery there was a fearful conflict, of which the anguish of Gethsemane and Golgotha may give us some idea. But. what matters the exact force of the temptation? it suffices for us to know that "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." God, who permits the temptation is also He who measures it; and doubt not that He took care to strengthen His Son for the conflict according to His need. He will do the same for you, my dear friends; and therefore no temptation present nor to come should seem to you irresistible. For, remember this; though it is the devil and not God who tempts you, it is God and not the devil who measures the temptation, and who adapts it to the degree of strength which you possess, or which He intends to give you. This consoling truth is clearly pointed out to us in the history of Job. (Job i. and ii.) Did Satan ever appear more virulent against any poor servant of

God? Yet he is always tethered, and God lengthens or shortens the chain as He thinks fit, but Satan can never shake it off; and the Holy Ghost allows us in this history to see it, that we may know that the chain is round the devil's neck even when we cannot perceive it. Without God's express permission Satan can attempt nothing against Job: "Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath." Then, in granting the permission, God still "makes a hedge about him." He commences by reserving his person: "All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand." When this first temptation has strengthened Job to endure a fiercer attack, God, again solicited by Satan, gives His servant's person into the devil's hand, only reserving his life. (Observe the gradation that Satan follows in the temptations which he places successively before Job: the loss of fortune, the loss of family, the loss of health, and had he been allowed to go further, the loss of life. A kind of proud sentimentality would have induced us to reverse the order; but "the old serpent" has greater experience than we possess, and the cleverness of the plan he pursues in this wonderful history is on the authority of God himself.) "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Had Job died in the first bewilderment caused by this new attack, he might perhaps have given way to despair, and justified the adversary's insolent prediction: "He will curse Thee to Thy face." But now he has time to reflect, to listen to Elihu, to humble himself before God; and in spite of some rash words wrung from him in the bitterness of his affliction, he remains steadfast, he sends the adversary away defeated, he recovers in a twofold measure the favor of his God, and he is set forth in the New Testament as an example of patience. ( It may appear strange that Job should be mentioned by St. James as an example of patience. How can we reconcile this eulogium with the bitter complaints expressed by Job in the 3rd chapter of his history! The reason is that God is more merciful in His judgments than we are in ours. He measures the patience of His saints, not only by the degree of their submission, but also by that degree of submission combined with that of their sufferings, as one man may exhibit more physical strength by dragging painfully along a considerable load, than another in carrying with ease a much lighter burden. Above all, God looks on the heart; and its inward motions are but imperfectly revealed by those outward manifestations which are alone visible to the eye of man. One who gives way to bitter complaints may have, in the depths of his heart, more genuine submission to God's will, than another who knows better how to modify the outward expression of his inmost sentiments. The truth of this last remark is confirmed by a deeper study of Job's complaints. There is, in the very boldness which characterizes them, and which we cannot always defend, something that reveals a soul at home with God, familiar with God, and that clings to Him with an unflinching grasp: this confidence honors and pleases God more than the irreproachable moderation of many others. Job's heart is explained to us by that of Jeremiah, when he pronounced a word which may offend more than one reader, but which I am sure is approved of God. "Righteous art thou, Oh Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments," Jeremiah 12:1)

Comfort yourselves by the thought that the devil can never tempt you without the consent of your heavenly Father, nor beyond what your heavenly Father allows. (The same doctrine as in Luke 22:31-32) Without this authorization, and beyond these limits, he can do nothing against you. Never say that you are tempted beyond your strength: under the garb of accusing the devil you are accusing God himself. If the historical proof that I have just brought forward does not appear to you sufficient, if you require a formal declaration from the Lord's hand, here is one; but after that, be satisfied, and doubt no more. It is written, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man:" there is for the past; and now for the future: "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 to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) What more do you require? Recall the past: "no temptation hath taken you but what is common to man!" that is to say, but what is proportioned to human nature, and consequently what human nature may overcome; I say for human nature, not such as it was in Jesus, nor even such as it was in Adam, but such as it is in you. If there were for Adam before his fall, or for Jesus in the wilderness, this or that temptation which exceeds the powers of your nature to resist, it is a sufficient reason for it to have been spared you. And more than this, God guarantees to you the future, and guarantees it in the name of His own faithfulness: "God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able," (you, and not Jesus, not Adam,) but "that ye are able, but with the temptation he will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." After this, dear brother, if you tell me of a temptation that is stronger than you are, which you cannot overcome, I must choose between your word and God's word, since you affirm what God has said could never happen. No! whatever appearances may be, as long as God shall be God, and the Bible shall be His word, it is not possible that we should ever be exposed to a temptation which we are unable to resist.

What we have just learned from the victory of Jesus in the wilderness, Scripture asserts elsewhere, and supposes it everywhere. It is never a fatal necessity for us to succumb to temptation. Compelled to choose among various testimonies to this effect, I shall only select a few connected in some way with our subject, or alluding to it.

We find some of the clearest testimonies in this same 91st Psalm which Satan rashly sets before us, and which we should not have thought of, had it not been for the unworthy use which he makes of it against our Master. This Psalm is entirely filled with promises of victory, but remember above all the words which follow immediately those upon which Satan takes his stand: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." Why didst thou not finish thy quotation, thou cruel enemy of our souls? was it not because this verse concerns thee? The lion and the serpent, these two images twice associated in this short verse may depict all the foes we have to dread! but they point in a special manner to the leader who guides and inspires them! and who is likened in Scripture sometimes to a lion, at others to a serpent. (1 Peter 5:8; 2 Timothy 4:17; Revelation 12:9, and Revelation 20:2) Upon this lion we shall advance! this serpent we shall trample under foot. The assurance is again given us in these words of the apostle, where Satan is mention by name: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20) Here St. Paul alludes to the first prophecy: "His seed shall bruise thy head," (Genesis 3:15) and shows us what is very evident, if we study attentively this prophecy, that victory is promised not only to the Messiah, but also to the whole family of believers. We have the same doctrine in St. James, who, doubtless, when he penned these words, had in his mind's eye the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James 4:7-8) But this is surpassed by the fullness of the promises that the Holy Ghost has given us in St. John: "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil." (1 John 3:8-9) This is not the place to dwell on the meaning of this difficult passage, (The word sin, explained by dwelling in sin,

is used, not in the sense of a brother overtaken in a fault, but of a heart given up to sin.) but it is undeniable that it must at least signify that the child of God has in himself a secret virtue by which he can overcome the enemy, and that he is never compelled by an irresistible power to give him the victory.

