

Satan's Forty Days

Mark 1: 12, 13; Matt. 3: 16, 17, Matt. 4: 1-11, 23-25; Luke 4: 1-15.

The "Forty Days" of Scripture.

Sixteen Addresses.

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CHAPTER 10 — SATAN'S FORTY DAYS.

TEMPTATION AND DEFEAT; OR, THE STRONG MAN BOUND AND HIS PALACE SPOILED.

I have read the threefold account, which God has been pleased to give us, of the temptation of the Lord Jesus, because, beloved friends, we get in each Gospel some point that is very noticeable, but which the other Evangelists do not record. Matthew gives you the historical sequence of the temptation, while Luke gives you the moral order of events. When we think who it was who was tempted, it well becomes us, with unshod feet, to tread this ground, and with circumcised ear to listen to what God says to us. We have the history here of a Man, a true real Man, vigorously assaulted by the foe of God, as it says: "Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered" (Luke 4: 2). He was forty days and forty nights without food, and then, as you might expect, He was hungry. Then the tempter came, man's tempter, your tempter, my tempter, in that day the tempter of the Lord Jesus. I do not doubt Satan came thinking that he would do with this Man as he had done with the first man he tempted, that is, upset him to his ruin.

We all know that the first man was absolutely conquered, and it is a great thing for you and me to see that we belong to a conquered stock, a conquered race, a stock that has been overcome by the power of the tempter. The first man, I repeat, was absolutely conquered and ruined by the tempter. Here is another Man, the second Man, the last Adam. Why the last? There is no other to come. There are only the first and the last. The first was the parent of the family to which you and I by nature belong. The second Man, the Lord out of heaven, the last Adam here comes before us in all the blessed moral perfection that was His as a dependent and obedient Man; and God permits us to see the victory of Christ, and the downright and complete rout of the devil in the wilderness.

This is grand hearing for sinners, grand hearing for saints, yea, grand tidings for men and women like you and me, who belong to the first man, children of that Adam who was unable to

cope with a foe like Satan. We are permitted to see Jesus, before He comes out into this world to begin His lovely ministry, defeat the enemy absolutely. This is indeed a blessed sight for us, but that is the way the Spirit of God introduces the Lord here, ere He commences His public ministry. The one who had ruined the first man and reduced the earth to misery through sin, to start with, and then brought in corruption and violence, here assumes to put his hand on this blessed, holy Man, but it was only to be defeated absolutely. And mind you the devil tempted Christ just like he tempts you and me. That is, he took Him up on the very point where he thought He was weakest. If Jesus were an hungered — and there was nothing wrong in His being hungry — the question is raised of how to get Himself bread to meet His hunger. But you will see that He defeats the devil by obedience to and dependence on God. And, beloved friend, there is no other way of victory for you or for me but by being in the same path as the Lord Jesus.

But, first of all, see how the Lord is introduced here. He comes out into notice after His baptism by John. Observe what takes place as He is baptized. The Gospel of Luke adds this particular, that He was praying (Luke 3: 21). He was a dependent Man. When baptized He comes up out of the water and the heavens are opened. There are four occasions where you find them opened in the New Testament. They are opened here for God to look down to earth to see a Man in whom He could completely delight. Next they are opened when Stephen looks up and sees that same Man glorified in heaven (Acts 7: 56). The next time is when Peter saw them opened and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, and received up again into heaven. He saw all sorts of four-footed beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air in it (Acts 10: 11, 12). What is the meaning of that? Nothing goes into heaven but what comes out of it. How am I to get there? That is a serious question. If there be not the work of God in my soul and yours, let us not dream of heaven. That is the lesson I get in Acts 10.

And where is the last time the heavens are opened? They have not been opened as yet, but they are going to be opened for the fourth time (see Rev. 19: 11, etc.), for this blessed Man to come out and take possession of all things, to which He has right and title on the ground of what He was personally as the Son of man, and also on the ground of redemption; for He has earned it, as Man, by going into death. He is going to take in this way His world-kingdoms, which the devil proposed in the wilderness to give Him without treading the pathway of suffering, but at the expense of the truth, at the expense of the homage that was due to God, and which the devil has always sought to have rendered to himself. Do you know what took place there? The Lord refused Satan's way at the cost of His life, blessed be His name. He went to death, but that death has delivered us who believe, and enabled Him to associate us with Himself. Thank God, what He refused from the devil's hand that day, is what He is going to come out of heaven for by-and-by, and we shall be with Him in the day of His glory. Ah, friends, there is a grand day coming for the world when Christ gets His rights.

