

TESTING, TRIAL AND TEMPTATION
A Biblical Study

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PREFACE

This study is an abbreviation of my thesis accepted by the faculty of Emmanuel College, Victoria University, Toronto, as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Theology degree. The chief alterations include:

- a) Change of the title, *Peirasmos in the New Testament to Testing, Trial and Temptation*;
- b) Elimination of words in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets (a few such words have been retained in transliteration);
- c) Removal of almost all of the evidence in Greek literature supportive of statements in chapter two concerning the use of the relevant vocabulary outside Jewish and Christian circles.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Professor E. C. Blackman for his encouragement and advice with respect to the study of the theme, and also to the faculty of Emmanuel College for recommending that the thesis be prepared for publication. I am constantly grateful to my wife Dorothy whose patience and support have encouraged me through the preparation of this material.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Customary abbreviations are used for ancient Greek, Jewish and Christian writings. Other abbreviations occurring in this work are in accordance with the following list:

- ATR* *Anglican Theological Review.*
- BAGD* W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Fourth revised and augmented edition as translated and adapted by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, and further revised and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker from Bauer's fifth edition.
- BASOR* SS. *Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Research*. Supplementary Studies, Nos. 10-12.
- BDB* F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.*
- BSac* *Bibliotheca Sacra.*
- CBQ* *Catholic Biblical Quarterly.*

- CQ* *The Crozer Quarterly.*
- CQR* *Church Quarterly Review.*
- CT* *Christianity Today.*
- EB* W. R. Nicoll (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible.*
- EBC* F. E. Gaebelin (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary.*
- GNT* K. Aland, et al. (eds.), *The Greek New Testament.*
- HDCG* J. Hastings (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.*
- IB* G. A. Buttrick, et al. (eds.), *The Interpreter's Bible.*
- ISBE* J. Orr (ed.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia.*
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature.*
- JSOT* *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.*
- JTS* *Journal of Theological Studies.*
- KJV* Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible.
- LXX* The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament.
- MM* J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament.*
- MT* The Massoretic Text of the Old Testament.

- NBC* F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs and E. F. Kevan (eds.), *The New Bible Commentary*.
- NEB* The New English Bible.
- NIDNTT* C. Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
- NIV* New International Version of The Holy Bible.
- NRSV* New Revised Standard Version of The Holy Bible.
- NTS* *New Testament Studies*.
- RSV* Revised Standard Version of The Holy Bible.
- SB* H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*.
- SNT* K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament*.
- TDNT* G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.
- TDOT* G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*.
- TWBB* A. Richardson (ed.), *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*.
- UMS* *University of Michigan Studies*.
- v.l. varia lectio (variant reading).
- ZNW* *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums*.

INTRODUCTION

Testing, Trial and Temptation is the title we have given to this study. A more precise title would be, *Peirasmos in the New Testament*, *peirasmos* being the Greek term to be translated, at least in its earlier usage, as “testing,” “test” or “trial,” though enticement to evil often became so prominent in its meaning that “temptation” is frequently an appropriate rendering. Unless otherwise indicated, in this monograph “testing,” “test,” “trial” and “temptation” represent *peirasmos* or a cognate thereof, and vice versa. Moreover, since it is frequently uncertain which English word most accurately represents the respective connotation of *peirasmos*, we often use testing/temptation, test/temptation, or trial/temptation as a rendering thereof.¹

Several considerations invite investigation of our theme:

- a) The importance of a number of passages in which the theme is found. Special mention in this connection may be made of the occurrence in the Lord’s Prayer. No other passage in the Christian Bible is so familiar, and possibly none is so influential, as the Matthaean verses in which this Prayer is recorded.
- b) The questions its occurrence excites. Again the Lord’s Prayer provides the foremost illustration, for in it the followers of Jesus are urged to pray: “Do not bring us to the time of trial” (Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:4).² If God

brings us to the time of trial, why should anyone pray that we may not be brought to it? ³ Another illustration is provided by a consideration of this petition in the Lord's Prayer in conjunction with such a text as Jas. 1:2, "Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy." Why is it that one New Testament passage encourages the followers of Jesus to pray that they may not be brought to the time of trial and another encourages them to rejoice when they experience it?

- c) The significance accorded to the testing of Jesus in such a text as Heb. 2:18, "Because he (Jesus) himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested."

In spite of the importance of testing in the New Testament, so far as I am aware only one twentieth century monograph on the subject is widely accessible, J. H. Korn's *PEIRASMOS, Die Versuchung des Gläubigen in der griechischen Bibel*, published at Stuttgart in 1937 by W. Kohlhammer. ⁴ In addition to this volume by Korn, H. Seesemann's article on "*peira, peiraō, peirasmos, apeirastos, ekpeirazō*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ⁵ 6:23-36, calls for special mention as a valuable introduction to the theme. Though there are numerous articles which deal with subsidiary topics, the most important being those which treat of the temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness, most readers seem to be restricted to these two bibliographical items for a general treatment of biblical teaching on the subject.

In the opinion of the present writer the treatment of the theme in the accessible literature leaves something to be desired at a number of points, of which the following are the most notable:

- a) The question of the source of testing receives inadequate consideration.
- b) The practical questions concerning the means of testing, and the proper response to it, receive very little attention.
- c) The significance which the Bible attaches to the testing of Jesus is not treated in a comprehensive and balanced

fashion.⁶

- d) The testing of God by human beings receives only cursory consideration.

It is our purpose as we consider the theme to investigate the occurrence of the relevant vocabulary in the biblical literature, to consider the use of that vocabulary outside Jewish and Christian circles, and to set forth its use in Jewish literature up to and including the Talmudic and Midrashic writings, and in Christian literature in the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers. Then we shall proceed to consider the religious testing/temptation of people so far as the source of it, the means to it, and the response to it, are concerned; and we shall continue with a consideration of those individuals whose experience of testing/temptation is reported in Jewish and early Christian literature, giving special attention to the testing/temptation of Jesus. We shall conclude with a chapter on the testing of God by people.

Since we have chosen to be comprehensive rather than exhaustive, there will be passages which bear on the theme, especially in Jewish literature, which will not be treated. On the other hand, we shall endeavour to examine passages representative of every aspect and facet of the subject.

Notes

- ¹ A comparison of recent translations of the Scripture shows that there is often disagreement as to whether a particular occurrence of *peirasmōs* is best rendered “test”, “trial”, or “temptation”. A comparable statement may be made concerning the cognates of *peirasmōs*.
- ² Quotations from the Bible in English are according to the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.
- ³ This is not the only question this petition raises. It is merely the most obvious one.

- ⁴ So far as I am aware, Vallotton's *Essai d'une Doctrine Chrétienne de la Tentation* has not been published.
- ⁵ Eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1946-76).
- ⁶ Vallotton, *Tentation*, 65-140, treats this theme extensively. In the view of the present writer, however, some of the passages which he considers are not about religious testing. This is especially true of his treatment of passages in the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER 1 THE VOCABULARY

A. Its Extent

As has been indicated, of primary concern in our study is the use of the Greek word *peirasmos*, and of the words etymologically related to it. The most important of the related words is the cognate verb *peirazō* (commonly translated “test,” “try” or “tempt”). Indeed, *peirazō* and *peirasmos* occur many times more frequently in the biblical literature than all of the words etymologically related to them put together. In the Greek New Testament *peirasmos* occurs 21 times, and *peirazō* some 38 times,¹ whereas all the related words put together have only nine well-attested occurrences, and four of them are of the verb *ekpeirazō*, which is merely an intensive form of *peirazō*. Two occurrences of *peira* (“attempt,” “trial,” “experience”), one of *apeiros* (“unacquainted with,” “unaccustomed to”), one of *peiraō* (“attempt,” “endeavour”), and one of *apeirastos* (“without temptation,” “cannot be tempted”), make up the other five occurrences of words related to our noun and verb.

In the Septuagint there are fifteen occurrences of *peirasmos*, in three of which it is a proper noun. The cognate verb occurs 44 times, and there are five well-attested occurrences of *ekpeirazō*. A variety of other cognates are met with from time to time.

Though the limits of this paper do not allow for a detailed consideration of words from other roots, we shall have to take notice of them insofar as they are used to convey ideas which *peirasmos*,

and the words related to it, may be used to convey. The most important of these words is *dokimazō* (“prove,” “prove by testing,” “approve”) and some of the words etymologically related to it.

B. The Hebrew Equivalent

The Greek words we have listed as those of special concern to us are used as the equivalent of the Hebrew verb *nāsâh* (in the Piel), and its derivatives. Indeed, in the Septuagint *nāsâh* and its derivatives are always translated by *peirazō* or by an etymologically related word. There are apparent exceptions, but no real ones.

Peirazō and related vocabulary were almost always reserved for the translation of *nāsâh* and its derivatives by those responsible for the Septuagint version. Concerning the comparatively few occasions in which there is divergence from this practice there are several comments:

- a) In a number of instances the divergence is on the part of poorly-attested readings of the Septuagint.
- b) In some passages the divergence is interpretive of the original vocabulary in its context.
- c) Sometimes the divergence is due to the fact that the peculiar conception attaching to the root have fallen far into the background.²

An additional comment may be added: Ps. 25 (26):2 shows that *nāsâh* (“test”) could be used as a synonym for *bāḥan* (“prove”).³ That *peirazō* is rarely used to translate *bāḥan* is therefore surprising. The fact that it is not so used more frequently indicates that though the conceptions overlap considerably, they are nevertheless to be carefully distinguished.

C. The Distribution of our Vocabulary

1. In the Massoretic Text

Almost half the occurrences of our vocabulary in the Massoretic text are in the Pentateuch. Twenty-two of the forty-four or forty-five occurrences of *nāsâh* and its derivatives are in this part of the Old Testament. ⁴ Concerning the occurrences in the Pentateuch, two comments are to be made:

- a) All the occurrences are religious except those in Deut. 4:34a and 28:56;
- b) All the religious uses of the vocabulary have to do with the experiences and activities of Israel in the Wilderness, except one relating to Abraham in Gen. 22:1.

In the next section of the Old Testament—the Former Prophets, i.e., the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings ⁵—there are seven occurrences of *nāsâh*, all of them in relation to the earliest period described in these books: four in Judges and the others in the portions relating to the reigns of David and Solomon. The religious occurrences are all in the book of Judges. Of the four occurrences in this book at least two, and possibly all four, are religious. In the books of the later prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve ⁶—*nāsâh* occurs but once, in Isa. 7:12, which contains a religious use of our vocabulary attributed to King Ahaz of Judah, who reigned in the eighth century B.C.

The books of the Hagiographa (the remainder of the Old Testament), which make up a little more than one-third of the Massoretic text, contain some fifteen occurrences of *nāsâh* and its derivatives. Seven of the occurrences are in Psalms 25 (26), 77 (78), 94 (95), 105 (106), and two each are found in 2 Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, Daniel and Job (?). All the occurrences in the Psalms are religious, and all refer to Israel in the Wilderness, except for the occurrence in Ps. 25 (26). ⁷ The other occurrences in the Hagiographa are all profane except for one in 2 Chron. 32:31. It is possible that there is also a religious occurrence in Job 9:23.

It is remarkable that the religious use of the vocabulary in the

Massoretic text has to do with Israel in the Wilderness, and in the period of the Judges, in the great majority of passages in which it occurs, the only exceptions being Gen. 22:1; Isa. 7:12, Ps. 25 (26):2; Job 9:23; 2 Chron. 32:31. It may almost be said that the religious use of our vocabulary in the Massoretic text is restricted to passages concerned with the experiences of Israel in the Wilderness and in the period immediately following.⁸

Why is the use of our vocabulary restricted in this way? Is the circumstance purely accidental? Possibly so. The literature with which we are concerned is of limited extent, to say nothing of the fact that the themes with which it deals often provide little occasion for use of the terminology. On the other hand, the testing of people, according to the most ancient use of *nāsāh* and its derivatives, is in order that God may “know” whether there is devotion to Him. Especially noteworthy in this connection is Gen. 22:12, “Now I know that you fear God.”⁹ Was it because such language implied that God might be ignorant of something, that it ceased to be useful? Indications that this may have been the case include:

- a) In the Book of Job it seems to be implied that God “knows” a man’s character apart from activity on His part to compel the outward exhibition thereof. Job is represented as saying concerning his sufferings, “You seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, although you know that I am not guilty” (10:6-7; cf. 23:10). Moreover, there are passages in the Psalms (17:3; 26:2; 139:23-24), and perhaps elsewhere as well (cf. Jer. 12:3), in which God is said to initiate certain human experiences in order to bring to light what is in the persons involved. The verb *bāhan* is used to describe these experiences, a verb which, of itself, does not call into question the existence or non-existence of that about which one is concerned,¹⁰ as is indicated by the following observations:

- (1) In its use in relation to the testing of metals, it takes a precious metal as its object, not “rock” or “ore”;¹¹
- (2) It is frequently used in parallel with *sārap*, which primarily means “smelt” or “refine”;¹²

- (3) Though God knows one, He may still *bāhan* him/her;¹³
- (4) It is customarily translated by *dokimazō* (prove) in the Septuagint. There is no occurrence of *nāsāh* so translated.
- b) Though our vocabulary reappears in the third century B.C., the idea that God engages in testing in order that He may “know” whether a person has faith in Him or not seems not to occur again. Testing is frequently for the sake of the exhibition of a man’s true allegiance,¹⁴ but not for the sake of God’s knowledge thereof.
- c) Reasons given in a number of late Jewish writings for the testing of Abraham are often at variance with Gen. 22:12, and may indicate dissatisfaction with the explanation given there:
- (1) According to Jub. 18:9, God explained His instruction to Abraham to stay his hand from his son as follows: “I know that he is one who fears the Lord.”¹⁵
- (2) According to Gen. R. 55:6, R. Akiba (died c. A.D. 133) stated concerning the command to sacrifice Isaac, “He [God] tested him [Abraham] unequivocally, that people might not say that he confused and perplexed him so that he did not know what to do.”
- (3) According to bSanh. 89b, God said to Abraham when He commanded him to offer up his son, “I have tested thee with many trials and thou didst withstand all. Now be firm for my sake in this trial, that men may not say, There was no reality in the earlier ones.”
- (4) According to Num. R. 17:2, God told Abraham concerning the command to sacrifice Isaac, “It is in order to make you known in the world.”
- (5) According to Pirke Aboth 5:4, “With ten trials Abraham our father was tried and he bore them all, to make known how great was the love of

Abraham our father.”¹⁶

- d) The teaching credited to R. Eleazar and R. Jose b. Hanina, both of whom flourished in the third century A.D., that God visits only the righteous with tests,¹⁷ seems to imply that God knows that a man is righteous before He tests him.
- e) In a variety of ways the simple ascription of testing to God in the Pentateuch is altered in Jewish writings:
 - (1) Satan is introduced in legendary expansions of Gen. 22,¹⁸
 - (2) In Gen. R. 55:3 and Cant. R. 2:16, the meaning of *nāsāh* in Gen. 22 seems to be assimilated to that of *bāhan*.

Concerning all of this argument, however, there are the following objections to be made:

- a) Much of the evidence is so late that it is of little significance.
- b) Some of the evidence from late Jewish literature may be due to the vagaries of Jewish exegesis; and some of it to the tendency for legendary expansion to include in the stories of ancient worthies matters which belong elsewhere.
- c) The use of *nāsāh* and the cognate noun of the putting of God to the test—as distinguished from its use of the testing of people—only occurs in the Massoretic text in passages referring to events preceding the seventh century B.C. We know of no reason why this should be the case,¹⁹ though it must be stated that, so far as we are aware, only rarely, if ever, is a synonym used in giving expression to the idea. In Ps. 94 (95):9 *bāhan* is used in so doing, but only in parallel with *nāsah*.²⁰ In Mal. 3:10, 15, *bāhan* is used of a kind of testing or proving of God, but, as we shall see in Chapter VIII, there is real question whether the usage, at least in 3:10, is not to be distinguished from that of testing God in the sense with which we are concerned about it.²¹

- d) In the Old Testament Job 4:2 perhaps contains the only profane use of the vocabulary which does not occur either in a passage purporting to relate an incident at least as early as the reign of Solomon, or in a document dated at least as late as the third century B.C.²² Though the profane use of the vocabulary in narratives of the early period of Israel's history is infrequent, it does occur at least four, and possibly as many as seven times.

In view of these considerations, we are inclined to reject the suggestion that the use of *nāsāh* and its derivatives was given up because it implied a view of God which the more sophisticated mind could hardly contemplate. It has been discussed here because it is the only alternative we know to the idea that it is purely accidental that our vocabulary occurs where it does in the Old Testament.

2. In the Septuagint

In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament the distribution of *peirasmōs* and related words is in close accord, as we have seen, with its distribution in the Massoretic text.

In the Apocryphal books the vocabulary occurs almost as many times as in the Massoretic text of the Old Testament—39 well-attested and several poorly-attested readings. It is to be noted, however, that the majority of the occurrences are profane. Such occurrences are found in Sirach, Tobit, Wisdom, and the four books of Maccabees. As is to be expected, in view of their concern with conduct, the religious use is chiefly in Sirach and Wisdom, though it is represented in Tobit (Aleph text), Judith, 1 Macc., and possibly 4 Macc. as well. Though the religious use is frequently prompted by the Old Testament narratives concerning Abraham and Israel in the Wilderness, its occurrence apart from such influences is found in at least five, and possibly as many as eight or nine passages.

So far as I have noticed, there is nothing peculiar about the distribution of the vocabulary in the Apocrypha.

3. *In other Jewish Literature*

Though we have made no attempt to be exhaustive, the religious use of *peirasmos* vocabulary in various other Jewish documents has been noted.²³ In what may be lumped together as the pseudepigraphic writings, there is one such occurrence in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and one in the Dead Sea Scrolls.²⁴ In Josephus there are a number of occurrences. The vocabulary is singularly lacking in the passages where Philo discusses the sacrifice of Isaac and the Wilderness wandering of Israel.²⁵ The absence of the vocabulary where one would expect it in Philo is due, according to H. Seesemann, to the influence of Greek thought. Education is in the foreground of Philo's thinking to such an extent that he has no understanding of testing in the religious sense.²⁶ In my opinion Seesemann's judgment is sound.

In the Talmudic and Midrashic literature the vocabulary is found from time to time. There appears to be nothing remarkable about its occurrence in this literature, except that in a large proportion of cases its use is inspired by the Old Testament.

4. *In Early Christian Literature*

In the Synoptic Gospels the language is found twenty-three times in well-attested readings, thirteen times²⁷ if one omits parallel occurrences. We consider seven of these thirteen occurrences to be religious.

To the Synoptic occurrences should be added the one in John 8:6, in a passage which is not Johannine, but which would be at home in the Synoptics, and which is found following Luke 21:38 in the Farrar group of cursives.²⁸ In our view it is a non-religious use.

In contrast to the numerous occurrences in the Synoptics, there is only one in the Johannine gospel,²⁹ in our view a non-religious one, and none whatever in the Johannine epistles.³⁰ In Acts there are seven occurrences;³¹ in the Pauline epistles there are eleven occurrences (twelve if one includes the Pastorals as Pauline);³² in the Epistle to the Hebrews nine occurrences;³³ in the Epistle of James seven occurrences;³⁴ in 1 Peter two occurrences;³⁵ in 2

Peter one occurrence;³⁶ and in Revelation four occurrences.³⁷ All of these are religious occurrences except for four in Acts, one in Paul, three in Hebrews, and one in Revelation.

The paucity of occurrences in the Fourth Gospel is probably to be explained on the basis of the particular concern which dominates this Gospel. The purpose of this gospel is to present the “signs” which “Jesus did . . . so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). The experiences of Jesus which may be described as tests were hardly suitable for this purpose.³⁸

In the Apostolic Fathers I have noted use of the vocabulary as follows: Didache, twice;³⁹ Hermas, seven times;⁴⁰ Ignatius, once;⁴¹ *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, once;⁴² Polycarp, once;⁴³ 2 Clement, thrice.⁴⁴ These occurrences are all religious except for one each in Did., Hermas, Ign., *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, and 2 Clement. That the religious use of the vocabulary should occur frequently in Hermas is only to be expected in view of the theme of the writing. The laxity of Christians greatly exercises the author, and concern regarding Christian conduct dominates his book. It is surprising that the use is not found in Ignatius. The omission is probably accidental, however, since the idea seems to be implicit.

Conclusion

Our consideration of the extent, Hebrew equivalent(s), and distribution of our vocabulary leads to the following conclusions:

- a) The remarkable extent to which our vocabulary is reserved for the translation of *nāsâh* and its derivatives in the Greek versions of the Old Testament indicates that said Hebrew vocabulary and our Greek vocabulary represent a unique and restricted circle of ideas.
- b) In the Old Testament our vocabulary seldom occurs except in passages clearly alluding to the pre-exilic history of the Israelites. The majority of the occurrences, indeed, relate to their Wilderness experiences. It is only in the centuries immediately

preceding the Christian era that our vocabulary regains prominence in the extant Jewish literature. In early Christian literature it is of more or less importance everywhere except in the Johannine gospel and epistles, and in some of the Fathers.

Notes

- ¹ The reading using this verb in 1 Cor. 10:9b is accepted in *The Greek New Testament*, Third Corrected Edition (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1983), 599.
- ² A considerable number of the occurrences of our vocabulary in the Septuagint, where it is not represented in the Massoretic text, are profane, i.e., do not relate to the religious life or commitment of the individual or individuals concerned.
- ³ Cf. Ps. 94 (95):9
- ⁴ Approximately 60% of the religious occurrences of the vocabulary in the Massoretic text are in the Pentateuch.
- ⁵ Approximately two-ninths of the Massoretic text.
- ⁶ Almost one quarter of the Massoretic text.
- ⁷ The occurrence in Ps. 25 (26):2 may have been due to a desire for another word which could be used in parallel with *bāhan* ("prove") and *sārap* ("put to a fiery test").
- ⁸ The profane use in the extant literature extends to narratives relating to David and Solomon, and is rarely found thereafter until we reach writings credited to the third century B.C. (There are, however, occurrences in the Lachish letters, correspondence of c. 588 B.C. unearthed at Lachish in Palestine in 1935.)
- ⁹ Cf. Deut. 8:2; 13:4 (3); Jud. 3:4; 2 Chron. 32:31.

- ¹⁰ See Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 137; Vallotton, *Tentation*, 9; M. Tsevat in *TDOT*, 2:69-72, for suggestions concerning its exact meaning.
- ¹¹ See Zech. 13:9; cf. Job 23:10.
- ¹² Jer. 9:6; Zech. 13:9; Ps. 17:3; 26:2; 66:10. Note the parallels in Ps. 26:2; 94(95):9. Cf. W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 2:257; M. Tsevat in *TDOT*, 2:69-70.
- ¹³ Job 23:10; cf. 10:6; Jer 6:27-30; 12:3; Vallotton, *Tentation*, 9.
- ¹⁴ E.g., T. Jos. 2:7; cf. Job 1:8-12; 2:3-6
- ¹⁵ It is possible that the author felt it necessary to allow for earlier testing of Abraham. It is stated that God knew that Abraham was faithful "because he tested him" previously in several ways (cf. 17:17-18).
- ¹⁶ To the passages quoted, *Clem. Hom.* 3:43 may be added.
- ¹⁷ Cant. R. 2:16. Cf. Gen. R. 32:3; 34:3; 55:2.
- ¹⁸ See Jub. 17-18; bSanh. 89b.
- ¹⁹ Except for the occurrence in Isa. 7:12, it is used only when referring to Israel in the Wilderness or in the period of the Judges.
- ²⁰ Cf. Wisd. 1:2-3; Heb. 3:8-9.
- ²¹ According to bTa'an 9a, Mal. 3:10 provides an exception to the prohibition of testing God which is expressed by the use of our vocabulary in Deut. 6:16.
- ²² There are two profane uses in the Lachish letters.
- ²³ We have found the profane use in a number of documents, but have disregarded it, except to note six occurrences of such use in Test. XII.
- ²⁴ T. Jos. 2:7; 1QH 2:14. The vocabulary may be represented in languages other than Greek and Hebrew in 1 Enoch 94:5; Jub. 17:7, 8; Ass. Mos. 9:4; Apoc. Abr. 13. W. H. Brownlee, "The Dead Sea Manual of

Discipline,” *BASOR*, 9 n. 32, suggests that the first word in IQS 1:18 is to be read as a Qal passive participle of *nāsâh*, but *nāsâh* is not used in Qal.

²⁵ Philo includes the vocabulary elsewhere when quoting Gen. 22:1; Exod. 15:25; 16:4. See *De Somn.* 1:195; *De conq. Erud.* 163; *Leq. Alleg.* 3:162, 167.

²⁶ *TDNT*, 6:26. The noun *peiramos* occurs nowhere in the writings of Philo or Josephus.

²⁷ Fourteen, if Luke 22:40 is not derived from Mark 14:38.

²⁸ With the Synoptic occurrence, compare the occurrence in *The Gospel of Truth* 19:20, “There came forth those who—in their own hearts only—were wise, testing him, but he put them to shame because they were empty.” On this verse K. Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 59 n. 90, comments, “Evidently a reminiscence of the scribes and Pharisees, but summarizing, not alluding to any specific scene of any gospel.”

²⁹ In 6:6.

³⁰ An occurrence, in a saying credited to Jesus, is quoted as follows in Tertullian, *de Baptismo* 100:20: *Neminem intentatum regna collestia consecuturum*. Other versions of this saying occur in *Didascalia* 2:8, and in *Apostolic Constitutions* 2:8:2. J. Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), 56, is of the opinion that the saying is authentic.

³¹ 5:9; 9:26; 15:10; 16:7; 20:19; 24:6; 26:21. Occurrences in 5:3 and 15:26 are very poorly attested.

³² 1 Cor. 7:5; 10:9 (*bis*); 10:13 (*tris*); 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 4:14; 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:5 (*bis*); 1 Tim. 6:9. There is also a poorly attested occurrence in 2 Cor. 6:9.

³³ 2:18; 3:8, 9; 4:15; 5:13; 11:17, 29,36, 37. The last of these is a doubtful reading.

³⁴ 1:2, 12, 13 (four times), 14.

³⁵ 1:6; 4:12.

³⁶ 2:9.

³⁷ 2:2, 10; 3:10 (*bis*).

³⁸ That Jesus was tested/tempted is intimated in John 12:27; 14:30. Cf. Seasmann in TDNT 6:36; Vallotton, *Tentation*, 98-111.

³⁹ 8:2; 11:7

⁴⁰ *Vis.* 5:3; *Mand.* 4:3:6; 9:7; 12:5:4; *Sim.* 7:1; 8:2:7; 11:31:2.

⁴¹ *Mag.* 7:1

⁴² 13:2

⁴³ *Phil.* 7:2

⁴⁴ 17:3; 18:2; 20:2.

CHAPTER II

THE VOCABULARY OUTSIDE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CIRCLES

In considering the vocabulary outside Jewish and Christian circles, we do not provide a detailed study, but only sufficient information to provide a background for the use of the vocabulary in Jewish and Christian literature. We shall, however, give more detailed consideration to the few occurrences we have discovered of the use of the vocabulary in religious contexts.

A. *The Profane Connotations*

1. *Peiraō and Peira*

The Greek vocabulary with which we are concerned all derives from the verb *peiraō*. In the active voice, of which there is no occurrence in Jewish or early Christian literature, it is used with the following meanings:

- a) "Attempt," "endeavour," "try," with the infinitive. An idiomatic extension of this meaning occurs: "Make an attempt (on a woman's honour)" with accusative of the person.
- b) "Put to the test," "make trial of," (especially with hostile intent), with genitive of the person or the thing.

As a deponent the verb is much more common, and, as such,

is used with the same meanings, plus the meaning, “have experience of,” “know by experience,” with genitive of the person or the thing.

The cognate noun, *peira*, exhibits the same range of meaning:

- a) “trial”, “attempt”, “experiment”, including the idiomatic use “an attempt (to seduce a woman)”;
- b) “test,” “experiment,” including the idea of testing in a hostile sense, in which case the meaning is “attack”;
- c) “experience.”

The phrase *peiran tinos lambanein* is of special interest, because of its occurrence in the New Testament. It is used in the following senses:

- a) “make trial of”, “make proof of”, “attempt”;
- b) “gain experience of”, “experience.”

2. *Compounds of Peiraō¹ and Peira*

The following verb, nouns and adjectives are based on the use of these words in the sense of “experience,” and modify that meaning as one would expect: *apeiria*, *apeiros*, *empeiros*, *empeiria*, *empeireō*, *polupeira*, *polupeiros*, *polupeiria*. The compound verbs *ekpeiraomai*, *diapeiraomai*, *apopeiraomai*, merely intensify the force of *peiraō*, usually with the meaning “to make trial of.” The verb *ekpeiraomai* does occur in the meaning “to tempt.” On the other hand, it may mean “test” in the sense of “question.”

The compound adjective *apeiratos* is of special interest in view of the occurrence of *apeirastos . . . kakōn* in Jas. 1:3. It is found in the following senses:

- a) “Without making trial of,” “without making an attempt upon”;
- b) “Untried,” “unattempted”;
- c) “Without experience of,” “unknowing of.” The phrase *apeiratos kakōn*, meaning “without experience of evil(s),” occurs in a number of writings.

3. Peirazō

Because of its religious use in Jewish and Christian literature, the verb of most importance for our study is *peirazō*.² There is no evidence that its use in profane Greek is different from that of *peiraō*.³ According to J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan it is a "poetic and late prose form" of *peiraō*.⁴ We note the following meanings:

- a) "Attempt." Of special interest is the related use "make trial of."⁵
- b) "Test," "make trial of," with either the genitive or the accusative of the person. In this sense it could be used with a hostile connotation. Also it could be used in a connotation into which the idea of affliction has almost, if not altogether, infiltrated.⁶

4. Peirasmos

So far as I can discover, there are only three occurrences of the noun *peirasmos* outside Jewish and Christian circles:

- a) Dioscurus, *Mat. Med. Praef. 5*, "experiments (*peirasmous*) on diseases," i.e. "'trials' made of drugs to see their effect in certain diseases."⁷
- b) Cyranides, 40.24, "Perils and trials (*peirasmoi*) on both land and sea."
- c) Syntipas, 124.18, "Pressed upon by trials (*peirasmōn*) of the world."⁸

5. Apeirastos

Since this word occurs in Jas. 1:13, the following usages are important for us:

- a) "Without experience";
- b) "Untried."

6. Peirateuō, Peiratēs, Peiratērion

These derivatives are noted because they occur in Greek versions of the Old Testament. The verb means “to be a pirate,” and is used in the passive with the meaning “to be attacked by pirates.” The first noun means “brigand,” “pirate.” The second noun ordinarily means “pirate’s nest” or “gang of brigands,” but also occurs with the meanings “test,” and “trial (for murder).”

In conclusion it is to be observed that outside Jewish and Christian circles the meaning of the root may be rendered “attempt,” “experience,” or “test,” depending on the context. Concerning these meanings, the following observations need to be noted in view of the interests of this paper:

- a) When used of testing the vocabulary may bear either a neutral or a hostile sense.
- b) There is a special use of “attempt” in the sense of “attempt to seduce (a woman).”
- c) It is only rarely that the vocabulary is used in the sense of “tempt” or “entice.”⁹

B. Religious Use of the Vocabulary

Our vocabulary is rarely used in a religious sense outside of Jewish and Christian circles. The only passages we have found which merit our consideration are:

- a) Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1662-63, “Must I listen to their wanton threats of violence, flowers of insolence wherewith they trifle with their fate (*daimonos peirōmenous*)?” With this occurrence may be coupled the one in Aeschylus, *Choephorae* 511, “Tis time to put thy fortune to the proof (*daimonos peirōmenos*).”¹⁰ It is to be noted that *daimōn* is translated “fate” and “fortune” respectively. This accords with the point made by E. Fraenkel that by the time of Aeschylus this word had “lost a good deal of its personal character and is on the way to what we should call an abstract idea. . . In this meaning *daimōn* is very close to *potmos*

... and to *tuchē*.”¹¹ In my view the meaning does not go beyond that of the persons concerned testing whether they will survive certain perilous circumstances. At any rate the meaning is quite far removed from the biblical conception of putting God to the test, where, as we shall see in Chapter VIII, such a *peirasmōs* of the deity is characteristically due to a reprehensible lack of faith in Him.

- b) Herodotus 1.46-47, “Having thus determined, he straightway made trial (*apepeirato*) of the Greek and Libyan oracles. . . His intent in sending was to test (*peirōmenos*) the knowledge of the oracles, so that, if they should be found to know the truth, he might send again and ask (*epeirētai*) if he should take in hand an expedition against the Persians. And when he sent to make trial (*diapeiran*) of these shrines, he gave the Lydians this charge. . .”

In this passage there are two somewhat different uses of our vocabulary. In the first place it is used of the test of oracles to see whether they did indeed, as was reputed, have the kind of knowledge which was only the possession of the gods and of those to whom the gods made it known. Comparable occurrence of our vocabulary is found in Rev. 2:2 and Did. 11:7 (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1). In each case the vocabulary is used of the effort put forth to discover whether the claim or reputation of having a gift from God, or from a god, is justified. This is quite different from “putting God to the test.” Indeed, it is not a use of the vocabulary in the religious sense at all.

The second sense in which the vocabulary is used in this passage from Herodotus is of the procedure whereby one consulted an oracle in order to discover whether he should proceed with a contemplated venture or not. The usage is more or less similar to what we have in Jud. 6:36-39. Again, however, the conception is quite different from that of “putting God to the test” in biblical literature, which involved a lamentable lack

of trust in God.

- c) Herodotus 6.86.3, "The priestess answered that to tempt the god (*to peirēthēnai tou theou*) and to do the deed were of like effect." The sentence occurs in the story of a certain Glaucus who pretended not to have received a sum of money which had been placed with him in trust. Glaucus proceeded to ask the oracle at Delphi "whether he should swear (that he had not received the money) and so ravish the money." The priestess then warned him that a man who swears falsely will have his offspring cut off. Thereupon Glaucus asked pardon of the god for what he had said, and received the reply quoted above.

The use of our vocabulary in this context seems to have been prompted by the fact that it could be employed, as in Herodotus i.46-47, of any inquiry made of an oracle. In this case, however, the inquirer apparently should have known that the course of action he contemplated was displeasing to the god, and, therefore, that it was an affront to the god to inquire whether he should engage in it. Accordingly he seems to have had a reprehensible lack of faith in the god's character, and, perhaps, in his power to visit with retribution as well. If so, the passage contains an example of what is called in biblical literature "putting God to the test," or at least an example of something very like it.

It still remains to ask, however, whether our vocabulary in this context is to be translated "put the god to the test" in the biblical sense or only "inquire of the god." In my judgment it is impossible to say. In the light of Herodotus 1.46-47, however, and also in light of the fact that I have been unable to locate any other passage in which "put the god to the test" in the biblical sense is found, it is my opinion that the proper translation is "inquire of the god," with "in this case," or some similar phrase, left to be understood following it. But, even if this interpretation is correct, the passage does use our

vocabulary in such fashion as to show that it had the potential of being used outside Jewish and Christian circles of testing God in the biblical sense of that phrase.

- d) Seneca, *de Providentia* 4.11-12, "Why is it strange if God sends severe trials (*temptat*) upon noble spirits? A test of one's courage is never an easy matter. Is it destiny that scourges and lacerates us? Let us endure it; 'tis not wanton cruelty, it is a contest; the oftener we enter it, the stronger we shall become . . ." ¹² This example, though it does not contain our vocabulary, does contain the Latin equivalent thereof. Moreover, as we shall see, the usage is closely parallel to the disciplinary conception of *peirasmōs* which is prominent in the later sages, and is represented in primitive Christian literature.

The foregoing represent all the possible examples of the religious use of the vocabulary outside Jewish and Christian circles which we have been able to locate. The number of occurrences is exceedingly small, and, except for the use in one or two passages, bears little resemblance to the major religious uses of the terminology in Jewish and Christian literature.

Notes

- ¹ We include only those words which occur in Jewish and early Christian literature.
- ² The intensive form *ekpeirazō* does not occur outside Jewish and Christian writings. The only occurrence of *diapeirazō* listed in Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, New (Ninth) Edition, Revised and Augmented by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), is in 3 Macc. 5:40.

- ³ J. H. Korn, *PEIRASMOS, Die Versuchung des Gläubigen in der griechischen Bibel* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1937), 24-27, contends that there was a growing tendency in Jewish and early Christian literature to reserve *peirazō* for use concerning religious testing, and likewise to reserve *peiraō* for profane contexts.
- ⁴ *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: odder and Stoughton: 1952), 501b; cf. S. Lyonnet, "Le Sens de *Peirazein* en Sap. ii.24 et la Doctrine du Pêché Originel," *Biblica* 39.1 (1958), 28 n. 3.
- ⁵ Cf. Apollonius Rhodius 3:10, "Hera first made trial of Athena (*peiraze . . . Athēnaiēn*)." According to Lyonnet, "*Peirazein*," 29, this is the sole example of the use of *peirazō* in a way approaching the idea of "tempt."
- ⁶ Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *Sources of New Testament Greek*, 107.
- ⁷ *MM*, 501b.
- ⁸ This usage and the preceding one are of special interest in view of the tendency in early Christian literature to use *peirasmos* as a synonym for tribulation.
- ⁹ Unless, of course, the use in the sense of "attempt to seduce (a woman)" is in this category.
- ¹⁰ Translation according to Headlam and Thomson, *The Oresteia of Aeschylus*, *in loc*.
- ¹¹ *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) 3:1341. Cf. W. Headlam, tr., *Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, ed. A. C. Pearson (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), 261-62.
- ¹² Translation according to C. W. Super, *Between Heathenism and Christianity* (Chicago, New York, Toronto: Revell, 1899), 95.

CHAPTER III

THE VOCABULARY IN JEWISH AND EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

A. The Profane Use

In considering the profane use of the vocabulary, we shall treat the words in the same order as in the preceding chapter.

1. Peiraō

The following senses occur:

- a) "To attempt," "to try." This meaning is found in all four of the books of Maccabees. The only well-attested occurrence in the New Testament is in Acts 26:21, "The Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me." In the Apostolic Fathers it is found in *Mart. Polyc.* 13:2, and in *2 Clem.* 17:3.
- b) "To experience." In the Old Testament and Apocrypha this meaning occurs in 1 Sam. 17:39; in Sir. 31 (34):10, and in 4 Macc. 15:16 (v.l.). In the New Testament there is one poorly-attested occurrence: Heb. 4:15, "One who in every respect is experienced (*pepeiramenon*) as we are, yet without sin."¹
- c) "To make trial of," "to put to the proof," "to test." There

is no well-attested occurrence of the verb in this sense in biblical literature. Poorly-attested occurrences in the Old Testament are found in Prov. 26:18 and Eccl. 7:24 (23). A poorly-attested occurrence is also found in Rev. 2:2, "You . . . have tested (*epeirasō*) those who call themselves apostles but are not."

2. *Peira*

This noun occurs with the meaning "attempt" in 4 Macc. 8:2, and with the meaning "experience" in 2 Macc. 8:9, and (probably) in Wisd. 18:20 and 18:25 as well.²

Of most interest is the phrase *peiran lambanein*. In Deut. 28:56 it means "to attempt," "to make an attempt." In Heb. 11:29 ("When the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned") it also bears this meaning. However, in Heb. 11:36 ("Others suffered mocking and flogging") it means "gain [harsh] experience of."³

In 1 Esdras 5:19 (Codex B) *peira* occurs as the name of a place. In the light of the context it is used in a profane sense. This is in contrast to Deut. 33:8, its other biblical occurrence as a proper noun, where it refers to a religious test.⁴

3. *Compounds of Peiraō and Peira*

Biblical occurrences of compounds of *peiraō* and *peira*, with one exception, are all in the Greek versions of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. In every instance the meaning is based on the use of the root in the sense of "experience," as is the case with these words outside Jewish and Christian circles.

The single New Testament occurrence is in Heb. 5:13, "Everyone who lives on milk. . . is unskilled (*apeiros*) in the word of righteousness." Some have thought that *apeiros* in this verse implies ignorance, rather than lack of skill, as in the NRSV rendering.⁵ In light of the respective clause in the succeeding verse ("Those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil"), the NRSV seems to be supported.

4. Peirazō

This verb occurs with the meaning “to attempt” in the Old Testament in Deut. 4:34 and 28:56 (Aquila); and in the New Testament in Acts 9:26; 16:7; 24:6. It also occurs with this meaning in *Ign. Mag.* 7:1. The biblical use in the sense of “to experience” is found in *Wisd.* 2:24; 12:26; 19:5.⁶

As is the case outside Jewish and Christian circles, our verb is also used in profane contexts both of the testing of things and of people. In the Septuagint, the testing of things is found in *Eccl.* 7:24 (23); *Wisd.* 2:17; *Sir.* 39:4 (5). Though such usage does not occur in the New Testament, there is an occurrence in *Hermas, Sim.* 8:2:7.⁷

Turning to the testing of people, we note first that there are several scriptural passages which refer to the testing of oneself: *Eccl.* 2:1; *Sir.* 37:27 (30); 2 *Cor.* 13:5. In the last of these occurrences (“Examine [*peirazete*] yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test [*dokimazete*] yourselves.”) we judge that a non-religious use occurs. The movement is entirely subjective. God is neither the source nor the object of the testing, nor is one’s relationship to Him directly affected by the testing which is urged.

The use of *peirazō* of the testing of other people in a profane sense is found in 1 *Kgs.* 10:1 (2 *Chron.* 9:1); *Dan.* 1:12, 14; *Sir.* 13:11 (14); and possibly in *Ps.* 34 (35):15-16 LXX. Religious testing may be in view in the last example (“They impiously mocked [LXX: ‘tested’] more and more, gnashing at me with their teeth”).⁸ On the other hand, the immediate context seems to me to suggest that no more is intended than the profane idea of testing in the hostile sense, so that we may almost translate: “They attacked me.”

Our verb is used of the profane testing of others in early Christian literature in *Rev.* 2:2, “You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false”; and in *Did.* 11:7, “Do not test or examine any prophet who is speaking in a spirit.”

The use of *peirazō* (test) in *Mark* 8:11 (*Matt.* 16:1; *Luke* 11:16); 10:2 (*Matt.* 19:3); 12:15 (*Matt.* 22:18; *Luke* 20:23 v.1.);⁹

Luke 10:25¹⁰ (Matt. 22:35);¹¹ John 8:6, needs special consideration. All but the last are similar occurrences of the word and originate in Mark and Q. The John 8:6 reference, though not from the Synoptics, is in a passage found only in late copies of the Fourth Gospel, is in the language and style of the Synoptics, and is found after Luke 21:38 in one family of manuscripts. The usage is almost always one in which Pharisees, Sadducees, and/or other opponents of Jesus, ask him a question "testing him." In Mark 12:15 (Matt. 22:18; Luke 20:23 v.l.) the same idea is represented by Jesus' question, "Why put me to the test?"

There is difference of opinion concerning the use of our vocabulary in these passages. Some scholars consider that it is a non-religious use, some that it is a religious use. It is even possible that sometimes it is a religious use and sometimes a non-religious use. However, since the usage is so similar in all these passages, it would appear that the usage is all of one kind.

