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go where they may not come, and He would thus lead them into His own way of living life. They must know Him on the mountain as they could never know Him in the desert. 'He bringeth them up into a high mountain' privately, and was transfigured before, alas, not them all, only three, and so suggestively three too! Here is Divine irony indeed. For in all ages, not even in the ratio of three in twelve, has Christ been a transfigured Christ to His own.

4. Pursuing the track of this adverb, we see unity of design, and find ourselves among the same apostles who come 'privately' to their Lord with the powerless query: 'Why could we not cast him out?' 'We' is the emphatic, for who are these, if not those who came back rejoicing that even the devils were subject to them? 'We, oh, we! Where is our old-time power?' What a private affair this is! How often we publicly lament our impotence when the remedy is all in our private life. The question they ask in secret is, however, answered by Christ on the housetops for the Church in all ages to hear: 'Because of your unbelief.' Ah, no wonder the power is lost! Power means publicity as to its exercise, and as

night wars with day, so publicity wars with privacy.

5. And, granted the power bestowed, what so necessary as the last use of our adverb? There are about to be left on this earth the chosen custodians of Christ's truth. From their lips and pens will come anon the Divine 'form of sound words,' and they, in turn, will transmit the same as a Divine unit to faithful men who will be able also to teach others. How necessary then for them, as for all of us, to spurn human creeds, and approach Christ privately on the matter of His own teaching. 'The disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when these things shall be.' Not to particularize prophecy (though well we might), how little, indeed, is Christ permitted to preach His own truth privately to His own! Nay, He is not spicy enough for itching ears, and the public ministry of the Word often supersedes such private Divine tuition as He loves to give. Yet as now, so in all ages, the greatest need is to be in private audience of our God, that the good Word of promise may be fulfilled in us: 'They shall be taught of God.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dan Crawford, *Thirsting after God*.

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## Temptation.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN W. DIGGLE, D.D., LATE BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

ONE of the chief difficulties connected with the problem of temptation arises from the double sense in which the word is used, especially in the Bible. The word 'tempt' is almost equivalent to 'attempt.' Its radical meaning is to test, or try, or prove. At its root, therefore, 'temptation' is practically synonymous with 'probation.' But a subsidiary implication is often attached to it; and the testing is accompanied by a motive, either the motive to incline and strengthen the will-to-good, or to incline and allure it to evil. God often tempts in the former sense, never in the latter; Satan constantly in the latter, and never in the former. When God tempted Abraham, the purpose was by the trial of his faith to establish and exalt it: when the devil tempted our Lord, the purpose was to undermine His faith and destroy it. God's temptations are as the furnaces of the refiner which purge away the

dross and purify the gold; the devil's temptations are as the baits of the gambler who by illusions of gain ensnares his victims in inevitable, sometimes irretrievable, loss.

Our Lord's life was one continuous series of temptations, at times by God through the instrumentality of Pharisees and Sadducees and lawyers; at times by the devil when He was weary and lonely and misunderstood by His disciples, and in other ways. In His great temptation in the wilderness both God and the devil had a share. He was led up by the Spirit to be tempted for His triumph, and tempted by the devil to secure His defeat.

Whatever view we adopt of this Great Temptation, whether we regard it as history or as parable, in any case it is biography and its teachings are the same. It was a threefold temptation applied to the tripartite human nature of the Very Man, Jesus

Christ, to His body, soul, and spirit. Hunger opened the way for the trial of His bodily appetites ; the desire to win the world for the reign of righteousness opened the way for the trial of His soul ; and the joy of leaning on angels sent by His Father for the trial of His spirit. All these trials were very real. The fact that in Christ was no sin did not mitigate their severity. With regard to the first temptation, hunger is the same in all men, whether good or bad. With regard to the other two temptations, the nobler and more spiritual men are, the stronger and more attractive these temptations become. Nor have we any indication that either Christ's divinity or His sinlessness was assistant to His withstanding these temptations. He met them in that manhood which was capable of trial in all points like unto ours, although without sin. Otherwise His example would have had neither meaning nor message for us. As in Gethsemane and on the Cross, so also in the wilderness, Christ was tempted in His manhood, not in His divinity ; and His sinlessness, if it affected His temptations, only added keenness and sharpness to their severity. Moreover, it should be remembered as a kind of set-off, so to speak, to Christ's sinlessness that He had no help, so far as the records relate, from the Holy Ghost who in our temptations is ever at hand to aid and encourage us. He Himself tells us how and by what means He successfully resisted, and His tale is evidently meant to teach that all men may, if they will, by the same means also resist. The first temptation He conquered through the conviction that life is more than livelihood ; the second through the determination never to use evil means for the attainment of any end, however good ; and the third through the confession that, although God may righteously tempt man, yet man can never righteously tempt God.

