

Lastly, it is perhaps worth while, just to allude to the tradition that St. Luke was a painter, and especially distinguished for his portraits of the Virgin Mary. It cannot be said that the tradition is an early one, or that it is worthy of the faintest credence; but it may perhaps have been shaped in accordance with an earlier tradition, and at least it embodies a belief in a connexion of some kind between St. Luke and the Virgin, which we have seen, from internal evidence, to be extremely probable.

And now to sum up. I have tried in this paper, *not* to harmonize the two accounts of our Lord's Nativity (to do that completely and satisfactorily is perhaps now impossible), but *to discover the points of view of the narrators*. If this has been done satisfactorily, if we are once clear on this head, and convinced that the story is really given to us from two different sides, it will lead us to expect variety, or at least to be patient of it; and it will help us to understand how the two accounts, strikingly different as they are, may nevertheless both be true, and both be the work of men who were inspired by that Spirit "who divideth to each one severally as He will."

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CHRIST AND THE ANGELS.

HEBREWS ii. Ver. 17, 18.

THE general structure of the argument of Verse 17 has been explained in a former paper; we come now to the details, and here we note (1) the function of the high priest, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people." The construction of *ἰλάσκεσθαι* with the accusative *ἁμαρτίας* is unusual, but does not present any difficulty, being in fact equivalent to *ἐξιλάσκεσθαι ἁμαρτίαν* which,

though not used in the LXX. of the Canonical books is common in post-canonical Greek, and frequent in Ecclesiasticus. In Theodotion's version of Daniel ix. 24, ἐξιλάσασθαι ἀδικίας answers to the Hebrew *kipper* 'awôn; and here, no doubt, it is the high-priestly propitiation, *kap-pârah*, on the great day of atonement, that is in the mind of the Apostle. The sins expiated are those of the λαός, that is, of Israel, the people of God (Chap. ix. ^).

The general function of atoning acts in the Old Testament is not disputed. The course of those benefits which Israel receives from the covenant God is liable to interruption from the sins of the people. That these sins are not imputed as a disturbing element in the covenant standing of the people, is expressed in the services of the day of atonement; in which the people approach the sanctuary in the guise of penitents, but through the high-priestly atonement obtain that access to God within the veil which shews that their persons are accepted, and that their sins have not broken the flow of covenant blessings. This atoning ordinance is not final. It is repeated from year to year; not to wipe out the sins of each new season, but because each act falls short of the requirements of a true atonement, and does not remove from the worshippers the consciousness of sin (Chap. x. 2). Strictly speaking, it is only the shadow of an atonement to come; but at least it serves to shew what the Church needs, namely, a way of access to God in which the people can find all help and grace from on high without the intervening consciousness of sin.

(2) Now the Apostle takes it for granted that, to be a high priest and secure the access of a weak and sinful people to God, Jesus must Himself be in all things like his brethren. This really needs no proof; for, as appears in Chapter v. Verse 1, it is the very definition of a priest that he is taken *from* men, to stand *for* men in things regarding

God. His position is that of a representative; and no one can be a fit representative of others save in virtue of what he has in common with them. It is to be observed, however, that the Apostle lays stress on certain qualifications for office, which Jesus has in virtue of his earthly experience but which cannot be said to be prominent in what we read of the Old Testament priesthood. By being made in all things like to his brethren, Jesus is a high priest *ἐλεήμων*, merciful, and *πιστός*, trustworthy and loyal in the discharge of his duty. How far are these Old Testament ideas? We read in 1 Samuel ii. 35, that God (having destroyed Eli's house) will raise up *a faithful priest* (*ἱερέα πιστόν*) who will do all that is in God's mind. On the other hand, the predicate *קַדִּישׁ, קַדִּישׁ אִישׁ*, which would correspond to *ἐλεήμων*, is nowhere used of the priests,¹ and from the time of Hophni and Phinehas downward the great fault of the priests was their frequent lack of sympathy with the people. They were eager exactors of their own rights, but rather delighted in the sins of the people, which proved to them a source of revenue (Hosea iv.). In the later period of Jewish history, under the degenerate Hasmoneans and in New Testament times, the priestly aristocracy of the Sadducees was notoriously unfeeling and cruel. The Sadducees, says Josephus (*Arch.*, xx., 9, § 1), are savage in judgment beyond all the Jews.² Thus the idea of a merciful and faithful high priest, though little prominent in the Old Testament, was one which could not fail to attract the sympathy of the Hebrew readers of the Epistle, who had full reason to know that in these qualities the Aaronic priesthood had failed.

