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Boston University
Graduate School

Thesis

TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of requirements for
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TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

I. INTRODUCTION

Hearing about Jesus as both Divine and human, and believing in Him as the revelation of God the Father, one might readily be led to think that no obstacles could delay Him in His pathway, the pathway of righteousness directed by His Heavenly Father. Though He was a conqueror, yet He was subjected to temptation.

A reading of His experience in the Judean wilderness immediately after His baptism should be convincing that Divine favours did not keep Jesus from being tempted. Turning to the writers of the Synoptic Gospels for a record of the wilderness temptations of Jesus, it is found that Matthew says: "Led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Mark says: "The Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness, and He was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan." Luke says: "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days,

being tempted of the devil."

In the above we see that Matthew and Luke would show Jesus being led of the Spirit into the wilderness. Mark tells us that He was driven. "The Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." Further reading will show that Matthew and Luke so developed the theme that they give details showing us something of the character of the temptations. They give the number as three, though not in the same order: for Matthew's second is put third by Luke. Mark either has forgotten the details or being so enthusiastic over the victories of Jesus he cannot take time to relate them. He shows Jesus in them. "He was with the wild beasts;" but Mark sees Jesus a Conqueror. "And angels came and ministered to Him." Yes, a Conqueror over the temptations in the wilderness, and to Mark- proved as such, so that he immediately presents Jesus in His great work, that of the Kingdom.

To find meaning of words "lead" and "driveth" may I think be done, resulting in harmony. A person may be so led in some great matter as to feel so compelled that he must give to it careful consideration. To me

different words meaning the same thing are used by different men in order to tell the same story.

All three Synoptic writers tell us clearly, definitely, that Jesus was tempted, and all three tell us that the place of this tempting was the wilderness. But for an account of this wilderness experience Mark is not our greatest source; though for the strengthening of our faith, for the enrichment of our lives, Mark has given us something (even if the others had not given any account) for which we are glad. Mark shows us Jesus in the wilderness, but not remaining there. To Mark, Jesus was One that overcometh. Jesus was a Conqueror. The solitary place, the wild beasts, could not defeat Mark's Lord, for the seeming solitary place will be changed by the presence of angels. The wild beasts were unable to hurt Him. Soon He will be on His great mission, a builder of the Kingdom of God.

However, so far as details are concerned relative to Jesus' experiences in the wilderness, we admit that Mark has not given such. Gilbert¹ says: "The narrative of Mark (1:12-13) gives no specific suggestion in regard to the nature of Jesus' experience in the

(1) Gilbert. Jesus P. 134

wilderness. It shows no trace of acquaintance with the Logia account. Taken as a whole, it is not intelligible as a report by Jesus of His retirement into the wilderness, for we cannot suppose that He would have told His disciples that He was tempted, and yet not have said anything of the nature of the temptation, or how He had met it. To have done so would only have bewildered them." And whilst all this seems true, let us rejoice in the account, though brief, that Mark has given. I like to think myself seeing Mark's glorious and all-conquering Jesus with a Divine Mission, and though details are not given, we can well agree with Bennet² (Life of Christ According to St.Mark) writing on the Temptation of Jesus: "He separated Himself from the crowd, and went out into the wilderness that He might become better acquainted with the Spirit of God; and He found Satan the Tempter."

Finding the Tempter is shown quite clearly by all three writers of the Synoptic Gospels. So Mark, though brief in his account, has put much in the kernel.

(2) Bennet. Life of Christ According to St.Mark P.8

It may be that Renan thought well to be influenced by the unwritten in Mark, for he (Renan) passes over the Temptation experience of Jesus very lightly. Notice what he says: "Until the arrest of John, which we put approximately in the summer of the year 29, Jesus did not quit the neighborhood of the Dead Sea and the Jordan. A stay in the desert of Judea was generally looked upon as a preparation for great things, a sort of "retreat" before public acts. Jesus followed the example of those before him, and passed forty days there, fasting strictly, without other companionship than that of wild beasts. The minds of the disciples were much exercised in regard to this sojourn. The desert was, according to popular belief, the abode of demons. There are few regions in the world more desolate, more God-forsaken, more shut off from life, than the rocky slope which forms the western border of the Dead Sea. It was believed that during the time Jesus passed in this frightful country he had gone through terrible trials; that Satan had assailed him with his illusions, or flattered him by seductive promises; and that finally, to reward him for his victory, angels had come and ministered to him."³

(3) Renan. The Life of Jesus. P. 160

Berguer says: "Jesus, we remember, had just passed through the supremely beautiful and exalting experience related in the episode of the Baptism. The time had come for Him to translate into living works the magnificent life-urge with which He felt Himself flooded. Now in such an environment as His, the natural expression of such a religious genius lay along the extended lines of Messianism. His education *** had familiarized Him, through His reading and understanding of the Scriptures and particularly of the Jewish Apocalypses and the prophets, with the traditional figure of the Messiah. On the other hand, the very character of His inner life, the central experience of His soul, must have led Him to accept certain features of this figure while rendering others repugnant to Him. Finally, the originality and the sovereignty of the inner experiences through which He had passed must have urged Him invincibly to manifest outwardly the life that was expanding so abundantly within Him. He had to act: this fact He had already solemnly accepted in the Temple when He was twelve years old.

Now the hour for practical action had struck; the appearance of the Baptist had Him conscious of this call. The time had come for Him to begin.

But how? That was the agonizing, momentous, alarming, disquieting question upon which depended the salvation of a whole people. He is to be the Messiah, or something approximately to that; He is to come in the name of Him who sends Him. But how is He to do it? Under what **banner** and bearing what colours? How is He to reach men in such a way as to act upon them, to communicate to them this Father Whom He knows, to save them, without compromising what gives value to His life and all the experiences of His life?

The crisis awaits Him here. Nothing of this sort had presented itself to Him when the question had been simply of the direction He was to give to His own life. It arises at the precise moment when this life encounters sinful humanity with the purpose of manifesting itself to it. In this lies the meaning of the Temptation. It is, at bottom, the temptation which all of us have, to miss our own life, to lose it in paths

where it will not give us what it should and can give us. We do not have this temptation as messiahs, we have it as men, in the sense and according to the line of our various vocations."⁴

No doubt such words as these by Berguer appeal to us, and in contrast to Renan give to us feeling. We want to know about our Lord in His wilderness experience. For this knowledge, it seems best to go with Him, and in order to get the most it is necessary to let Matthew and Luke lead us. At the same time it is profitable to remember that the One Who told the story of the Temptations was Jesus, for we understand that He was "alone."