The temptation of Jesus Christ is the most illustrious of all examples of the avenues through which temptations approach men, as also the most effectual means of resisting them. But neither it nor any knowledge which we possess of our own or other temptations completely solves the great riddle of temptation. Temptation and probation, like the existence of evil and the origins or beginnings of things, seem to baffle the capacities of human understanding. They are too high for us to reach, too deep for us to fathom, too broad for us to measure. No searching can fully find them out. Yet we are not altogether in the dark about

them. We cannot tell either when or how things were created ; but reason assures us that they had a Creator with a definite mind and will, and that they did not fortuitously happen into such beautiful and orderly results, and faith reveals to us that this Creator was God, the All-Father. Similarly with the origin and existence of evil. We do not know whence it came or exactly what its power and purposes are. But we do know that evil is neither almighty nor supreme in the world. It is always the enemy, yet often the unwilling cause, of noble consequences. As Shakespeare has said :

There is a soul of goodness in things evil,  
Would men observingly distil it out.

As the resistance of friction in matter promotes movement, so in morals the resistance of evil often strengthens and quickens the progressive march of good. We cannot, of course, positively declare that the presence of evil, and the conflict resultant therefrom, are necessary to the production of the highest good. The complete interpretation of the great mystery of the incessant strugglings and strivings which so manifestly abound in the earth has not been unfolded to us. But biologists tell us that it is through their struggle for existence that all higher forms of life have been evolved from lower forms. And everybody knows that an athlete can never be developed from indolent comfort or cushioned ease ; or a great intellectual without ardent study and persevering effort ; or a moral giant from a child's ignorance and innocence ; or a hero without adventure and risk ; or a splendid saint through, merely singing hymns. These facts are not of the nature of explanations, but they are of universal occurrence, and, although they tell us nothing of the origin of evil, they clearly teach us how to deal with it. They bid us in the arenas of resistance to win good from it. Temptations are our opportunities for practising this resistance and thus reaping its beneficent results.

Temptations take many forms, some joyous, others grievous. The joyous are the most deadly and difficult to resist. Our Lord warned us of the deadliness of pleasant temptations when He told us how hard it is—and indeed it is very hard—for the rich, whether in money or in intellectual or social talents, to enter into the kingdom of heaven, *i.e.* of sovereignty over self, royal service to their fellows, and dutiful allegiance to God. The devil is never so dangerous as when he comes in the disguise of an

angel of light, or a patron of privilege, or a bestower of power and popularity. Sin is never so attractive as when it is sugared over with pleasure and prosperity, nor are temptations ever so strong as when they are sweet.

This is one of the greatest of all the perplexities in which the problem of temptation is entangled. The ancients failed to grasp the primal elements of the problem. They supposed that prosperity was an evidence of the divine favour and therefore of spiritual safety. Christ went down much deeper into the problem and contradicted this supposition. He never taught that either wealth or poverty, in and of itself, is an evidence of the divine favour, any more than He taught that health and happiness are the portion of the elect, and pain and suffering of the castaway. But what He never failed to emphasize was the fact that it was harder for the contented and comfortable than for the weary and heavy-laden to resist temptation, to flee from the devil, and to seek their refuge and find their rest in God.

Experience proves this to be true; and reason, although it cannot wholly explain, yet can partly account for the fact. The prosperous man can largely rely for succour in times of need upon the fruits of his prosperity. People flock around him with their consolations and their sympathy. Flattering hopes allay his fears and social anodynes keep his conscience quiet. No external pressure has ever compelled him to face the problems of evil and pain, of suffering and penury. The fullness of bread has caused an emptiness of mind. He is troubled with no speculations concerning either God or man, death or the after life. He has practised not resistance to, but acquiescence with, his sensuous self and the sensuous world. Spiritually he is more dead than alive, and therefore, when temptations assail him, he has no strength to withstand them and falls before their assault an easy prey.

