

are breaking down, and if not wholly removed, are yet largely disregarded. So far as this means the removal of narrowness of outlook and bitterness of judgment, it is surely a sign of christian progress, but so far as it springs from an unconfessed indifference to the principles which gave birth to the several denominations, it is simply a feature in the decay of genuine religious vitality. Men may fraternise because they have lost interest in the convictions that once separated them, as well as because they really love each other more. The only catholicity that is worth having is that which comes from conviction, not because conviction is lacking . . .

I would not argue that it is wholly the fact that our churches have maintained a closed table that has preserved them from the sad departures that many have made from gospel truth over the last century and a half, but would maintain that it is that desire for doctrinal accuracy and utter conformity to the Word of God, of which the closed table principle is part, that have ensured that the unchanging gospel of salvation by grace, through faith is still taught and preached in our churches.

*Historically baptists have stood for the strict position and have seen the 'Table' as an integral part of the church's fellowship. Inevitably the two stand or fall together. Alas! very little biblical 'baptistness' remains in so many churches still calling themselves baptist! Some still recognised by their national unions have united with paedobaptist churches, Congregational, Methodist, and even Anglican, as the things that divide count for so little today. In this ecumenical climate of today this departure from the rule of truth is viewed by man as 'spiritual progress' towards that oneness that is the biblical ideal. However, for those who*

*believe that the unity of all Christians cannot be realised by the sacrifices of truth of principle, it appears quite otherwise. True spiritual unity can only be attained by a total submission to the Word of God and not by the neglect of its teaching. Baptists are despising their heritage and bringing greater reproach on the Lord's name than the apparent fragmentation of Christianity occasions . . .*

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# THE TEMPTATIONS: TO DENY THE OFFICE

David T. Williams

The story of the temptations of Jesus is well-known. Even those with only a nodding acquaintance with the Bible know that directly after his baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The story is found in both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, with just a variation in the order of the second and third temptations, and is referred to briefly in Mark. The fact that it is so well known is probably because temptation is something so well known to everyone; all can relate to Jesus' experience. Immediately after the step of identification with humanity in baptism, Jesus shared in the common spiritual battle of humanity.

Some have, of course, seen the account as fictitious, some even doubting the actual journey to the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> Such a belief cannot be disproved as there were no witnesses, but unless the account is simply an invention of the early Church, the fact that it came from the mouth of Jesus must give it authenticity, and makes it more than just an interesting story.

In this, most find immediate comfort and help, for we can approach a God who has shared in human battles. We can find strength in his victory, for although he was tempted, yet he was without sin (Heb. 4:15). Just as with us, a great spiritual experience is often succeeded by depression and temptation.

Just as we can do, Jesus used the words of scripture to great effect, although also just like us, he needed to do more than simply quote. Just like us, he found that the devil only tries to persuade, for, of course, an act committed under duress is not real sin, and no victory for the devil.

The particular temptations have been of help to many, bringing, for example, the realization that since even God's son had to suffer, pain need not be due to sin; that life even for Jesus was more than a casting onto faith alone; and that Christian faith does not in itself give power and authority over the created world. These and other aspects of the three temptations have encouraged and blessed Christians for two millennia. Of course human temptation is infinitely more varied than the three described, but like the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life' (1 Jn. 2:16), another comprehensive summary, they do represent the experience of all.

In particular, however, the story of the temptations has strengthened those who have sought to follow Jesus as closely as possible in a life of obedience, seeking to imitate his role, as he has called them. Those who adopt any aspect of Christian service will find it carries its own temptations, and will find that the example of Jesus shows how these may be resisted.

I want to suggest that the nature and timing of the temptations are significant, in which case, incidentally, the account is more likely to be historical. Jesus is not simply being tempted, but is being tempted to deny the threefold role that he now has to assume, which will lead him to the cross. His baptism appointed him to the office of prophet, priest and king; he is now tempted to resign it immediately. The temptations therefore have direct reference to the type of his ministry.