Not the less on that account is it plain that our Author here touches on features the demand for which, as an essen-

¹ Deuteronomy xxxiii. 8 is not to be cited in this connection.

² Compare at a somewhat earlier date the character given to the priestly aristocracy in the *Psalter of Solomon*.

tial part of a priest's character, transcends the Old Testament sphere. What was required in theory of the Old Testament priest was ceremonial precision in his duties; and when the prophets rebuke the moral failings of the priesthood, they do so mainly in connection with their functions as judges and teachers, which were less important in the later part of the Jewish dispensation and are not mentioned by the Apostle. The point indicated by our Author in Chapter v. Verse 2, that the Aaronic priests were able to shew indulgence to the ignorant and erring, is not one which has any importance under the Old Dispensation. It is because Christ's priesthood is not *ceremonial* but *ethical*, because He helps us in the inner needs of our spiritual life, that these qualities of mercy and fidelity are necessary parts of his equipment for the priesthood. If we are to seek an Old Testament basis for the introduction of these ideas in connection with the purging away of sin, this must be found not in anything relating to the priesthood, but in Proverbs xvi. 6: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged."

(3) The ethical point of view from which the predicates *ἐλεήμων* και *πιστός* appear so indispensable to the true high priest is expressed in Verse 18.

Of this Verse there are two possible translations. The easiest is:—"For inasmuch as He hath suffered, having Himself been tempted, He is able to succour those that are tempted." But it is also grammatically possible to read the words thus:—"For having Himself been tempted in what He suffered He is able, etc."

On the first rendering, the sufferings of Christ are such sufferings as are felt by men under temptation. It is not the physical agony of his passion, but the pain of temptation, which forms the bond of sympathy between us and Jesus. On the other rendering, the temptation is not set forth as being itself a cause of suffering, but as arising

out of suffering. On the one interpretation, temptation is viewed as a painful experience; on the other, the pains of human life are presented as occasions of temptation. The first of these two views not only agrees better with the syntactical structure of the verse, but appears more natural and comprehensive. For certainly not every temptation arises out of the painful experiences of life; yet we know that Jesus was *in all points* tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Chap. iv. 15).

The sufferings of Jesus, therefore, which He endured when He assumed flesh and blood, and for our sakes passed under death, are to be viewed as the accompaniments of temptation; and, of course, of temptation resisted. For example, the crowning suffering of death, which is mainly in our Author's mind when he speaks of the suffering Christ, has religious value, not in respect of the physical agony on the cross, but because in it was experienced the sharpest temptation that fell upon Jesus. And, in like manner, the weaknesses experienced by us, with which He has fellow-feeling (Chap. iv. 15), are nothing else than our want of strength under temptation, which requires that we should be upheld by seasonable help from heavenly grace.

(4) At this point we must seek to get a clearer idea of what is meant by temptation; and, in particular, by the temptation of Christ. "Temptation" says Ritschl,¹ "is a source of possible sin, proceeding from an impulse which at first sight it appears to be legitimate to gratify. The motions of any appetite or impulse which from the first appears to be illegitimate, and therefore to be wicked, are not a source of temptation, but a manifestation of sinful concupiscence. Christ was exposed to temptation only because temptation always attaches to some disposition, which looked at *à priori*, is legitimate or per-

¹ *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii. p. 507.

missible. It was the impulse to natural self preservation, which in itself is justifiable, that produced the wish of Christ to be spared the suffering of death. Hereupon a temptation to sin arose, since the wish came into collision with the special duty of his vocation; but Christ resisted the temptation, renouncing self preservation and accepting the death appointed for Him by God as a consequence of his vocation." It will be remembered that we found the idea of "perfecting" (*τελειώσις*) to be applicable to Jesus only in connection with his moral vocation as Author of our salvation. Ritschl's remarks help us to see that the temptation of Christ must be viewed in the same connection: otherwise we shall not be able to understand it in a sense consistent with the absence of all sinful concupiscence. We saw that Christ passed through a process of *τελειώσις*, inasmuch as He had to take his place in the moral universe, with the moral relations it involves, by actually and practically working Himself into that place, in a course of prayerful and believing submission to the will of God (Chap. v. 7-9). The will of God marked out for Him a course of self-renunciation. He was called not to do his own will, but the will of the Father; to subordinate the personal, and in itself legitimate, end of self-conservation to the accomplishment of his task as our Saviour. To a certain extent this is the call of duty to all of us. No member of the ethical fellowship of the kingdom of heaven is permitted to take the development of his own personality, and the gratification of his own legitimate aspirations as the supreme ruling object of life. In general, however, the formula of self-denial, as it is required of us, is expressed by Philippians ii. 4: "Looking not every man to his own things, but every man *also* to the things of others." That is, while each man's life must fall under the rule that he has to live not for himself alone but for the kingdom of God, the religious and moral growth

