



THE THREE TEMPTATIONS

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY (FBTC), page 119

“... We shall see, as we take up the consideration of these three temptations, how in the **first temptation** Christ was confronted by **maya, with physical forces** of such strength that the devil could take advantage of them in an effort to confound Him. We shall see how in the **second temptation** He was tempted by **glamour**, and with the submergence of His vital spiritual life by a misconception and an **emotional** use of His divine powers. The sin of the **mind**, which is **pride**, was called into activity by the devil in the **third temptation**, and the **illusion** of temporal power to be used for right ends we may be sure was presented to Him. Thus the possible interior weakness of the three aspects of Christ's nature was tested, and through them the vast sum total of the world maya, glamour and illusion was poured in on Him. Thus He was confronted with the Dweller on the Threshold, which is only another name for the personal lower self, regarding it as a unified whole, as is only the case in advanced people, disciples and initiates. **In these three words — maya, glamour and illusion — we have synonyms for the flesh, the world and the devil, which constitute the threefold test that confronts every son of God on the verge of liberation.**”



THE FIRST TEMPTATION

"If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." Let us use our divine powers for personal physical ends. Let us put the material physical nature first. Let us assuage our hunger, whatever it may be, and do it because we are divine. Let us use our divine powers so as [Page 120] to gain for ourselves perfect health, long desired financial prosperity, popularity for our personality, for which we crave, and those physical surroundings and conditions which we want. We are sons of God and are entitled to all these things. Command that these stones be made bread for the satisfaction of our supposed need ... The temptations which come to the advanced souls in the world are most subtle. The use of divine powers for the meeting and satisfaction of purely personal [the separated self apart from the needs of the group or community or world], physical needs can be presented in such a manner that they may seem entirely right. Yet we do not live by bread alone, but by means of the spiritual life which (coming forth from God) pours into, and is the life of, the lower man. This is the first essential for understanding. Upon that soul life and upon that inner contact the emphasis should be laid. ..The emphasis upon a divinity which must express itself entirely through the meeting of a physical need, in a monetary manner, most definitely limits divinity to an attribute

of itself. When we live as souls, when our inner life is oriented to God, not because of what we can receive but because we have the developed sense of divinity, then the forces of divine life will pour through us and produce what is needed. This may not necessarily bring about complete immunity from disease or produce financial affluence; but it will mean a sweetening of the lower nature, a tendency to self-forgetfulness, and unselfishness which puts others first, a wisdom which concerns itself with the teaching and helping of others, a freedom from hatred and suspicion which will make life pleasanter for those with whom we associate, and a kindness and inclusiveness which leave no time for the separated [Page 121] self.

That this type of inner nature will make for a sound body and freedom from physical ills is quite possible, but not inevitably so. In time and space, in a particular life and at a special time, illness has its uses and may be a profoundly desirable blessing. Poverty and financial stringency may re-establish a lost sense of values and enrich the heart with compassion. Money and perfect health may be disasters to many [unless money is seen as a spiritual asset for service and the greater good]. But the use of divine power for selfish ends ... constitute the temptation which Christ so triumphantly met. We live by the life of God. Let that life flow in "more abundantly" upon us and we shall become, as Christ became, living centres of radiant energy for the service of the world. ..." [Page 123] "... Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

REFLECT upon the temptations of using divine power for selfish ends. How have you triumphed? Growing Soul strength is gained with every triumph, until one is tempted no more.

MALA Contemplation / Words of Power:

"We do not live by bread alone, but by means of the spiritual life pouring from God".

"I live by the life pouring through me from God on High"

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THE SECOND TEMPTATION:

"... Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; 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.** Jesus said unto him, **It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**"⁴²

"It is essential for the right understanding of this temptation that we remember our earlier distinction that such passages in the Bible are interpreted from the angle of the souls involved. **Christ meets the devil on the ground of His divine nature.** If thou art the Son of God, take advantage of the Fatherhood of God, and cast thyself down. This temptation is different from the first, though it appears to embody the same type of test. The clue to this is found in Christ's answer, where He takes His stand upon His divinity. ... The glamour of doubt descends upon the Christ. ... He is tempted to question the very roots of His being. ... He was attacked where He was the strongest, and in this lies the potency of this temptation."

