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## PASSION AND PATIENCE

ONE OF THE TEMPTATIONS of our Lord, recorded in Luke's Gospel, is directly related to the scene of Passion and Patience. We are told that the Son of God, "being filled with the Holy Ghost, was led into the wilderness by the Spirit, to be tempted by Satan" (Luke 4:1–2). The devil shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world with all their wealth and power and offers them as a trade for the simple act of obeisance. The proposition is that our Lord bypass the suffering and humiliation of the Cross and have His reward *right now*. He is offered satisfaction without travail of soul. It was a real temptation to a real humanity with real consequences.

The "sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the immediate" mentality is beautifully illustrated in Passion, who is the spoiled, pouting, sulking child of the "now generation." He represents the men of this world "who will have all now"—men who are involved in the relentless accumulation of goods, pleasures, trinkets and toys. But is not the passion for immediate possession of goods a form of idolatry? It is precisely on this point that Satan attacks the Son of God in His humanity—encouraging Him to commit idolatry by forsaking the Cross and choosing temporary pleasures instead.

Patience, on the other hand, waits as Jesus did in refusing Satan's offer, knowing that the pleasures of this world are tempo-

rary and fleeting. Jesus' temptation was no phantom temptation. He was "in all points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). Yet, the Scripture tells us that Jesus, "who *for the joy that was set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2).

Passion and Patience are two figures with whom we all must deal. For the believing Christian, Passion is part of the remaining corruption rising up within us and waging a great battle in the human breast, pitting "have it now" against "wait for the greater glory."

Paul encouraged the Corinthian church:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17–18).

Although it may seem contradictory to say that we are looking at things we cannot see, the Bible tells us these realities will be our possession forever. On the other hand, the trinkets and toys that accompany our present condition are things we can see and touch and taste but are transient and vanishing at best.

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