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The Lord's Prayer, the Pastor's Prayer

The Sixth Petition

Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:4: Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν.

Downtown in the park, where people rest or loiter or stand in groups to air their opinions and to match mind with mind, an insolent mouth blurted out the blasphemous derision: "Jesus Christ is a sinner. He was tempted as we are. He permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan and played with hell-fire as every sinner does. He tempted His own friend Philip, and temptation is a sin." Immediately he heard the rebuke: "Jesus Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The testimony of many was refreshing, and their sharp reproof from the Scripture silenced the blasphemer.

We observe that *πειρασμός* is a word used in a good and in an evil sense, but always with the idea of test, trial, probation. In some instances its derivatives have the simple meaning of an attempt, or effort, made in spite of the element of doubt, which is always present during and to the end of the trial. The process of tempting may be applied to oneself as in self-examination. Because this word has so many meanings, the many words listed as synonyms must be chosen carefully for the proper expression of thought. Not every temptation carries with it the principle of a net or lure or enticement. We must distinguish between temptation to good and temptation to evil, the former being a probing by test and examination to establish a good end, the latter being deception to accomplish a sinister purpose.

We try to trace the process of thought in the mind of the *tentator ad malum*. He conceives a sinister motive directed against his victim. He studies well the character, the wants, the circumstances, of his victim. He prepares argument, persuasion, appeals to the emotions, tastes, and appetites. Now he forms a plan with the design of placing himself at an advantage and the victim at a disadvantage in order to accomplish his evil intention. Whatever means appeal to him most, such as power of persecution, or trick, fraud, ruse, he will employ in his campaign. If his operations do not terminate in success at the first attack, he restudies his approaches and tactics to abuse and injure.

The *tentator ad bonum*, as he purposes the improvement of his charge, keeps in mind the advantages to be derived from the experiences prepared for the charge. Since his intentions are good, he studiously avoids all foul play and sinful means and observes only legitimate procedure. The tempter to good never stoops to the axiom: The end justifies the means.

The reaction to temptation in the mind of the tempted is the obligation of a moral and spiritual choice. Either he will comply, or he will object. He may experience a severe struggle. He may shrink timidly from the ordeal, or he may face it with fortitude. He may surrender to defeat; he may fight and obtain the victory. The issue will leave its effects on his circumstances, on his body and soul, for time, perhaps for eternity. The temptation to good also requires a choice as well as an effort on the part of the tempted, if its purpose is to be attained.

The compound verb εἰσφέρειν is followed by the preposition εἰς. According to A. T. Robertson (*Grammar*, p. 559), this construction is common usage. Some therefore regard it as of no greater force than the simple form. The compound denotes an act of motion, a carrying into, a leading into. Moulton and Milligan (*The Vocabulary III*) illustrate the varied uses of the word from the papyri: carrying to, bringing forward to, paying to, contributing to. The Vulgate translates with the word *induco*. The meaning can be rendered by the word induce or induct. If either is employed, the repeated preposition will appear also in the translation: Induce, or induct, us not into temptation. The R. V. renders "bring." The *Pulpit Commentary* (Vol. 33, 256) suggests "put," or "place," or "abandon." The *Expositor's Gr. Test.* translates "expose." All these do not convey the idea underlying the original εἰσφέρειν: carry into; which is avoided because the translator or expositor recoils with horror from the intimation or suggestion that the holy and gracious Father carries, or leads, some into temptation to evil. Nor can we deny that we shudder at that blasphemous thought. Nevertheless we cannot substitute another word for εἰσφέρειν, and εἰσφέρειν demands the presence of the εἰσφέρων and implies that he moves before, or carries as he moves, in the direction suggested by his will. Jesus teaches us to pray that the Lord may not suffer us to arrive at the end designed by the tempter.