### Looking back

Such an interpretation of the temptations of Jesus is strengthened by the very common view that Jesus was in a way re-enacting the Exodus event. Tasker<sup>2</sup>, for example, comments that Jesus was obedient as Israel was not; he learnt obedience by suffering (Heb. 5:8). In this case Jesus, and so the Church, is the new Israel. Jesus clearly cited texts from Deuteronomy (8:3, 6:13, 16), referring to Israel's wilderness experience; indeed Deuteronomy 8:2 has a general similarity to Matthew 4:1-2. Thus Jesus underwent a recapitulation of the wilderness events, and in particular overcame where Israel succumbed to the temptations of the devil in the events of the manna (Ex. 16), at Massah (Ex. 17) and in the matter of the calf (Ex. 32). This last parallels the third temptation, in that calf worship, like Baalism, was intended to give power over nature. This incidentally indicates, as Mark 1:13 implies, that Jesus was tempted throughout the forty days as Israel was in the course of forty years, and also that Matthew's order is correct as it parallels the Exodus order. It is also an indication, as for Hendrickson,<sup>3</sup> that Deuteronomy is not a 'pious fraud'.

A very similar, and indeed connected view, is to see Jesus as the new Moses (cf. Deut. 18:18).<sup>4</sup> Moses

not only spent those forty years in the wilderness, but spent forty days fasting on the mountain (Ex. 34:28), was led to the establishment of the Tabernacle, the precursor of the Temple, in the Sinai experience, and finally saw Canaan from a high place. This is particularly significant in that although Israel as a nation served as prophet, priest and king, these roles were summed up above all in the person of Moses.

Danker<sup>5</sup> sees in the Temptation experience not only a reminder and recapitulation of Moses but also the figure of David who reigned as king for 40 years, and in addition the experience of Elijah (1 Ki. 19:8), the classic prophet. Moses and Elijah, of course, identified with Jesus later on the mount of Transfiguration.

It is the figure of forty which goes a long way to prompt such identifications and may also suggest a few other parallels in the forty days of rain for Noah, in the experiences of Isaac (Gen. 25:20), Esau (Gen. 26:34) and Joshua (Josh. 14:7). Without wanting to force a pattern, a common feature here is that of preparation, particularly obvious of course in the experiences of Israel, which was being made ready to occupy the promised land. In the case of Jesus, it hardly needs saying that the wilderness experience was preparatory. His time of communion with God and of temptation was an essential prerequisite for his future role.

### Looking forward

The forty days were not looking back to Israel, but looking forward, and must immediately remind the Christian of the forty days between resurrection and ascension. Again this period can be looked upon as a time of preparation as the disciples needed to be ready for the departure of Jesus. They were told to go and wait for the Spirit who would not only empower them, but also give them a prophetic ministry, as was seen to be the case on the day of Pentecost, where Peter saw the gift of the Spirit as fulfilling the prophecy of Joel and enabling prophecy in the Church (Acts 2:18). Secondly, Jesus gave them the authority that he himself had received, which is seen later in kingly acts over disease. As Jesus said (Jn. 14:12) 'greater things than these you will do'. Thirdly, just as Jesus in the ascension took on the role of a great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), so the disciples themselves had a priestly role of making disciples and teaching them. The disciples were therefore themselves given the threefold ministry of prophet, priest and king to exercise in Jesus' bodily absence.

However, before it was given to the Church, this ministry was given to Jesus in baptism. For him, baptism was clearly not necessary for the purpose of salvation, as he had no sin, but did have a valid role in showing to the world that he was indeed Son of God, and also in marking a change in Jesus' life as he entered his ministry. For him, as for all, baptism signified a willingness to obey God (cf. Matt. 28:19, where baptism and discipling are clearly connected). At the same time he was seen to be appointed to his office, an event which could be a later experience for individual Christians, who in experiences subsequent to their baptism, their indication of willingness to

serve, are called to a particular ministry. In this way 'the baptism of Jesus becomes a paradigm for those who are called to Christian service'.<sup>6</sup>

Here the giving of the Spirit at his baptism was an indication of Jesus' appointment to service, and then the experience of the forty days follows naturally from that as a time of preparation for that service. Tasker<sup>7</sup> notes that all the synoptics imply a connection between baptism and temptation. Jesus is being tempted to deny the second part of the message from heaven: 'in him I am well pleased', to deny the obedience signified in baptism.

