

**THE TEMPTATION OF
JESUS: A STUDY OF
OUR LORD'S TRIAL
IN THE WILDERNESS**

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The Temptation of Jesus: A Study of Our Lord's Trial in the Wilderness by A. Morris Stewart

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A. MORRIS STEWART

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PREFACE.

IN setting forth this Interpretation of our Lord's Temptation in the Wilderness, the writer's aim and method are very simple.

The aim is, so to read and use every indication in the Gospel narratives, that the plain facts of them shall meet the reader's imagination, and be readily related with his experience.

The Temptation is a great fact which, first and chiefly, concerns the inner experience of Jesus. To understand it, both generally and in its details, is to gain insight regarding Him; and that is an end in itself. But there is no communication of Scripture regarding God or His Son which is not designed in relation to our needs. When we are shown Jesus, it is always in such an aspect as may instruct and help us; and nowhere can this be more true than in the Temptation, where we see Jesus in relation to Satan and sin; meeting evil and the Evil one,

on His own behalf and ours, as the Saviour of men.

Each point narrated or indicated in the Temptation story is primarily and intimately related to our Lord; but, when it is told in the Gospel, it gains, in the telling, that extra meaning in which it concerns us who are admitted to the understanding of it.

The method of this Interpretation is nothing else than the keeping in view of this double significance: that of the facts, on the one hand, which concern our Lord; and that of their narration, on the other hand, which sends them on to us.

In discussing the several Temptations, the order which has been followed is that of S. Matthew's Gospel, in preference to S. Luke's. The latter order, when it puts the rapture to the Temple top after the vision of the kingdoms of the world, seems designed to end on a level which shall be close to the beginnings of our Lord's ministry. The step from the height of the Temple buildings is seen by S. Luke as a proposed emergence into publicity. Jesus is shown refusing this mode of entry upon His ministry (Luke iv. 12); and, in the narrative immediately following, we see Him choosing an

ordinary road towards His extraordinary work : "returning in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (Luke iv. 14). This contrast of the airy path suggested by Satan, and the earthly walk chosen by Jesus, is effective ; but the order of S. Matthew is plainly the logical order of the Temptations, in which they rise from the less to the greater, culminating in world-wide vision on Jesus' part, and in dismissal on the part of His Tempter.

Critical questions and purely theological discussion have been avoided in the text. A few matters which fall under these heads, and which could not be passed over, are treated of briefly in notes which will be found in an Appendix.

A. MORRIS STEWART.

ARBROATH,

March, 1903.

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