



Demonic Temptations

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: 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. 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. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Matthew 4: 1-11

"This is the way the demons work; after causing a soul to fall into sin, then they cast us into despair to destroy us completely. The demons are always saying to the soul: 'When will his name die and be destroyed? (Ps. 40:6). If the soul is one of sobriety, it will answer them and say 'I shall die but live, and declare the works of the Lord' (Ps. 117:17).

Again he said: 'Do you be the door-keeper of your heart. And so that no alien may enter therein, say: 'Are you on our side or the adversary's?'"

Sayings of a Certain Egyptian Elder, THE SPIRITUAL MEADOW of John Moschos

1. "When the devil sees that our intellect has prayed from the heart, he makes a powerful attack with subtle temptations; but he does not bother to destroy the lesser virtues by such powerful attacks."
Saint Kosmas Aitolos +1779
2. "Just as the thieves are hidden in shady areas to rob the passerby, thus the devil hides in enjoyments to overcome our soul."
Saint Basil the Great
3. "The demons have also the following trick. They cry out the names of those whom they know to have none of the merits of holiness and to possess none of the fruits of the Spirit. They pretend to be burnt up by the merits of such people and to take flight from the bodies of the possessed.

Deuteronomy has this to say about such persons: 'If a prophet should arise among you or a man claiming visionary dreams, and if he foretells a sign and a portent, and if what he says should actually happen, and if he should say to you, "Let us go and follow strange gods who are unknown to you and let us serve them," do not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. For the Lord your God is putting you to the test, bringing out into the open whether or not you love Him with all your heart and with all your should (Deuteronomy 13: 1 - 3).

And in the gospel he says this: 'Fake Christs and fake prophets will rise up and they will perform great signs and wonders so that if possible even the chosen will be led into error' (Matthew 24:24)."

St. John Cassian, "Conferences," - (Trans Colm Luibheid, New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 174 - 176

4. "If we desire to acquire faith -- the foundation of all blessings, the door to God's mysteries, unflagging defeat of our enemies, the most necessary of all the virtues, the wings of prayer and the dwelling of God within our soul -- we must endure every trial imposed by our enemies and by our many and various thoughts.

Only the inventor of evil, the devil, can perceive these thoughts or uncover and describe them. But we should take courage; because if we forcibly triumph over the trials and temptations that befall us, and keep control over our intellect so that it does not give in to the thoughts that spring up in our heart, we will once and for all overcome all the passions; for it will not be we who are victorious, but Christ, who is present in us through faith."

St. Peter of Damaskos, "God's Universal And Particular Gifts", from G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Bishop Kallistos Ware, "The Philokalia: Vol. III," (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), pp. 172 - 173.

The third kind of healing is a trick and deception worked by demons. A man caught up in obvious wrongdoing is an object of admiration of being a holy man and a servant of God and he becomes, for evil spirits, the means of enticing others to imitate him even to the extent of doing wrong like him. The way is now open for scandal and even the sanctity of religion is maligned. And it is quite certainly the case that this man who credits himself with the gift of healing is brought crashing down all the harder because of the pride in his heart.

REF: St. John Cassian, "Conferences," - (Trans Colm Luibheid, New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 174 - 176

Sources: <http://www.saintkatherineorthodoxchurch.org/patristics/demonictemptations.htm>

http://www.orthodox.net/gleanings/demonic_deceptions.html