It is moreover evident that the Spirit was enabling Jesus to perform the three-fold role of prophet, priest and king. Just as the Old Testament prophets were moved by the Spirit of the Lord, it is the evidence of the Spirit that gives authority for later prophetic utterance, as in the case of Agabus (Acts 11:28). Jesus was thus frequently recognized as a prophet.

The giving of the Spirit can be seen also as the appointment to the directly Messianic roles of priest and king in that they were anointed at their appointment. Just as the anointing with oil shows the designation of God, so the Spirit shows that Jesus acts with the authority of God. Again, he was acclaimed as king (Matt. 21:9), and, at least in the book of Hebrews, recognized as priest.

Thus the temptations may be connected with the three aspects of the office of Christ. Jesus was being tempted to abuse the role given to him at baptism. In this case, of course, just as the three aspects form one united office of Christ, so the three temptations will relate to each other, and so will relate also to the ministry of Jesus.

Here, although most commentators usually accept the Matthean order of the temptations as correct,<sup>8</sup> particularly because he uses a sequence word 'then' rather than the simple 'and' of Luke,<sup>9</sup> the connection with the ministry of Jesus does supply a reason for the otherwise difficult-to-explain order of Luke who reverses the second and third temptations.<sup>10</sup> Here in his ministry the temptation to miracle would be logically prior, but the popularity that this gave leads naturally to the temptation to use it for earthly power as it did when the people sought to make Jesus king after the miraculous feeding (Jn. 6:15). Having rejected such a method, there follows naturally the urge to force God to act, which some, such as Schweitzer, have seen in the willingness of Jesus to go to the cross. These temptations are then summed up in the wilderness experience.

### **The prophetic temptation**

Jesus is tempted to produce bread from the stones to satisfy his hunger. This is indeed prophetic, for the essence of the prophetic role is to demand a response. The word of the prophets is intended to be creative, to produce change. The change demanded would usually be in attitudes and action, as in the prophetic attacks on oppression in the period of the monarchy. Nevertheless this could be extended as in Ezekiel's experience in the valley of dry bones (Ez. 37), or in the multiplication of oil by Elisha (2 Ki. 4:6). One wonders if a change from something else was actually

the source of the mysterious manna, seeing that it was such a unique substance.

The first temptation that Jesus underwent was to satisfy his immediate hunger. Although this would have been a very real temptation to one who was exceedingly hungry, it was in a sense ridiculous in that Jesus was experiencing hunger by choice. The temptation is rather to use the prophetic authority in a way different from that intended, namely for selfish ends. It is a temptation for prophets to go outside the divine mandate, which is how Israel fell in Exodus 16, when they sought to gather too much manna, and in the wrong way. It was in that way that God tested them to see 'whether they will walk in my law or not' (Ex. 16:4), and where they failed.

Secondly the temptation is to question the appointment received in baptism, and so to seek to prove the prophetic power in a tangible way.<sup>11</sup> It can be seen as the desire to test the divine power without witnesses and so without embarrassment.

Thirdly the temptation can be seen as symbolic of one which must have recurred constantly throughout Jesus' ministry. Even if the other two motives can be quickly dismissed as not relevant to Jesus, his immense compassion for others would have made this very real.

However, like the other prophets, Jesus saw his main role as changing individuals and lives rather than directly attacking poverty. He emphasized that 'man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Matt. 4:4), and refers to himself as the living bread which alone really satisfies (Jn. 6:41), making a direct link with the story of the manna.

Nevertheless Jesus did use his prophetic ability in a more material sense on a number of occasions. He did turn water into wine at Cana (Jn. 2) and in particular did feed the five thousand hungry people. He was not ascetically rejecting the material outright.

### **The priestly temptation**

The second temptation, in Matthew's order, was for Jesus to throw himself from the pinnacle of the Temple. Here Luz,<sup>12</sup> although he is aware of the possibility of relating the temptations to the office of Christ, cannot see that either the fall or the Temple itself relates definitely to the priestly role. Nevertheless, the Temple must be associated with the priests, but there is a more fundamental connection between the priestly role and a temptation of this nature. Essentially the priestly role is to act on behalf of men and women towards God. This means that the priest is in a special position as regards the rest of humanity. The basic temptation is to doubt whether this is in fact the case, as Israel doubted at Massah (Ex. 17:7), and so to seek to prove God's presence, and in this way a legitimate priesthood. Here Hendrickson<sup>13</sup> refers to a Rabbinic tradition that the Messiah would appear on the roof of the Temple.