You must not bring forward your own experience to prove the reverse. I know well that there is not a single day in our lives that is not marked by some fall---but whose fault is this? You must not even quote the example of the least unfaithful of the Lord's servants, of His saints, of His prophets, of His apostles: I have not forgotten that however irreproachable their lives may be in comparison with ours, (Luke 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Kings 20:3, &c.) however incontestable the right they have acquired to say, "Brethren, be followers together of us," (Php 3:17, &c.) they yet have reason to say, "in many things we offend all!" (James 3:2. We are aware that there is a body of Christians, known by their great services and great examples, which teaches that the believer may attain here below to a state of sinless perfection, and which points out to us here and there some of Christ's followers who have attained perfect sanctification. Our Wesleyan brethren appear to have made a confusion between the right and the fact. As a principle, Scripture establishes that we are never compelled to yield to temptation, but it does not exhibit a single man who, in practice, never falls. It is, I think, through a defective exegesis that anyone can endeavor to prove the sinless perfection of such or such an Old or New Testament saint. Our biblical instinct, if I may be allowed to use the expression, would certainly be offended if we heard sin spoken of as a necessity; but it is equally so when we hear it said this man or that woman no longer commits sin. It may be objected that these two views, which I attribute to Scripture, contradict each other. I do not think so, for the simple reason that they are both to be found in the Word of God; but I grant that human logic cannot reconcile them. We have here one of those numerous anomalies which we find in Scripture, and which renders it impossible for us to reduce their teaching to a mere system, without losing sight of one part of the truth, and doing violence to the other part in order to be more rigorously consistent than we can be in our present condition.) but is this the result of some fatal and imperious necessity? Ah, the holier they are the more such a supposition will fill them with indignation and horror. Go and tell a Noah that he could not avoid being intoxicated in his tent; a Jacob, that he could obtain only by a lie the promised blessing; a Moses, that it was impossible for him to glorify God at Meribah; a David, that he could not resist the attractions of Bathsheba; a Hezekiah, that he could not conquer his feelings of vanity; a Job, that he could not refrain from his rash murmurings; a Zachariah, that he could not believe the words of the angel; a St. Peter, that he could not confess his Master in the court of the high priest,---and you would see them, one and all, striking upon his breast, lifting up his eyes to heaven and saying: "Oh Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face!" (Daniel 9:7) Every time we fall, it is through our own fault; it is because we have not made a faithful use of the resources, always sufficient, that God has placed at our disposal that we might stand firm. At all events, "let God be true, but every man a liar." (Romans 3:4) Let His faithfulness be put out of the question. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1:13) . . . My brother, my dear brother, "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Fight on with courage, with confidence. You say, Oh, if I were assured of conquering! Well, you can always conquer in Jesus: we are not fatalists, we are Christians. Do not accept your falls as a matter of course. Do not live knowingly and voluntarily in any sin. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)

Again, learn of Jesus, the Conqueror in the wilderness, the immense importance of a single victory. In the Lord's history the temptation was one of those critical epochs, that may prove the turning-point upon which depends the whole existence, as a battle lost or won may decide the final result of a whole campaign. The victory of Jesus, placed as it is, not only keeps Satan at a distance for a season, but abates his presumption; and when he returns for a fresh conflict, it will be enfeebled by the presentiment of another defeat. There are also for you such decisive days; perhaps today is one of them. Consider well its privileges and its responsibility. If you fight valiantly, if you gain a complete victory, you may be able to put him to silence forever; but if you hesitate, if you leave the issue doubtful, you will have him prowling continually around you. Yet one moment of weakness, think you, only one moment, and it was a moment chosen by the tempter for a last effort, a final struggle which was either to destroy his hopes, or to revive them. . . . Courage then, stand fast; do not give way one inch, nor delay one second; leave the enemy no illusion; show him that he is losing his time and his trouble; and from your reception of his attacks compel him to recognize in you the disciple of the Master who conquered him in the wilderness!

It is no easy task to conquer . . . . No human enterprise requires such a firm resolve as the warfare of faith; and it is the secret consciousness of this great inward struggle that keeps you in this languid state. Yes; but consider the joy of the victory! Think of the joy of Job delivered out of all his distresses, and sanctified through suffering! Think of the joy of the three young men escaped from the fiery furnace, and of Daniel taken out of the lions' den! Think, above all, of the joy of Jesus returning from the victory: "Look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) What will not be your joy also, when you have overcome this very temptation which had hitherto appeared to you insurmountable; a joy all the greater that by your triumph you will "strengthen your brethren," (Luke 22:31) as Jesus by His victory has strengthened you. Amen.

## 03 - Lecture 03

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### Lecture 3 - The Weapons

#### THIRD LECTURE. THE WEAPONS.

"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed. from him for a season."--- Luke 4:1-13.---Read also Matthew 4:1-10; Mark 1:12-13. MY DEAR FRIENDS,

After having been warned by the conflict of Jesus of the conflict that we must expect, and encouraged by His victory to believe that we too may conquer, we must now examine the weapons which He made use of to triumph, and by which we may hope to triumph also in our turn.

Before entering into this part of the subject we should have liked to consider the preparation of Jesus for the conflict It would teach us what we have to do, in order that the tempter may find us prepared for his attacks; and that is half the victory. But the subject enlarges as we go on, and is so vast that it would make this discourse too long. We must confine ourselves to a rapid outline of the principal ideas.

Let us begin by setting aside a servile imitation, which substitutes the letter for the spirit. To be conformed to the example of Jesus preparing to conquer in the wilderness, we must not go into the wilderness to avoid temptation; and to be conformed to the example of Jesus fasting forty days, we must not submit ourselves to an annual fast of forty days. By acting in this manner we should not strengthen ourselves against temptations, but rather expose ourselves to them. We must here remember the principle which those who follow Jesus Christ must never lose sight of: to imitate is not to copy.

"Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost," when He was baptized and praying; (Luke 3:21) this is the secret of His strength.---"Let us pray without ceasing, that we may be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18) for he that is "filled with the Spirit" is also filled with "wisdom, faith, and power."

(Acts 6:3, Acts 6:5, Acts 6:8; see also Acts 11:24)

Jesus has just been proclaimed by God, "His well-beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased." This declaration, while it marks Him for the attacks of the tempter, as we have already seen, strengthens Him for resistance, because it authorizes Him to address God as a Father that heareth always. (John 11:41-42) We want the "Spirit to bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God," (Romans 8:16) His well-beloved children. We shall thus be more exposed to the assaults of the enemy; but we shall also be more capable of resisting him: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world?" (1 John 5:4)

Jesus is "led by the Holy Ghost" to encounter temptation, and He does not go into it by His own will; hence His confidence. Wherever God leads, God will guard. We must not seek danger: it cost dear to Peter to have resisted warnings, and forced his way (John 18:1, 1. When Jesus entered into the palace of the high priest, John followed Him, because "he was known unto the high priest;" but Peter remained without. John must go out of the palace expressly, and speak unto her that kept the door, that she might bring Peter in.) into that temptation to which he had been warned that he would yield. Let us do what we can to be spared temptation; but if that cannot be, let us meet it with the liberty of a good conscience, and with the strength which belongs to humility.

Finally, Jesus fasts before, and during the temptation: this fast, of which the devil takes advantage against Jesus, has nevertheless strengthened Jesus to resist the devil. This is because Jesus fasts in praying, and in order to pray the better: His fasting is explained to us by that of Moses, who, on two different occasions, "fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, and did neither eat bread nor drink water!" (Deuteronomy 9:9, Deuteronomy 9:18) Of this last lesson some have made a bad use, but we have too much neglected it. The use that Jesus Christ made of fasting, and His apostles after Him, reveals to us a means of struggling against temptation, and a means which may be sometimes necessary: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:29) But abstaining from food must form only a part of a more general, a more complete fast, which consists in overcoming the desires of the flesh, and which is never out of season: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, . . . and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 13:14; Luke 21:34, &c.) Satan takes advantage of the flesh; when the flesh is kept under, he has no hold, and loses his power.