"... Christ faced this issue without dismay, and **triumphed by the use of an affirmation of such power** (because it stated a truth) that the devil temporarily could not reach Him. He practically said: **"I am the Son of God. Thou mayest not tempt me."** **He took His stand upon His divinity and vanquished the doubt ...**

"... **If for one brief minute we have been in the Presence of God and known it, that is real.** If the Presence of God in the human heart has at any moment, for an instant, been a reality, then let us take our stand upon that known and felt experience, refusing to deal with the [Page 126] detail of the glamour of doubt, of emotion, of depression or of blindness in which we may temporarily find ourselves...

... If the sense of God has persisted in the world for untold ages, and if the testimony of the mystics and saints, the seers and the Saviours of all time is historical and verifiable—as it is—then that testimony, in its wealth and universality, constitutes a fact ... Steadily through them all, the soul of man marches from one unfoldment of consciousness to another, and our concept of divinity constantly gains in richness and reality. **That is the fact upon which humanity can stand, the divine soul in man.** That is the fact upon which Christ took His stand when the devil tempted Him a second time.

CONTEMPLATE: Rest back upon your experiences of "God" ... thereby affirming your Essential Divinity. With every temptation of doubt and blindness that temporarily assails the

soul in form, every conscious triumph by the divine soul in man leads to ultimate victory – *Christ is Victorious* – making this temptation as weak as a feather blowing in the wind.

MALA Contemplations / Affirmations / Words of Power:

“I am the Son of God. Thou mayest not tempt me”

“Christ in me is victorious over all my life affairs”

“Christ is victorious over all world affairs”

“Christ is Victorious for the betterment of Humanity”

“The Unconquerable nature of Goodness precipitates (begets)
the inevitable, ultimate triumph of the Good”

“I am as God created Me”

“Christ is Victorious”

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THE THIRD TEMPTATION:

(p 126) "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth 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. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."⁴⁶

"... In the case of Christ in the third temptation, His "conscious values or purposes" were being tried. His integrity must be undermined, if possible, and the unity for which He stood must be forced to disintegrate. If this could be done, and if the standard which He set could be upset, His mission was, from the start, destined to fail. If He could be deceived by the illusion of power, if ambition of a personal nature could be developed in His consciousness, the founding of the kingdom of God might be indefinitely delayed. This temptation was an attack at the very root of the personality. The mind, the integrating factor, with its ability to think clearly, to formulate definite purpose and to choose, was under test. Such temptations do not come to the little-developed, and because of the strength of the character involved they are of the fiercest kind and the most difficult to handle. The call of the devil was to Christ's ambition. Ambition is, par excellence, the problem of the developed aspirant and disciple—personal ambition, love of popularity, worldly ambition, intellectual ambition, and the dictatorship of power over others. The subtlety of this temptation consists in the fact that appeal is made to right motive. It would—such is the implication—be good for the world of human affairs if it all belonged to Christ."

"In the case of Christ in the third temptation, His "conscious values or purposes" were being tried. His integrity undermined, if possible, and the unity for which He stood forced to disintegrate. ... By simply recognizing the power of the devil, the material force in the world, as being supreme, that control over the kingdoms of the world could be given to Christ. He was offered it as the reward of a single recognition—given alone and unseen on the top of a high mountain — to the power which represented, or symbolized, the triple world of external living. If Christ would briefly fall down and worship that great power, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them would be His ... [Page 129] ... What stood between Him and the acceptance of this opportunity? His reply indicates it clearly, but needs understanding. **What intervened was His knowledge that God was One and God was All.** The devil showed Him a picture of diversity, of many kingdoms, much division, of multiplicity, plurality, separated units. **Christ came to unify, to bring together and to unite in one all kingdoms, all races and all men, so that the words of St. Paul could be true in deed and in fact:**

"There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."⁴⁷

“ ... The illusion of power could not touch Him. That which was real had such a grip of His mind that the unreal and the immediate could not delude His consciousness. He saw the picture whole. He saw the vision of a world wherein there could be no duality but only unity, and from His efforts to bring that future world into being He could not be swerved.”

“Where this vision exists, lesser values and smaller issues cannot hold the ardent heart.