"The narrative in Luke is like Mark's in extending the temptation through the forty days; like Matthew's in narrating the three temptations at the end. The second and third temptations are put in a different order in Luke; for the difference no satisfactory explanation can be given, nor is it important."⁵

(4) Berguer. Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus. P. 163-5

(5) Burton. Life of Christ. P. 59-60.

THE PLACES WHERE JESUS' TEMPTATIONS OCCURRED

The wilderness was not the only place where Jesus was tempted. The record of the wilderness temptation shows that the devil left Jesus for a season. It is well to remember that it was only for a season, and wise to keep in mind that the season in all probability was very brief. Surely He must have been tempted many times of which we have no record.

Caesarea Philippi is another place where we have clear testimony from Jesus that He was again tempted. Neither His spiritual conquest nor ours is settled in the first fight. Jesus had renewals in conflict. Here at Caesarea Philippi the temptation came back to Jesus, the temptation urging Him to go contrary to what he knew to be the Father's will.

It was here that Jesus told His disciples how He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Having heard this message from Jesus, Peter began to rebuke Him, because he could not bear such a disappointing message. But

Jesus turned to him, and said: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling block to me." Jesus recognized the tempting spirit of His old antagonist who was making use of Peter. Too, He regards the suggestion to spare Himself as a real temptation.

Gethsemane is another place where the gospel records bear clear testimony of Jesus under temptation. He sees Jerusalem and knows that soon He is to be attacked by the elders, chief priests and scribes. Here in the habitat of this Garden, Jesus knows that soon final plans will be in action for the purpose of putting Him to death.

Under such conditions surely it was natural to ask if there was a way of escape. No wonder Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But here again is the temptation to find another way, a swerving from obedience to the Father's will. How did Jesus deal with this temptation? The answer is given in the continuing words of His prayer: "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." So we see that in this Gethsemane temptation, the plan of

Jesus to deal with it is on the basis of whatever is His Father's will. Instead of responding to this temptation, he remained loyal to the decision of the Judean wilderness which was complete submission to the will of God.

JESUS' PREPAREDNESS FOR TEMPTATION

It was the custom of the Jews in Jesus' time to teach their children in religion. Costly as copies of the Scriptures were, it is reasonable for us to believe that Joseph had at least one of these. We would expect both Joseph and Mary to be anxious to instruct their child. Joseph would not be unmindful of the injunction "These words which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest

down, and when thou risest up."

Trained by his parents in the way a child should go, and with the grace of God upon Him, it was natural for Him at the age of twelve to say: "I must be about my Father's business." These are the earliest recorded words of Jesus and they indicate a high note in His life afterwards. Through His temptations He never allowed Himself to speak a single word or engage in a single act contrary to this saying.

II. JESUS' FIRST TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

It was in the wilderness that Jesus endured His first temptations following His baptism. He had lived and worked in Galilee, surrounded with many things that would tend to make life bright, cheerful and enjoyable. A mother such as we must think the mother of Jesus was, a father such as Joseph was, a boy such as Jesus was (who "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men"), must have made home life ideal. Besides the joys of home, the surroundings of Nazareth were familiar to Jesus. He was accustomed to the flowers and fruit which grew around there. He too, was accustomed to the social life for Nazareth was the place "where He had been brought up."

We are told that He (Jesus) is in the "wilderness." No doubt He must have realized keenly the contrast. He was away from home. He was away from the scenes of his boyhood. He was alone in the wilderness, and away from all social life. The laughter

of Galilean children is only in remembrance. Now in hearing is the roar of the beasts of prey.

"The vision which allures the eye in Nazareth is of the tall workman, making ox-yokes in contented labour, the Son on whose arms the widowed mother leans; on whose knees the little children climb. The most familiar path of nature He has trod is the stony track leading to the wide plateau above the little town, from which He has seen at sunset Carmel flushed with rose, and the Jordan valley deep in purple shadow, and far away to northward the azure of the sea. And now, all at once, He is confronted with a new nature which seems no more benevolent and joyous, but evil and malignant. These scarred and frowning rocks, this bloomless waste, this gloomy illimitable plain, compose a fitting theatre for diabolic energies. Night falls upon the scene, and the darkness overwhelms the spirit. The cry of the wind or the wild beast thrills the nerves. The immitigable silence is itself a horror. The stars alone shine familiar; elsewhere there is neither sight nor sound that is not fearful and detestable. Hunger gives a new poignancy to

all mental and physical sensations."⁷

To such a place Jesus hastened. Before considering some of the details of His experience therein, a question, somewhat personal: could I go and stay alone in such a place? Perhaps I, too, would realize a wilderness indeed. Yea more, for such a place would afford opportunity not only to realize the present but also to ask: what of the future? The loneliness would give opportunity for the past to project itself, the past with its regrets so projecting as to blast present hopes and check visions of the future. It is hard to picture Jesus in the wilderness, for, to endeavor to put oneself there, can hardly be done even by the imagination. No, we cannot. We may endeavor, but in so doing there would be the greater realization of the need of that companionship which is assured in the promise: "Lo, I am with you alway."

Jesus had no regrets which some of us mortals would have. He was not baptized as a penitent.

(7) Dawson. The Life of Christ. Page 50.

There was nothing in His life for which He had to repent. A study of His own words with John preceding His baptism should be convincing that "the baptism of Jesus was not a confession of sin, but a profession of devotion to a revealed plan of God."

At His baptism He heard the heavenly language saying: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

After the baptism Jesus went to the wilderness. There He was alone. Early in life He had decided to be about His Father's business. From this decision He had never wavered. But from the time of His baptism, "we must believe, dates the beginning of his clear conviction that He was to undertake the work of founding the kingdom of God: From the moment the voice from heaven sounded in his heart, He devoted Himself with unswerving purpose and self-sacrifice to the new work."

Jesus finds Himself under the impulse to seek aloneness so that He may meditate on this new work.

JESUS WAS TEMPTED TO DISTRUST HIS FATHER'S WORD.