Most certainly the act of tempting a person to evil is sin. God forbids it with the threat of awful woes. Satan committed sins when he tempted to evil Eve, and Job, and Jesus. The children of the world sin when they propose sin to the children of God by threat or by allurements. Failing Christians sin when their sinful nature entices their fellow men into paths of unrighteousness. The act of yielding to temptation to evil is sin. Eve yielded. David, Peter, Demas surrendered. They sinned by consenting to evil. Tempting to evil by foul means is sin. Though the maneuvering tempter may succeed in covering his evil aim with a show of good and right, nevertheless he commits sin. Temptation to good by deception or persecution is sin. It is heartless and uncharitable to contrive evil and expose a person to it. Call the damnable

scheme diplomacy, shrewdness, a white lie; nevertheless it is sin. Tempting to good is not sin, if the plan and procedure is not polluted with sin. Who is sufficient for this thing? God only. True, we who are pastors probe, examine, test, ourselves and others; but none of us boasts the ability to εἰσφέρειν εἰς πειρασμὸν πρὸς ἀγαθόν.

The last three petitions form a triad of which the first and last speak of evil: sin in the Fifth Petition and evil in the Seventh. The Sixth is joined to the Fifth by *καὶ* and to the Seventh with *ἀλλὰ*. There can be no doubt that the *πειρασμός* in this petition signifies temptation to evil.

God has the prerogative to tempt to good, to try us, our faith, our love to Him, our love to the brethren, the quality of our virtues. Jesus tried Philip: Τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν πειράζων αὐτόν (John 6:6). Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fire among you πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη . . . ἀλλὰ . . . χαίρετε (1 Pet. 4:12,13). While we pray in the Sixth Petition that the Father would not lead us into temptation, we pray in Ps. 139: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Do we not submit with confidence to a physical examination by a competent physician? How much more should we as dear children approach the Father fearlessly with the petition: Search me, try me, see, lead me. He loves us, and His hands are tender, and His comfort is sweet. "Den Geprueften will Gott Gelegenheit geben, Proben eines heiligen Wohlverhaltens abzulegen, das fuer andere ein Vorbild, fuer sie selbst eine Quelle neuer Kraft und neuen Lichtes wird. Darum kommt Gott bald mit Wohltaten an uns heran, die unsere Erkenntlichkeit auf die Probe stellen, bald mit Geboten, die ein Opfer, eine Verleugnung erfordern, wie bei Abraham, 1 Mos. 12:1, und dem reichen Juengling, Luk. 18:18 . . . bald laesst er Noete, Kreuz und Truebsale, Widerwaertigkeiten und schwere Zeiten ueber uns hereinbrechen." (Fronmueller, *Bibl. Woerterbuch*.) We can never forget how the Lord tested and strengthened the faith of that Syrophoenician woman. Paul glories in the trials by which God trained his trust. Though the child of God may tremble while passing through supreme affliction, yet he draws closer to the Father, lifts his eyes to the face of the Father, and prays: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by Thy right hand," etc. (Ps. 73:23-26). We glory in tribulation also. (Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:12.) Before the Holy Spirit exhorts us to endure chastening, in which temptation to good is included, He leads in triumph before our eyes that great army of heroic conquerors, and finally He reintroduces the great Champion and Captain of our salvation, to whom we should look. (Heb. 11 and 12.) No child of God has ever regretted the temptations

to good at the Father's hand, but only his own weakness and failing in the test.

Whereas the Father tries His children and they desire to be exercised in faith and virtue; and whereas we are taught to pray for the Father's temptations to good; and whereas the words, the construction, the context, indicate the sense of the Sixth Petition to be that the Father would not lead us into temptation to evil: therefore the inevitable logical conclusion seems to be: the Father leads into temptation to evil.