A subsidiary temptation is that the priest, rather than God, can then be worshipped, or at least revered. Ferguson<sup>14</sup> sees this as the temptation for Jesus to use the divine power to further his ministry

by generating a sense of gratitude, of awe, or of obedience.

The priest must however always be reminded that God is able to raise up sons of Abraham (Matt. 3:9), interesting, in the light of the other temptation, from stones. Of course, even while the priest himself is unimportant in comparison with his role, worship is legitimate in the case of Jesus, which is why the devil can motivate the temptation as he did the first, by the words, 'if you are the Son of God'. However, acclamation for doing wonders would be entirely inappropriate for what Jesus intended, which is why he sought to hide his Messiahship (e.g. Mk. 3:12). He should not be worshipped for his role, for what he does, but for who he is, incidentally a telling accusation of many Christians today who look only at what Christ gives, whether salvation or psychological and even material benefits, and forget the attitude of Job (1:21). A second aspect of this is that the devil quoted scripture. This immediately makes the temptation attractive, but can reflect the possibility of worshipping what God does, in this case giving scripture, rather than God himself.

A further temptation peculiar to the priestly role is to seek to relate to God in an illegitimate way, as was done by Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1), and indeed by Moses himself (Num. 20:2f), an incident which must relate to the one in Exodus 17. This is indeed the temptation of Jesus; he did after all come to die. The point is that it was not to be at that time or in that way, or indeed to lead to that sort of an escape. The correct way was later, on a cross, and then to experience a resurrection. That was the way of God, and so alone would be legitimate.

The priestly temptation is also always to see efficacy in the priestly act without observing the need for individual holiness. The devil significantly left out the second part of his quotation from the Bible, and so effectively changed the meaning of the text. It is a promise of God's help specifically in living a life of obedience, but he omitted the qualification, completely neglecting the need for obedience to God.

Thus the recurring temptation for Jesus was to minister in a priestly way, by forgiving sins, even healing, without the teaching that would lead to the holiness of life that was required. However, had Jesus ministered in this way, it would have tended to undermine what was the real priestly act, the sacrifice of himself at the cross, as it would have implied that forgiveness could be obtained without the later vicarious suffering, even though in fact the basis of Jesus' forgiving, as indeed God's forgiving in the Old Testament period, was entirely dependent upon the cross (Rom. 3:25).

### The Kingly temptation

The third temptation is easier to connect with a role. It is the temptation to grasp at earthly power, and to use that power to solve the political problems of Israel and indeed to solve the problems of the world by the ordinary human methods of power politics. Of course, kingly power, like any other political authority, must have a basis. Israelite kings were anointed, demonstrating that they ruled with the delegated

authority of God. Thus the temptation of Israel in the case of the calf (Ex. 32), was to substitute a different power base, and this is exactly what the devil tried to persuade Jesus to do.

From a baser perspective which relates rather to the first temptation, it is the lust for power for its own sake, to rule rather than to serve. It is also the temptation to put the value of the end over the means of achieving that end; as Tasker<sup>15</sup> says, dominion without the cross. At the simplest level, it is the temptation to force, even to a good result, rather than to offer something freely.

The kingship of Jesus is however one of service, of giving, which should be the intention of the rule of an official; he has authority so that he can act on behalf of and so benefit the people. The essence of kingship is not of separation from, and authority over, the people, but an action for the people, implying a union, a oneness with them. Emphatically the kingship of Jesus also means our union with God in him. We have salvation because we share in God's power in the victory of the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Rom. 6:4-5). This would be completely undermined if Jesus succumbed to this temptation, for it would turn Christ's union from that with his Father, into one with the devil, and so remove Jesus' gifts to us.

At the same time it would not enhance the power of Jesus but would reduce it. It is ridiculous to tempt the Lord of all creation by a view of a limited part of the world, for such a view, however supernatural, must like that of Moses from Pisgah (Deut. 34:1), be limited. Indeed political power must always be limited, as the ebb and flow of political rule demonstrates.