Jesus being thus prepared, let us follow Him in sight of the enemy, and learn the weapons that assured Him the victory. The weapons of Jesus: let us rather say the weapon of Jesus; for He has but one---the Word of God. Tempted three times, He three times repulses the temptation by a simple citation of Scripture, without any development or commentary. "It is written," this simple word acts upon the tempter like a tremendous discharge of cannon upon an assaulting battalion. "It is written," and the devil withdraws the first time. "It is written," and the devil withdraws a second time. "It is written," and the devil departs for a season. The Word of God is the weapon that Satan fears more than any other; a weapon before which he has always been obliged to give way. It is justly that St. Paul calls it "the sword of the Spirit;" (Ephesians 6:17) and that St. John, in his Revelation, describes it as "a sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth of the Son of man:" (Revelation 1:16, Revelation 2:16, Revelation 19:15-21; Hebrews 4:12, The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the

heart.") With this "sword of the Spirit" in our hands, our cause will be that of the Spirit himself, and we shall be as superior in strength to our adversaries, as the Spirit of God is superior to the Spirit of darkness; without it, on the contrary, abandoned to ourselves, we shall be as inferior to Him, as human nature is to that of angels. (Ephesians 6:12) Adam fell only because he let go this sword; Jesus triumphed, because nothing can wrest it from His hands. But why is it that the Son of God, instead of encountering the enemy with some new weapon brought down from heaven, whence He came, only arms Himself with ours, that He found in our old world, where Adam had recklessly forgotten it? Because He must be our example: we must learn what this weapon can achieve in our hands by what it achieved in His. Let us then in our turn take it, or rather receive it from Him, newly tempered by His victory, and we shall have nothing to fear. To all the attacks of the adversary let us oppose a simple It is written, and all his efforts will be in vain. The devil would draw you again into the world. He sets artfully about his work. He comes close up to you, and insinuates that it is not charitable to keep so completely separate from the society of men! that it would be easier to win them over to the gospel by joining in their amusements; that you would thus show them that you do not understand religion as hermits do; in short, too much precaution does not become those who wish to harden themselves to Christian virtue, and that to conquer without danger is to triumph without glory. Thus speaks the tempter. If you defend yourself only with your own wisdom, you will be the more easily persuaded, because your natural heart is but too much disposed to agree with his discourse. But if you arm yourself with the Word of God, if you answer with faith: "It is written, Be not conformed to this world," (Romans 12:2) this single word restores order, the adversary is unmasked, and his wiles confounded. The devil will persuade you that the Christian faith is not the only way of salvation. He takes you to some high place in a vast city, to show you the multitude of goers and comers who succeed each other without interruption; then he says, Can you believe that all these are hastening to perdition? Neither your heart nor your reason can accept such a doctrine. And yet the greater number of these people do not believe in Jesus Christ! they certainly do not believe what you and your friends do. Can it be true that the only way to life eternal is the narrow path that you follow? Are not your ideas upon the subject contracted and unworthy of God? Thus reasons the tempter. If you seek resistance only in your own wisdom, you will not hold out long against him, and you will feel after his attack, cold, uncertain, wavering. But if you take in hand the Word of God, if you answer without hesitation: It is written, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6) The charm is dispelled, "the snare is broken, and you are escaped" from the hand of the treacherous fowler. Or again, the devil desires to rob a faithful minister of Jesus Christ of the power of his preaching. He persuades him not to appear so harsh, not to denounce heresy for such trites, not to make heaven so narrow and salvation so difficult, not to cast a gloom over the "glad tidings" of grace by the notion of a devil and a hell. This line of conduct, while it will win the favor of his hearers, will be a means of drawing them more surely to the faith, while it allows him to make a better use of the great gifts with which heaven has endowed him. Such is the advice of the tempter. If to refute him you have recourse only to your own wisdom, you will inevitably fall into the snare, so clever is he at making "good appear evil and evil good, light darkness and darkness light!" But if you rest firmly upon the Word of God, if you answer with assurance, It is written, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," (Galatians 1:9) "the strong man" has found one stronger than himself, and all he can do is to abandon ingloriously the battle-field.

Oh, if we only knew what the Word of God can do even in our hands! If we knew the terror it strikes into our formidable adversary, even when he affects before us to scorn it, to make us give it up! If, after having heard him, on the scene of temptation, deride the Word of God, we could (forgive the familiarity) follow him behind the scenes and hear him confess to his accomplices that he is lost if he does not succeed in making this irresistible weapon fall from our hands! if we knew all that, and if, like mighty Eleazar, we held firm "our sword until our weary hand clave unto it!" (2 Samuel 23:10 oh, then we should be invincible, yea, invincible!

But, for the Word of God to have the same power in our hand that it had in that of Jesus, it must be for us all that it was for Him. I know nothing in all the history of humanity, nor in the field of divine revelation, that speaks more clearly than my text in favor of the inspiration of the Scriptures. What! the Son of God, "He that is in the bosom of the Father," and who could so easily find sufficient strength in Himself, prefers borrowing it from a book that He finds in our hands, and draws His strength from the same source that a Joshua, a Samuel, a David (Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-2) drew theirs! What! Jesus Christ, the King of heaven and earth, calls to His aid in this solemn moment Moses His servant, and "He that speaketh from heaven" strengthens Himself against the temptations of hell by the word of him that "speaketh of the earth!" (John 3:31; Hebrews 12:25) And how can we explain this wonderful mystery,---shall I call it?---or this strange subversion, if the word of Moses were not for Jesus the Word of God and not as the word of men, and if He were not fully persuaded that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?" (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21) I am not unmindful, my dear friends, (I am speaking especially to young ministers of the Word)---I am not unmindful of the objections to which the inspiration of the Scriptures has given rise, nor of the real obscurity that surrounds it: if it sometimes troubles your heart, it has also troubled mine. But at such times I have only had to cast a look upon Jesus glorifying the Scriptures in the wilderness, and I have found that for those who will simply receive His testimony, the most embarrassing of problems is transformed into a palpable, historical fact, perfectly evident. Jesus certainly was not unaware of the difficulties that inspiration gives rise to, and the portion of the Scriptures that He quotes, the Old Testament, is that which offers the most. Did that prevent His having recourse to their testimony with the most entire confidence? What was sufficient for Him, is also sufficient for you: fear not then that the rock upon which your Savior leaned with so much confidence in the hour of distress and temptation should give way under you. What is it that gives rise to your doubts about inspiration? Is it the differences in the old manuscripts? These differences were inevitable, without a perpetual miracle, and there were divergences in the days of Jesus for the Old Testament which He quotes three times. Is it the trifling divergences in the sacred authors in the narration of the same event, such as we find between St. Matthew and St. Luke in the history that is the subject of these discourses? [In the quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3, (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4) and for the order of the temptations.] There are divergencies of the same kind between books of the Old Testament; for instance, between the Kings and Chronicles. Is it the degree of inspiration? Do you fear that there may be less inspiration in the historical books than in the prophetic? Jesus always quotes Scripture as an authority that "cannot be broken;" (John x. 35.) and in the portion that we study, the quotations are all from a historical book---Deuteronomy. Finally, are you embarrassed to know what theory you will adopt upon the subject: what is the mode and extent, what part is left to man, does inspiration direct the mind of the sacred author or his pen?---and other questions of a similar nature. Here again, take example of Jesus. Upon all these speculative questions He says nothing. But is the question a