and culture of our own personal life is to all of us a considerable direct part of the work which God appoints to us. But this was not the case with Jesus. His vocation was that of Head over the whole moral fellowship of the saved. It was a representative vocation, every act of which had a universal bearing, being done in the direct interest not of his own personal life, but of the life of God's people as a whole. Therefore He is much more than an example of self-communication. His whole life is one self-renunciation, so that at every point in it we can say that here Christ sacrificed his own will for us, sacrificed it to the will of God for our salvation. Thus all possible temptation, every possible antagonism between the personal aim of self-conservation and self-development on the one hand, and the interests of God's will and kingdom on the other, is embraced in the life of Christ. Now, the steady and unbroken practice of self-denying obedience to God under such circumstances is necessarily a suffering—not the suffering of internal distraction between a resolve to do right and a desire to do wrong, but the painful and laborious toil of doing God's will against obstacles, and at a sacrifice of interests which are in themselves innocent and laudable. The ideal of righteous happiness is a course of life in which at each moment the action conducive to the realization of the final aims of God's kingdom, is also the action which at the moment is felt to give full, free, unfettered scope for the play of the legitimate activities of the individual. It is not, therefore, merely because of the risk of yielding to the tempter that we are taught to pray "Lead us not into temptation." Temptation, even when withstood, is not in itself a good thing; for it implies a condition of constraint and pressure which belongs only to a state of discipline. And no man is to pray for discipline, though he must accept it cheerfully when it comes (James i. 2). Our prayers always

contemplate the final goal, a state where God's will is done in perfect freedom and without pain. Thus even Jesus in his prayers combined with the expression of perfect submission to God's will the petition that the cup of his passion might pass from Him.¹

These considerations make it plain that the temptation and suffering of Christ are co-extensive; and that both are inseparable from the whole course of his life of obedience. The active and passive obedience of Christ cannot be dissociated; his doing and suffering alike belong to the whole discharge of his vocation as the Author of our salvation; and it is this constant union of doing and suffering which marks his course as one of constant exposure to and victory over temptation. But the moral attitude corresponding to such a life is not one of mental conflict, which we generally associate with the idea of temptation, but, as Ritschl has well observed, an attitude of *patience*. And so, in the latter part of the Epistle, we hear no more of the temptation of Christ, but only (Chap. xii. 2, 3) of the patience with which, for the joy set before Him, He endured (*ὑπέμεινε*) the cross, despising shame, or endured so great contradiction of sinners against Himself.

(5) What, now, is the value for our religious needs of this doctrine of the temptation of Christ, and how does the doctrine belong to the discussion of the qualification of Jesus as our high priest? The answer to the first question is given in Verse 18; while the second question has to do with the connection between Verses 17 and 18. As the idea of Verse 18 is perfectly simple and self-contained, it is better to begin with the question that belongs

¹ From the shorter form of the Lord's prayer as given in Luke, it appears that "deliver us *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονήρου*" is a gloss on the original petition, "Lead us not into temptation." But if *πονήρου* is personal, "the evil one," the gloss falls far short of the true scope of the petition, which indeed is not fully expressed even in the form "deliver us from evil."

to it. It is because Christ has Himself been tempted and suffered, that He is able to succour those who are under temptation. Along with this answer we must take Chapter iv. Verse 15, where the fact that He was tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin, is used to prove that He is not one who is unable to have sympathy with our weakness. Plainly, the Apostle holds that the only efficient help which can be given to men under temptation is the help of sympathy, based on experience of the same kind of trial.

This, I think, is assumed, and correctly assumed, as a proposition evident on general grounds. For what does help in temptation mean? It may mean one of two things. In the first place, a person wiser than myself may explain to me that path of duty which the temptation threatens to obscure. He may say to me with authority, this is what you have to do, and so may reduce my decision against the temptation to a simple exercise of obedience to his instructions. It is, however, plain that this kind of help is not what Christ gives to believers. God permits us to be tempted as a moral exercise not merely in obedience, but in spiritual insight. And, therefore, while He clearly reveals to us all that is required to guide us in the path of duty, his revelation is never put in a shape which calls for nothing but mechanical obedience. It is still necessary for us, prayerfully and thoughtfully, to ponder the path of duty under temptation, and to conquer by a personal decision.