The arguments in favour of a religious use of the term in these passages are as follows:

- a) The Synoptic narratives were shaped by the life and experience of the church, a life and experience in which persecution, understood as a testing of faith,¹² was a prominent and disturbing feature. That Jesus suffered, and successfully met, testing--verbal as well as physical --was an important element in the encouragement of these Christians in view of the malicious questions and attacks which they suffered. The recurrence of our word at the beginning of these narratives is an indication that what follows is recorded because it provides inspiration, and perhaps even guidance, in the readers' own testing experiences.
- b) Related to the former point is the evidence that Jesus' life was considered, at least in some Christian circles, as a life pre-eminently characterized by religious testing, e.g., Heb. 2:18, "Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested"; 4:15, "One who is every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin"; and Luke 22:28, "You are those who have continued

with me (Jesus) in my trials (lit.: 'tests')." The last of these passages especially describes the life of Jesus as one so characterized. Moreover, apart from the Wilderness narrative, Luke's gospel contains no other narratives in which Jesus is specifically described as suffering trials (i.e., tests), unless it be those with which we are now especially concerned.¹³

- c) In John 8:44 Jesus is represented as saying of those who opposed Him, "You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires." Though this is not a Synoptic statement, the idea that persecutors were doing the devil's work may be taken as representative of the view in the early Christian church.¹⁴
- d) According to the first two gospels, Jesus' warning, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," follows closely on the request of the Pharisees for a sign from heaven,¹⁵ the request which constitutes the test in one of the passages presently under consideration. This warning is most easily understood as prompted by the religious testing of Jesus in being asked for a sign from heaven.¹⁶
- e) The demand for a sign from heaven itself is in essence identical with the Wilderness test in which Satan urged Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple.¹⁷
- f) Luke 22:28, as quoted above, states that Jesus' disciples were with Him in His tests. His disciples were not with Him in the Wilderness, so that the passages presently under consideration describe the only experiences of Jesus in the company of His disciples of which such vocabulary may be used. Mark 10:10 (Matt. 19:10) implies that the disciples were present when Jesus was "tested" by the Pharisees concerning divorce. We have already noted reason to believe that they were present when Jesus was asked for a sign from heaven. Their presence on the occasion of other disputes with the Pharisees and others may be presumed.¹⁸

The arguments in favour of taking these usages as non-

religious are as follows:

- a) They are formally in exact agreement with a profane usage found in non-biblical Greek of various periods, e.g., Homer, *Od.* 9:281, "So he spoke, testing (me), but he trapped me not. . ."; Epictetus 1:9:29, "Rufus was wont to say, to test me. . ."
- b) It is difficult to understand how the question, "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?" (Matt 22:36) would constitute religious testing for Jesus.
- c) In John 8:6 the addition of the purpose clause, "so that they might have some charge to bring against him," immediately follows "to test him," and is most naturally taken with it. Religious testing of Jesus seems not to have been the intent of His interrogators.
- d) If "test" is used in a profane sense in Mark 12:15 (Matt. 22:18), "Why are you putting me to the test?" it catches up what is stated in Mark 12:13 (Matt. 22:15), where the purpose in sending some Pharisees and some Herodians was "to trap him in what he said." There is no hint that their purpose in their question concerning tribute money was a religious testing of Jesus. Their purpose, according to Luke 20:19-20, was to obtain from Him a seditious statement which they could report to the governor. Moreover, since Jesus was aware of "their hypocrisy," it is doubtful that the question could have constituted a religious test of Him. It appears that the story is not represented as a testing narrative, but as a narrative setting forth an attempt at entrapment.
- e) There is nothing in the immediate context of any of the narratives we are considering to support the view that "test" is used because the test Jesus is undergoing is a religious one.
- f) All the uses of "test" we are considering originate in Mark and Q. On the other hand, Luke 22:28 ("You are those who have stood by me in my trials") is neither from Mark, nor from Q, so far as we know. How then can it be connected with the passages we are considering? It is

possible that it is in whole, or in part, an editorial addition by Luke.¹⁹ Scholars have held a variety of views concerning the matter, but the conviction is quite widespread that the respective occurrence of our vocabulary is unrelated to the use of our vocabulary in the Synoptic passages presently being considered. In my opinion such a judgment is justified, as is the judgment that in these passages testing is not used in a religious sense.²⁰

There remains the question whether "test" is used in these Synoptic passages in a neutral or in a hostile sense. There seems to be no question but that it is used in a hostile sense in Mark 8:11 (Matt. 16:1; Luke 11:16); Mark 12:15 (Matt. 22:18), John 8:6. Whether it is in a hostile sense when used in reference to the question about divorce (Mark 10:2; Matt. 19:3) is debatable, in view of the rabbinic debate about the issue current at the time. The Luke 10:25 occurrence in connection with the statement about the greatest commandment in the Torah seems to be in a neutral sense, since, when Jesus turned the question back to him, the lawyer answered in a way which earned Jesus' commendation.²¹

Also requiring special consideration is John 6:5-6, "Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do." It has been held that we have religious testing here, the testing of Philip's faith.²² In favour of this view is the fact that already in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is recognized as the Son of God, evidently in Philip's presence, and Philip himself had spoken of Him as the one "about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote" (John 1:43-46). Moreover, it had been prophesied that the Messiah would feed his people (Ezek. 34:23). According to this gospel, furthermore, Philip had probably witnessed a number of Jesus' miracles, notably the provision of wine when needed (John 2:1-11), and Jesus had declared that his works were a witness to Him (John 5:36). Finally, it is possible that we have here a reminiscence of God's testing of Israel in the Wilderness in connection with a desperate need for food (Exod. 16:4; Deut. 8:2-3,16).

In my opinion, however, the use of our vocabulary in this

passage is non-religious,²³ that it indicates nothing more than a very human question asked with a view to discovering how Philip would solve the question at hand, and indeed, that it is included by the writer of the gospel in the course of an attempt to avoid a possible misunderstanding.²⁴ And, if religious testing were intended, would not Philip's lack of faith have elicited Dominical comment? According to the Johannine gospel, Jesus was accustomed to comment on the presence or absence of faith (cf. 1:50; 3:10; 4:48; 6:36, 64; 8:46; 9:36-39; 10:26, 37-38; 11:40; 14:8-11).

5. Peirasmos

The profane use of this noun is rare in biblical literature. The only well-attested occurrences (meaning "test" or "testing") are in Sir. 6:7; 27:5-7. In Eccl. 3:10; 4:8; 5:2, 13; 8:16, there are secondary readings with this noun in a profane sense.²⁵

6. Compounds of Peirazō

Of the compound verbs formed from *peirazō*, *diapeirazō* occurs in a profane sense in 3 Macc. 5:40 meaning "test." This is its only occurrence in any sense in biblical literature. We have also argued for a profane sense of *ekpeirazō* (meaning "test.") in Luke 10:25.

7. Peirateuō, Peiratēs, Peiratērion

These words occur in a profane sense, meaning "to raid," or "raiders," "brigands," "robbers" in Gen. 49:19; Hos. 6:10 (9); and in a few secondary texts. In Ps. 17 (18):30 *peiratērion* is used in what is probably a profane meaning.

Examination of the foregoing occurrences of our vocabulary, and of these occurrences in the light of the total number of its occurrences in the Septuagint and in early Christian literature, leads to the following observations:

- a) All the words of our vocabulary were sometimes used in a profane sense, with the possible exception of *ekpeirazō* (in Luke 10:25), and the probable exception of

apopeiraomai (in Prov.16:29, its only biblical occurrence). Furthermore, *peirasmos* rarely occurs in a profane sense.

- b) *Peiraō*, *peira*, and compounds formed from them, are seldom used in other than a profane sense. Occurrences in a religious sense are found in Ps. 77 (78):41; Prov. 16:29 (?); Heb. 4:15 (?). (Passages in which one of these words occurs as a variant reading are disregarded.) And in Deut. 33:8 *Peira* occurs as the name of a place famous for a religious test, which was experienced there. (The name of this place is given as *Peirasmos* in Exod. 17:7 LXX; Deut. 6:16 LXX; 9:22 LXX.)
- c) The verb *peirateuō* and the nouns *peiratēs* and *peiratērion* occur in profane senses. It is possible (see below) that the nouns are used in a religious sense in Job, and perhaps even in Ps. 17 (18):30.
- f) The profane use of our vocabulary exhibits no particular peculiarities.

B. The Religious Use of the Vocabulary

In considering this topic we leave to the last the consideration of its use in the sense of "putting God to the test."

1. The Earliest Use: The Neutral Meaning

In the earliest period the vocabulary is always used in the sense of testing to "know" the true state of the religion of the person or persons tested. There is little indication that the test serves any other purpose, and no indication that it is prompted by hostility. In Gen. 22:12 God is represented as saying, after Abraham has withstood his test, "Now I know ²⁶ that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." In vv. 15-18 Abraham is promised a multitude of descendants who "shall possess the gate of their enemies," and by whom "all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves," because he did not withhold his son, but this promise appears to be of the nature of a reward, rather than being indicative of the nature of the test itself. ²⁷

In Exod. 16:4 the testing of Israel is in order to know "whether

they will follow my (God's) instruction or not"; in Deut. 8:2, "to know what was in your (Israel's) heart, whether or not you would keep his (God's) commandments"; in Deut. 13:3 (4), "to know whether you (Israelites) indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul"; in Jud. 2:22, to know "whether or not they (Israel) would take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their ancestors did"; and in Jud. 3:4, "to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their ancestors by Moses." In Ps. 25 (26):2 God is invited by the Psalmist to "test my heart and my mind." He is certain that if God does so He will know that "your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to you."

Other passages do not specifically indicate what testing implies, but in no case is our vocabulary used in a way which is inconsistent with the meaning evident in these passages. In the context of the Deut. 8:2 passage which we have quoted (cf. 8:16), there is reference to an idea which becomes prominent in the use of our terminology in *Wisd.* and *Sir.*, as we shall see, but it is clear from our quotation from this verse that our vocabulary is still used primarily in the oldest sense.²⁸

Though other ideas gain prominence in the use of our vocabulary, the idea that *peirasmōs* is testing which makes one's religious disposition manifest remains basic to its meaning. In 2 Chron. 32:31 God's testing of Hezekiah was in order to "know all that was in his heart." In *Sir.* 4:17-18, it is said of Wisdom in relation to each of "her sons": "At first she will walk with them on tortuous paths; she will bring fear and dread upon them, and will torment them by her discipline until she trusts them, and she will test them with her ordinances. Then she will come straight back to them again and gladden them. . ." Though other ideas have infiltrated, "until she trusts them" indicates that the basic connotation of our vocabulary is very important. Though the Hebrew of this verse varies considerably, the idea of *peirasmōs* as the testing of one's loyalty and devotion, is, if anything, even more prominent. The clause concerning torment and discipline is omitted, and the verse concludes, "I will prove him (according to Levi's correction) with trials, and when his heart is found with me, I will return and will make him happy."

In my opinion there is a religious use of our vocabulary in Job 10:17 LXX, "Renewing the examination against me, Thou hast exercised against me great wrath; and hast brought against me *peiratēria*."²⁹ That our vocabulary is used in a religious sense, and with the primary connotation, is indicated by the occurrence of "examination (*etasin*)," which not only suggests the primitive meaning of *peirasmōs*, but which also belongs to a word group found elsewhere in testing contexts.³⁰ Considerations supporting the view that *peiratērion* is used in a religious sense in this verse include:

- a) The theme of the entire book of Job is that of religious testing (1:9-11; 2:4-6; cf. 7:18; 23:10; 34:36). It would not be surprising, therefore, if a translator were to select words on occasion which not only conveyed the meaning in the Hebrew text before him, but which also suggested the idea of religious testing, provided that such terms were available and appropriate. *Peiratērion* and *peiratēs* seem to have provided just such vocabulary.³¹
- b) A fourth century A.D. manuscript contains the following sentence: "Through the prayers of thy saints, we shall be saved from every *peiratēriou* of the devil."³² This is an unmistakable use of *peiratērion* meaning "temptation."
- c) "Test" or "trial" as the foremost meaning of *peiratērion* seems more probable than "attacking band" in Job 7:1, "Is not the life of man on the earth a *peiratērion*?"³³ But if so, it is significant that the context indicates that God is the source of the "test" or "trial," so that religious testing is apparently in view.
- d) The other occurrences of *peiratērion* in Job (in 16:10 [9] A and in 19:12), and also the occurrences of *peiratēs* therein (in 16:10 [9] B and in 25:3), are in contexts in which the conception of religious testing is fitting, if not implicit.³⁴

The primary connotation is clearly evident in T. Jos. 2:7, "In ten testings he showed that I was approved"; and in Judith 8:25-27, "The Lord our God. . . is putting us to the test as he did our ancestors. Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac. . .

For he has not tried us with fire (*epurōsen*), as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him, in order to admonish them." Though other ideas are in evidence in the latter passage, "search their hearts" therein emphasizes the primary meaning of our vocabulary.

In Wisd. 3:5 ("Having been disciplined a little, they (the righteous) will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself") we again observe the primary meaning of our vocabulary, albeit with another emphasis also prominent.³⁵

In early Christian literature the basic meaning of the vocabulary is seldom emphasized. 1 Pet. 1:6-7 may, however, provide an example: "In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials (*peirasmois*), so that the genuineness of your faith. . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed." The last clause intimates that the basic idea that testing makes patent the quality of a person's religious disposition is present, though, as we shall see, other ideas have infiltrated the meaning. Another passage to be noted is Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation (*peirasmon*). Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him." As Jas. 1:2-4 makes clear, other ideas have become prominent in our vocabulary. Nevertheless, the idea that testing is with a view to disclosing whether love to God is characteristic of the individual, or not, seems to be implied.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that, though the basic meaning of the vocabulary is frequently in view in its later occurrences, it is rare for the test to be in order that God Himself may "know" one's religious disposition. The only passages we have noted in which this idea seems to recur are: 2 Chron. 32:31; Wisd. 3:5; Jos. *Ant.* 3:1:4; Exod. R. 31:3; Pirke R. Eliezer 38A.

2. The Connotation in which the Idea of Discipline is Prominent

Amongst the later Sages, i.e. the authors of Sirach and Wisdom, the idea of discipline becomes prominent in the use of our vocabulary, though, as we have seen, the basic meaning still receives emphasis. Contact with the emphasis on education in Greek thought, which particularly influenced the author(s) of Wisdom, probably contributed to this development.³⁶ As we shall see, no doubt the development was made easy by the fact that difficult circumstances had come to be considered the chief means of testing.

Deut. 8:2-5 was a preparation for the connotation in which a disciplinary purpose is involved in the use of our vocabulary. Though it is explicitly stated that through their experiences in the Wilderness God was "testing you (Israel) to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments," there is immediately added the words: "He humbled³⁷ you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna. . . in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. . . As a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you." Here discipline and testing are brought into close conjunction. If it is not implied that the idea of disciplinary purpose has invaded our vocabulary, the passage certainly tends in that direction. In this connection Deut. 8:16 needs to be noted: "(The Lord your God) fed you in the wilderness with manna . . . to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good."

It is possible that an earlier passage may have a like import. It is reported in Exod. 20:20 (MT) that Moses said to the people who were "afraid and trembled" before Mt. Sinai, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you,³⁸ and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin." Though it is not explicitly stated that the testing is with a view to the fear of God and freedom from sin, the two ideas are in a parallel construction. The Septuagint renders the verse: "To prove (lit.: "test.") you God has come to you in order that the dread of Him may be in you that you may not sin." The omission of "and" before "in order that the dread of him. . ."

makes it hard to interpret this reading to mean other than that the proving (testing) is with a view to the fear of God and freedom from sin. Of the same experience Deut. 4:36 says, "From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you."

In the later sages passages in which testing has a disciplinary aspect include:

- a) Sir. 2:1-5 LXX, "My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing. . . Accept whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation be patient. For gold is tested in the fire, and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation." The humbling effect of testing is brought forward in vv. 4, 5.
- b) Sir. 4:17 LXX states that Wisdom "will torment them (her children) by her discipline until she trusts them, and she will test them with her ordinances." Here discipline is clearly a prominent idea in testing, though the older meaning may also be present. The line "will torment them by her discipline" is absent from the extant Hebrew version, so that at this point discipline is not represented as prominent in testing.³⁹
- c) Wisd. 3:5, "Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself."
- d) Wisd. 11:9, "For when they were tried ('tested'), though they were being disciplined in mercy, they learned how the ungodly were tormented when judged in wrath."

Other passages in Jewish literature of the last years B.C., in which discipline is set forth as an important element in "testing" include:

- a) Dan. 12:9-10 LXX, "The words are shut and sealed until many shall be tested and purified, and make themselves white." There is nothing corresponding to "tested" in the Massoretic text. The use of "purified" in parallel with "tested" indicates that testing has the purpose of moral perfection.
- b) Judith 8:25-27, "The Lord our God. . . is putting us to the

test as he did our ancestors. . . He has not tried (*epurōsen*) us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him, in order to admonish them.”⁴⁰

In early Christian literature the connotation clearly occurs in a number of passages:

- a) Inasmuch as one of the major themes of the Epistle to the Hebrews as a whole is testing, and inasmuch as Heb.12 brings discipline into the picture, our vocabulary as used in 2:18 and 4:15 may be understood to include prominently within its meaning the idea of discipline. Heb. 12:5-11 leads to this judgment:

You have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children--“My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises⁴¹ every child whom he accepts.”⁴² Endure trials (*hupomenete*) for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, . . . They disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he. . . for our good, in order that we may share his holiness.⁴³ Now discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained⁴⁴ by it.

The author views testing as disciplinary, and is doing his utmost to persuade his readers to associate the idea of discipline with the experience thereof.

- b) Jas. 1:2-4, “Whenever you face trials (*peirasmois*) of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing (*dokimion*) of your faith produces endurance;

and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- c) 1 Pet. 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal (*purōsei*) that is taking place among you to test you.” *Purōsis*, which is used of the refinement of metals, indicates that moral improvement is in view.⁴⁵
- d) Hermas, *Sim.* 7:1-2, “The glorious angel. . . wishes you to be tried (*peirasthēnai*). . . Your family has done great iniquity and sin. . . and for this reason he commanded you to be afflicted for some time, that they also may repent and purify themselves from every lust of this world.” That testing is disciplinary is evident, but this passage is peculiar in that the discipline is not of the one who undergoes testing but of his family.
- e) 2 Clem. 20:2, “We are contending in the contest (*peiran*) of the living God, and we are being trained by the life which now is, that we may gain the crown in that which is to come.”

3. *The Connotation in which the Idea of Tribulation is Prominent*

Largely coincident with the use of our vocabulary with a connotation in which discipline is prominent, is its use with a connotation in which tribulation is also prominent. It is possible, however, that testing could be used with disciplinary implications in describing experiences which could hardly be described as tribulations. Exod. 20:20, which we considered in the preceding section, may support such a contention, though it is hardly probable that the idea of discipline has actually penetrated our vocabulary as used in that verse.⁴⁶

Just as Deut. 8 prepares--perhaps along with Exod 20:20--for the view which became common much later, that testing has a disciplinary purpose, so it also provides an early example of our vocabulary used in a sense in which it seems to be almost a synonym for affliction.⁴⁷ In vv. 15-16 the “great and terrible wilderness” through which God led Israel is described as “an arid wasteland

with poisonous snakes and scorpions” where God provided water from the rock and manna “to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good.” The use of our vocabulary in parallel with “humble” is noticeable, to say nothing of the particular experiences to which reference is made.⁴⁸

It is not surprising to find that the later sages, who emphasize the disciplinary purpose of testing, use our vocabulary in a way which implies tribulation. In Sir. 2:1 we discover that “calamity” and “humiliation” are used in parallel with “testing.”⁴⁹ In Wisd. 11:8-10 the testing of Israel in the Wilderness is described as being by way of thirst, and it is stated that through this experience they “learned how the ungodly were tormented when judged in wrath. For you tested (*edokimasas*) them as a parent does in warning.” The last clause, with its synonym for our vocabulary, especially suggests the idea that tribulation is an essential element of testing.

In Judith 8:24-27 scourging and testing are used in such way as to suggest that the latter involves the former: “The Lord our God. . . is putting us to the test. . . The Lord scourges those who are close to him. . .” In 4 Macc. 9:7-8, “Tyrant, put us to the test; and if you take our lives. . . We, through this severe suffering and endurance, shall have the prize of virtue. . .,” the parallel use of “test” and “suffering” suggests that in this context “suffering” is prominent in the meaning of “testing”.⁵⁰ Though not a prominent feature of the view of testing in the later Jewish literature, testing and affliction are closely identified in a number of passages, e.g., Gen. R. 55:2; Exod. R. 21:3.

In the New Testament suffering and testing are often closely identified. An important example is in Heb. 2:18, “Because he (Jesus) himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”

More instructive still in this connection is the use of our vocabulary in the Lukan interpretation of the Parable of the Sower. According to Luke 8:13, “The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root, they believe only for a little while and in a time of testing fall away.” Moreover, according to Luke 8:15, “That in the good soil . . . are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an

honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance." The fact that "patient endurance," as we shall see in Chapter VI, is frequently used in testing contexts, becomes significant when we note that Mark 4:17, 20 (Matt 13:21, 23) read: "trouble or persecution" instead of Luke's "time of testing"; and of bearing fruit "thirty and sixty and a hundredfold" instead of Luke's "with patient endurance". L. Cerfaux contends that Luke lacks the eschatological interest which is common to Matthew and Mark, and so replaced "trouble," to which an eschatological connotation had become attached. He conjectures, moreover, that Luke omitted the reference to persecution, a reference inappropriate when he wrote since the primitive persecutions were a thing of the past and the Roman persecutions had not yet begun.⁵¹ Schuyler Brown has a different explanation. He argues that for Luke "trouble (*thlipsis*)" is used "only of faithful Christians"; "testing (*peirasmos*)" may be used of apostates.⁵² For this reason "trouble" was inappropriate in the verse we are considering. But Cerfaux fails to take into account that "testing" is also used of the eschatological tribulation; and Brown "plays down the significance of 4:1-13 and misunderstands 22:28."⁵³ As I. H. Marshall states, it is "probable that Luke has substituted a term which brings out the significance of persecution as a means of tempting erstwhile believers away from their incipient faith."⁵⁴

Further evidence is found in the close parallels to be observed between Jas. 1:2-3, "My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials (*peirasmois*) of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing (*dokimion*) of your faith produces endurance"; 1 Pet. 1:6-7, "In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials (tests), so that the genuineness (*dokimion*) of your faith. . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed"; and Rom. 5:3-4, "We. . . boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character (*dokimēn*). . ." It is clear that these three passages bear some kind of relationship to one another. E. G. Selwyn has argued that they contain remnants of a "persecution form" which also left its impress on such other passages as 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Pet. 4:12; Jas. 1:12; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Cor. 8:2; in the first three of which "testing" is used,

and in the last three of which "tribulation (trouble)" is used. Moreover, he is of the opinion that this "persecution form" is related in origin to Matt. 6:13, "Do not bring us to the time of trial (testing)," and Luke 22:28, "You are those who have stood by me in my trials (testings)." ⁵⁵ Whether Selwyn's view is sound at every point or not, the evidence he has amassed proves that "testing" and "tribulation" could be used more or less interchangeably. An additional item of evidence (though from the second century A.D.) is in Hermas, *Vis.* 2:2:7, "Blessed are you who endure (the) tribulation." Now according to Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation." The dependence of Hermas on James, or of both on a common source, is hardly disputable, as is also the synonymous use of "testing" and "tribulation." ⁵⁶

That the persecutions Christians suffered at the hands of those opposed to them were called "tribulations" is clear from 1 Thess. 3:3-4, where the sufferings of the Thessalonian Christians at the hands of their own countrymen are called "tribulations." It is significant that immediately afterward, in v. 5, the fear is expressed lest Satan had effectually tempted (tested) them, obviously by means of these persecutions: "I was afraid that somehow the tempter (the tester) had tempted (tested) you and that our labour had been in vain." Though all that can be said is that tribulation is represented as a means of testing, nevertheless it may be that here we have a stage of development just preceding the use of "testing" as a synonym for "persecution." The idea is intriguing in view of Selwyn's suggestion that Sylvanus had much to do not only with the framing of the language of 1 Thessalonians (cf. 1 Thess 1:1), but also with the development of the "persecution form," or least of a version of it reflected in a number of New Testament documents. ⁵⁷ Of course *peirasmos* may have been used already as a synonym for tribulation/persecution. However, it is in the various remnants of the "persecution form" that "testing" is first clearly used as a synonym for tribulation/persecution. ⁵⁸

In addition to the evidence from the "persecution form," there is more direct evidence that *peirasmos* came to be used in the sense of tribulation/persecution, albeit without losing its meaning as "testing." The abuse, the "fiery ordeal," the reproaches, the sufferings of Christians, are called *peirasmoi* in 1 Pet 1:6, and are

“to test you (*pros peirasmon*)” (4:12). In Acts 20:19 Paul is represented as telling the Ephesian elders how he had served “the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials (*peirasmōn*) which befell me through the plots of the Jews.” This is a clear instance of the description of persecutions as *peirasmoi* because of their effect as tests.⁵⁹

4. *The Eschatological Testing*

From the connotation of *peirasmos* in which the idea of tribulation, and then of persecution, became prominent, derived its use to describe the eschatological tribulation as a test.

The earliest use in connection with the troubles of the end time is in Dan. 12:9 LXX, “The words are shut up and sealed until many are tried (*peirasthōsi*) and purified. . .”⁶⁰ However, our vocabulary is not used in this passage to designate these troubles, but only to describe them.

In the New Testament there are, first of all, certain passages in which it is possible that the eschatological tribulation is being described as a *peirasmos*.

- a) In the midst of a passage which is explicitly concerned with *peirasmos*, Paul writes in 1 Cor. 10:11 of himself, and of other Christians of the day, as those “on whom the ends of the ages has come.”⁶¹ In v. 13 he tells his readers: “No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength.”
- b) The “various trials (*peirasmois*)” being suffered by those to whom 1 Pet. 1:6 is addressed are said to be “for a little while,” a statement preceded by reference to “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” to which salvation the trials are the prelude.⁶²
- c) Likewise in 1 Pet. 4:12, the “fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you” is in the context of the statement, “The time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”⁶³

In these passages it may be that *peirasmos* is being used as another name for “the eschatological tribulation.” In my judgment, however, this is doubtful.

The situation is apparently quite otherwise in Rev. 3:10, which speaks of “the hour of trial (*tou peirasmou*) that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.” The eschatological tribulation described in the later chapters of the book is clearly designated “the trial that is coming on the whole world.”⁶⁴

According to some scholars, there are at least two sayings of Jesus in which the word *peirasmos* occurs with an eschatological reference:

- a) The sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “Do not bring us to the time of trial (mg.: ‘us into temptation’)” (Luke 11:4; Matt. 6:13);⁶⁵ and
- b) The Gethsemane exhortation, “Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial” (Mark 14:38 [Matt. 26:41]).⁶⁶

That Jesus had the tribulation of the end time in view in both instances is suggested by the very considerable evidence that He thought that the kingdom of God was imminent, if not already inaugurated, when he carried on His ministry,⁶⁷ and that victory over Satan was involved in the establishment of that kingdom. The imminence, if not the presence, of the kingdom He proclaimed when He announced at the beginning of His ministry, “The kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:15; cf. Matt. 4:17);⁶⁸ and when He later declared, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power” (Mark 9:1; cf. Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27). That He believed that He was engaged in a decisive contest with the devil is evident from the fact that He considered that His casting out of demons was a binding of Satan.⁶⁹ Especially noteworthy is the saying in Luke 11:20 (Matt 12:28) in which He declares that His exorcisms are evidence of the presence of the kingdom: “If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” In this saying the two ideas of victory over demonic power and the advent of the Kingdom are connected.

That the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer are concerned with the coming of the kingdom ⁷⁰ is adduced as additional evidence that the sixth petition is concerned with the end time.⁷¹ Additional evidence to support the argument that the Gethsemane exhortation has the testing of that time in view is as follows:

a) "Watch (keep awake)" is characteristic of Parousia contexts.⁷²

b) The quotation of Zech. 13:7 is attributed to Jesus in Mark 14:27 (Matt. 26:31), "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" As we shall see under c), it may be argued that the prophet has the eschatological trial in view.

c) In Luke 22:31 Jesus is credited with saying concerning this *peirasmōs*: "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat." C. H. Dodd ⁷³ notes that "sift (*siniazō*)" is "not found elsewhere in this connection," and that "the meaning would seem to be that Satan is permitted to put the disciples through a test which will separate the faithful from the unfaithful." He observes:

(1) According to Matt 3:12 and Luke 3:17 John the Baptist promised that the Coming One would wield a winnowing fork; and

(2) Amos 9:9 (MT) refers to a future sifting of Israel, and is followed in vv.11-12 with the promise concerning the raising up of the tabernacle of David, which is quoted in Acts 15:16-18 as prophetic of the church. He concludes that the *peirasmōs* suffered by the disciples is being interpreted as the eschatological "sifting or purging of Israel." In support of this conclusion he refers to Zech. 13:8-9, in which it is promised that the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the sheep will be followed by a purging of the people, though the metaphor is not that of sifting or winnowing, but of "the firing of metallic ore." When the purge is complete God is represented as saying, "They are my people."

- d) The eschatological struggle with the powers of evil may be implied in Jesus' statement to those who came to arrest him: "This is your hour and the power of darkness!" (Luke 22:53b).

Though the position is a strong one, there are reasons to doubt that Jesus had the eschatological tribulation in view in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer:

- a) This petition is separated from the petitions relating to the coming of the kingdom by petitions concerning daily bread and forgiveness. It has been held that the petition concerning bread is a petition for the "bread of salvation" which is to be received at the consummation,⁷⁴ but Jesus' concern for man's ordinary need for food seems sufficient to account for the inclusion of a petition related thereto in the Lord's Prayer.⁷⁵ It has been held that the petition for forgiveness also has the consummation in view,⁷⁶ but prayers for forgiveness are common in all Jewish religion. Indeed, there is a striking parallel to this very petition in a verse which lacks any eschatological orientation whatever, namely, Sir. 28:2, "Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray."

- b) Though they are probably not as ancient as the Lord's Prayer, ancient Jewish prayers concerning *peirasmōs* are extant which do not have an eschatological orientation. The most notable of these is in bBer. 60b, "Bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation. . . And deliver me from evil hap and sore diseases."⁷⁷

- c) The fact that some of the earliest synagogue prayers contain petitions for the coming of the kingdom⁷⁸ raises the question whether an apocalyptic type of eschatology is necessarily implicit in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer. The main stream of Judaism seems never to have held the apocalyptic view of an eschatological struggle preceding the inauguration of the kingdom.⁷⁹ Though we have noted evidence which suggests that Jesus had such a view of the end of the age,⁸⁰ if he had intended to specify

a particular view of the kingdom's advent when He gave the prayer, would he not have made such an intention clear?

In my opinion the end time was not particularly in view in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer as it came from the lips of Jesus.

With respect to the Gethsemane exhortation, there is reason to doubt that the eschatological test is in view:

- a) There seems to be no Dominical saying in the Passion narrative which clearly suggests either a struggle with demonic powers or the onset of the eschatological test. At most there is an intimation of such in the quotation of Zech. 13:7 in Mark 14:27 (Matt. 26:31), and in the saying of Luke 22:53b. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."
- b) "Watch (Stay awake)" occurs in some New Testament testing contexts which do not have an eschatological orientation.⁸¹
- c) There is some doubt concerning the dependence of the "sifting" saying of Luke 22:31 on Amos 9:9. The prophet does not compare Israel with grain. And, if there is no dependence on Amos 9:9, the only possible eschatological reference is in the idea of the separation of the wheat and the chaff.⁸² The reference to Satan is reminiscent of Job 1-2, a passage which, as we shall see in the next chapter, had considerable influence on Jewish writers of the centuries preceding and following the birth of Christ, but the prologue of Job certainly does not have eschatological conceptions in view.

These objections cast doubt on the view that Jesus warned his disciples concerning the eschatological test in Gethsemane. It is to be noted, however, that there are sayings of Jesus in the Passion narrative which suggest the imminence of the coming of the kingdom, and of the revelation of the Son of man.⁸³ Reference to the eschatological test would not be out of place. We therefore think it not impossible that we do have such in the Gethsemane saying we are considering.

We turn now to a consideration of the way in which the

respective Synoptists who incorporated our two sayings into their gospels understood our vocabulary therein.

- a) With respect to Matthew's understanding: Though the Sermon on the Mount has a strong emphasis on eschatology, the section 5:17-6:18, in which the Prayer occurs, is concerned primarily with Christ's disciples vis-a-vis Judaism. Moreover, Jesus is represented as concluding his warning about anxiety concerning food, drink and clothing with the saying, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." Finally, as we shall see when we consider Matthew's understanding of the Gethsemane trial saying, there is reason to believe that Matthew did not consider that the tribulation of the last days was imminent during the lifetime of Jesus. It appears that for Matthew the trial mentioned in the Lord's Prayer is not specifically eschatological.
- b) It is unlikely that Luke understood a reference to the eschatological tribulation in the Lord's Prayer. His version of the prayer is represented as Jesus' response to a request on the part of the disciples that he teach them to pray as John the Baptist had taught his disciples. It is stated that the request was prompted by their observation of Jesus in the act of praying. And the immediate context does not reflect concern with the end time. Moreover, it is to be noted that the petition concerning bread in Luke's version of the Prayer reads: "Give us each day our daily bread." "Each day," which does not occur in Matthew's version of the petition, implies that the petition is not for the eschatological bread of salvation. This being the case with the petition concerning bread makes it probable that the petition concerning trial is not a petition concerning the eschatological tribulation. Finally, there is reason to believe, as we shall see, that Luke was convinced that the end time was not yet.
- c) The understanding Mark had of Jesus' meaning when he spoke of the trial in Gethsemane, is not easy to determine.

There are those who hold that Mark was dominated by an apocalyptic view of Jesus' public life and ministry, e.g., J. M. Robinson declares that Mark represents Jesus as engaged in a cosmic struggle with Satan as the necessary prelude to the inauguration of the kingdom of God. The struggle begins with the temptation in the Wilderness and reached its climax in the crucifixion and resurrection.⁸⁴ He seems to imply that it was because the disciples would be involved in the climax of this struggle with Satan that Jesus urged them to watch and pray on the night of his arrest. In my view Robinson's thesis is overdrawn. Though it is implied in Mark that the evil men do is inspired by the devil,⁸⁵ there is no clear suggestion that demonic power was responsible for Christ's death or for any of the events connected therewith.⁸⁶ The only points in the narrative which may be understood to have such implications are:

- (1) Mark 14:35, "(He) prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him." In view of the saying in 14:41, "The hour has come; the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners," it could be understood that "the hour" in this verse refers to the eschatological hour of trial.⁸⁷
- (2) Mark 15:33, "When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon." "Darkness" could be taken to symbolize the power of evil attempting its worst,⁸⁸ a suggestion which, perhaps, is supported by the Cry of Dereliction in the following verse.

In neither of these verses, however, is it necessarily implied that a struggle with the power(s) of evil was involved in the passion of Jesus. Moreover, there is only one saying of Jesus in which the trial of the last days seems to be in view.⁸⁹ His quotation of Zech. 13:7, recorded in 14:27, seems to have such a reference in the light of its Old Testament context.

It may be noted in this connection that there are those who have quite a different view of Mark's theology from that of Robinson. F. C. Grant, for example, holds

that his "theology is not primarily apocalyptic-eschatological --except for ch.13, where he is following one of his sources--but is rather the theology of the Greek-speaking Gentile church, for which apocalyptic thought was already becoming something alien and remote."⁹⁰

d) Our conclusion concerning Matthew's understanding of the use of our vocabulary in Gethsemane is similar to our conclusion concerning Mark's understanding of it. His version of the passion narrative gives no more indication that the tribulation of the last days is at hand than does Mark's. Moreover, the apocalyptic discourse in Matt. 24 provides reason to believe that the author of the first gospel may not have thought of the events of the passion of Jesus as constituting or initiating the eschatological tribulation.

(1) He lacks the exhortation concerning "the beginning of the (eschatological) birthpangs": "As for yourselves, beware" (Mark 13:8), which seems to imply that the sufferings mentioned will be the lot of the four inner disciples named in v.3, and possibly also of their immediate associates.

(2) Instead of persecution at the hand of Jewish authorities, as in 13:9, Matt. has Jesus prophesying of the enmity of Gentiles (24:9). The use of "you" in "They will hand you over to be tortured, and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations. . ." (24:9) seems not to be directed at His immediate disciples particularly.⁹¹ Matthew seems not to have thought of the Gethsemane warning concerning trial as relating to the eschatological tribulation.

e) The prominence of Satan in Luke 22 (vv. 3, 31; cf. v. 53) might leave the impression that the struggle of the last days is before us. That this is not the case, however, is evident from the Lukan inclusion in the apocalyptic discourse of words which apparently dissociate the sufferings Jesus' disciples are to undergo from those of

the end time. According to Luke 21:12, "Before all this occurs (i.e., before the beginning of the sufferings) they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons."⁹² Moreover, there is less emphasis on the imminence of the end time in Luke. Of particular significance in this connection is the contrast between Mark 14:62 ("You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and 'coming with the clouds of heaven'"); and Luke 22:69 ("From now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God"). It seems certain that Luke did not think that Jesus' use of our vocabulary in Gethsemane referred to the tribulation of the end time.⁹³

Our conclusions concerning the question whether "the time of trial" has an eschatological connotation in the Lord's Prayer and in the Gethsemane exhortation may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Jesus probably had no such connotation in view when he gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer.
- (2) Matthew and Luke did not understand that such a connotation was in view in the Lord's Prayer.
- (3) It is possible that Jesus had such a connotation in view in the Gethsemane saying.
- (4) Mark probably did not understand that such a connotation was in view in the Gethsemane saying.
- (5) Matthew and Luke almost certainly did not understand that such a connotation was in view in the Gethsemane saying.

5. *The Connotation in which Enticement to Evil is Prominent*

Prominent in the connotation of our vocabulary in many of its New Testament occurrences is the idea of enticement to evil. There is considerable evidence, however, that *peirasmos* does not lose its earlier meaning of testing, but that enticement to evil often becomes the means whereby the values of testing are realized.⁹⁴

72 It is doubtful that the use of our vocabulary in this sense occurs in Jewish literature prior to the second century A.D.⁹⁵ The only possible occurrence of which I am aware is in Prov 16:29 LXX, "A man who is a transgressor enticeth (*apopeiratai*) friends and leadeth them in ways which are not good."⁹⁶ It is to be noted, however, that the particular word from our vocabulary is a *hapax legomenon* in biblical literature. Does this suggest that the common words of our vocabulary were not yet available in the sense of temptation?

In the rabbinic literature, probably the earliest occurrence is in bBer. 60b, "Bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into (lit. 'into the hands of,' i.e., 'into the power of') temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me, and let not the evil inclination have sway over me." Its inclusion in a series of moral evils suggests that our vocabulary is used in this passage of enticement to evil.

In Christian literature *peirasmos* frequently has this connotation. Classic expression is given to it in Jas. 1:13-15, "No one, when tempted (*peirazomenos*), should say, 'I am being tempted (*peirazomai*) by God'; for God cannot be tempted (*apeirastos*) by evil, and he himself tempts (*peirazei*) no one. But one is tempted (*peirazetai*) by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it, . . ." Our vocabulary in these verses is clearly defined as enticement to evil. The only possible exception is *apeirastos*, of which there is this single occurrence in biblical literature. There are three possible meanings thereof, in two of which enticement to evil is involved:

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- a) "Without experience (of evil)";⁹⁷
 - b) "Not enticing to evil," or "incapable of enticing to evil";⁹⁸
 - c) "Untempted" or "incapable of being tempted."⁹⁹

The first interpretation accords with the common meaning of the phrase *apeiratos kakōn*. However, it introduces an irrelevant consideration. The second interpretation fits the preceding clauses, but it reduces the succeeding clause to a tautology. The third interpretation accords with the normal meaning of adjectives in *-tos*. It maintains uniformity in the connotation of the vocabulary

in the immediate context. The use of *de* as the connective with the succeeding clause suggests that the two clauses are correlative.¹⁰⁰ Finally, this meaning of *apeirastos* occurs in a number of early Christian documents.¹⁰¹ In our judgment this is the meaning intended by the author.

Other New Testament passages in which our vocabulary is used of enticement to evil include:

- a) Luke 4:1-13 (Matt. 4:1-11), the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the Wilderness. The enticement to worship Satan, with the hostility of Satan to God implied therein, makes it clear that this is the meaning.
- b) Luke 11:4 (Matt. 6:13), "Do not bring us to the time of trial (mg.: 'into temptation')." The following considerations support the judgment that enticement to evil is in view:
 - (1) It accords with Matt 4:1, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." The devil as the active source of temptation is therefore probably assumed.
 - (2) The preceding petition concerning "sins" (Luke 11:4) suggests that *peirasmos* is enticement to become involved in wrongdoing.¹⁰²
 - (3) The closest rabbinic parallel to the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer includes *peirasmos* in a list of predominantly moral evils (bBer. 60b), as we have seen.¹⁰³
- c) 1 Cor. 7:5, where husbands and wives are exhorted not to refuse one another cohabitation for an extended period, "so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." That the *peirasmos* which Satan causes is enticement to evil is indicated in the reference to lack of self-control, which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is probably due to the sinful nature of "the flesh."
- d) 1 Cor. 10:13, "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing

he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it." That "enticement to evil" is intended is indicated in the context, which warns, in v. 6, against "desiring evil," and in vv. 7, 14, against worshipping idols.

- e) Gal. 6:1, "My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted." It is implied that the *peirasmos* in view is enticement to transgress God's law.
- f) In 1 Thess. 3:5, "I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain." It seems to be implied that the work of the tempter is to draw one away from faith in Christ.
- g) 1 Tim. 6:9, "Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction." That *peirasmos* is said to result in being "trapped by many senseless and harmful desires" is evidence that "enticement to evil" is intended.¹⁰⁴

Passages in the Apostolic Fathers which imply that *peirasmos* is enticement to evil include:

- a) Hermas, *Mand.* 4:3:6, "If a man be tempted by the devil and sin. . ."
- b) 2 Clem. 18:2, "I myself too am altogether sinful, and I have not yet escaped temptation but I am still in the midst of the devices of the devil, yet I am striving to follow after righteousness." It is evident that "the devices of the devil" are with a view to persuasion to depart from righteousness.¹⁰⁵

6. Putting God to the Test

In Jewish and early Christian literature there are occurrences of our vocabulary in the sense of putting God to the test, a theme which will engage our attention in Chapter VIII.

The occurrence of *Massâh* (LXX: *Peirasmos*), in Exod. 17:7; Deut. 6:16; 9:22; and of *Massâh* in Ps. 94 ((95):8;¹⁰⁶ is to be noted in this connection. Though it is the name of a place in these verses, it received its name from the testing of God which took place there. In our judgment, the religious associations of the word cannot be separated from this place-name, and that, therefore, it is to be included when we speak of the religious uses of our vocabulary.¹⁰⁷

Notes

- ¹ It has been suggested that this reading is a tendentious correction of *pepeirasmēnon*, due to a Docetic interest which sought to eliminate the idea that Christ was tempted. See Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 30.
- ² Cf. J. A. F. Gregg, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), 180. See T. Gad 5:2 for another occurrence of the noun in this sense.
- ³ F. Field, *Notes on the Translation of the New Testament* (Cambridge: University Press, 1899), 232, prefers to translate Heb. 11:29 "had experience of." But see J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952), 183.
- ⁴ See, however, Jos. *Antiq.* 3:1:4; 2 Clem. 20:2.
- ⁵ Cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 71. G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 101, asserts that a person who is *apeiros* is one who "lacks experience, is untried, or ignorant." W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1991), 137, says that the term means "inexperienced" or "unskilled."
- ⁶ M. Greenberg, "NSH in Exodus 20:20 and the Purpose of the Sinaitic Theophany," *JBL*, 79 (1960), 273-76,

argues strongly that this meaning occurs in Ex. 20:20; Jud. 3:1; and Eccles. 2:1. However, translators generally disagree. (Do Jud. 2:21-22 and 3:4 not indicate that in Jud. 3:1 the meaning is "test"?)

⁷ A special use of our verb occurs in Gen. 44:5 (Sam.) and in Gen. 44:15 (Sym.). In these verses we have the use of *peirazō* in relation to divination. We have noted a similar use of the procedures whereby one obtained a response from an oracle. Perhaps the use in Jud. 6:39 is also similar: "Gideon said to God, 'Let not thy anger burn against me, . . . Let me make trial (*peirasō*) only this once with the fleece.'" In view of the petition, "Let not thy anger burn against me," it is possible, however, that we have here a putting of God to the test in the reprehensible sense which is common in biblical literature.

⁸ Cf. 2 Chron. 32:31; T. Jos. 2:6.

⁹ Cf. Egerton Papyrus 2 concerning the same incident in f.2 (ll.43-59), ". . . came to him to put him to the proof and to tempt him whilst they said. . ."

¹⁰ *Ekpeirazō* in this verse.

¹¹ *The Gospel of Truth* 19:20, "There came forth those who--in their hearts only--were wise, testing him, but he put them to shame because they were empty," is a summarizing reference to some, or all, of these occurrences. It does not allude "to any specific scene of any gospel." Cf. K. Grobel, ed., *The Gospel of Truth* (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 59 n. 90.

¹² See Rev. 2:10.

¹³ Cf. Luke 4:13. See J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: SCM, 1957), 51.

¹⁴ Cf. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17.1; *Acts of St. Fructuosus* 7; *The Acts of Peter: Vercelli Acts* 6-8; *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 2.2.

¹⁵ Mark 8:11 (Matt. 16:1). Cf. Mark 8:15 (Matt. 16:6). See Luke 11:16; 12:1.

¹⁶ Cf. E. Best, *The Temptation and the Passion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 31-32.

¹⁷ Cf. T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949), 45.

¹⁸ These arguments are based largely on Korn, *Peirasmos*, 79-82.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the question and the various possibilities, see I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 814-15.

²⁰ Cf. Seesemann in *TDNT*, 6:28. But see W. Schneider/C. Brown, "Tempt, Test, Approve," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:804.

²¹ Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 442. *Per contra*, Bundy, *First Three Gospels*, 339. In the version in Matt. 22 there is greater reason for seeing a hostile occurrence, but, even so, it is difficult to think that the question at issue could serve a hostile purpose.

²² Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: S. P. C. K., 1955), 228, "Jesus wishes to test the extent of Philip's faith."

²³ Cf. Seesemann in *TDNT*, 6:28.

²⁴ Cf. J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), 1:175.

²⁵ Cf. Schneider, Brown in *NIDNTT*, 3:799.

²⁶ Is God's foreknowledge deficient? Or does faithfulness only become truly real when actualized (cf. Jas. 2:22)? And can God only know faithfulness as a present reality when it has been actualized? R. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 1:697, states that in the respective Hebrew verb "the

element of objective verification is less prominent than that of detecting or feeling or learning by experience." (Cf. N. M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 153.)

²⁷ Critical scholarship considers vv. 15-18 to be by a later editor, "who felt that Abraham's faith was deserving of explicit commendation here" (C. A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 1:645.)

²⁸ U. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness* (London: SCM, 1963), 35, argues that Deut. 8:2 may mean that "God tests Israel so that she may find out what is in her heart." However, the interpretation seems odd, to say nothing of the precedent in Gen. 22:1-12.

²⁹ The Massoretic text is considerably different. It lacks our vocabulary.

³⁰ E.g. Judith 8:25-27.

³¹ It should be noted, however, that I have not found a profane use of *peiratēriōn* in Jewish or Christian literature with the meaning "test."

³² P. Lond. 2491.8 qu. in *MM*, 2:7:501b.