But now, look again at this scene on Jordan's banks. The heavens are opened here, and the Father says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17). For thirty years He had been in retirement at Nazareth, and men had seen nothing of Him. As a child of twelve He was up at Jerusalem and was found in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2: 46). Then for eighteen years God drops a veil upon His life. All we know of that period is this, that when He came out men said, "Is not this

the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark 6: 3). So I conclude that this blessed Son of God, here in human form on earth, wrought with His hands. Let not any one think then that service or toil is a menial thing to be shunned. Toil has been ennobled by the pathway of Christ, even as the grave has been sanctified by the fact that He has gone into it. Ah, beloved friends, wonderful indeed is the pathway of Christ.

And now the thirty years are over, and He comes out. The Father's heart is delighted then to say, as the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, lights upon Him, "This is my beloved Son." In Noah's day the dove went out of the ark but came back because it could not find a resting-place. For four thousand years the Spirit of God had been looking all over the earth to find a sinless man, a man suited to God's heart in every respect, but every man was sinful. No resting-place was found. At length there comes a Man upon whom this Holy Spirit can descend and *abide* (John 1: 32). There is the resting-place the Spirit of God has found, a man suited to God in every spring of His being, every thought of His heart, every act of His life. He came into this world to do the will of God. And you will see how in doing God's will He is preserved, when the enemy comes to Him.

What a joy must it have been to Him to hear the Father's voice saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3: 22). Notice this. People are sometimes troubled about the Trinity. You have it here. "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." Then "a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." There you have the Son, a real, true Man, before your eye. A Man whose only thought was to do the will of God. Beloved friend, have you any doubt about the Trinity? If you have, you will never make progress in your soul as to God's truth. It is not that I find the word in Scripture, but I find the thing. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are each before us in this scene. The Son was come here to make the Father known. And moreover, in the power of the Spirit, He was come to do the work by which man is delivered, as well as Satan absolutely defeated.

Are you not yet clear about the Trinity. It is vital to have the sense of what the Trinity involves, and to rejoice in it. Christ is the revealer of the Father's love. He became incarnate that He might reveal God, redeem man, and absolutely crush and break the power of the enemy. And I want you, my friends, to see that the Man who adorns the throne of God tonight has defeated Satan. I quite admit He has not taken sin out of the world yet, and the devil has power yet over men's minds, but the title to everything is in the hand of Christ. He met Satan in the wilderness and defeated him morally. Then on the cross, and in His death He utterly destroyed his power. And now redemption is accomplished, and Christ is risen, and the consequence is that if you have come into this hall tonight in your sins and in misery, you may go out with the sense that your sins are gone, because the Lord Jesus, when upon the cross, bore the sins of sinners, that He might put them away for ever. And if He has not put them away, He never can do it, and He never will do it. Why? He will not die again. Then you say, What am I to understand? That a work has been done by this blessed Man that enables God to let you know your sins are blotted out. And if you get hold of the truth of redemption as revealed in the cross, you will go on your way, beloved friend, with your heart attached to Christ, and you will seek to do, in your pathway, what He did perfectly in His pathway — the will of God.

I love to hear that voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Perhaps some of you say, Why do we not here get the word "hear him," as on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17? it seems to me that at this part of Christ's life man is being tested, and further, it goes without saying, that everybody ought to hear Him. Should not you hear Him if He be God's Son? I appeal to you from the oldest to the youngest in this hall tonight, ought we not to listen to Him without being told? Yes. And that is the point. At this stage, therefore, the word "hear him" is absent. When we come to Matthew 17 Peter is bungling sadly when he says, "Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17: 4). Moses the Law-giver, Elijah the Reformer, and Jesus, the Son of God, he put on a common level. The Father could not stand that, he swept Moses and Elijah off the scene as a cloud overshadows them, while the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye *him*" (Matt. 17: 5).

This is the day of Jesus. Moses' day has gone by, and so has Elijah's. This is Jesus' day; hear Him. I have heard Him. Have you? I am not going to ask you to come to Christ tonight. But if I can so preach Christ that the effect is that your heart is attracted to Christ, then you will go down that lobby saying, By the grace of God, Christ for me from this night forth. Oh, cling to Him, trust Him, the blessed One who has charmed the heart of God, and defeated the enemy.

