

The Use of the Infinitive in Biblical Greek (Chicago, 1896), and Professor Deissmann's important monograph, *Die Neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'* (Marburg, 1892). The former supplies full and accurate lists of the various infinitival constructions, the only kind of foundation on which a solid grammatical structure can be reared. The latter is an instructive instance of that grammatico-theological research which yields such luminous results for the interpretation of the N.T. While Deissmann's main aim is to penetrate to the heart of the apostle's central expression ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, he examines the N.T. use of ἐν in the light of the classical language, and, above all, in relation to the usage of the LXX. His method is a model of scholarly thoroughness and lucidity. To trace the history of a construction or part of speech in

this exhaustive fashion is to have all the materials at one's disposal for forming a conclusion as to its later usage, say, in the N.T. It is along similar lines that adequate results in this department can alone be reached. Of course all such investigations must rise above mere mechanical accuracy. There prevails a tendency to draw up elaborate lists and tables of facts which may mean little more than an expenditure of manual labour. To discern what is of real significance in such dreary tabulations, to combine the relevant facts with insight, that is the faculty needful if genuine knowledge is to grow. Sometimes Deissmann is apt to be carried away by a grammatical literalism which he has to justify by exercising ingenuity. But that is seldom. His work is usually of the most solid construction.

Gethsemane.

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WE have three accounts in the Synoptic Gospels of what we are accustomed to describe as our Lord's Agony in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26³⁶⁻⁴⁶, Mk 14³²⁻⁴², Lk 22⁴⁰⁻⁴⁶). Nor need it cause us concern, though much has been made of the fact that we find no parallel account in the Gospel according to St. John. That Gospel is professedly a selection of certain events from our Lord's life, and if the scene in the garden did not fall in directly with the writer's aim there is nothing surprising in its omission. It is enough for us that St. John is clearly aware of its occurrence, and in one precious word has preserved the Saviour's own summing up of the final issue of His conflict (Jn 18¹¹, cf. vv. 1-2).

Of the Synoptic accounts, St. Matthew's is, on the whole, the fullest, and adds certain interesting and significant particulars to what is apparently the original and traditional account in St. Mark. In their main features, however, the two accounts closely correspond. St. Luke's narrative stands on a somewhat different footing. It may be taken as agreed that chap. 22⁴³⁻⁴⁴ form no part of the original text, though Westcott and Hort, who place them within double brackets, claim them as embodying a true evangelic tradition.¹ And

when they are left out, St. Luke's account is not only the shortest of the three, but undoubtedly gives a more 'subdued' report of the dread intensity of feeling under which the other two evangelists represent our Lord as labouring.² There is nothing, however, in his report to lead us to question its authenticity. And as we may safely set aside all attempts to resolve the Synoptic narrative into a mere mythical construction (as Strauss), or to analyse its constituent details into a reminiscence of certain events of Old Testament history (as Schleiermacher), we begin by assuming that the occurrence was real, and that the Synoptists have preserved for us an historically true account of it.

What happened was briefly as follows. After the farewell discourses, Jesus and the eleven apostles left the upper room, and, crossing the brook Kidron, came to a retired enclosure or garden known as Gethsemane, apparently because it contained an oil-press. Leaving the eight at the entrance, the Saviour took with Him, as on two other notable occasions, Peter and James and John, and no sooner did He find Himself alone with them than He 'began' to show signs of deep mental distress. How strong was the impression

¹ *The New Testament in Greek*, vol. ii. App. p. 64 ff.

² See especially Bruce, *With Open Face*, p. 296 ff.

made upon the disciples the words used to describe this state prove. He was greatly amazed (*ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι*) and sore troubled (*ἀδημονεῖν*), says St. Mark. He was sorrowful (*λυπεῖν*) and sore troubled, says St. Matthew. While both represent Jesus as describing His own state as that of one 'exceeding sorrowful (*περίλυπος*)'—encompassed, surrounded with sorrow—'even unto death.' So sacred and so terrible indeed was that sorrow, that not even the chosen three could be permitted to witness it in its fullest extent. And so, leaving them behind to abide and watch,—'with Me,' St. Matthew describes Jesus as adding, to indicate His desire for the utmost help that human companionship could afford,—the Saviour Himself went forward a little, or, in the striking word of St. Luke, 'was torn from them' (*ἀπείσπασθη*) in the violence of His emotion, and falling prostrate upon the ground, poured out His whole soul in earnest supplication to God.