It is altogether otherwise with the man whom the stress of pain and suffering and want has forced to face the problems of life. Sometimes, perhaps often, even he gives up the problems, not indeed through self-satisfied apathy, but in utter despondency and despair. They baffle and defeat him. He is neither big enough nor strong enough to battle with and conquer them. But it is far from always so. In struggling with poverty, pain, suffering, and sorrow the wrestler gains spiritual

strength. He learns to look away from himself and up to God, and the longer and more steadily he looks up the clearer and brighter his vision becomes; till at length through the clouds and mists of his hardships and griefs he plainly perceives the loving face of the shining God, enters His Kingdom, and is at rest in peace. The trials, or probations, or temptations of God have prepared and enabled him to resist the temptations of the evil one. This aspect of the problem of temptation, the way and the force with which divine temptations are always calculated to strengthen men, and in countless instances have strengthened them, to resist and overcome devilish temptations, supplies one of the most promising keys for its solution. Given a world in which evil exists and sin abounds, there would appear to be no hope for its redemption, no way of salvation, except through sweat and suffering and sacrifice; for experience proves demonstrably that the chastisements, the trials, and the temptations of God are the surest, if not the only, means for combating, controlling, and conquering the temptations of the devil.

This seems to be both the final cause and the explanation of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Whatever else may be doubtful in the problems of evil and sin and pain and suffering, there can be no doubt whatever, assuming that the New Testament is a narrative of facts and not a mass of fictions, that the most divine and perfect Man who has ever lived submitted Himself, and submitted Himself voluntarily, to the most virulent and severe temptations which evil and sin, pain, poverty, and suffering, all combined, were able to inflict. If His life was an ideally perfect life, then it follows that temptations are essential elements in such a life. If His life was divinely human, then temptation is a divinely ordered factor in a completely human life. We cannot by speculative searchings fathom or solve the mystery. But if Christ is a fact, then the necessity of temptation to human perfectness is a fact also. Some other mysterious things are likewise facts. Christ's great temptation is recorded as immediately following after the baptismal descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him out of the opened heavens. Temptation, therefore, is a sign not of the absence but of the presence of God; not of heavens shut but of heavens opened. There appears always to have been some close relation between the triumphs and

the temptations of Christ, as if the one naturally grew out of the other. His mighty works were frequently attended by the trial of displays of unbelief in Him. The glorious confession of Simon Peter's faith in His Messiahship was accompanied by the miserable disappointment of realizing how little of true understanding that confession contained. He descended from the glories of the Transfiguration to encounter the grief of His disciples' lack of faith. The Eucharistic Prayer, in which He revealed His oneness with His Father, was followed by the agony in Gethsemane and the broken-hearted cry from the Cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' This intimacy of relation between spiritual triumph and spiritual trial or temptation is very remarkable. What does it mean? Does it mean that triumph is a strengthening prelude to temptation, or that temptation imparts chastening and solidity to triumph? Both our temptations and our triumphs are part of the great riddle of our life.

Remarkable also is the close connexion between temptation and joy, trial and gladness. As triumph often precedes temptation, so temptation is often followed by bliss—not merely blessing, but bliss. Everybody is aware, either from his own experience or from the experience of others, of the blessings of the temptations or trials sent by God. 'Before I was afflicted I went wrong, but now do I keep thy law' (Ps 119<sup>67</sup>). Chastenings cleanse, strengthen, purify character; beautify, sweeten, exalt conduct. Who ever came across a really fine and noble person who all through life had been an utter stranger to suffering and sorrow, grief and pain? The problem of pain and evil is profound, but the fact that, contrary to expectation, yet confirmed by the experience of all those who confront them as Christ did, they work an exceeding weight of glory is indubitable. Confronted in an evil spirit, temptations of every kind bring forth evil; confronted in a good spirit, even the temptations of the devil bring forth good, blissful good. Sorrow is turned into joy, mourning into felicity, ashes into beauty, as the seed is turned into the flower and the flower ripens into the fruit. It is no mere catchy saying but a profound truth: 'No cross, no crown.' Affliction works strength, spiritual strength, a peace passing understanding and inexpressible raptures such as we do not find wrought by any other means. Great is the mystery of evil and temptation and trial and probation;

but greater still is the mystery of the good which often springs from evil, the triumph from temptation, the bliss from trial, the power from probation.

