

A TEMPTED SAVIOR—OUR BEST SUCCOR NO. 487

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 4, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted,
He is able to succor them who are tempted.”
Hebrews 2:18.*

MY text, furnishing the motto for the congregation for the New Year is, as you know, always supplied to me by a most venerable clergyman of the Church of England who has always showed to me the most constant and affectionate regard. I have no doubt that the present text has been suggested to this aged servant of the Lord by his deep experience at once of affliction and deliverance; for there he has learned his need of solid, substantial food—fat things full of marrow, fit for the veteran warriors of the cross. Having been tempted these many years in the wilderness, my esteemed friend finds that, as his natural strength decays, he needs more and more to cast himself upon the tenderness of the Redeemer’s love; and he is led more fully to look to Him who is his only help and succor in every day of trouble, finding consolation alone in the person of Christ Jesus the Lord! My text seems to me to be a staff fitted for old age to lean upon in the rough places of the way; a sword with which the strong man may fight in all hours of conflict; a shield with which youth may cover itself in the time of peril, and a royal chariot in which babes in divine grace may ride in safety. There is something here for every one of us; as Solomon puts it, a portion for seven, and also for eight. If we consider the Great Prophet and High Priest of our profession—Jesus Christ—as being tempted in all points, we shall not grow weary or faint in our minds, but shall gird up our loins for our future journey, and like Elijah, go in the strength of this meat for many days to come!

You who are tempted—and I suppose the major part of this present congregation is included in the list—you who are tempted—and indeed if you know yourselves, you are all in your measure thus exercised—you who are tempted, listen to me this morning while I endeavor to speak of your temptations, and in parallel lines of the temptations of Him who, having known your trials, is able to succor you at all times!

I. Our first point this morning is this—MANY SOULS ARE TEMPTED—CHRIST WAS TEMPTED. All the heirs of heaven pass under the yoke; all true gold must feel the fire; all wheat must be threshed; all diamonds must be cut; all saints must endure temptation.

1. They are tempted *from all quarters*. It is as Christ’s parable puts it concerning the house whose foundation was on the rock—“The rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.” The descending rain may represent temptations from above; the floods pouring their devastating torrents upon the land may well denote the trials which spring from the world, while the howling winds may typify those mysterious influences of evil which issue from the Prince of the power of the air. Now, whether we shudder at the descending rain, or fear before the uprising flood, or whether we are amazed at the mysterious energy of the winds, it is well to recollect our blessed Lord was tempted in all points like as we are! This is to be our consolation—that nothing strange to the Head has happened to the members!

Beloved friends, it is possible that we may be tempted *by God!* I know it is written that “God is not tempted, neither tempts He any man,” yet I read in Scripture, “It came to pass that God did tempt Abraham.” And I know it is a part of the prayer which we are taught to offer before God—“Lead us not into temptation”—by which it is clearly implied that God *does* lead into temptation, or why else should we be taught to entreat Him not to do so? In one sense of the term, “tempt,” a pure and holy God can have no share, but in another sense, He does tempt His people! The temptation which comes from God is altogether that of trial; trial, not with an evil design as are the temptations of Satan, but a trial meant to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genu-

iness of our virtues, and to add to their energy. You remember that Abraham was tried and tested of God when he was bid to go to a mountain that God would show him, there to offer up his son, Isaac. You and I may have a like experience. God may call us in the path of obedience to a great and singular sacrifice, the desire of our eyes may be demanded of us in an hour—or He may summon us to a tremendous duty far surpassing all our strength! We may be tempted by the weight of the responsibility, like Jonah, to flee from the presence of the Lord; we can only know when placed in the position what temptations the Lord's message may involve. But, beloved, whatever these may be, our Great High Priest has felt them all! His Father called Him to a work of the most terrific character; He laid upon Him the iniquity of us all; He ordained Him, the second Adam, the bearer of the curse, the destroyer of death, the conqueror of hell, the seed of the woman to be wounded in the heel, and elected to bruise the serpent's head! Our Lord was appointed to toil at the loom and there, with ever-flying shuttle, to weave a perfect garment of righteousness for all His people. Now, beloved, this was a strong and mighty testing of the character of Him who was found in fashion as a man, and it is not possible that we can ever be thrust into such a refiner's fire as that which tried this most pure gold! No other can be in the crucible so long or subjected to such a tremendous heat as that which was endured by Christ Jesus! If then, the trial is sent directly from our heavenly Father, we may solace ourselves with this reflection—that He Himself has suffered, and being tried of God—He is able also to succor them who are likewise tried!