practical one? Does it concern the confidence with which you may quote the Scriptures, all the Scriptures, and even a word of Scripture? (John 10:35. The quotations of Jesus prove in favor only of the Old Testament. The inspiration of the New Testament has different proofs, which also are founded entirely, though in a different way, upon the authority of Jesus Christ, and no one except the Jews receive the inspiration of the Old Testament, rejecting that of the New Testament). It is impossible to be more explicit, more firm, more positive than He is. Go and do likewise. Quote the Scriptures as Jesus did, and have the theory you please about their inspiration. Jesus takes a more elevated view, freer from earthly influences, than our theology does: let us follow Him upon these heights where we inhale an atmosphere so pure and so light, and where the vapors with which the earth dims the truth are beneath our feet. ("Eat in peace the bread of the Scriptures, without being troubled by the grain of sand that the millstone may have left in it."---Letter from Bengal to a young theologian.)

Ah! when the devil comes to instill into your minds some of those subtle doubts that he always has in reserve against the inspiration of the Scriptures, simply send him to Jesus: Why didst thou not say that to my Master, when He repulsed thee in the wilderness by that Word, which today appears to thee so weak and so uncertain? Carry thy objections to Him; and when they have staggered Him, they may stagger me too.

Jesus makes use of no other weapon than the Word of God; but this weapon, how does He handle it? Let us study each of the three quotations He borrows from the Scriptures. In this way His example, which has revealed to us the power of the Word of God, will also teach us in what manner we ought to make use of it.

After forty days and forty nights spent in the wilderness Jesus feels hungered, which appears to have been spared to Him during His fast. All here is supernatural. It is then that the devil draws near and begins to attack Him. We have had an opportunity elsewhere of contemplating the three temptations of the wilderness, in what may be called their outward aspect, I mean to say, in the objects to which they refer; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." We will now consider their inward aspect. I so call the sentiment by which the devil hoped to make the Lord fall, and which, properly speaking, constitutes the spirit of the temptation. Considered in this point of view, the first is a temptation to mistrust, the second a temptation to infidelity, and the third a temptation to presumption. The devil begins thus: "If thou art the Son of God, command that this stone become bread." The time was certainly well chosen, and the temptation subtle. The tempter tries to make Jesus turn to His own personal advantage the divine power He possesses as Messiah, if indeed He is the Messiah, of which, perhaps, Satan will also endeavor to make Him doubt. It is as if he had said, Make use of the means you possess to supply your wants, since God, whom you call your Father, seems to have forgotten you. If Jesus had given heed to this proposal, which covered so much perfidy under such benevolent appearances, He would have gone aside from the path marked out by God, for having doubted God; He would have made use of His power, as Satan had used his, for His personal satisfaction; and the work of redemption would have been ruined from the very basis. So He repulses the enemy without hesitation, [Jesus who here refuses to use His divine power to procure what was necessary for Himself, uses it elsewhere to procure for others' luxuries, (John 2:1-11)] by giving him for sole answer this testimony of the Scriptures: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." This quotation may perhaps appear to you strange, and little appropriate to the

circumstance; but you will no longer think so when you have penetrated further into the meaning of it.

It is taken in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 8:3) from the history of the people of Israel in the wilderness. Remark that the other two answers of Jesus Christ to the tempter are borrowed from the same history, in the same book. Whence comes it that Jesus, with the whole field of Scripture open before Him, should confine Himself to this place as to an impregnable fortress when the enemy is before Him? It is because he sees a secret affinity between himself, the Son of God, preparing the foundation of His kingdom by forty days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness of Judea; and Israel, that other Son of God, (Hosea 9:2) prepared for the conquest of Canaan, by forty years of privations and trials in the great wilderness of Arabia. Israel, which is presented as a type of the Church of the New Testament, is also of Jesus, the head of that Church, in whom it is personified; it is for this reason that Jesus learns and strengthens Himself by what is written for Israel. Admirable connectivity of the Scriptures! Marvelous unity of spirit in the two testaments!

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger," said Moses to the people of Israel; "but he 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 only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live;" or, as our text has it, "by every word of God." Though bread is the usual means by which God sustains man, it is not the only one that He has at His disposal. For the secret of the nutritious virtue resides, not in the bread, but in the Word of God, from whence alone proceeds all virtue and all blessing. Bread becomes assimilated with the substance of our body, only because that word said in the beginning, "I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth to you it shall be for meat; (Genesis 1:29) and if, instead of pronouncing this blessing upon wheat, the same word had been spoken to wood or stone, the wood or stone would nourish us as well as wheat; and this would not be more surprising than the wood sweetening the streams of Mara, (Exodus 15:23, Exodus 15:25) or the rock supplying Israel with water for their thirst. (Exodus 17:1-6; 1 Corinthians 10:4.) Without the Word of God bread itself would be without nourishment, and men would eat without being satisfied; (Haggai 1:6) but without bread, the Word of God can sustain whom He will, as He will. God made this evident in Moses and his companions, by feeding them forty years with manna, which ceased the day they put their foot upon cultivated ground. (Joshua 5:12) And still more, the Word of God Can support man's body without bread, without manna, without any outward visible means whatever. Moses, at two different times, lived forty days upon Mount Sinai, and "did neither eat bread nor drink water." (Deuteronomy 9:9, Deuteronomy 9:18)

Elijah, too, marches forty days, without eating or drinking, towards the same mountain, across the same wilderness. Jesus, in His turn, led by the will of His Father, into a desert where He had nothing, was so marvelously sustained during His fast of forty days that He did not even suffer from hunger. He will reckon upon Him who brought Him into the wilderness to sustain His life in the wilderness. Nothing remains but the choice of the means, which He willingly abandons to paternal wisdom, having learned from Moses that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word of God." As soon as this word of Scripture, taken in its true and profound meaning, is pronounced, all the efforts of the enemy are overturned and his first attack annihilated. My dear friends, whenever the tempter persuades you to doubt of God's assistance, because ordinary means seem to fail, answer like Jesus: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word of

God."

