

### Paul Haupt's 'Kohleth.'<sup>1</sup>

THE Book of Ecclesiastes, overlooked by ordinary readers of the Bible, has always had a fascination for certain minds. It was a favourite with Frederick the Great, it had naturally a special interest for Schopenhauer, while Heine spoke of it as the *Hohelied der Skepsis*. It may perhaps be taken as one of the assured results of O.T. criticism that the meaning of the book will never be reached unless it be admitted that its present is very different from its original form, the text having been touched and retouched and interpolations introduced by redactors of different schools. It may be that the late Professor Siegfried (in Nowack's *Hdkom.*) went too far in partitioning the present book among various contributors, but there can be little doubt that he worked on essen-

<sup>1</sup> *Kohleth, oder Weltschmerz in der Bibel.* Verdeutsch und erklärt von Paul Haupt. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905. Price M. 1. 20.

tially correct lines. The same principles underlie the very attractive little work which lies before us. In his preface Professor P. Haupt justifies his method of relegating many passages to the foot of the page as forming no original element of the text. He quite anticipates adverse judgments, and is prepared for charges of arbitrary procedure and subjectivity, but he means to abide by the principle that what is probably a correct reconstruction is in any case to be preferred to a form that is certainly false. The man who considers himself entitled to reject offhand the results embodied in this brochure must either, says Professor Haupt, have gone far more thoroughly into the Book of Kohleth than he has done, and must know far more Hebrew—or far less. In any case, there will be only one opinion as to the spirited character of Professor Haupt's translation of Kohleth's utterances.

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## The Dawn of the Messianic Consciousness.

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### III.

WE have now to do with Jesus as Christ, and as He is henceforth to act—in Christly functions. But what is His action to be? The first answer is given in the subject of the third and closing part of our study—the narrative of the Temptation. We note in passing how strongly the Temptation narrative reinforces the assertion of the Baptism narrative, that Jesus had not previously known Himself to be the Christ. Had He known, His programme must have been ready. All that went to make it had long lain within His reach—on one side the O.T.; on the other side, His personal moral intuitions or revelations from God. It is also of interest to observe that the later as well as the earlier narrative still calls Messiah *Son*—'If Thou art the Son of God.' Does not this go to strengthen our belief that the use of the term 'Son' in the Baptism narrative is more than an accident?

The form in which we accept the Temptation narrative is that found in Matthew. In the most dashing and erratic of Bible Dictionaries, attention

has lately been drawn to a paper which interprets by analogies from other regions the form of Temptation narrative found in Mark. The suggestions there made are highly ingenious; it is another question whether they are solid. In any case, we submit that if that view of Mark's narrative were adopted, there must be all the more room for a version of Christ's temptation which did not represent Him as a wizard, but rather as a prophet and man of God. As regards the order of the three temptations, again, related by Matthew and Luke, we cannot hesitate which guide to follow. After 'get thee behind Me Satan' there can be no further parley. The temptation which is brought to an end by that retort must stand not second, as in Luke, but, as in Matthew, third and last. Our opinion of the historical worth of the narrative must depend in great measure upon our closer study of it. Possibly it may lie before us in a somewhat broken form. Yet we must press the question, whether this narrative, even as we have it, does not exhibit a fitness and a meaning which

take it out of the category of purely conventional glosses, such as the temptations of the Buddha? We shall claim that the temptations indicated as besetting Jesus are thoroughly to the point, inasmuch as they deal with possible conceptions of Messianic rights and duties—conceptions which the Master dismisses as misconceptions, attractive in virtue of certain innocent features, but otherwise tainted, and therefore evil things. It also seems certain that, whether we assume a literal tempter outside, or whether we regard the whole process as a simple train of thought, we must expect to find a certain progress by antagonism, the new suggestion being, each time, one extremely opposed to that which had last been under consideration. Beyond this point, our proposed interpretation is conjectural in much of its detail; it is only fair to renew that admission.

The first need of Jesus is to be alone with the overwhelming revelation that has come to Him, and with its Author. Our narratives do not quite agree whether temptation began at once or began after an interval. On internal grounds of probability, we should prefer Matthew's statement, that temptation was a secondary development. First came rapture—a long rapture, placed at the favourite conventional figure of forty days. First came God's presence; then came another presence; perhaps—if it is not fanciful to say so—perhaps the mystery of sin, which had occupied the thoughts of Jesus as He went to the baptism of repentance, which had helped to make plain to Him the holier and still deeper mystery of His own person—perhaps it was with Him still; He may have recognized in it the antagonist which He had to face.

