

history of the first four centuries. Even in the last edition of the admirable Lehrbuch of Dr. Karl Hase there is a similar disregard of English works on Church history since Milner. This neglect of the work of great English scholars is really unworthy of a nation so justly proud of their thorough and comprehensive learning as the Germans, and we welcome in Dr. Zahn a singular exception to the rule. The special characteristics of English and German scholarship are eminently qualified to supplement and assist each other, and perhaps it is by a combination of the two that the great critical problems which engage attention at the present day are destined to be solved.

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THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

IN an article on *Christ's Use of Scripture*,¹ the present writer referred to the fact of entire passages in the three Synoptic Gospels being almost, though not quite, identical; and he advanced the opinion,—which is by no means new,—that these are extracts from an original Gospel, now lost, which was probably written in the vernacular Hebrew of the time.

One of the most remarkable of these is the account of the Temptation of our Lord. This is given by both Matthew (iv. 1-11) and Luke (iv. 1-13) in nearly the same words, but with one important difference. That difference is the order in which the temptations are arranged by the two Evangelists. They agree in placing first the temptation to use the miraculous power which Christ possessed, for the purpose of supplying his natural human hunger; but Matthew places last the temptation to purchase dominion over the world by doing homage to Satan; while Luke places last the temptation to prove the reality of his Messiahship by

¹ See pp. 101 ff.

casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Both cannot be right; and the question which is right is of interest, not only in itself, but because it includes that of the nature of the temptations, and the manner in which they were presented to our Lord's mind.

There is a great difference between Matthew and Luke as historians. Luke aims at external verbal accuracy in his reports of our Lord's sayings and doings; he writes down what he learned by careful and accurate enquiry from those who had been eye and ear witnesses,¹ and when information has come to him in a fragmentary form, he gives his readers the fragments as he has received them, without any attempt to piece them together.² Matthew, on the contrary, arranges the discourses of Christ, not in the order in which they were actually spoken, but artistically, with the purpose of shewing the connexion of their ideas, and making one throw light on the other. This does not render him less trustworthy; on the contrary, I fully believe that in his treatment of the discourses of Christ, Matthew was guided by the same Spirit of Christ who inspired the prophets of old to testify of Him.³ If the passages now under consideration were like most other parts of the Gospels, we should therefore conclude that Luke's account was probably the correct one as to the historical fact. Other reasons, however, appear to make it more probable that Matthew's account is absolutely correct. The most we can say of Luke is that he endeavoured to be as accurate as possible, but he could not be more accurate than his informants; there is no strong improbability in the supposition that the authority from which Luke derived his information had in some accidental way altered the true order of the narrative, and the internal evidence of Matthew's accuracy in this case appears almost conclusive.

¹ See Luke i. 1-3.

² See especially Luke xvi. 14-18.

³ See 1 Pet. i. 11.

The saying, "forewarned is forearmed," is evidently true of temptation to sin, and most so of those who hate and fear sin the most. A man like Judas commits sin deliberately and with his eyes open: a man like Peter, as he was at the time of the betrayal of his Lord, may commit grievous sin, even so far as to deny his Lord, under the pressure of sudden fear; but a man like Peter, as he had become many years later, at the time of the controversy at Antioch respecting the obligation of the ceremonial part of the Jewish law, can be drawn into the sin of insincerity and dissimulation,¹ or any other sin, only through perversion of the judgment, that is to say, by a temptation which is not at the time recognized as a temptation to sin at all. Christ was perfectly sinless, and yet his temptations were real; and temptation addressed to a perfectly sinless Being must be disguised. If it is avowed temptation to obvious sin, it is temptation no longer.