³³ Cf. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 2:1335a; C. Thomson, tr., *The Septuagint Bible*, Edited, revised and enlarged by C. A. Muses (Indian Hills, Col.: Falcon's Wing, 1954) *in loc.* On the other hand, the possibility cannot be denied that the intended meaning is: "Is not the life of man on earth a contest with an attacking host?" Even so, the idea of religious *peirasmos* is not necessarily excluded from the connotation of *peiratēriōn*.

³⁴ For a more extended argument that *peiraterion* and *peiratēs* in Job include the idea of religious *peirasmos*, see Korn, *Peirasmos*, 12-16.

³⁵ Cf. Jub. 17:16-19; 2 Enoch 30:15. In Jewish literature of a period later than the New Testament the earliest usage still continues. See Jos. *Ant.* 1:13:1; Pirke Aboth

5:4; bSanh. 89b; Gen. R. 55:6; Exod. R. 31:3.

³⁶ Seesemann in *TDNT*, 6:27, holds that Greek thought so dominated the mind of Philo that he had no understanding of the fundamental idea involved in *peirasmos*. Indeed the noun does not occur in his writings.

³⁷ Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 34 n. 1, states that *nāsâh* and *ʿânâh* are "used almost synonymously in Deut. 8:2, 16. This affinity occurs nowhere outside Deuteronomy."

³⁸ M. Greenberg, "NSH in Exodus 20:20 and the Purpose of the Sinaitic Theophany," *JBL*, 79 (1960), 273-76, has argued that in this passage *nāsâh* is to be interpreted: "Give an experience."

³⁹ Seesemann in *TDNT*, 6:26, includes Sir. 31 (34):9-10, "An educated man knows many things, and one with much experience (*polupeiros*) will speak with understanding. He that is inexperienced (B: *epeirathē*; Aleph: *epirasthē*) knows few things, but he that has travelled acquires much cleverness." In my opinion the last line, and the use of *peiraō* in the passive in the best text, argue that our vocabulary has no religious reference here. Cf. Korn, *Peirasmos*, 27.

⁴⁰ In 4 Macc. 9:7 our vocabulary seems to be used in a disciplinary sense. In rabbinic literature testing as disciplinary seems to occur in jSchab. 1.3.3b.64 and in Cant. R. 2.16.

⁴¹ The same Greek word occurs in Judith 8:27, a verse dealing specifically with testing.

⁴² Quoted from Prov. 3:11-12.

⁴³ Cf. Dan. 12:9 LXX.

⁴⁴ Note the use of the respective Greek verb in Heb. 5:14 and in 2 Clem. 20:2.

⁴⁵ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 185.

⁴⁶ Additional support is perhaps to be found in jSchab. 1.3.3b.64. That tribulation and testing could be used interchangeably, but in connection with the earliest concept of testing rather than with the view of it as disciplinary, may be implied in Jub. 17:15-17, "Words came in heaven concerning Abraham that he . . . was faithful in all affliction. And Prince Mastema came and he said before God, ' . . . Tell him to offer him (Isaac) [as] a burnt offering upon the altar. . . And you will know whether he is faithful in everything in which you test him.' And the Lord was aware that Abraham was faithful in all his afflictions because he tested him . . ."

⁴⁷ For a partially comparable use in profane literature, see Strabo 16.4.24.

⁴⁸ Cf. vv. 2-3. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 34 n. 1, states that "test" and "humble" are "used almost synonymously in Deut. 8:2, 16. This affinity occurs nowhere outside Deuteronomy."

⁴⁹ See also Sir. 4:17.

⁵⁰ Cf. 2 Bar. 32:6 (Charles), "There will be a greater trial than these two tribulations when the Mighty One will renew His creation."

⁵¹ L. Cerfaux, "Fructifiez en Supportant (L'E'preuve)," *Revue Biblique* 64 (1957), 487-88. He finds an indication of the eschatological character of the Markan version in the reference to "those outside" (Mark 4:11).

⁵² *Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of Luke* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 14.

⁵³ Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 326.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 442-48, 455.

⁵⁶ See also *Hermas Sim.* 7:1.

⁵⁷ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 14-17; 441-50.

⁵⁸ In *Wisd.* 2:17-20; 4 *Macc.* 9:7; 15:16 (A), persecution is clearly a means of testing.

⁵⁹ Such a connotation must be assumed in *Heb.* 11:37, "They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, (some MSS add 'they were tempted'), they were killed by the sword. . ." However, the preferred reading does not contain our vocabulary.

⁶⁰ Cf. 2 *Bar.* 32:6; 44:7.

⁶¹ Cf. C. T. Craig, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 10:112; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 227-28; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 459.

⁶² Cf. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 300; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 54.

⁶³ 1 *Pet.* 4:17. The persecutions suffered by the church seem to be viewed as a sharing of Christ's sufferings for some (v. 13), and as a "judgment" for others (v.17).

⁶⁴ Cf. *Did.* 16:5.

⁶⁵ See Bundy, *First Three Gospels*, 113; K. Stendahl, "The Scrolls and the New Testament: An Introduction and a Perspective," *SNT*, 11; J. Jeremias, *The Lord's Prayer* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 29.

⁶⁶ See J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1954), 44; H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 81. Some scholars have thought that the Gethsemane narrative is a Christian midrash on the Lord's Prayer. Cf. F. C. Grant, "The Gospel according to St. Mark: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 7:881. M. Dibelius, "Gethsemane," *The*

Crozer Quarterly, 12 (1935): 258-59, contends that the Gethsemane saying we have quoted is out of context. To be awake and alert would not avail in warding off the impending "temptation." The argument is not valid if "temptation" was used in a pregnant sense.

⁶⁷ Cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1959), 47, 159; V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 31.

⁶⁸ For the meaning of the Greek verb see H. Preisker in *TDNT*, 2: 330-32; F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 44; R. F. Berkey, "EGGIZEIN PFTHANEIN and Realized Eschatology", *JBL*, 82 (1963), 178-187.

⁶⁹ See Mark 3:22-27; Matt. 12:24-29; Luke 11:15-22; cf. Luke 10:18; 22:53b.

⁷⁰ S. M. Gilmour, "The Gospel according to St. Luke: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 8:201, states, "The first petition. . . is almost the equivalent of the second."

⁷¹ Stendahl, "Scrolls," 11.

⁷² Mark 13:33, 34, 35, 37; Luke 12:37, 39; 21:36; Matt. 24:42, 43; 25:13. See also 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 5:8.

⁷³ *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 51 n. 1.

⁷⁴ E.g., Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 222.

⁷⁵ See Mark 6:37 (Matt. 14:16; Luke 9:13; cf. Mark 8:2-3; Matt. 15:32); Matt. 25:35-42.

⁷⁶ E.g., Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 222. Cf. *ibid.*, 210-214.

⁷⁷ Cf. bBer. 16b, 17a, 46a. The last two petitions of the Lord's Prayer are probably reflected in 2 Pet. 2:9, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial (*peirasmou*)." It is clear from the context that *peirasmou* does not have a solely eschatological reference here.

⁷⁸ Johnson in *IB*, 7:275, 311. He notes that "in the Kaddish and the Alenu this petition follows the prayer for the sanctification of the name."

⁷⁹ See M. Rist in *IB*, 12:348b.

⁸⁰ Rist in *IB*, 12:348, affirms that Jesus did not hold the view of the "dualistic apocalyptists" that the present world is under the domination of Satan. He is not alone in such a judgment.

⁸¹ Acts 20:30-31; Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18. F. W. Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 10:739, argues that "the evil day" in Eph. 6:13 is not a reference to the eschatological tribulation.

⁸² See Matt. 13:24-30; Luke 3:17 (Matt. 3:12); Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 216 n. 38.

⁸³ See Mark 14:25 and parallels; 14:62 and parallels.

⁸⁴ *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: SCM, 1957), 28, 51, 52.

⁸⁵ E.g., 8:33.

⁸⁶ Contrast Luke 22:3, 31, 53.

⁸⁷ Cf. F. C. Grant in *IB*, 7:882, 884.

⁸⁸ Cf. Luke 22:53; Gilmour in *IB*, 8:412.

⁸⁹ That is, unless one includes the saying in 14:41 quoted above.

⁹⁰ In *IB*, 8:640a.

⁹¹ Cf. G. Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew," *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, H. J. Held) (London: SCM, 1963), 21-22.

⁹² Cf. Gilmour in *IB*, 8:364-65.

⁹³ Cf. H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, 81. Conzelmann holds that Luke 23:35ff. marks "the

transition to a new epoch," but this new epoch is not the time of the end. "It (the temptation of this time) is connected with martyrdom, but not with any particular time." See *ibid.*, 28, 81, 199.

⁹⁴J. H. Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1954), 133, describes temptation as "primarily an assault" and holds that this development was in accord with the profane use of our vocabulary of testing in the hostile sense, a use specifically evident in the derivative *peiratēs*, "pirate," "attacker." On the other hand, it may be that this use corresponds to the meaning in profane Greek "attempt to seduce."

⁹⁵Cf. I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 2:105.

⁹⁶Cf. Plutarch, *de Bruto*, 10. See also 1 Enoch 94:5; *Apoc. Abr.* 13.

⁹⁷F. J. A. Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 22-23.

⁹⁸Vulgate and some older commentators.

⁹⁹P. Davids, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 82-83, suggests a further possibility: "God ought not to be tempted by evil persons." Cf. his "The Meaning of APEIRASTOS in James I.13," *NTS*, 24 (April 1978): 386-92. Does not such an interpretation introduce an irrelevant topic?

¹⁰⁰The correlation would be more certain if the first clause had included a *men*. However, Jas 2:2, 11, contain correlative clauses without *men*.

¹⁰¹E.g., Pseudo-Ignatius, *de Baptismo ad Phil.* 11; *Acts of John* 57; *Apostolic Constitutions* 2:8:2.

¹⁰²A. Souter, *A Pocket Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 184, points out that "in Aramaic the same word indicates a debt and a sin,"

and suggests that “debts” in Matthew’s version of the Prayer could therefore be translated “sins,” “probably as that for which we owe reparation to God.”

¹⁰³In bBer. 16b; 17a; 29b, there are prayers for deliverance from other kinds of evil as well. Despite his quotation of bBer. 60b and his reliance on it, Jeremias, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 29-30, insists that this petition of the Lord’s prayer is a petition relating to the eschatological tribulation, and that it is to be rendered, “Let us not succumb to the trial.”

¹⁰⁴J. Jeremias, *The Lord’s Prayer*, tr. J. Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 29, asserts concerning *peirasmos*, “In the New Testament. . . the meaning ‘temptation (into sin)’ appears unequivocally at only one passage, I Timothy 6:9; . . .” We have supplied reasons for thinking otherwise.

¹⁰⁵See also *Acts of SS. Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonica*, 19, “By God’s permission he (the devil) tempts man, seeking to turn him from holiness.”

¹⁰⁶*Peirasmos* occurs in LXX of this verse, but apparently as a common noun. Cf. Heb. 3:8.

¹⁰⁷Compare *Massāh* (LXX: *Peira*) in Deut. 33:8, where a testing of Levi is apparently associated with the place. As noted earlier in this chapter, *Peira* in 1 Esdras 5:19 (B) has no associations with religious testing.

J. de Zwaan, “Gal. 4:14 aus dem Neugriechischen erklärt,” *ZNW*, 10 (1909), 246-50, puts forward a strong argument that *peirasmos* in Gal. 4:12-14 is a designation of the devil. However, the case must be considered conjectural because (1) It rests on a reading of the text which is not well attested; and (2) *Peirasmos* as a designation for the devil is not substantiated before the fifth century A.D.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOURCE OF TESTING AND TEMPTATION

A. In Jewish Literature

1. God as the Source

In the Old Testament religious testing is commonly traced simply to the divine being. Wherever our vocabulary occurs in the Massoretic text in this sense,¹ such is the case, with only one possible exception. It is attributed to "God" in Gen. 22:1; Exod. 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:31; to "Yahweh" in Exod. 15:25; 16:4; Deut. 29:3 (2); 33:8; Jud. 2:22; 3:1; Ps. 25 (26):2; and to "Yahweh your God" in Deut. 4:34; 7:19; 8:2, 16; 13:3 (4). The one possible exception is in Job 9:23, which may not contain our vocabulary, but which, if it does, gives no indication of the source of the testing in view.

The Septuagint version of the Old Testament has our vocabulary in some passages which lack it in the Massoretic text. Of such passages in which it is, or may be, used in a religious sense, the following describe it as God's doing: Job 10:17; 16:10 (9); 19:12; 25:3; Eccl. 3:10 (A); 8:16 (A). No source is indicated in the rest of the passages in which the Massoretic text does not contain the Hebrew cognate, namely: Job 7:1; Ps. 17 (18):30; 35:16; Prov. 16:29; Eccl. 4:8 (A); 5:2; 5:13 v.l.; Dan. 12:9.

There are, however, two important passages (Gen. 3 and Job 1-2), in which our particular vocabulary does not occur, and in

them considerable responsibility for the onset of *peirasmos* is attributed to "the serpent" and "the Satan" respectively. In the Old Testament, therefore, there are at least two departures from the simple ascription of testing/temptation to God.²

In the later sages (Ben Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon) "God" is explicitly said to be the source of testing in Wisd. 3:5, "God tested them (the righteous) and found them worthy of himself." In Wisd. 11:9 ("When they [Israel in the Wilderness] were tried, though they were being disciplined in mercy") it is probable that we are to understand that "the Lord" was the source, though it is not entirely certain that the author has passed from a description of the works of Wisdom to those of God, so that it may be that Wisdom is the source.³ Wisdom is explicitly named as the source of testing in Sir. 4:17, "She (Wisdom) will test them (those who seek Wisdom) with her ordinances."

The relationship between God and Wisdom in the writings of the later sages is such that what is attributed to Wisdom may be attributed to God.⁴ It is doubtful, therefore, that the naming of Wisdom as the source of testing in Sir. 4:17, and possibly also in Wisd. 11:9, is indicative of hesitancy about attributing testing to God. Moreover, the tracing of testing simply to God continues to be common in our literature whenever its disciplinary value is stressed, and, as we have seen in Chapter III, it is precisely its disciplinary value which is stressed in the later sages. On the other hand, the occurrence in Sir. of the conception of the evil impulse (*yēšer*) at least prepares for the involvement of an altogether different source. The same is true of the conception of Satan which is evident in Wisd. 2:24, "Through the devil's envy death entered the world."

Of special interest in view of its proximity in date to Sir., and also in view of the rarity of the conception, is Tobit 12:14 (A),⁵ "I (the angel Raphael) was sent to you to test you. At the same time God sent me to heal you and Sarah your daughter-in-law." That "send (*apostellō*)" should be used in the passive in the first clause, and in the active (with God as the subject) in the clause which follows, is surprising. Was the author hesitant about attributing testing to God? His failure to make the two clauses parallel may

make it seem so. On the other hand, not only is Raphael one of God's holy angels, there is no suggestion that he has the cynical attitude toward people which is attributed to Satan in the Prologue of Job, nor is there any suggestion that he was responsible for the test in any primary sense.⁶

But whatever hesitancy the later sages and the author of Tobit may or may not have had about attributing testing simply and directly to God, it is often attributed simply to Him in writings of the pre-rabbinic period, though a different view also occurs:

- a) T. Jos. 2:6-7, "In all these matters he (God) takes his stand, and in various ways he offers assistance, even though for a brief time he may stand aside to test (*dokimasai*) the disposition of the soul. In ten testings (*peirasmōis*) he showed that I was approved, and in all of them I persevered."⁷
- b) Judith 8:25-27, "The Lord our God. . . is putting us to the test as he did our ancestors. Remember what He did with Abraham, and how He tested Isaac. . ."
- c) Philo, *de Abrahamo*, 32 ff., discusses the Gen. 22 story of the offering of Isaac. Though he does not use our vocabulary, he attributes the command to sacrifice Isaac to God, and that without qualification.⁸
- d) 2 Enoch 30:14-15, "I (God). . . called his name Adam. . . And I pointed out to him the two ways. . . so that I might come to know whether he has love towards me, or abhorrence. . ." This passage is of special interest since it speaks clearly of a test of Adam by God, even though it does not use our vocabulary. It is noteworthy that though the book has much to say about Satan, neither he, nor the serpent, nor the forbidden tree, are mentioned in this connection.
- e) Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 1.13.1-4, states concerning the sacrifice of Isaac that God was "desirous to make an experiment (*diapēiran*) of Abraham's religious disposition," and so proceeded "to try (*dokimasai*) the temper of his mind."

- f) Josephus, *Antiq.* 3.1.4, represents Moses as saying to Israel in the Wilderness, "Seeing it is probable that God tries (*dokimazonta*) their virtue and exercises their patience by these adversities, that it may appear what fortitude they have. . . He will first try (*epi peira*) their fortitude. . ."

In the rabbinic literature there are quite a number of passages in which testing is attributed simply to God, even though a more complex view of its origin seems to be typical of the period. Relevant references to the testing of Abraham occur in Gen. R. 55:1, 3, 6; Num. R. 15:12⁹; of David in the Midrash on Ps. 26:2; and of Israel as a whole in Mekilta, Vayassa I on Exod. 15:25; and of people in general in Exod. R. 31:3; Cant. R. 2:16. Though our investigation has not been exhaustive, the number of testing/temptation passages we have found in which there is no explicit reference to Gen.22, Exod. 15:25, and Ps. 25 (26):2, is comparatively few.

2. Satan in Relation to Testing/Temptation

The experiences of the Exile and of the period following were of such a devastating nature that the calamities suffered by God's people could not be traced simply to God.¹⁰ The breakup of the national life and increased individualism made the problem particularly acute. The books of Job and Ecclesiastes, whatever their date, show that such an understanding could not satisfy.¹¹ Many scholars believe that outside influences played a part in the modification of related views and convictions.¹² In the process it comes to pass that a hostile person and/or power is often held to be involved in the onset of testing/temptation.

One alternative was to trace testing/temptation, at least partially, to Satan. The steps in the development of the doctrine are not all clear, nor do we know all the influences which helped to fashion the doctrine until it reached its final form. We do know that the Hebrew word "satan" could stand for any adversary, personal or national.¹³ There is evidence, furthermore, that the "accuser" in court, apparently a sort of public prosecutor, could be called a "satan."¹⁴ It may be that the conception of a heavenly court with a

public prosecutor developed out of the belief that God is the Judge of mankind.¹⁵ At any rate, in the vision recorded in Zech. 3 there is the description of such a court with the accuser, "the satan," performing his function before "the angel of the Lord." It is surprising, however, that this satan earned the rebuke of the court. In view of what is stated in verse four concerning the iniquity of Joshua the high priest, the accusations brought by the "satan" against him may not have been false, but, if not, it seems that they must have been pursued either with too much rigour or with a legalistic demand for the exact requital of Joshua for his iniquities.¹⁶

In the prologue of the Book of Job¹⁷ there is a somewhat similar conception of a heavenly court with a satan, one of the "sons of God"¹⁸ whose function appears to be that of public prosecutor. It is evidently his responsibility to report on human conduct to the court.¹⁹ However, his activities extend even farther. With God's permission he brings people, or at least the devout, into circumstances which test character,²⁰ that is, in effect, into the experience of *peirasmos*. Moreover, he is described as cynical concerning the possibility of disinterested piety: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" he asks. "Stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face," is his judgment concerning the one whom God has called "a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (1:8-11). His cynicism persists when the first test has not shaken Job's devotion to God. He declares in the divine court: "Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face" (2:4-5).

There is one further Old Testament passage concerning Satan. In 1 Chron. 21:1 we are informed that Satan "stood up against Israel and incited David to count the people of Israel." In this passage:

- a) "Satan" is no longer an official title, it is a personal name, as is shown by the fact that the term is anarthrous. This seems to imply that a stage has been reached in which the accuser of Zech. 3 and Job 1, 2, is no longer merely an official of God's court, but one who is

considered an important personage in himself.

- b) There appears to be an advance on the view of the satan's functions as set forth in the prologue of Job. In Job 1-2 he is the tester of men, whereas in this passage he seems to have become the tempter. In Job 1-2 the satan is cynical concerning Job's integrity and is permitted to test it;²¹ in 1 Chron. 21 Satan is represented as actively engaged in inciting David to sin.²² In this connection it may be noted that Brown, Driver and Briggs²³ interpret 1 Chron. 21:1 ("Satan stood up against Israel") as indicative of hostility, citing 2 Chron. 20:23; Dan. 8:25; 11:14, as other passages where the construction has this sense. This interpretation accords with the idea that Satan has now become the tempter.
- c) The Chronicler uses 2 Sam. 24 as his chief source for his version of the numbering of Israel, yet he credits Satan with inciting David to the numbering, whereas 2 Sam. 24:1 explicitly states, "The Lord. . . incited David against them." Whether the change originated with the Chronicler himself or not, he can hardly have been unaware of the change. Did he consider that his version sharply contradicted the version in 2 Sam.? We think not. In the first place, other writers, both Jewish and Christian, attribute to Satan what was attributed to God in the Old Testament without leaving any indication that they sensed that they were contradicting the Old Testament. In Job. 48:2, 17; 49:2, activities are credited to Mastema (i.e., Satan) which are credited to Yahweh in Exod. 4:24; 14:8; 12:29, respectively.²⁴ In 1 Cor. 10:10 Paul credits "the destroyer"--probably Satan in light of 5:5--with the plague which killed large numbers of Israelites in the Wilderness, whereas in Num. 16:41-49 it is stated that Yahweh sent the plague. It is especially noteworthy that the account of Jesus' temptation in Matt. 4 and Luke 4 not only quotes, but owes much otherwise,²⁵ to what is stated in Deut. 8 concerning the testing of

Israel in the Wilderness, yet there is no evidence of a sense of incongruity in describing the “tempter” of Jesus as Satan, whereas in Deut. 8 God is responsible for the testing of Israel. There is, moreover, the strong emphasis on the authority of the Old Testament implied in the words, “it is written,” which occur several times in the account of Jesus’ temptation (Luke 4:4, 8, 10, 12 [Matt. 4:4, 5, 7, 10]). In the second place Matt. 4:1 (cf. Luke 4:1-2) implies that it was God’s will that Jesus be tempted by Satan,²⁶ albeit possibly because the temptation constituted a test.

In the light of these considerations, we think it probable that the author of 1 Chron. 21:1 did not consider that he was sharply contradicting 2 Sam. 24:1, but rather that he was avoiding the misunderstanding to which 2 Sam. 24:1 lent itself. According to G. B. Caird,²⁷ “The Chronicler. . . has provided the first indication of a feeling, which was later to grow to a conviction, that to God’s servant Satan may be ascribed activities which are unworthy of God himself, and that Satan’s work, though it is done in the name of God, is in some way contrary to the real divine purpose.” It is to be noted that Caird describes Satan as “God’s servant.” There is some justification for so doing.²⁸ On the other hand, one may question Caird’s statement that this is the first indication of the feeling that Satan’s work is “in some way contrary to the divine purpose.” Do we not have an indication of such a feeling in the Book of Job, inasmuch as Job protests that, though he can only attribute his sufferings to God, they are not appropriate to Him? Moreover, the prologue suggests something that Job does not know: that the cynicism of Satan in God’s court is a consideration alleviating, if not explaining, the problem of Job’s sufferings.²⁹

In the years following the work of the Chronicler there continued to be development in the doctrine of Satan, though some of the views concerning him were apparently limited to certain circles among the Jews. In the pseudepigraphic literature the doctrine that Satan is a fallen angel has considerable prominence,³⁰ as does the doctrine that the “sons of God” mentioned in Gen. 6 were formerly members of the heavenly court.³¹ The fall of “Satanail” and his angels is described in 2 Enoch 29:4-5:

One from the order of the archangels deviated, together with the division that was under his authority. He thought up the impossible idea, that he might place his throne higher than the clouds which are above the earth, and that he might become equal to my (God's) power. And I hurled him from the height together with his angels. And he was flying around in the air, ceaselessly, above the Bottomless.³²

This doctrine of the fall of Satan was part and parcel of a conception of Satan as hostile not only towards man, but also towards God, a conception which reaches its full flower in some of the pseudepigraphic and sectarian writings. Another example of the hostility between God and Satan, who is also called the devil and Beliar, is found in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. There we read of "the kingdom of the enemy" who, of course, is Satan.³³ It is declared that the Lord will "will make war against Beliar,"³⁴ with the result that Beliar "will be thrown into eternal fire."³⁵

The views of the Qumran community are quite similar. The "dominion of Belial (i.e., Satan)"³⁶ is an important concept, which is elaborated in the following terms:

In the hand of the angel of darkness³⁷ is all the rule over the sons of perversion and in the ways of darkness they walk. And it is because of the angel of darkness that all the sons of righteousness go astray; so all their sin and their iniquities and their guilt and the transgressions of their deeds are under his dominion (according to God's mysteries) until his end-time; while all their afflictions and their seasons of distress are under the dominion of his hostility. And all the spirits allotted him [strive] to trip the sons of light.³⁸

In 1QM we have a prophetic description of the eschatological war to take place between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.³⁹ The outcome of the war is described as follows: "The great hand of God (will be) raised against Belial and against all the

forces under his dominion inflicting on them an eternal discomfiture.”⁴⁰

In this literature Satan is pre-eminently the enemy of God,⁴¹ though in at least some of the writings he is still described as God’s creature,⁴² and even as the instrument of His purposes. He is God’s instrument of destruction in CDC 8.1-2, “Such will be the fate also of those who in the latter days will have entered God’s covenant but not held fast to these things. Then God will punish unto extinction by the hand of Belial.” As we shall notice later, he also has a part to play in God’s “testing (*bhn*)” of His people.

In the Rabbinic literature it is taught that Satan is the accuser of people at the throne of God,⁴³ that he is the tempter of people on earth,⁴⁴ and that he must obtain permission to conduct temptations, doctrines which are already in evidence in the Old Testament. As we have seen, these doctrines are of chief importance in relation to the theme of this paper.⁴⁵

As already indicated, the conditions of the Exile and of the period following were particularly conducive to the development of the conception of a spiritual power hostile to God. Various scholars have noted that subsequent to the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. the Jews had considerable contact with Iranian religion and its dualistic doctrines, and have contended that the doctrine of Satan in Judaism was influenced by it, though the stage at which the influence began to exert itself, and the degree of that influence, is uncertain. The chief evidences of influence they have advanced are as follows:

- a) A connection between the Book of Tobit (second century B.C.⁴⁶) and Iranian religion has been recognized. J. H. Moulton⁴⁷ argues that the name of the demon Asmodeus was derived from “Aesma daeva,” the name of one of the leading demons according to Persian religion.
- b) “Angra,” the first part of “Angra Mainyu,” the name of the demon at the head of all the hosts of evil in Persian demonology, is the word for “enemy.” As we have pointed out, “Satan” means “adversary” or

“enemy.”

- c) “Ahriman (i.e., Angra Mainyu) resembles Satan in being ‘alike opponent of God, . . . foe of mankind, author of lies, a traitor and deceiver, an arch-fiend in command of hosts of demons.’”⁴⁸
- d) According to *Yasna* 30:6, “The demons. . . chose not aright, for infatuation came upon them as they took counsel together, so that they chose the Worst Thought. Then they rushed together to Violence, that they might enfeeble the world of men.”⁴⁹ The points of contact with the Jewish story of the fall of the angels are obvious.⁵⁰
- e) In spite of the eternal opposition of “the two primal spirits,” Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu, i.e., the Holy Spirit and the destructive spirit, they “revealed themselves in vision as twins.”⁵¹ Inasmuch as the Wise Lord is called the father of the Holy Spirit, He was evidently thought of as the father of the destructive spirit as well, and was certainly considered such by two sects of late Zoroastrianism.⁵² One is reminded of 1QS 3.25, “The God of Israel. . . created the spirits of light and darkness.”
- f) According to *Yasna* 30.3-6, 10; 45.2:

The two primal spirits. . . are the Better and Bad in thought and word and action. And between these two the wise once chose aright, the foolish not so. . . At the last the Worst Existence shall be to the followers of the Lie, but the Best Thought to him that follows Right . . . Of these twain spirits he that followed the Lie chose the worst things; the holiest Spirit chose the Right . . . So likewise they that are fain to please Ahura Mazda by dutiful actions. Between these twain the demons also chose not aright. . . They rushed together to Violence that they might enfeeble the world of man. . . Then truly on the Lie (i.e., the followers of

Druj) shall come the destruction of delight. . . The holier (of the Spirits twain at the first beginning of the world) thus spoke to the enemy: "Neither thought nor teachings nor wills nor beliefs nor words nor deeds nor selves nor souls of us twain agree."

There are remarkable points of contact with 1QS 3.18-24; 4.2, 9, 11-12, 16-18:

He (God) assigned him (man) two spirits by which to walk until the season of his visitation. They are the spirits of truth and perversion. From a spring of light (issue) the generations of truth; but from a fountain of darkness (issue) the generations of perverseness; ~~in the ways of light they walk.~~ ~~But~~ in the hand of the angel of darkness is all the rule over the sons of perversion; and in the ways of darkness they walk. And it is because of the angel of darkness that all the sons of righteousness go astray. . . And all the spirits allotted him (strive) to trip the sons of light. . . The way of the Spirit of truth is to enlighten the heart of man, and to make straight before him all the ways of true righteousness. . . But to the spirit of perversion belong greediness. . . wickedness . . . lying and deceit. . . And the visitation of all who walk by it consists in a multitude of plagues through all angels of affliction, in eternal ruin through the furious anger of the God of vengeance . . . God has set them (i.e., the two spirits) in equal parts until the last period; and He has put eternal enmity between their divisions; an abomination to truth are acts of wrongdoing; an abomination to wrongdoing are all ways of truth. And passionate strife pertains to all their practices, for they do not walk together.

In the hand of prince of lights is the rule over all the sons of righteousness.

g) With *Yasna* 44.15, "When the two opposing hosts meet

in battle according to those decrees which thou wilt firmly establish . . .,”⁵³ compare the eschatological war which is prominent in Jewish apocalyptic literature.⁵⁴

With this introduction we take up Satan’s role in relation to testing/temptation in the literature of the period following the writing of the Old Testament. At the outset we have to report that we have not found any passage in which testing/temptation is attributed solely to Satan. This is probably due, on the one hand, to the fact that our vocabulary is rarely used of enticement to evil in the extant Jewish writings, and, on the other, to the strength of the connection of God with testing in the Old Testament.

In view of the importance of enticement to evil in respect to testing/temptation in the New Testament, we cite a few examples of the frequent attribution of such enticement (not the specific attribution of *peirasmos*) solely to Satan in the pseudepigraphic and rabbinic writings.⁵⁵ Examples in the pseudepigraphic writings include:

- a) T. Reub. 4:11, “If promiscuity does not triumph over your reason, then neither can Beliar conquer you.”
- b) CDC 4.12 ff., “Belial will be rampant in Israel . . . By making them (whoredom, lucre and desecration) look like three kinds of righteousness Belial ensnares Israel in them.”
- c) 2 Enoch 31:6, “He (the devil) entered paradise and corrupted Eve.”

In the rabbinic writings examples of Satan enticing to evil are found in a variety of passages. Of particular interest is that he may do so by appearing in human form (e.g., bKid. 81a; cf. Test. Job 23; bSanh. 107a), and by inspiring visions (e.g., bSchab. 89a).

Closely related to the question of the relationship of Satan to testing/temptation is the question of the relationship of demons or evil spirits thereto. We have found no passage specifically mentioning *peirasmos*, which accords demons any responsibility for its onset. Moreover, for the most part, demons only harm; they

do not seek to lead people astray.⁵⁶ Of rabbinic writings in particular, A. Cohen has stated, "The evil spirits seem really to be the personification of danger."⁵⁷ Though it is intimated that they entice to evil in Lev. 17:7; Ps. 105 (106):36-37; bPes. 112b; Deut. R. 11:10, it is only in some of the pseudepigraphic writings that such activity on their part is prominent.⁵⁸

The seductions of evil spirits have a prominent place in various strata of 1 Enoch, in 2 Enoch, in Jubilees, in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵⁹ In the case of the Testaments and the Scrolls, however, it is probable that many of the references to evil spirits are references to attitudes and propensities rather than to cosmological entities.⁶⁰ Of special interest is the fact that a number of these documents trace the beginning of demonic enticement to the lusting of "the sons of God" for "the daughters of men," and to their cohabitation with them, as set forth in Gen. 6.⁶¹

In this connection it is appropriate to consider the serpent in Gen. 3, because it is credited with the deception and enticement of Eve, as a result of which she ate the forbidden fruit. Except for Gen. 3 there is no certain reference to the serpent in the Old Testament.⁶² In Jewish writings subsequent thereto what is said of the serpent is sometimes repetitive of what is said in the Gen. 3 story, namely that the serpent was a very clever animal created by God (e.g., Jub. 3:17-23; cf. Gen. R. 20:4).⁶³ However, it is often felt that more needs to be said.

- a) In 1 Enoch 69:6 the angel Gader'el is said to have "misled Eve." Whether it is thought that the serpent was really this angel, or was this angel's instrument, is not indicated.⁶⁴
- b) In Apoc. Abr. 23:7-11 that which was "like a dragon" in Eden is identified as "Azazel himself," "the chief of the fallen angels" (13:6-7; 14:6-7).⁶⁵ Is it implied that Azazel tempted Eve in the guise of a dragon or serpent?
- c) According to Apoc. Mos. 16:5 (cf. 17:4) the devil said to the serpent, "Only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will

be able to deceive him (Adam)." ⁶⁶

- d) According to 3 Bar. 9:7, "Satanael. . . covered himself with the serpent," or "took the serpent as a garment."
- e) According to the Greek Apoc. Ezra 2:12-16, "He who established disobedience (i.e., Satan) made this (man) sin"; yet, "The serpent. . . deceived her." Is it assumed that the serpent and Satan are one and the same?
- f) According to L. I. Rabinowitz, in some of the rabbinic literature, "Satan. . . appears merely as the impersonal force of evil." In this connection he cites bBaba Bathra 16a, "Satan, the evil prompter (the evil impulse?) and the angel of death, are all one" (cf. Gen. R. 17:6; 84:3; Num. R. 20:23). ⁶⁷ In the period under consideration Jewish thought evidently had not arrived at a consensus concerning the serpent of Gen. 3.

But if testing/temptation is not specifically attributed to Satan (or to demons) in Jewish literature we must note the frequency with which God and Satan are associated in its initiation. This conception of its origin first occurs, as we have seen, in the prologue of the Book of Job where Satan is given permission to test character. In response to Satan's urging, God says to him, "Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!" (1:12); and, "Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life" (2:6). It must be noted, however, that the test is also described as God's doing: "You (Satan) incited me (the Lord) against him (Job)" (2:3; cf. 1:21; 2:10). On the other hand, it is my opinion that the Jewish mind would find little, if any, discrepancy between the idea that God gave Satan permission to test Job, and the idea that God himself tested Job. ⁶⁸

The influence of the prologue of Job on the conception of the source of testing/temptation is evident in a number of rabbinic passages. The idea that Satan moved God to test Abraham occurs in a legendary expansion of Gen. 22 found in Jub. 17:16-17, "Prince Mastema came and he said before God, 'Behold, Abraham loves Isaac his son. And he is more pleased with him than everything. Tell him to offer him (as) a burnt-offering upon the altar. And you will see whether he will do this thing. And you will know whether

he is faithful in everything in which you test him.” Various rabbinic expansions of Gen. 22 give evidence of the same influence of the prologue of Job, by according to Satan a role in the testing of Abraham.⁶⁹

There are passages in which God and Satan are both accorded responsibility for the onset of testing/temptation, though the influence of Job 1-2 is not obvious. The most outstanding examples we have noted are in a Qumran document:

- a) IQM 16.11-12, “In the event that Belial girds himself to help the children of darkness, so that through God’s inscrutable will, and as a means whereby He may ‘put the gold to the test (*lhwn*),’ the corpses of the infantry begin to fall.”
- b) IQM 17.10, “Be of good courage in the trial (*bmšrp*) which God visits upon you, until He gives the sign that He has completed his test (*mšrpyw*).”⁷⁰

Though the vocabulary in these passages is not the technical vocabulary with which we are concerned, the context is that of the eschatological conflict, which is frequently described as a time of trial. Moreover, the terms used here occur elsewhere in parallel with our vocabulary. What is significant is that, though Belial’s hostility to God is as extreme as it can be, the testing/temptation which he effects is said to be a visitation of God. Indeed, the conflict, insofar as it is a test, seems to be not only by God’s permission but in fulfilment of His will.⁷¹

Though the conception that both God and Satan were responsible for testing/temptation is encountered rather frequently in the pseudepigraphic and rabbinic literature, Satan seems only to have been able to effect it with God’s permission. Indeed, that tests/temptations effected by Satan were the will of God and served His purposes recurs from time to time.⁷² Moreover, the intense hostility of Satan to God in some of the pseudepigraphic writings does not seem to make any difference at this point. In view of the frequent expansion of Gen. 22 in order to include the participation of Satan in the testing of Abraham, the question may be raised whether the Jewish view did not commonly include Satan in its

conception of the origin of testing/temptation, even though he is not always mentioned.

In connection with our study of Satan in relation to our theme, the Gen. 3 story requires consideration, though, as I noted when discussing the relationship between Satan and the serpent, it is never spoken of as a testing or temptation story in the literature consulted, but always as a deception story (e.g., Apoc. Mos. 16:5; 4 Macc. 18:8; Sib. Or. 1:40; 3 Bar. 4:8; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14).

In Gen. 3 “the serpent” who tempted Eve is represented as a member of the animal creation (3:1, 14), albeit as “more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made.” In later literature, however, Satan is said to be related to the serpent in one way or another. In Apoc. Mos. 16:4-5 he says to the serpent, “Do not fear; only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him (Adam).”⁷³ According to 3 Bar. 9:7, “Samael (i.e., Satan). . . took the serpent as a garment.” In a number of passages it seems to be assumed that the serpent was Satan, e.g., 3 Bar. 4:13, “(Satanael) deceived Eve and Adam”; 2 Enoch 31:4-6, “(The devil) corrupted Eve” (cf. 1 Enoch 69:6; Apoc. Abr. 23:11); Wisd. 2:24, “Through the devil’s envy death entered the world”; Rom. 16:20, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet”; Rev. 12:9, “That ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” (cf. 20:2).

Though it is not said that God had a hand in the tempting of Eve (and Adam), He put “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8), He forbade the eating of the fruit of it (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:3), and He apparently allowed the serpent to have access to the inhabitants of the garden. One may deduce therefrom that He wanted Adam and Eve to be tested.

3. The Evil Impulse in Relation to the Onset of Testing/Temptation

We turn now to another source of *peirasmos* mentioned amongst the Jews, namely the evil impulse (*yēšer*).

Gen. 6:5 (“The Lord saw. . . that every inclination [impulse]

of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually”), and Gen. 8:21 (“The inclination [impulse] of the human heart is evil from youth”), provided the seed-bed from which the doctrine of the evil impulse developed.⁷⁴ And according to G. von Rad, *yēšer* in Deut. 31:21 (“I know what they are inclined [lit., *yēšer*] to do even now [i.e., ‘turn to other gods and serve them’]”) “is already approaching here closely” to the evil impulse doctrine.⁷⁵ The first extant occurrences of the evil impulse doctrine probably occur in Sir. (c. 180 B.C.), the relevant passages being in:

- a) 15:14 (Heb.), “God created man from the beginning . . . and gave him into the hand of his inclination”;⁷⁶
- b) 21:11 (Syr.), “He that keepeth the law gets mastery over his inclination,”⁷⁷
- c) 23:5-6 (LXX), “Remove evil desire from me. . . Do not give me over to shameless passion”;
- d) 37:3 (LXX), “O inclination to evil (*ponēron enthumēma*), why were you formed. . .”⁷⁸

It should be noted, however, that B. Otzen considers it doubtful that the Jewish doctrine of the evil impulse is represented in Sir.⁷⁹

Subsequent to Sir., the extant references to the evil impulse which are to be dated before, or about, A.D. 100, are in:

- a) *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Second Century B.C.),⁸⁰ a writing which also includes references to the good impulse in people as the counterpart of the evil impulse. The most notable passage is T. Ash. 1:3-9, “God has granted two ways to the sons of men, two mind-sets. . . The two ways are good and evil; concerning them are two dispositions within our breasts that choose between them. . . If the mind is disposed toward evil, all of its deeds are wicked. . .”
- b) The Qumran literature, in which the doctrine of the evil impulse is probably represented in 1QS 5.4-5 and in CDC 2.16, both of which refer to the possibility of “going astray after” one’s impulse⁸¹ (cf. 1QH fr.3:9f.). Some scholars are of the opinion that this doctrine,

- and that of the good impulse as well, is also represented in 1QS 3.18-19, "(God) assigned him (man) two spirits by which to walk. . . They are the spirits of truth and perversion."⁸² Most significant is the occurrence of the precise phrase "evil impulse" in 11QPSa 19:15f. where "the poet prays that Satan and an unclean spirit may not rule over him and that 'the evil impulse' may not take possession of his limbs."⁸³
- c) 4 Macc. (about the beginning of the Christian era⁸⁴) seems to reflect a variation of the doctrine: "When God fashioned human beings, he planted in them emotions and inclinations, but at the same time he enthroned the mind among the senses as a governor over them all" (2:21-22; cf. 1:1, 30). M. Hadas compares this doctrine with that of the rabbinic doctrine of the "evil inclination."⁸⁵
- d) In 2 Enoch (late first century A.D.?) the doctrine of an evil tendency in man from the beginning is apparently implied in 30:16, "Whereas I (God) have come to know his (Adam's) nature, he does not know his own nature. That is why ignorance is more lamentable than the sin such as it is in him to sin." R. H. Charles comments, "This ignorance. . . is. . . of his nature with its good and evil impulses."⁸⁶
- e) Of special interest is the teaching of 2 Esdras (late first century A.D.) concerning the relationship of the evil impulse to the fall of Adam in 3:21-22, "The first Adam, burdened with an evil heart (*cor malignum*),⁸⁷ transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed and the evil remained."

In rabbinic literature the doctrine of the evil impulse is found as early as Pirke Aboth 4:2, "Who is mighty? he that subdues his impulse."⁸⁸ Enticement to evil is frequently attributed to the evil impulse, e.g., Gen. R. 22:6; bSanh. 91b; 105a.⁸⁹

It ought, perhaps, to be added that “the heart,” which is commonly thought of as the seat of the evil impulse,⁹⁰ is sometimes used when the evil impulse is meant,⁹¹ even though the heart was not considered to be essentially corrupt.⁹² Furthermore, there is some reason to believe that “lust” could be used to represent the evil impulse. Concerning Pirke Aboth 4:30 (“Envy, lust, and conceit put man out of this world”), S. Schechter comments, “‘Lust’ here apparently corresponds to *Evil Yezer*.”⁹³

Of importance for our study is the fact that Jewish writers seem to have consistently held that the evil impulse was created by God. This conviction was expressed in such ways as the following:

- a) T. Ash. 1:3, “God has granted two ways to the sons of men, two mind-sets. . .”
- b) 4 Ezra 7:92, “The evil thought that was formed with them.”
- c) bKid. 30b “I (God) created an evil tendency.”⁹⁴
- d) Midrash Hag-gadol, I Genesis, p. 132, “But for the *Evil Yezer* which I (God) have created in him (man), he would have committed no wrong.”⁹⁵

In accord with the doctrine that the evil impulse was created by God is doctrine to the effect that God wills enticement to evil through the evil impulse. Indeed such a doctrine occurs in the earliest document extant in which there is probable reference to the evil impulse: Sir. 15:14 (Heb.), “God created man from the beginning, and put him into the hand of him that would spoil him, and gave him into the hand of his inclination.”⁹⁶

The same doctrine is implicit in a passage probably to be credited to late in the first century A.D., namely 2 Enoch 30:15-16, which has been quoted above. The doctrine is found again in *Apoc. Abr.* (probably from the end of the first century A.D.) 23:14, “Eternal, Mighty One! Why did it please you to bring it about that evil should be desired in the heart of man, because you are angered by what was chosen by you . . .(?)”

In the last of these passages there is awareness of the moral

problem involved in the attribution to God of the creation of the evil impulse. In our opinion it was the awareness of this moral problem which led to:

- a) The unusual teaching attributed to R. Hana b. Aha (A.D. 80-120) that God regretted having made the evil impulse.⁹⁷
- b) The teaching that the evil impulse was formed for a good purpose, as in Gen. R. 9:7, "But is the evil impulse very good? . . . Were it not for that impulse a man would not build a house, marry a wife, beget children, or conduct business affairs."⁹⁸
- c) The teaching of one rabbi that man made the impulse bad.⁹⁹

The relationship between the evil impulse and Satan must now be examined. The earliest passage I have located in which the two are explicitly brought into conjunction is T. Ash. 1:8-9, "If the mind is disposed toward evil. . . it. . . is overmastered by Beliar." The context makes it clear that the evil impulse is controlled by Satan. R. H. Charles, however, emends T. Ash. 1:8 to read, "If it (the soul) incline to the evil inclination. . . (it) is ruled by Beliar."¹⁰⁰ Even if the text as amended means that Beliar has his opportunity when the evil inclination has once grown strong, the idea that Beliar dominates the evil impulse is still implied in T. Benj. 6:1, "The deliberations ('inclination'?) of the good man are not in the control of the deceitful spirit, Beliar, for the angel of peace guides his life."

