

is a simple translation of Hebrew texts,—by far the largest class. Then he sets aside citations and plain analogous formations. The original Greek texts, containing the phrase, are then such as Eph 2²⁻³ 5⁶, 1 P 1¹⁴, Gal 4²⁸, Ro 9⁸, 2 P 2¹⁴. Deissmann argues that as the translators of the Septuagint do not always slavishly limit themselves to a literal reproduction of the Hebrew *ben*, there is no need to suppose the New Testament writers to be following a Hebrew bias in the use of such phrases. There is nothing un-Greek, he says, in the phrase. Plato uses the term *ἐκγονος* in a similar sense. The stately speech of inscriptions and coins uses similar forms. 'Although therefore the *viōs* in such passages may be due primarily to the text, it is not un-Greek.'

'O *viōs* τοῦ Θεοῦ.—This New Testament designation goes back, of course, to the Old Testament; there its root is to be found. But when we ask how the Gentile Christians of Asia Minor, Rome, and Alexandria understood it, we are met by the fact that *viōs* Θεοῦ occurs in inscriptions of the

Roman emperors — Augustus and his successors. The Old Testament sense must have been more prominent in Christian teaching than our author seems to intimate. He also overlooks the horror which the worship of the Cæsars excited among the early Christians. He says: 'If it is certain that from the beginning of the 1st cent. Θεοῦ *viōs* was very common in the Græco-Roman world, this fact ought not any longer to be ignored by us: it is indirectly of great importance for the history of the early Christian designation of Christ. It does not, indeed, explain its origin and original meaning, but it makes a contribution to the question, how it might be understood in the empire.' 'In Corinth the gospel was understood differently from what it was in Jerusalem, and in Egypt differently from Ephesus. The history of our religion shows in its further course different modifications of Christianity; in succession and side by side we see a Jewish and an international, a Roman, a Greek, a German, and a modern Christianity.'

J. S. BANKS.

The Temptation of Christ.

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THERE are few passages in the life of our Lord which present more difficulty than the incidents recorded in the Gospels as immediately following His baptism. For thirty years he had lived, so far as we may learn, a quiet, simple life in the humble household at Nazareth, a life of preparation for ministry, the greatness of His condescension in dwelling among men being known only to Himself. But at last the preaching of St. John the Forerunner having made the way plain for the fuller revelation that was in store, He was baptized in the waters of the Jordan, and the Voice from heaven announced to those who had ears to hear that this was in truth the Holy One of God, the Son of His good pleasure. And then it was that the Christ was led up into the wilderness of temptation. We cannot, indeed, suppose that on no other occasion did He feel the assaults of the Spirit of evil; but at this critical moment in His life on earth, the Prince of Darkness seems to have put forth all his powers. It would be presumptuous to suppose that a full

explanation is possible of the precise forms in which the threefold temptation presented itself to the sinless nature of Jesus. No man witnessed that struggle save He who endured it for our sakes. Little is told us of the circumstances, although, as the narratives of the Gospels must be derived at length from Christ's own words to His disciples, we may rest assured that all that is necessary for us to know is recorded. But the meaning of what we are told is not easy to unravel; and the relation of the three trials to each other is explained in widely different ways by those who have studied the Gospels most closely. The careful and learned exposition of Archbishop Trench in his *Studies in the Gospels*, and the notes of Mr. Sadler in his edition of the New Testament, seem on the whole to provide the most satisfactory English commentary on this awful and mysterious transaction; but even they have left gleanings for those who (although *longo intervallo*) come after them. And in particular the explanations of the second temptation (follow-

ing St. Matthew's order) given by them do not seem quite to give the sense which lies on the surface; though, in the case of the third temptation, Mr. Sadler's reverent comments are full of suggestiveness.

The outlines of St. Matthew's narrative are familiar. After the prolonged fast of forty days, the tempter came (whether in outward presence or as a suggestion to the spirit we know not, and we do not need to know). 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' That is: You are the Son of God; why do you not satisfy the natural cravings of the flesh by putting forth your divine power over nature? And when this had failed, then came the second, more subtle, trial: 'If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down.' You are the Son of God; why submit yourself to the ordinary restrictions which natural law imposes upon men? By angelic hands you will be borne up and supported after a fashion which no child of man dare hope for. In such miraculous support and guidance, dejection of spirit will pass away, and that spiritual joy and peace which accompany the vivid sense of the Divine Presence will be regained. And then, the trial of the flesh and the trial of the spirit were followed by the blasphemous suggestion: 'All these things,' the kingdoms of the world and their glory, 'will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

In St. Luke's narrative, as all students of the Gospels know, the trial placed last by St. Matthew is given the second place. But (if we are right to press such details at all) we can hardly doubt that St. Matthew gives the order of events as they actually happened; for he adds notes of time: '*Then* the devil taketh Him into the Holy City; '*Again* the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain,' which show that he is giving a continuous narrative. Such indications are absent from St. Luke's record, although the reason of the differences can only be matter of conjecture. Certainly the order in which St. John in his First Epistle speaks of the three master temptations of humanity—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life¹—is an order which naturally suggests itself as a fit one in which to range the three great temptations of the Son of Man. It is an order which brings before us the besetting sins of the various stages of human life.

