

omit from the problem the awful fact that "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One," and that the prince of this world is the devil. It is a great, world-wide, *spiritual* conflict, without truce or armistice. The Gibraltar of every mission station is the heart of its missionary, and Satan knows it. When *that* proves traitor, or capitulates, or makes a compromise with the enemy, the day is won for the kingdom of darkness.

We propose to trace a resemblance between the threefold temptation of Christ and the three typical temptations that assail the missionary, to illustrate these temptations from the history or the methods of missions, and to point out Christ's victory over each as the only way of escape.

Distrust and Despair

I. *The first temptation is to doubt God's providence and despair of His promises.* "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." "Thou still clingest to that vainglorious confidence that Thou art the Son of God, carried away by those illusory scenes at the Jordan. Thou wast born in a stable—but Thou art the Son of God! A carpenter's roof supplied Thee with a home, and in the obscurity of a despicable town of Galilee Thou hast spent thirty years—yet still Thou art the Son of God! Be it so. But, after that, surely Thy days of trial should have an end. Why linger for weeks in this desert, wandering among the wild beasts and craggy rocks, unhonored, unattended, unpitied, ready to starve? Is this befitting the Son of God?"

In a similar way does doubt assail the missionary—distrust in God and despair of His love. And as the temptation, so is its occasion and environment. There is a solemn contrast in every missionary's life between the hour of farewell to the home land and that of arrival on the field. One has only to read *personal* missionary correspondence (not the printed reports), or the letters of Henry Martyn, for example, to find abundant proof. Every missionary's diary will show it.

It is one thing, in the fervor of consecration and enthusiasm before an assembled congregation, to feel hands laid on you, and to be set apart to the work (a work which makes you conscious of the heroic, and this self-consciousness is fostered by sympathetic friends); it is a day on the mount of transfiguration; on the next, you descend to the Jewish rabble and the demoniac.

It is quite another thing to arrive on the field and find every circumstance and condition different from the ideal picture painted on the imagination; to find your whole environment not only strange (yea, often shocking), but to feel bitterly disappointed that things are not as you expected them to be. Yet this is the experience of nearly every one, I believe, who goes out to the foreign field; in a sense, utterly opposite to the words of the Queen of Sheba: "The half had

never been told." It is too often a one-sided picture that is drawn in missionary books and reports. We are all sinners, and our reports are too roseate. A recent writer says:

How hard it is for the missionary to be patient when his friends at home are so impatient, and how great is the temptation to embellish the account of his annual labors. I fear there are grave scandals connected with reports, but the fault lies with the subscribers rather than with the missionary agents. For the simple, pious folk who take great interest in missionary enterprise, but who are entirely ignorant of the circumstances of missionary work, the sun must always shine; a cloud on the horizon is intolerable; this is, as it were, the *condition* of their support. The result is the issue of reports positively grotesque in their optimism, in which Scripture texts jostle strangely with palpably exaggerated retrospects and forecasts.

To the missionary comes a sudden awakening as out of a dream—a *realism* that shocks the ideal as when a man falls upon a live electric wire. And the result—a spiritual desert and the tempter!

You have left civilization, and are now with the wild beasts. Home and companionship are behind—you stand, or fall, by yourself. The moral atmosphere is a miasma that oppresses, makes faint, stifles. You learn for the first time from the window of the mission house that the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. You *see* the last verses of the first chapter of Romans in a daily panorama on the street. You are ignorant of the language, and yet are surrounded by it; its horrid tentacles take hold of you like a devil-fish on all sides; you do not look at the language, but it rises like a monster and looks at you. You thought you came to *preach*, but find that you have come to wait (to wait in such a wilderness!), and to hunger and thirst for the privilege of preaching forty days and forty nights. A horror of great darkness comes upon you, and the horror is only the greater because you hide it in your bosom, and never whisper it to the committee at home or your fellow missionary. Except that you find relief in prayer, your spiritual life becomes a desert.

Now, I ask you candidly, where could there be a better opportunity for the Tempter? It is the supreme test.

At the London Missionary Conference, Professor Drummond said:

I have met men in mission fields in different parts of the world who make zealous addresses at evangelistic meetings at home, who left for their fields of labor laden with testimonials, *but who became utterly demoralized* within a year's time. . . . I would say that the thing to be certain of in picking a man for such a field as Africa, where the strain upon a man's character is tremendous, and the strain upon his spiritual life, owing to isolation, is even more tremendous, that we must be sure that we are sending a man of character and heart morally sound to the core.

