

How to Treat Temptation

The following are extracts from one of the last addresses delivered by the late Dr. A. T. Pierson.

I presume that the great majority of you do not expect to overcome temptation always, and perhaps not even in the majority of cases. The lethargy and apathy to sin, among even disciples of Christ is, to my mind, one of the most appalling things that I meet in daily life. Now, I do not ask to know your attitude, but I want you to say in your hearts whether you passed yesterday without any known sin. How many of you can say to God, I have walked before God in righteousness today? That ought to be the history of every day.

There is no such thing as sinless perfection in this world, because at best we shall always leave a great deal undone; and the thought is that, as we grow in grace and knowledge of God, we come to see things as sins that before we thought of, at best, as doubtful, and things doubtful that we used to consider as entirely proper. One of the greatest marks of spiritual growth is that your sensibilities become keener to detect what is wrong, what is questionable. But I believe it is an atrocious thing to do a known sin under any circumstances. To fall into sin because you are overwhelmed by some sudden temptation, the power of which you do not realize perhaps, of the presence of which you are not aware, is one thing. But deliberately to go into sin against God is another, one of the most paralyzing things in your life. It destroys all power of prayer, it disqualifies you for proper witness, and it makes impossible a holy service.

It is no wonder that you do not serve God acceptably and do not have personal intimacy with God when you allow yourself to commit a known sin. Her pastor once wrote Miss Havergal and asked her if she had ever passed a day without conscious sin, and she wrote back: "No, I never have." "Now," he said, "you pray that the Lord will keep you this day without sin. What is the use to pray this prayer if you do not expect it to be answered? I suggest that you undertake, in the strength of God, to see if you cannot pass one day without sin." That was a turning point in Frances Ridley Havergal's life, and from that time she passed many days without any known sin against God.

ESCAPING AND ENDURING.

In the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, you find the remarkable discussion of temptation, and in James; but they do not cover the same ground. That in the tenth of First Corinthians is about escaping temptation, and the other is about enduring temptation. Now look at them for a moment. First, 1 Corinthians 10:13:

make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it."

Now turn to James 1:12-14, and let us get his testimony about enduring temptation:

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed."

Temptation, then, is the common experience of human beings. It is absolutely impossible naturally to escape it. As long as we are in the world we shall meet it. It will come from the world, from the flesh, from the devil. The subtlest of our foes is the self-life. You cannot expect to escape, but there is no necessity of your being overcome by it as a child of God. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Now, inasmuch as there is a community of temptation, and you cannot miss it, here is

THE FIRST ENCOURAGEMENT.

God is faithful. It does not say God is merciful, or God is gracious. Faithful is a word of obligation, and the idea is there of the obligation on the part of God to stand by the tempted soul. Isn't that magnificent, that the moment you take your stand against temptation, the whole Godhead is behind you, and there can be no temptation too great, because no temptation can be greater than God? And He is faithful to you. He will stand by you. He regards Himself as under obligation not to allow you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. Here is for us a definite teaching that whenever we are tempted there is a way of escape, which God in His fidelity has provided. Look for the way of escape and go in it.

Let us pass over to the other passage: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Why? Because when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. Not every disciple will be crowned. There will be millions who will be saved and not crowned. If you are defeated you will not be crowned. If your life is one of disaster and discipline, you may be saved, but you will just enter heaven, saved, as it were, from a burning building, but without coronation.

THE STEPS DOWN.

What is the first step down? It is parleying with temptation. The second step down is committing a sinful act, whatever it may be. You have the impulse to say something unkind, and you do it. The third step down is to repeat a sin. It is easier to repeat. It is becoming habitual. The fourth step down is to get yourself so under the power of sin that you no longer attempt to resist, but let yourself go—as the Lord says, "giving yourselves over to uncleanness." The next step is God's abandonment of you

to the sin which you have abandoned yourself to. See the first chapter of Romans: "God gave them over," etc. Judicial abandonment never comes until there has been individual abandonment, but usually follows individual abandonment. The next step down, you become the agent of Satan. If you are a drunkard, you teach others; if you are a blasphemer, you teach others to blaspheme. The next step is hell, and it may come in this life.

STEPS UP.

What are the steps up? The first is your attitude, "I will not do this sin against God;" turning your face Godward. The second step is the habit of overcoming. The next step up is the sense of freedom from the power of the sin, the sense of liberty, the liberty of grip that heathenism has upon the people. It is the religion of their fathers, and appeals to the fleshly nature, as the Apostle Paul said: "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," and Satan will exhaust every effort to prevent his subjects from hearing the gospel.