Where the whole as a possibility is grasped, the part falls into its rightful place. **Where the purpose of God stands clearly revealed to the mind of the seer, the lesser ends or motives, and the tiny wishes and desires for and of the personal self fade out of the picture. At the end of the road of evolution lies the consummation, the kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of the world.** They are parts of a future whole, and will be later welded into a spiritual synthesis. But that kingdom, as we shall see in our final chapter, when we sum up the results of initiation, is [Page 130] not brought into being through personal ambition, personal effort and personal desire. **It comes through the submergence [surrender] of the part in the whole and of the individual in the group.** But this is brought about willingly and intelligently, with no loss of personal prestige, usefulness or sense of identity. It is not enforced or demanded by the group or state or kingdom, as is so frequently the case today. **Dr. van der Leeuw tells us:**

"If we would enter the kingdom this attitude must change to that of **Christ whose love has become radiating, ever giving out** to the surrounding world, whether deserving or not, whose **life is centered in the Divine, common to all.** In Him there is no remnant even of a separated personality, battling for its own existence or aggrandizement; the cup of His existence is emptied of all that is personal and become filled with **the wine of the divine life, shared by all.** We, by continuous though possibly unconscious effort, may maintain the center of separate life which we call our personality; if we would follow Christ, **we have to give up the laborious struggle for individual assertion in the desire to be the life of the Whole rather than that of a part. Thus alone can we enter the Kingdom where no separateness can be.**"⁴⁸

CONTEMPLATE: The illusion of power. Once we choose and stand for the Plan of God, then the pride and ambition cannot hold power.

MALA Contemplation / Words of Power:

◇ Unity consciousness fills my awareness. ◇ The illusion of power does not touch me. ◇ The pride of illusion does not grip me.

◇ “Lead me from the unreal to the real, from death to immortality”

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Esoteric Lent Diamond Soul practices are intended to discipline the personality and its vehicles to come under full soul control for the purpose of expressing our Essential Divinity.

The three temptations of the Christ when viewed and experienced from the higher level of the Master and the Chohans of the 6th degree *in relationship to* the expression of *higher Harmlessness* and that beneficence which renders evil harmless, stimulates what lives high and deep within us.

In this more condensed form, we are reviewing the writings on these subjects to contrast and live and/or experience (to what degree we can) the Three Temptations and Harmlessness at the level of the aspirant, disciple and soul which Jesus was going through, and on a still higher turn of the spiral what Christ went through at His stage of unfoldment as the Perfect One. We must remember Christ is with us today beaming forth What and Who He Is – *as He Is today* – expressing His Divinity.

In the context of the Three Temptations, the three primary practices of harmlessness – *perfect poise, a completed point of view and divine understanding* – demonstrate and affirm our Essential Divinity. These can only be *experienced*, not ‘reasoned into’ from the level of the concrete mind, yet the mind must play its role through right orientation and holding the mind steady in the light. The concrete mind when turned downward is lost in detail and endless analysis and argument, becoming a prison for the soul and unable to receive higher light. When **the mind is turned upward *contemplating*** together the lesser and higher expressions of harmlessness, a door opens into illumination and inspiration allowing for touches and tastes of *experience* ... and if drawn in, a deeper and fuller experience of the freedom of perfect poise, a completed point of view that knows the whole, and a loving divine understanding that is the Heart of the Christ.

This is subtle work. It works by “surrendering to” ... leading to being overtaken by the Soul. It happens *to* us as the vibratory vehicles are sufficiently raised, creating space for virgin spontaneity ... And then it happens, and keeps happening – this state of Being

Our true and natural state,

The Signature of God





EACH TEMPTATION BEGINS WITH "If" AND IS MET WITH "It Is Written"

[FBTC, Page 116] "There are **two interesting facts connected with all these temptations. Each of them begins with "If" on the lips of the devil, and each is met by Christ with the words "It is written."** These two phrases link all three episodes and give the clue to the whole process. **The ultimate temptation is doubt.** The test we have all to face eventually, and which climaxed in Christ's life until He vanquished it upon the Cross, is **the test of our divinity. Are we divine?** How must our divine powers express themselves? What can we do, or not do, because we are sons of God? That the details of each difficulty, test and trial may differ is relatively immaterial. That the tests may first be focused in one aspect of our lower nature or another is equally unimportant. **It is the general lifelong urge to divinity which is on trial.** To the man who is but a little evolved the problem of divinity as a whole does not present itself. He can be preoccupied only with the detail, with the problem in the immediate foreground of his life. This he handles or not, as the case may be by the light of conscience. **For the disciple,** the detail assumes less importance, and the general truth of his sonship begins slowly to concern him. He then handles his life conditions from the angle of that theory. **For a perfected son of God, such as the Christ, or for the man nearing perfection, the problem must be handled as a whole, and the life problem must be considered from the angle of divinity itself.** Such was the issue with Christ, and such the implications hidden in the devil's threefold "If."