But, dear friends, our God not only tries us directly, but *indirectly*. All is under the Lord's control of Providence. Everything that happens to us is meted out by the decree, and settled by His purpose. We know that nothing can occur to us save as it is written in the secret roll of providential predestination; consequently, all the trials resulting from circumstances are traceable at once to the great First Cause! Out of the golden gate of God's ordinance, the armies of trial march forth in array. No shower falls without permission from the threatening cloud; every drop has its order before it hastens to the earth. Consider poverty for instance. How many are made to feel its pinching necessities? They shiver in the cold for lack of clothes; they are hungry and thirsty; they are homeless, friendless, despised. This is a temptation from God, but all this Christ knew—"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head." When He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry, and then it was that He was tempted of the devil! Nor do the scant table and the ragged garments alone invite temptation, for all providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction; our mountains are not too high, and our valleys are not too low for temptation to travel. Where shall we flee from their presence? What wings of wind can carry us? What beams of light can bear us? Everywhere, above and beneath, we are beset and surrounded with dangers! Now, since all these are under the superintendence and direction of the great Lord of Providence, we may look upon them all as temptations which come from Him. But in every one of these, Christ had His part. Let us choose the special one of *sickness*—sickness is a strong temptation to impatience, rebellion, and murmuring, but He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses. That visage had not been marred more than that of any man, had not the soul been sorely vexed, and the body consequently much tormented. *Bereavement*, too—what a trial is this to the tender heart! You arrows of death, you kill, but you wound with wounds worse than death! "Jesus wept," because His friend Lazarus slept in the tomb. In that great loss, He was schooled to sympathize with the widow in her needs, with the orphan in his fatherless estate, and with the friend whose acquaintance has been thrust into darkness. Nothing can come from God to the sons of men the like of which did not also happen unto the Lord Jesus Christ! Herein let us wrap ourselves about with the warm mantle of consolation, since Christ was tempted in this point like as we are.

2. But still more do temptations *arise from men*. God does try us now and then, but our fellow men every day. Our foes are found in our own household among our friends. Out of a mistaken kindness, it often happens that they would lead us to prefer our own ease rather than the service of God. Links of love have made iron chains for saints! It is hard to ride to heaven over our own flesh and blood. Kinsfolk and acquaintances may much hinder young disciples. This, however, is no novelty to our Lord. You know how he had to say to Peter, well-beloved disciple though he was, "Get you behind Me, Satan. You savor not the things that are of God." Poor, ignorant human friendship would have kept Him back from the cross; would have made Him miss His great objective in being fashioned as a man, and so have robbed Him of all the honor which only shame and death could win Him! Not only true, but false friends

attempt our ruin. Treason creeps like a snake in the grass, and falsehood, like an adder, bites the horse's heels. Does treachery assault us? Let us remember how the Son of David was betrayed. "He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me." "Yes, My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me." What shall be done unto you, you false tongue? Eternal silence rest on you! And yet, you have spent your venom on my Lord—why should I marvel if you try your worst on me?