Well now, we read, "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" (Luke 4: 1, 2). Now look at the difference between the temptation of Christ, and the temptation of Adam and Eve. They were in Paradise, with everything at their hand that the goodness of God could surround them with, and there they fell. When I come to the Lord Jesus, He is not in Paradise, but in the wilderness, with everything against Him. He is there for forty days.

What a wonderful forty days we see here — the most wonderful forty days that we have in Scripture, at least so far. If Moses went up to the mountain-top, what was it for? To spend "forty days" with God. If Elijah went forty days in the strength of divinely provided food, it was to meet God in the end, and to have wonderful communications from God. Here I find One who had always walked with God, and is now led by the Holy Ghost. He is taken into the wilderness to have forty days of conflict with Satan. This touching and wonderful scene is not recorded in exactly the same words in each scripture. Luke says "Being forty days tempted of the devil." We are not told what the character of that continued temptation was, but the three instances that are named here suffice. The character of the temptation that the blessed Lord sustained at the hand of the enemy during the forty days would seem to have a veil flung over it by God's own hand, but the final assault of the enemy is fully recorded for our profit and encouragement.

After the forty days were ended, Jesus was hungry. Then came the tempter, with four thousand years of experience of how to tempt man. He knows our weak spot. Oh yes. Down in the bottom of every heart there is a little bit of lust after something. To that the devil appeals. Satan knows exactly how to tempt every one of us. With one man it is love of money; with another some fleshly lust, perhaps a glass of whisky. Another man he knows is upon the very verge of a moral precipice, and he will present a lure and drag him over. Satan knows the weak points of every Christian too. I do not think he exactly tempts sinners, but he knows how to work for their downfall. He does tempt the children of God because he knows they have escaped his

grip. Unbelieving sinners he effectually controls, for of such it is written: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them" (2 Cor. 4: 4). So he leads them on to destruction.

And now, look well at Christ, hungry, and note how the enemy assails Him. "And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread" (Luke 4: 3). There are two ways in which you may look at that word "if." Casting a doubt on His relationship to God, or getting Him to act on the fact of that relationship. I think the audacity of Satan is sometimes surprising. He says to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God." That too is the way in which he will seek to upset you. He will with you raise the question whether after all you are a child of God. To the Lord he says here, "If you are really God's Son, command this stone that it be made bread." That is, God has kept you hungry, now then, your opportunity has arrived, take yourself out of God's hand, for you are able to make those stones into bread, and satisfy yourself. No miracle apparently had been wrought by the Lord Jesus up till this moment, but Satan had a true idea of who He was. He sought to upset this blessed One, and to trip Him up in the most plausible way possible.

There is no sin in hunger. It is incidental to man as he passes through this scene. If the Son of God become a Man, and enter into the world where men are, He must at least expose Himself to the vicissitudes of human life. Well, He was hungry. "And now, help yourself," was Satan's suggestion. Oh, hear what Jesus says. He had said before, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40: 7, 8). He was only here to do God's will, hence when Satan says to him, "Command this stone that it be made bread," His answer is very beautiful — "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4: 4). Notice, dear friends, the Lord Jesus not merely quotes Scripture, but He quotes it as Scripture. Mark what He says. He does not merely say, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but "It is written." He had the most profound respect for what God had written. I should like you to notice that, dear friends, because we live in a day when people say the books of Moses are not to be received. They are just human compositions. Know you this, that the answer with which Christ overcame the devil was quoted from one of these books? The first quotation is from Deuteronomy 8, and the other two instances named here are from Deuteronomy 6. Christ puts His emphatic stamp upon Moses' writings over and over again, affirming their authenticity, and that they were God's word.

And now you be warned, you young men, for today the devil is busy casting doubts on Scripture. Some people say the Word of God is not to be relied upon. Look at this blessed One, He should know its value and reliability. All that He ever was He brought into manhood. He was the incarnate Son of God, and therefore, as God, He knew perfectly what was and was not Scripture. He takes the place of dependence, and then He quotes that striking verse which Moses uttered to the children of Israel: "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" (Deut. 8: 3). The devil meets Jesus in the wilderness where Israel had been, and he tempts Him, as he tempted them. His resource is Scripture, the sword of the Spirit, God's Word. He hangs on God's Word. He is here the truly obedient, as well as the absolutely dependent One, and Satan is foiled. How are you and I to meet Satan? Exactly the same way.