Though the relationship indicated is somewhat different, the devil and the evil impulse are seemingly conjoined in the version of the fall of Adam in *Apoc. Mos.* 16:4-5, "The devil said to him (the serpent), ' . . . Only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him,'" taken in conjunction with 19:3, "He (the serpent) went. . . and sprinkled his evil poison on the fruit (of the forbidden tree) which he gave me to eat which is his covetousness. For covetousness is the origin of every sin. And I . . . took of the fruit and ate." "Covetousness . . . the origin of every sin" sounds like a reference to the evil impulse. However, the idea that the evil impulse originates with the devil rather than with God is strange, and casts doubt on

the view that the author had the doctrine of the evil impulse in view.¹⁰¹

When we consider the rabbinic view, we find that scholars hold diverse views as to rabbinic convictions. Some are convinced that for the rabbis generally, "Satan, the Adversary, is only an allegorical figure, representing the evil of the world, both physical and moral. . . The belief in evil spirits, and in Satan, the Evil One, remained rather a matter of popular credulity and never becomes a positive doctrine of the Synagogue."¹⁰² Others claim that the identification of Satan and the evil impulse was "an exceptional Rabbinic view."¹⁰³

The chief support for the former view is the statement in bBaba Bathra 16a, "Satan, the evil prompter (lit., 'impulse'), and the angel of death are all one." A. Cohen comments, "It indicates that the prompting to evil is rather a force within the individual than an influence from without. It also indicates why God permits Satan to be active and does not destroy him. The reason is because. . . the (evil impulse) is an essential constituent in human nature."¹⁰⁴ However, S. Schechter¹⁰⁵ who disagrees with Hughes, says concerning bBaba Bathra 16a, "The identification of the *Evil Yezer* with the Angel of Death is sometimes modified in the sense of the former being the cause of death consequent upon sin rather than of his performing the office of executioner." To support his statement he draws attention to Pirke Aboth 2:16, "The evil eye (envy), and the *Evil Yezer*, and the hatred of one's fellow creatures put man out of the world."¹⁰⁶

In our view the same may be said of the identification of Satan and the evil impulse. Such passages as the following are in opposition thereto:

- a) According to jShab. 1.3.3b.64, "Then there came a spirit in the form of a woman, and tempted him (a man of great piety), and his *impulse* pressed him to desire her." Though this passage speaks of "a spirit" rather than of "Satan," the external "tempter" and the impulse are distinguished.
- b) In Yalkut Schimeon on Deut. 23:14 the evil impulse

and Satan seem to be distinguished: "Whoever dwells without a wife and with drawn sword (penis), with him the evil impulse becomes mighty; he goes out with him to the street; Satan stands there and strives to destroy him out of the world." ¹⁰⁷

- c) In bBer. 16b there appears to be the same distinction: "May it be thy will, O Lord. . . to deliver me this day and every day. . . from the evil impulse. . . from Satan the destroyer." ¹⁰⁸

The judgment of S. E. Johnson appears to be correct: "The rabbis taught that Satan stirs up the. . . evil impulse in man." ¹⁰⁹

In Jewish literature testing/temptation is sometimes attributed to the evil impulse. The attribution seems to be implied in Sir. 15:14 (Heb.): "God created man from the beginning, And put him into the hand of him that would spoil him, And gave him into the hand of his inclination." ¹¹⁰ Other passages we have noted seem to imply likewise, but do not make the attribution specific. In rabbinic literature testing/temptation seems to be traced to the evil impulse, most impressively in the prayer found in bBer. 60b, "Bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me, and let not the evil inclination have sway over me." If this passage does attribute testing/temptation to the enticements of the evil impulse, it is to be noted that it is because God "brings" a man into it. God is involved in the onset of testing/temptation as well as the evil impulse.

Of special interest is the rabbinic passage in which God, Satan, and the evil impulse, are all involved in the onset of testing/temptation, namely bSanh. 107a:

He (the Lord) answered, "I will test thee (David) . . . I will try thee in a matter of adultery" . . . Now Bathsheba was cleansing her hair behind a screen when Satan came to him, appearing in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him which broke the screen. Thus she stood revealed and he saw her. . . ¹¹¹ (After taking Bathsheba) David pleaded, ". . . Thou knowest full well that had I wished to suppress my lust (lit. 'impulse') I could have done

so. ”

In this passage testing/temptation is described as the will of God; it is effected by Satan; and the evil impulse seems to be its subjective possibility. The objective nature of Satan seems to be especially evident in that he appears as a bird.

Though our vocabulary is not used, Ex. R. 19:2 contains a notable statement: “David said: ‘Lord of the universe! When I occupy myself with Thy statutes, let not the Tempter (*yēser?*) have power to influence me. . . namely, that Satan do not lead me astray and make me shamefaced before the righteous.’ ”¹¹² In this prayer credited to David, temptation is by the permission of God and is probably (?) the work of both the evil impulse and Satan. That it is by God’s permission here, but by His determination in bSanh. 107a, is reminiscent of the ambivalence at this point which we noted in the prologue of Job.

Summary and Conclusion

In Jewish literature testing/temptation is ordinarily attributed to God, and to God alone, in the earliest period. Gen. 3 with its doctrine of the serpent is apparently an exception, though it seems not to have been considered a testing/temptation story in this period. The prologue of Job provides another exception if it is to be dated very early. Unless the serpent of Gen. 3 was identified with Satan (as in Rev 12:9) at an earlier time, the prologue of Job provides the earliest occurrence of Satan’s involvement in testing/temptation. It is probable that in Sir. we have an early indication of the responsibility of the evil impulse, though this responsibility does not become specific and unmistakable in the extant literature until we confront it in the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹¹³

It is significant concerning the meaning of testing/temptation that we have not found a single passage in this literature (with the possible exception of Gen. 3) in which God’s responsibility is not explicit, or at least clearly implied. If Satan is active in its onset, it is always because God at least permits it, if He does not actively will it. Even if there are passages in which Satan is accorded sole responsibility, such passages are not representative of the common view held amongst the rabbis, and would probably not represent

the full view of the rabbi who made the statement. The same is true concerning the evil impulse. It only brings men into *peirasmos* according to the will of God, and, if there are passages in which this is not made clear, it is because complete expression is not being given to the view commonly held.

Though no formal doctrine concerning the source of testing/temptation is elaborated, and though there is evidence of some disagreement concerning the matter, the present writer is of the opinion that the doctrine which seems to be implicit in bSanh. 107a is probably representative of the view which would have commanded general support, had a doctrine ever been formulated. In this view the primacy of God is steadily maintained. Whether He merely permits testing/temptation, or delivers over to it, or actually engages in it Himself, it cannot take place apart from Him and always serves His purposes. Inasmuch, however, as the means of testing/temptation were often considered unworthy of Him, a source thereof which is external to Him seems to have been deemed necessary. Hence the importance of Satan, who, nevertheless, derived his power and authority from God. The evil impulse, which was created by God, seems to have been important as the internal possibility of the *peirasmos* of people.

B. In Early Christian Literature

1. God as the Sole Source

When one turns to the New Testament and early Christian literature, one discovers that testing/temptation is not often attributed simply and solely to God.

Heb. 12:3-11 seems to be one of the few examples. Though the experience which prompted the writing of these verses is not called a *peirasmos* in the immediate context, that experience seems to be referred to as such in Heb. 2:18 and 4:15, and persecution ordeals are elsewhere called *peirasmoi*, as we have seen. Furthermore, "discipline," which is prominent in this passage, is connected with testing in Deut. 8:2-5; Sir. 4:17-18; Wisd. 11:9-

10.¹¹⁴ Now it is specifically stated concerning the experience of those to whom the epistle is addressed: "God is treating you as children," and "He (the Father of spirits) disciplines us for our good." In addition, there is quoted with approval Prov. 3:11-12, "Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts." It seems to be implied that it is God, and God alone, who is responsible for the testing they are undergoing.¹¹⁵ It is to be noted that the disciplinary value of testing dominates the thought.¹¹⁶

A passage in Hermas also merits our attention at this point, though at first it may not seem so. The passage is in Sim. 7.1-2, and reads as follows:

"I (Hermas) have come here, Sir (apparently 'the angel of repentance') "¹¹⁷ said I, "in order that you may command the shepherd of punishment to depart from my house, because he afflicts me too much." "You must be afflicted," said he, "For thus," said he, "the glorious angel enjoined concerning you. For he wishes you to be tried (*peirasthēnai*). . . Your family has done great iniquity and sin, and the glorious angel has become enraged at their deeds, and for this reason has commanded you to be afflicted for some time, that they also may repent and purify themselves from every lust of this world. When, therefore, they repent, and have been purified, then the angel of punishment will depart from you."

One might have assumed that the shepherd, or angel, of punishment was either the devil or one of his angels,¹¹⁸ but it is specifically stated concerning him, "He is one of the righteous angels, but is set over punishment."¹¹⁹ "The glorious angel" is apparently one of "the glorious angels," perhaps the chief of them, whom "the Lord took. . . as counsellors concerning the heritage of the servant." ¹²⁰ Here, then, are God's own angels engaging in tests, evidently as His agents, though it is to be noted that, as in Heb. 12, the purpose is disciplinary. That it should be His angels

rather than the Lord himself who engage in such tests is reminiscent of Raphael's responsibility in relation to testing in the Aleph text of Tobit 12:14, to say nothing of the relationship of testing to Wisdom in Sir. 4:17 and in Wisd. 11:9; or of the Holy Spirit in the Wilderness narratives of the Synoptic gospels. Of course, as we shall see, Hermas also speaks of testing/temptation as having quite a different source.

An interesting reference to God as the source of testing occurs in 2 Clem. 20:2, "We are contending in the contest (*peiran*) of the living God, and we are being trained by the life which now is, that we may gain the crown in that which is to come."¹²¹ In this passage the disciplinary value of testing is prominent, as in Heb. 12 and Hermas *Sim.* 7.1-2.

A further passage in early Christian literature is to be noted: *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.8.2, "The Scripture says, 'A man that is reprobate (or "unapproved") is not tried by God.'"¹²² If the rendering is correct, testing/trial is represented as God's doing.

It will be noticed that there is only one New Testament passage which attributes testing solely and explicitly to God, though there are several early Christian passages outside the New Testament where this occurs. It is probably significant that usually it is a particular aspect or connotation of *peirasmos* which is prominent.

Before we leave this section we must take note of an occurrence of our vocabulary in a context which, in our view, specifically mentions no source other than God, but which leaves the strong impression of a more complex view. The occurrence is in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Do not bring us to the time of trial (RSV: 'Lead us not into temptation')."¹²³

That God is not solely responsible is intimated by the fact that the petition is not, "Do not try (or test) us,"¹²⁴ but "Do not bring us to the time of trial." There is, moreover, the evidence that our vocabulary is used in the sense of enticement to evil, as we have seen. Immediately the question arises, however, concerning the extent to which God is responsible. There are those who are of the opinion that underlying the petition is the idea that God only permits temptation. For example, E. F. Scott claims that "in Aramaic

the imperative can be used in a 'permissive' sense, so that the meaning may be, 'Do not allow us to be led.'" ¹²⁵ F. C. Grant, on the other hand, contends that "bring (*eisenegkes*)" "carries a sense of compulsion," ¹²⁶ so that we have here more than the idea of permission; we have the idea of deliverance into trial/temptation. I favour this view because it relies on the text as it stands, and also because it fits what Matt. 4:1 states concerning the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. ¹²⁷

That there is no clear indication of the effective source of testing/temptation in the Lord's Prayer is disputed. Some believe that the Matthaean version at any rate clearly refers to the evil impulse. The following considerations are advanced in favour of such a view:

- a) In bChag. 16a the occurrence of "the evil" (lit.) in Mic. 7:3 is understood as a reference to the evil impulse. ¹²⁸ The same interpretation may well apply in the case of "evil (*tou ponērou*)" in the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer.
- b) A close rabbinic parallel to the sixth and seventh petitions of the Lord's Prayer suggests that "evil" in the seventh petition refers to the evil impulse. In bBer. 60b these words occur: "Bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, into temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me, and let not the evil inclination have sway over me."
- c) In the Gethsemane narrative Jesus is represented as exhorting His disciples to pray "that you may not come into the time of trial" (Mark 14:38 [Matt. 26:41; Luke 22:46])--an exhortation manifestly reminiscent of the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer. According to Matthew and Mark the exhortation is immediately followed by the Dominical comment: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."¹²⁹ This saying suggests that it is the weakness of the flesh which gives testing/temptation its opportunity. As we shall have occasion to notice later in this chapter, it has been held that "the flesh" in this passage corresponds to

the evil impulse in rabbinic literature.¹³⁰

In view of these considerations it is not surprising that I. Abrahams has declared, "It is difficult to resist the suggestion that the final petition (of the Lord's Prayer) has a reference to the doctrine of the evil *yeşer*."¹³¹

Another view is that the Matthaean version indicates that Satan is the source of trial/temptation. The following arguments are presented in favour of this view:

- a) Though they affirm that there is no place in rabbinic literature in which Satan is called "The Evil One," Strack and Billerbeck are of the opinion that to refer to him as such would not sound strange in Jewish ears.¹³²
- b) bBer. 16b shows that the rabbis could pray for deliverance from Satan, as well as from the evil impulse, from evil people, and from misfortune of every kind.
- c) In Matt. 13:19, 38, *ho ponēros* ("the evil [one]") clearly refers to Satan.¹³³
- d) Davies and Allison draw attention to the "parallel" in Luke 22:28 ("You are those who have continued with me in my trials"), and note that this statement "is immediately followed by the mention of Satan" (22:31).¹³⁴
- e) According to T. W. Manson, "The preposition (*apo*) used with the verb "deliver" suggests deliverance from a personal adversary rather than out of an evil condition."¹³⁵

The present writer is of the opinion, however, that neither of these interpretations of *tou ponērou* (the evil [one]) in the last petition of the Lord's Prayer is justified. We are convinced by the weight of the evidence that it is to be taken almost as a synonym for trial/temptation (*peirasmon*) in the preceding line, if it be allowed that *peirasmon* is used in the pregnant sense of yielding, and/or if it has tribulation prominent in its connotation. This interpretation is favoured by:

- a) 2 Tim. 4:18, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack (*rhusetai me . . . apo pantos ergou ponērou . . .*)" "The sentence sounds like an echo of 'deliver us from evil (*rhusai hēmas apo tou ponērou*)' of the Lord's Prayer."¹³⁶
- b) 2 Pet. 2:9, "The Lord knows how to rescue (*rhuesthai*) the godly from trial (*ek peirasmou*)," a statement which apparently alludes to the last two petitions of the Matthaean version of the Lord's Prayer.¹³⁷
- c) Did. 10:5, "Remember, Lord, thy Church, to deliver (*rhusasthai*) it from all evil (*apo pantos ponērou*) and to make it perfect in thy laws. . . For thine is the power and the glory for ever." The dependence of this portion of a much longer prayer on the final petition and closing doxology of the Lord's Prayer found in Did. 7:2 is obvious.

Of lesser significance, but providing additional support for the position being advanced, are such passages as:

- a) Ps. 17 (18):30 LXX, "By thee shall I be delivered from a troop (*rhuthēsomai apo peiratēriou*)." This passage is of special significance if the last word contains the idea of religious testing, as we have seen that it may.
- b) Sir. 36 (33):1, "No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again."
- c) Sir. 51:11 Heb., "He (the Lord) redeemed me from all evil, and delivered me in the day of trouble (Syriac: 'from all trouble');" cf. LXX, "You saved me from destruction, and rescued (*exeilou*) me in time of trouble."
- d) bBer. 29b, "May it be Thy will, O Lord my God, to lead me forth in peace, and deliver me from the hand of every enemy and ambush by the way." In this passage "lead" and "deliver" occur in consecutive petitions, as in the Lord's Prayer, to say nothing of the kind of "evil" from which deliverance is desired.¹³⁸

In the light of what appear to be three primitive interpretations of it, to say nothing of the parallels in Jewish sources, it seems that the last petition of the Lord's Prayer provides no indication of the effective source of testing/temptation. However, we cannot shake the impression that there is a parallelism of ideas between the statements (both from the first Gospel): "Do not bring us to the time of trial (*peirasmon*)" (6:13), and "Jesus was led up. . . to be tempted (*peirasthēnai . . .*)" (4:1).¹³⁹ This may suggest that the temptation in the Lord's Prayer is effected by the devil, but it is not evidence from the prayer itself for such a view. The most that can be said is that the sixth petition hints at a more complex view of the source of testing/temptation than God alone.¹⁴⁰

2. *Satan as the Source*

In contrast with the extant Jewish literature, testing/temptation is traced simply to Satan in a number of places in early Christian literature. This is probably made possible by the frequent prominence of enticement to evil in the connotation of our vocabulary. New Testament occurrences include:

- a) Acts 5:3 v.l.: "Why has Satan tempted your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. . .?" Apart from the consideration that this reading is poorly attested,¹⁴¹ it is to be noted that the source of testing/temptation is more complex elsewhere in Lukan writings.
- b) 1 Thess. 3:5, "I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you, and that our labour had been in vain."¹⁴² Paul elsewhere, however, makes it clear that he has a more complex view of the source of testing/temptation.¹⁴³
- c) Rev. 2:10, "The devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested."¹⁴⁴ The use of the passive, "that you may be tested," rather than the active, "to test you," may, however, suggest that the will and desire of Satan are not the only reason for the "test."

There is a New Testament passage which is not specifically concerned with testing/temptation, but which may be included in

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our present consideration: ¹⁴⁵ Jesus' response to Peter, when Peter remonstrates with Him concerning His announcement that He must suffer. Jesus "rebuked Peter, and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things'" (Mark 8:33; cf. Matt. 16:23). ¹⁴⁶ As we shall see, however, there are indications in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus thought in more complex fashion of the source of testing/temptation than this passage suggests.

In early Christian literature we note the following occurrences of the attribution of testing/temptation simply to Satan:

- a) In *Hermas: Sim.* 9.31.2, "Though every one of them is tempted by the most wicked devil. . ." *Mand.* 4.3.6, "If a man be tempted by the devil"; and *Mand.* 12.5.4, "The devil comes to all the servants of God, tempting." As we shall see, however, in *Mand.* 12.1-3 the evil impulse is involved in bringing on testing/temptation, and, as we have seen, in *Sim.* 7.1, "the glorious angel" is said to wish that *Hermas* be tried.
- b) In 2 *Clem.* 18:2, "I have not yet escaped temptation, but I am still in the midst of the devices of the devil."¹⁴⁷

It will have been noticed that in most cases we have shown that the simple attribution of testing/temptation to Satan did not represent a complete expression of the author's view. It may well be questioned whether many Christians thought of testing/temptation in such simple terms. It seems highly doubtful. We know of only one document where this simple view seems to be held, namely the *Clementine Homilies*, which, to quote F. J. A. Hort, represent in general "a form of Ebionism."¹⁴⁸ Of particular relevance to our inquiry is *Clem. Hom.* 3.55, "To those who suppose that God tempts, as the Scriptures say, He (Jesus) said, The tempter is the wicked one, who also tempted himself." In accord with this view, the author declares that it is a falsehood to state that God tried Abraham "that He might know if he would endure it" (3.43). Furthermore, he substitutes "the tempter tempted (*ho peirazōn epeirazen*)" ([16.13]), for Deut. 8:2 LXX, "the Lord God. . . tests (*peirazei*)."¹⁴⁹

We turn now to consider passages in early Christian literature

in which both God and Satan are accorded responsibility for the onset of testing/temptation. In the first place, there is one passage which seems to imply that testing/temptation is the deed of Satan, for which he has had to secure permission from God: Luke 22:31-32, "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail." These verses are reminiscent of the prologue of Job. Though testing/temptation terminology is not used in the immediate context, the idea is present, and the terminology occurs in Luke 22:40, 46, evidently with reference to the same apostolic experience.¹⁵⁰

It appears that there are certain passages in early Christian literature which imply a more active role for God, even though the actual testing/temptation is the work of the devil. In this case God does not merely permit the devil to engage in testing/temptation. He delivers individuals into the hand of the devil with a view to their testing/temptation.¹⁵¹

The first example to take our attention is with respect to Jesus' temptation in the Wilderness. Matt. 4:1 provides the most striking phraseology: "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Surely the version in Mark 1:12-13 implies no less: "The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan." Though the Markan version lacks the infinitive of purpose ("to be tempted") found in Matt.,¹⁵² the statement that the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness cries out for a reason, and the only reason available in the context is temptation by Satan.¹⁵³ If this interpretation is correct, the Matthaean version simply makes explicit what is implicit in Mark.¹⁵⁴ Surely the divine purpose is also in view in Luke 4:1-2, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted (*peirazomenos*) by the devil." It is probable that *peirazomenos* is a participle expressing purpose. In addition to the parallels in the first two gospels, it is to be taken as expressing purpose in view of the assimilation of the opening of Luke's temptation narrative to the language of Deut. 8:2-3 LXX, where it is stated that God led Israel in the wilderness to test them.¹⁵⁵

In all three Synoptics, then, the temptation of Jesus in the

wilderness is accomplished by the tempter to whom He has been delivered by divine action in accord with the divine will. The fact that it is the Spirit, rather than God, who delivered Him, does not appear to be of significance for our present study--in either case it is divine action that is involved. One may only question whether the relationship of the Spirit to temptation may not owe something to the later Wisdom literature, or at least to some of the thought patterns in Sir. and Wisd. It is Wisdom who tests according to Sir. 4:17 and Wisd. 11:9. Moreover, according to Wisd. 9:17 ("Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?") Wisdom and God's holy spirit seem to be identified.¹⁵⁶ That the conception of the Holy Spirit in the Synoptics shows advance beyond what we find in the Book of Wisdom, does not invalidate the suggestion that the doctrines in the Book of Wisdom may have provided some preparation for the temptation narratives in the Synoptics. In this connection it may be noted that both Wisd. 11:9 and the narratives of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness owe a good deal to Deut. 8.

To turn to another example, in the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in Luke, the Gethsemane experience of Jesus, together with His ensuing death, is considered as a trial/temptation effected by Satan, but fulfilling God's will. Jesus is represented as stating to those with Him at the Last Supper, "You are those who have stood by me in my trials" (Luke 22:28). Does the context not indicate that He is thinking of the trials which He has suffered hitherto, because of what He anticipates in the immediate future? Is it not suggested, therefore, that what He is about to experience is a trial/temptation too?¹⁵⁷ Indeed, Jesus Himself is represented as speaking of His death as God's will: "Remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36; cf. Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42), and the Gospels are replete with intimations that it was the divine purpose that He should suffer (e.g., Mark 10:45; Luke 24:44).¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, in Luke 22:3, 53 (cf. John 13:2) Jesus' death is attributed to Satan, so that there is reason to understand that what God willed concerning the passion of our Lord was effected by what Satan did, and that the trial/temptation He thereby experienced was due not simply to the will of God, but also to the activity of the devil. That the devil's responsibility in

the matter is not made explicit in Matthew and Mark may not be significant, since the evil men do is apparently traced to him in Matt. 13:38-39; Mark 3:23-26 (Matt. 12:24-27); 8:33 (Matt. 16:23).

Though testing/temptation is sometimes attributed to Satan alone, such a simple view apparently does not represent fully the view of any authors in the main stream of early Christianity. On the other hand, explicit indication that God and Satan are both involved is to be observed only in the Synoptic Gospels, and in the period following the Apostolic Fathers. In Luke, as we have seen, there is one passage in which God's responsibility is by way of permission (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13), but the more common view is that God wills that testing/temptation be visited on people by Satan.¹⁵⁹

3. *The Evil Impulse in Relation to Peirasmos*

We have seen that the evil impulse in mankind was important in relation to the onset of testing/temptation in Jewish literature. We take up now the occurrence of the evil impulse in respect thereto in early Christian literature, dealing first with the simple attribution of testing/temptation to it.

The Dominical statement recorded in Mark 7:21 (cf. Matt. 15:19), "It is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery. . .," suggests that Jesus may not only have been familiar with, but endorsed, the doctrine of the evil impulse. This becomes especially evident when it is realized that contemporaries of Jesus would probably understand "impulse (*yēser*)" where the Old Testament reads "heart,"¹⁶⁰ and that the rabbis commonly located the evil impulse in the heart.¹⁶¹ Indeed, this very statement by Jesus would leave the impression that testing/temptation has its source entirely within the human person, were it not for other statements which trace it to a source outside him/her, as we have seen.

It is virtually certain that the tracing of temptation (*peirasmos*) to the evil impulse is found in James 1:13-15, "No one, when tempted, should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one's own desire (*epithumias*), being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that

sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.” The close connection, perhaps even synonymous use, of “desire” and “evil impulse” in the rabbinic literature, makes it probable, in view of the context, that we have here the doctrine of the evil impulse.¹⁶² Moreover, Sir. 15:11-15 (Heb.) apparently teaches that man is not led astray by God, but by his impulse. Whether James is dependent at this point on Sir. or not, strong support is given to the view that our epistle is tracing temptation to the evil impulse.¹⁶³

This passage in James is of special interest, because it seems to deny the ancient attribution of testing/temptation to God at the same time as it attributes it to the evil impulse. Moreover, as we have seen, the *Clementine Homilies* strongly deny that God is responsible for *peirasmos*, and there is reason to believe that they may be partly dependent on the Epistle of James.¹⁶⁴

We suggest that our epistle is misunderstood in the *Clementine Homilies*, for the following reasons:

- a) The author is engaged in beating down the argument of an imaginary objector. Not only is the diatribe style (frequently?) characteristic of this epistle,¹⁶⁵ one of the important characteristics of that style is evident at this point: the quotation and refutation of an imaginary heckler. The author is not really concerned with the elaboration of his theological convictions concerning testing/temptation, or its place in the purposes of God. He has been lauding the person who “endures” testing/temptation, and now takes time out to demolish the defences of one who would excuse his failure to stand firm in testing/temptation on the basis that testing/temptation originates with God.¹⁶⁶ He begins the demolition of his imaginary opponent’s position by first of all denying the thesis that God engages in testing/temptation. He points out that God cannot be tempted to do evil,¹⁶⁷ an observation which derives its strength from the fact that to a Jew its truth would be inescapable, reared as he/she was in the doctrine of God’s perfect purity and holiness. From this observation he deduces that God could not possibly

tempt anyone to do evil, because, to do so, would obviously be taking "delight in evil."¹⁶⁸ At this point the excuse of his opponent is demolished, but, like the good preacher he is, our author immediately pursues his psychological advantage, and proceeds to awaken his opponent's conscience by pointing out that a person's own desire lures and entices him, a point which would be especially effective in view of the Jewish emphasis on the necessity of suppressing own's evil desires.¹⁶⁹ He further destroys his opponent's false security by pointing out that what his desire leads to is not some unimportant failure, but to sin, which, in turn, brings the dread end of death. It has been suggested that underlying Jas. 1:2-4, 12, is the assumption that God is in some sense responsible for testing/temptation,¹⁷⁰ but, if so, I doubt whether our author could have set this out in vv. 13-15 without seriously weakening the psychological effect of his argument. I am not even certain, as is sometimes contended,¹⁷¹ that our author has shifted from *peirasmos* as testing to *peirasmos* as temptation. After all, he can say, "Anyone. . . who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin." (4:17). May he not also have held that such failure--in this case failure to endure testing--is due to the allurements and enticement of *epithumia*?

- b) As in the Gospels, there is a tendency in this epistle to make statements which are unbelievable, unless we are prepared to consider that the writer did not intend them to be treated as fully representative of his position. Our author makes his points incisively, expecting that his readers will understand the necessary qualifications.¹⁷²
- c) Sir. 15:11-15, upon which James may be dependent, not only exhorts, "Do not say, 'It was the Lord's doing that I fell away'; for he does not do what he hates." It also asserts, "He (the Lord) left him in the power of his own inclination (Heb.: *yēṣer*)" (RSV).¹⁷³ Is it not probable that the author of James had the same view concerning God's responsibility for testing/temptation,

even though he does not say so?

Though the author of the Epistle of James seems to deny that God has any responsibility for the initiation of testing/temptation, careful consideration suggests that he probably thought otherwise.¹⁷⁴

We are on surer ground, however, when we suggest that the writer of James included Satan in his view of the origin of testing/temptation, since the need to "resist the devil" is urged in 4:7. It may be argued that the maxims in 4:7, and in its immediate context, are repeated because they are well-known among Christians, and that not all of them need faithfully represent the author's own position. That these maxims were familiar to Christians in general has been argued by P. Carrington¹⁷⁵ and E. G. Selwyn,¹⁷⁶ who marshal considerable evidence that they were part of a pattern of formulae which was widely, if not universally, disseminated in the primitive church. But this fact is not evidence that Satan had no real place in the thought of the writer of the Jacobite epistle, unless it can be shown that it is impossible to trace testing/temptation to both Satan and lust. It is clear that other Jewish and Christian writers sensed no incompatibility.

There is one passage in early Christian literature in which the evil impulse and Satan are specifically associated in such a way as to indicate that both are involved in the initiation of testing/temptation, namely, *Hermas, Mand.* 12.1.1-12.3.1.¹⁷⁷ Of particular interest are 12.1.1, "Put on the desire which is good and holy, for by putting on this desire, you will hate the wicked desire and will curb it as you will"; and 12.2.2, "These desires then are wicked, and bring the servants of God to death,¹⁷⁸ for this evil desire is the (or 'a') daughter of the devil."

The exact significance of the phrase "the (or 'a') daughter of the devil" is of importance for our inquiry. In their respective contexts, such phrases as "a worthless woman (lit.: 'a daughter of Belial')" in 1 Sam. 1:16; "the children of the evil one" in Matt. 13:38; and "son of the devil" in Acts 13:10, suggest that *Hermas* is using "daughter of the devil" to indicate that the character of the evil impulse is like that of the devil, and perhaps even that the evil impulse is prompted by the devil.¹⁷⁹ The immediate context, which states that the evil desires it inspires are "wicked, and bring the

servants of God to death," makes this a plausible interpretation,¹⁸⁰ especially if the correct translation is "a daughter of the devil," rather than "the daughter of the devil." Further support for this interpretation is found in the closely parallel passage *Mand.* 9.9, "Consider this double-mindedness; for it is wicked and foolish, and uproots many from the faith, yes, even those who are very faithful and strong. For this double-mindedness is the (or 'a') daughter of the devil, and commits much wickedness against the servants of God." That more is implied by our phrase may be indicated in *Mand.* 9.11, "Faith is from above, from the Lord, and has great power, but double-mindedness is an earthly spirit, from the devil, and has no power." If "daughter of the devil" is here being interpreted to mean that the devil is the source of double-mindedness, the same phrase in *Mand.* 12.2.2 means that the devil is the source of the evil impulse. However, in the light of the Jewish insistence that the evil impulse is God's creation,¹⁸¹ I doubt whether "daughter of the devil" has this meaning in *Mand.* 12.2.2.

In view of the parallels which O. J. F. Seitz has traced between prominent conceptions in Hermas and in Test. XII, conceptions which include that of the two impulses,¹⁸² it is possible that aid in interpreting "daughter of the devil" may be found in T. Ash. 1.8-9 and T. Benj. 6.1. As we have seen, it is clear that the teaching of the latter of these two passages, and perhaps also of the former, is that Beliar dominates the evil impulse. In the light of this evidence it is probable that the twelfth mandate teaches that the evil impulse is controlled by the devil, as well as having a character similar to that of the devil.

Though clear reference to the evil impulse is infrequent in early Christian literature, we have seen that there are a few passages in which it may be taken as certain that the doctrine is represented. In one of these there is explicit relationship to testing/temptation. In another, Satan and the evil impulse are apparently accorded joint responsibility for its onset. There is nothing in any of the occurrences we have noted, moreover, which precludes responsibility of some kind on God's part. Indeed, if we may assume the Jewish doctrine that God created the evil impulse, His responsibility is implicit. There is, furthermore, the evidence of God's involvement in those Synoptic passages in which enticement to evil is prominent in the

meaning of our vocabulary. On the other hand, there is no passage in which God, Satan and the evil impulse are all specifically accorded responsibility for the initiation of testing/temptation.

4. "The Flesh"

Finally we consider "the flesh" in relation to testing/temptation.¹⁸³ Though there is no clear evidence that "the flesh" was ever connected with testing/temptation in Jewish literature, it seems to have connection with enticement to evil in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the Old Testament there occurs on occasion a use of "flesh" as not merely the physical part of man, but as expressive of "the frailty and mortality of man"¹⁸⁴ as contrasted with the spirit of God.¹⁸⁵ Apparently from such roots as these, at Qumran there was a further development, perhaps under Hellenistic influence, in which "flesh" connotes not only man's frailty and mortality, but also his proneness to evil.¹⁸⁶ There is implicit the idea that man's flesh is polluted and that its tendency is to lead him into sin.¹⁸⁷

Evidence that enticement to evil has its source in the "flesh" is implicit in such passages as 1QS 11.9, "I belong to wicked humanity, and to the assembly of perverse flesh. My iniquities, my sin. . . belong to the assembly of worms and of things that move in darkness"; and 1QS 11.12, "If I stumble in the guilt of flesh."¹⁸⁸

I have not noted any passage which sets forth the origin of this pollution of the flesh, nor have I found any reference to the relationship of Satan, or of the evil impulse, to the enticement to evil which is due to "the flesh," with the possible exception of 1QS 4.20-21, in which there is the eschatological doctrine that God will finally "refine for himself some of mankind in order to abolish every evil spirit from the midst of his flesh, to cleanse him through a Holy Spirit from all wicked practices." The use of "flesh" in an ethical sense in 1QS 3.8-9;¹⁸⁹ 11.7, 9, 12, suggests the possibility that "flesh" in 4.21 is also used in an ethical sense.¹⁹⁰ The significance, so far as the source of enticement is concerned, depends, however, upon the interpretation of other words and phrases in the context. The possibilities appear to be as follows:

- a) According to W. D. Davies,¹⁹¹ the phrase, “to abolish every evil spirit from the midst of his flesh,” implies that “the flesh is the seat of evil spirits.” If Davies is correct, “the flesh” and evil spirits¹⁹² are considered to be jointly responsible for enticement to evil. Indeed, it would appear that “the flesh” provides the evil spirits with the possibility of enticing a person and also the sphere from which to attack him/her.
- b) If the evil spirits to be abolished from the midst of a person’s flesh are not cosmological entities, but rather dispositions and propensities, as the use of “spirit” in 4.10, which speaks of “loathsome works in an infidel spirit (lit.: ‘a spirit of fornication’) and ways of pollution in service of uncleanness,”¹⁹³ seems to indicate, an evil spirit may still be considered as jointly responsible with the flesh for the onset of enticement, provided that cosmological entities¹⁹⁴ are in view in 4.23, “Until now the spirits of truth and perversion strive within man’s heart.” It seems incongruous, however, that the evil spirit should be in man’s heart, and the evil propensities in his flesh.
- c) If dispositions and propensities are in view in 4.20-21, and if 4.23 refers essentially to what is known in other literature as the good and evil impulses, then it is possible that in 4.20-23 the evil impulse and the flesh are jointly considered to be responsible for enticement. But again it seems incongruous that the evil spirit, i.e., inclination or propensity, should be in the heart in 4.23 and in the flesh in 4.20-21.¹⁹⁵ This incongruity could be minimized by pointing out, as W. D. Davies does in his discussion of Paul’s doctrine of “the flesh,” that there are rabbinic passages in which the evil impulse is said to have “gained dominion over the whole 248 members of the human body.”¹⁹⁶ He continues with the affirmation, “It would not be difficult then for Paul to envisage sin as invading all his members and having its base in all his flesh.”¹⁹⁷ We submit, however, that to “gain dominion over” is

quite different from "having its base in."

In my opinion, "the midst of his flesh" in IQS 4.20-21 is merely another way of saying "his heart."¹⁹⁸ It is only two lines farther on that we read that "the spirits of truth and perversion strive within man's heart." The rabbis, moreover, though they located man's evil impulse in his heart,¹⁹⁹ could speak of it as "inside a man's body."²⁰⁰ In my view, therefore, there is no passage in the Qumran literature in which Satan (or demons) or the evil impulse is conjoined with the flesh as a source of enticement to evil.

In the New Testament the moral conception of "the flesh" is found chiefly in Paul,²⁰¹ who, however, provides in the Epistle to the Romans a detailed analysis of the conception such as is not present in the extant Qumran writings. As at Qumran, the flesh is the material element in man, which in itself is morally indifferent, but which is the seat and domain of that which has him morally under attack. That which thus has its seat in the flesh (7:14, 18, 23, 25), and which he distinguishes both from the flesh (7:25; 8:3)²⁰² and from man himself (7:17, 20, 23), Paul calls "sin."

Though he personifies "sin," Paul does not tell us whether it is a personal or impersonal power. In the light of Rom. 7:15-20, where the inner conflict due to "sin" is described in the language of demonic possession,²⁰³ it is tempting to think that if Paul were pressed he would identify this power as Satan,²⁰⁴ or as "the demon, Sin, playing the part of Satan."²⁰⁵ Our own view, however, is that "sin" in Rom. 5-8 does not refer to Satan or to a demon. If "sin" were Satan, or a demon, we doubt that the language of Rom. 5:12-13 would occur, "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin"²⁰⁶. . . sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law." Though it is entirely possible that "sin" is not always used with the same connotation in Rom. 5-8, we are of the opinion that it is to be understood throughout these chapters as a power to be compared to some extent with the evil impulse, which could not only be personified,²⁰⁷ but could even be identified with Satan.²⁰⁸ Indeed, it has been described as a propensity to sin,²⁰⁹ and, like the evil impulse, it transforms desire into lust.²¹⁰ On the other hand, it is to be contrasted with the evil impulse at the following points:

- a) It “dwells in” the flesh (Rom. 7:17-18), whereas the evil impulse is associated with the “heart,” that is, “the volitional and intellectual elements in man,”²¹¹ though in at least one rabbinic passage it is clear that the physical heart is meant.²¹²
- b) It is not of divine origin as is the case with the evil impulse. It was “by one man’s disobedience” that “many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:19), not because of any divine endowment.²¹³
- c) Because it is not of man’s nature as a created being, it is to be distinguished from the man himself in a way which is not true of the evil impulse. Twice Paul declares, “It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me” (Rom. 7:17, 20; cf. 7:22-23). This is not to deny, however, that the evil impulse is distinguished from man’s will in Jewish thought.²¹⁴
- d) Unless a man is set free by “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), it holds a man in slavery (Rom. 6:6-7, 14, 17-19, 20, 22; 7:14, 18-20). He is not free not to sin. In Jewish thought man is able to control the evil impulse.²¹⁵

That he considered “the flesh” a source of enticement because it is indwelt by “sin,” may be seen in such passages as Rom. 7:5, “While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death”; Rom. 8:12-13, “We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”; Eph. 2:3, “All of us once lived. . . in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses.”

That Paul considered “the flesh” not only a source of enticement to evil, but also a source of testing/temptation, is indicated in Gal. 5:16-25,

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires

is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent (*hina mē*) you from doing what you want. . . Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Even though the passage was apparently written to make sure that his doctrine of freedom from legalism would not lead to “an orgy of bad living cloaked with the pretext of higher spirituality,”²¹⁶ there is implicit in the exhortation to “be guided by the Spirit” the possibility that they may not be guided by the Spirit. And even though it is implied that to be “guided by the Spirit” is characteristic of faithfulness as children of God (cf. Rom. 8:14), it is also pointed out that there is within those who are Christ’s that which is opposed to the Spirit, namely “the flesh.” Those who are of the household of God are not only under the influence of the Spirit, they are also under pressure from the flesh and its unworthy desires.²¹⁷ Surely the effect of this pressure from the flesh is that their faithfulness as children of God is tested, i.e., they suffer *peirasmōs*.

It has been noted that the Spirit and the flesh, “opposed to each other,” and each of them seeking to keep those who are of the church from “doing what (they) want,” is reminiscent of the Jewish doctrine of the two impulses, each striving to sway the person, who must choose between them.²¹⁸ The chief difference is that the Spirit takes the place of the good impulse and the flesh the place of the evil impulse. In view of what we discovered concerning the function of the impulses in God’s people, the parallel with the Jewish doctrine supports our thesis that testing/temptation is in view.

Finally, in 6:1 the question is apparently taken up of the treatment a Christian is to receive who has failed to walk by the Spirit. The instruction given is, “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted.” This is surely decisive that *peirasmōs* is in view in Gal. 5, and, therefore, that Paul accords to “the flesh” responsibility for the experience of testing/temptation.

If, as some have held, that “the flesh” is being used in more

or less of the Pauline sense, testing/temptation is specifically traced thereto in Mark 14:38 (Matt. 26:41), "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."²¹⁹ In my opinion, however, this passage speaks of the flesh as "merely weak and impotent," not as "actively opposed to the 'the spirit.'"²²⁰ "The disciples wanted to do as he had asked. . . Their physical bodies let them down."²²¹ In this saying the flesh is not a source of testing/temptation.

There is one passage in Paul in which it is possible that both Satan and "the flesh" are accorded a part in the onset of testing/temptation. In 1 Cor. 7:5 husbands and wives are exhorted not to deny each other cohabitation for an extended period of time "so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (*akrasian*)."²²² Is it going too far to suggest that this verse implies that *akrasia* is native to human beings? And is it going too far to suggest that there is a point of contact, if not complete consonance, with the Pauline doctrine of the flesh in Rom. 7-8? Is there something approaching a definition of *akrasia* in the latter part of Rom. 7:18, "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it"?²²³ If so, we have considerable reason to believe that in 1 Cor. 7:5 "the flesh" as well as Satan is accorded responsibility for testing/temptation.²²⁴ Satan's ability to bring on testing/temptation, moreover, is due to a subjective condition, which is related to lack of marital relationships, so that Satan appears to be the objective condition and "the flesh" the subjective condition of testing/temptation.²²⁴

Summary and Conclusion

To sum up the early Christian view of the source of testing/temptation, we note, first of all, that passages are rare where the source is unambiguously and explicitly God. The twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the twentieth chapter of Second Clement, and the seventh similitude of Hermas, do so, but only, it seems, because the disciplinary value of testing/trial is prominent. Satan is frequently credited, or blamed, but there are some passages in which divine permission to Satan is mentioned, and others in which God appears to be involved to a greater extent, so that He not only permits, but actively wills that Satan bring about the testing/

temptation of persons. There are also a number of passages in which the evil impulse is important in its onset, sometimes being represented as the subjective condition, or even instrument, which makes it possible for Satan to bring about the experience of testing/temptation. In Pauline literature, but perhaps elsewhere as well, "the flesh" is sometimes represented as significant for the onset of testing/temptation, perhaps taking the place of the evil impulse as the subjective condition, if indeed, it does not include what is essential in the doctrine of the evil impulse. There seems to be no single passage in the New Testament, or in the Apostolic Fathers, where God, Satan, and the evil impulse (or "the flesh") are all represented as responsible for its onset, as appears to be the case in *bSanh. 107a*. On the other hand, the New Testament view seems to accord in general with the rabbinic view.²²⁵

The only way in which sectarian Judaism seems to have influenced primitive Christianity in relation to testing/temptation, is at the point of the greater hostility of Satan to God than is common among the rabbis. When this fact is coupled with the fact that God still permits, or even actively wills, testing/temptation by Satan, testing/temptation becomes more sharply paradoxical than it is in the rabbinic literature, though it is paradoxical there too.

The question arises whether different documents or sources exhibit differences in the matter of the origin to which testing/temptation is traced. In our judgment there is no clear evidence in the matter, though we have the following impressions:

- a) The severity of the opposition which the faithful are experiencing may have some bearing on the question. The Lord's Prayer, at any rate in its Lukan form, which does not contain the seventh petition, may reflect a situation where there was little, if any, persecution. The Epistle to the Hebrews deals with a difficult period in the life of those to whom it is addressed, but the threat of martyrdom has not been faced, so that difficult experiences may still be considered as sent from God. Mark and Q also reflect a background of tension, but one in which testing/temptation is still part of the positive will of God. One passage in the third gospel

may suggest a milieu in which the attacks on the church were of such severity that testing/temptation is considered to be by divine permission. It is noticeable, too, that in this Gospel Satan plays a larger part in the death of Christ than in Matthew and Mark.²²⁶ In such writings as the last book of the New Testament, Satan's power is so crushing that attention is focused on the battle being fought by Christians against him, and the victory to be won by Christ over him.

- b) The doctrines of the evil impulse and "the flesh" are most prominent where the emphasis is on the moral danger deriving from the undue excitement of the human appetites, rather than on the danger due to people round about. Certain passages in the Synoptics, in the Pauline epistles, in James, and in Hermas, illustrate this.

In none of the literature we have been studying is there anything approaching a formal doctrine of the source of testing/temptation. Had such a doctrine been attempted, it appears that God, Satan, and the evil impulse (or "the flesh") would all have had a place. God would have been represented as either permitting, or actively willing, testing/temptation; Satan would have been the active source external to the individual;²²⁷ and the evil impulse (or "the flesh") would have provided the internal condition making the experience possible.²²⁸

Appended Note # I: The Question of Other People as a Source of Peirasmos

The question whether other people are ever considered as a source of religious testing/temptation does not arise until the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. In earlier literature the source is always clearly and unequivocally God. Passages which raise the question, however, include:

- a) Prov. 16:29 LXX, "A man who is a transgressor enticeth (*apopeiratai*) friends and leadeth them in ways which are not good."²²⁹

- b) Yalk. Ps. 777, "The ancients were tried by the Lord... but the latter generations were tried by the nations."