The tempter, we are told, busied himself to help Jesus to make a decision that would conform to the wishes of the people and be accomodative to Jesus Himself. "And the devil said unto him, 'If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread.'"⁸

This wilderness experience of "forty days" brought Jesus to feel hunger, that is, a hunger with no food nearby. So far as I can see the hunger which Jesus must have experienced after the long fast was such as to compel Him to ask: "How shall I meet this privation of life if I am to be a kingdom builder?" There was no manifestation of temporal sustenance. However, the devil in his subtlety suggested "Why not prove God now. If thou art the Son of God, thou canst secure anything thou desirest. If thou art the Son of God, thou needest not to be hungry, besides thou canst prove in a very definite way to Thyself and to the world whether or not thou art the Son of God by doing the miraculous. Furthermore, there can be no harm. If thou art a King, thou must

(8) Luke. Chapter 1V, vs. 3-4.

be preserved in body. If the body should suffer, the work of the future cannot be accomplished, and certainly there can be no harm in securing food. The circumstances justify the means." An analysis of this temptation will reveal the fact that its real character is so concealed that it is hard to discern the subtlety therein. The thing concealed in this temptation is an attempt to make Jesus distrust God.

Well for us who profess to be Christians to seek for the mind of Jesus that such subtlety may be revealed; for many there are who often say concerning something done: "I know it was wrong but I just had to do it." This statement involves the concealment of the subtlety. Distrust God is the devil's appeal.

HE WAS TEMPTED TO DESPAIR OF HIS FATHER'S GOODNESS

If Jesus had followed the suggestion, who could say that act was wrong: that is, the act of securing food in order to sustain a tired hungry man. Well for us to remember that nobody has to do anything wrong. "I just had to do it," is of the evil one, who

would have God's children cease to have faith in the Father's plan, cease to follow His way, trusting in themselves and distrusting Him. Or, over-anxiety to take care of self rather than conform to the will of God. But the victory of Jesus in this fierce struggle, reveals that He will not distrust His Father. Though He did not consider bread as unnecessary, He did consider that man should trust in the word of God.

"Around Him lay fragments of limestone, and as His eye rested on the lump, the idea occurred to Him that He might relieve His hunger by miraculously converting it into a loaf. And He could have done it. Ere many days elapsed, He changed water into wine, and twice in the course of His ministry He multiplied a handful of bread into a meal for thousands. Yet He would not do it, and the explanation lies in the fact that of all the miracles which He wrought in the course of His ministry, not one was wrought on His own behalf. His power, ever alert to the cry of others' need, slumbered when His own was great. His mission demanded this self-abnegation. He had come to bear our load and drink our cup, and it was necessary that He should experience the

uttermost of our woe, in order that He might be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Had He exerted His miraculous power to save Himself from suffering, He would have cancelled that great act of self-renunciation, whereby He assumed our nature that He might dwell here, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."⁹

JESUS REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH THE TEMPTER

To the tempter's tremendous appeal, Jesus answered: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."¹⁰

His declaration through baptism was a clear testimony concerning the side He was on, viz., that of His Father's Kingdom. To be on God's side involves listening to God, and to "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Jesus was so consecrated to be what His Father

(9) Smith. The Days of His Flesh. Page 40.

(10) Matthew. Chapter 1V, vs. 4

would have Him to be that this tremendous temptation to sacrifice obedience to the comfort that would come from gratification cannot be entertained. It was a temptation through the body, a temptation so far as the principle is concerned common to every one. Jesus had a principle in mind and was determined to maintain it on the scale of honour, the honour of obeying His Father's will.

It is well for us to pray that in all our temptations we may be delivered by the Divine power. If we so pray, let us keep in mind that to secure deliverance we must be ready and willing as Jesus was to know and to acknowledge God's will concerning us.

III. JESUS' SECOND TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Jesus' victory over the first temptation in the wilderness did not solve the question: How to reveal Himself? How make Himself known is not yet decided. To come as some had thought of the Messiah coming in a spectacular way; to come from the clouds, and that suddenly might be a convincing way of demonstrating that He was the Messiah, (Mal.III-1) So we read that the Jerusalem center would be appropriate. Luke says: "And he led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, 'If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee, and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"¹¹

"To go to Jerusalem, when the multitudes were present at some feast, to cast Himself down unhurt from one of its lofty pinnacles before their eyes, would not that establish Him at once? * * If He was the

(11) Luke. Ch. IV. 9-11

Messiah, God's Son, then He had nothing to fear from such a deed."¹²

Here again is the subtle one for "Under guise of an appeal to filial trust lies concealed a temptation to distrust."¹³

Any scheme to bring about distrust in God, the devil will not only try but he will plan ways, subtle ways, to accomplish this. Here he will use scripture. Jesus used scripture in defeating him at the first trial, now he (the devil) will try scripture in the next attempt. But we will see that Jesus is also ready with scripture.

HE WAS TEMPTED TO PRESUME UPON THE POWER OF HIS FATHER

The devil could support much sin with scripture. Jesus was quite aware of this, and was ready with the answer: "Again it is written 'Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.'"¹⁵ I like the word "again" used by Matthew. It reveals the keen insight of Jesus into

(12) Rall. The Life of Jesus, Page 53

(13) Burton & Matthews- Life of Christ, Page 59

(15) Matthew. Chap. IV- 7.

the plans of the evil one to use scripture to endeavor to make Him believe that responding to the suggestion would be quite in accord with scripture, and therefore with the will of God.

"The proposal amounts to this: If thou art the Messiah, cast thyself down, for angels will preserve thee from harm. The desirable thing is to see whether, as Messiah, he bears a charmed life for which he does not need to be careful. That this suggestion arose, and that it had power, is evidence that Jesus shared the popular belief in regard to the miraculous resources of the Messiah. But this proposal was rejected. To accept it would be to tempt God, which is a forbidden thing. The man who is promised divine protection is the ordinary wayfarer who sets his love on God and dwells in his secret place (ps. 91:1-14) not the man who presumptuously leaps from precipices."¹⁶

Suppose Jesus had gone up on a wing of the temple (at a time when multitudes were in Jerusalem), and that he leaped therefrom, would it do any good?

(16) Gilbert. Jesus, Page 136.

Would it tend towards Kingdom building? Would it cause the people to believe that He was really the Son of God? We cannot see that such an action would do any good; whilst at first it might seem to convince that there was something supernatural about it- (that is- provided Jesus would be unhurt, and we may not be sure that He would be saved from injury), later it might be said that there was a trick in it, that a certain knowledge of the plan or method of leaping would enable others to do the same. But apart from this, it is not likely that such activity would prove satisfactorily that He was the Messiah. Furthermore, on such activity could the Kingdom of God be built? But here as before, Jesus would not submit to the temptation of presuming upon the power of His Father.

