

Orders, within the pale of the one reunited Church. I cannot, I fear, with Dr. Stock, include in my dream of the future our abandonment of the privilege of Establishment. By taking this step we should lose the hold the Church of England now has on men—and I have known many such—who say to the various denominations, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,” but feel themselves prevented by what they consider to be narrow dogmatic definitions from attaching themselves to any particular religious body. On the other hand, we might remove from ourselves the reproach of Erastianism by obtaining from the State a reasonable measure of self-government for the Church, with a Parliamentary veto to prevent legislation of which the people at large would disapprove. Such, in outline at least, is my dream, and I see nothing but prejudice and faint-heartedness on our parts which can hinder it from being realized. But bearing in mind the touching prayer of our Lord, recorded by St. John as having been uttered just before His death, I think the cause of home reunion, to say nothing of reunion on a larger scale, is one to which a man might well be ready to devote his life.



## The Evidential Value of the Temptation.

BY THE REV. H. M. SANDERS, M.A.

THE student of Christian evidences may find, it seems to us, more material for his use in the record of the Temptation than the treatises on that subject commonly point out to him. The narrative, independently of the actual words used in the first Temptation, “If Thou *art* the Son of God” (Ἐὶ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ,<sup>1</sup> which does not express a doubt, but a claim on the part of the Person addressed), bears directly both on the question of the character and the nature of Jesus Christ.

1. *As to the Character of Christ.*—The modern interpretation, which makes the temptations in each case to be addressed

<sup>1</sup> R.V., St. Matt. iv. 3.

to the highest and noblest aspirations of Jesus as *Messiah*, shows us that there is the most marked contrast imaginable between the Temptation of Christ and that of the ripest of the saints who have borne His name. For example, however mistaken some of the views and ideals of St. Antony the Solitary were, none can deny the true "saintliness" of his character. Yet his enthusiastic admirer and disciple, St. Athanasius, has left us a record of his temptations by the devil and his attendant demons, which, though they may have been the product of "the morbid action of a restless intellect in the silence and loneliness of the desert,"<sup>1</sup> reveal, as all temptation reveals, even in the case of that great saint, the unplumbed depths of evil in the heart of sinful man. It seems that even when you have emphasized as strongly as you can that the temptation came to Jesus "from without," the fact still remains that that only can "tempt" from without which can find some lodgment or some *point d'appui* within. Take the summary of St. Chrysostom<sup>2</sup>—*τα γὰρ μυρία συνέχοντα κάκα ταῦτα ἐστὶ—τὸ γαστρί δουλεῦειν, τὸ πρὸς κευδοξίαν τί ποιεῖν, τὸ μανίᾳ χρημάτων ὑπεύθυνον εἶναι*—this great Father would have us learn that the Temptation shows us the evil of and the method of escape from this triple summary of the myriad forms of evil;—the "being enslaved to the belly"; the "doing things for vainglory," and the "being subject to the mania for (great) possessions." Now, it is true that in a *derivative* sense we may learn these salutary lessons from the Temptation of Jesus, but not *directly*. Christ, according to our view, was not tempted *personally* with these. The Temptation of the Messiah consists in the appeal to Him to recognize that mankind is so tempted, and to make His appeal to men on that basis. In His personal immunity from all such attack, we have one of the strongest, because *indirect*, evidences of His sinlessness. Here, if anywhere, we might have expected the Evangelists to trip if they were portraying any other than a strictly historical figure. The task of imagining a *sinless* man

<sup>1</sup> Art. "Antonius," "Dic. Christian Biog.," vol. i., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. St. Matt. iv.

was hard enough, without complicating it by the portrayal of a fictitious Temptation. But there is no such failure. The narrative is perfectly consistent with the rest of the portrait of Christ. The apparently impossible is achieved, and that in the simplest and most natural manner possible. Real evil, a real tempter assail the Sinless, and that by appeal not to any latent conformity of His nature, however deep-seated and remote, with what is sinful, but by the effort to direct His sinless beneficence, His loving patriotism, and His sovereign consciousness into other channels than those appointed for them by the will of God. Even though it might be urged in favour of a more "personal" view of the Temptation that there was nothing inherently sinful in an appeal to avoid death by starvation; even "if," in the words of the late Professor Mill,<sup>1</sup> "the highest virtue does not exclude the instinct inseparable from humanity, to which pain is an object of dread and pleasure of desire; which prefers ease and quiet to tumult and vexation, the regard and esteem of others to their scorn and aversion; to which ill-requited toil and experienced unkindness are sources of corroding anguish and depression—this very conjuncture which presents but one of these objects of dread as the concomitant of doing God's will, or associates one of these desirable opposites with neglect or disobedience—every such conjuncture must produce a conflict between duty and these necessary instincts of humanity sufficient to constitute temptation in the strictest sense"; yet it must be granted that on any other theory than the "Messianic" one the last Temptation presents insuperable difficulties. Whether it be regarded, as St. Chrysostom said, as an attempt to appeal to τὸ μανία χρημάτων ὑπεύθυνον εἶναι (the desire for great possessions), or more generally as addressed to what St. John calls "the vainglory of life" (ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου), if Christ was personally tempted with these things, then it is hard to believe in the reality of His sinlessness. It seems to us that here is the crucial test. Fallen man has in the pride of his

<sup>1</sup> "Five Sermons on the Temptation Preached before University of Cambridge," 1844, p. 5.