It is difficult to be certain that other people are never considered to be the source of testing/temptation in statements such as these. Indeed Ernest Best concludes a lengthy consideration of the source of temptation according to the Scriptures with the statement, "Temptation comes either from Satan, or from the man himself, or from other men."²³⁰ However, other people are commonly considered to be agents rather than sources of testing/temptation. The following passages are especially instructive in this connection:

- a) T. Jos. 2.6-9.5, which deals in detail with the enticements of Potiphar's wife, but which prefaces them with such words as: "For a brief time he (God) may stand aside in order to test the disposition of the soul. In ten testings he showed that I was approved, and in all of them I persevered." On this passage H. M. Hughes comments: "God. . . sometimes tempts men to try their inclinations."²³¹
- b) Judith 8:25, in which the Assyrian attack on Bethulia is described as a *peirasmos*, specifically attributes that *peirasmos* to God.
- c) bSanh. 107a, which describes David's taking of Bathsheba as originating in an appeal of David to God that he be tested as the patriarchs had been. God responds by promising to test him.²³²

In early Christian literature a passage of particular interest in this connection is Mark 8:31-33 (Matt. 16:21-23) in which Jesus responds to Peter's rebuke with the words, "Get behind me, Satan!" It is probable that the severity of the language can only be justified on the basis that Peter was the instrument of the devil.²³³

Yalk. Ps. 777, if it does not represent a vagary of rabbinic opinion, may reflect a consciousness that the Old Testament attributed tests/temptations simply and directly to God, whereas the tests/temptations of his own day were considered to be by divine permission only. In addition it seems to reflect a period in which

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testing/temptation was thought of chiefly in terms of the hostile activities of antagonistic nations.

Appended Note # 2: The Source of Jesus' Peirasmoi

That God and Satan were both involved in the trials/temptations of Jesus is clearly indicated in the Synoptic gospels. Is there any indication anywhere in our literature of the evil impulse or "the flesh" also being involved? The passages requiring attention include:

Mark 14:38 (Matt 26:41; cf. Luke 22:40-46)

In the Gethsemane narrative according to the first two gospels Jesus urged Peter and his companions, "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Appended to the exhortation are the words, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Jesus implied that they should keep awake and pray in view of their forthcoming trials/temptations, even as He himself was keeping awake and praying in relation to His own trial/temptation. Indeed, according to Matthew's gospel He preceded the exhortation with the words, "Could you not stay awake with me one hour?" Does the appended statement imply that Jesus' own flesh was "weak" like that of the disciples?

Jesus' statement betrays no awareness that His "flesh" was not weak like that of the disciples. Indeed, Réville has conjectured that it was "spoken by Jesus of himself."²³⁴ The conjecture, however, has no textual warrant. Furthermore, though Jesus' own struggle was severe, He was not so preoccupied with it that He could not concern Himself with the test/temptation the disciples were about to face. Indeed, He warns them to keep awake and pray in anticipation of it! The most that can be said is that there is nothing in the first two gospels to suggest that Jesus' flesh was not weak like that of the disciples. The natural assumption is that His flesh was exactly like theirs in this respect.

Though the author of the third gospel did not include the saying

concerning the spirit and the flesh in his version of the Gethsemane narrative,²³⁵ according to some important witnesses to the text of his gospel, he did include in that narrative material which might be taken to mean that Jesus' flesh was weak: "An angel from heaven appeared to him (Jesus) and gave him strength" (Luke 22:43).²³⁶

Though the evidence is not conclusive, the Gethsemane narrative in the Synoptic gospels leaves the impression that Jesus' "flesh" was "weak"²³⁷ (cf. 2 Cor. 13:4). On the other hand, as we have seen, there is reason to believe that this weakness did not imply propensity to evil. If so, the idea that Jesus' flesh was sinful flesh receives no support from the saying being considered.

Rom. 8:3

Of more importance is Rom. 8:3, "Sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he (God) condemned sin in the flesh." Some scholars hold that this verse means that Christ's flesh was sinful flesh;²³⁸ others argue that it means exactly the opposite, i.e., that Jesus' flesh was not sinful flesh.²³⁹

In favour of the view that the flesh of Christ was sinful flesh there are the following considerations:

- a) "Likeness" does not necessarily imply a difference between the flesh of mankind generally and that of Jesus. Indeed, the use of "likeness" in a Christological discussion seems not to have been accidental or unusual, since there are other such occurrences of the respective Greek word and of related words in Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17; 4:15. In Phil. 2:7 Paul speaks of Christ having been "born in human likeness." In the context he is not concerned with the sinful flesh, or even the sinfulness, of humanity.²⁴⁰ Moreover, in Rom. 5:15 (cf. vv. 17, 19) he writes without any hesitancy of "the one man, Jesus Christ." The use of "likeness," therefore, need not be understood to imply any distinction between the humanity of Jesus and that of mankind generally.

b) Paul has traced man's predicament to his particular kind of flesh, i.e., sinful flesh. In Rom. 8:3 he is declaring that God sent His Son into man's situation in order that there He might conquer sin on its own territory. God's Son would not really have entered man's situation if the flesh he assumed had not been sinful flesh.²⁴¹

In support of the view that the flesh of Jesus was not "sinful flesh" the following considerations are urged:

a) "Likeness" could be used by Paul in Romans in a way which does not imply complete correspondence, e.g., Rom. 6:5, "If we have been united with him (Christ) in a death like his."²⁴²

b) Paul speaks of the "flesh" of Christ in Col. 1:22, when there is no danger that the word may be understood in a moral sense (cf. Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Eph. 2:15). His use of such a circumlocution as we find in Rom. 8:3 and Phil. 2:7 is evidence of fear lest Jesus' flesh be thought to be "sinful flesh."²⁴³

c) The prominence of "condemnation" in Rom. 8:1-3 clearly recalls Rom. 5:12-20, the passage in which it is emphasized that Adam's trespass led to "condemnation" for all men.²⁴⁴ In that passage Paul not only sets forth Jesus and His obedience as the counterpart of Adam and his disobedience, but also declares that Adam "is a type of the one who was to come," i.e., of Jesus Christ. In 1 Cor. 15:45-47, of course, Paul distinctly refers to Jesus as "the last Adam," and "the second man (i.e., Adam)." It seems logical to suppose that Paul thought of Christ's humanity in terms of the humanity of Adam before the Fall.²⁴⁵

d) It has been suggested that "to deal with sin" should be translated "as a sin offering" as in NRSV mg. (cf. NIV), because the phrase frequently has this meaning in the Septuagint. In view of the emphasis on the unblemished perfection which must characterize the sin offering

(Lev. 4:3, 23, 28, 32), the suggestion possibly carries with it the implication that Christ's flesh was not "sinful flesh."²⁴⁶

In my view, H. Olshausen is correct in his judgment that Paul is asserting "the *affinity* of Christ's nature with ours; he is silent, therefore, on the *difference* between them."²⁴⁷ But, if so, Rom. 8:3 is of no help with respect to the question before us.

2 Cor. 5:21

Consideration must be given to 2 Cor. 5:21, "For our sake, he (God) made him (Christ) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." In Greek the phrase "who knew no sin" has been drawn into emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence.²⁴⁸ V. Taylor seems to think that it means that Jesus' flesh was not "sinful flesh."²⁴⁹ On the other hand, in Rom. 7:7 Paul says, "If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin," and in the context makes it plain that flesh may be "sinful" apart from such "knowledge" of sin. It is clear, therefore, that Paul could have written 2 Cor. 5:21 without necessarily implying that Jesus' flesh was not "sinful."²⁵⁰

The statement that Christ was "made sin" might suggest that Christ's flesh was not "sinful flesh," if by "sin" Paul means "sin offering" (NIV mg.). That he does so mean is very unlikely:

- a) The Septuagint uses "concerning sin (*peri hamartias*)" of the sin offering, not "sin (*hamartia*)" alone;
- b) The parallel with "righteousness" in the next clause is against it.²⁵¹

In my view 2 Cor. 5:21 provides no assistance in determining whether Paul thought of Jesus' flesh as "sinful flesh."

Phil. 2:7

Some scholars think that Paul hints at a testing/temptation experience of Jesus in Phil. 2:6-7, "(Christ Jesus), though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness." V. Taylor comments, "It is quite

possible that in the thought there is an implicit contrast with Adam who was tempted to 'be as God, knowing good and evil,' and in this case it is natural to think of the Temptation experience recorded in Matt. 4:1-11; but the nature of the temptation in the two instances is so different as to render the contrast doubtful." He adds, "(Its) meaning, there can be little doubt, is the refusal to put personal interests first, signalized in renunciation." He goes on to affirm that "the idea of renunciation is strongly attested" by the clause which follows: "but emptied himself," and that "it is most in accord with the whole passage if the reference is to a pre-incarnate renunciation coincident with the act of 'taking the form of a servant.'" ²⁵² Note that he states that a "temptation" of Christ may be implicit in the passage, and that "a pre-incarnate renunciation" is indicated.

Taylor considers it possible that there may have been a pre-incarnate test/temptation of Jesus. Though this need imply nothing concerning Paul's view of the source of the testing/temptation Jesus suffered during the period of his incarnate life, it suggests the possibility that Paul could conceive of a test/temptation of Christ to which no flesh of any kind, let alone sinful flesh, was related.

Heb. 2:9-18; 4:15-5:7; 7:26-28; 9:14

Heb. 4:15-5:7 may be taken to imply that Jesus had the same sinful tendencies as mankind generally. According to 4:15 Jesus is not a high priest "who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but, . . . one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin." In 5:2 it is stated concerning "very high priest chosen from among mortals," that he can "deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness." Is it not implied that Jesus' sympathy is possible because he was "subject to weakness"? ²⁵³ Moreover, the "weakness" of the Jewish high priest is not morally neutral: "Because of this (being 'subject to weakness') he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people" (5:3). ²⁵⁴ Likewise in Heb. 7:27-28 the need of the Jewish high priest to "offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins," is paralleled with "subject to weakness" in such a way

as to imply that it is because they are weak that they have sins for which they need to offer sacrifices.²⁵⁵ If Jesus had such “weakness” he had a subjective source of testing/temptation which may be compared with the evil impulse in Jewish thought and with “the flesh” in Pauline thought, though it is impossible to say much more concerning it.

Strongly supporting the idea that Jesus had such “weakness” is the statement in 2:17-18, “He had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. . . Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” Is it not implied that his suffering and temptation was made possible by the fact that he had been made “like his brothers and sisters in every respect”? Is it not implied, further, that the “weaknesses” of mankind, which, as we have seen in our consideration of 4:15ff., are so significant in relation to the human experience of testing, must also have characterized him?

That Jesus had such “weakness” may, however, be disputed. It is not actually stated of Him that His sympathy with our weaknesses is based on the fact that He had personal experience of such weakness, but on the fact that He had personal experience of testing. Moreover, it is at least possible that “without sin” in 4:15 limits “in every way, just as we are”(NIV), which it follows in Greek, rather than “has been tested” which is at the opposite end of the participial phrase.²⁵⁶ If so, the author is stating that Jesus’ tests were like those of mankind generally in every respect except one: there was no “sin” within Him “to become the spring of trial.”²⁵⁷ It may be noted that “sin” is objectified, perhaps even personified, in 3:13, “the deceitfulness of sin.”²⁵⁸

It is also possible that Heb. 7:26-28 implies that Jesus was not possessed of “weakness.” According to this passage:

It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; . . . For the law appoints as high

priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

It is doubtful whether the adjectives in the first verse of the passage make it certain that Jesus was free from the kind of weakness of which this epistle speaks.²⁵⁹ They do imply, of course, that He had no sins for which sacrifice was necessary, as is made clear by the statement that He "has no need. . . to offer sacrifices . . . for his own sins," a statement which appears, in the context, to be drawing out the relevant implications of the description of Jesus in the preceding verse. The concluding verse, with its description of the Jewish high priests as "having weakness," which, it is implied, made it necessary for them to "offer sacrifices daily, first for (their) own sins," may indicate that Jesus did not have such "weakness," since it seems to say that the "weakness" of Jewish high priests is in contrast to the "holy, blameless (and) undefiled" Jesus. It is to be noted, however, that what is actually said in this verse of Jesus as high priest in contrast with the weakness of the Jewish high priests is that He "has been made perfect for ever." It may be, therefore, that the door is left open to the understanding that Jesus was once characterized by weakness--weakness, or course, which never issued in sin--but that, having "been made perfect," He is no longer characterized by it. According to this epistle, moreover, Jesus is not the only one capable of "perfection." Indeed, Christ's high priestly function is to make "perfect" all those who are His (10:14).²⁶⁰ Weakness is not necessarily a bar to "perfection." It is possible, therefore, that 7:28 does not imply that Jesus was always free from "weakness." Nevertheless, the present writer cannot escape the impression that the author held that He was.

In support of the idea that Jesus was considered to have been free from the "weakness" of humankind in general, is 9:14, "Christ . . . offered himself without blemish (*amōmon*) to God." In the context His death is described in terms of the sin offering on the day of Atonement (v. 7: cf. Lev. 16). The emphasis on the unblemished perfection required of the Levitical sin offering, a perfection our author attributes to Jesus, may suggest that He had no moral "weakness."²⁶¹

Our consideration of the question whether Jesus' humanity is represented as including an evil impulse, or "sinful flesh," or anything comparable to either of these, has led to no definite conclusion. All the relevant Scriptures are open to diverse interpretations. It appears that the most that can be said is:

- a) The Gethsemane narrative in the Synoptic Gospels implies that Christ's flesh was "weak," but propensity to evil seems not to be implied (cf. 2 Cor. 13:4);
- b) Paul probably held that Christ's flesh was not "sinful flesh." His doctrine of Christ as the second Adam seems to indicate as much; and
- c) The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews leaves the impression that Jesus was not beset with moral weakness, even though He was fully human.

If Paul and/or the author of Hebrews did, indeed, hold that Jesus lacked a subjective tendency to evil, such as the evil impulse or the "flesh," He was an exception to the rule that such an impulse is the presupposition of testing/temptation. At least we have judged that this rule is implicit in late Jewish and early Christian thought.²⁶²

Notes

¹ Henceforth in this paper we disregard the profane use of the vocabulary. We also disregard the use in relation to putting God to the test, except in Chapter VIII.

² See also 1 Chron. 21:1. Since enticement to evil was apparently not yet within the circle of ideas represented by *peirasmos* when the Old Testament was written, the Gen. 3 narrative could hardly have been considered a *peirasmos* story. Indeed, so far as we have been able to discover, the blandishments of the serpent are never specifically described as such in any of the literature included in our study.

³ See vv. 13, 26. The influence of Deut. 8 is not decisive,

since the author frequently attributes to Wisdom what is credited to God in the Old Testament.

⁴ E.g., Wisd. 10:19-21. For the relationship of Wisdom to God, see Sir. 1:1-10; 24:3, 8-9; Wisd. 7:25; 8:21; 9:4.

⁵ Our vocabulary occurs only in this text of Tobit 12:1-14.

⁶ The demon Asmodeus is credited with the slaying of the seven husbands of Sarah. However, the demon only harms, he does not test or tempt. See 3:8; 6:14. A parallel to *peirasmos* through a benign angel in Tobit occurs in jSchab. I.iii.3b.64. See also Hermas *Sim.* 7:1.

⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from the pseudepigrapha are according to J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983).

⁸ Cf. Philo, *de Vita Mosis* 1.36, concerning the testing of Israel in the wilderness.

⁹ As we shall see, Abraham's *peirasmos* has a more complex source in some rabbinic passages.

¹⁰ Gen 3. surely implies a more complex origin at a considerably earlier date.

¹¹ See W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, S.P.C.K., 1948), 38.

¹² The influence of Iranian religion is commonly considered to be of importance.

¹³ See 1Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kgs. 5:18.

¹⁴ See Ps. 109:4, 6, 20, 29. ⁷⁻¹³

¹⁵ See Gen. 18:25; Jud. 11:27; Ps. 94:2.

¹⁶ For a more detailed consideration of the development of the conception of Satan, see G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 31-32; G. von Rad in *TDNT*, 2:73-75.

¹⁷ The Book of Job may be earlier than Zechariah. See M.

- H. Pope, *Job* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), xxxii-xl.
- ¹⁸ 1:6; 2:1.
- ¹⁹ 1:7-8; 2: 2-3.
- ²⁰ 1:12; 2:6-7.
- ²¹ *Per contra*, J. Morgenstern, "Satan," *The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 9:380a.
- ²² See Caird, *Principalities and Powers*, 36. The transition was an easy one, especially since enticement to evil may be a means of testing. For example, in Deut. 13:1-3 encouragement to idolatry is described as a test.
- ²³ *A Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 764b.
- ²⁴ The second is of special interest from the viewpoint of our study: Jub. attributes the hardening of Pharaoh's heart to Mastema (Satan) rather than to God as in Exodus.
- ²⁵ Indeed it is possibly assumed to be the antitype of the *peirasmoi* of Israel in the Wilderness.
- ²⁶ Cf. bSanh. 107a.
- ²⁷ *Principalities and Powers*, 32-33.
- ²⁸ *Per contra*, L. Blau, "Satan," *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 11:69a.
- ²⁹ I am in basic agreement with A. B. Davidson, *The Book of Job*, New Edition (Cambridge: University Press, 1918), xxviii-xxix. *Per contra*, S. R. Driver and J. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), lxiii.
- ³⁰ Cf. Pirke R. Eliezer, 13.
- ³¹ A Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud* (London: J. M. Dent, 1932), 57, affirms that there is no reference to fallen angels in the Talmudic or Midrashic literature.

³² Cf. *The Life of Adam and Eve* 17:1. This passage in 2 Enoch is evidently dependent to a considerable extent on Isa. 14:12-15.

³³ T. Dan 6:2.

³⁴ T. Dan 5:10.

³⁵ T. Jud. 25:3.

³⁶ 1QS 1.18, 23-24.

³⁷ Almost certainly Belial. In T. Levi 19:1 and T. Jos. 20:2 it seems to be implied that Beliar is "the angel of darkness."

³⁸ 1QS 3.20-24. Quotations from 1QS are according to W. H. Brownlee, "The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," *BASOR*, Supplementary Studies 10-12. Quotations of other Qumran documents are according to T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957).

³⁹ For these terms cf. 1QS 1.10-11.

⁴⁰ 1QM 18.1f.

⁴¹ Cf. Caird, *Principalities and Powers*, 37, concerning Satan in the New Testament.

⁴² 1QS 3.25.

⁴³ He is especially the accuser of Israel. See *SB*, 1:141. In no passage is it suggested that Satan was guilty of false accusation, except against God. In Bereshith 20:1, "he is identified with the slanderer of Ps. 140:12, because 'he uttered slander against his Creator'" (Caird, *Principalities and Powers*, 34-35).

⁴⁴ See bBaba Bathra 16a. In *Wisd.* 2:24 there is the earliest extant reference to Satanic involvement in the Gen. 3 story, but it is uncertain whether the devil is identified with the serpent as in *Rev.* 20:2, or merely used the serpent as in *3 Bar.* 9:7.

- ⁴⁵ Another major emphasis in the Rabbinic literature is that Satan executes God's punishments (see Ex. R. 20:10; Deut. R. 11:10; cf. 1 Cor. 5:5). The rabbinic view of Satan is nearer to that of the Old Testament than to that of the Pseudepigrapha. Satan's hostility to God is not an emphasis of the rabbis.
- ⁴⁶ R. H. Pfeiffer in *IB*, 1:401.
- ⁴⁷ *Early Zoroastrianism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), 250-52.
- ⁴⁸ Moulton, *Zoroastrianism*, 306, qu. Jackson, *Grundriss*, 2:652.
- ⁴⁹ According to the translation in Moulton, *Zoroastrianism*.
- ⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 137, 307.
- ⁵¹ *Yasna* 30.3.
- ⁵² See *Yasna* 47:2-3; and R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 50.
- ⁵³ Moulton, *Zoroastrianism*, 369 n. 1, points out that it is uncertain whether "hosts" refers to worshippers of Mazda and opposing worshippers of Druj, or to spiritual forces. The comparison holds in either case.
- ⁵⁴ For various judgments concerning the extent to which Jewish doctrine was influenced, see N. H. Snaith, *The Jews from Cyrus to Herod* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, n.d.), 135-144; Caird, *Principalities and Powers*, 38; M. E. Andrews, "PEIRASMOS--A Study in Form Criticism," *ATR* 24 (1942): 235; Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospels and Epistles," *SNT* 283 n. 10; L. Blau, "Satan," 11:69a; Moulton, *Zoroastrianism*, 325-326; W. Bousset and H. Gressman, *Die Religion des Judenthums im Späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, Third Improved Edition (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926), 491-92, 499-505, 514-17.

- ⁵⁵ In the Apocrypha, see Wisd. 2:24.
- ⁵⁶ See Tobit 3:8, 17; 6:14-17; 7:1-3; bBer. 5a; 6a; 51a; bBek. 44b; bPes. 3b; 112a; bSot. 48a; bKid. 29b; bShab. 151b; bPesahim 110a; 112b.
- ⁵⁷ *Everyman's Talmud* (London: Dent, 1932), 278.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. I. Broydé, "Demonology," *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 4:518, "It was only at a certain period and within a certain circle that demonology received its specific character as part of the cosmic power of evil, and in opposition to angelology as part of the cosmic power of good." See also Cohen, *Talmud*, 278.
- ⁵⁹ E.g., 1 Enoch 9:6; 10:8; 16:1-3; 54:6; 69:6; 2 Enoch 18:4-5; Jub. 7:27; 10:1; 12:20; T. Naph. 3:3; 1QS 3.24; CDC 12.2. However, note 1 Enoch 98:4, "Neither has sin been exported into the world. It is the people who have themselves invented it."
- ⁶⁰ E.g., T. Reub. 2:1; 3:3-7; 1QS 4.10. See R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper, 1949), 65; H. G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery," *JBL* 82 (1963): 1-14.
- ⁶¹ See 1 Enoch 6-8; 84:4; 2 Enoch 18:4-5; Jub. 10:5. Cf. T. Reub. 5:6; CDC 2. In the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37-71) the sins of angels are not due to lust, but to becoming subjects of Satan, and "an evil spirit-world is supposed from the beginning" (R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1893], 107). Note that according to 1 Enoch 69:6, "Gadreel. . . led astray Eve."
- ⁶² Gen. 49:17 may contain an allusion to the serpent of Gen. 3.
- ⁶³ This is the interpretation favoured by most scholars; e.g., V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 188. Cf. J. H. Sailhammer in *EBC* 2:50-51 n., "There is no mention

yet of the identification of the serpent with Satan, but the narrative has not closed the door on that interpretation.”

- ⁶⁴ Gader’el apparently takes over the role of As’el, one of the “watchers” according to 1 Enoch 6-9. I am of the opinion that these “watchers” are the “satans” mentioned in 40:7 and 65:6. According to M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch*, New English Edition (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 200, “In this passage (40:7), the satans are a special class of angels, no doubt subject to Satan.” Satan is mentioned in 53:3 and 54:6.
- ⁶⁵ Some manuscripts of 2 Enoch 18:3 state that Azazel was ringleader of the angelic rebellion against God (cf. 1 Enoch 9:6), though “Satanail” is the preferred reading
- ⁶⁶ According to 16:3 Adam was “cast out of Paradise through his wife.”
- ⁶⁷ “Satan,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, C. Roth and G. Wigoder, eds. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 14:903. Is this statement in bBaba Bathra derived from Sadducaic thought?
- ⁶⁸ In the *Testament of Job* we also find, on the one hand, that Satan is represented as having tested Job after receiving divine permission to do so, and, on the other hand, that the afflictions of Job are attributed to God (see T. Job 16, 20, 26, 37). In contrast with the biblical record, however, Job is always (?) aware that he is in conflict with Satan, and, indeed, that he provoked Satan’s attack (see T. Job 4, 27).
- ⁶⁹ E.g., bSanh. 89b; cf. Gen. R. 56:4.
- ⁷⁰ Cf., 1QS 1.17-18.
- ⁷¹ Note also *Apoc. Abr.* 13:8-11, “The Eternal Ruler, the Mighty One, has given you (Azazel) a dwelling on earth . . . and through you (are) wrath and trials on the generations of men who live impiously. . . You have no permission to tempt all the righteous. Depart from this

man (Abraham)! You cannot deceive him. . .” See also bSanh. 107a; Ex. R. 19:2.

⁷² Cf. 1 Enoch 53:2-3, which implies that Satan is subject to the Lord of Spirits. Would a Jew of the time have distinguished between what God permits and what He wills?

⁷³ According to Apoc. Mos. 21:3-5, after Eve had been persuaded to eat the forbidden fruit, the devil spoke through her mouth, and she persuaded Adam to partake as well.

⁷⁴ Cf. G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 1:479-80.

⁷⁵ *Deuteronomy*, trans. D. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 190.

⁷⁶ Translation in H. M. Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature* (London: Robert Culley, n.d.), 151. A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 271-72, argues that *yēšer* in this passage should be rendered “free will.” Cf. NRSV. In the light of succeeding passages in Sir., I am inclined to disagree; cf. J. G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 78-79.

⁷⁷ Translation in Hughes, *Ethics*, 151. Cf. Pirke Aboth 4:2.

⁷⁸ Cf. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 178, “The *propensity to evil* reflects the rabbinic doctrine of two (good and evil) inclinations in man.”

According to Hughes, *Ethics*, 152, Sir. 27:6b (Heb.) states, “The thought is according to the *yezer* of a man.” However, the passage does not occur in I. Levi, *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus*, Third Edition (Leiden: Brill, 1969); and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 356, is evidently unaware that the Hebrew text of the passage is extant.

- ⁷⁹ In *TDOT*, 6:265.
- ⁸⁰ So H. C. Kee in *The Old Testament Apocrypha*, J. H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:777-78. Some scholars believe that it is a Christian composition.
- ⁸¹ Cf. 1QH 15.13. See Brownlee, "Manual of Discipline," 19 n. 17.
- ⁸² Cf. 1 John 4:6. See H. G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery," *JBL* 82 (1963): 1.
- ⁸³ Otzen in *TDOT*, 6:265; cf. J. A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, N.Y.; Cornell University Press, 1967), 70, 71. Otzen notes that the passage is "datable . . . in the first half of the 1st century A.D.," and points out that it contains "probably the earliest clear use of the phrase 'evil impulse.'"
- ⁸⁴ R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York: Harper, 1949), 215.
- ⁸⁵ Ed. and trans., *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York: Ktav, 1976), 151 n. to 1:33.
- ⁸⁶ Ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:450; cf. H. M. Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature* (London: Robert Culley, n.d.), 199.
- ⁸⁷ This phrase and also "a grain of evil seed [*granum seminis mali*]" (4:30) are evidently Latin equivalents of "the evil impulse (*yēšer*)."
- ⁸⁸ Translation according to Hughes, *Ethics*, 151.
- ⁸⁹ In the Soncino translations of the rabbinic writings, *yēšer* is often translated "Tempter."
- ⁹⁰ See bBer. 61a. Cf. Num. R. 22:9.
- ⁹¹ See bSukkah 52a.

⁹² See S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 259. According to Aboth R. Nathan 16, the evil impulse is king over all the 248 organs of one's body.

⁹³ *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* 246.

⁹⁴ Translation according to O. S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 27.

⁹⁵ Qu. in Schechter, *Rabbinic Theology*, 266.

⁹⁶ V. 15, "If you will, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice," makes it clear that the author did not conceive of God as responsible for human sin. One can overcome his/her evil impulse. Cf. Hughes, *Ethics*, 151.

⁹⁷ bSukkah 52b.

⁹⁸ Translation according to Cohen, *Talmud*, 96. Cf. Sifre Deut. 73a.

⁹⁹ See Schechter, *Rabbinic Theology*, 268-69. The fact that a moral problem was recognized, and the nature of the attempts to solve it, indicate that the creation of the evil impulse by God was not questioned by Jewish writers.

¹⁰⁰ *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 173 nn. 38, 42.

¹⁰¹ According to Gen. R. 22:6 the idea that the evil impulse is an external force which may take possession of a man is not entirely foreign to rabbinic thought. Cf. Cohen, *Talmud*, 95.

¹⁰² K. Kohler, *Jewish Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 190, 192. Cohen, *Talmud*, 58, affirms that Satan is the personification of wickedness.

¹⁰³ Hughes, *Ethics*, 152; cf. Pfeiffer, *New Testament Times*, 65.

¹⁰⁴ *Talmud*, 58.

¹⁰⁵*Rabbinic Theology*, 245.

¹⁰⁶Translation in Schechter, *Rabbinic Theology*, 245.

¹⁰⁷Qu. in *SB*, 3:372.

¹⁰⁸Cf. T. Ash. 1:8-9.

¹⁰⁹“The Gospel according to St. Matthew: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 7:270. Cf. *SB*, 1:139.

¹¹⁰Hughes, *Ethics*, 251-52, considers it probable that Sir. 27:5-6 (Heb.) teaches that the evil impulse “tests a man.” However, I have not been able to check this statement. The passage does not occur in I. Levi, ed. *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus*, Third Edition (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

¹¹¹At this point we have omitted a passage of considerable length.

¹¹²I assume that “Tempter” is literally *yēšer* in accord with common practice in the Soncino translations. I have not been able to check the Hebrew of this passage. I also make the assumption that Satan and the evil impulse are not identified in this passage.

¹¹³Consideration of “the fles” as a source of enticement to evil in the Qumran literature will engage our attention in the latter part of this chapter. We have not included this consideration here, since the theme of *peirasmos* is not to the fore in any of the passages in which “the flesh” has a moral connotation. At most it is implicit in IQS 11.12.

¹¹⁴The prominence of “endure (*hupomenō*)” in 12:3, 7, is characteristic of *peirasmos* contexts, as is “faith (*pistis*),” which dominates Heb. 11.

¹¹⁵It is possible that the reference to “struggle against sin” suggests a more complex view. In this phrase sin is at least half personified. See also Heb. 3:13; Rom. 7:11; J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952),

198. G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), 1:481, states, "In parallel passages in the Midrash, evil impulse may be found in one and sin in another, with the same things said about them." I do not think that this means that there is an allusion to the evil impulse in Heb. 12:4, just as I do not think that there is any reference there to the demon Sin. See G. Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:296; W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:311. (The only explicit reference to Satan in the Epistle to the Hebrews is in 2:14.)

¹¹⁶Heb. 2:10 and 2:18 taken together suggest that the *peirasmos* Jesus underwent in His suffering and death, was due to God alone. If so, it is to be noted that the *peirasmos* made possible His moral ripening, since Heb. 2:10 states that He was made "perfect" through the suffering willed by God for Him. The idea is closely related to the conception in Heb. 12 that *peirasmos* is disciplinary.

¹¹⁷See *Mand.* 12.6.1.

¹¹⁸See Ex. R. 20.10; Num. R. 14.3; Deut. R. 11.10; 1 Cor. 5:5.

¹¹⁹*Sim.* 6.3.2.

¹²⁰*Sim.* 5.6.4.

¹²¹In 18:2 temptation (*peirasmos*) is the work of the devil. Our vocabulary is being used with a different connotation.

¹²²Translation according to *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 7:399. J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 52, renders, "One who is without trial is unapproved in the sight of God." Rather different versions occur in *Didascalica* 2.8 and in Tertullian, *de Baptismo*, 20. There is no such statement in the Scriptures. Mayor is of the opinion that "Scripture say" is an allusion to Jas. 1:12 and Heb. 12:8.

¹²³Luke 11:4 (Matt. 6:13). In light of the Scriptures which

emphasize its values, it is surprising that according to the Prayer one should pray that he/she may *not* be brought into trial. The problem is perhaps solved by the fact pointed out by E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 329, that we find *peirazō* “sometimes pregnantly carrying with it the implication of yielding. . . So in I Cor. 7:5, and so here (Gal. 6:1) also, since that which is feared is manifestly not temptation, but the sin which is likely to result from it.” Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 59 n. 1, arrives at much the same solution. He states that bBer. 60b (“Bring me not into the hands of sin, nor into the hands of guilt, nor into the hands [i.e. the power] of temptation, nor into the hands of contempt”) is “a prayer to be helped through them (sin, guilt, temptation and contempt),” and affirms that the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer has exactly this meaning. “It is not a petition for immunity from temptation, but for help to face it.” He claims that the seventh petition supports this view.

¹²⁴Cf. 4 Macc. 9:7.

¹²⁵*The Lord’s Prayer* (New York: Scribners, 1951), 104; cf. D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 138-39; W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 1:613.

¹²⁶“The English Bible: New Testament,” *JBL*, 80 (1961): 174. Cf. Mark 1:12, “The Spirit. . .drove him out (*ekballei*) into the wilderness.”

¹²⁷Is the problem with this view not due to the influence of rationalism?

¹²⁸Cf. bSanh. 103a concerning “evil” in Ps. 91:10.

¹²⁹The statement was used by Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians 7:2 to illuminate the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “. . .beseeching the all-seeing God in our

supplications 'to lead us not into temptation,' even as the Lord said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."¹³⁰

¹³⁰Cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 23-25.

¹³¹*Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, Second Series (Cambridge: The University Press, 1924), 2:101. In Deut. 31:21 LXX renders "purpose (lit.: 'inclination,' 'impulse')" by "the evil (*hē ponēria*)." See Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 26 n. 3. This translation, however, is unusual. Moreover, "evil" here is feminine. In Matt. 6:13 it is either masculine or neuter.

¹³²SB, 1:422-23.

¹³³So too in *Clem. Hom.* 3.55; *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne* (Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.6). W. E. Bundy, *Jesus and the First Three Gospels* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), 144, states concerning the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Evil is half personified as though it were a power outside as well as inside of man."

¹³⁴*Matthew*, 1:615. Is there really a significant parallel? And is not the reference to Satan in Luke 22:32 in a separate pericope?

¹³⁵*The Sayings of Jesus* (London: S C M Press, 1949), 170. However, this judgment is called into question by 2 Tim. 4:18, as we shall shortly see.

¹³⁶Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 220.

¹³⁷See A. Resch, *Agrapha aussercanonische Schriftfragmente* (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), 85; S. E. Johnson in *IB*, 7:315; W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew*, Second Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), 61.

¹³⁸Note that bBer. has been quoted in support of each of the

three positions!

¹³⁹Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, 279. The Greek verbs rendered “lead” and “led” are not the same, but the verbs also differ in the various Synoptic accounts of Jesus’ temptation in the Wilderness.

¹⁴⁰Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13.

¹⁴¹See K. Aland *et al.* (eds), *The Greek New Testament*, Third Corrected Edition (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1983), 433.

¹⁴²Cf. Rom. 8:38-39.

¹⁴³See 1 Cor. 7:5; 10:13.

¹⁴⁴The hostility of Satan to God is emphasized most strongly in this book. See 12:7-13:20; 19:19; 20:7-9.

¹⁴⁵Partly because of the prominence of enticement to evil in many of the early Christian occurrences of our vocabulary, and partly because it is closely paralleled in Matt. 4:10.

¹⁴⁶According to E. Best, *The Temptation and the Passion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 29, “It seems better to see Peter behaving after the manner of Satan than as either indwelt by Satan or as his tool.” Jesus said to Peter, “You are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things” (Matt. 16:23), but are human beings so “creative” that they can devise evil thoughts without diabolical inspiration? In my view they cannot.

¹⁴⁷Cf. *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 2.2; *Acts of Peter: Vercelli Acts* 6; *Acts of Paul* 10.1. So far as we are aware, the activity of Satan’s angels, or demons, in relation to *peirasmos* does not occur in the New Testament. There are, however, a few passages in which enticement to evil is attributed to demonic spirits in early Christian literature, e.g., Barn. 9:4, “They erred because an evil angel was misleading them”; *Hermas, Sim.* 6.2.1, “The angel of luxury and deceit. . . deceiving them with evil

desires in which they perish." It is notable that O. J. F. Seitz, "Two Spirits in Man: An Essay in Biblical Exegesis," *NTS*, 6 (1959): 82-95, traces the recurrence of certain ideas in Test. XII, DSS, Barn., and Hermas.

¹⁴⁸*The Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 24.

¹⁴⁹See *ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵⁰The idea that God "permits" *peirasmos* is also found in the New Testament in 1 Cor. 10:13, but it is not stated to whom or to what He grants the permission, unless Satan may be assumed from 1 Cor. 7:5. Cf. *Acts of SS. Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonica* 19; Augustine, *The City of God*, 14.27.

¹⁵¹This distinction was also noted in our consideration of Jewish literature. We are far from certain that either a Jew or a primitive Christian would have sensed a distinction.

¹⁵²Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, 27, "The editor (of the first gospel) has in mind the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the life of the Messiah."

¹⁵³Is the Hebraic tendency to use compound rather than complex sentences responsible for the less exact indication of the relationship between the ideas?

¹⁵⁴Cf. *Gospel of the Hebrews*, frag. 3, "Even so did my mother, the Holy Spirit, take me by one of my hairs and carried me away on to the great mountain Tabor." Translation in E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, R. M. Wilson, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 1:164.

¹⁵⁵In contrast with Luke 22:31-32, in Matt. 4 and Luke 4 the devil tempts, he does not merely test. In light of Mark 3:22-27; 4:15, probably the same may be said concerning Satan in Mark 1:13.

¹⁵⁶Even if Wisd. 9:7 and 11:9 derive from different sources

(see R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* [New York: Harper, 1949], 321-26) the suggestion is not invalidated, since direct dependence of the Synoptics, or their sources, on these passages in Wisdom is not required.

¹⁵⁷I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 830, notes (1) the unusual construction of Luke 22:40, (2) Loisy's suggestion that "Luke's source" read, "Pray that I may not come into temptation," and (3) "The thought of *peirasmos* links with 22:28-38, and indicates that temptations are now at hand." He concludes, "The implication is that Jesus himself also faces temptation."

¹⁵⁸In light of the context, and of 2 Chron. 32:31 and T. Jos. 2.6-7, the Cry of Dereliction (Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46) almost certainly implies that His passion was a *peirasmos*.

¹⁵⁹Compare the relationship between God and Satan in 2 Cor. 12:7 and in 2 Thess. 2:9-11. See also 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20. For further examples of *peirasmos* willed by God but effected by Satan, see *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 1.3; 2.2; *Acts of Thomas* 3.30.

¹⁶⁰Compare IQS 5.5 with Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Ezek. 44:9. See Seitz, "Two Spirits in Man," *NTS*, 6 (1959): 94.

¹⁶¹bKid. 30b, "Strong is the evil impulse, since even its Creator calls it evil; as it is said, 'For the imagination (*yēšer*) of man's heart is evil from his youth.'"

¹⁶²E. C. Blackman, *The Epistle of James* (London: S C M, 1957), 53-54; G. H. Rendall, *The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), 63; W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:314.

¹⁶³Cf. P. H. Davids, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 83; R. P. Martin, *James* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1988), 36; J. Marcus, "The Evil Inclination in the

Epistle of James," *CBQ*, 44 (1982): 606-21. It is difficult to decide whether other New Testament occurrences of *epithumia* with an evil connotation refer to the evil impulse. Of particular interest in this connection are the occurrences in Rom. 1:24; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:10; 3:3; Jude 18.

¹⁶⁴Cf. Martin, *James*, xlvi.

¹⁶⁵See J. H. Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James* (New York: Scribner's, 1916), 12-14; compare and contrast Davids, *James*, 23-24.

¹⁶⁶Cf. Hort, *James*, 21. E. F. Scott, *The Lord's Prayer* (New York: Scribners, 1951), 105, is of the opinion that this passage is addressed to persons who used the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer as an excuse for their moral failure.

¹⁶⁷See *BAGD*, 83a.

¹⁶⁸Mayor, *James*, 50-51.

¹⁶⁹Cf. Sir. 23:5-6; Pirke Aboth 4.30. The view that we have here a reference to the evil impulse does not affect the validity of our argument.

¹⁷⁰Hort, *James*, 23.

¹⁷¹E.g., *ibid.*, 24.

¹⁷²See 1:10, 27; 2:5-7, 10 (?); 3:2, 6-8 (?); 5:1-5. Cf. Matt. 5:40; Luke 6:20, 24; John 6:27.

¹⁷³Cf. J. G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 78-79; A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 271-72.

¹⁷⁴Rom 1:24 may be a passage in which the evil impulse serves God's purpose. However, *peirasmos* is not the purpose served.

¹⁷⁵*The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957).

- ¹⁷⁶*The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 365-466.
- ¹⁷⁷See also *Vis.* 1.1.8. Cf. 1 Cor. 7:5 which is discussed below.
- ¹⁷⁸This statement is reminiscent of Jas. 1:15.
- ¹⁷⁹See John 8:44.
- ¹⁸⁰The idea that the devil brings death is found in Heb. 2:14; cf. *Wisd.* 2:24.
- ¹⁸¹But see *Apoc. Mos.* 16.1, 5; 19.3.
- ¹⁸²"Two Spirits in Man," 6 (1959), 93: See *ibid.*, 82-94, concerning the occurrence in both of such conceptions as two ways, two impulses, two spirits, two angels.
- ¹⁸³W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 20-25; and P. H. Davids, *James*, 36, hold that "flesh," when used by Paul with an ethical connotation, corresponds to the rabbinic doctrine of the evil impulse. Cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922-1961), 4.1.466. If the view is correct, the material in this section could have been included in our discussion of the evil impulse.
- ¹⁸⁴W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls; Flesh and Spirit," *SNT*, 160.
- ¹⁸⁵See Gen. 6:3; Isa. 31:3; etc. Cf. 1QH 4.29.
- ¹⁸⁶According to Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 159-60, it is barely possible that the view is represented in *Mishnah Aboth* 2.7; *bSotah* 5a; *Jer. Targum* on Gen. 40:3.
- ¹⁸⁷See 1QS 11.7, 9, 12; 1QM 12.11-12. That this is not the kind of dualism between matter and spirit which we associate with Hellenistic thought is evident from the possibility that the flesh may be cleansed. See 1QS 3.8-

9. According to Wernberg-Møller, *The Manual of Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 64 n. 25, the idea of the cleansing of flesh in 1QS 3.8-9 is due to a "(lapse) into the terminology belonging to the sphere of leprosy."

¹⁸⁸According to K. G. Kuhn, "New Light on Temptation, Sin, and Flesh in the New Testament," *SNT*, 103, 1QS 11.11-12 shows that "sin is brought about through 'flesh' as that which qualifies human existence as such." For a different view of 1QS 11.12, see Wernberg-Møller, *Manual of Discipline*, 153 n. 31.

¹⁸⁹Note that according to this verse one's flesh needs to be "cleansed." Cf. the use of "cleanse" in 4.21 (the same verb as in 3.8-9).

¹⁹⁰Cf. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *SNT*, 162; Kuhn "Temptation, Sin and Flesh," 105.

¹⁹¹"Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *SNT*, 161.

¹⁹²Cf. 1QS 3.24.

¹⁹³Cf. "a spirit of humility" in 4.3, and "a spirit of knowledge" in 4.4.

¹⁹⁴So May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery," *JBL*, 82 (1963): 1-7.

¹⁹⁵Note that Paul speaks of "the lusts of their hearts" in Rom. 1:24, despite the fact that in Rom. 6-8 it is the flesh, and presumably its lusts, to which moral delinquency is traced. Indeed, he uses the phrase, "the lusts of the flesh" in Gal. 5:16. Cf. Gal. 5:24; Eph. 2:3. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *SNT*, 163-64, holds that flesh with an ethical connotation is integrated into neither the Qumran theology nor Paul's theology.

¹⁹⁶E.g., Abboth R. Nathan 16.

¹⁹⁷*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 27. This was written before the Qumran discoveries.

- ¹⁹⁸Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *SNT*, 164, states that "flesh" with an ethical connotation is not found in the homily in 1QS 3.13-4.26. On the other hand, the rendering of 4.20-21 in Wernberg-Møller, *Manual of Discipline*, 27, 86 n. 72, has "and clean his flesh."
- ¹⁹⁹This is not intended as a judgment on the opinion that the spirits of truth and perversion are essentially the same as the good and evil impulses.
- ²⁰⁰bShab. 105b.
- ²⁰¹Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *SNT*, 165, suggests that, since Paul's use of "flesh" in an ethical sense is associated with the ideas of the Fall and of idolatry, it reflects a "Hellenized Rabbinic Judaism," whereas the Qumran use reflects a "Hellenized Zoroastrian Judaism."
- ²⁰²Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Second Edition (New York: Scribner's, 1896), 178; W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:310.
- ²⁰³See W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:311.
- ²⁰⁴Cf. 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Cor. 7:5; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 145-146.
- ²⁰⁵See W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:311. See also Eph. 6:11-12, and the close identification of "the devil" and "the spiritual hosts of wickedness" therein.
- ²⁰⁶Cf. Wisd. 2:24, "Through the devil's envy death entered the world."
- ²⁰⁷See bSukkah 52b; Gen. R. 22.6.
- ²⁰⁸bB.B. 16a; G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), 1:492.
- ²⁰⁹Cf. W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:309-311.
- ²¹⁰Rom. 6:12; 7:8. For further points of similarity, see Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, Chap. 1.

- ²¹¹Ibid., 21. Cf. H. M. Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature* (London: Robert Culley, n.d.), 150.
- ²¹²bBer. 61a. Ibid. also mentions the view that the good and evil impulses dwell in the kidneys.
- ²¹³According to 4 Ezra 3:21, it was because the first Adam was “burdened with an evil heart” that he “transgressed and was overcome, as were all who were descended from him.” Cf. 3:26; 4:30.
- ²¹⁴See Pirke Aboth 4.1; bBer. 5a; Gen. R. 34.10.
- ²¹⁵bAbodah Zarah 5b; bKid. 30b; Gen. R. 22.6; etc. Despite his pessimism concerning the number who have done so, the author of 4 Ezra still holds to man’s ability to withstand the evil impulse (3:36; 7:48, 138-40). Though he states in 8:35 that “there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted wickedly, and among those who have existed there is no one who has not transgressed,” he is rebuked for the statement in 8:47. Adam’s fall seems to have left an evil legacy, but its exact nature is not clear. Probably it strengthened the power of the evil impulse. See 4:30; 7:118; Hughes, *Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature*, 214.
- ²¹⁶R. T. Stamm, “The Epistle to the Galatians: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 10:560.
- ²¹⁷I take it that the *hina* clause in v. 17 expresses purpose rather than result. Cf. Stamm, “Galatians,” *IB*, 10:561. *Per contra*, NEB.
- ²¹⁸Cf. Stamm, “Galatians,” *IB*, 10:561.
- ²¹⁹According to S. E. Johnson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Black, 1960), 236, Mark 14:38b is “reminiscent” of Gal. 5:16.
- ²²⁰H. B. Swete, *Commentary on Mark* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 346-47.
- ²²¹L. Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 670.