You have hitherto laboriously earned your bread and that of your family; but suddenly work fails, you lose your strength, and all your customary resources are cut off. This is an opportunity of which the devil will not fail to take advantage. He would not dare to propose to you to rob, or to steal; but he will say, Has thy God and Father no better fare for thee than the stones and brambles amongst which He leaves thee to vegetate? Well, since He abandons thee, help thyself, and fear not to go a little out of the beaten track, and provide for thy wants by some of those expedients about which you are too scrupulous. Engage in this speculation, try the brilliant chances of gambling, be less difficult in the choice of friends, flatter without any qualms of conscience those whose protection is so necessary: "Say to this stone to become bread." Answer him: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word of God." "The God whom I serve is able to deliver me," and He will deliver me; but "Whatever He may do," (Daniel 3:17-18) I will not forsake His paths; and even were I to die of hunger, I will "abstain from all appearance of evil." The nourishment of your soul gives cause for similar temptations, that you will repulse in the same spirit. You feel yourself shut up in a spiritual solitude; obliged to sojourn in a place where your "soul longeth, even panteth for the courts of the Lord" (Psalms 84:1-5) and the communion of His people; bound to a position, to associates, where all tends to hinder your "growth in grace:" for you, the road to sanctification is thick-set with temptations and hindrances. But this solitude is prepared by God for you; it is God who chose this position for you, and you can change it only by neglecting imperative duties; and these associates are those of your natural family, for which God has commanded you to provide, at the risk of "denying the faith, and being worse than an infidel!" (1 Timothy 5:8) In such moments the devil will say, It is not time to provide for the deliverance of thy soul? put a stop at any price to a state of things that makes Christian life impossible: "Say to this stone that it become bread." Answer him: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." The blessing comes from God alone, and this blessing does not depend upon any human condition. I am where God wills, that suffices me. He who "turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, and the water-springs into dry ground," (Psalms 107:33-35) is He that can also turn the most terrible temptations into precious means of grace: He is able to keep me in all my ways, excepting in those of disobedience.

You are a servant of God. By visible dispensations of the Lord you have been placed at the head of a Church in which singular blessings have not ceased confirming your vocation. But this Church is poor, and you are yourself poor, and you know not when you begin the year how you shall be able to meet the expenses that each of the 365 days which compose it require. Dear brother, you are truly in the wilderness, but in a wilderness into which God has led you as by the hand. The devil then says to you: The God that you serve so faithfully forsakes you. What has He done to calm your natural anxiety, though you have been praying for yourself and your family for so many years? Why do you delay? Leave so ungrateful a place, seek some other that will give thee thy "bread and thy water, thy wool and thy flax, thine oil and thy drink." (Hosea 2:5) "Say to this stone to become bread." Answer him: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." God, upright with those that are upright, (Psalms 18:25-26) has resources ready for all my wants: wherever He has sent me hitherto, He has never left me to want anything. [When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said: nothing, (Luke 22:25)] As long as I believe that this is the place that He has assigned me, I will remain, "and quietly wait for

the salvation of the Lord." (Lamentations 3:26)

Answer thus, my friends, and God will come to your aid. Many of your brethren have been tried as you are: they waited for the Lord; and now that God has "shown them the salvation promised to him that ordereth his conversation aright," (Psalms 1:1-6. Psalms 23:1-6) they would not exchange for all the gold of the world the salutary lessons they reaped in their distress. The first temptation vanquished, vanquished by the Word of God, the devil has recourse to another. "And the devil taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 'And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.' " How did this mysterious scene come to pass ? We know not. I have already said: I receive the narrative of my text with the simplicity of a child; and without seeking to penetrate into "the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God," I go straight to "those which are revealed, and which belong to us and to our children." There is much to be learned here of the wiles of the adversary, and of what we must do to escape from them.

What must we think of this expression of Satan: "All this is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it?" It is a mixture of truth and falsehood, which generally characterizes the seductions of the adversary: for if all were true, "the father of lies" would not find his reckoning; and if all were false, his aim would be too evident. It is but too true that Satan exercises in the world an immense empire, which he derives from sin, and which he places at the service of sin. He usurped it in Eden, where, not satisfied with taking possession of the mind of man, that king of the earth, we see him taking the place of the King of heaven himself, as the object of man's obedience. We need only look around us to perceive the fatal influence that the enemy has acquired over us: history, politics, sciences, arts, literature, all varieties of beauty and glory, bear too evident witness to the truth of it. The Scriptures call Satan "the prince of this world," (John 12:31) so great is his power; and even "the god of this world," (2 Corinthians 4:4) so much is he worshipped. But this power of Satan, as he is obliged to confess himself, has "been delivered to him." Now, as it has "been delivered to him," it cannot be absolute: it is exercised under the control of God, who makes it subservient to the final accomplishment of His own purposes; and if Satan is the prince of this world, God alone is "the most High who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." (Daniel 4:17) And, again, having been "delivered to him," this power is not eternal: it will be taken from him when sin, upon which alone it rests, shall be abolished; and it is to abolish sin that the Messiah came, "to destroy the works of the devil," and to set up a kingdom upon the ruins, "that shall never be destroyed." (Daniel 2:44) What Satan here dares to attribute to himself, what he affects to offer to the Son of God, belongs in reality to this Son, to whom the Father has promised "the heathen for inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." (Psalms 2:8)

However that maybe, Satan offers to Jesus what he can dispose of, and perhaps, also what he cannot dispose of. He shows him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." All the pride of power, the show of riches, the splendor of luxury, the vanity of honors, the seduction of pleasures, and all that worldly pomp which excites so ardently the desires of men; and then says to him, "All shall be thine," with only this condition, "if thou wilt worship me." Instead of waiting and conquering the inheritance promised by the Father, to receive it from the hands of Satan, rendering him the homage which is due to God alone: this is the spirit of the second temptation.

There is something more revolting in it even than in the first: this condition attached to the empire of the world is nothing less than a pact with the devil. And Jesus upon hearing this impious proposition, for a moment forgets the serenity that characterizes His resistance (Jude 1:9) and, for the first time calling Satan by his name, repulses him with holy indignation: "Get thee behind me, Satan! for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This quotation immediately puts a stop to the efforts of the enemy, and a second time sends him away vanquished.