HE WAS TEMPTED TO INDULGE IN THE SPECTACULAR

There was the temptation for Jesus to make some spectacular display likely to find a favorable reception with the people. They were looking for a Messiah, a

Messiah the fulfillment of prophecy, and for Jesus to come down from the pinnacle of the temple would indicate in a form His coming from above, and claim the allegiance of the people as a result of their impression that the Divine favor was conferred. Hence a form of this temptation is to be seen, a form involving a demonstration, a demonstration so that by one act the miraculous power of the Divine would be exhibited and thereby all toil, scorn, and contradiction could be avoided.

The demand for a sign was put forth to Jesus many times afterwards. A sign from heaven was requested. But during Jesus' ministry His policy was not the building of His Father's Kingdom on a cataclysmic catastrophic basis. Jesus realized that to be a builder of God's kingdom He must know what God wants, and He was decided that it was not by demonstration that the Kingdom should come. He would not presume on God's power to enable Him to carry out the curious, to excite attention, or bring about an adornment of spiritual pride. This phase of His second temptation He dealt with in His answer to the devil: "Thou shalt not make

trial of the Lord thy God."

HOW JESUS OVERCAME THIS TEMPTATION

The devil used scripture when tempting Jesus to ascend the pinnacle and cast Himself down before the eyes of the gazing crowd below. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." Jesus knew that God could do this very thing, just as later He knew that His Father could send ¹²ten legions of angels to defend Him. But though Jesus so understood, yet the point with Jesus was: what was His Father's will for Him, and one thing was clear, that "trial" should not be made of the goodness of God. Besides for Him the Father's will must be supreme. The devil's suggestion cannot be entertained.

IV. JESUS' THIRD TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

Jesus had recognized that to turn stones into bread would be responding to a suggestion based on an attempt to have Him distrust His Father. He met this temptation and defeated its purpose as shown in the expression "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The next trial He overcame in placing it where it belonged, namely: "tempting of God."

JESUS LED TO A MOUNTAIN TO BE TEMPTED.

When Jesus refused to make a spectacular display in the Holy City, another appeal comes. "The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, 'all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'"¹⁹

"Exceeding high mountain." Luke does not mention a mountain, just says that "he was led up" perhaps to some elevated position where there was a good view, but not such as to see with the bodily eye the

(¹⁹ Matt.Ch.IV. Versus 8-9.)

whole world, yet sufficient to stimulate the thought of the whole world, which too, would be in harmony with the Jewish hope that a Deliverer would come who would not only establish the throne of David; but be such a Leader that the Jewish nation would be able to establish its independence. And here is the appeal to Jesus to embrace the opportunity to extend his influence, to leave aside spiritual ideals, say temporarily, and make room for His message. If He will accept the challenge, and be a political leader, He will have a large following as many are ready to revolt against the Roman yoke, and if He leads His people to political victories they will believe on Him. And the way to establish His kingdom will be opened. Not only are the "kingdoms of the world" promised to Him, but "the glory of them." According to Luke the devil asserts ownership, and gives his reason for being able to claim ownership in the words "for it hath been delivered unto me."²⁰ We also read in Luke that the devil claims he has it in his power to confer a favor. He told Jesus that the world was his. "And to whomsoever I will I give it."²¹

(20) Luke Ch.IV, verse 6.

(21) Luke Ch.IV, verse 6.

THE TEMPTATION CONTAINED IN THE DEVIL'S PROMISE.

Matthew says: (Jesus must recognize the devil's ownership and the glory that he claims to have by an act of humility. Jesus must worship him.) "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."²² What a temptation; the chance of a lifetime. And reasonable in a measure, for in getting such an honorable position there would be great opportunities to exercise power and hasten the Kingdom of Heaven. Besides it would fit into the idea of being the Messianic Leader so long looked for by the people.

HE IS TEMPTED TO ACCEPT WORLDLY KINGDOMS INSTEAD OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

The Man who has not where to lay His Head has presented to Him an offer to dwell in a king's palace, an offer that is hard to refuse. It is a tremendous temptation. What is man to do with it? How will he act? Will he do without home, without fame, without power? Will he follow a path of lowly service instead of becoming a great national leader with authority to command? Or, will he give himself to be a national leader, with the devil's

(22) Matt.Ch.IV,verse 9.

promise that he can have the worldly riches, worldly glory, pomp, and every bit of ease that may be desired. Or, will he be a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, from whom men will hide their faces?

If we should get the idea that it was easy for Jesus to pursue the course He did, we fail to see the man in the wilds of the wilderness. We fail to hear the cry of the wild beasts in the midnight hour. We are not seeing Jesus who was struggling with tremendous temptation. The world which He wished to win for God must have been pictured in His mind in some way. But the devil tempts Him probably to some course which if Jesus accepted would amount to worship of the devil.

Jesus had to deal with the enormity of this offer. It contained much. It was an offer covering "all" the kingdoms of the world. In our temptation let us recall that word "all" in Jesus' temptation. It was not a mere little here and there. It was comprehensive in that it included much. What a temptation-- will the son of the carpenter of Nazareth seize the opportunity to be a millionaire? Or, will He move in a quiet pathway, with the possibility of poverty, and without the possibility of finance to carry out even the best of intentions?

HE IS TEMPTED TO BELIEVE THAT THE KINGDOMS OF
THIS WORLD ARE IN THE POWER OF THE DEVIL.

Jesus has not only told us that the devil tempted Him in offering to Him the kingdoms of the world. But He too has told us that the devil asserted that they were in his (the devil's) power. This claim to ownership naturally should carry much weight. If the devil is the owner and as such is willing to make this large donation, it is surely reasonable to confer with him.

It must have been a weighty matter for Jesus to consider, that of securing a position which might enable Him to do what was in His mind. In such a position as a ruler of all the kingdoms of the world He could free the captives, relieve the oppressed, and many other things. In such a position, He would be unlimited in opportunities and power to do good.

We will do well to keep in mind that Jesus is the One who has told the story of this temptation. And, He having told it, we can immediately decide that it was without doubt a temptation. Having this clearly before our minds we will with profit allow ourselves to be reminded of what Jesus is tempted.

The devil has told Jesus that he is the owner, and he also may have claimed that the kings and people of these

kingdoms had given their power and honor to him. This could have a feasible presentation for we are told in the second verse of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians that there were those who "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air."