²²²Cf. Rom. 8:3.

²²³Note Yalkut Schimeon on Deut. 23:14, "Whoever dwells without a wife and with drawn sword (i.e., penis), with him the evil impulse becomes mighty; he goes out on the street. . . Satan stands there and strives to destroy him. . . And Satan drives him to drink out of a cup which is not his. . . If you have taken a wife your evil impulse does not become powerful." (Qu. in *SB*, 3:372.) The parallel to 1 Cor. 7:5 is remarkable if one allows that *akrasia* (lack of self-control) is due to "the flesh," and that in Pauline thought "the flesh" takes the place of the evil impulse.

²²⁴In Yalkut Schimeon on Deut. 23:14, Satan appears to be the objective condition, and the evil impulse the subjective condition of *peirasmos*.

Though *peirasmos* is not in view in Rom. 7:5, or in Eph. 2:3, it seems to be implicit in Rom. 8:12-13. The "brethren" are warned that they must "by the Spirit. . . put to death the deeds of the body." The language is reminiscent of Gal. 5:16ff. Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), 127.

²²⁵Demons and evil spirits do not appear to have direct responsibility for *peirasmos*, except possibly in a few of the non-canonical writings.

²²⁶See Luke 22:3, 53; cf. John 13:2, 27; 14:30. There is some reason to believe that the writer of the third gospel was more concerned to prove that "Christianity was not a subversive sect" than were the writers of the first two gospels. Was this because persecution had become more severe, or more a matter of official policy? See S. M. Gilmour, "The Gospel according to St. Luke: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 8:5-7.

²²⁷According to Luke 22:3; John 13:27, he may enter into

a person, but this probably means that he may gain complete control of him/her.

²²⁸Augustine, *The City of God*, 11.17, provides a preliminary attempt at such a doctrine, though it does not deal with the internal condition making the experience possible. See also *ibid.*, 14.27.

²²⁹Cf. 1 En. 94.5; bMen. 99b.

²³⁰*The Temptation and the Passion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 60. His arguments are sometimes debatable, and are frequently arguments from silence.

²³¹*Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature*, 161.

²³²Cf. *Apoc. Mos.* 21.3, 5, "When he (Adam) came, I (Eve) opened my mouth and the devil was speaking, and I began to exhort him and said, 'Come hither, my Lord Adam, hearken to me and eat of the fruit of the tree, of which God told us not to eat of it.' . . . And speedily I persuaded him." Note 16.1-5, "The devil spake to the serpent saying, '. . . Only be my vessel, and I will speak through thy mouth words to deceive him'"; and 3 Bar. 9.9, "At the transgression of the first Adam. . . Sammael . . . took the serpent as a garment."

²³³Cf. J. M. Gibson, "The Gospel of St. Matthew," *EB*, 4:754; G. A. Chadwick, "The Gospel according to St. Mark," *EB*, 4:868a. Though the persecutions described were considered to be tests, the persecutors were not considered the source of those tests in *Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonica* 19; *Acts of Peter: Vercelli Acts* 6, 7; *Acts of S. Fructuosus* 7; *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 2.2.

²³⁴Qu. in V. Taylor, *Jesus and his Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 153 n. 2.

²³⁵Did he omit it because it might be taken by his reader(s) to mean that matter is inherently evil?

²³⁶Luke 22:43 (*GNT*, 305 n. 3). Is it farfetched to suggest

that "strength" answers to "weak" in Mark 14:38 (Matt. 26:41)?

²³⁷The writers of these Gospels may have believed that His flesh was "weak," and yet have been convinced that He was sinless. Cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: S C M, 1959), 93-94.

²³⁸E.g., Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, Eleventh revised edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 160-61; Cullmann, *Christology*, 172, 178; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1977), 380-82; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 421-22.

²³⁹E.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 193; Dodd, *Romans*, 119-20; V. Taylor, *The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 39-40

²⁴⁰F.-J. Leenhardt, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Romains* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestle, 1957), 117 n. 1, claims that the obedience of Jesus emphasized in Phil. 2:8 not only distinguished Him from other men, but is evidence that the word "likeness" in 2:7 implies difference from other men as well as likeness to them. In my view, however, the structure of the passage is such that v. 8 does not have implications for the meaning of "likeness" in v. 7.

²⁴¹Cf. Michel, *Römer*, 160-61; D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Temptation* (London: SCM, 1966), 103. That Paul believed that Jesus never yielded to temptation is made clear in 2 Cor. 5:21. From Rom. 5:13 it is evident that Paul could conceive of a person being a sinner without being a guilty sinner.

²⁴²Cullmann, *Christology*, 178 n. 2, claims that in Rom. 5:14 ("like [lit: 'in the likeness of'] the transgression of Adam") the usage favours complete correspondence. I doubt it. Furthermore, does the use of "in every respect"

in Heb. 2:17 (“made like his brethren in every respect”) not argue that “likeness” by itself may not imply complete correspondence? Cf. Heb. 4:15.

²⁴³Cf. Dodd, *Romans*, 120; V. Taylor, *Person of Christ*, 39-40.

²⁴⁴There are other reminiscences of Rom. 5:12-20 as well. Cf. Michel, *Römer*, 160. This is not to deny the contact with Rom. 6:1-11, which has been pointed out by Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 193; and Dodd, *Romans*, 118.

²⁴⁵Cf. Dodd, *Romans*, 120.

²⁴⁶Phil. 2:15 implies that Christians may “be . . . without blemish (*amōma*) in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation . . .” (That the “flesh” of Christians is still “sinful flesh” is implied in Gal. 5:16-17). It is possible, however, that *amōmos*, when used of Christians in the New Testament, means “blameless” rather than “unblemished.” (Cf. *BAGD*, 47b-48a.) It is possible, also, that it is used of Christians almost, if not altogether, in an eschatological sense in this verse as elsewhere in the New Testament. (Cf. E. C. Blackman, “Innocent, Blameless, Unblamable,” *TWBB*, 114a.) In either case Phil. 2:15 would not tell against the point made in the main text.

²⁴⁷*Studies in the Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis, 1983 repr. of 1849 edn.), qu. in L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 303 n. 15.

²⁴⁸In personal communication E. C. Blackman suggested that the force of the Greek might be brought out somewhat as follows: “The very One, I tell you, who had never come to consciousness of sin, him, I say, God made sin. . .”

²⁴⁹*Person of Christ*, 40.

²⁵⁰Cf. Michel, *Römer*, 147; F. V. Filson, “The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 10:343. According to G. Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:296, “2 C.

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2 Cor 9:11

5:21 shows (*hamartia*) to be a pregnant expression for the whole sinful nature of man." In my view this is reading more into the use of this term than is warranted.

²⁵¹J. Denney, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," *EB*, 5:771a.

²⁵²*Person of Christ*, 64-77. Cullmann, *Christology*, 177-78, elaborates a similar view. For a more extended consideration of this interpretation, and of alternates, see R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), 134-53.

²⁵³Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 94.

²⁵⁴According to G. Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:492, "weakness" has "almost the sense of 'sin'" in Heb. 4:15; 7:28. On the other hand, P. E. Hughes comments on Heb. 4:15, "It was precisely our weaknesses that he (Christ) embraced and made his own when he took our nature upon himself"; but says of Heb. 5:2, "Our author. . . is now speaking of that weakness which is the consequence not so much of human nature as of human depravity" (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 171, 177). Is it likely that the author would make reference to two such different kinds of weakness within four verses without indication thereof? (Actually, the author of Hebrews never says that Christ embraced our weakness. [G. Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:491, incorrectly interprets *autos* in Heb. 5:2 as a reference to Christ.] He says that He was "in every respect . . . tested as we are.")

²⁵⁵Cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 103; G. Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:492.

²⁵⁶Possibly it could also be taken as a limitation of "in every way" in 2:17 (NIV). Heb. 4:14-16 catches up what is said in 2:17-18. See Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 58.

²⁵⁷B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan, 1892), 107; cf. E. Graham, "The Temptation in the Wilderness," *CQR*, 162 (1961):

29; C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1953), 2:93.

²⁵⁸Cf. Rom. 7:11, "Sin. . . deceived me"; Stählin in *TDNT*, 1:296.

²⁵⁹The meaning of these adjectives is discussed at length in Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:199-201, 418; and in *TDNT*, 5:489-92; 3:482; 4:647, respectively. "Unstained (*amiantos*)" probably comes nearest to suggesting that Jesus was free of moral "weakness."

²⁶⁰ Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 92.

²⁶¹See the discussion concerning Rom. 8:3 in relation to this point. Though the moral weakness mentioned in Heb. 4, 5, 7, is nowhere related particularly to the physical part of a human person, it may not be amiss to note that according to Heb. 10:20 the flesh of Jesus is of major significance in relation to His sacrifice. (Heb. 10:10 speaks of "the offering of the body" of Jesus).

²⁶²In Paul's view Adam may have been another exception. See Rom. 5:12-19. Contrast 4 Ezra 3:21.

CHAPTER V THE MEANS OF TESTING AND TEMPTATION

A. Divine Laws and Commands

Positive and difficult commands are sometimes described in Jewish literature as being in themselves means whereby God brings men immediately and directly into testing. Indeed, the most renowned of the tests recounted in this literature furnishes an example. It is indicated in Gen. 22:1 that God tested Abraham by commanding him, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." The severity of the test is implicit in the phrase, "whom you love."¹ This severity is recognized in Jub. 17:16, "Abraham loves Isaac, his son. And he is more pleased with him than everything"; in Wisd. 10:5, which refers to his "compassion for his child"; in Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.13.1, which speaks of Isaac as "his own son"; and in Gen. R. 56:4, where Satan is pictured as meeting Abraham after he had received the command, and saying to him, "Are you going to slay a son who was granted to you when you were a hundred years old?"²

In later Jewish literature Abraham is described as one who endured many tests, some of which were through other commands from God. In Jub. 17:17 it is said that the Lord "tested him with his land,³ and with famine. And he tested him with the wealth of kings.⁴ And he tested him again with his wife, when she was taken

(from him), and with circumcision.⁵ And he tested him with Ishmael and with Hagar, his maidservant, when he sent them away."⁶

The testing of Israel in the Wilderness was, at least in part, through difficult requirements. This is seen in Exod. 15:25, "The Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test." The testing of Israel, according to this passage, was through "a statute and an ordinance," seemingly some responsibility, which, if fulfilled, would show that she was loyal, and, if unfulfilled, would show a lack of loyalty.

Another example of testing by means of commandment is reported in Exod. 16:4-5, "The Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you; and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.'" The test seems to be through the command to gather only a day's portion at a time. Their faith in God's daily providence would thereby be tested continually.⁷

We have noted one further instance of what may be considered a specific command serving as a means of testing, i.e., the conviction of Jesus that it was the will of God that he should suffer and die. In contradistinction to the preceding examples, however, what God required of Jesus was not primarily with a view to testing Him, but with a view to the salvation of "many."⁸ Furthermore, Jesus was not to fulfil God's will by His own overt deed and act. His death was to be accomplished by other people, people inspired by Satan.⁹ Like the other examples, however, God's will had to be accepted, and the difficulty of accepting it constituted it a means of testing. It undoubtedly functioned as such at Caesarea Philippi. When Peter rebuked him for stating that the Son of Man must suffer and die, Jesus responded, "Get behind me, Satan!"¹⁰ Surely we are to understand that Peter was Satan's mouthpiece, tempting Jesus to avoid the cross. Its full effect as a means of testing/temptation is seen in the agony of Gethsemane, when He prayed, "Remove this cup from me, yet, not what I want, but what you want."¹¹ The Epistle to the Hebrews, in the elaboration of Jesus' sufferings as tests, accords special notice to His Gethsemane experience, and

emphasizes His "obedience" in that connection. According to 5:7, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered."

In each of the foregoing examples the known will of God for conduct in a particular situation is the means of testing. There are, however, passages in which God's known will for human conduct in general becomes a means of testing. Though the prohibition with respect to the Edenic tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not said to have been with a view to the testing of the inhabitants, no doubt the provision of the tree and the prohibition concerning it had such a purpose in view, and "the serpent" used it as a means thereof. And in Deuteronomy and Judges the revelation of God's will for conduct in general is said to be with a view to the testing of God's people. The passages in question are: Deut. 8:2, "Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments"; Deut. 13:3-4 (4-5), "The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. The Lord your God you shall follow, him alone you shall fear, his commandments you shall keep, his voice you shall obey, him you shall serve, and to him you shall hold fast"; Jud. 3:4, "They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their ancestors by Moses" (cf. 2:22).

There is a passage in Jewish literature, probably composed in the late first century,¹² which is of special interest in this connection since it apparently attributes the revelation of the two ways to a desire on God's part to test man. The passage is in 2 Enoch 30:14-15, "I . . . called his name Adam. . . And I pointed out to him the two ways--light and darkness. And I said to him, "This is good for you, but that is bad";¹³ so that I might come to know whether he has love toward me or abhorrence, and so that it might become plain who among his race loves me." This passage not only describes the revealed knowledge of righteousness as the means of

testing Adam, but indicates that the revelation thereof was with a view to testing him.. Moreover, the clause, “that it might become plain who among his race loves me,” suggests that the knowledge of the two ways was not only to make possible a test for Adam, but for all mankind.¹⁴

What we have noted concerning the function of the law in Deuteronomy, and of the knowledge of the two ways in 2 Enoch, prepares in part for the Pauline conception of the law. In Chapter IV it was contended that in 1 Cor. 7:5 and in Gal. 5:16-17 Paul traces testing/temptation to “sin . . . which dwells within (a person), that is, in (his/her) flesh” (Rom. 7:18). Apart from any other consideration, this means that Paul’s view of the relationship of the law to sin must be examined for what it reveals concerning his view of the relationship of the law to testing/temptation.

Of chief significance for our enquiry in this connection is the teaching of Rom. 7:7-9, 11, 13:

If it had not been for the law,¹⁵ I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died . . . Sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. . . Sin (worked) death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. (Cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:13, 20; Gal. 3:19.)

Twice in this passage Paul states that sin seized “an opportunity in the commandment.” The Greek word rendered “opportunity” is a military term signifying “the starting point or base of operations for an expedition,”¹⁶ but came to be used quite commonly in a metaphorical sense. In such usage it could mean “occasion,” “pretext,” “opportunity.” In our passage it seems preferable to render it “opportunity,” since Paul wrote verses 7-12 to explain why he

can hold the view of the law he does and yet deny that "the law is sin." He was concerned to establish that "the commandment is holy and just and good."¹⁷ That the original meaning of the word is "base of operations" is, however, to be kept in mind. That Paul is consciously using military language seems evident from the recurrence of such language in v. 23 through the use of the word "war" and the phrase "making me captive."¹⁸

How sin finds "opportunity," "a base of operations," in the commandment may be deduced from the context if one keeps in mind that Paul conceives of sin as a power dwelling within man, and that its true nature is hostility to God (Rom. 7:13-17; 8:7). He indicates that until the will of God is known as a commandment, or commandments, sin "lies dead," i.e., inactive, or ineffective.¹⁹ He intimates that it could not be otherwise, because, until such time as there is at least some knowledge of His will, human beings are not confronted with a choice in relation to God. As a result there is no occasion and no "opportunity" for hostility toward Him.²⁰ But when the will of God is known as a commandment, or commandments, the situation changes. Then there is an occasion for hostility to God. Immediately sin springs to life, and inspires rebellious disobedience,²¹ using deceit--probably deceit concerning the law --to gain its ends.²² As a result of the process sin's true nature is not only expressed, it is also revealed. Sin is "shown to be sin," i.e., it is shown to be hostility to God. In short, in this passage Paul is stating that sin "which dwells within (human beings), that is, in (their) flesh," can only develop its true nature and be seen for what it really is, when the will of God is known as a commandment or commandments.²³

In our view Paul is not dealing with testing/temptation in Romans 7. "I was alive once," does not mean "alive to God." It means the carefree life of one in whom "sin" dwells, but in whom it has not yet had an opportunity to develop its true nature. Indeed, F. J. Leenhardt compares the situation, not with that of Adam before the Fall, but with the situation described in Rom. 5:13, "Sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law."²⁴ Nor does the present writer believe that the "coming of the commandment" means involvement in a testing/temptation experience, despite the use of Gen. 2-3 to illuminate

what transpires when this happens. Paul does not really envision the possibility of obedience to the commandment. Enticement to evil, and perhaps even guilt, may be involved, but not testing/temptation.²⁵ As we have noted, sin “which dwells within (human beings), that is, in (their) flesh” is the subjective possibility of testing/temptation. Could “sin” function as such apart from the knowledge of the law? Paul implies that it could not. His doctrine, that “sin” can only develop its true nature as transgression, and can only be recognized according to its true nature, if there is knowledge of the law, implies that, however “sin” may express itself in conduct, the fact that it does so express itself does not indicate anything concerning man’s devotion to God unless said conduct is known to be contrary to God’s will. For Paul, then, the law only makes testing/temptation possible.²⁶

It ought to be added, perhaps, that Paul’s doctrine that the Christian is not “under law” (Rom. 6:14-15; cf. Gal. 3:23; 4:5), and does not serve “under the old written code” (Rom. 7:6), does not imply that the law is unrelated to the testing/temptation of Christians. He specifically states that Christians, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are to fulfil “the just requirement of the law” (Rom. 8:4), and seems to imply that they are persons who “submit to God’s law” (Rom. 8:7; cf. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14). Moreover, he warns Christian readers, “Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--for if you live according to the flesh, you will die” (Rom. 8:12-13; cf. Gal. 5:16-17). The last quotation, if we remember that “the flesh” stands for “sin . . . that dwells . . . in (the) flesh,” is reminiscent of Rom. 7:7-11, where it is stated that “sin” finds “opportunity in the commandment,” and so accomplishes death. There is no reason, therefore, to think that what we have considered to be the implications of Rom. 7:7-13 for Paul’s view of the relationship of the law to testing/temptation needs to be revised when we consider the testing/temptation of Christians.

In concluding this section, be it noted that it remained for Paul to finally elaborate the function of the law in such a fashion that it is seen clearly as the possibility of testing/temptation. There had been preparation for his understanding at least as early as Deuteronomy, if not as early as Gen. 2-3. Whether such doctrines as the one we discovered in 2 Enoch 30 assisted his thinking or

not, the present writer is of the opinion that he writes as though he is breaking new ground.

B. Marvellous Manifestations of Power

That testing/temptation may be due to marvellous manifestations of power is probably to be seen first of all in Exod. 20:18-20,

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking (at Sinai), they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you, and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."²⁷

The meaning seems to be that by the marvellous manifestation of His presence and power God is giving the people a strong reason for faith in Him.²⁸ The manifestation is a test insofar as it makes it necessary for the people to decide for or against God. They are provided urgent reason for devotion to Him, but they must determine whether they will render that devotion. That the manifestation of God's presence and power is accompanied by a revelation of the kind of conduct that He desires is possibly implied.²⁹ If so, the manifestation of God is a test, and the law given therewith is the standard by which their reaction to the test may be judged. That the giving of the law served a disciplinary purpose is also a possibility.

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The inclusion of "trials (testing experiences)" in a series which includes "signs" and "wonders" suggests a similar conception in Deut. 4:34, "Has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders. . . as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? To you it was shown, so that you would acknowledge that the Lord is God" (cf. 7:19; 29:3 [2]). It is thought by some

scholars that the “trials” here mentioned are tests of Pharaoh,³¹ but the passage specifically states that what occurred was out of concern for Israel, “To you it was shown, so that you would acknowledge that the Lord is God.”³² We judge, therefore, that the “trials” were tests of Israel.³³

In Deut. 13:2-4 (1-3) marvellous manifestations wrought by one who thereby entices to the worship of other gods are mentioned as significant elements in a possible experience of testing: “If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ . . . the Lord your God is testing you . . .” (RSV). It is to be noted that “signs” and “wonders” which are attributed to the power of other gods test loyalty to Yahweh. It is noteworthy, furthermore, that the test is still considered to be Yahweh’s doing.

In early Christian literature the terminology of Deut. 13 recurs in descriptions of the eschatological trial/temptation:

- a) Mark 13:22 (Matt. 24:24), “False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect” (RSV).
- b) Did. 16:4-5, “Then shall appear the deceiver of the world as a Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be given over into his hands and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since the world began. Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial (*dokimasias*) . . .”³⁴

In these passages, as in Deut. 13, signs and wonders may test loyalty to God.

C. Hard Circumstances

Difficult circumstances are the most common means of testing/temptation, so common, indeed, that, as we have seen, the time came when tribulation (*thlipsis*) could be used almost as a synonym for trial. Still later, in Christian circles, persecution

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(*diōgmos*), the form of tribulation which was most prominent, could also be used in this way.

Deut. 8 contains the one Pentateuchal passage in which harsh circumstances seem to be set forth as a means of testing. In vv. 2-3 Moses is represented as exhorting Israel, "Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart . . . He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna . . ." The humbling, which was apparently the means whereby they were tested, was through letting them hunger, though it is possible that it was accomplished both by the hungering and the feeding with manna. The latter view is supported by v. 16, "(Your God) fed you in the wilderness with manna . . . to humble you and to test you."³⁵ On the other hand, the Hebrew verb translated "humble" usually means "afflict," and is so understood in the Septuagint version of this chapter.³⁶ In our opinion, therefore, the experience of hunger is to be understood as the means of testing to which reference is made, and v. 16 is to be taken as an abbreviation of what was stated in vv. 2-3.

Jud. 2:22; 3:1, 4, also seem to be passages in which adversity is represented as a means of testing. There is a reference to war as such in 3:1-2, "These are the nations that the Lord left to test all those in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan (it was only that successive generations of Israelites might know war, to teach those who had no experience of it before)." Even if it be concluded that 3:1 does not contain a religious use of our terminology in the ordinary sense, there is evidence that the means of the test to which reference is made in 2:22 and 3:4 is by means of adversaries.

The outstanding Old Testament example of testing by hard circumstances is that of Job. To test whether his devotion to God was uncalculating or otherwise, he was first of all subjected to the loss of his possessions and of his children. Later he was afflicted with "loathsome sores . . . from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head," to say nothing of the blasphemous response of his wife to these troubles (Job 1:8-2:9). In the body of the book of Job there is also added the unjustified reproaches and disdain heaped upon

him by his relatives, friends and acquaintances (see 17:6; 19:13-19). As we have seen in Chapter III, the Septuagint probably introduces testing terminology into the text in several places, namely, 7:1; 10:17; 16:10; 19:12; 25:2. Though the respective Greek words, as we have seen, refer to “attackers,” probably they convey the additional thought that these “attackers” are sources of religious testing.

Apart from the passages noted above in which testing is almost synonymous in Jewish literature with tribulation, specific reference to harsh circumstances as a means of testing is found in Jub. 17:17, “The Lord was aware that Abraham was faithful in all of his afflictions, because he tested him . . .” An additional example is in Judith 8 where the extreme straits of the city of Bethulia due to faintness for lack of water when besieged by Holofernes, general of the Assyrian army, are described as a means of testing.³⁷

In the chapter on the meaning of our vocabulary, we paid considerable attention to testing through tribulation, and especially through persecution, in early Christian literature. However, there are instances of testing/temptation through unpleasant circumstances which were not mentioned in that discussion:

- a) The hunger which Jesus suffered in the Wilderness, and which was used to tempt Him to make stones into bread (Luke 4:2-3 [Matt. 4:2-3]).
- b) Acts 15:16 v.l., “Men who have delivered up their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ to every kind of trial (‘test’).”
- c) Rev. 2:10, “The devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested.”³⁸
- d) Hermas, *Sim.* 7.1, “You must be afflicted . . . For thus . . . the glorious angel enjoined concerning you. For he wished you to be tried (‘tested’).”

D. Wealth and Abundance

Sometimes the very opposite of harsh circumstances, namely plenty and prosperity, are set forth as a means of testing. According to Exod. 16:4, "I (the Lord) am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not." Israel is to be tested as to whether they will restrict their daily gathering to the amount specified, or not. The very plenitude of the manna was one of the means whereby they would experience testing.³⁹

In the Aleph and A texts of the Septuagint of Eccles. 5:12-13, it is possible that riches are set forth as a means of testing. According to these peculiar texts, "Riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad trial ('test')." ⁴⁰

A clear example of wealth as a means of testing is in Jub. 17:17, where it is stated that Abraham was "tested. . . with the wealth of kings."⁴¹ Probably the reference is to Abraham's response to the king of Sodom concerning the goods recovered in the battle with Chederlaomer and the kings associated with him, as recorded in Gen. 14:21-23, "The king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give me the persons but take the goods for yourself.' But Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the Lord, God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours, so that you might not say, 'I have made Abram rich.'""

It is possible that we should see a final example, so far as Jewish literature is concerned, in Exod. R. 31.3, "He (God) tries ('tests') the rich man to see if his hand will be opened unto the poor."

In Christian literature, a variant reading of Acts 5:3 ⁴² makes it explicit that their wealth was a means of testing to Ananias and Sapphira. According to this reading of the narrative, Satan tempted them to keep back for themselves part of the proceeds of the sale of a piece of ground, but to pretend that they had laid the whole thereof at the apostles' feet. ⁴³ That wealth is a means of testing seems to be implied in the Jacobite exhortation to the rich man to

“boast . . . in being brought low,” an exhortation which is preceded and followed by explicit concern with a proper response to testing.⁴⁴

E. Objects of Illicit Desire

There are a number of passages in which people are the means of testing/temptation through the stimulation of illicit sexual desire. In Jewish literature these include:

- a) T. Jos. 2:2-9:5, in which Potiphar's wife is described as a means of testing/temptation for Joseph.⁴⁵
- b) bSanh. 107a, in which Bathsheba is the means whereby David is brought into testing/temptation.⁴⁶

In the New Testament a parallel situation seems to be envisioned in 1 Cor. 7:5, “Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time . . . ; and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”⁴⁷ In 1 Cor. 10:8 it is implied that “the daughters of Moab” were a source of temptation to the people of Israel in the time of Moses (cf. Num. 25:1-9).

Other objects of illicit desire are sometimes mentioned as means of testing/temptation. That the wealth one desires and does not have may become such is stated in 1 Tim. 6:9-10, “Those who want to be rich fall into temptation . . . For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith . . .”⁴⁸

That food could be a means of testing/temptation is indicated in 1 Cor. 10:6, where the craving of Israel for meat, and its sequel, as recorded in Num. 11, is used as a warning against the dangers of testing/temptation.⁴⁹ It is to be noted that the craving of the Israelites is described as “desir(ing) evil.”⁵⁰

Of special interest is Satan's use of “all the kingdoms of the world” as a means of tempting Jesus.⁵¹ According to the Lukan version of His temptation, the basis of the appeal was two-fold: “their (the kingdoms') glory and all this authority.” Such could excite desire for power⁵² and minister to pride.⁵³

It is of interest that the objects of illicit desire which are means of testing/temptation in passages in which our vocabulary specifically occurs, include those things which could gratify the desire for sex, for wealth, for food, for power and for glory.⁵⁴

F. Deception

Deception is a means of testing/temptation quite different from the other means we have been considering. Moreover, it seems that the danger of deception is generally, if not always, characteristic of testing/temptation. Deception is the attempt to "lead . . . (people) to believe what is false" (2 Thess. 2:11; cf. Rom. 1:25), and it is doubtful that one would ever fail a test/temptation without believing what is false, at least temporarily. Deception is a ('the') common, if not universal, means of testing/temptation to which the other means are secondary.

Though I have not found any ancient text which speaks of Eve as tested/tempted, it will be argued later that her relationship and loyalty to God was tested by the blandishments of the "the serpent."⁵⁵ She is represented as saying about her fall, "The serpent deceived me" (Gen. 3:13 NIV). It is evident that this was never considered to be merely an excuse, but was widely held to be the truth. (Sometimes it was also considered to be the truth about Adam's fall.) According to Sib. Or. 1:39-40, "A very horrible snake craftily deceived them." Similar language occurs in *Life of Adam and Eve* 18:1; Apoc. Mos. 15:1; 16:5; 23:5; 30:1; Pseudo-Philo 13:8; 3 Bar. 4:8; Gr. Apoc. Ezra 2:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14.⁵⁶

According to Deut. 13:1-5, "The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul," when prophets or persons "who divine by dreams" and "the omens or the portents declared by them take place, and they say, 'Let us follow other gods . . . and let us serve them.'" That the omens or portents declared by these prophets or persons who divined by dreams took place appeared to provide impressive reason for believing that it was reasonable to follow and serve other gods as they were being advised. The danger of being deceived was essential to the test. (It is significant that the Lord is said to have been testing thus [cf. 1 Kgs. 22:20-23]!)

The testing of Job involved the danger of deception. His sufferings tempted him to believe that it was useless to continue in his fear of God and rejection of evil (cf. Job 1:8, 11; 2:5). Moreover, his afflictions persuaded his wife to forsake God. She even counselled her husband, "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). She was deceived. He was not, but was in danger thereof. (It may be added that the tribulation and/or persecution of God's people commonly puts God's people in danger of false belief concerning God. In other words it puts them in danger of being deceived.)

In Sir. 4:17 we are told that Wisdom will "walk with them (her children) on tortuous paths; she will bring fear and dread upon them, and will torment them by her discipline until she trusts them, and she will test them with her ordinances." The idea appears to be that Wisdom will bring torment to her children to find out whether they will be deceived by that torment into believing that her ordinances need not be heeded. If they are not deceived, she then "trusts them."⁵⁷

In CDC 4:12 ff. it is said, "By making them (whoredom, lucre and desecration) look like three kinds of righteousness Belial ensnares Israel in them." Deception is clearly in view here.

According to 1QS 3:21-22, "By the angel of darkness (comes) the aberration of all the sons of righteousness, and all their sins, their offenses, their guilt and their iniquitous deeds (are caused) by his reign." They go astray because "all the spirits which are allotted to him (strive) to trip up the sons of light" (3:24). According to M. Burrows "the spirit of deceit," whose "ways . . . are . . . atrocious disguise and falsehood, great hypocrisy . . ." (4:9-10),⁵⁸ is another name for "the angel of darkness" spoken of in 3:20.⁵⁹ But even if the spirit of deceit and the angel of darkness are only closely associated, it is clearly implied that deception is an (the?) important means of testing/temptation.

According to bKid. 81a, Satan appeared to Rabbi Meir as a woman on two separate occasions. An attempt at deception is implied. In bShab. 89a Satan is said to have given the Israelites a vision of Moses' bier, as a result of which they said to Aaron, "As for this Moses, we know not what has become of him," and they asked him to make gods for them (cf. Exod. 32:1). By being

deceived into believing that Moses was dead, the Israelites were led into idolatry. In bSanh. 89b it is said that when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Satan went to Abraham and sought to mislead him. He told Abraham that the burnt offering he was to offer was a lamb and not a son. Satan is represented as attempting to deceive Abraham. According to Gen. R. 56:4 Satan tried to deceive Abraham in various ways. Particularly significant is the suggestion that God is not trustworthy, a suggestion reminiscent of Gen. 3:4-5.⁶⁰

When the devil tempted Jesus he quoted Ps. 91:11-12, attempting to persuade Him that it was right and proper for Him to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:6 [Luke 4:10-11]).⁶¹ When Peter rebuked Jesus, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you (that you be killed)," Jesus responded, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; . . ." (Matt. 16:22-23). In so saying Jesus clearly represents Himself as being tested/tempted, and (apparently) as having been in danger of being deceived by Satan (through the mouth of Peter)⁶² into believing that He need not suffer death.

One further passage requires our attention, namely Heb. 3:13, where "brothers and sisters" are warned against being "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." The exhortation relates to what those addressed were experiencing, namely a time of testing (2:18; 4:15). In such a time they were in danger of being deceived. Sin is almost personified in the warning. If pressed as to who or what was ultimately responsible for the actual attempt at deception, the author might have said it was Satan. H. Montefiore states, "It is probably right to see here a reference to the primal sin wherein Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent."⁶³ If such a reference was in the author's mind, he would probably have identified the serpent as the devil, as Paul and the author of Revelation did (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:9). And, of course, the devil is mentioned in Heb. 2:14. However, regardless of how "sin" is to be interpreted, deception as a means of testing is clearly in view.⁶⁴

In connection with his comments on Heb. 3:13 J. Moffatt remarks, "All sin deceives men."⁶⁵ Since testing always implies the possibility that one may fail the test, and so sin, Moffatt's

(Israel at Elim⁷⁹) that “He (God) was exercising them with these trials of the moment. But now they were convicted of failure, both in endurance and in recollection of benefits received.”

It is in the New Testament that Israel’s failure in times of testing in the Wilderness gains its greatest importance as a warning:

- a) In 1 Cor. 10:1-12 the idolatry, immorality and grumbling of Israel are cited, and it is said of them, “These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us.” Since Israel fell, we must “watch out that (we) do not fall.”
- b) In Heb. 3:7-4:13, where there is an appeal for faithfulness in time of testing, the appeal is emphasized by commentary on Psalm 95:7-11 which tells of Israel’s failure when she was tested in the Wilderness.

From the foregoing it is evident that the Scriptures are an aid in times of testing/temptation in various ways:

- a) They may help the persons involved to understand that the experience through which they are passing is a test/temptation.
- b) They may provide phraseology whereby one may articulate his/her experience as he/she undergoes testing/temptation.
- c) As in the case of Christ in the Wilderness, they may assist in determining the nature of the proper response.
- d) They provide exhortation to faithfulness and warning against lack of steadfastness.
- e) They provide examples of the faithfulness to be emulated and instances of the faithlessness to be avoided.

2. Prayer

In the earliest literature prayer is not specifically mentioned as an aid to steadfastness in times of testing/temptation. Ps. 25 (26) is a prayer in which God is challenged to prove the Psalmist’s

steadfastness through testing him, but there is no suggestion that prayer helps one to make the proper response when he/she is undergoing it. The first such reference which has come to our attention is in Sir. 2:10, "Has anyone called upon him (the Lord) and been neglected?" The context is one in which those who serve the Lord are informed that they may expect to experience testing, and are exhorted concerning faithfulness in it.

That prayer was considered to be of value in meeting tests/temptations successfully is seen in Jewish literature thereafter:

- a) *Life of Adam and Eve* 17:1-3, "Hearing this from the devil, Adam cried out with great weeping and said, '. . . Remove far from me this opponent, who seeks to destroy my soul. . .' And immediately the devil disappeared from him. But Adam persisted. . . in repentance. . ."
- b) *bSanh.* 64a, "The shape of a fiery lion's whelp issued from the Holy of Holies, and the Prophet said to Israel, That is the Tempter of Idolatry. . . Then they said, Since the time is propitious, let us pray that the Tempter of Sin (may likewise be delivered into our hands)."
- c) *bBer.* 60b, "Bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me and let not the evil inclination have sway over me."
- d) *bKid.* 81b, "Every time R. Hiyya b. Abba fell upon his face he used to say, "The Merciful save us from the Tempter.'""
- e) *Ex. R.* 19:2, "David said: 'Lord of the universe! When I occupy myself with thy statutes, let not the Tempter have power to influence me. . . namely, that Satan do not lead me astray and make me shamefaced before the righteous.'"

In the New Testament prayer has a large place in aiding one to withstand testing/temptation:

- a) The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is evidence if testing/temptation is used in that petition in a pregnant

sense, as seems probable.

- b) According to Mark 14:38 (Matt. 26:41; Luke 22:46; cf. Luke 22:40) Jesus exhorted His disciples, "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial." "Trial" in a pregnant sense is apparently in view in this saying as well.
- c) Jesus Himself set an example of prayer in the great testing time with which His ministry came to an end. Not only did He pray in Gethsemane, but there is also the evidence of the Cry of Dereliction on the cross (Mark 15:34 [Matt:27:46]). Moreover, in Heb. 5:7 it is stated concerning His Gethsamane experience, which is described as a test in the context: "Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverential submission." Though there is no certain evidence that the Cry of Dereliction helped Him meet His test, that the Gethsemane prayer did so is surely implied in the words which concluded that prayer: "Yet, not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36 [Matt. 26:39]). That the prayer did aid Him is explicit in the passage in Hebrews. Moreover, was not the "reverential submission" which is mentioned there expressed in the words from the prayer which we have just quoted?
- d) Eph. 6:18, "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication," is the last in a series of exhortations which indicate how the readers of the epistle may "be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." That the contest with the devil constitutes a test/temptation is not specifically stated but is surely implied, and is indicated, moreover, by emphasis on the need for faith and perseverance.⁸⁰
- e) In connection with the experience of testing Jas. 1:5 urges, "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you." It is to be noted that the emphasis

on wisdom as a requirement for the successful meeting of tests accords with the emphasis of the Jewish sages on the power of "wisdom" to keep one from evil.⁸¹

In the Apostolic Fathers the emphasis on prayer continues. Not only is the Lord's Prayer, with its petition concerning testing/temptation, repeated in Did. 8:2 (cf. 10:5), this particular petition is singled out in an emphasis on prayer in time of testing/temptation in Polyc. Phil. 7:2, ". . . beseeching the all-seeing God in our supplications 'to lead us not into temptation,' even as the Lord said, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" ⁸²

Of special interest with respect to prayer in connection with testing/temptation is Rom. 8:26-27, which emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in relation to prayer under such circumstances. The need for, and the nature of, the Spirit's assistance is described as follows: "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." That testing/temptation is at least one of the themes which receives consideration in the context is evident from the fact that "the sufferings of this present time" and separation "from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" bracket the passage (Rom. 8:18-39) in which the verses occur with which we are specially concerned. Moreover, "the sufferings of this present time" are described as "hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword," which, as we have seen, were considered to be typical testing/temptation circumstances. As evidence that they do constitute tests/temptations is not only the fact that the danger of separation from "the love of Christ" is envisioned, but also the fact that "hope," "patience (lit. 'endurance')," and "love (to) God," are emphasized.⁸³

Closely related to the idea that "the Spirit intercedes for the saints" in their times of testing/temptation, is the idea expressed later in the same passage that "It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God. . . who. . . intercedes for us" (8:34). Indeed, may we not paraphrase this statement and the succeeding question as follows: "Since Christ Jesus. . . intercedes for us, who will separate us from the love of Christ"? An earlier testing/temptation passage in which the intercession of Christ is

mentioned is Luke 22:31-32, “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail.” It is to be noted that in this case it is Christ’s prayers on earth which are in question rather than His intercession at the right hand of the Father.⁸⁴

Not only are our own prayers and those of Christ and of the Holy Spirit an aid to us in our times of testing/temptation, “supplication for all the saints” is included in Eph.6 as of importance if the saints are to be able to “withstand in the evil day” (v. 13 RSV).⁸⁵

3. “Keeping Alert”

In the New Testament “keeping alert” is often linked with prayer as an aid to the successful meeting of testing/temptation experiences:

- a) A significant example is at the conclusion of what is an elaboration of the eschatological testing/temptation, though not specifically so called. The passage is Luke 21:34-36,

Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

This passage is significant in that it clearly interprets the exhortations in the Olivet discourse to “keep alert” (Mark 13:33, 35, 37; Matt. 25:13) as not merely exhortations to be alert for the impending Parousia, but as exhortations to be alert in view of the eschatological test/temptation which is closely connected with the Parousia. On the other hand, the “trap” motif, though found elsewhere in testing/temptation contexts,⁸⁶ is not typical of Parousia

contexts.⁸⁷

- b) An outstanding example is in the Gethsemane exhortation recorded in Mark 14:38 (Matt. 26:41), "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial." There is some question as to whether "keep awake" means any more than to keep awake physically. On the other hand, the need for vigilance in view of the spiritual dangers before them suggests that the writers of the gospels saw in the exhortation a deeper meaning. Moreover, elsewhere they report sayings of Jesus in which "keep awake" is used in the figurative sense of keeping alert spiritually, and many scholars are of the opinion that this sense is to be perceived here.⁸⁸
- c) Col. 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving." I think it probable that testing/temptation is in view here.
- d) Eph. 6:18, "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints." The strong concern with testing/temptation in the context is to be noted.
- e) Polyc. *Phil.* 7:2, "Let us turn back to the word which was delivered to us in the beginning, 'watching unto prayer.'"⁸⁹ The prayer which is specifically mentioned in this connection is the testing/temptation petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Additional testing/temptation passages in which watching is emphasized, besides those in which it is conjoined with prayer, possibly include:

- a) 1 Cor. 16:13, "Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong";
- b) 1 Pet. 5:8-9, "Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith. . ."

What it means to keep alert is indicated negatively in Luke 21:34 where it is emphasized that “dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life” are in danger of weighing people down so that they fail to keep alert (cf. Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 12:45). Similarly it is exhorted in 1 Thess. 5:6-8, “Let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober.”⁹⁰ On the positive side 2 Pet. 3:11-12 implies that “lives of holiness and godliness” are the concomitant of watchfulness, and 1 Thess. 5:8 suggests that the sobriety which is intimately related to keeping alert involves “put(ting) on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”⁹¹

C. Rewards of Steadfastness in Testing/Temptation

Rewards for steadfastness are seldom mentioned explicitly in connection with testing/temptation, but they do occur, and are of several kinds:

1. Material and Temporal Rewards

Freedom from disease is promised to those who are steadfast in testing/temptation, according to Ex. 15:25-26, “There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. He said, ‘If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.’” It is of interest to note that “healing” is listed as one of the temporal rewards of those who walk in the way of the Spirit of truth and not in the way of the spirit of perversion, according to 1QS 4:6. Other temporal benefits which are conferred on such include “abundant peace during length of days, and to bear seed with all everlasting blessings” (1QS 4:7). The epilogue of the Book of Job suggests, though it is not specifically stated, that Job’s faithfulness in time of testing was rewarded, inasmuch as it states

in 42:12-13, "The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters." The rich man who "withstands his test" will be able to "enjoy his wealth in this world," according to Ex. R. 31:3. According to Num. R. 15:12, Joseph "was made a ruler, as a reward for having withstood his temptations."

Most renowned of the temporal rewards for withstanding testing is the one granted Abraham according to Gen. 22:16-18,

By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.⁹²

Sir. 44:21 summarizes this passage and adds that God promised to "give them (Abraham's posterity) an inheritance from sea to sea and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth."⁹³ In Jub. 18:15-16 the statements of Gen. 22:16-18 again recur (cf. Num. R. 15:12).

I have not noted any reference in early Christian literature to material and temporal benefits which accrued or accrue to those who are faithful in testing/temptation.⁹⁴ Possibly the tendency to consider tribulation and persecution as the means of testing/temptation to such an extent that they are frequently used as synonyms of testing/temptation made it difficult to conceive of temporal benefits as a reward for steadfastness. There was too much evidence that steadfastness had the opposite effect! Such passages as Luke 18:29-30 (cf. Mark 10:29-30; Matt. 19:28-29) make it clear that there were Christians in the primitive church who did not frown on the idea of material and temporal rewards *per se*.

2. *Spiritual Rewards*

An interest in the spiritual rewards of faithfulness in times of testing/temptation does not become explicit before the intertestamental period, when the view of testing as disciplinary had become prominent, and when pessimism concerning the possibility of reward in this life had grown strong. It is also possible that Hellenistic emphases had influence at this point.

Sir. 4:17-18 is the earliest passage we have noted where a spiritual reward for faithfulness is set forth: "She (Wisdom). . . will torment them (those who desire wisdom) by her discipline until she trusts them, and she will test them with her ordinances. Then she will come straight back to them again and gladden them, and will reveal her secrets to them."

A reward of a different kind is reported concerning Abraham. The first occurrence which we have noted is in Jub. 19:8-9, "Abraham was tried. . . He was found faithful and he was recorded as a friend of the Lord in the heavenly tablets."⁹⁵ Reference to the testing of Abraham is also implied in CDC 3:2-3, "Because he (Abraham) kept the commandments of God and did not prefer the desires of his own spirit,⁹⁶ he was accounted the Friend of God and transmitted this status in turn to Isaac and Jacob." The connection is explicit in Judith 8:22 (Vulgate), "We ought to remember how our Father Abraham was tested. . . proven, made the friend of God." That he was "called the friend of God" is again connected with the sacrifice of Isaac in Jas. 2:21-23.⁹⁷

Having righteousness "reckoned to him" is said to be Abraham's reward for faithfulness when tested in 1 Macc. 2:52, "Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?" That the reward of merit is in view is evident from the exhortation in the preceding verse, "Remember the deeds of the ancestors, which they did in their generations; and you will receive great honour and an everlasting name." Immediately following v. 52 other Old Testament heroes are listed, and after each name some outstanding action or accomplishment is mentioned and its reward. Of particular interest in this connection is Jas. 2:21-23,

Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.

Though there is no specific reference to testing in the immediate context, the reference to the sacrifice of Isaac and the points of contact with 1 Macc. 2:52 and Jub. 19:9 make it practically certain that the thought of testing is in the background,⁹⁸ and that the righteousness reckoned to Abraham is connected therewith. On the other hand it appears that the reckoning that he was righteous is related fundamentally to Abraham's "faith," which was "active along with his works, and . . . brought to completion by the works," and is not to be considered simply as a reward for offering up Isaac.⁹⁹

There are passages in the New Testament, however, which do connect righteousness with testing/temptation, albeit a different kind of righteousness. An important one is Heb. 12:11, "Discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."¹⁰⁰ Righteousness in this passage is simply a life fully conformed to "the will of God."¹⁰¹ The peculiarly Pauline conception of righteousness is not found here. Moreover, the kind of righteousness in view is thought of as the result, rather than as the reward of faithfulness.