Although Jesus rejected this temptation and so the exercise of political power, he was nevertheless crushed by the political power<sup>16</sup> of the day which reacted when he was recognized as a king. Ironically, this then led to his victory in the resurrection and therefore our salvation, the reverse of the defeat of Adam (Rom. 5). Such a victory over the devil incidentally means that it is indeed appropriate that this temptation is the last of the three.

By rejecting this temptation, Jesus rejected the use of plain authority in his ministry. He did however act in this way from time to time such as in healing, for instance in the case of the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. 9:20), or in his word of authority to still the storm (Mk. 4:39), and even, as Davidson<sup>17</sup> remarks, in the evident power of personality in the case of the woman taken in adultery.

### The Relation of the Temptations

Not only is there a danger of the perversion of each of the roles of prophet, priest and king, but also of adopting any of the roles to the exclusion of the others. Indeed, the roles of prophet, priest and king do not operate independently in the life of Jesus but must be seen as aspects of one united office.<sup>18</sup> In this case it follows that the temptations should not be isolated but rather complement each other. As has been seen, this is indeed the case.

The first temptation is clearly to exercise the power

of God by faith to satisfy material need, to which the reply is made that faith is indeed sufficient in itself. It was after all because of faith that the situation of hunger developed. Having rejected this, the second temptation complemented this. The devil in effect said that if faith was so effective, then it should be exercised more fully. Bruce<sup>19</sup> comments that the first sought to overturn faith, the second to rely on it alone. Danker<sup>20</sup> likewise, using Luke's order, writes '... [the] first two temptations coax Jesus to defy God, the third invites him to show complete trust in God'. Again the first two can be seen to complement each other in that the first is an affirmation of the needs of the body, the second a rejection of those needs.

Such a relation should not be a surprise as the two offices are complementary; priests act on behalf of man to God, prophets on behalf of God to man. This was a difference in role and emphasis that led to the frequent rivalry, even hostility, between priests and prophets in the Old Testament, but where they are seen rightly to complement each other. Priestly religion can be an empty formalism, prophetic religion can lack stability.

It is clear that the first two temptations are similar in that they are both attempts to persuade Jesus to force God to act. Matthew Henry remarks that it is significant that the first temptation was not to make a request or a prayer to God, but to command the stones. Likewise Filson<sup>21</sup> comments that the Temple was an appropriate place for a death-defying plunge as there God's power could be expected to be at its maximum.

Finally the third temptation is a reaction to these. Whereas the first two would lead to attempts to force God, the third would be for Jesus to ignore God completely and to take matters into his own hands. Of course his prophetic power and popularity as an effective priest would contribute to this.

### The temptations of the Church

If the temptations of Jesus are seen to relate not to him personally but to his office, then it follows that they are also the temptations of the Church. The temptations can be seen as anticipating the Messianic, or Church age.<sup>22</sup> If they are just directed at Christ as the Son of God, then they are not relevant to us as we are not divine. Indeed, as they stand, they are clearly directed at Jesus only.<sup>23</sup> The comment that the temptations do remind us of the full humanity of Jesus, citing Hebrews 4:15<sup>24</sup> is appropriate to temptation in general, but hardly these specific ones. Wade<sup>25</sup> is forced to suggest that Jesus was tempted at two levels, firstly as Messiah, then as we are.

Nevertheless, as we become Christians, we unite with Christ and become adopted children of God (Rom. 8:15). The temptations then become ours, but this is because we become part of the Church, the new Israel. Significantly in Deuteronomy 8:5, in the chapter used by Jesus against the devil, Israel is referred to as a son. Christ's baptism led to his ministry as prophet, priest and king through the temptations, and the Church is led to its ministry through the baptism of individuals, just as Paul sees

baptism at the start of Israel's experience of temptation in the Exodus experience in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:2) which led to its role and ministry to the world.