For Jesus to take over full possession and reign in a way that would be worthy of the kingdom of God, to wipe out evil and establish good, surely would be accepting an undertaking worth while.

Many a one has been side-tracked by such a putting in a plausible way of something delightfully gilded; but false at the centre. To see the gilding is easy for that is the aim of the artist. To detect the falsity is not so easy, for the aim is to hide the falsity with the gilding. But Jesus was able to think straight. He had keen discernment. He was a seeker for truth. On truth He will proceed to be a Builder of His Father's Kingdom, and for Him truth will demand listening to His Father Whom He will worship.

JESUS IS TEMPTED NOT ONLY WITH OWNERSHIP OF
MATERIAL KINGDOMS, BUT THE GLORY OF THEM.

Human nature seeks fame and glory. Power is glorious. To have power instead of weakness is famous. To be able to assert one's power in accordance with one's ambition brings inward glory - and likely to secure outward fame.

For Jesus, Who was bent on doing good; to get an offer that would bring Him into prominence and also endow Him with a marvellous power through ownership of worldly kingdoms - "and the glory of them," we will agree, presented an unusual challenge at least for consideration.

Let us keep in mind that Jesus regarded it as a temptation from the devil. The devil has made a promise to Jesus. It is put in such a way as to present great glory. Here it can be noticed that the devil is offering glory to another, but it is on conditions that he be worshipped by that other. In other words, instead of giving to Jesus the glory that he has promised to Him, his scheme is to get greater glory for himself. The devil wants to be worshipped. Jesus has revealed to us this fact. Let us give attention to it.

Evidently Jesus saw the subtlety in this offer, and remembering that God the Father should be worshipped and Him only - Jesus would not be drawn into such a snare.

Jesus was taught in the days of His childhood that the Lord God was one Lord who was to be loved with heart, soul, and mind. Furthermore, Jesus at the age of twelve had decided to attend to His Father's business, and the words confirming His Sonship are still fresh in His mind; hence He did not accept this offer of glory from the devil.

JESUS WAS TEMPTED TO BELIEVE THAT THE OFFER
WAS THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME.

Surely, the demand for immediate decision was involved in this temptation. The devil presented his offer so as to be understood as having possession of the kingdoms of the world (and the record indicates that point). He told Jesus that they had been delivered unto him; that he, the owner, had the power and authority to give them to whomsoever he will. All this with the promise to Jesus that they can become His property, with only one condition. A condition which will only require a seemingly simple act surely calls for decision without delay.

If Jesus should delay in accepting the offer it might never come again. Even the attitude should be the same, might it not be that someone else would get this favorable opportunity and His chance be gone forever.

Every Christian that by the Spirit of God has met and overcome attacks from the devil knows from experience that this is part of the subtle one's game - that of bringing decision without first allowing a talk with the Divine Father.

To rise from the position of a toiling carpenter to a monarch on a throne, to rise from obscurity to prominence- socially and politically, surely carries a strong temptation to disregard all other considerations. This is true if the individual is not concerned about the kingdom of God and His will concerning the kingdom.

The Christian man who has allowed the mind of Christ to dwell in him - must take time to submit everything to the will of God.

It is true, quick action was demanded; but Jesus will not make haste to accept the devil's offer.

JESUS' VICTORY OVER THIS TEMPTATION.

Jesus looked upon this unusual offer made to him by the devil as a temptation. Certainly He treated it as such, and in this treatment we regard Him as making a victory of it. It was a victory for Jesus. He conquered and is able to help all who are tempted so that they may

conquer. He decided to worship God as Supreme and the only one whom He should worship. He too, has refused the way of temporal power for the building of His Father's Kingdom. To have accepted worldly power and to have used it in gratifying the people with worldly wealth would not have been a genuine victory for Jesus.

For He came to lead men into such a knowledge and fellowship with God that they would be weaned from pride and covetousness. Jesus would change men from being "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

If we are to meet temptation and treat it in a victorious way, then we must ask ourselves: "Along what level will it be wise to proceed?"

For answer, let us look at Jesus as presented by Matthew and Luke on His entrance into the wilderness. Matthew says: Jesus was "led of the Spirit." Luke says: "Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost - - - was led by the Spirit in the wilderness;" that Spirit, the presence of which He was conscious. Jesus has not forgotten Heaven's confirmation. That Spirit that abode upon Him was not a mere momentary experience. It had permanence. I like that word "abode." Yes, so abode that Jesus was moving on the higher level of thought - so permeated by the abiding presence of the

Spirit that He will be actuated upon by Divine principles in face of strong temptation, that His decision will be in accordance with the Father's will. That will never can endorse the worship of the devil. That will draws men to the highest, noblest and best. Jesus perceived the subtlety of the subtle one. And immediately came the strong commanding (if not vehement) response "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" 23.

This is the answer from, or on, the higher level. No toleration, no parley, no delay, but immediate sentence. The devil must go - must go for Jesus is not going to build the kingdom of God in accordance with such a suggestion.

"It is with us as it was with the Son of God. He was swept by the Holy Spirit onward to be tempted of the devil. He was entering a new epoch in His life. A great work lay just before Him. His imagination was stirred to unwonted activity, and all the currents of His life flowed with a new momentum. In this highly wrought condition of nerve and spirit - new yearnings, strange ambitions, lofty dreams, seized and held him. Vast possibilities opened before him. Conflicting suggestions thronged upon his soul. The world lay at his feet. He felt Himself to be

(23) Matt.Chap.IV, verse 10.

its rightful lord. How to enter into his dominion was the problem which crushed Him almost to the earth. The decision was reached only after tremendous struggle. Out of the wrestling he staggered, weakened and fainting, to be ministered unto by angels."²⁴

Matthew says: "Angels came and ministered unto him."²⁵ But Luke says that "when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season."²⁶ Not forever. No. Temptations came to Him afterwards, but here Jesus gained the victory and the position secured He never lost.

Jesus worked out the great plan of salvation for men. His decision here regarding the kind of kingdom God wants, is going to be maintained. It will not be built on selfish lines. It will not be brought in by spectacular displays. It will not be brought to a sin-sick world by giving place to devil-worship.

Jesus will give Himself as a Kingdom Builder having as His supreme thought the doing of His Father's Will.

Now He has consecrated a spotless life to the work of universal salvation.