Here things are so evident, the proposal of Satan so abominable, and the answer of Jesus so simple, that any explanation would be superfluous; not so the application. However horrible the temptation may seem, all the children of God are exposed to it; and however simple the answer, we are far from being always ready to find it. There is no one amongst us to whom an alliance with Satan has not been offered more than once. I call by this name that tacit stipulation by which a man engages himself to serve the God of this world, in order to obtain the favor of the world; by which a Christian perhaps consents to render homage to Satan in his impatience to obtain "the honor that comes from men," instead of seeking by faith "the honor that cometh from God only." Let us seek some examples borrowed from the experience of youth. The most ordinary form under which Satan proposes his fearful alliance, is the desire of riches. A young man moral, perhaps even pious, has just entered into his commercial life. The hope of making a brilliant fortune takes possession of his mind; but how can he realize this hope? Amongst other means he is offered one that is common in the world, but which is not exempt from sin; lying, deceiving, wronging a friend, giving rise to a lawsuit, dividing families, neglecting the service of God, infringing upon the Lord's day. It is the devil who whispers, "All this shall be thine if thou wilt worship me." How few fortunes are accumulated without similar concessions made to Satan! Answer him, my dear young brother, "Get thee behind me, Satan! for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Let Satan keep all the advantages he offers you, since it is at such a price. Do not seek to obtain from Satan the vain appearance of an honor that God will give you in reality, if you are faithful. Even here below the blessing must come from God: "Godliness is profitable. unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Sometimes an alliance with Satan is disguised under a project of marriage. A young person was walking faithfully in the ways of the Lord; by her fervent and lowly piety she was an example to her companions, an honor to the Church, and a pattern to the world. Her hand is asked by a young man possessing desirable qualifications, fortune, rank, intellect, loving, and perhaps loved---but a stranger to God---and to whom she cannot be united without danger for her faith. It is Satan who whispers, "All shall be thine if thou wilt worship me." See what a brilliant fortune is prepared for you: what honors, what happiness, what love! Wouldst thou be deprived of all this?---and why?---for the melancholy satisfaction of leading a sad and gloomy life? Keep thy faith, thou canst keep it, only keep it hidden in thy heart; and belong to the world whilst thou art in it. How shall a feeble child resist such a maneuver of the adversary, so treacherously contrived? By this simple word, "Get thee behind me, Satan! for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Ah, my young sister, answer him thus, and you are victorious. And "the grace of the Lord is sufficient for you." Go, and gently place at the foot of His cross all the plans of happiness that your poor heart has been combining; and you will find in His love an ample compensation for all your sacrifices.

Even the sanctuary is not always a sure retreat from the offers of alliance with Satan. A young minister, enriched with the finest gifts of God, enters into the service of the Church; he may aspire to the glory of this world: to the praise of men, to the highest and most influential places; but, in order to attain this lofty position, he must accept the doctrines of the age, or accommodate his faith to the world's futility, or take part in its frivolous pleasures, or join with it against the people of God. Here, again, Satan says: "All shall be thine if thou wilt fall down and worship me." How many young ministers have yielded to this temptation? How many who, like Demas, have forsaken the brethren, "having loved this present world?" (2 Timothy 4:10) How many who "have believed on Jesus but do not confess him, because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God?" (John 12:42-43) Oh, my young friends, be faithful, be unmovable. Answer: "Get thee behind me, Satan! for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "If you seek to please men, you will not be servants of Christ." Confess Jesus Christ as your God, His Word for your rule, and His people for your people; and "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away!" (1 Peter 5:4)

Twice vanquished, Satan makes a last effort, for which, we may foresee, he will collect all his wiles and all his expedients. "And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee. And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." To enter fully into the spirit of this temptation, we must place it in opposition with the first, with which the contrast is manifest. The tempter had in vain sought to make Jesus doubt His Father: this means, to which he usually has recourse at first, and which had but too well succeeded with Eve, had failed when brought to bear on the unmovable confidence of Jesus in the assistance of God. The tempter then conceives the hope of seducing Him through this very confidence, but through this confidence perverted. He "transforms himself into an angel of light;" he surrounds himself with holy things; he takes Him into the holy city, and sets Him upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and encourages Him by the holy Word of God to cast Himself down without fear from the top of it, to give the wondering crowd a striking proof of who He is by the miracle of the promised protection. But is this hazardous feat, proposed by Satan, necessary? Is it willed of God? Does it offer the requisite conditions in order that the promise of the 91st Psalm should be applicable? If Jesus were to give way to the suggestions of the tempter, He would, without any warrant to it, implicate the faithfulness of His Father, He would make the Word of God an amusement, rather than a protection; He would create a peril for the frivolous satisfaction of provoking the deliverance; and if this deliverance should fail, He would expose the glory of God by His blind and presumptuous confidence, as much as He would have served it by a humble and obedient faith. So, without hesitation, Jesus answers His treacherous adviser: "It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 6:16)

What is tempting God? And why would Jesus have tempted God by casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple? To "tempt God," or to "prove God," (Psalms 95:9. "Your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work." The word 'prove', which means properly speaking try, explains the word tempt which precedes it. The meaning of this verse is: your fathers wished to put my power to the trial, I made them feel it, but in exercising it against them. See also Isaiah 7:12; Acts 5:9) is, as the simple meaning of the words indicate, to try God, and thus put His faithfulness to the test; whereas faith reckons simply upon God, and rests upon His faithfulness as upon an

unmovable rock. Faith says: "Hath God said, and shall he not do it?" And it requires no other pledge of His promise than the promise itself. He who tempts God holds quite another language. Will God do it? Can God do it? Then, led by the wish of clearing up his doubts, he prescribes certain conditions that he expects God to accept before he can rest upon His promise. The Israelites "tempted the Lord" at Rephidim by asking for water to drink, and asking in such a spirit that they would judge by the way in which their request was answered, "whether the Lord were amongst them or not." (Exodus 17:2-7) They tempt Him again at Kibrothhattaavah, by asking for other food, and saying: "Behold, he smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people?" (Psalms 78:18-20; Numbers 11:1-35) Though under different forms, the same spirit appears in the Christian Church. The new disciples who opposed the apostles in the council of Jerusalem "tempted God," by wishing to put a yoke upon the neck of the newly-converted Gentiles which they themselves had not been able to bear, (Acts 15:10) and by doing so they seemed to require of God an extraordinary display of grace which they had no right to expect. This conduct is the more reprehensible, because if, when thus challenged, it should please the Lord to refuse the conditions that have been prescribed to Him, His character or His word will seem to be in fault: false confidence and distrust, presumption and unbelief, are near akin; the principle and the results are much the same. Jesus would have tempted God had He cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. For having no reason to authorize such an action, having neither commandment nor necessity, He could not say God will guard me; but at most, Will God guard me? Will He carry me safe to the ground? I will try. Had He but once spoken such a word, He was vanquished; but His refusal and the quotation of Scripture: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," disconcerts the adversary's plan, and puts him to flight for the third and last time. . My brethren, Satan can tempt us too, to tempt God. Examples are not wanting; the only difficulty is in the choice of them.

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." In every enterprise undertaken for God's glory, and carried on in His Spirit, we may expect that the Lord will send us the necessary resources. He will not confound our faith. But without this faith, the fairest works of Christian piety and charity would have been arrested in their very beginnings. The Franks, the Cotlingos, the Marie Callams, would have failed in their mission. But take heed, not to throw yourself rashly into the first path that seems to open before you, under the pretext of faith in God. Here, again, the suggestions of Satan will not be wanting. He will sometimes persuade you to take for an inspiration of God's Spirit, a plan, which, notwithstanding its fair appearances, will tend less to His glory than to yours; sometimes for the execution of a plan approved by God, he will tempt you into expenses that are not authorized by necessity, nor conformable with evangelical simplicity; sometimes he will tempt you to anticipate impatiently upon the time of God, and thus disturb the slow, but sure progress by which He loves to assure the success of a good cause, while He exercises the humility of the instrument. What hast thou to fear, man of little faith, he will say? Go on, in the name of the Lord; give, promise, buy, build, do all that thy hand findeth to do. If thou art a child of God, confide in thy Father; "cast thyself down from hence." Listen to him, and you will find yourself insensibly drawn into obligations that you cannot meet. Thus the gospel will be compromised in the eyes of the world; who will say, on seeing your plans incomplete, "This man began to build, but he was not able to finish;" and you may fall into pecuniary difficulties that will break your heart if they do not shake your faith. Prevent so great an evil by walking scrupulously with God, tempering the liberty of Christ by the prudence of Christ; going out of the beaten path

only to answer to a manifest calling, or to obey a certain impulse of the Spirit; this is the secret of prayer. Beyond this, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" there is your answer and your peace.