¹ 1 Jn 2¹⁶.

The passionate desires of youth, the absorbing worldliness of mature men of the world, the pride and self-satisfaction which too often attend successful old age; we know them all. And we cannot be surprised that the third evangelist, writing for Greek readers, should have followed the order, *φιληδονία, πλεονεξία, φιλοδοξία*, although he is careful not even to hint that he is describing the Lord's temptations in the order in which they actually occurred.

But in St. Matthew's account, as we have seen, the climax of the struggle was reached when the evil suggestion came from the Evil One: 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.' It is necessary to inquire, What is the meaning of this? What is the significance of this temptation? From whence did it derive its force? It is commonly said that the human love of power, present in every son of Adam, was the principle upon which the tempter here rested his malicious attack. And it is beyond controversy that earthly ambition is a strong motive. The desire of fame—'that last infirmity of noble mind'—is a desire which has brought about the fall of many a heroic soul. And it has been supposed that this was at the root of the third temptation of our blessed Lord. There is grave danger, as we have reminded ourselves already, in paraphrasing solemn words like those in the story before us. We rather weaken them than add to their force by translating them into our modern ways of speech. And in any case we cannot expect to understand the matter to the end. But surely such an explanation as this is not satisfactory. It does not suggest that there was anything extraordinary or even intense in the trial of our Lord, if the last and greatest temptation which He had to resist was the temptation to seek earthly dominion, to gratify earthly ambition. It appeals to a motive powerful with the children of men, but hardly to be supposed as peculiarly present with the Eternal Word, *by whom all things were made*.

We shall gain, it is believed, a clearer understanding of what this mysterious trial was, if we look back to those which preceded it. Both the other tempting voices, 'Command that these stones be made bread,' 'Cast Thyself down from hence,' were prefaced by the words, 'If Thou be the Son of God.' No doubt is here expressed or implied as to that Divine Sonship; the consciousness of it must, we can but reverently believe, have been

ever present with the Christ: But the temptation was to draw upon that store of supernatural power which was ever within His reach. 'Thinkest thou,' He said, on the last sad evening, 'that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?'¹ It would have been so easy to have asserted His absolute freedom from the conditions of human life, as we know that He did assert and display it after His Resurrection. Easy to gratify the desires of the flesh or the pride of life; easy for us all, but incomparably easy for Him who was Lord of the whole earth. Nor would such yielding have been to all outward appearance a renunciation of His claims. The desire for food is innocent in itself; trust in the Divine Providence is the soul's best strength and stay. But to have followed either suggestion would have been to turn aside from His appointed course. He had come to live a true human life, to taste of life as we know it; and to have thus—either for His own bodily needs or His spiritual consolation—divorced Himself from the life of men by a display of Divine power would have been, it may well be, a departure from the course foreordained in the counsels of the Supreme. A true Redeemer must be perfect man; body and soul alike need redemption. And a Redeemer who did not share in the fulness of human nature, who would free Himself from the infirmities of human body, or would comfort His fainting soul by supernatural manifestations of His Godhead, would not be a Redeemer for man. And so He endured the pain of abstinence, and the sorrowful depression of a soul which dreads the withdrawal of the Divine help, rather than minister to the one or relieve the other by a direct exertion of the Godhead that dwelt in Him. He was thus tried, for He was the Son of God; He resisted, for He was the Son of Man.

The first two trials were, then, more subtle than appears at first sight. The victory lay in the refusal to separate Himself in His sorrows from mankind; it lay in that 'self-emptying' of which St. Paul speaks. And when we turn to the third and final conflict, we seem to find that it too was a far more terrible conflict than any which can come upon men, though it be full of the deepest teaching for us all. He was in truth the Son of

¹ Mt 26⁵³.

Man. He had taken upon Him that nature which is the flower and the crown of created life. Through this Incarnation it should receive new strength; fresh gifts were thus placed within man's reach, for it is in Christ that men become partakers of the Divine nature. So is the Church in fact the body of Christ. Why should it not be established then and there? He who was to come had come. All things were ready. The kingdoms of the world awaited their rightful Lord. Surely there was no need of more. The gospel of an Incarnate Word might now be preached. All the glory of the earth, which was to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, spread itself before Him; and the whole creation, which had been groaning and travailing together in discipline and painful waiting, had found its consummation in Him. Is not this the gospel itself?