Against this conclusion we have the statement: God Himself tempts no one (James 1:13). Evidently the context there indicates that the temptation spoken of is temptation to evil. In fact, all Scripture agrees that the purpose of the temptations designed by God is always good. Records such as 2 Sam. 24:1 offer no difficulty when we consult the original text and study the parallel passages. God indeed tempts no one to evil. Nor does God tempt by evil in the sense of sin. He is accused of urging Abraham to commit murder to prove his greater love to God. But His accusers confuse terms the definitions of which they will not learn. Job considered all his afflictions as evil received at the hand of God (Job 2:10), and in all this did not Job sin with his lips. God consented to Job's terminology. The Holy Spirit helps us to interpret those evils that seem to be grievous merely as tribulation and chastening. (Heb. 12:11; James 5:11; John 16:33.) God never becomes the *causa peccati*. He controls Satan and all evil. He knows our strength and our weakness. He supplies us with all the weapons that we might stand as invincible. No temptation is ever too severe, thank God. (1 Cor. 10:13.) The axiom of Scripture is ever true: The *tentatio seductionis* is of the devil, the world, and the flesh; the *tentatio probationis* is of the Father. Whoever succumbs to the former falls by his own fault; whoever obtains the victory receives it only by the Father's grace and protection. When God sets the ungodly in slippery places, He has already judged them and cast them off. (Ps. 73:18, 19; Rom. 1:24.) Passages which refer to God's final judgment upon the sinner, convey the terrible fact that the sinner is now seduced by Satan and fallen beyond God's grace. The idea of temptation is excluded from the records of such final judgments.

Since the Sixth Petition refers to the *tentatio seductionis*, and since God does not tempt to evil, what can be the purpose of praying this petition?

Doubtless the Savior impresses upon us by the choice of words and by the form of this petition that we must banish the logical conclusion, at which reason arrives, that the Father leads into temptation to evil. He magnifies the holiness, the righteousness,

the faithfulness of the Father, and He encourages the children to accept by faith what the unbelieving mind rejects. This petition is designed to teach us that we are living in a dangerous world, where we are dangerous to ourselves because of the sinful propensities of our flesh, and where the dangerous and roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour. The Christian who prays these words will not expose himself to the danger of sinful compliance, nor will he ever agree to be the instrument to vex others and lead them astray. He will not argue with the devil. He will fight the good fight of faith and stand in the whole armor of God. Mindful of God's many warnings against self-reliance, wiser by the sad experiences of others, ashamed of his own defeats, he appeals to the Father in humility and dependence. Expressing his dread and his distrust of self and at times shrinking from the ordeal of battle, he confesses his trust and confidence in the Father that nothing will separate him from His love and that he will be more than conqueror. "Lead me, then, lead me safely past all dangers; guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Luther's masterly exposition of this petition cannot be surpassed.

The pastor prays, "Lead us not into temptation." He is Christ's undershepherd and has a charge to keep. He moves among the sheep. He senses and sees the many dangers. Luther summarizes them as misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice. The immediate context reminds us of temptation to uncharitableness and of temptation to use justification as a license for sin. The broader context suggests the presence of undue cares and worries, of rebellion against the Father's will, of indifference to the Kingdom, of ungodly life and false doctrine. No good shepherd finds comfort in the circumstance that the flocks of other shepherds are diseased and exposed to many dangers. He will pasture his sheep, and he will protect them: lead us not into temptation, that "the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity" (Ps. 125:3). The pastor will ask God for wisdom when he plans to prove and to provoke his flock to good. (2 Cor. 8:8, δοκιμάζειν.)

The pastor is concerned in the kingdom at large. The enemies have hidden everywhere snares and pitfalls for every department of the Church. Bold-faced and impudent Satan, who attacked the Lord Jesus, studies each situation in the Church, even to the weakness of the individual leader. He uses our sins for his armor. (Theophylact.) In our college days we were told that he is most active in the institutions for the training of pastors and teachers. He moves about in our elementary schools. His temptations may be of a different design and his approach more stealthy, but no less

severe, in our conferences. We must look diligently lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble us and thereby many be defiled. (Heb. 12:15.) With the last great tribulation comes the great hour of temptation (Rev. 3:10), in which iniquity abounds and the love of many shall wax cold. Let us hold with an iron grip the spiritual treasures of the soul and run with patience the race that is set before us. As we and our congregations rally under the Cross of Christ for the last battle, we ever join in the prayer: Lead us not into temptation, but "Preserve in wave and tempest Thy storm-tossed little flock; Assailed by wind and weather, May it endure each shock." (Hymn 264.)

