

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS - Bible Echo November 15, 1892

The great work of redemption could be carried out by the Redeemer only as He took the place of fallen man. Burdened with the sins of the world, He must pass over the path where Adam fell, and redeem his failure. When Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him, but he was surrounded by the glories of Eden. But it was not thus with Jesus; for, bearing the infirmities of degenerate humanity, He entered the wilderness to cope with the mighty foe, that He might lift man up from the lowest depths of his degradation. Alone He was to tread the path of temptation and exercise self-control stronger than hunger, ambition, or death. {BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 1}

Clothed as an angel of light, the artful foe presented his specious temptations to the Saviour. He sought to persuade Christ to turn from the path of self-denial and cross-bearing. He assured Him that God was satisfied with his willingness to endure the trial, but that as He stayed the hand of Abraham when about to sacrifice Isaac, so now, satisfied with Christ's willingness to set his feet in the bloodstained path, He had sent an angel to deliver Him from the long fast by which He was to overcome the power of appetite in man's behalf. This specious reasoning was a temptation to Christ. His humanity made it a temptation to Him, and it was only by trusting his Father's word that He could resist the power of the enemy. He walked by faith, as we must walk by faith, and turned from the artful deceiver, who feigned to doubt his divinity. Satan declared that a powerful angel of heaven had been banished to the earth, and that Christ's appearance indicated that instead of being the King of heaven, He was this fallen angel, forsaken of God and deserted by man. If He were the Son of God, He was equal with God, and could make this evident by working a miracle. He said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." He promised that if Jesus would do this, he would acknowledge his supremacy and no longer contest his claims. The archdeceiver hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in his Father, work a miracle in his own behalf, and take Himself out of his Father's hands. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken; for it was contrary to its terms that Christ should work a miracle in his own behalf. Throughout his life on earth, his power must be exercised for the good of suffering humanity alone. As man's representative, He was to bear the trials of man, leaving a perfect example of submission and trust in God. Jesus met the adversary with the Word of God. He said, "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." It was not for the Son of God to descend from his lofty mission to prove his divinity to a fallen foe, or to condescend to explain his humiliation as man's Redeemer. If the children of men would follow the example of Christ, and hold no converse with the enemy, they would be spared many a defeat at his hands. {BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 2}

Foiled in the attempt to provoke Christ to manifest his divine power in his own behalf, and seeking to awe Him by a display of superior power, Satan bore the Son of God from the wilderness, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem. He there admitted that Jesus had been right in manifesting unqualified trust in God, and, declaring that God had promised to give his angels charge over Him that He should not dash his foot against a stone, he urged Christ to manifest still more faith in the Word of God. He said to 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." Satan thought to take advantage of Christ's humanity, and urge Him beyond the limits of trust into the sin of presumption. But while manifesting perfect trust in

his Father, He refused to place Himself in a position which would necessitate the interposition of his Father to save Him from death. He would not force Providence to his rescue, and thus fail to give man an example of perfect trust and submission. {BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 3}

Baffled in his attempt to overthrow the integrity of Christ, Satan now hazards all, and throwing off his assumed character, he avows himself the arch-rebel, the ruler of the kingdom of men, the sovereign of the earth. Placing Jesus upon a high mountain, he causes the kingdoms of the earth to pass in panoramic view before the Redeemer. He presents the glory of the world, and promises to put Christ, without suffering or peril, in possession of all its power, if He will but concede that He is inferior to Satan, and bow in homage before him. The life of Christ was darkened by sorrow, privation, hardship, and toil. Homeless and friendless as He was, the mighty kingdoms of earth were offered to Him for a single consideration. To regain the supremacy of the earth, He would have to pass over the blood-stained path through Gethsemane and Calvary; but He dallies not with the tempter. Turning to his adversary, He said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only, shalt thou serve." {BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 4}

Writhing with humiliation and rage, the baffled foe is forced to leave the presence of the world's Redeemer. He cannot withstand the authority of Christ's command, and he is compelled to acknowledge that Christ's victory is as complete as had been Adam's failure. He had endured the test, greater than any man could ever be called upon to endure,--as much greater as his character was more elevated and pure. The angels now ministered to the fainting Son of God. Strengthened with food, comforted with the assurance of his victory and his Father's love, his great heart goes out in sympathy for man, and He determines to go forth to complete the work He has begun, and rest not until the foe is vanquished and the human race redeemed. {BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 5}

The followers of Christ are called upon to share with Him in his sufferings. The confederacy of evil is arrayed against those who would follow in the footsteps of the world's Redeemer. We are to battle with the mighty prince of evil; but the Saviour tells us that we are not to fight alone. All the heavenly intelligences will come to our help. Amid the darkness of the world, we are to catch the radiance from the throne of God, and to shed the light of heaven to the uttermost parts of the earth.

-

{BEcho, November 15, 1892 par. 6}