It is very significant of the independence of the gospel narratives that by no two of the evangelists are the words of the Saviour's prayer reproduced in exactly the same form. But its burden is always the same,—an earnest pleading that if it be possible 'this cup' should pass away from Him; but always provided, first of all, that God's will, not His, be done. Thrice He so prayed, twice at least according to St. Mark, 'saying the same words'; though, from a slight change of expression which St. Matthew indicates on the second occasion ('If this cannot pass away, except I drink it, Thy will be done,' instead of 'If it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt'), it is possible to imagine an ever-deepening insight on the Sufferer's part into the true meaning and necessity of the cup, and a consequent advancing calmness in facing it. After each prayer He returned again to the disciples, on the first and second occasions to rouse them from the sleep into which they had fallen, notwithstanding His earnest admonition to watch and to pray; but on the third to tell them, in tones of mingled irony and sorrow, that their sympathetic watchfulness was no longer required. So far at least as He was concerned, they might sleep on now. He had conquered in the struggle. And the hour had come when He must go forward to meet His appointed doom.

Such is the narrative, and the whole brings

before us not only a struggle of the severest kind, but one which is unique in the Saviour's life, so far at least as that life has been revealed to us. For though there are frequent indications elsewhere in the Gospels of Jesus being subject to human emotions, nowhere, with this one exception of Gethsemane, do we find this same intensity of emotion or even sorrow in its more directly personal form attributed to Him. He may have wept tears of pity (*ἐδάκρυσεν*, Jn 11³⁵) by the grave of Lazarus. He may have burst into loud passionate lamentation (*ἐκλαυσεν*, Lk 19⁴¹) as He pictured to Himself the doom of Jerusalem. But here, and here only, are we confronted with the ideal Man of Sorrows, crushed under an apparently overwhelming burden, and praying in agony of spirit that even yet, if it be possible, this cup may pass from Him. How explain His prayer? Was not this the cup to which in some form He had all His life been looking forward, and whose necessity had been becoming ever clearer to His mind? Had He not just before; in words of surest confidence and hope, bade farewell to His disciples as He told them of the Father to whom He was going?¹ What new element was now added to the thought of His death which could thus lead Him, while still submitting His will absolutely to God's will, to shrink in such distress of spirit from its approach?

These are questions which for many reasons we would rather not put at all. It seems like rude profanation to seek thus to enter into this Holy of Holies of the Saviour's life. And even before we do so, we know that we shall find ourselves face to face with mysteries which we can never hope wholly to solve. And yet we cannot forget that this scene has been recorded for our instruction. Our Lord Himself took three witnesses with Him, that the memory of it might not be wholly lost. And it has been too often turned to wrong uses, and its true connexion with Christ's atoning work too often lost sight of, for us not to endeavour to understand it as best we can. Let us at least with all reverence make the attempt. And we shall perhaps best arrive at its true meaning by passing in brief review some of the leading interpretations that have been offered of it.

¹ We owe the record of these words to St. John alone, but the calm spirit underlying them is the same spirit that appears in, *e.g.*, St. Matthew's account of the institution of the Supper (Mt 26²⁰ ff.).

Before doing so, however, it may be well to clear the ground by one general remark. Very many of these interpretations proceed on the assumption that in the well-known verse in Heb 5⁷, 'Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear,' we have an inspired comment upon Christ's prayer in the garden, and that therefore no interpretation can be accepted which does not show that that prayer received an immediate answer. But we shall do well, at the present stage at any rate, to keep out all reference to this verse. For not only is the exact meaning to be attached to some of its expressions in itself a matter of great difficulty, but it is uncertain how far it refers to the scene in Gethsemane at all. It certainly does not refer to it alone. And though we may afterwards find it useful in testing the truth of any interpretation to which we may be led, it must not be made the basis of any such interpretation. What in the meantime we are concerned with is the gospel narratives themselves. And the problem before us is, how to reconcile the mental attitude of Jesus, as it is there depicted, with what we have been previously led to expect of Him.

1. In trying to do so, we may at once set aside all those interpretations, favoured though they are by some of the Fathers of the Early Church, which deprive Christ's attitude of its directly *personal* character. Thus it has been conjectured that, just as on a previous occasion Jesus worked certain miracles for the sake of the Baptist and his followers, so now His actions and His prayers were intended to reassure His disciples in view of the crisis that was hanging over Him. Or it has been suggested that He had the needs of the Jews, or even of the traitor Judas, more particularly in view. But of such intercession for others there is not the slightest trace in the narrative before us. It was His own sorrow from which at this moment the Saviour was suffering—a sorrow so great that to Himself it seemed to be crushing Him 'even unto death.'

