

Christian Perfection and Temptation

by Samuel Chadwick

Samuel Chadwick's sermon explores the nature of temptation in relation to Christ's experience and the process of sanctification for believers.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:15, James 1:2, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Christian Perfection", "Temptation And Sin"

Description

Samuel Chadwick delves into the temptation of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that He was tempted in all points like us but without sin, highlighting the reality and representative character of His temptation. Chadwick explores how temptation is inseparable from probation, even for the perfect, and discusses how sanctification does not eliminate temptation but exposes the sanctified to exceptional exposure. He explains that temptation is not sin; it is consent that makes it sin, and that entire sanctification purges the nature of its inborn proneness to evil, rooting out the desire to yield to sin. Chadwick concludes by discussing the temptations of the sanctified, warning about the subtlety of temptations and the need to watch and pray to avoid stumbling.

Transcript

It is said of Jesus Christ "that he himself hath suffered being tempted," and also that "He hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The first statement declares the reality of His temptation, and the second certifies its representative character. The Scriptures never speculate upon the nature and character of Christ. No explanation is offered of His temptation, nor of the extent to which He pondered or desired the objects presented to His mind. The facts are stated, and we are able to deduce important conclusions, but though important they are not revealed. Satan was the tempter, so we infer Jesus was open to attack from an evil source. He suffered being tempted, by which we understand there was real conflict in the soul of Christ. The proposals of the tempter appealed to Him. There was a consciousness of something in the forbidden path that was plausible. Otherwise there could be no temptation to sin. He was tempted in "all points like as we are." In all points; not in all forms. There are temptations that come to us that never came to Him, because He never experienced many of the relations out of which our temptations spring. For instance, He never was a husband or father, wife or mother. He did not live under twentieth century conditions of life and labor. In these and other respects He had no experience of many temptations with which we are familiar, but in every practical sense He was tempted like as we are. He was tested at every point where temptation can assail, and tried along every avenue by which sin may gain access to the soul.

THE PERFECT MAN TEMPTED

The temptation of Christ is our warrant for saying that temptation is inseparable from probation. The perfect are subject to assault from Satan and solicitation to evil. Humanity is not dehumanized when the work of grace is perfected in the soul. Some teaching would make Entire Sanctification a process of emasculation. Grace destroys nothing but sin. The "old man" crucified is superseded by the "new man in Christ Jesus." He is still a man. All the appetites remain in the sanctified man. Their order is restored, their direction rectified, and their desires purified. Their gratification is no longer sought in forbidden ways. Every desire is submitted at once to the test of the divine will, and whatever is suspected of being at variance with the standard is at once dismissed. In the sanctified man the desires, the affections, and the will become allies of the conscience. Man may be tempted in another sense than that indicated in James 1:13, 14. The ambiguity which attaches to the English word "temptation" has led to some confusion. Originally it meant just "to try." Hence the noun, attempt, and the adjective, tentative (temptative). It has hardened, however, into a use that indicates trial with an evil purpose. Both uses are found in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament it is more frequently used of righteous than of unrighteous trial; while in the New Testament, prevailing, but not uniformly, it is used of trying to induce to evil. The first use of the word is in Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham." The writer to the Hebrews (11:17) says of the same event, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried." The Revised Version substitutes "prove" for "tempt" in the Genesis story. In Psalm 26:2, the psalmist says, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." Our Lord is said to have asked a question of Philip to prove him (John 6:6). Writing in the second letter to the Corinthians (13:5), St. Paul exhorts them saying, "Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves." The word used for "trying" and "proving" could quite rightly be translated "tempt". God tried those at Ephesus who said they were apostles, and found them liars (Rev. 2:2). Jesus was led "of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4:1). There is a vital difference between the two uses of the word. It may mean either to solicit or to test. In the first sense Satan tempts men; he entices to evil. In the second sense God proved Abraham. He put him to the proof. Adam was tempted and fell. Jesus was tempted and conquered. In neither was there the lust or proneness due to sinful generation, but both were tempted. Grace cannot make us more perfect than Christ, and if He suffered being tempted we surely shall not escape.

St. James bids us glory in temptation: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Again he says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him".

SANCTIFICATION AND TEMPTATION

It is a matter of speculation at what point temptation passes beyond the boundary of innocence. Some have argued that, if the temptation advances beyond the intellect and affects the desires, exciting them to action, such desires are always attended with sin. This position cannot be sustained from the Word of God. Desire may be sinful, for Christ Himself has told us that a look may be adultery, and passion, murder; but that is when desire has the consent of the will, and only for prudential or other reasons does not pass into action. What about sinful desire resisted? The lust of the flesh may be successfully antagonized and overcome. Temptation is not sin; it is consent that makes it sin. Entire sanctification purges the nature of its inborn proneness to evil. Dr. W. B. Pope says, "Sanctification in its beginnings, process, and final issues, is the full eradication of the sin itself, which reigning in the unregenerate co-exists with the new life in the regenerate, is abolished in the wholly sanctified." Mark the terms! "Reigning in the unregenerate,

co-exists with the new life in the regenerate, abolished in the wholly sanctified." It cleanses him of "his own lust" by which he was drawn away and enticed. The desire for gratification by forbidden means is taken away. The soul is cleansed by the cleansing blood of the Son of God. Not only is grace given to resist, the desire to yield is rooted up and cast out of the heart. Sin is loathed because love is perfect.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE SANCTIFIED

This does not mean that sanctification places the soul beyond temptation. On the contrary, it brings it to exceptional exposure. The experience furnishes a new basis of attack. Our Lord's temptation followed His baptism, not only as a matter of time, but of consequence. The temptation was the outcome of the experience. It was upon the testimony of the baptism that the attack was made. If He was "tempted like as we are" it follows that, as we become like Him, we shall be tempted as He was. The wilderness is never far from the Jordan. The relations of the natural and the spiritual have to be adjusted, and Satan will seek to win us back through the demands of the flesh, the problem of bread, and the obligations of common toil. If he fails there, he will test along the avenue of courageous faith, and tempt to presumption and vain glory. The second often succeeds where the first fails. Grace is made the occasion of sin, when we disobey God under cover of faith. The final temptation of Spirit-filled people is to use carnal weapons in spiritual aims. The world is accepted under plea of its service to the kingdom. The peril of these temptations is in their subtlety. To the saints Satan comes as an angel of light. The beast is transformed into the likeness of a lamb. The very elect are deceived, if they cease to live in the Spirit through whom comes discernment as well as power. God is able to keep us from stumbling, and to set us before the presence of His glory without blemish, in exceeding joy, but we need to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

Saviour of the sin-sick soul,

Give me faith to make me whole!

Finish Thy great work of grace,

Cut it short in righteousness.

Speak the second time, "Be clean!"

Take away my inbred sin;

Every stumbling-block remove,

Cast it out by perfect love.

Nothing less will I require,

Nothing more can I desire;

None but Christ to me be given!

None but Christ in earth or heaven!

O that I might now decrease!

O that all I am might cease!

Let me into nothing fall,
Let my Lord be all in all!

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