The first two temptations, taking Matthew's order of them, were disguised; it was only the deepest insight and the highest purity that could have perceived that they were temptations. The impulse to use miraculous power in order to satisfy hunger was perfectly natural, and did not imply any tendency to sin in the Being to whom it was addressed; and it needed more than human purity, and more than human insight, to perceive that the miraculous powers with which his Father had endowed Him, were not to be used for any personal purposes at all, however natural and innocent. Without discussing the question of the personality of the tempter, we may be quite certain that no voice spoke to Christ, urging Him to turn the stone into bread, except the impulse of his own hunger, and his own filial trust in God. "If Thou art the Son of God," said the tempter; that is to say, "If the voice at thy baptism, which called Thee the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased, was any

¹ See Gal. ii. 11-14.

more than a peal of thunder, or a dream of thine own, do not fear to use a Son's privileges in a Father's house." He had no tendencies to sin to which temptation could appeal, but He was here tempted through the innocently human feeling of hunger, and the Son's feeling of trust in the Father.

The second temptation also appealed to this feeling of trust in the Father. "If Thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and his angels will bear Thee in safety." It may be that He was longing for his work on earth as Messiah to begin, and the thought flashed across his mind that such a public display as this of his faith in God and his miraculous power, would be a natural and happy beginning. But again, with his superhuman insight and purity, He decided that He ought not to anticipate, but to wait for, the revelation of the Father's purposes.¹

The third temptation is more difficult to understand, but the suggestion of the author of "Ecce Homo" seems on the whole the most satisfactory that can be made; namely, that it was a temptation to use his miraculous powers in order to overcome opposition to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

"His purpose was the salvation of mankind—the establishment of a reign of truth, justice, and mercy throughout the world—and the means to this end which He commanded were nothing less than Omnipotence. Before Him—not at the end of a long series of labours, but within his immediate grasp—rose a vision of universal monarchy, of such power as Cyrus, Alexander, or Cæsar never dreamed of, to be gained without shedding a drop of blood, and employed in realizing the prophets' and the psalmists' de-

¹ Canon Farrar's notion, that Christ when on the pinnacle was already in a position of danger, seems merely fanciful. He was comparatively a stranger to Jerusalem, and went to see the Temple, which was in process of building, and near its completion; and as visitors to the Cathedral of Milan do now, He ascended the pinnacle and looked down and around.

scription of the happiness of mankind under the reign of the Messiah, when war should cease, and all rulers should be just. It does not appear that power for its own sake had any attraction for Christ; but to his infinite love for mankind, and his infinite capacity for sympathy with those who suffered sorrow and wrong, the thought of the use He could make of such power must have been all but irresistibly attractive. Moreover, it was a course that presented no difficulties whatever." "All opposition would have vanished away at the first display of a power that could call down fire from heaven or move mountains into the sea; and He would have earned the enthusiastic applause of the mass of mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, at Rome as at Jerusalem." "But He decided at last, and during his subsequent career never swerved from his decision, that the desire to take the easier course was a temptation of the evil principle; that the purity and thoroughness of his work in men's souls would be marred if He were to rule by any other power than his character, or to be a king except by bearing witness to the truth."¹

But whatever was the nature of the temptation, it is absurd to suppose that Satan, as Satan, offered a bribe to Christ, as Christ. This would not have been a temptation at all. We are familiar with cases in which resistance to temptation is so much a matter of course that the temptation is scarcely felt. The offer of a bribe to a British officer to give information to an enemy, or to a British judge to give an unjust judgment, would be so impossible to accept that it would be scarcely felt as a temptation; and how infinitely more would Christ be above the temptation of accepting the whole world, and the glory of it, as a bribe to commit treason against his Father! We may be perfectly certain that on this occasion the tempter came not

¹ From "The Scientific Bases of Faith," by the writer of the present paper, pp. 186, 188.

like a roaring lion, but like a deceitful serpent, or rather, transformed himself into an angel of light.

It was in meeting and resisting this temptation that the fact of temptation was first recognized by Christ. For anything recorded to the contrary, the first two temptations, and his resistance of them, appeared to Him as nothing more than the weighing of reasons in his own mind; but, according to Matthew, He recognized the third as not only a suggestion to an unwise course of action, but as a temptation to what his perfect purity and his Divine strength of insight discerned as being in effect treason against God. Then, for the first time, He exclaimed, "Get thee hence, Satan." The temptation was at last recognized; and, as must necessarily be when temptation is addressed to one who is perfectly pure in heart, in the act of being recognized it was overcome. "Then," we are told, "the devil leaveth Him."