"Surely, it might be argued, if the end were salvation, the means would be forgiven. Think what an Emperor we

(24) Jefferson Doctrine and Deed, Page 342.

(25) Matthew Ch. IV, verse 11.

(26) Luke Ch. IV, verse 13.

would have had in the Lord Jesus - what abuses He would have swept away, what tyrannies He would have broken down, what oppression He would have relieved. - - - But Christ, in the temptation in the wilderness, would not exchange the whole world for His own soul. And for that soul it was the world that Satan offered."²⁷

"It was this thought of God, His Father, that determined all else for Jesus. It determined his idea of the kingdom and delivered Him from all the external and selfish conceptions of the people round about Him. They dreamed of a Messiah working wonders and overthrowing their foes. He faced that expectation in the wilderness days and definitely broke with it. The kingdom of God, the rule of His Father, must be first of all love and peace, righteousness and good will, the reign of a new spirit among men."²⁹

Yes, God's will is to be first and foremost, no matter what the sacrifice, no matter what the cost. Jesus saw that it meant poverty. There was a way of securing sustenance for the body but it would not be the Father's will. There was a way for securing a place in the

(27) Wilson. The Christ We Forget, pages 142-3

(29) Rall. The Life of Jesus, page 57.

religious circle but it was spectacular and not the Father's way. There was a way for national fame and glory, but it would be of the devil; therefore could not be tolerated.

V. JESUS TEMPTATION AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI

The wilderness temptations of Jesus were not the only ones He had. In the fourth chapter of Luke's gospel verse thirteen, we read "And when the devil^{had} ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season." The next verse in the same chapter reads: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."

The fact that the devil departed from Jesus at the end of the wilderness temptation, and the fact that Jesus left the wilderness in the power of the Spirit does not mean that there were no more temptations.

After He fed the multitude with five barley loaves and two small fishes, an attempt was made to "take Him by force to make Him a King (John 6:15). This was a similar temptation to that which we have just considered only that it was presented in a more tangible form. Jesus quickly dismissed this temptation and went to a mountain Himself alone.

We shall now consider the temptation which He experienced at Caesarea Philippi.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THIS TEMPTATION TOOK PLACE

Let us now turn to Matthew's gospel, sixteenth chapter, verse thirteen. This verse reads: "when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Phillipi, he asked his disciples, saying, "whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?" The disciples reported what they had heard from others; then Jesus asked them: "whom say ye that I am? This was a great question. How will they answer it? They had heard others asking Jesus who He was, and He had not answered. Now for the disciples to answer on what Jesus kept so silent, to make their declaration on what Jesus kept from declaring, is not an easy matter. But someone responds with a clear cut testimony, that one is Peter who said: "Thou are the Christ the Son of the Living God."

At the time of Jesus' baptism he had the testimony from heaven "this is my beloved Son." Here at

Caesarea Philippi Jesus has heard the testimony of man in the presence of the disciples. Jesus pointed out to Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed this knowledge to him, but that it came from the Father in heaven. Jesus has been through Palestine teaching and healing and working miracles. Yet we are not told that these things enabled Peter to testify as he did. It was God who gave to Peter the revelation that he had of Jesus.

Under such conditions it might be thought that the devil was not near him to tempt Him any more; but as we pursue the narrative in the chapter before us we shall see differently, for we shall see something more of Peter.

PETER'S PART IN THIS TEMPTATION.

Verse twenty-one of this sixteenth chapter of Matthew tells us that: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." This statement was too much for Peter. Evidently he did not want that kind of a Messiah. Anyhow, he did not want to think of Him as suffering or as being put to death. Peter felt he should rebuke Jesus at this point, telling Him distinctly that such a thing could not be

allowed. Besides, the Jews of Jesus' day were not looking for a suffering Messiah. They were looking for a triumphant Messiah, one who could be, and would be victorious in every undertaking. It seems that Peter still shared such a view, hence he was bold in insisting that Jesus must not pursue a pathway which meant suffering, shame, and apparently defeat.

It seems reasonable to suppose that Peter may have felt greatly exalted at what Jesus had already said to him in relation to his confession, and then failed to exercise control so as to allow the spirit of humility to have the rightful place. "Not everyone can keep the spirit low and humble in the midst of great advancements." Furthermore, Peter may have felt that the chief priests and elders and scribes could not assert themselves in such a way as to hurt Jesus. These church dignataries feared the people. Too, Peter may have felt that he himself with hundreds of others would fight rather than let Jesus suffer as He had indicated.

Whatever may have been the reason for Peter's rebuke one thing is certain that Jesus regarded it as a

temptation and one that must be put away instantly. Jesus will not allow any parley. His words to Peter are delivered instantly- they are directed with definiteness of purpose: "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Those who obstruct the righteous in the pathway of duty must be regarded as an offence. It is a temptation to a good man to be obstructed in his plan in doing the will of God. No matter how good a person may be in somethings, if he exercises himself to hinder the righteous from doing or suffering for God, in that, he is Satan's

? (adversary.)
a general or abstruse

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THIS TEMPTATION
WITH THE WILDERNESS TEMPTATION.

A comparison of this temptatation with that of the wilderness leads us to notice a sameness in purposes. The purpose of the devil in the wilderness was to side-track Jesus. The devil did not want Jesus to be the world's Emancipator of sin. In order to hinder Jesus in

in his plan of world redemption the devil appealed to him in every possible way. Each way was an appeal to save Himself- and not only to save Himself but to exalt Himself.

Here at Caesarea Philippi the appeal is made through Peter to spare Himself suffering shame and death. Jesus recognized the same tactics of the old antagonist in this populated territory as similar to those he had shown in the solitude of the Judean wilderness.

We also see a distinct similarity in Jesus' treatment of the devil in the last of the wilderness temptations and this one at Caesarea Philippi, that treatment of dispatching the devil. In Matthew, chapter four, verse ten, we have the words "Get thee hence, Satan." In Matthew chapter sixteen, verse twenty-three, we have the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Both commands meant the same thing. Both commanded the devil to get from about Him. These commands were direct, purposeful, and effective.

Having so dealt with comparisons we may profitably consider contrasts in the temptations of

Jesus in the wilderness and at Caesarea Philippi. He was alone in the wilderness. He had no companions. There were no human voices within sound. The voices He heard were those of wild beasts. At Caesarea Philippi the disciples were around Him. In the wilderness He was facing His ministry and trying to find the pathway His Heavenly Father had for Him.