We will now pass to the second temptation which Matthew gives. Satan is very wise. He is very crafty. If you foil the enemy once by dependence upon God he will still come back to you. If he does not get in at the front door, he will come again and try to enter by the back door. And what will he come with next time? Very likely a text, since he finds that you believe in Scripture. So is it here. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down" (again notice the "if"): "for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matt. 4: 5, 6). This mangled quotation is taken from Psalm 91, which describes our Lord's pathway as the Messiah. Turn back to it for a moment. See how it starts. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91: 1). It is an oracular description of what Christ would be as Messiah upon earth. He then speaks: "I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress. my God; in him will I trust" (Ps. 91: 2), and indeed Jehovah was His refuge. The Spirit then addresses Messiah thus: "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence" (Ps. 91: 3). If I might so say, here, in this wilderness episode, is the fowler seen spreading a snare.

Further down in the Psalm we read, "Because thou hast made Jehovah which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Ps. 91: 9, 10). And now observe those words: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee *in all thy ways*. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. 91: 11, 12). Satan did not quote the whole of the verse. He left out those four words "*in all thy ways*." Ah, how crafty is the enemy. To the blessed Lord he as it were suggests: "The scripture is plain that that promise applies to You. Now is Your opportunity to show that it does apply to You." He suggests to Him that He should fling Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and thus He would prove that the scripture had its application to Him, and thus make Himself an object of great interest to men.

It is, however, never the way of a saint to put God to the test; so the Lord Jesus says, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," quoting this time Deuteronomy 6: 16. Do I need to put God to the test to know that He loves and cares for me? No. And there is the whole point of this temptation of the Lord. If Satan suggest this text to Him, boldly mis-quoting Scripture, His blessed dependence upon God preserves Him, as He says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." I do not need to put God to the proof.

I do not doubt Satan thought He had got a very strong point here with the blessed Lord, but when the heart is right it is always kept. There was nothing in His heart but a desire to do the will of God, and He was maintained in the most beautiful, perfect trust in God. He says in effect, "There is no need for me to put Him to the test." Blessed, perfect, holy Man, He knew the heart of God. He knew the love of God. He trusted in God. And what was the result at that moment? He is preserved from the snare of the fowler, and the enemy is utterly beaten. And that is the only way you and I can beat the enemy, by confidence in God and the humble use of Scripture, which then becomes the sword of the Spirit, by which the foe of our souls is driven off.

But now there is a third attack recorded. If you have beaten Satan twice, he will come again. A third time he comes to the Lord. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high

mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4: 8, 9). How many a man has fallen down and worshipped Satan for a very little. Have you not noticed that? The god of this world easily deludes men. But here, what was it? Satan proposes to Christ, as he shows Him the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time, and the glory of them, to give them to Him if He will fall down and worship him. You know that men like glory, power, and authority. Christ, however, is the only One who is worthy of these; hence in the Book of Revelation, they are, in the songs thereof, ascribed to Him alone. All that men set so much stress upon, but which they generally use to their own self-exaltation, heaven's voice, by-and-by, is heard in one blessed note, one universal strain, ascribing to Jesus, as they say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5: 12). That is to say, other men's hands have held those things and abused them; but finally the universal judgment is that there is but one hand worthy of holding the sceptre of power, and it is the hand of the Man that first overcame Satan in the wilderness, and then was nailed to the cross to atone for sin and save sinners. It is our joy to anticipate that day and say now that His is the only hand that is worthy to hold the sceptre of authority and power.

But look at the craft of the enemy as he endeavours to turn the Lord aside. He seeks to get for himself that which is due to God, the Creator. Satan is a creature, but here he seeks to get for himself what belongs to God alone. Each temptation reveals some peculiar beauty in Jesus. In plain language, if I get *obedience* evinced in the first temptation, and *dependence* marking the second, it seems to me in the third that you get the most beautiful unfolding of the *fidelity* of His heart to God. Man is to worship God alone, therefore He says, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4: 10). And what does Satan do? He leaves Him. Observe this, he is overcome; he is foiled; he is defeated.