But for one fact it could be the gospel. That fact is the fact of sin. And does it not seem as if the suggestion of evil which came to the Sinless One was that He should recognize the rights of sin in the universe of which He was the Creator? 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Sin had a place in the world; the race had fallen from its high estate; and the Divine Mercy had now provided a fresh source of strength from which it might draw life-giving draughts. Was not this enough? Was it indeed necessary that the Incarnation should be fulfilled in the Atonement, that the condescension of the Divine Charity should stoop to the cross? We are here on holy ground, and we dare not go beyond what is written. But at least we are not inventing anything for ourselves which is not in the text of the Gospels. For we read that the tempter only departed 'for a season,'² and we know that more than once this very temptation assailed the Redeemer. In the garden of Gethsemane on the eve of His Passion, 'with strong crying and tears,'³ He prayed, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.'⁴ The shadow of the cross was ever with Him; and in the earlier as in the later days of ministry, the greatest, supremest, trial of Jesus lay in the submission to the cross, and all that it involved. 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship

² It is interesting that at Lk 4¹³, in the Græco-Latin MS. of St. Gall (δ), after the words *usque ad tempus* we have the explanatory gloss, *i. passionis*.

³ He 5⁷.

⁴ Mt 26³⁹.

me.' But the answer comes from the lips of the Sinless One, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan.' The words show in their sternness the bitterness of the trial which drew them forth. They are used but once again, and then they are occasioned by the self-same suggestion of evil, when the Apostle St. Peter would have had his Master refuse the cross.¹ To have refused the cross would have been to have left evil unconquered; it would have been a recognition of its right to a place in God's world; and thus it would have left humanity unredeemed. It is only through the merits of the Passion that a Christian can say, 'I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.'² And it is deeply significant that the two occasions on which the Lord was

¹ Mt 16²³.² Ph 4¹³.

comforted by a ministry of angels were the two great occasions on which He resisted the impulse to shun the cross, and thus leave the work of Redemption but half done. 'Angels came and ministered unto Him' in the wilderness, says St. Matthew.³ 'An angel appeared to Him' at Gethsemane, says St. Luke.⁴ For in both cases the voice of the Kingly Victim has been heard, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan; Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' Evil must ever be an intruder in the kingdom of righteousness; it has no joint sovereignty with good; it must be overcome by Him who alone is able to overcome it. But the path to victory is 'the royal road of the cross.'

³ Mt 4¹¹.⁴ Lk 22⁴³.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

JOHN xx. 29.

'Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

'Jesus saith unto him.'—Our Lord does not bid Thomas rise, nor say, as the angel did to John in the Apocalypse, 'Worship God'; nor did He reject the homage which is here so grandly paid; but He describes this very state of mind which induced the disciple to say, 'My Lord, and my God!' as that high, holy acquisition which throughout His ministry He had treated as the main prime condition of all spiritual blessings. 'Thou hast believed,' said He, 'because thou hast seen Me; thou hast become a believer in all that I am, because thou hast received this crowning proof of the reality of My victory over death.'—REYNOLDS.

'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'—The change from perfects to aorists should be noted: 'Blessed are they who *saw* not and (yet) *believed*.' There were already disciples who believed without having seen the Risen Lord; and from a point of view in the future, Jesus sees many more such.—PLUMMER.

THE contrast which Jesus indicates is that between a faith which, to accept the miraculous fact, insists on *seeing* it, and a faith which consents to accept it on the foundation of *testimony*. In the first way, faith would be possible for the world only on condition of miracles being renewed unceasingly, and appearances of Jesus being repeated to

every individual. Such was not to be the course of God's operation on the earth, and hence Jesus calls those blessed who shall believe by the solitary means of that faith to which Thomas insisted on adding the other.—GODET.

THIS last great declaration of blessedness is a beatitude which is the special property of the countless number of believers who have never seen Christ in the flesh. Just as it is possible for every Christian to become equal in blessedness to Christ's mother and brethren by obedience (Mt 12^{49, 50}), so it is possible for them to transcend the blessedness of the apostles by faith. All the apostles, like Thomas, had seen before they believed; even John's faith did not show itself till he had had evidence (v.⁸). Thomas had the opportunity of believing without seeing, but rejected it. The same opportunity is granted to all believers now.—PLUMMER.

Seeing and Believing the Resurrection.

The great external fact of the Christian religion is the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead. Jesus died to satisfy Divine justice. When He died He did satisfy Divine justice—the Law of God had no more dominion over Him. But He rose from the Dead. So here *on earth* was One over whom God's Law had no power. And as He died not for His own sins but for ours, here on earth was One under whom we could find shelter from the Law of God. We flee to Him, and 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' If He had not died, there