Fathers and mothers, it is you that will furnish my second example; lend an attentive ear. The time is come, you think, for you to send your son or your daughter to a distance from home, to take advantage of the resources offered by public institutions, to complete their instruction, or to form their mind and character; upon what principles do you act in the choice of that second family you are going to give your child in exchange for his own? If you give the "one thing needful" the first place; you will find the truth of that promise: "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." But if, too much absorbed by the glory that comes from men, you seek, above all, for your son, the means of distinguishing himself in the world, and for your daughter, the means of pleasing in the world; if you place them for years where the name of Jesus Christ is neither honored nor loved, nor even known, perhaps; if you abandon that innocent mind, that confiding soul to the influence of a blind and inflexible proselytism, which your imprudence seems to have disarmed of its scruples; if, indeed, that were true, what would you have done but "tempt God?" The secret voice that then whispers: Are not the advantages of a brilliant education worth some sacrifices? And besides, cannot God preserve my child from the contagion of error, or the seduction of example? Is there no other way of drawing him to religion than pursuing him with the Bible? What is this voice but that which said to Jesus, "Cast thyself down from hence?"---and what other answer have you to give than that of Jesus, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Alas! how many parents I could name who now shed bitter tears over the sin and folly with which they reckoned upon God to guard their children in the midst of perils to which they exposed them without consulting God's will! At another time, perhaps, the tempter will persuade you to frequent company that you cannot altogether approve, because God can guard you against its influence; or to waste your time in frivolous, if not pernicious reading, because God can defend you against its contagion; or to listen to teachers who announce strange doctrines, because God can close your heart to the seduction of their discourses. These are only so many varieties of the same counsel to Jesus: "Cast thyself down from hence;" and to each your only answer should be, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In the perils to which it may please God to expose you, be firm and unmovable; but never seek to create them for yourself; never put God to the test; never compromise His glory; and if ever placed upon a pinnacle of the temple, do not cast yourself headlong down, but descend quietly and humbly the stairs of the building. But there is in this last temptation a feature that deserves particular attention: the use that Satan makes of the Scriptures. He has seen that by them, Jesus has repulsed him twice: and he forms the audacious plan of turning against his conqueror that sword of the Spirit of which he has just felt the irresistible power. Marvelous art of the tempter, who makes everything serve his purposes, and arming himself against us with what belongs to us, he seeks to weaken us by our own strength, as God on the contrary strengthens us by our very weakness! "Cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee; in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." In what consists the perfidy of this quotation? Some have answered that Satan has maliciously altered the passage he cites. The Psalmist says, "He will give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways;" and these last words that the tempter omits

show that we can only reckon upon the promised help if we keep in the path marked out for our vocation. This remark appears to me subtle; if it were well founded Jesus would probably have commenced by restoring the mutilated text to its true signification. No, Satan does not alter the passage he cites, but he makes a false application of it. The help promised in the 41st Psalm has evident conditions from which Jesus would deviate by casting Himself down from the height of the temple: God upholds those of His children who find themselves inevitably exposed to danger, and not those who run into it of their own free will, and without any necessity. But this restriction not being formally expressed by the Psalmist, how can Jesus prove that such was the true meaning of the Holy Ghost? Can it be by appealing to reason or natural feeling? No, but by appealing to Scripture. Jesus does not answer: the interpretation which thou givest to this passage of Scripture cannot be the right one, because it is too peculiar; but He answers, The meaning thou givest to this passage cannot be the true one, because it is in contradiction with another passage. This intention of the Lord is still more manifest in the narration of St Matthew, who adds to that of St Luke the word also, which is very significative in this place: "It is also written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This is very instructive. There are in the Bible, which is written, not by philosophers for philosophers, but by ordinary men for ordinary men---there are some parts which require explanation, and which, for want of being rightly understood, may furnish the tempter with arms against us: these explanations must be sought, not according to human wisdom, but in other passages of Scripture. For if human wisdom were allowed to control the Scriptures, where would be the limit at which it must stop? We should soon see one rejecting all belief in the existence of the devil as opposed to reason; another would reject that of eternal condemnation as wounding his feelings; a third would conceal that of the atonement beneath casuistry which stifles it; and thus there would remain no positive faith, because there would be no longer any divine authority. The Scriptures can be controlled only by the Scriptures, and to one it is written, nothing substantial can be opposed but---" it is also written."

Satan sees a Christian diligently occupied about his salvation, praying without ceasing, meditating in the Scriptures day and night, and watching to avoid the world's contamination. He has sought in vain to draw him away from prayer, to make him doubt the Word of God, to inspire him with the love of the world. He now takes his Bible in his hand, (you know that he has one,) and begins to preach in this way: Ah, my friend, what a burden do you take upon yourself! Is it necessary to run yourself out of breath to serve God? To see you is enough to be disgusted with piety. I can show you a much more convenient way, and quite as orthodox; for, after all, your sanctification is the work of God, not yours. A little more liberty; follow the bent of your heart, and leave the rest to God. It is written, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Php 2:13) Yes, indeed, follow the bent of your heart, and the devil will be more tranquil about you. I believe that easily. . . . Ah! my brother, answer to "this holy Satan," as Luther somewhere calls him. It is also written, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." (Php 2:12; Luke 13:24)

Satan wishes to induce a minister of the gospel whose powerful preaching prevails against the "gates of hell" to be less faithful. He has in vain sought to stop him in his holy work by discouragement, by vainglory, by the enmity of the world. He then has recourse to the Scriptures, and says: Man of God, why do you take so much trouble about the spiritual nourishment you must give to your flock? Can you not find good, holy, salutary advice to give without wearing yourself out

over your Bible and other books? Go to work more easily. Reckon upon the facility God has given you for speaking. Abandon yourself to the Holy Spirit, and say the things that He will suggest. In this way you will honor the Lord better without taking account of the time thus gained for His service. It is written, "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matthew 10:19-20) There, my friends, is a snare agreeably spread for your natural indolence: if you fan into it, it is to be feared that your preaching will be blighted, as has been that of many servants of God who, under different pretexts, dispensed with all laborious work (2 Samuel 24:24) to speak extemporaneously without effort. But here is your safety. Answer: It is written, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:13-16)

After the same manner, for all the other scriptural temptations of Satan. Beware of the devil's exegesis, and combat it simply by Scripture itself. What may be wanting in one place you will find in another, as if those only were judged worthy to penetrate into the profound meaning of it who take the pains to draw together and reconcile the various lessons it contains. If it is written "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," it is also written: "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead." If it is written: "Neither be ye called master; for one is your master, even Christ," it is also written: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." If it is written: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," it is also written: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." If it is written: "I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," it is also written: "Blessed is the man that feareth always!" If it is written: "Unto the pure all things are pure," it is also written: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." .