As by friends, you and I are tempted, so often are we assailed by enemies. Enemies will waylay us with subtle questions, seeking to entrap us in our speech. O cunning devices of a generation of vipers! They did the same with Christ. The Herodian, the Sadducee, the Pharisee, the lawyer—each one has his riddle, and each one is answered—answered gloriously by the Great Teacher who is not to be entrapped! You and I are sometimes asked odd questions; doctrines are set in controversy with doctrines; texts of Scripture are made to clash with other portions of God's Word, and we hardly know how to reply. Let us retire into the secret chamber of this great fact—in this point, too, Christ was tempted! And then, when His foes could not prevail against Him, they slandered His character. "A drunken man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," said they, and He became the song of the drunkard till their reproach had broken His heart! This may happen to us; we may be subjected to slander just in that very point where we are most clear! Our good may be spoken evil of; our motives misinterpreted; our words misquoted; our actions misconstrued—but here also, we may shelter ourselves beneath the eagle wings of this great truth of God—our glorious Head has suffered, and, being tempted, He can give us aid! But His foes did even more than this—when they found Him in an agony of pain, they taunted Him to His face! Pointing their finger, they mocked His nakedness; thrusting out their tongue, they jeered at His claims, and hissed out that more than diabolical temptation, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe in You." How often do the sons of men, when they have gone to the full length of their tether, charge us in like manner? They have caught us in some unhappy moment—surprised us when our spirits were broken, when our circumstances were unhappy, and then they say, "Now—now where is your God? If you are what you profess to be, now prove it!" They ask us to prove our faith by a sinful action which they know would destroy our characters—some rash deed which would be contrary to the profession we have espoused! Here, too, we may remember that, having been tempted, our High Priest is able to succor those who are tempted! Moreover, remember that there are temptations which come from persons who are neither friends nor foes—from those with whom we are compelled to mix in ordinary society. Jesus went to the Pharisee's table; the example of the Pharisee reeked with infectious pride; He sat with the publicans, whose characters were contagious with impurity; but, whether it was in one leper house or another, the Great Physician walked through the midst of moral plagues and leprosies unharmed! He associated with sinners, but was not a sinner! He touched disease, but was not Himself diseased! He could enter into the chambers of evil, but evil could not find a chamber in Him! You and I are thrown by our daily avocations into constant contact with evil; it would be impossible, I suppose, to walk among men without being tempted by them. Inadvertently, men who have no studied design to betray us, by the mere force of their ordinary behavior, entice us to evil, and corrupt our good manners. Here, too, if we have to cry, "Woe is me, for I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar," we may remember that our great Leader sojourned here, too, and being here, He was tempted even as we are!

Dear friends, we shall not complete the list of temptations if we forget that a vast host, and those of a most violent character, can only be ascribed to *Satanic influence*. These are usually threefold—for Christ's temptation in the wilderness, if I read it right, was a true picture of all the temptations which Satan uses against God's people. The first grand temptation of Satan is usually made against our faith. Being hungry, Satan came to our Lord and said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Here was that devilish "If," that cunning suggestion of a doubt concerning His Sonship coupled with the enticement to commit a selfish act, to prove whether He were the Son or not. Ah, how often does Satan tempt us to unbelief. "God has forsaken you," he says. "God has no love for you; your experience has been a delusion; your profession is a lie; all your hopes will fail you—you are but a poor miserable dupe! There is no truth in religion—if there is, how is it that you are in this trouble? Why not do as you like, live as you like, and enjoy yourself?" Ah, foul fiend, how craftily do you spread your net! But it is all in vain, for Jesus has passed through and broken the snare! My hearers, beware of intermed-

dling with divine providence! Satan tempts many believers to run before the cloud, to carve their own fortunes, build their own house, to steer their own vessels. Mischief will surely befall all who yield to this temptation! Beware of becoming the keepers of your own souls, for evil will soon overtake you! Ah, when you are thus tempted by Satan and your adoption seems in jeopardy, and your experience appears to melt, fly at once to the good shepherd remembering this, “In that He Himself has suffered being tempted; He is able to succor them who are tempted.”

The next foul temptation of Satan with Christ was not to unbelief, but to the very reverse—*presumption*. “Cast Yourself down,” he said as he poised the Savior on the pinnacle of the temple. Even so, he whispers to some of us, “You are a child of God; you know that, and therefore you are safe—live as you like—cast yourself down, for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you.’” Oh, that foul temptation! Many an Antinomian is led by the nose of this—driven like a fatted bullock to the slaughter, and like a fool to the correction of the stocks; for many an Antinomian will say, “I am safe, therefore, I may indulge my lusts with impunity.” But you who know better! When you are thus molested; when the devil brings the doctrine of election or the great truth of the final perseverance of the saints, and seeks to soil your purity, and stain your innocence by temptations drawn from the mercy and love of God—then console yourselves by this fact—that Christ was tempted in this point, too, and is able to succor you even here! The last temptation of Christ in the wilderness was to *idolatry*. Ambition was the temptation, but idolatry was the end at which the tempter aimed. “All these things will I give You if You will fall down and worship me.” The old serpent will suggest, “I will make you rich if you will only venture upon that one swindling transaction; you shall be famous, only palm off that one falsehood; you shall be perfectly at ease, only wink at one small evil. All these things will I give you if you will make me Lord of your heart.” Ah, then it will be a noble thing if you can look up to Him who endured this temptation before you, and bid the fiend depart with, “It is written, you shall worship the Lord with all your heart, and Him only shall you serve.” Thus shall Satan leave you and angels minister unto you as they did to the tempted one of old!