3. The greatest hindrance of all is the indifference of the church. Part of this can be explained on account of ignorance. The facts have never been properly presented and the people thoroughly informed as to the ~~hed~~; but the chief ~~reason~~ can be.—*Bible Magazine*.

If we would be much like Christ, we must be much with Him. If we would become transformed into His image, thoroughly made over so as to be hardly recognizable for the same, we must "with unveiled face" and unclosed eye and untiring mind and uncorrupted will tarry in His presence and look long at His glory. There is no other method. We come thus to take His point of vision in our perception of things; we acquire His habit of mind; we catch His tone; we reflect His views; we adopt His policy; we unconsciously imitate His ways. His words sink into our soul; His plans take possession of us; His very glances inspire us; His inmost purposes become our own, and, scarcely conscious of the process, without knowing when or how, we find ourselves merged into His being, copies of His character. It is somewhat thus that a devoted wife comes in time closely to resemble her husband even in face, a son the revered father, a student that adored instructor. It is not a process that can be very much hurried. Some plates are more sensitive than others to such impression. Our part is to cultivate the sensitiveness and see that there is no intermission in the exposure. Given time enough, to gether with steadfast resolution and a vigorous use of every available means, and the results are both sure and amazing.—*Pittsburg Christian Advocate*.

Prayers are heard in heaven very much in proportion to our faith. Little faith will get very great mercies, but great faith still greater.—*Spurgeon*.

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J. O. McCLURKAN EDITOR
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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR IN ADVANCE

EDITORIAL

AS THEY WENT THEY WERE CLEANSED. LUKE 17:14.

Blessed in obedience these ten lepers were healed as they went to show themselves unto the priest. There was nothing in the mere act of going to work such a miracle but they were blessed in obedience. Just as Naaman was when he dipped himself seven times in the Jordan. Six times would have not been sufficient, because seven was commanded. There was nothing in the water to perform such a cure. The virtue lay in doing what the Prophet said. Doing is not the basis of salvation. Being good must precede doing good. Salvation by works is the heathen idea, but works must follow if we maintain a Christian life. Salvation is a gift, but the measure of the reward depends upon faithfulness in service. Just the other day a good woman said to us: I once had a glorious experience but I neglected my duty, didn't take sufficient time for Bible study and prayer, the cares of home absorbed me and I am not where I used to be spiritually. This is an old story. We hear it on every hand. People drift because they are not true to God. There is a leakage in their joy and dryness and barrenness of spirit follows.

As they went they were blessed. The path of obedience is freighted with blessing. "The obedient soul shall be made fat." They grow up as calves of the stall.

We are too often looking for extraordinary manifestations, rather than for the blessing that accompanies the quiet performance of duty.

The extraordinary in its very nature is only occasional. And the bulk of life's du-

ties lies in the sphere of the ordinary, if we maintain a strong healthy spirituality it must be in little things. The blessing hinges upon the performance of duty. Most people live in a convicted state. They are chronic cripples through neglected duty instead of going on in obedience and being triumphant. They lay by the wayside and bring forth little or no fruit to perfection.

Hear the words of Jesus: If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will make our abode with him, John 14:23. Clouds of blessings are just above, ready for a great downpour on the obedient soul.

Ah, here is the secret of the prevalent indifference among professing Christians. They are not true to the heavenly vision. They will not walk in the light. They refuse to go, and hence they are not blessed.

If those who wear the name of Christ, would do as the lepers, they too would experience a mighty quickening of spirit, but they seem to forget that the blessing is conditional upon obedience. We saw a man get shouting happy the other day just because he made up his mind to give up an old grudge that he held against another. One of these fellows given to curious questioning, said to his pastor, where is heaven? The minister, well knowing the brother's delinquencies, replied, I can tell you how you can have your question answered: There is a family over yonder in which the breadwinner has been down for weeks with typhoid fever; hitch your horses to the wagon, load it up with what they need in the way of provisions, take it to them, and when you have unloaded in their kitchen, then go and offer prayer at the bedside of the sick, and your questions will be answered. He did it and returned with heavenly raptures thrilling his soul. As he went he was blessed. Oh, if people would only go as bidden by the Master what mighty transformations would occur.

If instead of looking for blessings in some unusual or abnormal way, they would maintain the habit of obedience they would discover the secret of abiding in the Lord, and their lives would flow on with a perennial freshness, "always abounding in the work of the Lord." God is in the stars, but it is our duty to walk with him rather in the performance of daily duties. Our place of service is here for the present. Hence our blessing is here as an old saint quaintly put it when interrogated as to the discharge of some duty, he said, I must be there for it is the place where the blessing falls. Most of life is occupied with the common place. The Kingdom of Heaven cometh not with outward show. It is in grace as in nature. The mightiest forces are noiseless. Opportunities make no outcry. The great crises come and go silently. The highest thing speaks only in gentle tones. Could some angel write in burning letters across the face of the sky the tremendous opportunities that we are passing heedlessly by we might listen

for a moment, but soon the novelty would be gone, and the same stolid indifference would again assert itself.