nature the most subtle of his foes. Its appeal is to no gross sin ; it is capable of dissembling itself under the most plausible of disguises. What we learn of the character of Christ from the rest of the Gospel story would lead us to expect that there would be the greatest unlikelihood of even this form of evil seducing Him from His whole-hearted allegiance to God. We approach the Temptation with the inquiry whether what is there told us fits in with our preconceived ideas of the character of Christ, and we find that the test is triumphantly survived. It is not that the evil came to Him with any personal appeal ; it comes to Him as it comes to all men, but perforce it must assume a special form. It may not hope to awake in Him any vainglorious self-love ; it can only attack the purpose of His life, and that indirectly. It is the effort to turn Him from His *οἰκονομία*, as Chrysostom and other Fathers call it. It appeals to Him to recognize the good that lies behind the social order, and on the basis of that recognition to use His master-hand to disentangle the good from the evil, and to build the Kingdom of God on existing foundations, without the upheaval of life involved in an entirely fresh beginning. This is the only way we can conceive a sinless man to be tempted, and this is the way in which the Christ is assailed.

When "the summary of evil" comes to His assault, it finds no niche or cranny in the polished granite of His perfection in which it can insert the thinnest edge of the wedge of temptation. The most it can hope for is that His mind should fail in statesmanship, in foresight ; that He should seize upon the moment's advantage and so lose the final good.

How foolish this tempter ! He can foresee ; he recognizes clearly enough that the Cross means his downfall, and yet he imagines that there is a chance that his Opponent will be less clear-sighted ! No wonder that he failed !

2. The Temptation also provides us with evidence on the subject of *the Person of Christ*.

If He be man alone, however great and good ; if He be merely a reformer and a prophet, however inspired, then this

record, which comes to us from information which He Himself must have given, reveals Him as possessing a self-consciousness which it would not be too strong to describe as pretentious and bombastic in the last degree. He would then be presented to us as a man claiming that the fortunes of the race centre in himself, that on his decisions as to his line of action hang the solutions of the greatest problems with which humanity is faced. Other prophets and reformers have felt, and felt rightly, that on them depended whether their contemporaries should advance a step or two along the road which leads to the final solution. With the Christ it is not a question of a single step, or even of a dozen, but of the ultimate issue itself.

We will go further, and say that, if Christ be *merely* man, then the Temptation never had objective reality. The very existence of such a story on that supposition reveals Him as unfolding to His disciples an account of an imaginary conflict intended to create a false impression as to His own importance. It is the boast of the charlatan pretending that even the devil recognizes that he wields supernatural power. It reduces Him to the level of an hysterical enthusiast.

But once it is granted that Christ is Son of God, all becomes simple, natural, inevitable. The Son of God *has* such a mission, and *does* wield such authority. The "Prince of this world" must make what effort he can to turn Him from His purpose, and in so doing only reveals the more clearly the authority of Him whose power he fears. Our Great High Priest is tempted "according to all the laws of temptation (κατὰ πάντα) like as we are"; His human nature is tried in the furnace as we are tried, but *χωρίς ἁμαρτίας* ("without sin"), and in the strength of that victory we are strong. He is tried and tested under the conditions made imperative by the mission of Him who came into the world to reveal the Father and to atone for sin. The "laws of temptation" demand that He should be tempted in accordance with His circumstances, and His circumstances are those of the Christ, perfectly human and perfectly Divine.

NOTE.—In this connection I may be allowed to quote the words of the latest of the compilers of a biography of Jesus—David Smith, M.A., in his

brilliant work, "The Days of His Flesh," pp. 40, 41: "His Temptation in the wilderness most strikingly evinces the sinlessness of our blessed Lord. When Saul of Tarsus retired to the desert of Arabia, he was haunted by the remembrance of his 'exceeding madness' against Jesus and His saints. It clung to him all his life, and during that season of retirement he would mourn over it, and vow with sore contrition to make the future, so far as he could, a reparation of the past. But far otherwise was Jesus employed during His sojourn in the wilderness. He could look back without regret or shame. It was not the past which concerned Him, but the future; and His only thought was how He should do the Father's will and accomplish the work which He had given Him to do. The past had left no regret, and He faced the future, not with tears of penitence and vows of reparation, but with a prayer for guidance, and a steadfast resolution to recognize no law save the Father's will and seek no end save His glory. It was a spotless life that the Messiah consecrated to the work of the world's redemption."



## The Case of the Curates.

BY THE REV. BARTON R. V. MILLS, M.A.

THE falling off in the supply of clergy is a common subject of complaint. The number of candidates for Holy Orders has been steadily falling for many years, while that of candidates for other professions has as steadily risen. This is generally attributed to the poor worldly prospects which the Church offers to its ministers in comparison with other occupations. This, no doubt, is one of the causes, but by no means the only one. There are still many clergymen who can disregard this consideration. There never is the least difficulty in filling a "living," however small the stipend may be.

With a curacy the case is very different, as many vicars know to their cost. The dearth is really one, not of *clergymen*, but of *curates*. This suggests that one cause of the diminution of candidates may be the unsatisfactory position of this latter class of clergy. That there is wide dissatisfaction at that position hardly admits of doubt. It may be at once admitted that the grievance is not mainly financial. Scandalously low as is the payment of all the clergy, curates, as a class, are probably less