2. But while this is so, it is impossible to believe that it is from an immediately present death, from death there in the garden, and not from death on the Cross, that Jesus prays to be delivered. By whom this suggestion was first

made is not quite certain, but it has been recently adopted by Dr. Schauffler of New York, and Dr. Clay Trumbull, the editor of the American *Sunday School Times*; and there is no doubt much that is tempting in their advocacy.¹ It relieves Christ's prayer at once of the smallest appearance of weakness or ignorance, and invests it rather with the spirit of the loftiest heroism—the prayer of One who asked 'not for grace to escape the Cross, but for strength to reach it.' But no one will pretend that this is an interpretation which suggests itself naturally on a first reading of the passage; and it would probably never have been proposed at all but for the desire to harmonize Christ's prayer in the garden with the *heard* prayer of Heb 5⁷. And, when we come to examine it more closely, it is found to import an altogether inadequate meaning into some of the most characteristic expressions in the passage. The words 'this cup,' for example, according to the invariable usage of the Gospels, must be taken not as referring to the general lot of Christ, or even to an immediately impending death, however brought about, but rather to the appointed sufferings and death which awaited the Saviour on the Cross,² a conclusion confirmed by the equally significant references to the 'hour' of Jesus. Nor can the words, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,' be taken as only a general expression of resignation on Christ's part into God's hands, as on this view they would be, but must be indicative rather of the conflict which Christ now experienced as accompanying the resignation He was still resolved to make.

3. It is, however, when we proceed to ask, What was the particular ground of His conflict? what caused it? that the real difficulties of our inquiry begin, and that the widest divergence of views is found to prevail. Thus there have never been wanting rationalistic critics, from the days of Celsus and Julian until now, who have ascribed Christ's prayer to *physical dread* of the sufferings He saw to be impending, and who in consequence have drawn unfavourable parallels between His conduct and that of many of the old saints and confessors.³ But can we for a moment believe

¹ See the interesting Notes and consequent discussions in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, vol. vi. pp. 433 ff., 522 f.; vol. vii. pp. 3 ff., 34 ff., 118 ff., 502 ff.

² Mt 20²², 23, Mk 10³⁸, 39, Jn 18¹¹.

³ Origen, *Contra Cels.* lib. ii. c. xxiv.; *apud* Theod.

that He who showed so much more than a martyr's courage during life found that courage fail Him at the thought even of an agonizing death? Or is such an interpretation reconcilable with the Saviour's actual conduct under His sufferings, when not a cry of pain or of mere bodily anguish fell from His lips?

4. These same considerations may help us also to dispose of all attempts to find an explanation in the thought of the *human nature* of Jesus regarded by itself, and apart from the divinity with which He was equally endowed. Thus, to say nothing of such unworthy representations as that of Renan, who, with characteristic sentimentality, does not hesitate to picture Jesus as shrinking back in terror and hesitation from the death that was to end all, overcome by memories of His past pleasant life by the clear fountains and under the vines and fig-trees of Galilee,¹ it is surprising to find Neander thinking it sufficient to point out that 'as a man' (*menschlicher Weise*) Christ might wish to be spared the sufferings that awaited Him, though from a higher point of view He recognised their necessity.² For surely so to argue is to introduce an unwarrantable dualism into the personality of Jesus, a dualism which represents Him as swayed at different times by different sets of motives; and which, to go no further than the present instance, is contrary to that absolute resignation to His Father's will, which does not manifest itself only after His prayer, but is itself the underlying motif and crown of the whole prayer.

With what dangerous consequences, too, such an interpretation is attended is proved by the example of Keim, who, finding the starting-point of Christ's agony in the 'human and Messianic clinging to life, the human dread of death which drew him back from his destiny,'³ can go on to speak of Jesus as exhibiting 'human weakness and opposing desires, an incipient but not a perfected sin,' even though 'in the next moment he

victoriously quitted the sinful frontier.'⁴ But from all sin, even in embryo, Christ was wholly free. And besides, mere human ἀσθένεια, even if we could thus think of it wholly apart from the divine in Christ, would of itself be insufficient to explain the intensity of the agony which the Saviour now endured, and which, as we have already seen, is so clearly marked off from all previous experiences in His earthly life.

5. May the reason of that agony, then, lie not so much in the death itself as in its *contingent surroundings*, the agents and the manner by which it was brought about? That the Saviour's sufferings were in this way immensely aggravated must be obvious to all. To find that it was 'the elders and chief priests,' the rulers and religious heads of the nation, who were leagued against Him; to die at the hands of the men He was dying to save—all this must have added a terrible weight to the Saviour's burden, and contributed in no small degree to the exceeding sorrow which oppressed Him. But the question still remains, Does it exhaust that sorrow's significance? And with all deference to the distinguished scholars who have advocated this view,⁵ we hardly think that it does. Had not Jesus realized clearly before that it was in this way His death was to be brought about?⁶ And though there are not wanting even then traces of mental agitation on His part as evidenced by the feelings of amazement and terror which His attitude awakened in the minds of His disciples (Mk 10³²), it only led Him to press ever more steadfastly forward, His face set as heretofore towards Jerusalem (Lk 9⁵¹). What made the difference now? What led Him to recoil not from the manner in which the cup was offered, but from the cup itself? It must have been something in that cup, in the very nature, therefore, of the death He was about to die, rather than in the means and agents by which His death was to be brought about.