It is important to notice the different order of the three temptations as recorded by Matthew and Luke. As I have already said, Matthew gives us the historical, and Luke the moral order. The historical order shows that when the Lord bids Satan depart he *obeys* His word and leaves Him. As Luke presents this wondrous scene, however, the temptation on the mountain top comes second, and, as it now reads, in our ordinary English Bible, has this ugly appearance, that Satan stood his ground and did not go when so bidden of the Lord. This is not the case, and you should know, if you do not already possess the information, that what the Spirit of God records by the pen of Luke in verse 8 of his third chapter is this, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 3: 8.)

Carefully observe that the words "Get thee behind me, Satan," are *not* there. Evidently in copying the ancient manuscripts some scribe judged that the previous copyist had omitted in Luke the words, "Get thee hence, Satan," which do occur rightly in Matthew 3: 10. This supposed error was sought to be corrected by the careless insertion of the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," which occur in Matthew 16: 23, and are addressed to Peter. Having thus crept into the text, they remained, and are found in our otherwise very correct English version of the Scriptures. Read the passage, however, as God wrote it by Luke, and all is comely, for no command is given to Satan to depart, and the following temptation comes in its moral order, void of the ugly appearance I have indicated.

But you may ask — What do you mean by moral order? I mean the order in which Satan's temptations usually reach us, as they reached Eve at first, and all the world since. It is written, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food" (the lust of the flesh), "and that it was pleasant to the eyes" (the lust of the eye), "and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (the pride of life), "she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3: 6). The order here is akin to Luke's account of the Lord's temptations, and exactly what the Spirit of God elsewhere thus describes: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2: 16). Poor world! Its composition is after all only twofold, lust and pride. *Lust* is seeking what I do not possess, *pride* is self-exaltation on account of what I do possess. These principles form and actuate the world — away from God.

Now in Jesus there was nothing of this, so when Satan sought to move Him in regard to the bread, which in us would appeal to "the lust of the flesh," he was foiled. Again, "the lust of the eyes" He was absolutely free from, and though He sees the kingdoms of the earth they attract Him not. Further, to fling Himself from the temple parapet, be unhurt, and become an object of admiration and interest, presented no charm to Him, for "the pride of life," which might easily lead us to act on similar lines, had no place in His being. Blessed, perfect, lowly, dependent, obedient Man that He was, to do God's will was His meat and drink, and in doing it He escaped the fowler's snare, and utterly defeated the enemy of God and man. May we all remember that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2: 17).

Jesus is seen here as the moral Conqueror of that malign being who has upset every man but Himself. By dependence and obedience He has, however, utterly defeated and routed him. When Jesus at length at the end of the forty days' temptation said, "Get thee hence, Satan," he obeyed and departed from Him. Ah, but that is Christ, you say. Yes. But do not you forget this scripture, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7). Christian, get hold of this, Satan is a beaten and defeated foe. You and I could not overcome him, but the Lord did, and He shares His victory with us.

And now we read, "And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4: 11). To me there is a great charm about this. That wilderness scene angels had watched with the deepest interest. They had seen a Man that would not relieve Himself at the expense of the character of God; and when the testing time was fully over and Satan utterly routed, angels came and ministered to Him. I do not know what they brought in their hands, but they ministered to Him. Oh yes, but that was Christ, you again say. True, but do not forget that we read of angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1: 14). I think, beloved friends, we have little idea of how much we are the objects of angelic ministry.

Have you ever noticed how they figure in the Gospels in relation to Christ? They predict His incarnation (Luke 1: 30-33). They come and tell of His birth (Luke 2: 9-12). In the moment of His victory over Satan, angels have the pleasure of bringing to Him that which suited Him at that moment (Mark 1: 13). He is strengthened by them in the hour of His deepest sorrow in Gethsemane (Luke 22: 43). They roll back the stone from the door of His tomb, sit thereon, and

then Announce His resurrection (Matt. 28: 2; John 20: 12). And when He comes again to earth they will be His happy attendants (Matt. 16: 27; 2 Thess. 1: 7).