It may be thought by some readers that Christ's Divine knowledge made this form of temptation impossible to Him; that He would at once have seen through any possible disguise that temptation could assume. I reply to this, that it is only from what is declared in the New Testament we can know anything about Christ's Divinely human nature; and even the New Testament does not enable us to understand how it was possible for One who was in the form of God to strip Himself of the glory which He had with his Father before the world was, and to take the form of a servant.¹ We only know the fact; how much is implied in that fact is to be learned, not from considerations of *à priori* theology, but from indications in the life of our Lord; and such indications appear to make it certain

¹ See Phil. ii. 6, 7 and John xvii. 5. The difficult expression *ἐκένωσε ἑαυτὸν* is translated by Conybeare, "He stripped Himself of his glory," and this appears the best yet proposed. "He made Himself of no reputation" is much too weak, and "He emptied Himself" is scarcely intelligible.

that He laid down the Divine property of omniscience and took the human condition of partial ignorance. He was really disappointed when He failed to find fruit on the leafy fig-tree; and He was not only grieved but disappointed when Judas, who had been one of his familiar and chosen friends, turned against Him. This view is not free from difficulties; if it appeared to be so, this would be a presumption against it. But the notion that Christ in laying aside his Divine glory retained Divine omniscience, that He recognized the tempter from the first, that He knew there was no fruit under the leaves of the barren fig-tree, and that He appointed Judas to be an apostle while knowing him to be a traitor;—this view appears not so much difficult as impossible. Only a Being capable of ignorance could be “in all points tempted like as we are,” that He might come through the temptations “without sin.”¹ Moreover, his saying that “of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,”² seems not merely to imply, but to assert that He had parted, at least for the time, with his omniscience.

One of the many services which the Revisers of the New Testament have rendered us is the rejection from Luke iv. 8, of the words: “Get thee behind me, Satan.” These were no doubt suggested to the transcriber by the similar words in Matthew iv. 10, “Get thee hence, Satan”; but they are certainly wrong where they occur, at the end not of the third but of the second temptation; for, as I have been arguing, we may be certain that so soon as the tempter was recognized as such by our Lord, he was defeated and the temptation ended.

The words, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” were spoken by our Lord to Peter, when that disciple began to rebuke—or, as we should say, expostulate with Him—for predicting his own rejection and martyrdom.³ Peter’s thought

¹ See Hebrews iv. 15.

² Mark xiii. 32, and Matt. xxiv. 36.

³ Mark viii. 31-33.

probably was that the Lord's unapproachable majesty of spirit caused a feeling of loneliness which sometimes produced an emotion of unreasonable despondency. When our Lord called him Satan, this terrible rebuke meant that any one who would try to help Him from the "way of the cross" was, even though unintentionally, an enemy. But it seems also a recollection of the temptation on the mountain, of the words: "Get thee hence, Satan," with which He ended it; for—if we have rightly understood the subject—that also consisted in a temptation to avoid the cross.

I will conclude this paper by asking a question which is perhaps 'impossible for any one to answer with certainty. When Christ said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven," did He refer to the moment when He recognized, and in recognizing defeated, the tempter? This conjecture is supported, though not very strongly, by the words which immediately follow: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall in any wise hurt you."¹ This appears to allude to the words of the 91st Psalm: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him"; and these words come immediately after the passage which the tempter quoted when urging Christ to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, "He shall give his angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all thy ways; they shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash thy foot against a stone." But, as has been often remarked, the tempter omitted the clause, "in all thy ways," which teaches that God's angels can be expected to guard his sons only so long as they remain in the ways appointed to them by his providence.

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¹ Luke x. 18, 19.