Righteousness of a similar kind is also considered to be the result of endurance in testing/temptation in Jas. 1:4, "Let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." In other words, the result of endurance is development of character (cf. Rom. 5:3-4).¹⁰²

If we have been correct in our contention that Rom. 8:28-30 is in a context of testing/temptation, moral development is not only connected with faithfulness, but much more as well. "Those who love God," and so, presumably, are steadfast in testing/temptation, will be advanced toward the destiny God has for them, namely, "to

be conformed to the image of his Son," which includes being "glorified." As C. E. B. Cranfield has urged, "being conformed to the image of his Son," "is meant to embrace sanctification as well as final glory, the former being thought of as a progressive conformity to Christ."¹⁰³ If what we have stated is justified, both perfection of character and glorification are connected with steadfastness. Furthermore, whereas James indicates that steadfastness is the ground of moral maturity, Paul is at pains to emphasize that what follows steadfastness is to be traced to God's eternal purpose and consequent action. Whether this may be described as a reward in any sense, or only as a gift, depends on one's understanding of "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God. . . For those whom he foreknew he also predestined. . ." ¹⁰⁴

Quite a different result or reward, if one may call it such, which faithfulness may entail, is the knowledge that one is sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Thus, in 1 Pet. 4:12-14 the persecutions of those addressed are described both as a test and as a reason to "rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings" (cf. Acts 5:41; Phil. 3:10). It is declared furthermore: "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you."¹⁰⁵

3. *Eschatological Rewards*

Eschatological rewards for faithfulness in testing/temptation do not gain prominence in Jewish literature until a relatively late date. It was only when the destiny of the individual had become important that such rewards for steadfastness could be promised. Moreover, the rewards that are promised reflect the variety of eschatological doctrines which circulated.¹⁰⁶

Possibly the most important differences to be noted concerning the eschatological rewards promised in the various documents have to do with the nature of the future life. Evidently under the influence of Hellenistic conceptions ¹⁰⁷ Wisd. 3:1-9 is concerned with "the souls of the righteous" whom "God tested. . . and found them worthy of himself." "Their hope is full of immortality."¹⁰⁸ On the other hand it seems probable that the resurrection to everlasting life

promised in Dan. 12:2 is for those who have been "tested" (12:10 LXX) in the eschatological testing. According to Dan 12:2, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." A similar hope is expressed concerning the seven famous brothers who were martyred in the Maccabean revolt because they refused to disobey God. In response to the test to which he was subjected, one of them replied, according to 2 Macc. 7:9, "The King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws" (cf. v. 23). That resurrection is specifically in view is clear from the phrase "resurrection to life" in v. 14, and from the statement, "He quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands, and said nobly, 'I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again'" (vv. 10-11). The promise of everlasting life, besides its occurrence in Dan. 12:2 and in 2 Macc. 7:9, is apparently found in a testing context in 2 Enoch 50:2-3, "My children, in patience and meekness abide for the number of your days, so that you may inherit the final endless age that is coming. Every assault and every persecution and every evil word endure for the sake of the Lord." The same seems to be true of CDC 3:20, "They that hold fast unto Him are destined for life eternal, and theirs is all mortal glory."

The promise of glory is one which has a great deal of importance. Besides the reference in CDC, the famous passage, IQS 3:13-4:26, which is concerned with the two spirits which strive within man and which is therefore concerned with testing/temptation, promises "all the glory of Adam (or 'man')" (4:23) to the "sons of light" who are not "tripped" by the spirits allotted to the angel of darkness. In the same famous passage these sons of light are promised a "crown of glory" (4:7).¹⁰⁹ Probably of similar import are such promises as Dan 12:3, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever"; and Wisd. 3:7, "In the time of their visitation they will shine forth." Closely related are the promise of reward "in eternal light,"¹¹⁰ and the promise of "raiment of majesty."¹¹¹

In Dan. 7:27 rule over nations and kingdoms is apparently

promised to those who have been steadfast in testing/temptation: "The kingship and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them."¹¹² It is clearly promised in Wisd. 3:8, "They will govern nations and rule over peoples."¹¹³

Other promises to those who are faithful in testing/temptation include freedom from torment, great good, peace, rejoicing, the understanding of truth, and the privilege of living with God.¹¹⁴ That they shall see the restoration of Jerusalem is apparently to be the reward of the steadfast according to 2 Bar. 44:7, "When you endure and persevere in his fear and do not forget his Law, the time again will take a turn for the better for you. And they will participate in the consolation of Zion."

The enjoyment of wealth is implicit in some of the foregoing promises.¹¹⁵ In later Jewish literature there is a peculiar passage which excites our interest in this connection. According to Ex. R. 31:3,

He (God) tries the rich man to see if his hand will be opened unto the poor, and the poor man he tries in order to see whether he will accept chastisement without repining. . . If the rich man withstands his test and practises charity, then he will enjoy his wealth in the world, while the capital will be preserved for him in the Life to Come. . . If the poor man withstands his test without rebelling he takes a double portion in the world to come.

We know of no other passage in Jewish or Christian literature with a doctrine comparable to what is here promised the faithful rich man. It is probably an example of the vagaries which occur in the Midrashic literature. It is included here because it is a passage dealing explicitly with testing.

When we consider early Christian literature we discover that the eschatological expectations occurring in testing/temptation contexts show considerable continuity with those set forth in such

contexts in late Jewish literature, and especially in the pseudepigraphic writings.

The New Testament contains no testing/temptation passage in which immortality is anticipated, unless it be in Phil. 1:19-23, where Paul states that “to depart and be with Christ . . . is far better” than “to live in the flesh.”¹¹⁶ That he looks upon the martyrdom which he may be called upon to suffer as a test/temptation may be indicated when he writes, “It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.” Immortality is specifically brought into the context of testing/temptation in Mart. Polyc. 17:1, where it is stated that immediately upon his tragic death Polycarp was “crowned with the crown of immortality.”¹¹⁷ Emphasis on resurrection is found in Rom. 8:23, “We wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.”¹¹⁸

As in Jewish literature, eternal life is brought into testing/temptation contexts. In at least one passage, indeed, it seems to be implied that eternal life is the reward of steadfastness, namely 1 Tim. 6:12, “Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” It may be noted that this exhortation is addressed to Timothy so that he might not be among those who “fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction” (1 Tim. 6:9). Furthermore, the noun rendered “fight” is used elsewhere of the struggle with testing/temptation.¹¹⁹ As a post-New Testament example of what we find in 1 Tim. 6:12, we observe that in Mart. Polyc. 14:2 Polycarp is said to have viewed the issue of his martyrdom as “eternal life both in soul and in body.”

Closely related to the promise of eternal life is the promise of salvation.¹²⁰ In the Olivet discourse it is declared concerning those who must suffer the eschatological tribulation: “The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Mark 13:13 [Matt. 24:13]; cf. Luke 21:19).

That “glory” follows upon steadfastness is clearly indicated in various places. Usually the promise is quite general as in Rom.

8:30, "Those whom he justified he also glorified";¹²¹ and in 1 Clem. 45:8, "They (of Old Testament times) who endured in confidence obtained the inheritance of glory and honour." That the glory is that of Jesus Christ is stated in 2 Thess. 2:14-15, "He called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us."¹²²

Closely related to the promise of glory is the promise of a "crown." In some passages the reference is quite general, e.g., Rev. 3:10-11, "Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown"; Hermas, *Sim.* 8:3:6, "All those. . . who wrestled with the devil and conquered him, have been crowned"; 2 Clem. 20:2, "We are contending in the contest of the living God, and we are being trained by the life which now is, that we may gain the crown in that which is to come."¹²³ The crown is described as "the crown of righteousness" in 2 Tim. 4:7-8, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day. . ." It is described as "the crown of life" in Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him"; and in Rev. 2:10, "The devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, . . . Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." As we have seen it is described as "the crown of immortality" in Mart. Polyc. 17:1, "He was crowned with the crown of immortality."¹²⁴

That those who do not fail in the hour of testing/temptation shall become rulers is made clear in 2 Tim. 2:11-12, "If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful. . ."¹²⁵ Other benefits promised include such things as freedom from all that is painful and unpleasant, rest, rejoicing, white garments, living with God and Christ, and the

reception of food and living water from the hands of God or of Christ.¹²⁶

The effects and rewards of steadfastness in early Christian literature are essentially the same as those which are set forth in Jewish writings. The chief difference is in the significance of Christ in relation to these effects and rewards. The benefits of the Messiah's advent for those who have been faithful in testing/temptation is implicit in such passages as Jer. 23:4-5; Ezek. 34:20-24; but so far as I am aware there is no place in which the benefits of the Messianic advent are promised specifically to those who are steadfast in testing/temptation.

D. Results of Failure in Testing/Temptation

The results of failure are seldom indicated in passages concerned explicitly with testing/temptation.¹²⁷ In some instances, moreover, wrath, ruin, destruction, and words of similar import, are used to indicate the dread results of such failure, but without any indication of the exact nature of the dread visitation, for example:

- a) Sir. 4:19, "If they go astray she (Wisdom) will forsake them, and hand them over to their ruin."
- b) Gen. R. 22:6, "The tempter destroyed many generations."
- c) Heb. 10:39, "We are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved."

Material and temporal disabilities are intimated in several passages in Jewish literature. According to Gen. 3:16-19 God said to Eve, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you"; and to Adam, "In toil you shall eat of it (the ground) all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of

the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, . . ." In Ex. 15:25 it seems to be implied that, if Israel does not prove steadfast in trial, she may suffer the "diseases" which God had put upon the Egyptians. According to 2 Sam. 24:15 (1 Chron. 21:14) pestilence was visited on the whole nation because David yielded to the enticement to number Israel.¹²⁸ In Ex. R. 19:2 David is represented as being concerned lest Satan "lead (him) astray and make (him) shamefaced before the righteous."

Death as the result of failure when tested is said to have been visited on Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:19, 22-24). And death as a result of failure in testing/temptation seems to be implied in bB.B. 16a, "Satan comes down to earth and seduces, then ascends to heaven and awakens wrath; permission is granted to him and he takes away the soul. . . Satan, the evil prompter, and the angel of death are all one."¹²⁹

Surely the reference in Deut. 13:12 (13) to enticement by "scoundrels" to worship other gods is a reference to testing/temptation. (Enticement to worship other gods by a prophet, or by one who divines by dreams, is interpreted as a test/temptation in Deut. 13:3 [4].) A city which fails to be steadfast under such circumstances is to be put to the sword. In this case failing a test is to lead to destruction at the hands of God's people.

According to the Book of Judges not death, but subjugation by national enemies, is the result of Israel's failure when tested.¹³⁰

It is to be expected that later Jewish and early Christian literature would emphasize effects of lack of steadfastness other than material and temporal ones. It is eschatological effects which are most prominent, however. Consignment to Gehenna is the consequence, according to Ex. R. 31:3. With this may be compared the "fearful prospect of judgment and a fury of fire" mentioned in Heb. 10:27 (cf. 12:29); and "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone," which will be the lot of "the faithless," according to Rev. 21:8. In closest connection with such a prospect is the intimation in Matt. 24:51 that the person who fails to be a "faithful and wise slave" in the eschatological test will be "cut in pieces and put. . . with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing

of teeth" (cf. Luke 12:46-47).

Notes

- ¹ Cf. W. A. Whitehouse, "Faith," *TWBB*, 75; R. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:199, 205-6, 208.
- ² Cf. Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 1.
- ³ Other translations render v. 3b, "I walk in your faithfulness" (NRSV mg.), or "in your truth" (NIV). If one of these renderings is the correct one, faithfulness as the fundamental element of a worthy response to *peirasmos* is not explicit.
- ⁴ For the purposes of this paper the exact relationship is not of consequence; no issue with which we are concerned turns on the distinction.
- ⁵ Heb.: "The one who keeps the law preserves himself."
- ⁶ According to R. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:199 n. 166, in this passage "the Law takes the place of God" (cf. 33:3 LXX).
- ⁷ See also Philo, *de vita Mosis*, 1.36.
- ⁸ Cf. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:219, 221. "Examine (lit.: 'test') yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5 NRSV) may not refer to religious *peirasmos* in the strict sense of the conception. "Whether you are living in the faith" probably means simply: "Whether you are really Christians." (Cf. F. V. Filson, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 10:420; Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:212, 216 n. 319, 221.) Nevertheless, the use of "faith" in this context may well owe something to the idea that it is one characterized by faith (*pistis*) who is able to withstand *peirasmos*.
- ⁹ It does have this meaning in 10:23; 11:11.

- ¹⁰ J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952), 28, 37.
- ¹¹ Cf. B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan, 1892), 83; R. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:205, 208.
- ¹² Cf. 3:19. Note the emphasis in 4:2; 10:22, 39, on the readers' need of "faith" if they are not to be overcome in their *peirasmos*. There is an allusion to Heb. 2:17, and possibly also to Heb. 5:8, in the Gnostic *Gospel of Truth* 20:10, "This is why the merciful one, the faithful one -- Jesus! -- was patient to endure the sufferings until he took that Book, for he knows that this death of his (means) life for many." See K. Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth* (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 63 nn. 105, 106.
- ¹³ Cf. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:208.
- ¹⁴ For the peculiar connotation of *dokimion* (genuineness) in this verse, see J. H. Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James* (New York: Scribner's, 1916), 134.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:208.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:204. Note that in 2:13 Antipas is described as "my faithful one"; cf. 1:5 and 3:14 concerning Jesus.
- ¹⁷ For examples outside the Apostolic Fathers, see *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 1.3; 2.2. *The Acts of Peter: The Vercelli Acts* 6; *Acts of S. Fructuosus* 7.
- ¹⁸ Also compare Mark 13:13 (Matt. 24:31) which occurs in a passage dealing with the eschatological tribulation.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Barn. 2.1-2.
- ²⁰ Cf. Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:199.
- ²¹ See Whitehouse, "Faith," *TWBB*, 75-76; Bultmann in

TDNT, 6:206 n. 239.

- ²² Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:208.
- ²³ B. S. Easton, "The Epistle of James: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 12:45.
- ²⁴ The idea that Gen. 15:6 is to be interpreted by Gen. 22:1-12 is already suggested in 1 Macc. 2:52 (Easton, "James," *IB*, 12:44).
- ²⁵ According to A. Richardson, "Abraham," *TWBB*, 13a, "In Jas. 2:23. . . the rabbinic conception of faith as merely one of the works of the law is maintained." Is this an overstatement?
- ²⁶ Job 1:8-9 intimates that the fear of God which is without ulterior motivation will enable one to meet *peirasmos* successfully.
- ²⁷ Cf. Targum of Jonathan on Gen. 22:12, "Now it is manifest before me that thou fearest the Lord." That the fear of God was considered an element in meeting temptation successfully is indicated in T. Sim. 3:4, "Liberation from envy occurs through fear of the Lord" (cf. T. Reub. 4:1).
- ²⁸ For an exposition of the Pauline conception of "fear," see Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:221.
- ²⁹ Note T. Sim. 4.7, "Each of you love his brothers with a good heart, and the spirit of envy will depart from you." This passage seems to teach that there are *peirasmoi* which may be withstood by love of one's brothers.
- ³⁰ The two are also conjoined in 5:8, "Let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love." Are not the two also described here as a protection against the onslaughts of the tempter?
- ³¹ So RSV mg., NIV, NEB.
- ³² This is the opinion also of J. Denney, "The Epistles to the Thessalonians," *EB*, 6:378a; E. Stauffer in *TDNT*,

1:50 n. 140. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, "Love, Lover, Lovely, Beloved, and (in AV of NT) Charity," *TWBB*, 135b. It is possible too, if not probable, that the 'Persecution Form' contained a reference to "love to God," and that this form has influenced 2 Thess. 3:5. Love to God is emphasized in connection with *peirasmos* in Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:8. (Rom. 8:28 is written with the "sufferings" of 8:18 in mind, so that Paul could write of the importance of love to God in the midst of tribulation.)

³³ Furthermore, "to make it perfect in the experience of thy love to it" hardly commends itself as a satisfactory interpretation.

³⁴ In 2 Macc. 7:20 it is said of the mother of the seven brothers martyred in the Maccabean revolt: "Though she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord" (cf. 7:14).

³⁵ Bultmann in *TDNT*, 6:207.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

³⁷ "The Double-Minded Man in the Light of Essene Psychology," *ATR*, 38 (1956), 167-73.

³⁸ Cf. Sir. 1:27-28; 2:12-13; James 1:6-8; 1 Clem. 11:2; 23:3; 2 Clem. 11:2; 19:2; Hermas, *Mand.* 9:5, 6. Note also T. Reub. 4:1, "Live in integrity of heart in the fear of the Lord."

³⁹ Cf. Hermas, *Vis.* 3.4.3, "The double-minded who dispute in their heart whether these things are so or not." Double-mindedness is a major concern of Hermas. He uses the vocabulary more than fifty times.

⁴⁰ Note Hermas, *Vis.* 3.1.2, "You are saved. . . by your simplicity."

⁴¹ *De Vita Mosis* 1:36. In *de Abrahamo* 32 he declares that Abraham, when commanded to sacrifice Isaac, "remained steadfast as ever."

⁴² Cf. Jub. 17:18; 19:3, 8.

⁴³ Cf. Pirke R. Eliezer 31A.

⁴⁴ See L. Cerfaux, "Fructifiez en Supportant (L'Épreuve)," *Revue Biblique*, 64 (1957): 483. The only other occurrence of "endurance (*hupomonē*)" in Luke-Acts—in Luke 21:19—is in a passage dealing with persecution. This fact supports the view that "endurance" is used in Luke 8:15 to contrast the fourth category with the second.

⁴⁵ See Mark 13:9, 22-23 (Matt. 24:24), 33-37 (cf. Matt. 25:42-44); Matt. 24:10-11, 45-51.

⁴⁶ Compare the use of "endurance"—conjoined with "faith"—in connection with the eschatological tribulation in Rev. 13:10. This tribulation is called a "test" in 3:10. See also the occurrence of "endurance" in Rev. 2:2, 3, 19; 14:12; and of "endure" in Hermas, *Vis.* 2:7.

⁴⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5:1:6-7.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Gospel of Truth* 20:10.

⁴⁹ Closely related to the idea that endurance is necessary to meet testing/temptation aright is the emphasis on the danger of wavering. See Ps. 26:1-2 (?); Sir. 36 (33):1-2; Philo, *de Abr.* 32; Jas. 1:4-6.

⁵⁰ Cf. 5:34; 17:15; 2 Macc. 7:2, 9, 23, 30.

⁵¹ Though the reference is to the angels who fell, note 2 Enoch 7:3, "These are those who turned away from the Lord, who did not obey the Lord's commandments."

⁵² Cf. Midrash Hag-gadol, 1 Genesis, 304-305, qu. in S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 251; Targum of Jonathan on Gen. 22:1; Pirke R. Eliezer 38A. See also Ex. R. 34:2 concerning Noah.

⁵³ In Rom. 5:19 Christ's obedience is contrasted with the disobedience of Adam. It is doubtful, however, that Paul is thinking of Christ's obedience as particularly

obedience in time of testing/temptation.

⁵⁴ Whether “disobedience” is mentioned in connection with failure when tested in 3:18; 4:6, 11, depends on the meaning of *apeitheia* (NRSV: ‘disobedience’: NEB: ‘unbelief’). In view of Heb. 5:8-9, in my opinion the NRSV rendering is correct.

⁵⁵ The Greek does not necessarily imply that doing the will of God is the result of endurance. In my opinion it implies that endurance and doing the will of God are concomitant.

⁵⁶ As we have seen 2 Thess. 3:3-5 is probably a passage dealing with testing/temptation, though the respective term is not used. The emphasis on keeping Paul’s commands is to be noted. That Paul considered these commands to have divine authority is seen in v. 6, “We command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. . .”

⁵⁷ Cf. Ps. 119:11, “I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.” See also Job 23:11-12; Prov. 7:1; Sir. 35 (32):24–36 (33):3; T. Reub. 3:9; 4:1.

⁵⁸ Translation according to O. S. Rankin, *Israel’s Wisdom Literature* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 27.

⁵⁹ Cf. Num. R. 15:12; Pirke R. Eliezer 38A.

⁶⁰ Cf. John 12:48. The “two-edged sword” recurs in Rev. 1:6; 2:12; cf. Rev. 2:16; 19:15, 21. Is it not probable that testing is in view in Rev. 2:12? Note v. 13, “I know where you are living, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you where Satan lives.” Testing is specifically mentioned in v. 10, which is addressed, however, to “the angel of the church in Smyrna,” whereas v. 12 is addressed to “the angel of the church in Pergamum.”

⁶¹ B. S. Easton, “The Epistle of James: Introduction and

Exegesis," *IB*, 12:26.

⁶² Cf. Davids, *James*, 80. As Davids argues, it is unlikely that a promise of Jesus is being referred to.

⁶³ *Life of Adam and Eve* 17.

⁶⁴ Ex. R. 34:2.

⁶⁵ Judith 8:26; 4 Macc. 16:20, 25; bB.B. 17a; bSanh. 107a; Gen. R. 56:5; Num. R. 15:12.

⁶⁶ Judith 8:26-27; 4 Macc. 16:25; bB.B. 17a; bSanh. 107a; Num. R. 15:12.

⁶⁷ T. Jos. 2:7; Num. R. 15:12.

⁶⁸ Judith 8:23 (Vulgate); Cant. R. 4:4:1; Cf. Sifre Num. 12:7:103 (27b).

⁶⁹ Num. R. 15:12.

⁷⁰ bB.B. 17a; Cant. R. 4:4:1.

⁷¹ Mart. Is. 5:2-11.

⁷² T. Job 26-27; Ex. R. 21.7; Tanhuma 29.4.

⁷³ Pirke R. Eliezer 11A.

⁷⁴ Cant. R. 4.4.1.

⁷⁵ 4 Macc. 16:21.

⁷⁶ See 11:4-5, 20-22. Even here, however, testing/temptation may be implicit.

⁷⁷ The occurrence of "endurance" and the concern with testing/temptation in 1:2, 12, indicate that testing/temptation is in view.

⁷⁸ Cf. bB.B. 17a; Midrash on Ps. 26:2.

⁷⁹ Compare and contrast the report in Ex. 16:2-8; 17:2-7.

⁸⁰ Note the reference to perseverance in such testing/temptation contexts as Job 2:9; Sir. 2:2; 4 Macc. 14:9; Heb 11:27; Polyc. *Phil.* 8:1. Cf. F. W. Beare, "The Epistle

to the Ephesians: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 10:737, "The 'wiles of the devil'. . . means the manifold temptations to unbelief, to sin, to conformity with the surrounding pagan world."

- ⁸¹ E.g., Prov. 2:6-22; Wisd. 10:5-8, 13; Sir. 19:20; 24:22. Possibly 1 Pet. 5:7 should be included in the list of New Testament passages emphasizing the importance of prayer in coping with tests/temptations.
- ⁸² Prayer has a large place in *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*. See 5, 7, 8, 14, 15. There is no clear indication, however, that prayer helped the saint to face his martyrdom without flinching.
- ⁸³ Is the disciplinary value of suffering implied in vv. 28-29? Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:428.
- ⁸⁴ Heb. 7:25 ("He (Jesus) is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them") may have intercession in relation to testing/temptation in view inasmuch as the testing of the readers is of major concern in the epistle. On the other hand this particular verse is a generalization, and concern with testing/temptation may not be in the author's mind.
- ⁸⁵ Cf. Beare, "Ephesians," 10:746. See also Ign. *Mag.* 14:1; *Trall.* 12:3; *Rom.* 3:2; *Phila.* 5:1.
- ⁸⁶ E.g., 1 Tim. 6:9; Jas. 1:14 (?); cf. Wisd. 14:11; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26.
- ⁸⁷ The "thief" motif occurs in connection with the Parousia in Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:4; Rev. 3:3; 16:15; 2 Pet. 3:10, all of which emphasize the necessity of keeping alert in one way or another.
- ⁸⁸ See Mark 13:33-36; Matt. 24:42-44; Luke 12:35-40. Cf. A. Oepke in *TDNT*, 2:338; Lane, *Mark*, 520.
- ⁸⁹ Dependence on 1 Pet. 4:7 is evident.
- ⁹⁰ Cf. 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8; Polyc. *Phil.* 7:2. See also 2 Pet. 3:3-

4.

⁹¹ Cf. Eph. 6:11-18; 1 Cor. 16:13.

⁹² Cf. Gen. 15:5-6; 32:12. According to critical scholars generally Gen. 22:15-18 is a later addition to the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac.

⁹³ Cf. Ps. 72:8; Zech. 9:10. See also Ex. 23:31; Mic. 7:12.

⁹⁴ Heb. 6:13-15 refers to the promise to Abraham recorded in Gen. 22:17 in such terms as to suggest that it was obtained as a result of faithfulness in testing.

⁹⁵ There is a partially parallel statement concerning Levi in Jub. 30:20. The description of Abraham as a "friend" of God is found as early as Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7.

⁹⁶ Is this not a reference to Gen. 22?

⁹⁷ For other passages in which Abraham is called "friend" of God, see Apoc. Abr. 10:5; Test. Abr. (A) 2:6; 4:7; 8:2; 9:7; 15:12; 16:9; Philo, *de Sobr.* 11; 1 Clem. 10:1; 17:2. The reason he is called such is not always because of the sacrifice of Isaac.

⁹⁸ Moreover, testing/temptation is the theme of the opening paragraphs of the epistle (cf. 5:10-11).

⁹⁹ Cf. G. Schrenk in *TDNT*, 2:201, "The Jewish idea of merit is . . . alien. According to 2:23 Abraham was justified before God by the imputation of a faith which found fulfilment in works." *Per contra*, A. Richardson, "Abraham," *TWBB*, 13a, "In Jas. 2:23. . . the rabbinic conception of faith as merely one of the works of the law is maintained."

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Jas. 3:18. It has been argued previously that the paragraph in which this statement occurs is concerned with the theme of testing/temptation.

¹⁰¹ G. Schrenk in *TDNT*, 2:200.

¹⁰² The occurrence of the verb "to perfect" in Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9; 7:28, has been taken to mean that Jesus

statement implies that deception is a (the?) universal means whereby people are tested, as we suggested at the beginning of this subsection.⁶⁶

Appended Note: God Leaving One to Himself/Herself

J. H. Korn⁶⁷ draws attention to two passages in which God is said to depart from a man in order to test him. The passages in question are: 2 Chron. 32:31, "In the matter of the envoys of the officials of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him (Hezekiah) to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart"; and T. Jos. 2:6-7, "In all these matters he (God) takes his stand, and in various ways he offers assistance, even though for a brief time he may stand aside in order to test the disposition of the soul. In ten testings he showed that I was approved, and in all of them I persevered . . ." ⁶⁸

Probably we are to understand that God's leaving of Hezekiah (to himself) meant that he was free to decide for or against Him.⁶⁹ In T. Jos. 2:6-7 it seems to be implied that, when God "stands aside" from a person with a view to testing him/her, He withdraws His "assistance" from him/her. Probably it is implied that he/she is thereby left to his/her own free will.⁷⁰

Of special interest in this connection is Korn's suggestion that 2 Chron. 32:31 and T. Jos 2:6-7 may have significance for our understanding of what is involved in the quotation of Ps. 21 (22):1a which is credited to Jesus on the cross. He suggests that the connection between abandonment by God and testing which is drawn therein intimates that testing may be in the background of the Cry of Dereliction, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁷¹

Whether 2 Chron. 32:31 and T. Jos. 2:6-7 provide sufficient evidence to suggest that, when God is represented as forsaking the righteous, it had come to be understood that testing was involved, is uncertain.⁷² In my view Korn is justified in suggesting the

possibility. Quite apart from the point of contact with 2 Chron. 32:31 and T. Jos. 2:6-7, however, in my view the Cry of Dereliction implies that Jesus' faith was being tested--that is, of course, if the Cry is to be understood as giving expression to a sense of abandonment.⁷³ Since the Synoptists represent Jesus as susceptible to temptation, such a sense of abandonment in the midst of suffering as intense as His must surely have occasioned the question whether there was any point in continued fidelity to God.⁷⁴

In this connection it may be worthy of notice that the Synoptic passages describing the taunts and insults flung at Jesus as He hung upon the cross are reminiscent of Wisd. 2:17-20:

Let us ("the ungodly") see if his ("the righteous man's") words are true, and let us test (*peirasōmen*) what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us *etasōmen* ('test') him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial (*dokimasōmen*) of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected.

Especially remarkable is the parallel between v. 18 and the latter part of Matt. 27:43, "He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" Indeed, S. E. Johnson has suggested that "the evangelists may have the entire passage Wisd. Sol. 2:12-20 in their minds as they write."⁷⁵

Notes

¹ This statement is especially poignant, because, as G. von Rad, *Genesis*, Revised Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 239, states, "The child, given by God after long delay, the only link that can lead to the promised greatness of Abraham's seed. . . is to be given back to God in sacrifice. . . He (Abraham) must give up

his whole future.”

² Trans. in A. Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud* (London: Dent, 1932), 60. Reference to the sacrifice of Isaac occurs in Heb. 11:17 and in 1 Clem. 10:7, but without special reference to the severity of the test.

³ Apparently a reference to the command to him in Gen. 12:1, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house, to the land that I will show you.”

⁴ A reference to Gen. 14:21-24?

⁵ Probably a reference to Gen. 17:10, “Every male among you shall be circumcised.”

⁶ God's command to Abraham to send away Ishmael and Hagar in accord with the request of Sarah, a request which was “very displeasing” to him (Gen. 21:10-12), is apparently interpreted as a *peirasmos*.

For other lists of the trials of Abraham, some of which are by way of commands to him, see Aboth R. Nathan 33; Pirke R. Eliezer 31A-38A.

⁷ J. C. Rylaarsdam, “The Book of Exodus: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 1:950.

⁸ See Mark 10:45; 14:24 (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25); Luke 22:37; V. Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Third Edition (London: Epworth, 1958), 14.

⁹ See Matt. 26:2; Mark 8:31 (Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:23); 9:31 (Matt. 17:22-23); 10:33-34 (Matt. 20:18-19; Luke 18:32-33); Luke 22:3, 53.

¹⁰ Mark 8:31-33 (Matt. 16:21-23); cf. Matt. 4:10. Luke 9:51 may be an indication of a different kind that God's will was a means of testing/temptation for him at this period of His ministry.

¹¹ Mark 14:36; cf. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42; John 12:27.

¹² F. I. Andersen in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, J.

H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:91, 94-97.

- ¹³ This sounds like an interpretation of the prohibition with respect to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- ¹⁴ The importance of the devil in relation to enticement to evil is indicated in 31:6, "He entered paradise, and corrupted Eve."
- ¹⁵ Does he consider that the law written on the hearts of Gentiles functions in much the same way for them as does the Torah for Jews? Rom. 2:14-16 seems to imply that he does.
- ¹⁶ BAGD, 127b; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), 111; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 380. G. Bertram in *TDNT*, 5:472, makes no reference to the military usage.
- ¹⁷ V. 12. J. Moffatt thought that it meant "impulse," and so rendered Rom. 7:8, 11, "The command gave an impulse to sin . . ." (*A New Translation of the Bible, in loc.*)
- ¹⁸ Dodd, *Romans*, 111.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Jas. 2:17, 26; Leenhardt, *Romains*, 107 n. 3. In the light of Rom. 5:13-14, I take it that this does not mean that under such circumstances it does not inspire bad conduct, but only that it is inactive or ineffective so far as its being hostility to God is concerned. Cf. Dodd, *Romans*, 111.
- ²⁰ Cf. Leenhardt, *Romains*, 109.
- ²¹ Cf. Dodd, *Romans*, 111.
- ²² There is an allusion here to the Garden of Eden and the deception practised there. See Dodd, *Romans*, 105-6; Michel, *Römer*, 148.
- ²³ Cf. W. Grundmann in *TDNT*, 1:310-11.
- ²⁴ *Romains*, 107.

²⁵ Ibid., 108.

²⁶ We disagree with G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 41-43, when he states that Paul often attributes to the law "functions . . . elsewhere attributed to Satan," including his function as "the tempter."

²⁷ Cf. J. H. Korn, *PEIRASMOS, Die Versuchung des Gläubigen in der griechischen Bibel* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1937), 75; M. E. Andrews, "PEIRASMOS --A Study in Form Criticism," *ATR*, 24 (1942): 237. M. Greenberg, "NSH in Exodus xx.20 and the Purpose of the Sinaitic Theophany," *JBL*, 79 (1960): 273-76, argues that the Hebrew means not that God tested them, but that He gave them an experience of Himself. This interpretation has not commended itself.

²⁸ J. C. Rylaarsdam, "The Book of Exodus: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 1:990.

²⁹ Ibid. is of the opinion that the giving of the Decalogue was at this point. Cf. Deut. 5:4ff.

³⁰ According to M. Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 168, the test was to show whether the people had "the right 'fear' of God" and would not attempt "to go too near the theophany." J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 301-3, argues that the clause means, "It is with the purpose of giving you the experience that God has come." Our vocabulary sometimes occurs with the meaning "to give experience (to)," and M. Greenberg, "NSH in Exodus 20:20 and the Purpose of the Sinaitic Theophany," *JBL*, 79 (1960): 273-76, argues that it has this meaning in Ex. 20:20. Translators generally disagree.

³¹ E.g., S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 75; F. J. A. Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 4.

- ³² According to Exod. 7:1-10; 14:4, 18; all of which are credited by critical scholars to P, the miracles in Egypt were with a view to making the Egyptians know that Yahweh is God. I know of no comparable idea in Deuteronomy. In Exod. 10:2, which is credited to J, there is the same idea as in Deuteronomy, that the signs in Egypt were for the sake of Israel's faith.
- ³³ Cf. Korn, "PEIRASMOS," 75; G.T. Manley, "Deuteronomy," NBC, 203a.
- ³⁴ See also 2 Thess. 2:9-12; Rev. 13:13-14.
- ³⁵ Cf. Korn, PEIRASMOS, 75-76; Andrews, "PEIRASMOS," 24 (1942): 237. In this case the *peirasmos* was through a miracle.
- ³⁶ So also in BDB, 776a; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 106.
- ³⁷ See vv. 9, 25; cf. Ps. 66:10-12; Pss. Sol. 16:14; Martyrdom of Isa. 5:2-8; Pirke R. Eliezer 11A.
- ³⁸ Cf. *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 2.4.
- ³⁹ Cf. G. A. Chadwick, "The Book of Exodus," EB, 1:179b, "While the Lord discontinued the test of need and penury, which had proved to be too severe a discipline, he substituted the test of fullness." See also Deut. 8:17-18; Sir. 8:2.
- ⁴⁰ Was it Hezekiah's wealth which was a means of testing in connection with the visit of the envoys of Babylon? See 2 Chron. 32:31 and compare 2 Kgs. 20:12-19.
- ⁴¹ Cf. Aboth R. Nathan 33; Pirke R. Eliezer 32A.
- ⁴² GNT, 433 n. 1.
- ⁴³ See also the narrative of the Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-22 (Matt. 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-23); the parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21, and the warning against "the lure of wealth" in Mark 4:19 (Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14). Note, furthermore, Mark 10:23 (Matt. 19:23; Luke 18:24); Luke 16:19-31.

- ⁴⁴ Jas. 1:2-12. See also 1 Tim. 6:17. A similar emphasis on the dangers of wealth occurs in *Hermas*, *Vis.* 3.6.6, which speaks of “their wealth, which leads their souls astray.”
- ⁴⁵ Cf. Midrash on Ps. 26:2.
- ⁴⁶ According to *jShab.* 1.3.3b.64, “There came a spirit in the form of a woman, and tempted him (a man of great piety).” See also *bKid.* 40a; 81a; 81b; *Num. R.* 20.23; *Tanhuma B. Hukkat* 66a. In the Old Testament see *Prov.* 5:20-22. In the Apocrypha note *Sir.* 23:6; *Tobit* 8:7; *Sus.* 8. See also *T. Benj.* 8:2.
- ⁴⁷ See also *Matt.* 5:28; *Rom.* 1:26-27; *1 Thess.* 4:5.
- ⁴⁸ Cf. *1 Tim.* 3:8; *Tit.* 1:7, 11; *1 Pet.* 5:2. W. Evans, “Wealth, Wealthy,” *ISBE*, 5:3076b, notes that most of these passages refer “to the income of ministers of the gospel as though they were particularly susceptible of being led away by the influences and power of money.” In Jewish literature, see *Sir.* 26:29-27:1.
- ⁴⁹ The vocabulary shows that Paul is alluding to *Num.* 11. Cf. C. T. Craig, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 10:109.
- ⁵⁰ Cf. *Sir.* 23:6. The hunger in *Exod.* 16 and *Luke* 4 (*Matt.* 4) was not illicit. Commenting on *Gen.* 3:6, C. A. Simpson, “The Book of Genesis: Introduction and Exegesis,” *IB*, 1:505, says, “Deceived by the serpent she (Eve) is now deceiving herself. All that she wants to do, she tells herself, is to satisfy two legitimate desires, for food and for beauty.”
- ⁵¹ According to *Ascension of Isaiah* 2:2-7, Manasseh turned from the worship of God to the worship of Satan. If this is an interpretation of *2 Kgs.* 21:1-9 (*2 Chron.* 33:1-9), we have here the idea that the worship of a foreign god or gods is the worship of Satan. Cf. *1 Cor.* 10:20. Was Jesus tempted to worship a foreign god or gods? If so, what god or gods? Is the reference to Satan’s control over all the kingdoms of the world suggestive at this

point? Is John 19:15 suggestive? According to *SB*, 1:153 there was a rabbinic passage to the effect that the Roman Empire was under the leadership of Sammael (Satan? [See Deut. R. 11:10]).

- ⁵² Simpson, "Genesis," 1:505, is of the opinion that the desire of Eve to be like God was a desire for power.
- ⁵³ Cf. 2 Chron. 32:24-31. See also T. Dan 1:6; 5:6; 1 John 2:16.
- ⁵⁴ Enticement to evil may be through occasions of jealousy (T. Dan 1:6-8; T. Sim. 3:4); hatred (T. Gad 3:1-3); anger (T. Dan 3:1-3); the desire for wisdom (Gen. 3:6); the desire for food (Gen. 3:6); the desire for beauty (Gen. 3:6; T. Jud. 12:3; T. Reub. 4:1; 2 Macc. 2:2); and the desire for pleasure (T. Jud. 13:6).
- ⁵⁵ The activity of the serpent in Gen. 3 is represented as temptation by J. Jeremias in *TDNT*, 1:141; by W. Foerster in *TDNT*, 2:76; by J. Fichtner in *TDNT*, 5:573; etc.
- ⁵⁶ Cf. 1 Enoch 69:6. Is there an exception in 2 Enoch 31:6-7, "(Satanael) corrupted Eve. . . On account of (her) nescience I cursed them ('mankind's evil fruit-bearing')."
- ⁵⁷ Though the context is not one of religious testing, Sir. 37:3 teaches that the evil impulse "cover(s) the land with deceit."
- ⁵⁸ The translations of 1QS in this paragraph are according to P. Wernberg-Møller, *The Manual of Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 25, 26.
- ⁵⁹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1956), 257. Rather than "the spirit of deceit," Burrows renders "the spirit of error"; and W. H. Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline* (New Haven, Conn.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951), 16, "the spirit of perversion." Cf. Brownlee, 14-15 n. 30.
- ⁶⁰ Does Gen. 22 imply that God deceived Abraham? Did

He really desire the sacrifice of Isaac? The sequel seems to imply otherwise. Of course, though a kind of deception on God's part may appear to be involved, God did not attempt to persuade Abraham to believe what was contrary to His revealed will.

⁶¹ It may be argued that an attempt to deceive Him was also involved in the other temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness.

⁶² E. Best, *The Temptation and the Passion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 29-30, holds, "It seems better to see Peter behaving after the manner of Satan than as either indwelt by Satan or as his tool." He asserts that the temptation of Jesus on this occasion is not "Satanic: it is human." But, if so, is Jesus justified in saying, "Get behind me, Satan!?" Moreover, in my view people are never the source of temptation, only a means thereof. Likewise, Best argues that Jesus' temptation in Gethsemane was not a work of Satan. There we have "the simple struggle of human will against divine will" (p. 30). But why then does the human will struggle against the divine will? Best speaks of the flesh as "man's whole being in weakness and opposition to God." In my view man is too weak a creature to oppose God's will without Satanic assistance, just as he is too weak a creature to live for God without divine assistance.

⁶³ *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Black, 1969), 78.

⁶⁴ In Rom. 7:11 Paul speaks of sin as having "deceived" him. In my view, however, testing is not in view in this passage. Deception as a means of enticement to evil is in view, but loyalty to God is not being tested.

⁶⁵ *Hebrews*, 47.

⁶⁶ According to Rev. 12:9 Satan is "the deceiver of the whole world."

⁶⁷ *PEIRASMOS*, 63-64, 67, 83-84.

- ⁶⁸ Cf. Sir. 15:14-15, "It was he (the Lord) who created man in the beginning, and he left him in the power of his own inclination. If you will you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice."
- ⁶⁹ So W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1955), 315. Cf. E. L. Curtis and A. A. Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* (New York: Scribner's, 1910). 492-93.
- ⁷⁰ If so, it is not a means of *peirasmos* which is in view, but the possibility thereof, as in 2 Chron. 32:31. Cf. D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Redemption* (London: SCM, 1966), 103, 106.
- ⁷¹ Mark 15:34 (Matt 27:46). Note the verbal contact with 2 Chron. 32:31. Korn is of the opinion that the idea of *peirasmos* through abandonment by God may also occur in the variant reading of Heb. 2:9, "We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that without God (instead of 'by the grace of God') he might taste death for every man"; and in Heb. 5:7 as Harnack suggested that it should be emended, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and he was not (the addition of 'not' was Harnack's suggestion) heard for his godly fear." See Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 83-84.
- ⁷² This conception is to be distinguished from abandonment by God as a punishment, a conception occurring in Deut. 31:17; Isa. 54:7-8; Jer. 12:7-8; 2 Chron. 12:5; Neh. 9:28. Cf. Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31.
- ⁷³ For other views, see Johnson, "Matthew," 7:607-8; V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 157-63. Some scholars are of the opinion that the saying is not authentic, but was added to the Passion narrative as a result of the tendency to include references

to Ps. 22 in that narrative. See F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 239.

⁷⁴ Compare the advice of Job's wife according to Job 2:9. P. Vallotton, *Essai d'une Doctrine Chrétienne de la Tentation* (unpublished), 91, is of the opinion that *peirasmós* is reflected, and that it was the darkness over all the earth which elicited this cry from Jesus, since it raised the question whether the power of darkness had not conquered after all. But would physical darkness have had so profound an effect on Jesus?

⁷⁵ "Matthew," *IB*, 7:607.

CHAPTER VI THE PROPER RESPONSE TO TESTING AND TEMPTATION

A. Elements in the Response

1. Faith and Faithfulness

Though the proper response to testing/temptation experiences is variously described, fundamentally that response is one characterized by faith. Moreover, it is faith in the Old Testament sense, in which the idea of faithfulness is prominent.¹ Indeed, so intimately is the matter of faith of this kind bound up with *peirasmos* that *peirasmos* is always a testing of faith, regardless of the connotation which may be to the fore in the use of our vocabulary in any particular context.²

If the NRSV rendering is reliable, Ps. 26:2-3 ("Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and mind. For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to you") provides an excellent example of the correlation which exists between testing/temptation and faithfulness.³ Though its fundamental importance is not so evident in Sir. 2:6, the one who is undergoing "testing" is exhorted to "trust (*pisteuson*) in him (the Lord)" (cf. 2:10). In Sir. 4:16 it is stated, "If they (those who would be children of Wisdom) remain faithful, they will inherit her." The following verses make it clear that this "faithfulness" is necessary because Wisdom will "test them," and only "then she will come straight back to them

again and gladden them, and will reveal her secrets to them.” Though being faithful to Wisdom rather than being faithful to God is emphasized in the passage, according to Sir. 1:1 and 24:3 an extremely intimate relationship exists between God and Wisdom.⁴

That the successful meeting of testing/temptation is through faith, or faithfulness, also seems to be implied in Sir. 35 (32):24--36 (33):1 LXX, “The one who believes (*pisteuōn*) the law heeds the commandments,⁵ and the one who trusts the Lord will not suffer loss. No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again.” According to this passage, believing the law involves the keeping of the commandments. And to believe the law, and so to keep the commandments, is evidently equivalent to trusting the Lord and fearing the Lord.⁶ The person who has such faith in times of testing will be delivered repeatedly by the Lord. Faithfulness, then, is evidently prerequisite to a successful encounter with trial. In Wisd. 3:1-9, the righteous, whose “souls. . . are in the hand of God,” are those whom God has “tested,” and “found. . . worthy of himself.” They are also described as “those who trust in him,” and “the faithful.” It seems to be implied that those who are found worthy of God when tested are “the faithful.”⁷

In the New Testament the same emphasis is to be found:

- a) 1 Thess. 3:5-6, “I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain. But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love.” Evidently successful resistance to the attacks of “the tempter” is due to “faith” Whatever special meanings have become attached to “faith,” that the Old Testament connotation of “loyalty” has importance in this context seems evident from vv. 7-8, “During all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord.” In these verses “faith” is in parallel with “stand fast in the Lord.”⁸

b) 1 Tim. 6:9-12,

Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith . . . But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; . . .