Israel was not only given the task of bringing Christ into the world, but it was also given the role of prophet, priest and king. This was not only because it contained individuals with those roles, but, because, like the Church, it had those roles as a community. Thus Israel is referred to as a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6), and was often referred to as a holy people, significant since the idea of holiness involved separation from the ordinary, an idea also present in the act of anointing, so that kings and priests were separate as holy (cf. David's attitude to Saul e.g. 1 Sam. 24:6). Israel itself also had a prophetic role in its example to the surrounding nations of what God required (e.g. Is. 49:6). (This text is from the servant songs in the second part of the book of Isaiah, where the reference is usually to Israel but which Christians often see as fulfilled in Christ.) Isaiah 61:1-9 is a passage which combines the three roles, significantly used by Jesus in his sermon at Nazareth. Then just as individuals in Israel were tempted to abuse their callings, so was Israel collectively, both in the Exodus and later. Kunkel<sup>26</sup> comments that Jesus was rejecting the materialism of Sadducees, the power of the Romans and the spiritual totalitarianism of the Pharisees.

In this case, as the Church is the new Israel (Gal. 6:16), it is not surprising that the church also has its three-fold office (e.g. 1 Pet. 2:4, Rev. 1:6, 5:10). Therefore, 'the temptations of the Lord are the temptations of the Church' (Ronald Knox, cited by Davidson<sup>27</sup>), and must be rejected, individually and collectively, following the example of the Lord. Not all individually are called to these roles, but all are called to serve, and as such, the temptations are theirs.

Yielding to any of the temptations would have been disastrous for the ministry of Jesus, for this would have undermined what he had come into the world to do. In the same way, the Church must beware of the temptations which would destroy its unique role. This can be by perverting one or more of the roles of prophet, priest and king, or by an over-concentration on any one of them, whether the physical or the spiritual, or by using the methods of the world.

The prophetic temptation is to use spiritual power for material ends. In the modern Church this may be seen particularly in the 'prosperity cult', where it is believed that God will bless materially as a result of 'claiming'. This is an overemphasis on the material, and Jesus needs to remind this segment of the Church that 'man does not live by bread alone' (not that mere bread is usually the issue!), and that he himself is the living bread. Prosperity teachers are inclined to justify their teaching by claiming that God wants fitness and health for spiritual benefit, and there is also a tendency to seek to want to prove the reality of faith by its tangible, physical effects. It is particularly worth noting that whereas Jesus rejected food when he did need it, Adam was condemned for taking it when he did not, a telling commentary on the lust for extra wealth in the midst of world hunger.

Closely related to this is the priestly temptation,

which is the desire to prove the reality of faith, particularly in a scientific age which values empirical verification. Whereas the evidence of spiritual life may be seen in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), there is often a desire for more, for supernatural signs and wonders, or, in a previous age, the desire for proof of election in prosperity, something that led to the 'Protestant Work Ethic'. This is a move away from the faith of an Abraham or a Job who trusted irrespective of results.

At the same time priests are tempted to act in a way which in itself is irrelevant to human problems, but which is an attempt to force God to act. In the Church this could be an asceticism which is not just a self-limitation for the good of others but a look to a heavenly reward. Such is not common today, although it has been in the past. In the modern world it is rather an ignoring of the situation because of a hope in an imminent, probably pre-millennial return of the Lord.

At the opposite extreme is the kingly temptation, to do all on the human level, and to leave God out completely. It is the temptation to seek power in the world, even if for good ends. This would be seen in liberation theology, which is a barely veiled political programme in the name of Christianity.

Social needs are perhaps the obvious context of these temptations, particularly in view of the hunger of Jesus in the wilderness. It may be persuasively argued in any case that most social needs are the result of sin, so of the yielding to temptation. Nevertheless, the temptations could be extended further, to methods of evangelism, where they can be seen as trying to extend the kingdom by signs and wonders, by example, and in the third case by force, as in the Crusades where forced conversion was practised.

Because the essential danger is of perversion of the roles or a lack of balance, there is some validity in what is condemned. Jesus, while rejecting the temptations, still to some extent used those same methods. It is legitimate to ask for spiritual power, even if 'claiming' should be rejected. James 4:2 complains 'you have not because you ask not'. It is particularly right to seek for change, both in individuals and in social structures. Secondly it is legitimate to seek the solution to physical problems by means of 'spiritual activity' such as evangelism, as Christian attitudes would go far towards solving the deep problems both of individuals and of society. Thirdly, political action is also legitimate, indeed essential, for without it the errors of the status quo are condoned. What may again be suggested is that as the three roles form one united office, so a full Christian response must have more than one facet. So often it is unbalanced, and so ineffective.