The production of these fruits is a convincing evidence that temptation of itself is not of the nature of sin. Sin brings forth death. Temptation resisted, and not dandled or yielded to, brings forth fresh life and strength. Besides, God can be tempted both in the sense of being put to the test and in that of being grieved and tried; therefore, temptation is not necessarily of the nature of sin. We are, indeed, commanded not to tempt or test the Lord our God; although, if the stories of Gideon and Elijah and Hezekiah are veritable histories, God does occasionally allow, and approve of, His being tested. He guides the lot cast into the lap. But ordinarily, and as a rule of life, these temptings or testings of God are profane and pernicious. But in the sense of being tried and grieved God suffers Himself to be tempted every day. Every man at some time or other must be a great trial to God by the foolishness of his thoughts, the idleness of his words, the unworthiness of his deeds, the hardness of his heart, and the commission of sins. Here is a problem immeasurably surpassing in perplexity that of the temptations of man, namely, the temptations of God. There are no sorrows like His sorrows, no griefs like His, no pains like His. In all—not some, but all—our afflictions He is afflicted. The Incarnate God, although without sin, yet in all points was and is tempted and tried as we are. As the omnipotence of God neither destroys the existence of evil nor stops its ravages among men, so it does not—and that because it must work in harmony with His other attributes—stop the griefs of God, annul His pains, or shorten His sufferings. These unspeakable temptations and trials of God create in Him an infinite sympathy, an unfathomable pity, an ineffable love. Displayed in all their unsearchable riches on the Cross, they are the secret of the ever-growing power and the ever-deepening attraction of Jesus Christ.

These considerations shed some light on the darkness of the problem of temptation, although they are far from wholly dispelling it. It is doubtful whether it ever will be wholly dispelled in man's present stage of life and under the obvious limitations of his present capacities. We can, however, clearly see that, unless man had been

free to do wrong, there would have been no moral worth in his choosing to do right. Even the morality of God, we may reverently believe, depends on the complete freedom of His will. Such necessity of always being righteous and never sinning as is laid upon God must be a self-determined necessity, else no moral valuation could be attached to it. Similarly with man, made in the image of God. He is not a machine or a plaything of fate. He is a moral and responsible being, free, therefore, to choose between evil and good. The sphere of this choice is the sphere of temptation. Creatures not free cannot be endowed with choice; but it is in the exercise of choice alone that temptation can find its opportunity. To infuse worthfulness into the choice of good, freedom to choose evil must accompany it. As Schiller perhaps somewhat extravagantly, yet with essential truthfulness, sings :

God, not to mar the glorious form of Freedom  
Suffers that the hideous hosts of evil  
Should run riot in His Creation.

Treated merely as a speculation, whether by poets, philosophers, or prophets, the problem of temptation takes us completely out of our depth; treated, however, as a practical matter, it is plain and easy enough. Whatever be the origin of evil, our duty is either to fight against it or to flee from it. Only one course is open to any man for dealing with the temptations of the devil if he wishes to develop his nobler nature, and that is the course adopted by Christ, while with regard to the temptations sent by God we should unceasingly pray that He will never lead us into any temptations beyond our strength to resist and bear, and that in temptations of every kind He will deliver us from their evil and develop in us their possibilities of eliciting and strengthening good.

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## Entre Nous.

IT is a pleasure to be able to say, after thirty years, that THE EXPOSITORY TIMES is still holding its own. The year just finished has been the most prosperous (apart, of course, from the difficulties due to the cost of production) in its existence. And more expressions of appreciation have been received than in any previous year.

Speaking last month of *The Children's Great Texts of the Bible*, we said that 'Virginibus Puerisque' in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (where a few of them have been published) and the 'Notes' seemed to be the most popular features of the magazine. A correspondent who has just written, seems to prefer the 'Literature.' He says: 'I am especially interested in the reviews of books. I depend largely on the reviews to help me to decide what to purchase.' He goes on to say: 'I have noticed in your reviews lately several books published by the Methodist Book Concern. I take it that they are published in America. I wrote to Messrs. Simpkin Marshall & Co. and asked them if they could secure the books for me, but they replied to the effect that they were not agents for these publishers. Is it too much to ask you where I can

secure these books?' We shall try to get an answer in time for the December issue.

*The Saturday Review* for October 9 contains a leading article on *The Children's Great Texts*. The writer of the article found the three published volumes on his desk, looked into them, and was arrested by their freshness and appropriateness. He read on, and then: 'We frankly and promptly confess that we have found these volumes in every sense charming and exactly what such books should be. There are between seventy and eighty addresses in each, the average length of each address being about twelve hundred words. The text is happily chosen and is expounded with a wealth of every sort of suitable comment and an absence of every kind of dogmatic and ecclesiastical pride, exceedingly unusual and extremely refreshing. Each has its heading—"Paper Boats," "Keeping a Diary," "Get up Early," "Playing the Man," "Money Boxes," "A Spider's Web," and so on, and there is not one from which we might not quote most pleasantly. Take, quite at random, for example, the address on "Bird-nesting" in the first volume. The text is Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7, and runs as follows:—