6. That being so, it seems to us that we can never get a satisfactory answer to our problem unless in some way we connect the Saviour's sufferings here with His *vicarious*, His *atonement work*. That connexion has, no doubt, often been

Mops., in *Ev. Lucae Com. Frag.* (*Patr. Gr.* t. lxvi. p. 724). The words of Vanini are often quoted in this connexion, when on the way to execution he pointed to a crucifix, saying: 'Illi in extremis præ timore imbellis sudor: ego imperterritus morior' (Grammondus, *Hist. Gall. ab. ex. Hen. IV.* lib. iii. p. 211 ff.).

¹ *Vie de Jésus*, p. 378 f. (Edit. 7^{me}).

² *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 730 (Auff. 4^{te}), Eng. Tr. (Bohn), p. 451.

³ *Jesus of Nazara*, Eng. Tr., vi. p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁵ See in particular the striking and independent statement of it by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn in *The Expositor*, 1897, vol. i. p. 114 ff.

⁶ Mt 16²¹, 17²², 20¹⁸, and parallels.

expressed in unreal forms, as when Calvin speaks of Jesus with the dread tribunal of God before His eyes crushed by the huge mass (*ingenti mole*) of our sins;¹ or as when Luther on one occasion actually goes the length of saying, 'When Jesus prayed in the garden he was truly in Gehenna and hell.'² But avoiding all such materialistic and exaggerated expressions, it seems impossible to doubt that it is to the knowledge of the close relation in which His death was to stand to human sin that the true bitterness of the Saviour's cup is to be referred. What was the exact nature of that relation we may be unable to conceive, still more to put in words; but we know at least that it was so close that an apostle could venture to say, 'Him who knew no sin, He [God] made sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Co 5²¹).

From the beginning of His public ministry Christ had foreseen that the work on which He had entered would in all likelihood end in His being put to death. That prevision had more recently become a certainty; and along with the certainty had come the consciousness of the necessary connexion between His death and the accomplishment of His saving mission. But now for the first time He realized to the full all that that connexion involved, and how terrible in consequence was the nature of the task He had voluntarily undertaken. Not for an instant did He think of drawing back from that task. But the very holiness and perfection of His Being made the cup He now saw Himself called upon to drink appear so awful that He prayed that, if possible, even yet 'this cup'—in the particular

¹ *Harmon. Evangel.*, Mt 26³⁷.

² Quoted by Steinmeyer, *The Passion and Resurrection History*, Eng. Tr., p. 44, note 2. Steinmeyer's own discussion of the problem is well deserving of careful study, even though one cannot accept the distinction he draws between Christ's being made 'sin' in the garden, and a 'curse' on the Cross.

light in which it had now revealed itself to Him—might still pass from Him.

So understood, it is obvious that the Saviour's prayer is very nearly related to the mysterious cry upon the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Mt 27⁴⁶). For it is then that Christ actually experienced the closeness of that connexion between His death and the world's sin, the mere thought of which had so filled His heart with agony in the garden.

If, too, we are to find any reference to Gethsemane in Heb 5⁷, a reference to the cry on the Cross must certainly also be included.³ Nor, if we are only careful to give the words their exact translation, need they then cause us any difficulty in connexion with the interpretation we have been advocating. For it is not to Him 'that was able to save Him from death,' but to Him 'that was able to save Him out of (*ἐκ*) death,' that Christ's prayer is there represented as addressed. Not escape from death, but victory over death which He had been called upon to endure as the fruit of sin, becomes then the leading idea. And this prayer, we know, was *heard*.⁴

But it is impossible to pursue this line of thought further. We must be content with simply reaffirming that the true cause of Christ's Agony is to be sought not in physical fear on His part, nor in the weakness of His human nature, nor even alone in the mode which the death that He saw to be awaiting Him was to be brought about, but in the nature of that death itself. It was because, in a sense which it is impossible for human thought to fathom, 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all,' that it may be said of Jesus in Gethsemane in the fullest sense of the words, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.'

³ Comp. especially *μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς* (He 5⁷) with *ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ* (Mt 27⁴⁶). See also Mt 27⁵⁰.

⁴ For a defence of this interpretation, as against the ordinary view, see the Commentaries of Westcott, A. B. Davidson, and Moulton *in loco*.