Still further, to enlarge on this point, let me observe that we are tempted not only from all quarters, but *in all positions*. No man is too lowly for the shafts of hell—no person too elevated for the arrows of evil! Poverty has its dangers—“Lest I be poor and steal”—Christ knew these. Contempt has its aggravated temptations—to be despised often makes men bitter of spirit, exasperates them into savage selfishness, and wolfish cruelty of revenge. Our great Prophet knew experientially the temptations of contempt. It is no small trial to be filled with pain—when all the strings of our manhood are strained and twisted, it is little wonder if they make a discord. Christ endured the greatest amount of physical pain, especially upon the cross; and on the cross, where all the rivers of human agony met in one deep lake within His heart; He bore all that it was possible for the human frame to bear! Here, then, without limit He learned the pain of pain. Turn the picture—Christ knew the temptations of riches. You will say, “How?” He had the opportunities to be rich. Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus would have been too glad to give Him their substance; the honorable women who ministered to Him would have begrudged Him nothing! There were many opportunities when He might have made Himself a king; He might have become famous and great like other teachers, and so have earned honors and wealth; but as He knew, so also He overcame, the temptations of wealth! The temptations of ease—and these are not small—Christ readily escaped. There would always have been a comfortable home for Him at Bethany; there were many disciples who would have thought themselves but too honored to have found for Him the softest couch on which head ever rested—but He who came not to enjoy, but to endure, He spurned all—but not without knowing the temptation! He learned, too, the trials of honor, of popularity, and of applause. “Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna,” said the multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem, when palm branches were strewed in the way, and He rode in triumph over the garments of His disciples! Knowing all this, He was still meek and lowly, and in Him was no sin! We cannot either be cast down or lifted up, we cannot be put into the most strange and singular positions without still being able to remember that Christ has made a pilgrimage over the least trod of our paths, and is, therefore, able to succor them who are tempted!

3. Further, let me remark *that every age has its temptations*. The young, while yet children, if believers, will discover that there are peculiar snares for the little ones. Christ knew these. It was no small temptation to a youth, a lad of some 12 years of age, to be found sitting in the midst of the doctors, hear-

ing them, and answering their questions! It would have turned the heads of most boys, and yet, Jesus went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents. It is small peril to grow in knowledge and in favor with God and man, if it were not for the word “God” put in it; to grow in favor constantly with men would be too much of a temptation for most youths. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth, for youth, when honored and esteemed, is too apt to lift its head and grow conceited, vain and obstinate! When a young man knows that by-and-by he shall become something great, it is not easy to keep him balanced. Suppose that he is born to an estate, and knows that, when he comes of full age, he will be lord and master, and will be courted by everybody—why, he is apt to be very wayward and self-willed! Now, there were prophecies that went before concerning Mary’s son—which marked Him out as King of the Jews, and a Mighty One in Israel. But I find not that the holy child Jesus was ever decoyed by His coming greatness into any actions inconsistent with the duty of a child. So young believers, you who are like Samuel and Timothy—you can look to Christ and know that He can aid you! In His full manhood, it is unnecessary for me to repeat the various afflictions which beat upon our Lord. You, who today bear the burden and heat of the day, will find an example here; nor need old age look elsewhere, for we may view our Redeemer with admiration as He goes up to Jerusalem to die. His last moments are manifestly near at hand; He knows the temptations of an expected dissolution—He sees death more clearly than any of you—even though your temples are covered with gray. And yet, whether in life or in death, on Tabor’s summit or on the banks of the river of death, He is still the same—always tempted, but never sinning—always tried, but never found wanting.

O Lord! You are able thus to succor them who are tempted. help us! I need not say more. If I have not mentioned the particular trial of everyone here today, I think it may be included in some one of the general descriptions. Whatever it may happen to be, it cannot be so out of the catalog as not to come in somewhere or other in the temptations of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I, therefore, now turn to the second part of the discourse upon which I shall speak with brevity.