Let me now say one word to you, in passing, with regard to Satan. I hear some say that Satan is not a person. I do not believe in the personality of Satan, you say. Perhaps you do not. But you forget this, that the very thing that would delight him best of all is that you should not believe in him. If you believed in him you would be afraid of him. I will ask you a question: Do you believe in the personality of Christ? Oh yes, of course I do; Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour. And you hope to be saved by Him? Yes. What kind of a Christ must you have to save you? He must be a sinless man, that is certain. I agree with you. Now, let me ask you another question. What is Satan, then, if he have no personality? Do you reply, as many others today — Satan is the proclivity to evil which is found in man's heart. That is plain, at least. Satan is not a being who can trip men up? No! Satan, forsooth, is the tendency to evil in man's own heart. Now, then, you tell me you must have a perfect Saviour. True, but I want you to notice that if you get rid of a personal devil, you get rid at the same time of a personal Saviour. They both go together. How is that?

You tell me that the devil is only the proclivity in a man's heart to evil. There will be sin coupled with that. I read that Christ was tempted of the devil. Had He any proclivities to evil? Oh no, you exclaim. How, then, was He tempted of the devil? If Christ was tempted of the devil, and the devil be the proclivity to evil in a man's own heart, then He must have had such, for Scripture affirms that He was tempted of the devil. Do you see, my friend, where you are? You have a Christ before your mind with proclivities to evil in His heart. If that were true He would not be perfect, and He would not be a truly holy man. God forgive me for saying the words. But I am only showing you where your false and hell-born ideas as to Satan are taking you. Their issue is the complete destruction of Christ as a possible Saviour, because He must have a fallen nature to have proclivities to evil in His heart — since out of it are the issues of life. That man cannot save me who has such a nature. A Christ with any proclivities to evil in His heart could not meet my case nor yours. No, my friend, by your casuistry and infidelity you have swept the devil and Christ off the scene together, and you have left yourself where you are, a sinner in your sins, and on your road to hell, and when you get there you will find that there is a devil, who will be your companion for eternity.

But further, I press on you that there is a Christ, whom, if you go on in your present sad and awful condition, you will never meet but once, and that to get at His hands the judgment you have earned. Ah, my friends, you may say, I do not believe in judgment. Satan is clever enough to keep you from believing that too. There are plenty of men who say, "Did God prepare hell for men?" No, He did not. "And did God prepare eternal fire for men?" No. The Lord Jesus will yet say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25: 41). But do you not see, that if you will not have the company of God's Man for eternity, you must have the company of God's foe for eternity? If you are not going to spend it with Christ, through faith in His blood, and through faith in His name, if you are not going to spend it with the One who defeated the devil, and the One who loves to deliver and save you, you will spend it with the one who has deceived you. The first and last acts of Satan are identical — deceiving men. (See 1 Tim. 2: 14; Rev. 20: 3, 8-10.) My friend, better far wake up to the truth now. Better far take your place as a poor, good-for-nothing, ruined, undone sinner, and let this

blessed Son of God, this Man who is the Victor over Satan, bless and save you. How will He do it? Follow His history, and you will soon learn.

I find now in the end of the fourth chapter of Matthew that Satan being overcome, Christ comes out to bless and deliver man: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4: 23). In plain language, He fulfils that striking verse found in Luke's Gospel. There the Lord Jesus says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil" (Luke 11: 21, 22). And what is the meaning of that? Satan is the strong man, and he is armed with everything that can encircle and hold his vassal — man. This strong man keeps his palace. His armour is the knowledge he has of the weakness of man, a weapon which he has well learned to use in upsetting and overcoming man. His palace is the world. His goods are sinners. And while he holds them thus, they are in peace. You were never in anxiety about your soul? Never. You have been in peace all your days. You do not believe in Satan. Not you. You are just an illustration of the truth.

Well, who is the stronger Man? This blessed One I have been telling you of. He overcame Satan, and bound him morally in the wilderness. He took all his armour from him. Christ has gone into the devil's camp of set purpose, hence we read, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8). He has come here to refute the devil's lie that God did not love men. God is love, and He has given His own Son to death for us, at a great cost.

When the devil left Christ in the wilderness, we are told by Luke that it was "for a season" (Luke 4: 13). Another time Satan crossed His path in the garden of Gethsemane. Regarding that attack the blessed Lord said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14: 30). He had met Him once before, and been defeated by Him. But unabashed, he came to Him again in the garden. Then he evidently pressed on Him the awful consequences of His pathway if He would go on, even death. What was Christ's action? We read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from (or out of) death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5: 7). His agony was so deep then, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22).