The first temptation—'If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread'—bears out more than either of those which follow the view of *Ecc Homo*, advocated more recently by Dr. Sanday, that the Temptation narratives supply the strongest evidence of all in proof of the real possession by Jesus of miraculous powers. Against this we have to set the audacious theory of Baldensperger: temptation was due to the fact that Jesus, while conscious of being called to Messianic rank, was no less clearly conscious of the absence of miraculous gifts, and decided that to wish for them would be to tempt God. But, apart from audacity, to what merits can this theory lay claim? The language is against it. 'If Thou art the Son of God' does not imply any doubt of

the fact. It is almost equivalent to 'since Thou art.' The temptation is not to doubt His calling, or to doubt the possession of gifts traditionally held to be involved in that calling; the temptation is to misuse the powers actually and confessedly entrusted to Him. But further, the whole context of the situation is hostile to Baldensperger's view. Heaven has just opened over the head of Jesus—Baldensperger himself admits the truth of this as the record of a solemn vision—and Jesus has been saluted as God's beloved Son. That had gone before; what is to follow? He will soon emerge from retirement, preaching in tones of authority,—will soon be called on to perform wonderful works,—will meet the call. Is it credible that *He* saw anything impossible in His commanding stones to be bread? Undesirable, unlawful—yes; but impossible—no! Heaven and earth were mingling their life. His estimate of the possible may be inferred from the passage in which, under the very shadow of the cross, He told His disciples that legions of angels were at His command. Of course, modern enlightenment may hold that Jesus was mistaken. That is a possible conclusion—abstractly. But we must begin by ascertaining what the historical Jesus Himself thought and claimed; and few conclusions seem to be more certain than that He believed He could work miracles. As regards this particular temptation, the simplest view of the passage is that our Lord's hunger, felt when the pressure of religious emotion lessened, made the stones look like loaves; that He asked Himself whether He should provide for His own wants by the exercise of a power whose existence He at least did not question; and that He put the suggestion from Him as unduly self-regarding. If a word from the mouth of God required Him to do it, He should do so; but He would make no use of His strange powers unless in the service of His vocation. To some, this decision, as now interpreted, appears unreasonable. They consider it needlessly severe. Is it not the fact that we nowhere find Jesus represented as using miracle in His own service? Is it not a notable guarantee of fitness for the possession of unusual powers, if the possessor strictly subordinates them to moral vocation?

The second temptation, as already said, we must regard as a recoil or reaction from the first. Jesus cannot be induced to contract the slightest stain of selfishness; can He be induced to play the

fanatic? The vocation's the thing—away with every thought beyond ardent, uncalculating devotion to what His vocation requires! Let Him at once appear in the Temple at Jerusalem, and proclaim Himself there, where His right is! 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple'—Messianic interpretation, then or later, would have no hesitation in applying these words to the personal Christ. But would this mean danger? He is in no mood to calculate danger. And yet—here is an interesting point—danger is not once explicitly admitted. There *cannot* be danger; that is the belief suggested to Messiah's mind, or arising within it; no danger—'for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up.' There seems to be, as yet, no distinct forecast of the tragedy of Calvary in Jesus' mind, though probably already He had formed—or had accepted from the Baptist—a judgment of condemnation alike on Pharisees and Sadducees. The most we can say is, that there was a shade of uneasiness in His mind,—a subconscious foreboding of what the conscious reason could not yet admit—least of all perhaps could admit now, while the rapture of His anointing still clung around Him. He has put His state of mind on record by telling us that a text of Scripture was presented to His thoughts, but insidiously, in a false application, as if the father of lies not of truth were speaking. He sets the suggestion aside, not because He rates the danger high, or holds the security unreal, but because He will not presumptuously overtrust any more than He will distrust God. He will not run before His duty. When God bids—not till then. It is not to be His method to present Himself before His people, saying openly and in disregard of consequences, 'Lo! This is your Christ!' He is not of the stuff of which fanatics are made.

In stating matters as above, we have almost been forced to accept the alternative that Jesus stated some at least of the temptations in a parable for His disciples. We feel the more encouraged to take this view by considering that a parabolic element is almost unquestionably contained in the record of the remaining temptation. To worship the Devil could not be a literal demand addressed to Jesus. Natures of inferior purity to His would reject such proposals, if made openly. The final temptation must have been, to do or accept something which *on reflexion* seemed to involve

acquiescence in the principle of evil. And so we take it the second temptation was one to do something which might be described in a parable as casting oneself headlong from a pinnacle of the temple. The probability, that the second temptation was a reaction from the idea contained in the first,—the probability, that the question all through was, How is Messiah to act?—lead to the interpretation given above: Jesus was tempted to consider a policy of recklessness and rashness—might that not glorify God? But He answered, No. In contrast with this interpretation, the idea of literally casting Himself headlong seems altogether too trivial to be worthy of Jesus. It has been understood as a temptation to work a *show* miracle; but the narrative says nothing of any spectators; the prize held forth is not a widespread faith, but simply personal safety, supernaturally assured, as is alleged, to the Christ.