II. Our second point is THAT AS THE TEMPTED OFTEN SUFFERED; CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED.

Notice, the text does not say—“In that He Himself also has been tempted, He is able to succor them who are tempted.” It is better than that—“In that He Himself *has suffered*, being tempted, He is able to succor them who are tempted.” Temptation, even when overcome, brings with it to the true child of God a great degree of suffering. The suffering consists in two or three things. It lies, mainly, *in the shock which sin gives to the sensitive, regenerate nature*. A man who is clothed in armor may walk in a wilderness through the midst of tearing thorns and brambles without being hurt. But let the man be stripped of his garments, and then, let him attempt the same journey, and how sadly will he be cut and torn! Sin, to the man who is used to it, is not suffering; if he is tempted, it is no pain to him; in fact, frequently, temptation yields pleasure to the sinner. To look at the bait is sweet to the fish which means to swallow it by-and-by; but to the child of God, who is new-made and quickened, the very thought of sin makes him shudder! He cannot look at it without abhorrence and detestation, and without being alarmed to think that he is likely ever to fall into so abominable a crime! Now, dear friends, in this case, Christ indeed has fellowship and far outruns us; His detestation of sin must have been much more deep than ours. A word of blasphemy, a thought of sin must have cut Him to the very quick! We cannot get a complete idea of the degree of wretchedness which Jesus must have endured in merely being upon earth among the ungodly; for infinite purity to dwell among sinners must be something as terrible as if you could suppose the best educated, the most pure, the most amiable person condemned to live in a den of burglars, blasphemers, and filthy wretches! Such a man’s life must be miserable. No whip, no chain would be needed—merely associating with such people would be pain and torment enough! So the Lord Jesus, in merely bearing the neighborhood of sin without any other troubles, would have had to suffer a vast, incalculable amount of woe. Suffering, too, arises to the people of God *from a dread of the temptation when its shadow falls upon us before it comes*. At times, there is more dread in the prospect of a trial than there is in the trial itself! We feel a thousand temptations in fearing one! Christ knew this. What an awful dread was that which came over Him in the black night of Gethsemane! It was not the cup—it was the *fear* of drinking it! “Let this cup pass from Me,” just seemed to indicate what the sorrow was; He knew how black, how foul, how fiery were its deeps, and it was the dread of drinking it that bowed Him to the ground till He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. When you have the same overwhelming

pressure upon your spirit in the prospect of a trial yet to come, fly to the loving heart of your sympathizing Lord—for He has suffered all this—having been Himself tempted!

The suffering of temptation also lies often *in the source of it*. Have you not often felt that you would not mind the temptation if it had not come from where it did? “Oh,” you say, “to think that my own friend, my dearly beloved friend, should test me!” You are a child, and you have said, “I think I could bear anything but my father’s frown, or my mother’s sneer.” You are a husband, and you say, “My thorn in the flesh is too sharp, for it is an ungodly wife.” Or you are a wife, which is more frequently the case, and you think there is no temptation like yours, because it is your husband who assaults your religion, and who speaks evil of your good! It makes all the difference where the temptation comes from. If some scoundrel mocks us, we think it honor—but when it is an honored companion, we feel his taunt. A friend can cut under our armor, and stab us the more dangerously! Ah, but the Man of Sorrows knew all this since it was one of the chosen 12 who betrayed Him. And besides, “It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.” To find God to be in arms against us is a huge affliction! “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani! My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” is the very emphasis of woe! Jesus has surely suffered your griefs, from wherever they may come!

I have no doubt, too, that a portion of the sorrow and suffering of temptation may also lie in the fact *that God’s name and honor are often involved in our temptation*. It happens to some of us, who are more publicly placed than others, to be reviled, and when the reviling is merely against our own personal character, against our modes of speech or habit, we not only receive it gratefully, but thankfully—blessing God that He has counted us worthy to suffer for His Name’s sake. But sometimes the attack is very plainly not against us, but against God, and there will be things said of which we should say with the Psalmist David—“Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked who keep not Your Law!” When direct blasphemies are uttered against the person of Christ, or against the doctrine of His holy gospel, we have been “very heavy.” We have thought—“If I have opened this dog’s mouth against myself, it matters not, but if I have made him roar against God—then how should I answer, and what should I speak?” This has often been the bitterness of it—“If I fall, God’s cause is stained; if I slip through the vehemence of this assault, then one of the gates of the church will be carried by storm! Mischief comes not to me alone, but to many of the Israel of God.” David says, of grieving the saints—“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.” David’s Lord had to suffer this, for He says, “The reproaches of them who reproached You fell on Me.” He was made the target for those errors which were really shot at God, and so He had to feel first this bitterness of sympathy with His ill-used God.