The help given to the people of God under temptation is, therefore, not the kind of help which relieves us of half the battle; it can only be such help as enables us to conquer temptation for ourselves. Now every one knows what that help is which, instead of doing a thing for us, enables us to do it ourselves: it is the help of moral sympathy, the help of one who takes us by the hand and

walks with us step by step in the path that we are called to tread.

The Apostle, therefore, is justified in assuming on general grounds, and apart from all question as to the way in which Christ imparts his aid to us, that the kind of help He gives is dependent on his ability to enter into our weaknesses from personal experience of a like temptation. We know, from other Scriptures, that the way in which Christ helps us is by imparting to us his Spirit. But the action of the Spirit is not magical; it breaks no law of our moral nature; it supplies only the bond of union in which we can realize a personal fellowship with Christ. And so the help which the Spirit ministers can come to us only if, according to the precept which follows in the next verse, we look to Jesus. Or, as the thing is put in Chapter xii. Verses 1, 2, the race set before us must be run with our eyes fixed on Jesus in his quality as the beginner and perfecter of faith, and in his patient endurance of pain, shame, and opposition, for the sake of the joy set before Him. In this contemplation of the course in which for our sakes He conquered temptation in all its sharpness, we realize his sympathy, and are able to feel his hand spiritually sustaining us when we are ready to faint.

(6) And now we come to the last point in this long discussion. How does this effective sympathy of Christ stand related to his high-priestly function of atoning for the sins of the people? Our Author evidently views the two things as strictly parallel. The help which Christ gives to the seed of Abraham (Verse 16) is doubly expressed, as the expiation of the sins of the people by a merciful and faithful high priest, and as the succouring of the tempted by one who has himself been tempted.

To understand the parallelism between these two definitions of the help we receive from Christ, we must remember that, even under the Old Testament, the practical outcome

of the priestly propitiation was the uninterrupted continuance of the flow of Covenant blessings to the people from God. To the acts of worship accepted in the atoning service, God returned the answer symbolically expressed in the benediction pronounced by the priests over the people, which in the Pentateuch (Numbers vi. 22-27) is accompanied by a promise of effective Divine blessing. So, in like manner, the continual ministrations to the Church of the specific blessings of the New Testament covenant must be the practical outcome of Christ's propitiation. But these blessings are no longer earthly, but spiritual. The promise of the New Covenant is that given by Jeremiah in the passage quoted by our Author in Chapter x. Verses 16, 17: "I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The fulfilment of this promise in the experience of the Church, and of every believer, is the fruit of Christ's high-priestly work.

Now the latter half of the promise is realized whenever the believer confidently approaches the throne of grace through Christ. But both halves of the promise must be fulfilled together; and so we can come before God with confidence of forgiveness only when we come to Him to ask that our hearts may be transformed according to his law. The believer cannot appropriate the promise of forgiveness except in the submission of his heart and will to God's law; and he cannot submit his heart to the Divine will except in battle with and victory over temptation. It is, therefore, only in the perception of Divine grace succouring us in temptation that we can realize the fulfilment of the promise of the New Covenant, and the efficacious atonement of Christ (comp. Chap. iv. 16). The propitiation of Christ would not be adequate unless it contained in itself the security of grace to conquer temptation, as well as the pledge of free access to God. In passing to the right hand

of God, where He sits as our intercessor, Christ gives us the assurance of free access to the Father; but it is in his own victory over temptation in all its fulness that He gives to us the not less needful pledge of effectual succour in all temptation.

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ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

II. HAD THE AUTHOR READ ST. JUDE?

IN a previous article we attempted to prove that the Author of the Second Epistle had read the Antiquities of Josephus; we will now endeavour to shew that he copied the Epistle of St. Jude.¹

The close connection between this Epistle and that of St. Jude will be most readily perceived if we set down and italicize (in the order of St. Jude) the words and parts of words common to both, inserting merely so much of St. Jude's context as may enable the reader to catch their tenour: "*The servant of Jesus Christ to . . . mercy and love be multiplied.*"² With all zeal I beg you to contend for the faith *delivered* to the *holy* brethren (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 21, the *holy* commandment *delivered* to them). For some have come *in secretly, long ago* ordained to this *judgment, denying the Master*. But I wish to *put you in*

¹ It may be well to remind the reader that there are abundant instances of patch-work composition in apocryphal literature both before and after the Christian era. The First Book of Esdras, for example, contains an original story in a frame-work made up of extracts more or less exact from the Second Book of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah: and the Gospel of Nicodemus has for its basis the Gospel of St. John, but includes many extracts from the other Gospels.

² The salutation of 2 Pet. i. 1, though similar to that of Jude, is more similar to that in 1 Pet. i. 2.