In the wilderness the way for Him had to be sought. In Caesarea Philippi the way was decided. In the wilderness the temptations were brought to Him directly by the devil. In Caesarea Philippi the devil tempted Jesus through the person of Peter.

JESUS' ATTITUDE THROUGH THIS TEMPTATION.

Jesus' attitude in this temptation is well worthy of prayerful consideration. When he was alone in the wilderness, debating how He would proceed as a builder of the kingdom of God, the devil tried Him in different ways. In every way was a plan to hinder Jesus from going forth on His great work in accordance with God's will. Every plan of the devil was met with Jesus'

own plan which was to listen to the voice of God.

Here at Caesarea Philippi the devil has returned to carry out the purpose that he aimed to carry out in the wilderness. This time the devil has armed himself with human personality, in that he had Peter for his mouthpiece, Peter whom Jesus has told that he has had a revelation from the Divine to such an extent that he can give voice to a great truth testifying that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This very Peter with this Divine revelation is the one that Satan sees fit to use in order to tempt Jesus to change His world redemption plans.

Jesus realized that He was opposed by the Jewish leaders. They rejected Him, and they continued their bitterness towards Him. He sees he must suffer many things, and ultimately be put to death. For He realizes that there is no hope of the nation accepting Him and to accomplish His mission He must suffer and die.

Through suffering and death Jesus is determined to go. He is willing to deny Himself. There can not be the slightest compromise admitted. Hence it was that when the devil made his appeal through Peter for Jesus to spare Himself He regarded it as a temptation, and quickly dismissed it saying "Get thee behind me, Satan: Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

About a week after the foregoing experience Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him "up into a high mountain" and He "was transfigured before them."

"Like the baptism and the temptation, Jesus' transfiguration was primarily of significance to Himself. Its background is his rejection by the multitudes in Galilee, the malignant attacks of the Pharisees and the ominous suspicions of Herod. In the foreground is His proposed journey to Jerusalem and the perils and probably death which He could see there awaited Him. The intensity of the struggle in His mind

was revealed by His tense question addressed to the disciples and His almost passionate reply to Peter's protest which tempted Him to turn aside from the path that led to practically inevitable martyrdom. The transfiguration was the visible evidence of the crowning victory won on the quiet mountain height."³⁰

It was not the first time for Jesus to go to a mountain. After the feeding of the five thousand He saw that the people wanted to make Him a King, so He fled to the mountain. Here according to Luke He "went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered."

"His prayers received a splendid answer in the Transfiguration. That glorious scene took place in the middle of the year of opposition, just before He quitted Galilee and set forth on the journey of doom. It was intended partly for the sake of the three disciples who accompanied Him to the mountain-top, to strengthen their faith and make them fit to strengthen their brethren. But it was chiefly intended for Himself. It was a great gift of His Father, an acknowledgment of His faithfulness up to this point, and a preparation for what lay before Him. It was about the deacease He was to accomplish at Jerusalem He

conversed with His predecessors, Moses and Elias, who could thoroughly sympathize with Him."³¹

VI. JESUS' TEMPTATION BEFORE HIS DEATH

"In a quiet, rock-strewn garden, shaded by gnarled olive trees and surrounded by a rough stone wall, Jesus faced His last great temptation. At the beginning of His ministry He had met the temptations peculiar to manhood and to one consecrated to a great mission. At the transfiguration He decided to brave the dangers that lurked in Jerusalem and to give Himself if need be, for His cause. Now at this third supreme crisis of His life He was face to face with death, clothed in the hideous garb of treachery, hate, greed, injustice, and entrenched graft. In the darkness, lighted only by the stars, without the consoling friendship of His disciples, who had fallen asleep, overcome by the wearying anxiety of the strenuous days and the night vigils that had preceded, Jesus resisted the natural temptation to seek refuge in flight. He also conquered the deadlier temptation to yield to doubt and despair.

.....
.....

The words of His prayer, which must have fallen upon the half-awake ears of one of His disciples, admit of only one interpretation. Jesus still longed, even though with slight hope, that the impending crisis might be averted. The words are exceedingly important to a true interpretation of His character. As in Mark 10:39, the cup stands as a symbol of shame and martyrdom. It was not death that He feared, although He instinctively shrank from it as does every normal man, and for Him life and friendship and achievement were supremely attractive. The "cup" was rather the sense of failure and apprehension for His cause. To Him had come the clear vision of the most glorious and yet the most practical, social order ever seen by man. During His early Galilean activity He had seemed on the eve of realizing it. Now, repudiated by the Pharisees, regarded with suspicion by the people, hated with a murderous hate by the heads of the Jewish hierarchy, betrayed by one of His disciples, and followed hesitatingly by the others, He was confronted by the most cruel death that human barbarity could devise. Yet

Jesus' faith in God was such that He was able to pray, 'Not what I will, but what thou wilt.'³³

THE PLACE WHERE THIS TEMPATION TOOK PLACE

This temptation took place in a garden called Gethsemane, the location of which is supposed to be on the Western slope of Olivet. The name Gethsemane signifies a press, such as is used for crushing olives. It was in this place that Jesus was crushed.

In the forty-fourth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Luke's gospel we read: "And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood." These drops came when Jesus was in the Gethsemane garden. Here He met His last tremendous temptation. Here the scene of the awful agony. The place where He often went to pray-but now for the last time.

(33) Kent, The Life and Teachings of Jesus

THE ALONENESS OF JESUS DURING THIS TEMPTATION.

Jesus fought his battles alone and thereby has taught us that there is a Power invisible that is nigh to every one who trusts in Him. Here in the garden of Gethsemane it might appear at first sight that Jesus was surrounded with friends. The text tells us that He came to the garden "with them," meaning the disciples. But the narrative goes on to say that Jesus asked some of His disciples to stay and pray in one place. He took Peter, James and John to another place, asking them to pray there whilst He would go a little further.

Keeping before us the picture of the two groups of disciples and Jesus Himself in another place away from them- we will allow ourselves to be reminded that Jesus was fighting temptation without any human near Him. He was alone so far as man was concerned, and He wanted to be alone, alone with His heavenly Father. He taught men to enter into a secret place to pray. Now He would as far as possible secure secrecy for Himself;

not to avoid being heard or seen, but to avoid obstruction. Jesus wanted to hear God.