I cannot, of course, particularize this morning so as to hit upon the precise sorrow which you, beloved brother or sister in Christ, are enduring as the result of temptation. But whatever phase your sorrow may have assumed, this should always be your comfort—that He has suffered in temptation; that He has not merely known the temptation as you sometimes have known it, when it rattled on your harness and fell harmless to the ground—but it has rankled in His flesh! It has not made Him sin, but it has made Him smart. It has not made Him err, but it has caused Him to mourn! Oh, child of God, I know not a deeper well of purer consolation than this—“He Himself has suffered being tempted.”

III. Now, for the third and last point. **THEY WHO ARE TEMPTED HAVE GREAT NEED OF SUCCOR, AND CHRIST IS ABLE, HAVING HIMSELF BEEN TEMPTED, TO SUCCOR THEM WHO ARE TEMPTED.**

Of course, this is true of Christ as God. Apart from any temptation He has ever endured, He would be able to succor the tempted. But we are now speaking in our text of Christ as a High Priest in which we are to regard Him in His complex character as God-man. Christ is not only God, but man, and not only man, but God! The *Christos*—the anointed one, the High Priest of our profession—is, in His complex character, able to succor them who are tempted. How? Why, first, *the very fact that He was tempted has some succor in it to us*. If we had to walk through the darkness alone, we would know the very extremity of misery; but having a companion, we have comfort—having such a companion as Jesus Christ, we have joy! It is all black about me, and the path is miry, and I sink in it and can find no standing. But I plunge onwards, desperately set on reaching my journey’s end. It frets me that I am alone, but I hear a voice (I can see nothing)—but I hear a voice which says, “Yes, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” I cry out, “Who goes there?” and an answer comes back to me—“I,

the faithful and true witness, the Alpha and the Omega, the sufferer who was despised and rejected of men, I lead the way.” And at once I feel that it is light about me, and there is a rock beneath my feet, for if Christ, my Lord, has been here, then the way must be safe! The very fact that He has suffered, then, consoles His people!

But further, the fact *that He has suffered without being destroyed is inestimably comforting to us*. If you could see a block of ore just ready to be put into the furnace, if that block of ore could look into the flames, and could mark the blast as it blows the coals to a vehement heat—if it could speak, it would say, “Ah, woe is me that ever I should be put into such a blazing furnace as that! I shall be burnt up! I shall be melted with the slag! I shall be utterly consumed!” But suppose another lump, all bright and glistening, could lie by its side and say, “No, no, you are just like I was, but I went through the fire and I lost nothing! Look how bright I am, and how I have survived all the flames.” Why then that piece of ore would rather anticipate than dread the season when it, too, should be exposed to the purifying heat and come out all bright and lustrous like its companion! I see You, I see You, Son of Mary—bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—You have felt the flames, but You are not destroyed! The smell of fire has not passed upon You; Your heel has been bruised, but You have broken the serpent’s head! There is no scar, nor spot, nor injury on You; You have survived the conflict and I, bearing Your name, purchased with Your blood, and dear to God as You are dear to Him—I shall survive it too! Therefore will I tread the coals with confidence, and bear the heat with patience. Christ’s conquest gives me comfort, for I shall conquer, too.

And please remember, too, that Christ, in going through the suffering of temptation was not simply not a loser *but He was a great gainer*, for it is written it pleased God “to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” It was through His suffering that He obtained the mediatorial glory which now crowns His head! Had He never carried the cross, He had never worn that crown—that transcendently bright and glorious crown which now He wears as King in Zion, and as leader of His people whom He has redeemed by blood! God over all, blessed forever He would have been, but as God-man-mediator, He could never have been extolled unless He had been obedient even unto death, so He was a gainer by His suffering! And glory be to His name, *we* get comfort from this, too, for we also shall be gainers by *our* temptations. We shall come up out of Egypt enriched! As it is written, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold,” so shall we come forth out of trial with better than these treasures. “Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tried, he shall obtain a crown of life which fades not away.” The deeper their sorrows, the louder their song; the more terrible their toil, the sweeter their rest; the more bitter the wormwood, the more delightful the wine of consolation! They shall have glory for their share; they shall have honor for their contempt; they shall have songs for their sufferings, and thrones for their tribulations.