Doubtless Satan then suggested to Him to pause and not drink that cup, for it would cost Him His life, and the forsaking of God. He looked into the cup and measured its contents. It was all God's judgment against sin. If He drank it He must be forsaken of God, and be cast off, upon the cross. Not merely was it the physical suffering and sorrow that man could give Him, as they nailed Him to the tree, but the inevitable sense that God and He must part company. Hence as He looked at that cup, He said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." He knew that if He did not drink that cup of judgment upon the cross, you and I would have to drink it in eternity. If He did not drink the cup in our room and stead, there was no deliverance, no salvation, no pardon, no cleansing, possible for you and me. As He looked at that cup He shrank from it in all the perfect holiness of His being, and

depreciated it with the utmost intensity. Then He took it, and drank it to the very dregs in the perfection of His love. Blessed Saviour! Well may each redeemed one cry, Hallelujah, I am saved; I am saved by His death. We are saved because He drank God's cup of wrath, to the very dregs, so that He, in tender love and divine righteousness, might put the cup of God's salvation into our hands, and press it to our lips. May we not joyfully say, "What hath God wrought?"

Nor is this all. He died to save us, He now lives to succour us. "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" (Heb. 4: 15). What is that? just what we have been considering — the temptation in the wilderness. And now He is able to succour us. "For in that he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2: 18). He is able to save, He is able to succour, and He is able to sympathise (Heb. 4: 15). Note well the passage "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 25). What is the meaning thereof? That blessed, great high priest, now at God's right hand, understands perfectly all the pathway of the Christian here. He has gone through it Himself. He took up all our sorrows in His life that He might sympathise, and He took up all our sins in His death that He might save. Now on high He can succour and deliver His people absolutely. Hebrews 4: 15 alludes to the temptation in the wilderness, and Hebrews 5: 7 gives us the agony in the garden, as He looked at the cup, shrank from it, and then drank it.

With Him, then, it was "prayers and supplications." Do you know what the apostle connects with prayer and supplication for us? "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by *prayer and supplication* WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4: 6). Thank God. Christ's prayers and supplications were coupled with strong cryings and tears, ours are to be coupled with thanksgivings, for His death and resurrection have brought us into peace, liberty, and rest before God.

And now, let me again ask, who would not have this blessed One as Saviour, Lord, and Friend? Who would not seek to follow Him? He is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, for He has overcome Satan and spoiled his goods. Fellow-Christian, you and I were once servants and slaves of the devil. But what has happened? The Lord has picked us up, saved us and cleansed us, filled our hearts with peace and joy, and given us the privilege of telling other people of Himself.

What a wonderful thing is the grace that picks up the vessels of Satan's power, delivers and cleanses them, and then deposits in them some spiritual gift by which others may be helped. Christ ascended on high that He might send down the Holy Ghost with the glorious news which, when believed, delivers sinners from Satan's power, and brings them from darkness to light. And there is the value of preaching. The preacher goes out and tells the simple tidings of the love of Jesus and the value of His blood. Any one that believes and decides for Him, God will give His Spirit to, and very likely make him the means of blessing to somebody else. That is the way the gospel spreads. First of all you receive the gospel yourself, and then constrained by His love you go and tell others what Jesus has done for you. Like the man whose eyes Jesus opened, you can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9: 25). Who wrought this

marvel? Jesus. My hearer, believe in Jesus, and then go home and tell your friends: "I have found the Lord. I am delivered. I am set free. His blood has washed all my sins away."

Now, the gospel is not only that Christ has overcome Satan morally when tempted in the wilderness, but that He has gone right down into death, and there destroyed his power. Further, He has risen triumphant, and the devil knows it well. As a consequence there is peace for you. You learn to know a risen, triumphant Christ at God's right hand. The Man who overcame Satan morally in the wilderness — while He was on His way back to God's right hand — has on the road carved the pathway for me to accompany Him, and has opened the doorway right up to God's presence through His death and resurrection. As He died He said, "It is finished." When He rose, He said, "Peace unto you." The Holy Ghost has now come down to tell us that the Victor is in the glory. And the man that believes in Him shares His victory, and enters into the spoils of His conquest.

If you have never before made up your mind for Christ, surely you will believe Him and confess Him tonight. Then you can joyfully go through this world and say: "Come, see a Man that has overcome Satan, borne all my sins, saved me for ever, and now fills my heart with peace and joy. His name is Jesus." If this be the case, God will make you the means of blessing to others. May He grant it for His name's sake.