[Page 117] "Rightly or wrongly, it seems to me that we have erred in interpreting all truth from the angle of the mediocre. That is what has been done. **Truth is capable of interpretation in many ways.** [AB describes truth here at three levels]. **Those who are simply physical-emotional beings** [describing the majority of humanity with Atlantean consciousness], with therefore little vision, require the protection of theology, despite its imperfections and dogmatic or untenable assertions. This they need, and the responsibility of those who administer dogmas to the "little ones" of the race is great. **Truth** must also be **given in a wider form,** and with a more general connotation **to those who are beginning to live consciously as souls,** and who can therefore be trusted to see the meaning behind the symbol and the significance behind the outer appearance of theology. **Truth, for the perfected sons of God,** must be something beyond our dreams, of so deep a significance and of such comprehensiveness that it is futile for us to speculate upon it, for it is something to be experienced and not to be dreamed; something to enter into and not to [imagine].

"Christ's reply each time should be viewed in this triple manner. **"It is written,"** He says, and the unthinking and small-minded regard this as endorsing the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. But surely, He was not referring back only to the ancient sayings of the Jewish

Scriptures, beautiful as they are. The possibilities of error are too great to warrant our unquestioning acceptance of every word in any scripture in the world. When the processes of translation are studied this becomes glaringly apparent. Christ meant something much deeper than "The Bible says." He meant that **the signature of God was upon Him; that He was the Word**, and that that **Word was the expression of truth**. It is **the Word of the soul** (which is the influx of divinity) **that determines our attitude in temptation and our response** to the problem presented by the devil. If that Word is remote, deep-hidden by the veiling form, only distorted sounds will issue forth, and the Word will not be potent enough to withstand the devil. The Word is written in the flesh, defaced and almost invisible though it may be through the activity [Page 118] of the lower nature; it is upon the mind that the Word sounds forth, carrying illumination and insight, distorted as yet though the vision may be, and the light scarcely seen. But the Word is there. **Some day each of us can say with power: "It is written," and see that Word expressed in every part of our human nature as individuals and—at some distant date—in humanity itself.** This is the "lost Word" of the Masonic tradition."

CONTEMPLATE the written "Word" (the Word of the Soul) in and through you.

MALA Contemplation / Words of Power:

"The Signature of God was Upon the Christ"

"The Signature of God is Upon Me"

"I am the Written Word"

"It is Written"

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CHRIST'S EXPERIENCE

(Esoteric Healing, 671)

“A close but esoteric study of the three temptations of the Christ will reveal three major occasions when the Perfect One, expressing this higher harmless, forced the exponent of evil to retreat. This triple episode is symbolically related, but is factual in nature. **Little thought has ever been given to what would have been the worldwide effect down the centuries if the Christ had not reacted as He did;** speculation is of little use, but **it might be stated that the entire course of history and of the evolutionary progress of humanity would have been altered, and in a dire and awful manner.** But the dynamic harmless, the expression of the will-to-good and the demonstration of the will-to-power (forcing evil to leave Him) marked a most important crisis in the life of the Christ. The Gospel story (with its resume of the five initiations) concerns the progress and triumph of the Master Jesus; the story of the three temptations indicated the taking of a still higher initiation, the sixth, by the Christ; this conferred on Him complete mastery over evil, and not mastery over imperfection; it was because He was the "Perfect One" that He could take this initiation.

I have given you much for mature consideration and thrown some light upon an initiation of which little, naturally, can be known. I would call your attention also to the three fundamental requirements for a successful approach to this initiation: **perfect poise, a completed point of view and divine understanding.** You would find it of interest to see how these three qualities work out in relation to the [Page 672] **three temptations; in so doing much light would be thrown on the life, nature and character of the Christ** [and your own evolving Christ nature].

CONTEMPLATE THE ABOVE ... with MALA Contemplations of your own making.



“Under the Law of Perfection we are given the key to the civilisation and cycle of evolution which He inaugurated—the ideal of which is not lost, though the application of the teaching He gave has been neglected by the churches and by mankind. You will note also that one temptation takes place on the summit of a high mountain; from that elevation both time and space are totally negated, for the vision of Christ ranged from the past, through the present and on into the future. This state of awareness (I cannot call it consciousness, and awareness is almost as inaccurate a word) is only possible after the fifth initiation, reaching a high point of expression at the sixth initiation.