But more—in that Christ has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor us who are tempted *by sending His grace to help us*. He was always able to send divine grace, but now as God and man, He is able to send just the right grace at the right time, and in the right place! You know a doctor may have all the drugs that can be gathered, but an abundance of medicine does not make him a qualified practitioner; if however he has been ill himself and seen the case, then he knows just at what crisis of the disease such-and-such a medicine is needed. The stores are good, but the wisdom to use the stores—this is even more precious! Now, it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell—but where should the Son of Man earn His diploma and gain the skill with which to use the fullness correctly? Beloved, He won it by *experience*! He knows what sore temptations mean, for He has felt the same. You know, if we had comforting grace given to us at one part of our temptation, it would tempt us more than before—even as certain medicines given to the patient at one period of the disease would aggravate the malady, though the same medicine would cure it if administered a little later. Now, Christ knows how to send His comfort at the very nick of time, to afford His help exactly when it will not be an excess—to send His Joy when we shall not spend it upon our own lusts. And how does He know this? Why, He recollects His own *experience*—He has passed through it all! There appeared an angel unto Him strengthening Him—that angel came just when he was needed. Jesus knows just when to send His angelic messenger to strengthen you, when to lay on the rod more heavily, and when to stay His hand and say, “I have forgiven you. Go in peace.”

Once more, dear friends, lest I keep you too long. Having suffered Himself, being tempted, Christ knows how to succor us *by His prayers for us*. There are some people whose prayers are of no use to us because they do not know what to ask for us. Christ is the intercessor for His people—He has prevalence in His intercession—but how shall He learn what to ask for? How can He know this better than by His own trials? He has suffered being tempted! You hear some brethren pray with such power, such unction, such fervor! Why? Part of the reason is that theirs are *experiential* prayers—they pray out their own life; they just pray the great deep waters over which they themselves sail. Now, the prayer of our great High Priest in heaven is wonderfully comprehensive—it is drawn from His own life, and it takes in every sorrow and every pain that ever rent a human heart, because He Himself has suffered being tempted. I know you feel safe in trusting your case in the hand of such an Intercessor, for He knows which is the precise mercy to ask for, and when He asks for it, He knows how to put the words and frame the petition so that the mercy shall surely come to you at the right time!

Ah, dear friends, it is not in my power to bring out the depth which lies under my text—but I am certain of this—when through the deep waters He shall cause you to go, or you are made to pass through furnace after furnace, you cannot want a better rod and staff nor a better table prepared for you in the wilderness than this, my text, “In that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them who are tempted.” Hang this text up in your houses! Read it every day—take it before God in prayer every time you bend the knee, and you shall find it to be like the widow’s vessel, which failed not, and like her handful of meal which wasted not. It shall be unto you till the last of December what now it is when we begin to feed upon it in January!

Will not my text suit the awakened sinner as well as the saint? There are timid souls here. They cannot say they are saved—yet here is a loophole of comfort for you, you poor troubled ones who are not yet able to get a hold of Jesus. “He is able to succor them who are tempted.” Go and tell Him you are tempted—tempted, perhaps, to despair; tempted to self-destruction; tempted to go back to your old sins—tempted to think that Christ cannot save you! Go and tell Him that He Himself has suffered being tempted, and that He is able to succor you. Believe that He will, and He will! You can never believe anything too much of the love and goodness of my Lord! He will be better than your faith to you! If you can trust Him with all your heart to save you, He will do it! If you believe He is able to put away your sin, He will do it! If you can but honor Him by giving Him a good character for grace, you cannot give Him too good a name—

*“Trust Him, He will not deceive you,
Though you hardly on Him lean!
He will never, never leave you,
Nor will let you quite leave Him!”*

Receive, then, the blessing—May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you forever. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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