There is only one royal road to blessing, one secret of continuous victory; and that is in doing whatsoever He sayeth.

The method of blessing varies, but the conditions never. The lepers didn't stop to inquire how they were to be healed; they simply went as he told them, and, lo! they soon found themselves perfectly cured. The Lord Jesus was working in harmony with law when he said, "go show yourself to the priest," and they were working in obedience to law when they were blessed.

Reader, whatsoever He sayeth unto you, do it. Live in the center of divine will, neglect no duty, however small; do not shrink or postpone it, but go, and as the case of these in olden times, you will be blessed.

WEARY IN WELL DOING.

"Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." It was said of Christ that He should not fail nor be discouraged until He had set judgment in the earth. A sustained effort requires a constant supply of strength; the hidden fires must be kept burning, if the life is unctious daily nutriment must be provided if vigorous service is maintained; half starved horses cannot pull well; neither can ill-fed Christians work well.

Weariness in well doing may result from a number of causes, some of which we mention:

1. The worker has no root himself; he didn't get a good start; he entered the race without considering the distance, and enlisted for the war without counting the cost; and when testings came he fell away because he had not root in himself.

2. People weary in well doing who walk by sight rather than by faith; they want to see something going on. When the results of their labors are visible they are in an exultant mood. But when it is theirs to prepare the soil and sow the seed, with not even a tiny bud in sight, they become discouraged. Ah! how little we know what we are doing, and what poor judges we are of results. Sometimes we call ill good and good ill; our greatest blessings come to us amid the thickest shadows. "All these things are against me," exclaimed Jacob, when his sons had returned from Egypt and reported the status of things there. He judged by appearances, and they who thus do, will often be cast down when they should be rejoicing. Instead of everything being against him, God, in a most marvelous way, was turning all to his advantage, and just ahead of him lay one of the most joyous experiences of his long and varied life.

All discouragement is of the devil and results from not walking by faith. We may see or we may not see, it matters not—God is true, and no service rendered Him will fail. The *seemings* are often against us; it looks at times as if we were accomplishing nothing, but we should press steadily onward, neither unduly elated or depressed, "knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Inner decay—a decline in things spiritual—cause us to weary in well doing, but loss of spiritual vigor is followed by a corresponding decline in spiritual effort. We must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" if we "do exploits" for Him. Weaklings are soon exhausted; babes cannot do the work of adults; the majority of those who wear the name of Christ are sickly, and spend most of their time in the hospital. They haven't the soul health essential for strenuous and continual service; they soon weary in well doing.

Weariness in the work of the Lord will only cease when they learn to walk in the Spirit. The sad failure of so many to go farther in service than that rendered by mere infancy in Christ is the cause of the deplorable state of things so prevalent among professing Christians. Like children, they soon grow weary and quit.

An old gentleman arose in a meeting and said he hoped that in the revival which they were contemplating a great number would be born into the family of God. Whereupon, a deeply spiritual woman said: "If any more children are born into this church I don't know where we would put them; every cradle in the church now has a baby in it." Ah! that's the trouble—cradles full of babies, ten, twenty, thirty and forty-year-old babies, who must be nursed and in every way cared for, thus consuming the time of the spiritual minded.

Weariness in well doing is prevented by daily walking with God. It is a spiritual defect, and can only be remedied by building up the spiritual health. Mere beating and slashing the church around will not do; they must be fed, until they "grow up as calves of the stall," and become "fat and flourishing in the courts of our Lord."

4. A misapprehension of God's purpose for the age may cause us to weary in well doing. "We are now in a turning point in human history, and it is of more critical importance than in centuries." These words need to be borne home upon the heart and imagination of the church of God. We are confronting an awakening of untold millions of mankind, a renaissance incomparably greater than reformation, which convulsed Europe, passing over the world; and the fact of this expressible solemnity and of thrilling wonder is this, that the plastic, malleable stage of the waking nations

A grasp on the plan of the ages—understanding at least something of God's purposes for this age—is a wonderful encouragement to us. The weary centuries have dragged along, and yet, comparatively speaking, only a few have bowed the knee to Christ, but we are toiling on in joyous expectancy that by and by the work of witnessing will be accomplished and that the dispensation will change; the Lord will return. Satan will be

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HOUR OF FORE

BY R. H. BOLL.