The third temptation represents another recoil. He cannot be made a fanatic; can He be made an opportunist? Can He be got to sully His ideal purity in the name of His master motive—the vocation itself? This, if not the highest, is probably the subtlest and most clinging of all temptations. He who begins life with fanatical excess ends with dishonourable compromise; but here, He who refuses fanatical excess turns with scorn also from less noble if more insidious and more plausible errors. Could this tempt Jesus? Yes, perhaps it could; we must remember what the O.T. had written in His programme. The Psalm, which probably yielded to His mind the words 'Thou art My Son,' went on, not much lower down, 'Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' At such a moment as this, He must necessarily come to some sort of understanding with the more political conceptions of Messiahship, included in the O.T. He tells us that He considered the possibility of the thing; that He believed the empire of the world lay within His grasp, if He were ready to play such a part as Mohammed afterwards played; but that He felt such behaviour would involve recognition of the evil conditions of this actual sinful world. Two later sayings may throw light upon His decision here. One is short: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.'

Or, as we might paraphrase: What force establishes is liable to be destroyed by force. The other passage is that in which He contrasts greatness among the Gentiles with greatness in His own kingdom. The trappings of state were not for Him nor for His followers: 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life'; but the words which follow would probably carry us beyond the circle of thoughts clearly conscious to the mind of Jesus at this moment. It looks as if these two things went together in His thoughts—the idea of turning to the Gentiles, and the idea of empire; probably because so many passages of the O.T. weld together the two ideas. Hence perhaps the distress, as we might almost call it, which Jesus is said to have manifested when asked to heal the daughter of a Syro-Phenician woman. 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.' A mission to Gentiles such as Paul afterwards carried on does not seem to lie within His thoughts. He could exercise such a mission of preaching within Israel as Israel's Messiah; if He carried it on elsewhere, He would feel that He was deserting His Messianic vocation. The place of the Gentiles in the coming Kingdom of God is described, at least during His early ministry, in terms of another O.T. hope—many nations 'flowing to' Jerusalem (Is 2<sup>2</sup>, etc. etc.); they 'shall come' from the E. and W. and N. and S., and sit down in the Kingdom of God (Mt 8<sup>11</sup>; Lk). Later, when He was looking forward to a time of separation from His disciples, it is possible<sup>1</sup> that He may have contemplated the Gospel of the Kingdom being preached—by His servants, not by Him—throughout the whole world.

<sup>1</sup> Mk 13<sup>10</sup>, 14<sup>9</sup>, and parallels.

The temptation is repelled with the words, 'Get thee behind Me Satan.' Is not that as if Jesus then discovered, for the first time, who His interlocutor was? If so, it is not easy to hold that there was a visible interlocutor at all. Whether invisibly there was an evil-loving spirit making its approaches to the pure mind of Jesus, we do not feel it necessary to determine.

The Messianic vocation, inwardly perhaps constituted by conscious sonship and conscious sinlessness, has now received the following outward definitions: (1) it does not admit the use of its powers, miracle in particular, for the private convenience of Messiah; (2) to rush into danger unnecessarily by self-proclamation would be wrong; (3) not less wrong would it be to recoil from this into the methods of political or military strategy, with their promise of proximate success, and with their moral taint. Even though the O.T. may seem to guarantee the empire of the world on these lines, Jesus cannot follow them. Henceforth in His life we can trace the positive counterparts of these resolutions: (1) miracles, especially healings, in the service of others; (2) self-manifestation, not self-proclamation; (3) a ministry of the Word. It may be worth considering whether the title 'Son of Man,' Christ's habitual self-designation, contains in itself, between the lines as it were, a record of the temptation in the Wilderness. It might conceivably mean, one who is mere weak man to the eyes of His fellows; one who must humble Himself to act as mere weak man; yet one who is destined to supreme exaltation, but by God's act, not by His own—by God's act, and by methods or processes which are still hidden in the mystery of the Divine purpose.

## At the Literary Table.

### THE LETTER P.

KELTIC RESEARCHES: STUDIES IN THE HISTORY AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE ANCIENT GOIDELIC LANGUAGE AND PEOPLES. By Edward Williams Byron Nicholson, M.A. (Frowde. 21s. net.)

THE letter *P* has other uses—most of the words in Systematic Theology begin with it—but its principal use is to separate the people called

Celts from all the world beside. How do you know a Celt when you meet him? He has lost the letter *P*. 'Where the dead ancestor-speech of the entire Indo-European family had the sound of *p* undoubted and unaccompanied by any other consonant, the modern Celtic languages have regularly lost it altogether (save in borrowed words), while the other living members of the Indo-European family have either preserved it