O, Thou Son of God, who didst overcome for us, nerve Thy disciples with such perfect trust, and make them to so live by the Word from

the mouth of God that their moral fiber may endure the strain! Under the awful weight the cables may stretch and swing and twist and tremble, but while He holds them they can not snap asunder. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Presumptuously Testing God

II. The second temptation in the Gospel history is directly in contrast with the first. That was to *doubt*; this is to *presumption*. "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, . . . for it is written." Jesus had overcome the first temptation by simple, absolute trust. This was the time to act upon this very trust as the occasion for the temptation. "Cast thyself down," and trust in God. But, as Lange says, "Jesus proves Himself victor over temptation a religious fanaticism which mistakes excitement for spiritual emotion." It was the temptation to a *faith* without obedience, to a *prayer* that shows no self-surrender, and to *action* that has no warrant from on high. It was the temptation to the use of the spectacular and sensational coordinate with a pseudo-faith in the miraculous interposition of God.

This sort of temptation also assails the missionary. It comes most often in the time of spiritual exaltation. "The devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on the pinnacle of the temple." It comes to the missionary both at home and when in the field. If the shafts of whispered doubt and despair do not pierce the breast-plate, perhaps an arrow from behind may find its way through the joints of the harness. The tempter argues: "Because you are a missionary (one sent of God) He will care for you—your body as well as your soul. Tho you place yourself on the pinnacle of a moral precipice and cast yourself down, He will give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." You are a *missionary*, not one of the common lot of Christians—a higher consecration is yours—yours is a life fully surrendered to God. Surrender it yet more! It is His life and He will care for it, no matter what risks you take. Remember the special promise to missionaries; it is written: "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Depending on this promise, it is impossible to take typhoid fever, tho you drink swamp water in West Africa; and "the sun shall not smite thee by day," tho you carry no umbrella in the tropics. Those who hedge themselves about with comforts and precautions, who carry medicine-chests and water-filters and luxuries are showing a sinful want of faith.

Such is *one* form of this temptation; and just because the external features of it are spectacular and sensational, the crowd is attracted, and the missionary that yields to the temptation becomes a hero if not a martyr. It is easy to find onlookers when we advertise that we will cast ourselves down from some temple pinnacle.

A few years ago a party of American missionaries landed at Sierra Leone; two of their main principles were faith-healing and pentecostal gifts of tongues; no medicines were to be taken, no grammars or dictionaries made use of. The party was attacked by malignant fever; two died, refusing quinine. When the garrison surgeon called on the survivors, he found their minds fixed not to take medicine. Other similar cases could be quoted from recent mission history. A band of zealous workers, under the same delusion, were dashed to pieces at Aden before they reached their destination, East Africa; this happened only two years ago. An independent missionary in the Persian Gulf, some three years ago, who was an earnest Christian, came holding similar views, and with the idea of crossing the Arabian peninsula in the heat of summer, a chest of Bibles his only outfit; needless to say, he did not succeed. This temptation is very insidious, and creeps in when and where we least expect it. Alas! it finds endorsement in some missionary societies. Whether called by a fairer or more attractive name than *faith-cure*, it belongs often (we dare not say always) to the same category. Certainly this theory stultifies the wonderful agency of *medical* missions; if a person can pray over the sick, anoint them with oil, and trust to miracle-faith for all sorts of cure, there is no use in costly hospitals or an army of physicians.

Again, there seems to be a belief in some quarters that missionaries should become *ascetics* in order to evangelize successfully. But is it not the same temptation under another cloak?

The World's Gospel Union, of Kansas City, not long ago issued the following statement:

For some years we have believed that there was no hope that the world would ever be evangelized by salaried preachers and missionaries, and one of the foundation-stones of our movement has been that the laborers should in reality follow Jesus in the giving up of all things for His name and for their needy brethren, and go forth to a life of trust in God, and, if need be, of hardship and suffering. We are also reminded that what have become to be generally understood to be the necessities and comforts for the body are not always essential or helpful in the matter of spiritual power and blessing to the world, and we desire to keep before our eyes the words of the great apostle, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place," and to remember that the "Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering."

Now, however much we admire such zeal (and it is worthy of admiration), it is *not* according to knowledge. These are *not* sound missionary principles. With all respect for the earnest men who wrote them, we can not but believe that such a method is presump-