Glory to God! What a privilege to have part in such a work! It stirs us to the very depths and inspires every effort. We are a part in a wondrous plan, and instead of the Lord's service being wearisome, how we should delight in living at a time like this, and assisting in the out-gathering of the blood-washed army, preparatory for the coming of the King, followed by the millennial reign and then the age of universal righteousness, when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4.) Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him, in grace without spot and blameless. (2 Pet. 3:13, 14.)

THE MISSIONARY PROBLEM.

It is a problem, and a gigantic one at that! But the difficulties are not insuperable. The command is to preach the gospel to every creature, and despite all obstacles, it can and should be done.

Before undertaking to build a tower it is well to sit down and count the cost, lest we should begin and not be able to finish. It is never safe to underestimate the strength of an enemy. Hence, let us take a brief survey of the difficulties in the way of world-wide evangelism.

1. The vast numbers to be reached. In round numbers, a thousand million are yet without the gospel. This means that every hour three thousand souls pass out into eternity without ever knowing of Christ; 80,000 a day; 30,000,000 a year. These figures are too large for us to comprehend, as many as nearly half the population of the United States passing into eternity from heathen countries every year. Nearly 200,000 new missionaries would be required to furnish one to every 5,000 of the population. The children of India, 117,000,000 in number, would, if stood in line, girdle the entire globe. India's women, 145,000,000 strong, many in bondage far worse than African

slavery ever was; Africa's 150,000,000, under the devil's most cruel oppression; South America's 50,000,000 cursed with Romanism; China's 430,000,000, and the isles of the sea with their vast population, all in deep, dark need, appeal for help.

2. Difficult to reach:

Climatic hindrances. Numbers wear out in a few years. The deadly fevers of India and Africa have cut off many a promising missionary, while the constant strain of the climate has prematurely worn out others. Difficult languages to be mastered—it takes years to do it.

In numerous places very poor facilities for training.

Oftentimes hostility on the part of those who most need the truth, and the tremendous grip that heathenism has upon the people. It is the religion of their fathers, and appeals to the fleshly nature, as the Apostle Paul said: "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," and Satan will exhaust every effort to prevent his subjects from hearing the gospel.

3. The greatest hindrance of all is the indifference of the church. Part of this can be explained on account of ignorance. The facts have never been properly presented and the people thoroughly informed as to the need; but the chief reason for the neglect is due to a lack of spiritual life. People are self-centered and worldly. Their range of vision is narrow and their conception of duty very low. They have never been worked up. What do they care about the needs of these myriads of people? Oh, perhaps they care a little in a sort of general way, but they have never been stirred to the depths and wholly devoted to the Lord, else the state of things would have been very different from the present.

They set a worldly standard for their children. Very few would ever be willing for them to become missionaries. When Japanese parents lost a son in the recent war with Russia, their neighbors are said to have rejoiced with them in being thus honored in giving their sons for the defense of their country, but in a Christian country where God lays His hand upon a son or daughter to enlist for the war against Satan in heathen lands, they are often met with a decided "no" on the part of their parents; and the whole neighborhood is aroused at the thought of so and so wasting his life in any such a way. Like Esau, they put the emphasis on things material rather than spiritual. The people prefer to see their children famous lawyers, doctors, or merchants, rather than missionaries; in fact, it would be considered a real misfortune on the part of many if one of their children should take such a step.

How can we expect young people who have been reared in such a grossly material atmosphere as this to see the importance of missionary work. To get them to the field one has to run across the current of all previous training.

Again, the old plea, "We have so much to do at home," is the excuse rendered by many for their failure to share in the work abroad, but, as a rule, those who give most to the foreign mission work also give most to the home work. At any rate, we have no right to consume our efforts on the home land. Here we often see a half dozen churches in one little town, struggling to keep their heads above water, when three would do the work and let the effort expended on the others be given to the heathen. Sectism should never be allowed to hinder in the work of missions. It is not at all necessary for every denomination to establish a foothold in every town and country place. It is a needless waste of both money and men, which are needed far more elsewhere, and the point of the greatest need is the place where we should first work. Sad indeed that selfish rivalries should cause us to rear altar against altar at home, while those in the regions beyond have none at all.