And what shall we say of the faithful and wise servant, the pastor who prays this petition? The old saying still obtains: In temptation the strong is weak, and the weak is strong. *Tentatio*, together with *oratio* and *meditatio*, makes the theologian. At times it seems as though the *tentatio* constitutes the greater factor in the training, and the opponents in the strife seem unevenly matched. The pastor faces three enemies: the devil, the world, his flesh. No, the three enemies assault the pastor and Jesus, for Jesus has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The Lord Jesus is on the side of the pastor in this lifelong combat. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Ἐνδυναμῶν με, the Strengtheners of me, is the name of Jesus. Temptations grow in number and kind as the pastor takes up the burdens of his parishioners and assists the child, the youth, the aged, to overcome temptation. Some in the flock weary him with inexcusable opposition. His sensitive nature smarts under the consciousness of his own failings, and he feels that he stands in his own way. Does he seek refuge in retirement to his pastor's study as to monastic death, or does he face the fight with fortitude and courage to obtain the victory? He withdraws to his closet not as a beaten man but to give the final blow to the adversary. Also to the pastor in office the Holy Spirit says: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man": temptation by the same enemies, to the same end, with the same means, yet under the control of the Keeper who neither sleeps nor slumbers, and ever in proportion to the pastor's strength of faith. For "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." The way of escape is already prepared. Jesus is the ἑκβασίς.

A temptation quite common to pastors is pastoral fatigue. This does not mean that they are tired of their office, but tired in their office. Under the withered gourd sits the Lord's Prophet, fatigued and sulking. He wants to die. "It is better for me to die than to live." Under the juniper tree lies the weary Prophet. He wants to die. "Take now my soul from me." He has spent

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himself in the service of God. In prison the persecuted Apostle writes: "I have a desire to depart." He does not complain, but he wishes to be with Christ. We thank God that He did not consume Jonah in His anger. We thank Him that He directed Elias and Paul to greater service. His last word to brave Daniel is His gracious acknowledgment of that faithful servant's endurance, and the promise of rest in victory: "Go . . . thou shalt rest and stand." (Dan. 12:13; Is. 40:29.)

The commonest temptation besetting the pastor is the temptation to unfaithfulness to Jesus in doctrine, practice, and life. The pastor is also his own mouthpiece when he confesses at the altar: "We have sinned against Thee in desires, thoughts, words, and deeds." He admits that he has fallen in temptation. He is thankful to be standing again. His comfort is not that all the Apostles stumbled and fell; his excuse is not that his flesh is weak but his spirit willing. His comfort and joy is his restoration by the Lord. A long catalog of temptations can be compiled by rereading the form for the installation of a pastor contrariwise, not aflush with self-pity, but as the watchful and prayerful shepherd. In this catalog we mark the common temptation to stubbornness, to the superiority complex, to unevangelical practice, to uncharitableness, to shallowness. To sleepy theologians Jesus said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." And while we meditate on the ever-repeated temptations that we ourselves must conquer, we think of the brethren in other parts of the world, in whom the same afflictions are accomplished. (1 Pet. 5:8, 9.) In our prayer we include those fellow pastors who suffer privation and prison, or whose immediate task it is to re-assemble their congregations as they return from the battlefields.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12). "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Portions of this article first appeared in the *Journal of Religion* and are being reprinted by courtesy of The University of Chicago Press.

From the *Centifolium Lutheranicum* of Johannes Albertus Fabricius, published 1728—1730, to the publication of the *Bibliographical Guide to the History of Christianity*, compiled by S. J. Case and others two centuries later, there are few works of that nature which do not list the *Historia Lutheranismi* of Veit Ludwig, Baron