Months previous to this Gethsemane trial Jesus had told his disciples that He would suffer many things from the priests, elders and scribes; and that He would be put to death. He had realized that the religious leaders in great numbers had set themselves against Him, so He Himself had set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, the city famous for killing the prophets in which Jesus knows that plans are under way to kill Him. At the same time He knows that His Father could send legions of angels to defend Him against every move made against Him. But in all the temptations discussed Jesus was seeking to do His Father's Will, to give expression to His Father's character. Here in Gethsemane He had the same purpose in mind and alone He prayed "not my will but Thine be done."

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THIS TEMPTATION
WITH THE WILDERNESS TEMPTATIONS.

Going back to the wilderness temptations we can well see that then the devil only left Jesus for a 'season'. As we compare His temptations there with that of Gethsemane, we can see that the temptation in each case was to find another way. We can see too, that Jesus' sufferings in both places were immense. In the wilderness the battle rages so long and so intense that Jesus had gone without food until He was very hungry. In Gethsemane the battle had so intensified that His agony reached such an extent that His sweat was 'as it were great drops of blood.'

In the wilderness Jesus was alone fighting His way through for the doing of His Father's will. In Gethsemane He was alone seeking for direction and strength that He might finish the work His Father had given Him to do. In the wilderness His decision was that 'man must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' which meant following the will of God. In Gethsemane His decision was "Not my will but thine be done." In each place, Jesus secured a victory.

We may now consider contrasts in Jesus' experiences in the wilderness temptation and in Gethsemane. The former we learn was a dreary, barren and rugged place, frequented by the wild beasts. The latter was a garden, a place of production, and a place where men visited oftentimes. In the wilderness Jesus was not within sound of any individual; hence there were no eye-witnesses of his trials. In Gethsemane the disciples were not far from Him; hence they were witnesses.

In the wilderness experience we are not told that he prayed for the trial to pass away. In Gethsemane being in an agony He prayed: "O my Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

After the temptations in the wilderness, "angels came and ministered unto Him." During the trial in Gethsemane "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him."

HOW JESUS OVERCAME THIS TEMPTATION.

To find out how Jesus overcame this temptation, we can easily see that His course was one of prayer.

He believed in praying Himself, and He believed in having others pray. According to the record in the twenty-second chapter of Luke's gospel we learn that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to pray. On arriving there with His disciples He urged them to pray so that they "enter not into temptation." Whilst He Himself, went from them a little distance and kneeled down, and prayed.

Prayer was vital in the life of Jesus. In His teachings He exhorted men to pray. And by His own example He encouraged men to pray. But whether by example or otherwise, He taught people to pray. One thing we can distinctly understand that Jesus resorted to private prayer. He sought the mountain that He might be alone with God. Here in Gethsemane He left the disciples and went alone a distance from them, then kneeled down and prayed. We believe that Jesus was always deeply in earnest, in prayer. But we are told that in Gethsemane He was in an agony- that being so He prayed more earnestly.

This earnestness on the part of Jesus indicates that as His sorrow and trouble increased, His

earnestness increased the more. This does not mean that there was at any time any lack of earnestness, but at this time the sorrow was much, the agony intense. So much so that greater intensity was reasonable to expect.

Jesus had been tried severely many times. He had met and defeated the adversary in the wilderness. Through the person of Peter Satan tried to change the purpose of Jesus in Caesarea Philippi. There again, the tempter was quickly sent to a backward position. Tremendous must have been the temptation towards kingship as Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

But now in Gethsemane the greatest of all temptations is upon Him to shrink from drinking the "cup": "i.e., His approaching death and all it involved; dreaded, we must believe, because of the causes that led to it rather than the mere pain it involved."³⁴ I believe Jesus was concerned about the sufferings that He was to undergo. It would be unreasonable for Him to be otherwise. But I do not believe that He manifested cowardice.

"It is not cowardice that fills Him, but anguish, not merely because He must die, but because the man who is about to betray Him to His enemies is one of

(34) Burton & Mathews. The Life of Christ, Page 254.

His own friends. He is overcome with anguish because His countrymen, for whom He has laboured ever since He began His public ministry, the ancient people of God, the nation to which He Himself belongs, are capable of killing Him as a criminal." ³⁵

Months before Jesus came to Jerusalem He saw that suffering and death were inevitable but now that He has approached an "hour" when the anticipated sufferings are close at hand it is no wonder that He should be moved with terrible anguish. This "hour" which has a cup held out to Him is so bitter that He alone knows its taste. Neither is it any wonder that in His anguish He should find Himself in a tremendous struggle. But though the Gethsemane trial was immense, Jesus was not overcome. Though He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me": He also prayed, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And again He prayed, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."

"His humble acquiescence in the Fatherly will of God held its ground, and He now, with calm decision, could give Himself into the hands of the betrayer and the officers, and before the tribunal was able with kingly dignity to make a confession of his Messianic claim, which

brought upon Him the utmost derision and the most dreadful death, and with immovable patience He bore the torments which the wickedness and cruelty of men inflicted on His soul as well as His body." ³⁶

Again and again Jesus was urged by both friends and foes to pursue some course which would be contrary to His Father's will, but it was this will he sought, and to it He remained true.

(36) Wendt. The teachings of Jesus. Vol. II, Page 249.

VII. SUMMARY

1. The Wilderness temptations. Three things stand out clearly in these.

(a) The far-seeing or foresight of Jesus - the demands of the immediate present were weighed in the light of the future. He sees the principles involved - and whatever may be suggested must be measured by the standard of God's will.

(b) Whatever Jesus may be confronted with - He trusts only in God and to God He will give perfect obedience.

(c) Jesus manifests His knowledge of the teachings concerning Jehovah. He shows that there is one Supreme Being to Whom only worship should be given.

2. Jesus' trial at Caesarea Philippi was after He had gained popularity - and also had met with hostilities. We learn from this trial two things in particular.

(a) That a pathway of suffering and shame was apparent, and that even in such a pathway there will be no retreat - no turning

aside - the last step will be taken in order to fulfill the course.

- (b) That anything or anybody who savours not of God's will cannot have a place to influence him. He will mind the things that be of God.

3. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus had distinctly taught us:

- (a) That he has fought a battle through in communion with God and wholly subjected to His will.
- (b) His moral victory. He is challenged; but he met the challenge. He was threatened; but was not defeated - whatever powers may oppose him - he trusts only in the will of God.
- (c) The humanness of Jesus. He was tempted.
- (d) The Divine with Jesus "though tempted in all points yet without sin." He was victorious in temptation.

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