Folks have really made themselves believe that they are not able to support missions. Never was such an assertion made with less reason. We could if we would. There are dollars spent for needless luxuries while cents are given for missions. Even a little thing like chewing gum gets four times as many nickles and dimes as the great missionary cause. As trivial a thing as the buttons on ladies' kid gloves cost more than is devoted to missions. There is eight or ten times as much spent for finger rings as there is given to missions. If people would give as much as a two-cent postage stamp a day it would increase the missionary offering at least twelve-fold. Think of it! Those who claim to have been redeemed by the blood of Christ; to be on their way to heaven; not interested enough in His work to give two cents per day that a thousand million people may have the same wonderful gospel. Is it not plain that there is something radically wrong?

A systematic method would work wonders. Those who do contribute do so at irregular intervals, whereas if they would lay by so much a week, they themselves would be greatly surprised at the amount given by the end of the year. We have seen this demonstrated in the congregation here. The people are mostly poor, but they make their offerings regularly, and the aggregate is large enough to support several missionaries. If all congregations could be put on a similar basis, we could evangelize the world in the next few years. What a shame they will not do it.

This state of apathy on the part of the church means prayerlessness. They are not watching with Christ. They have no wrestling in prayer that workers may be thrust out according to the command of our Lord. They are not stirred themselves. How can they expect to stir others? To state the case plainly, missions is neither in their mind nor on their heart. They feel no burden of responsibility for this great work. Why should they be bothered about it? They are absorbed by their own selfish interest.

There are a few noble spirits here and there who are deeply interested and are working with might and main that those who have sat in darkness may have the light. All honor to them. May their number be greatly increased.

But take professing Christians, as a whole,

and they are inexcusably indifferent to the sacred trust committed to them. They ignore the responsibility the Master has laid upon them. They are blinded by the god of this world, and are at ease in Zion. They will never be otherwise unless awakened by the Holy Spirit. To this end let us pray.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

PRAYER ILLUMINES.

How often has light flashed in upon us as we prayed. Knee work can solve many problems that lie beyond the ken of head work. How often have we been muddled, confused, perplexed, harassed and burdened when we could get alone with God and an hour of prayer would clear up matters so wonderfully that we have felt almost as if we were on wings. Andrew Murray, writing on this subject, says:

I know not how I can plead with sufficient earnestness to urge God's children to make their private devotions a means for cultivation of clearer insight into what God is absolutely willing to do for us.

There is a life awaiting us prepared by God Himself, and waiting to be revealed in us by the Holy Spirit, if we are only ready to know and confess how very much there is lacking in our spiritual life.

Let us but take two simple truths in regard to the Holy Spirit, as our guide, the one, that the church of today is characterized by the feeble workings of the Holy Spirit. The other, that in God's Word there is promised us the mighty workings of God's Spirit in the heart of His children.

When we take our place on the one side, in the penitent confession of how little we have honored the Holy Spirit. The other, that in God's Word there is promised us the mighty working of God's Spirit in the heart of His children.

When we take our place on the one side, in the penitent confession of how little we have honored the Holy Spirit, and how little lived up to what He is willing to work in us, we shall find our hearts drawn out to a new and larger faith in the mighty workings of the Spirit which God has promised.

Our devotions each day may become a step out of the human standard we have been content with, and an ever increasing entrance into a life in the Spirit, which God has surely provided, and will so certainly make true to us."

REDEEMING THE TIME.

Time is too precious a thing to kill. Alas, how much of it is wasted in thoughtless, needless, hurtful conversation, idleness and neglect. A careful use of time will enable one to do so much more good. There are many who waste time enough to accomplish a great deal of good. The following is to the point:

"The time is short." Every hour is blood-bought. And while we must be free from all anxious suspense and unnatural strain, yet one cannot afford to be careless or off guard for a single hour. We are on the battlefield. We are in the race course. The prize is before. The great day is approaching. The enemy is active. "Be ye sober and watch unto prayer." "Instant in prayer." Everything is sacred, nothing secular. We need to be faithful in season, out of season; observing regular order and times of prayer and also sometimes turning social calls into prayer-circles. A little more love to Jesus, — a little keener appreciation of His worth; and it can be done, and the duty will be a delight. Surely the need is great enough and He is worthy. "Everything is prayer."

PRAYING EARLY.

"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord" (Ps. 5:3).

Robert McCheyne was one of the most devout men that Scotland ever produced. He died quite young, but such was his seraphic piety that he made a more profound impression upon the Church in the few brief years of his ministry than many do in a half century. He was a man of prayer, and it is said that his people would get under conviction by just the manner in which he walked up the aisle of his church. Speaking of prayer on a certain occasion, he said:

I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ arose before day and went into a solitary place. David says, "Early will I seek thee." "Thou shalt early hear my voice." Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness, and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then when in earnest prayer, the soul is often out of tune. I feel it is far better to begin with God—to see His face first, to get my soul near Him before it is near another.