It must not be forgotten that Jesus' ministry was in the context of what he had personally experienced in the temptations. An effective ministry will likewise rest upon the nature of the Church and individual Christians. It might therefore be suggested that a prophetic ministry, demanding change, must be in the context of personal self-limitation, just as Jesus himself was hungry. In the context of world hunger, demanding change in the third world is an empty call

when it comes from affluence. Again, related to this, priestly action 'from the pinnacle of the Temple' can be effective only when linked to personal holiness. Finally kingly action in the Christian sense is not the exercise of power over the world, but, as with the resurrection, in which we share, a sharing with the world. It is not so much rule, but service. The third temptation should be turned round; not 'all this will be yours', but 'all yours should be theirs'. The details of these do, of course, need to be related to individual needs and circumstances.

## Conclusion

While the baptism of Jesus led naturally to the temptations, it must be asked how many of those who are baptized then reject the implications of what they have done. There is here a call for action by the Church and by individual Christians. This is in the prophetic mode, demanding change in the lives of others, both individually and corporately. This is in the priestly mode, even to participate in Jesus' vicarious suffering for others (cf. Col. 1:24). This is in the kingly mode, the use of power, even over the devil. What the temptations are telling us, however, is that these actions must not be abused. They are right only if carried out in God's way, and the Church will always be liable to pervert them. The Church will also be tempted to over-emphasize one of the roles. Action may be essential, but must be a multifaceted action, and balanced.

It must finally be repeated, in any thought concerning temptation, that in itself it is no sin. The devil never forces compliance with his wishes. More positively we have the promise that the Lord himself will provide the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13), and the encouragement to become better acquainted with the scriptures, for it was in his use of them that the Lord made his escape.

## Footnotes

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7. *op. cit.*, p. 52.
8. E.g. T. L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the mountain: a study in Matthean theology*, JSOT, Sheffield, 1985, p. 88.
9. Cf. Hendrickson, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
10. H. Swanston ('The Lukan Temptation Narrative',

- in *Journal of Theological Studies* 17(1), 1966, p. 71) gives another explanation for Luke's order, referring it to the order given in Psalm 106, although he does not explain why the psalm gives that order. Incidentally, he sees some hint of the same order in 1 Corinthians 10:6, 7, 9.
11. J. M. Gibson,, *The gospel of St. Matthew*, 2nd. Ed. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1982, p. 44. A. H. M'Neile (*The gospel according to St. Matthew*, MacMillan, London, 1952, p. 38) sees the question of the authentication of Jesus' role as the main point.
  12. U. Luz, *Matthew 1–7: a commentary*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1989, p. 185.
  13. *op. cit.*, p. 228.
  14. J. Ferguson, 'The temptations', in *Expository Times* 95(5), 1984, p. 149.
  15. *op. cit.*, p. 54.
  16. Danker, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
  17. J. A. Davidson, 'The testing of Jesus' in *Expository Times* 94(4), 1983, p. 113.
  18. D. T. Williams, 'Salvation and healing: towards a unified theology' in *Theologia Evangelica* 23(2), 1990, p. 15–26.
  19. W. Bruce, *Commentary on the gospel according to St. Matthew*, Speirs, London, 1877, p. 65.
  20. *op. cit.*, p. 103.
  21. F. V. Filson, *A Commentary on the gospel according to St. Matthew*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1960, p. 70.
  22. Cf. Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
  23. G. H. P. Thompson, 'Called-Proved-Obedient: a study in the baptism and temptation narratives of Matthew and Luke', in *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 11(1), 1960, p. 6.
  24. F. W. Farrar, *The gospel according to St. Luke*, Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 1916, p. 96.
  25. G. Wade, 'Temptation', in *Expository Times* 100(4), 1989, p. 141.
  26. F. Kunkel, *Creation continues: a psychological interpretation of the gospel of Matthew*, Paulist, New York/Mahwah, 1987, p. 55.
  27. *op. cit.*, p. 114.

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