You have seen, my dear brethren, by the example of Jesus, answering to the threefold attack of the tempter, the use that you ought to make of the Scriptures against temptation. But to follow His example, you must know, the Scriptures like Jesus. Be not surprised if I speak of the knowledge Jesus had of the Scriptures; for, we cannot sufficiently repeat it; though He was the Son of God, Jesus was also the Son of man, and it was as the Son of man that He triumphed in the wilderness. How familiar the Scriptures must be to one who quotes them so appropriately and adapts them so exactly to the infinite variety of human temptations! Jesus moves and feels at home in the Scriptures with as much ease as we move and find our way in a town that we have known from our youth, that we can cross and re-cross and find our way, and of which every street, every place, every house, is engraved in our memory. It is thus that you ought to know the Scriptures. It is not by nearabouts that you can hope to combat successfully the enemy: the more precise you are in the use of the Scriptures, the stronger you will be. How do you know that there is not, for the special temptation that besets you, a special declaration of the Holy Spirit, which no other can entirely replace? it is important to discover it. The Scriptures should be for you a great storehouse, so well known to you that you can immediately put your hand upon the weapon you may require to defend yourself, or like a pharmacy in such good order that you can in an instant find the remedy necessary to cure you. You cannot have your Bible always before your eyes: you must carry it in your heart, if you will have it never fail you. But for that, what a study of the Scriptures!--what constant perusal!--what profound meditation! Well, all that is no more than God himself has prescribed: "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates in it day

and night!" "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." (Psalms 1:2; Joshua 1:8) All this is no more than what all the holy men proposed for our imitation have done: "Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day . . . . At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments. Mine eyes prevent the night watches that I might meditate in thy word." (Psalms 119:62, Psalms 119:97, Psalms 119:148) All this is not more than the example given us by our own fathers till the days of the desert and of martyrdom; those old faithful witnesses of whom it might be said that if the Bible were to be lost, the recollections of some of them, put together, would be sufficient to write it over again. . . . To what a state, Oh my God, are we fallen! ---what ignorance of the Scriptures in our people!---what ignorance of the Scriptures in our pastors! Lord, restore unto us the days of old!

But, after all, that knowledge of the Scriptures by which they may be kept in memory from beginning to end, is not what it is most important to imitate in Jesus. What makes Him overcome by the Scriptures is not that He knows the words by heart, but that He understands the sense and spirit of them. The Bible contains the maxims of the kingdom of heaven, but those maxims clothed in a terrestrial form; and he only can understand them who knows how to separate the divine thoughts from the human envelope that covers them. This is what Jesus does in my text; He does not keep to the surface of the book, He discovers "the thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12) of what "is written." As a proof of this I only require the first of His three quotations: "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word of God." Acknowledge that, had you been tempted like the Lord, it is not by this passage that you would have thought of defending yourself, and that it might have passed before your eyes many times without your having discovered what Jesus found in it. You would have seen the marvelous fact of the manna granted to the Israelites instead of bread; you would have seen a pledge of hope for a people placed in a situation similar to theirs, if such a situation could ever be again found; you would finally have seen an encouraging testimony of the love of God for His creatures, and of His faithfulness towards His people: but there your exegesis would be at a stand, enchained by history and by miracle. How much more penetrating is that of Jesus! He dives to the very bottom, and finds His way to the secret thoughts of the Holy Ghost; and beyond the history, the miracle, and all that is passing, He discovers this general and permanent principle: all power resides in the Word of God, which is not limited to the means it generally makes use of. At this depth the temptation of Israel and that of Jesus meet, if we may so speak, underground and by the root; so that the word of Moses, interpreted by Jesus Christ, applies as well to the second as to the first; I may say more---it applies equally to the temptations of the children of God in all ages. And yet, remark this well, this application, however extended and diversified, of the word of Moses, has nothing forced nor arbitrary; there is not even either allegory or double meaning; nothing but the profound conception of the Holy Spirit, as found in the profound language of Scripture, as true in the foundation as in the expression. This, my dear friends, is the exegesis of Jesus Christ; spiritual, substantial exegesis, equally accessible to the learned and to the unlearned, as attractive for the intellect as it is nourishing for the soul. Beside this, how superficial and cold is our ordinary exegesis, even when the most learned and the most conscientious! It is because ours is entangled with what is of the earth, earthy, while the other rises to the thoughts of heaven. What a glorious book would the Bible be, alas! and how new if studied in this spirit! The Bible, allow me the expression, is heaven-spoken, but this heaven must be disengaged from the word that shades, while it reveals it. And this is what Jesus Christ teaches us. But no commentary can give us this exegesis; we must seek it upon our knees, saying to God,

"Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Then we shall receive the witness of God within us; then what is written in the heart corresponds too exactly with what is written in the book, for the same Spirit not to be recognized in both. The Bible we said is heaven-spoken---the Bible thus accepted would be heaven seen, felt, lived.

We have now, my dear brethren, arrived at the limit we proposed. Three successive Sundays I have spoken to you of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness: it is not too much for a subject so vast and so instructive. For my part, I shall recall to mind with a deep feeling of gratitude these three weeks, during which I have been constantly contemplating the conflict my Savior sustained, the victory He won, and the weapon by which He conquered. I have found in this contemplation something particularly solemn and salutary; and I hope, through God's faithfulness, that it has not been without a blessing either for myself or for you. Return often into the wilderness. Whenever the number and the greatness of the temptations to which you are exposed seem ready to overwhelm you, remember Jesus tempted like as you are in all things. Whenever you may be in doubt as to the possibility of resisting, remember Jesus bruising Satan under His feet, and who has promised to bruise him under yours. Finally, whenever you are uncertain as to the means you must employ to vanquish, remember Jesus warding off with that single weapon, the sword of the Holy Spirit, the attacks of the adversary and forcing him to retreat. And you, my future fellow-laborers, I will not quit this subject without giving you a special exhortation that I recommend to your most serious attention. The temptation of Jesus is placed between the end of His personal preparation and the commencement of His public life. There is for you a similar time: the interval between the end of your studies and the beginning of your ministry. Take care of this interval: it may influence the remainder of your ministerial career. Devote it to a spiritual retreat; spend it with Jesus combating in His solitude: and when you enter the Church let it be as a man coming out from the wilderness---and not from the world: if you are full of recollections of the world, if you have been inhaling the corrupt atmosphere of vanities and pleasures, you are not fit for the service of Jesus Christ. From the wilderness and not from Nazareth: if you are under the dominion of family affections, if you place, the first line in the choice of a place a father or a mother, a wife or a child, you are not for the service of Jesus Christ. From the wilderness, and not from the academy: if you are still covered with the dust of deep study, if your faith and your knowledge come merely from books, you are not fit for the service of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ must have servants weaned from the world, free of creature engagements, nourished by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Be men of the wilderness, or be not men of the Church. Amen.

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