I would like to consider with you the nature of the three requirements ...

These three basic requirements concern attainment on various planes of the universe; though I dealt with them in connection with the approach to the sixth initiation, they have— on a lower turn of the spiral—their correspondences, and are therefore of practical application by the initiated disciple, particularly one who has taken *[or is in process of taking]* the third initiation. Let us take them, one by one, into our thinking:

Perfect Poise indicates complete control of the astral body, so that emotional upheavals are overcome, or at [Page 673] least are greatly minimized in the life of the disciple. It indicates also, on the higher turn of the spiral, an ability to function freely on buddhic levels, owing to complete liberation (and consequent poise) from all the influences and impulses which are motived from the three worlds. This type or quality of poise connotes—if you will think deeply—an abstract state of mind; nothing which is regarded as nonperfection can create disturbance. You can realize surely that, if you were entirely free from all emotional reactions, your clarity of mind and your ability to think clearly would be enormously increased, with all that that involves

Naturally, **the perfect poise of an initiated disciple and that of the initiated Master are different, for one concerns the effect of the three worlds or their non-effect, and the other concerns adaptability to the rhythm of the Spiritual Triad; nevertheless, the earlier type of poise must precede the later achievement, hence my consideration of the subject.** This perfect poise (which is a possible achievement for you who read) is arrived at by **ruling out the pulls, the urges, impulses and attractions of the astral or emotional nature, and also by the practice of what I have earlier mentioned: Divine Indifference.**

A Completed Point of View. This necessarily and primarily **refers to the universal outlook of the Monad, and therefore to an initiate of the higher degrees.** It can, however, **be interpreted on a lower rung of the ladder of evolution and refers to the function of the soul as an Observer in the three worlds and the completed all-round picture such an observer gradually attains.** This is brought about by the development of the two qualities of **detachment and discrimination.** These two qualities, [Page 674] when expressed on the Way to the Higher Evolution, become **Abstraction and the Will-to-good.**

A completed point of view-as experienced on soul levels—indicates the removal of all barriers and the freedom of the disciple from the great heresy of separateness; he has therefore created an unlogged channel for the inflow of pure love. Perfect poise, viewed from the same level, has removed all impediments and those emotional factors which have hitherto blocked the channel, thus preparing the way for the Observer to see truly; the disciple then functions as a clear channel for love.

Divine Understanding must also be studied from two points of view. **As a soul quality, it indicates a mind which can be held steady in the light, and can therefore reflect the pure reason (pure love) which qualifies the reflections of the Son of Mind, the soul on its own plane.** **On the higher Way of the Master,** it relates to that identification which supersedes the individualistic consciousness; all barriers have gone, and **the initiate sees things as they are**; he **knows the causes** of which all phenomena are the ephemeral effects. This, consequently, **enables Him to understand the Purpose**, as it emanates from Shamballa, just as the **lesser initiate understands the Plan as it is formulated by the Hierarchy.**

All three of these divine attributes are, in some measure, essential in the development of the initiate-healer; he must work at their unfoldment as part of his necessary equipment; he must know that all reactions of an emotional nature create a wall or barrier between the free flow of healing force and the patient, and that the barrier is created by him and not by the patient. The emotions of the [Page 675] patient should have no effect upon the healer and should fail to deviate him from the intense concentration needed for his work; these emotions of the patient cannot in themselves create a barrier strong enough to deflect the healing force.

A completed point of view involves at least the attempt by the disciple to penetrate into the world of causes, and thus learn (if possible) what it is that is responsible for the disease of the patient. This need not involve penetration into previous incarnations, nor is that essential, in spite of what some modern and generally fraudulent healers may claim. There is usually enough psychological evidence, or indications of inherited tendencies, to give the healer his clue and to enable him to get a somewhat complete picture of the situation. It is obvious that this "penetration" into the causes of the trouble will only be possible if the healer loves enough; because he loves, he has achieved a poise which brings negation to the world of illusion and of glamour. **Divine understanding is simply the application of the principle of pure love (pure reason) to all men and to all circumstances, plus right interpretation of the existing difficulties ...**

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Insert MALA Contemplations – of your own making

NOTE: Words inserted in [brackets] are our own for clarification.