The first use of "faith," which is clearly in a temptation (*peirasmos*) context, and the third, which has a wider reference, seem to be as a synonym for the Christian religion. Nevertheless, that such a synonym for the Christian religion is here used may owe something to the idea that "faith" enables a person to withstand in the time of temptation. In its second occurrence the word is not used as a synonym for the Christian religion. Its occurrence in the midst of a series of words describing the kind of character at which Christians are to aim suggests that the Old Testament connotation is prominent. Though it is probably used with a wider reference than occurs in v. 9, the concern regarding the possibility of falling into "temptation" is one of the considerations which leads to the use of the series of words in v. 11, of which "faith" is one. That the idea of temptation may have had something to do with the inclusion of "faith" in the series is rendered more probable by the fact that "endurance," which is also a word characteristic of testing/temptation contexts, is found in the series. Of course it is to be noted that "faith" does not have pride of place in the series as one would expect if the idea of "testing/temptation" were foremost in the writer's mind. Probably it was no longer foremost, which, of course, does not eliminate the possibility that the idea helped shape the series.

- c) In Heb. 2:17-3:12 faithfulness in time of testing is perhaps in view as early as the first two verses:

He (Jesus) had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The question turns on the significance of “faithful” in “a merciful and faithful high priest.” It can hardly mean “loyalty to God’s purpose.” Nor can it mean “reliable.”⁹ Behind the whole epistle there is the problem of the suffering of those being addressed, suffering which constituted a test. In 2:10-18 it is being argued that Jesus’ sufferings qualified Him to be the Saviour of those who undergo the test of suffering. The passage begins with the statement that it was appropriate for “the pioneer of their salvation” to be made “perfect through sufferings,” i.e., as the context indicates, to be made adequate and effective as their Saviour through sufferings. The author continues with an argument to show why Christ had to suffer. In v. 17 he says it was “so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest . . .” This is what it meant to be “made perfect” or adequate as a Saviour. The adjective “faithful” is surely used to describe His response to the sufferings he endured, suffering which is set forth in the succeeding verse as a means of testing. Indeed, the fact that the suffering is so described in v. 18 is in itself an indication that “faithful” is so used, in view of the close relationship between testing on the one hand, and “faith” and “faithful” on the other.¹⁰ Further support for this interpretation is found in 4:15, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” In this verse the author catches up ideas in 2:17-18. The reference

to Christ as a sympathetic high priest corresponds to the statement that He is a “merciful. . . high priest.” The statement that He experienced testing without sinning corresponds to the description of Him as “faithful.”

The use of “faithful” in 3:2, “Jesus was faithful to the one who appointed him,” verbally links chapter three with 2:10-18, and, if it refers to victory in the experience of testing, is relevant to the dangers confronting those to whom the epistle is addressed. That this is the correct interpretation of “faithful” in 3:2 is evident from v. 6, “We are his house (the house of the ‘faithful’ Jesus) if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.” Further evidence occurs in the exhortation in v. 12, “Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.” Is the danger of being “unbelieving (*apistia*)” not set over against the previous statement that Christ was “faithful (*pistos*)”?¹¹ Moreover, it is to be noted that “unbelieving” involves “falling away from the living God.” Surely this is a description of failure to meet testing successfully.¹²

- d) Jas. 1:2-3, “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials (tests) of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” To undergo testing involves the testing of “faith.” That “faith” is here used in a sense very similar to the one which we have found common in testing/temptation contexts seems to be indicated by the reference to endurance,¹³ and, if it be not too far removed contextually, by vv. 6-8 where the man of faith is contrasted with the man who is “unstable in every way.”
- e) 1 Peter 1:6-7, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith. . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ

is revealed.” This passage makes it clear that wherever trials (tests) are victoriously met, faith has been tested and found to be good.¹⁴ In this connection, it is to be noted that in v. 5 it is stated that those who inherit “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” are those who “are being protected by the power of God through faith.” That the meaning of “faith” is that of loyalty is evident in that it means to remain faithful when tested.¹⁵

- f) Rev. 2:10, “The devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” This exhortation clearly indicates the importance of being faithful if one is not to be overcome when tested. Again it is used to describe “the loyalty of faith.”¹⁶

In the Apostolic Fathers¹⁷ there is to be found this same emphasis on “faith” as fundamental to a proper response on the part of those who are faced with testing/temptation.

- a) This understanding is found in Did. 16.5, “Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial (*dokimasia*). . . “They who endure’ in their faith ‘shall be saved’ by the curse itself.” The language is reminiscent of 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12; and Rev. 3:10.¹⁸ Undoubtedly the same eschatological event and the same connotation of “faith” are in view.
- b) The understanding is as explicit as it is possible to make it in Hermas, *Mand.* 12.5.4, “The devil comes to all the servants of God, tempting; as many therefore as are full of faith withstand him powerfully, and he departs from them.”¹⁹
- c) It is also emphasized in 2 Clem. 20.2, “Let us then have faith, brothers and sisters: we are contending in the contest (*peiran*) of the living God. . .”

We have reserved to the end of this discussion the renown of Abraham as one “faithful” when tested. So far as extant literature is concerned, this renown begins with Sir. 44:20, “When he was tested he proved faithful.” The point is reiterated in 1 Macc. 2:52,

“Was not Abraham found faithful when tested . . .?”; in Jub. 19.8-9, “This (is) the tenth trial with which Abraham was tried. And he was found faithful. . . He was found faithful. . .”; and in Jub. 17.16-18,

Prince Mastema came and he said before God, “. . . Tell him (Abraham) to offer him (Isaac) as a burnt offering. . . And you will know whether he is faithful in everything in which you test him.” And the Lord was aware that Abraham was faithful in all of his afflictions because he tested him. . . And in everything in which he tested him, he was found faithful.²⁰

In the New Testament there are two passages in which Abraham’s “faith” in time of testing is emphasized:

- a) Heb. 11:17-19, “By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. . . of whom he had been told, ‘It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.’ He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead.” Though it is evident from the last sentence that “faith” in this passage includes conviction concerning the reliability of God’s promises,²¹ yet it is implied that faith “proves itself as faithfulness in temptation.”²²
- b) Jas. 2:21-23, “Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’” Though there is no specific mention of testing in this passage, the most celebrated testing narrative in the Old Testament and its outcome is crucial in the argument. Furthermore, though the “works” done by Abraham according to Gen. 22 are emphasized, his “faith” is also important. Indeed, he not only agrees that “faith” was one element in Abraham’s response when tested, it is affirmed that his faith was “active”

and that his “works” brought his faith to completion.²³ Does this not imply that his faith was in some sense prior to his works? ²⁴ It is implied that if there is a living faith it will lead to appropriate works. In Abraham’s case this meant obedience to the command to offer Isaac. Faith could not be separated from faithfulness.²⁵

That this emphasis on the faithfulness of Abraham continues is clear from 1 Clem. 10:1, “Abraham who was called ‘the Friend’ was found faithful.” Evidence from Gen. 12, 13, 15, 22, follows in the succeeding verses.

“Faith” usually, if not always, in the sense of faithfulness, is seen from the foregoing as the essential element in a proper response to testing/temptation. Indeed, it is so fundamental that testing can be, and is, described as the testing of faith. Moreover, there is no evidence that the various connotations of *peirasmos* have serious effect upon this description. *Peirasmos* as temptation is still a testing of faith inasmuch as it is an enticement to become faithless.

2. *The Fear of God*

Intimately related to faith and faithfulness as the fundamental element in the commendable response to testing/temptation is the fear of God. The proper awe and dread of the Almighty inspires faithfulness to Him, even as conviction concerning His deity inspires awe and dread of Him. It is therefore not surprising that the fear of God may be described as that which enables one to meet testing/temptation successfully. Indeed, just as *peirasmos* may be described as a testing of faith, so it is a testing of one’s fear of God.

In the celebrated testing of Abraham concerning the sacrifice of Isaac, it is indicated that it was Abraham’s fear of God that was being tested, and the fact that he truly feared God is said to be the real reason why he was willing to offer up his son. In Gen. 22:12 the angel of the Lord is credited with saying at the crucial moment, “Now I know that you fear God. . .”²⁶

In Sir. 36 (33):1, “No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again” (cf.

Sir. 2:1-16), it is implied that the fear of the Lord is the deciding factor whether one will escape undesirable results which could follow upon the experience of trial, albeit the escape will be the Lord's doing. In Jub. 18 the story of the sacrifice of Isaac is retold. At v. 9 the Lord is represented as saying at the moment when Abraham is about to slay the lad, "I know that he is one who fears the Lord."²⁷

In the New Testament the fear of God is not brought into the immediate context of any passage which specifically mentions testing/temptation. On the other hand the suffering experienced by those to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed is described as a test in 2:18 and 4:15, and elsewhere in the epistle the fear of God is frequently put forward as a motive for withstanding such a test:

- a) 4:1, 3, "While the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care (lit. 'fear') that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it. . . God has said, 'As in my anger I swore, "They shall never enter my rest"' (cf. 4:12-13).
- b) 10:26-27, 31, "If we wilfully persist in sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
- c) 12:21, 25, 28-29, "So terrifying was the sight (of Sinai with its voice) that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear' . . . If they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! . . . Let us . . . offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire."

It is noteworthy that the kind of fear which is encouraged in this epistle is described as "reverence and awe."²⁸

In the Apostolic Fathers the emphasis comes to the fore in

relation to the eschatological testing/temptation in Barn. 4.9-11,

Let us pay heed in the last days, for the whole time of our life and faith will profit us nothing, unless we resist, as becomes the sons of God in this present evil time, against the offenses which are to come, that the Black One may have no opportunity of entry. . . As far as in us lies let us 'exercise ourselves in the fear' of God. . .

Earlier in the epistle it is declared: "Fear. . . and patience (*hupomonē*) are the helpers of our faith" (2.2). That a testing/temptation context is indicated is evident from the preceding verse: "Seeing then that the days are evil, and that the worker of evil himself is in power, we ought to give heed to ourselves. . ."

3. *The Love of God*

To the Hebrew mind, concomitant with the fear of God is the love of God. In Sir. 2:15-16 "those who fear the Lord" is twice paralleled with "those who love him." Accordingly, in bSot. 31a R. Meir is credited with commenting on Gen. 22:12 that Abraham's fear of God was attested by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac at God's command, and that "'fearing God' with Abraham indicates from love." In view of the Hebraic conception of the relationship between the fear of God and love for God, it was possible for Jub. 17:18 to say concerning Abraham, "In everything in which he (God) tested him, he was found faithful. And his soul was not impatient. And he was not slow to act because he was faithful and a lover of the Lord." Of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, Philo likewise says, "Mastered by his love for God, he mightily overcame . . . family affection" (*de Abrahamo* 32).

That it is the love of God which determines one's response to testing/temptation is made explicit as early as Deut. 13:3 (4), "The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul." The idea recurs in the version of the creation of man found in 2 Enoch 30:14-15, "(I) called his name Adam. . . and I pointed out to him the two ways--light and darkness. And I said to him, "This is good for you, but

that is bad'; so that I might come to know whether he has love toward me or abhorrence, and so that it might become plain who among his race loves me." ²⁹

In the New Testament it is possible that the idea is represented in 1 Thess. 3:5-6, "I sent (Timothy) to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain. But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love." Primacy is given to faith in this passage but the reference to love, perhaps as a concomitant of faith, is not to be overlooked. ³⁰ It is not specifically stated that love to God is in view. Moreover, the emphasis on "love for one another and for all" in 3:12, and "love of the brothers and sisters" in 4:9-10 (cf. 5:13), may suggest otherwise, as does 2 Thess. 1:3-4, "Your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring." On the other hand, that love to God is the correct interpretation may be indicated in 2 Thess. 3:3-5, "The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ." The reference to the need for being guarded from the evil one is reminiscent of the reference to "the tempter" in 1 Thess. 3:5, especially if "from the evil one" is the correct translation, ³¹ rather than "from evil." That the love of the Thessalonians to God is in view here, rather than God's love for them, seems to me the most natural meaning in view because of the way in which the respective clause is worded. ³² It is our judgment, therefore, that "love" in 1 Thess. 3:6 at least includes love to God.

The idea that love to God enables one to stand firm in times of testing/temptation is indicated in Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test (lit.: 'been approved'), and will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." The importance of love to God in testing/

temptation, or, in this case, of love to Christ, is not so clearly set forth in 1 Pet. 1:6-8, "In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith. . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him. . ." Nevertheless, testing/temptation and love to Christ are in a contextual relationship, which is surprising unless a significant connection is implied. Verses 3-9 would be a closely-knit paragraph without the reference to love for Christ. Indeed, the reference does not correspond to any earlier statement in the paragraph, whereas everything else in verses eight and nine catches up what has been mentioned earlier. That such a significant connection is intended receives strong support from the passages in 1 Thess. and James which we have just discussed. That the "Persecution Form" probably influenced all three passages makes this view even more probable.

It may be implied that the love of God is the correlate of the successful meeting of testing/temptation in Did. 10:5, "Remember, Lord, thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love. . . For thine is the power and the glory forever. . ." The suggestion is based on the close correspondence of the first and third of these clauses to the last petition and closing doxology of the version of the Lord's Prayer found in Did. 8, a correspondence which suggests that there is concern regarding the testing/temptation which the church was experiencing, or was liable to experience, since the last petition of the Lord's Prayer seems to be closely connected with the petition concerning testing/temptation. If there is such a concern with testing/temptation behind this passage in the Didache, and if the petition "to make it perfect in thy love" is intended as the correlate to the petition "to deliver it from all evil," and if "thy love" means "love to thee," as seems probable in view of the contact with 1 John 4:17-21,³³ then it is indicated that those who love God, or at least those who perfectly love Him, are in no danger of falling in the hour of testing/temptation.

4. Trust in God, Hope in God

In view of the close relationship between faithfulness and

trust, it is not surprising that in a number of passages it is indicated that the one who trusts in the Lord will be unmoved when he/she experiences testing/temptation. The writer of Ps. 25 (26):1-2 is sure that if God will only test him, He will find that he trusts in Him: "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering." In Sir. 35 (32):24-36 (33):1 it is implied that the one who trusts the Lord will gain deliverance when he experiences testing: "The one who trusts the Lord will not suffer loss. No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again." In Wisd. 3:5-9 it seems to be implied that those who are "found. . . worthy of (God)" through testing are "those who trust in him."³⁴

Closely related to the idea of trust in God is the idea of hope in God.³⁵ Indeed, the Greek word for "hope" is used in Ps. 26:1 where the Massoretic Text has the Hebrew word for "trust." In Sir. 2:6 those who are to experience testing are exhorted to "trust (lit.: 'hope') in him (i.e., God)." In the New Testament this idea comes close to the surface in relation to testing in Heb. 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Though it is faith which is emphasized as necessary if the readers are not to fall away in their time of testing, faith is defined in such a way as to make it almost equivalent to hope.³⁶ Hope as an element in the proper response to testing is likewise close to the surface in Polyc. *Phil.* 8:1, "Let us then persevere unceasingly in our hope," an exhortation which occurs in a context urging "endurance" in time of persecution.

5. Single-mindedness

In relation to God one needs faith(fulness), fear, love, trust, hope, when faced with testing/temptation. In view of the choice confronting one when facing such an experience, single-mindedness is needed if he/she is to make a worthy response, an emphasis which occurs occasionally in late Jewish and early Christian literature.

As W. I. Wolverson has pointed out,³⁷ the concept of double-mindedness is found as early as 1 Chron. 12:33 and Ps. 12:2. It is important in Sir. 1:28 and 2:12, and is defined for us in 1QS 2:11-14, where "the would-be member of the community seems to want

to keep 'the idols of his heart' and to serve God at the same time." It is obvious, of course, that such double-mindedness is the concomitant of lack of faith. It is not surprising, therefore, that double-mindedness and lack of faith are frequently found in close conjunction.³⁸

Single-mindedness as an element in the proper response when one is enticed to evil, is implied in several passages in Test. XII:

- a) T. Iss. 4:6, "He (the genuine man) lives by the integrity of his soul, and perceives all things by the rectitude of his heart, making no place for an outlook made evil by this world's error, in order that he might envision no turning aside from any of the Lord's commands" (cf. T. Iss. 4:1-5:1).
- b) T. Iss. 6:1, "Your sons will abandon sincerity and align themselves with insatiable desire. Forsaking guilelessness, they will ally themselves with villainy. Abandoning the commands of the Lord, they ally themselves with Beliar" (cf. 1QS 5:4-5).
- c) T. Reub. 4:1, "Do not devote your attention to the beauty of women, my children, nor occupy your minds with their activities. But live in integrity of heart in the fear of the Lord."

The danger of double-mindedness in times of testing/temptation is emphasized in Jas. 1:5-8,

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God. . .
But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

In the light of the preceding verses, it is probable, if not certain, that prayer for wisdom is of assistance to those who suffer trials. It is indicated, however, that there is danger that the one who makes the petition may be "double-minded and unstable in every way." Such a one will not gain the assistance he/she needs so as to make a proper response in time of trial.

It is probably in dependence on this very passage in James that double-mindedness and testing/temptation are found in Hermas, *Mand. 9:5-7*,

Those who have doubts towards God, these are the double-minded,³⁹ and they shall not in any wise obtain any of their petitions, . . . But they who are perfect in faith ask for all things 'trusting in the Lord,' and they receive them, because they ask without doubting, and are double-minded in nothing. . . If ever you make any petition from the Lord, and receive it but slowly, do not be double-minded. . . for in every case it is because of some temptation or some transgression, of which you are ignorant, that you receive your request slowly.

Here, as in James, double-mindedness is not directly related to testing, but rather to effectual prayer. In contrast to what seems to be the case in James, however, the petitions considered seem to have no direct connection with testing/temptation: only the delay in obtaining what is requested is directly connected therewith.⁴⁰

6. Steadfastness, Endurance (*Hupomonē*)

In relation to the pressure which a person experiences when tested/tempted, he/she needs endurance. In Sir. 2:14, the one who fails when tested is warned: "Woe to you who have lost your nerve (*hupomonē*)!" Especially notable is T. Jos. 2:7, "In ten testings he (the Lord) showed that I was approved, and in all of them I persevered, because perseverance is a powerful medicine and endurance provides many good things." In the Testament of Job endurance is one of the two virtues--the other being almsgiving--which are emphasized over and over again as characteristic of Job. In T. Job 1:5 Job describes himself as "fully engaged in endurance." In T. Job 4:6 the Lord is represented as saying to him, "If you are patient (*hupomonēs*), I will. . ." According to T. Job 5:1, Job himself declares, "Till death I will endure: . . ." And according to T. Job 26:4 he says, "If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, shall we not in turn endure evil things?"

In 4 Macc. “endurance” is frequently emphasized as characteristic of Eleazar, the seven brothers, and the mother of the seven, all of whom suffered the test of martyrdom. Possibly the most striking passage is in 4 Macc. 9:7-8, “Put us to the test; and if you take our lives because of our religion. . . We, through this suffering and endurance, shall have the prize of virtue. . .” And specific mention of endurance occurs frequently in the narrative, e.g., 1:11; 7:9, 22; 9:6, 22; 13:12; 15:30, 32; 16:1, 8, 17, 19, 21; 17:4. The idea recurs in a passage which uses a synonym for *peirasmos*: Pss. Sol. 16:14-15, “Your testing (*dokimasia*) [of him] is in his flesh and in the difficulty of poverty. If the righteous endures all these things, he will receive mercy from the Lord.”

Philo does not call any of Israel’s experiences in the Wilderness tests/temptations, but he does state, in language reminiscent of Deut. 8, that “He (God). . .devised new forms of benefaction that they might be schooled not to show bitter resentment if something did not at once turn out as they would have it, but bear it patiently in expectation of good to come.”⁴¹ Josephus, also with reference to Israel in the Wilderness, represents Moses as addressing the people at Elim:

“It is probable that God tries (*dokimazonta*) their virtue and exercises their patience by these adversities. . .” He told them, it appeared they were not really good men, either in patience (*hupomonēn*) or in remembering what had been successfully done for them. . .Help would not come too late, though it come not immediately, if it be present with them before they suffer (lit.: ‘be tested/tempted [by]’) any great misfortune. . . He will first try their fortitude (*Antiq.* 3:1:4).

In later Jewish literature the same idea keeps recurring though the vocabulary used in expressing it varies. We note a few examples:

- a) In bSanh. 89b God is represented as saying to Abraham when He commanded him to sacrifice Isaac, “I have tested thee with many trials and thou didst withstand all. Now be firm for my sake in this trial.”⁴²

b) According to the Midrash on Ps. 26:2, David prays,

Prove me O Lord, as Thou didst prove Abraham, of whom the verse "God did prove Abraham" (Gen. 22:1) shows that Abraham stood up to his proving. Prove me as Thou didst prove Isaac, who being proved on the altar stood up to it. . . But while God was proving David, he said, "I have no strength to endure. I beg Thee, be lenient with me."

c) In Aboth R. Nathan 33 it is said concerning Abraham, "With ten trials was Abraham our father tried before the Holy One. . . and in all of them he was found steadfast."⁴³

In early Christian literature the emphasis upon the need of endurance when tested/tempted is continued:

a) The Lukan version of Jesus' interpretation of the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:11-15) diverges at two important points from the version in Matthew and Mark:

- (1) Instead of the reference to "trouble or persecution" found in Mark 4:17 (Matt. 13:21) in connection with the second kind of soil, "testing" is introduced;
- (2) Instead of the reference in Mark 4:20 (cf. Matt. 13:23) to bearing fruit "thirty and sixty and a hundredfold" in connection with the fourth kind of soil, the idea of bearing fruit "with patient endurance" is introduced.

That contrast of the second and fourth categories in Luke's version of the parable is intentional, is indicated not only by the fact that "endurance" is frequently used in testing contexts, but also by other variations in the Lukan version:

- (1) "in an honest and good heart" concerning the fourth category has no parallel in Mark and Matthew, but contrasts with "with joy" concerning the second category;

- (2) “hold it fast” concerning the fourth category occurs where Mark has “accept it,” and Matthew has “understands it,” and contrasts with “have no root” concerning the second category.⁴⁴
- b) After warning against the destruction which may follow upon testing/temptation, 1 Tim. 6:11 exhorts, “Shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.”
- c) In connection with the test his readers were experiencing (2:18; 4:15), the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds those he addresses of a previous experience: “You endured a hard struggle with sufferings” (10:32); informs them: “You need endurance” (10:36); and exhorts them: “Let us run with perseverance (‘endurance’)” (12:1); recalls the example set by Christ who “endured the cross” (12:2); urges the consideration of him “who endured such hostility against himself”(12:3); and urges further: “Endure trials for the sake of discipline” (12:7).
- d) The author of the Epistle of James exhorts: “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing” (1:2-4); adds: “Blessed is anyone who endures temptation” (1:12); and declares: “We call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job. . .” (5:11). There is no specific mention of testing/temptation in connection with the last of these quotations, but the emphasis on endurance in 1:2-4, 12; the contextual concern with the proper attitude in suffering; and the reference to Job whose testing is the theme of the book called by his name; combine to make it virtually certain that testing is in view.
- e) As noted, eschatological testing is in view in Did. 16:5, “Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery

trial.” Concerning this trial, it is stated: “They who endure in their faith ‘shall be saved’ by the curse itself.”

At least from the time of Sir. (c. 180 B.C.) “endurance” is characteristic of testing/temptation contexts, especially when affliction or persecution was considered the means of that testing/temptation. Indeed, it is probable that the use of “endurance” in connection with affliction or persecution usually implies that such experiences are understood to be tests/temptations. We have already had occasion to provide reasons for believing that 2 Thess. 3:3-5 and Jas. 5:11, both of which contain “endurance,” are concerned with the tests/temptations being experienced by the respective readers.

Possibly the most outstanding passage to be considering in this connection is Mark 13 (Matt. 10:17-22; 24:3-51; Luke 21:5-36) where the eschatological tribulation is considered at length. In this material we read in Mark 13:13 (Matt. 10:22; 24:13): “The one who endures to the end will be saved”; and in Luke 21:19: “By your endurance you will gain your souls.” Aside from indications that the eschatological tribulation being described puts those addressed in danger of falling away from Christ,⁴⁵ and so constitutes a test/temptation, as we have seen in Chapter III, there are passages which specifically describe the eschatological tribulation as a time of testing/temptation. In this connection Did. 16:5 is significant. It knows the saying, “The one who endures to the end will be saved,” or a variant thereof; it knows that it belongs in a context describing the eschatological tribulation; and it describes that tribulation as “the fiery trial (*tēn purōsin tēs dokimasias*)”, a phrase reminiscent of “the fiery ordeal (*tē . . . purōsei pros peirasmon*)” in 1 Pet. 4:12, and surely synonymous therewith.⁴⁶

Space does not allow consideration of all the tribulation passages in which “endurance” occurs to see whether we can discover additional reasons for believing that testing/temptation is implicit in such passages. The comment must suffice that frequently such reasons can be found, e.g., in 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 13:10; 1 Clem. 5:5-7; 45:8; Barn. 2:2; Polyc. *Phil.* 8:2; Ign. *Smyr.* 4:2; *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*.⁴⁷ Also it is probable that where “endurance” is mentioned as characteristic of a martyr or martyrs,

as in Polycarp, *Phil.* 9:1, the testing/temptation of said martyr or martyrs is in view. Of special interest is the use of this vocabulary concerning Christ in such passages as Barn. 5:1, 5, 6, 12; Polyc. *Phil.* 1:2; 8:1.⁴⁸ Since Heb. 12:2-3 spoke of Christ's "endurance" in His sufferings, which were called a test/temptation in 2:18; 4:15, it is at least possible, if not probable, that in these passages Christ's suffering is thought of as a test/temptation.⁴⁹

7. Obedience to God

If one considers the conduct required for faithfulness in testing/temptation, the proper response is one of obedience to God, and particularly to His commandments. This is implicit in the narratives of Gen. 3, 22. It is explicit in a number of passages in the Old Testament and in the Apocrypha:

a) Ex. 15:25-26,

There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians."

b) Ex. 16:4, "The Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.'"

c) Deut. 8:2, "Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you. . . in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments."

d) Deut. 13:3 (4)-4 (5),

The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. The Lord your

God you shall follow, him alone you shall fear,
his commandments you shall keep, his voice
you shall obey, him you shall serve, and to
him you shall hold fast.

- e) Jud. 2:22, "In order to test Israel, whether or not they would take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their ancestors did."
- f) Jud. 3:4, "They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord."
- g) Sir. 35 (32):24--36 (33):1, "The one who keeps the law preserves himself, and the one who trusts the Lord will not suffer loss. No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again." In this passage it is stated that he who "keeps the law" is the one whom the Lord will rescue "in trials." Though "keep(ing) the law" appears to have a more general reference than to the times of trial, surely it is implied that it includes such times.
- h) 4 Macc. 16:24, "By these words the mother of the seven encouraged and persuaded each of her sons to die rather than violate God's commandment."⁵⁰ The context is the test in which the woman and her sons were given the choice of martyrdom or apostasy.

The importance of obedience to God in time of testing/temptation is also emphasized elsewhere in Jewish literature. In Jub. 17:16, where Satan is credited with inciting God to command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, one of the reasons urged upon God is: "Thou wilt see whether he will do this thing." "Obedience to God" is also set forth in Philo, *de Abr.* 35, as characteristic of Abraham's response to the command to sacrifice Isaac. According to Josephus, *Antiq.* 1:18:2, when Abraham was given the command he "thought it was not right to disobey God in anything."⁵¹ A legend recounted in Gen. R. 56:4 tells of Satan confronting Abraham with various arguments against heeding God's request for the sacrifice of Isaac, and of Satan receiving Abraham's response: "I must obey."⁵² Though all of these examples relate to the testing of Abraham, his response

to testing is renowned in Jewish literature as exemplary. Moreover, there are many passages concerning testing/temptation in which it is implied that obedience to God is urgent.

Despite the emphasis on faith in the New Testament, there are passages in which obedience to God in times of testing/temptation is emphasized:

- a) In the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the Wilderness (Luke 4; Matt. 4), the quotation of Scripture as providing the decisive answer to Satan implies the necessity of obedience to God.
- b) In view of the Synoptic understanding of the Passion of Jesus as a time of testing/temptation, His prayer in Gethsemane, "Not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36 [Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42; cf. Matt. 26:42]), must be understood as a response of obedience in time of testing/temptation.
- c) In Heb. 5:8 it is stated concerning the Gethsemane and Calvary experiences of Jesus: "He learned obedience through what he suffered." Heb. 5:1-3, 7-10, is a commentary on Heb. 4:15, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin." It is therefore clear that in Heb. 5:8 Jesus' sufferings are considered a time of testing. The implication is that obedience characterized his response to testing, and that it ought to characterize ours.⁵³ Indeed, in the very next verse it is explicitly stated concerning Christ, that "he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." In the light of 4:15-16, the obedience here mentioned is obedience in reaction to testing.⁵⁴ In this connection it is instructive to note the exhortation in 10:36, "You need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."⁵⁵

In the Apostolic Fathers obedience in the time of testing/temptation is emphasized:

- a) In 1 Clem. 10:7 it is said of Abraham, "In his obedience he offered him(Isaac) as a sacrifice to God" (cf. 10:1).
- b) In connection with the spiritual danger to God's people in the eschatological tribulation, there is the following exhortation in Barn. 4:11, "Let us strive to keep his commandments" (cf. 2:1; Polyc. Phil. 9:1).
- c) In *Sim.* 7:1 we read that Hermas was told: "He (the glorious angel) wishes you to be tried." According to 7:4, Hermas is instructed in the way by which he may be able to "endure": "Only continue humble and serving the Lord. . . and walk in my commandments, which I give you."⁵⁶

B. Aids to a Proper Response

We turn now from the elements in a proper response to the aids to a proper response to testing/temptation.

1. The Scriptures

First and foremost of these aids, once the religion of Israel had become a religion emphasizing the Torah, is the Scriptures. Insofar as obedience to God is a major element in the proper response to testing/temptation, this is only to be expected. In my opinion there is an intimation of this emphasis already in Sir. 2:15-16, "Those who fear the Lord do not disobey his words, and those who love him keep his ways. Those who fear the Lord seek to please him, and those who love him are filled with his law." At the beginning of the chapter those who "come to serve the Lord" are exhorted to prepare themselves for "testing." In the verses immediately preceding 2:15-16 woes are pronounced on certain persons, evidently on those who fail in the hour of testing, since it is said that they have "no trust," and have "lost (their) nerve (lit.: 'endurance')." (As we have seen, both 'trust' and "endurance" are characteristic of passages concerned with testing/temptation.) By contrast, those who "fear the Lord" and "love him" are now

described as those who will not “disobey his words,” but will “keep his ways.” Is it not implied that they will meet testing/temptation successfully? In the following verse they are described as those who “seek to please him.” Seemingly in parallel with “seek to please him” is “are filled with his law.” Is there not here the suggestion that those who “seek to please him” are “filled with his law,” i.e., they will be prepared with the knowledge of His law to meet tests/temptations successfully?⁵⁷ That this view of the law prevailed in later Jewish thought may be illustrated by such passages as:

- a) bKid. 30b, “I (the Lord) created an evil tendency: I created for it the Law as a means of healing.”⁵⁸ As we have seen, the evil impulse, or tendency, is prominent in later Jewish literature as a source of testing/temptation.
- b) Gen. R. 22:6, “R. Hanina said: ‘If your Tempter comes to incite you to levity, cast it down with the words of the Torah.’”⁵⁹

In the New Testament the value of the Scriptures in assisting one to meet testing/temptation is evident from the example of Jesus, who not only responded to each of the three recorded enticements of Satan (Matt. 4; Luke 4) with quotations from the Scriptures--indeed from the Torah--but even countered Satan’s quotation of Scripture with other Scripture. We have previously considered the evidence that Jesus’ Cry of Dereliction (Mark 15:34 [Matt. 27:46]) is to be understood as indicative of testing/temptation. The cry is actually a quotation of Ps. 22:1. It may be that the Scriptures merely provide a form of words for the articulation of what He experienced in the hour of testing/temptation. On the other hand, is it not possible that they may be rendering help to Him in one or both of two ways? They may be serving as a means whereby His shattering experience is identified as a test/temptation. Or the quotation in question may be a support to faith since it introduces a Psalm which goes on to such affirmations as: “He (God) did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him” (v. 24; cf. Rom. 15:4). In either case the Scriptures render positive assistance in His experience of testing/

temptation.

After recounting how some of the Israelites in the Wilderness had become “idolaters,” others had “put (the Lord) to the test,” and still others had “complain(ed),” with serious results for all of them, Paul continues in 1 Cor. 10:11-13,

These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us. . . So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

In a context of warning concerning the danger of falling in the time of testing, the apostle states that at least some parts of the Old Testament “were written down to instruct us,” obviously to provide instruction concerning the tests we face. (Again it is parts of the Torah to which specific reference is made.)

The Epistle to the Hebrews, which was composed in view of the testing of those addressed, seems to follow the principle enunciated by Paul to the effect that the Old Testament is instructive in relation to testing. Though much of the author’s concern with the Old Testament is undoubtedly due to the particular theological questions at issue among his readers, there are extensive sections which seem to be introduced for no other reason than to fortify the appeal to his readers to be steadfast in their time of testing. First of these is the quotation of, and comment on, Ps. 95:7-11 in 3:7-4:13. Surely it is significant that the quotation from the Psalm is introduced with the words, “As the Holy Spirit says,” that in the course of the passage we read, “as it is said (in the Psalm)” (3:15), “as God has said” (4:3), “in one place it (Scripture) speaks” (4:4), “again in this place it (Scripture) says” (4:5), “(God). . . saying through David” (4:7); and that the passage concludes:

Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. Indeed, the word of God is

living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account (4:11-13).

Not only is the exhortation of the Psalm described as the exhortation of the Holy Spirit, it is described as part and parcel of "the word of God" which, it is warned, thoroughly scrutinizes, even judges our "thoughts and intentions."⁶⁰ The Scriptures are not only of assistance to us in the time of testing because they provide guidance, but also because they perform a "critical" function.

One other New Testament passage seems to imply the value of the Scriptures to those who undergo testing/temptation, namely Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." The promise referred to is possibly that of Zech. 6:14 LXX, "The crown shall be for those who endure."⁶¹ Or it may be a generalized statement of what the Old Testament promises to those who stand the test.⁶² Either way there is implicit the idea that the Scriptures are of aid in times of testing/temptation, because of the promise, or promises, they contain for those who are faithful.

We have left to the last the value of the Scriptures in providing examples of those who were faithful in testing/temptation, and also of those who were not able to stand up to it. Most renowned of those who are recalled in later days as having been faithful in testing/temptation is Abraham. Beginning with Sir. 44:20, his faithfulness when tested as set forth in Gen. 22 receives constantly recurring mention in Jewish literature, as we shall see in the next chapter. The following of his example is explicitly urged in 1 Macc. 2:52; Judith 8:26. In 4 Macc. 15:28 we are told of the mother of the seven who were martyred during the Maccabean revolt: "As the daughter of God-fearing Abraham she remembered his fortitude" (cf. 17:6). From 16:20 (cf. 14:20) it is clear that the reference is to Gen. 22. Though no other record of testing/temptation in the Old

Testament excited as much interest as that of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, there were other Old Testament characters who were acclaimed as having been steadfast in times of testing/temptation, even though at times the testing/temptation was read into the text, or was a legendary expansion of it. The persons so renowned include Adam,⁶³ Noah,⁶⁴ Isaac,⁶⁵ Jacob,⁶⁶ Joseph,⁶⁷ Moses,⁶⁸ the tribe of Levi,⁶⁹ David,⁷⁰ Isaiah,⁷¹ Job,⁷² Jonah,⁷³ Ezra,⁷⁴ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah.⁷⁵

In early Christian literature the inspiration to be gained from a consideration of Old Testament worthies who proved faithful in testing/temptation continues to receive emphasis, though, as we shall see, the example of Jesus Christ has greater prominence. In Heb. 3:2-5 the example of Moses is set forth, though the passage emphasizes Christ's faithfulness "over God's house as a son," in contrast to Moses' faithfulness "in all God's house as a servant." Later in the epistle, in urging his readers to "have faith and so (be) saved" (10:39), the author catalogues a long list of Old Testament heroes emphasizing that their renown is due to their "faith" (Heb. 11). The author may not have restricted his catalogue to those who demonstrated faith in time of testing/temptation,⁷⁶ but faith in such experiences is explicitly mentioned in 11:17 (concerning Abraham's offering of Isaac), and in 11:37 (some MSS), and is surely implicit in 11:27 (concerning Moses) and in 11:32-38. The Epistle of James (5:10-11) cites the prophets and Job as examples of steadfastness in times of testing/temptation.⁷⁷ In 1 Clem. 10:7 Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is mentioned with appreciation.

But it is not only those who are worthy of emulation because of their response to tests/temptations who are recalled. There are those whose failure in such times is held up as a warning. David's failure to withstand temptation when he saw Bathsheba bathing is elaborated in bSanh. 107a.⁷⁸ The failure of Israel to withstand testing in the Wilderness is cited in some Jewish sources:

- a) In Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1:36, it is stated concerning the testing of Israel with the manna (Ex. 16:4), "They should have put their trust in him of whose unfailing truthfulness they had received the clearest proofs."
- b) According to Josephus, *Antiq.* 3:1:4, Moses told them

experienced “moral ripening” through the testing He experienced (e.g., J. Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1952], 67.) However, in the Pentateuch (LXX) this verb is used “to signify the act of consecrating a priest to his office” (W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* [Dallas: Word, 1991], 57). Its occurrence in these passages in Hebrews signifies that through His testing Jesus “confirmed” that He is “the One qualified. . . for priestly ministry before God” (G. Delling in *TDNT*, 8:77). For further treatment of this matter, see Chapter VII.

¹⁰³*Romans*, 1:432.

¹⁰⁴For the different interpretations and a discussion of them, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:425-431. In my view it is, paradoxically, both reward and gift.

¹⁰⁵In Col. 1:24 Paul states, “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.” Does he think of these sufferings of his as a test/temptation?

¹⁰⁶I have only noted three passages in Jewish literature in which eschatological rewards are promised in the immediate context of our vocabulary, namely Dan. 12:10 LXX; Wisd. 3:1-9; Ex. R. 31:3.

¹⁰⁷R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York: Harper, 1949), 337.

¹⁰⁸Cf. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17:1.

¹⁰⁹Cf. 1QH 9:24. A “crown” is promised in T. Job 4:10; cf. Isa. 28:5; 62:3; Asc. Isa. 9:18; 1 Pet. 5:4.

¹¹⁰1QS 4:8. Cf. 1QH 7:24-25; 1 Enoch 58:6; 108:12; 4 Ezra 2:35.

¹¹¹1QS 4:8; cf. 1 Enoch 62:15; 2 Enoch 22:8; 4 Ezra 2:39.

¹¹²That this is reward for faithfulness in testing/temptation is suggested by what they endured according to v. 25,

“He (the fourth beast) . . . shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High.”

¹¹³Cf. 1QS 4:7; CDC 20:33-34; 1QM 12:17-18. Note also T. Sim. 6:6, “Then all the spirits of error will be given over to be trampled under foot. And men will have mastery over the evil spirits.”

¹¹⁴Wisd. 3:1-9; cf. Isa. 35:10; 49:10; 51:3; 65:19; 1QS 2:4; 4:22; 4 Macc. 16:25; 2 Bar. 44:7; 1 Pet. 4:13; Rev. 7:16; 21:4.

¹¹⁵Cf. Zech 14:14.

¹¹⁶The extent to which the kind of immortality here envisaged is to be compared with that set forth in the Book of Wisdom is a question which merits careful consideration.

¹¹⁷See Mart. Polyc. 13:3 for evidence that his martyrdom is considered a test/temptation. According to 14:2 Polycarp prayed for “the resurrection to everlasting life, both of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit.” It may appear, therefore, that immortality in 17:1 is really used in the sense of resurrection. The immortality mentioned in the latter verse, however, followed immediately upon his death. Moreover, in 16:1 there is evidence of the “belief that the spirit appears at death in the form of a bird.” (K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* [London: Heinemann, 1917], 2:333 n. 1. But see also *ibid.*, 2:334 n. 1.)

¹¹⁸We have argued above that Rom. 8:18-39 is concerned with testing/temptation.

¹¹⁹E.g., Heb. 12:1; cf. 4 Macc. 16:16; 17:11; 1 Thess. 2:2; Phil. 1:30; 2 Tim. 4:7; and the cognate noun in Luke 22:44.

¹²⁰Cf. CDC 20:34.

¹²¹We have argued previously that this promise is in a passage dealing with testing/temptation. Cf. *Letter of*

the Churches of Lyons and Vienne in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5:1:6. See also 2 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:10.

¹²²Cf. *Passion of SS. James and Marian* 1:3, “the glory of their crown.”

¹²³Cf. *Passion of SS. James and Marian*, 1:3; 2:2; *Acts of S. Fructuosus*, 7.

¹²⁴The genitives following “crown” in each of the examples quoted are almost certainly Genitives of Apposition.

¹²⁵Cf. Luke 12:32; 12:42-44 (Matt. 24:45-47); Heb. 2:5-8 (?); Rev. 2:26-27.

¹²⁶Luke 12:37, 42 (Matt. 24:45); 1 Thess. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 4:1-11; 1 Pet. 4:13; Rev. 2:17; 3:5; 7:15-17; 21:3, 4; 22:4; *Ign. Mag.* 1:2. In this section I have not tried to be exhaustive.

¹²⁷Gen. 3 is never said to be a testing/temptation story. The results of failure in the temptation described include shame (3:7-10, 21 [?]), attempting to hide from God (3:8), increased pangs in childbearing (3:16), male rule (3:16; 1 Tim. 2:12-14), toil (3:17-19), forfeit of access to the tree of life (3:19, 22-24; *Wisd.* 2:24; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22).

¹²⁸Note that the whole nation suffered, and not merely David. See also Ex. R. 31:3; Targum of Jonathan on Num. 26:10.

¹²⁹Cf. bShab. 55b; Ex. R. 31:3; Targum of Jonathan on Num. 26:10.

¹³⁰Jud. 3:4-8. It seems that much of Jud. 3:5-16:31 is interpreted in Jud. 2:22 as a description of the recurrent subjugation of Israel -- or of a part thereof -- because of recurrent failure when tested.

CHAPTER VII

THE PERSONS WHO EXPERIENCE TESTING/TEMPTATION

A. Ordinarily an Experience of the Righteous Only

Ordinarily testing/temptation is considered to be an experience of the righteous only. Not only are the particular individuals who are described as undergoing it almost always of this category, the fact that testing/temptation is typically the testing/temptation of faith accords with this statement. That it is an experience of the righteous only is almost suggested by the fact that in a testing/temptation context we have such a statement as Deut. 8:5, "Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you." It is almost implied, likewise, in such a statement as Sir. 2:1, "My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing." And in late Jewish literature there are passages which insist that it is only the righteous who experience it, such as Cant. R. 2:16:

R. Eleazar (c. A.D. 270) said: It is like a man who had two sons, one strong and the other weak. Which one does he work hard; is it not the strong one? So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked, because they could not stand the trial. . . Whom then does He try? The righteous, as it says, The Lord trieth the righteous (Ps. 11:5), and also, After these things God tested Abraham (Gen. 22:1). . . R. Jose b. Hanina (third century

A.D.) said, A flax-beater does not beat his flax very vigorously when it is hard, for fear it should split, but if it is good flax, the more he beats it the better it becomes. So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked, because they could not stand the trial, but He does try the righteous. . . . R. Johanan said: When a potter tests his furnace, he does not test it with cracked jars, because a single blow would break them, but he tests it with sound jars, which can withstand many knocks. So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked; and whom does He try: The righteous.

This passage, with only slight variations, occurs also in Gen. R. 34:2 and in Gen. R. 55:2. In Gen. R. 32:3 the same point is also made but only R. Jose b. Hanina is quoted.¹ Num. R. 15:12 lists tests/temptations suffered by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the tribe of Levi. Concerning the last of these the comment is made, "They were all righteous men, and. . . when He tried them they stood the test . . . This confirms what it says, 'The Lord trieth the righteous.'"²

In the New Testament there is a passage, which, though it does not necessarily imply that testing/temptation is restricted to those who serve God, does emphasize that it is a typical experience of God's "children." The passage to which we refer is Heb. 12:6-8,

"The Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts."³ Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children.⁴

There are passages, however, which appear to suggest that testing/temptation is, or may be, an experience of all mankind. Such a conception may be implied in 2 Enoch 30:14-15, "I (God). . . called his name Adam. . . And I pointed out to him the two ways -- light and darkness. And I said to him, This is good for you, but that is bad'; so that I might come to know whether he has love

toward me or abhorrence, and so that it might become plain who among his race loves me." A passage in later Jewish literature which possibly teaches the universality of testing/temptation is found in Ex. R. 31:3, "Happy the man who can withstand the test, for there is none whom God does not prove. He tries the rich man. . . and the poor man he tries. . ." In my judgment, however, it may be that it is only the people of God who are within the purview of the author when he says, "There is none whom God does not prove."

In early Christian literature the universality of testing/temptation -- at least in the end time -- is proclaimed in Rev. 3:10, "The hour of trial (*tou peirasmou*) that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth"; and in Did. 16:5, "Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial (*dokimasias*)."

Despite such passages, however, it appears that ordinarily testing/temptation is an experience of the people of God.⁵

B. Old Testament Individuals and Groups

1. Adam and Eve

We have drawn attention to the narrative of Gen. 3 from time to time, with its story of the fall of Adam and Eve. There is, furthermore, a legendary expansion of this narrative in Apoc. Mos. 16-21, and a considerable number of brief references thereto in Jewish and early Christian literature. However, it is noticeable that their Fall is frequently described in therein as the result of Adam and/or Eve being deceived.⁶ Gen. 3:13, "The serpent deceived me (Eve)" (NIV), was apparently accepted as a statement of fact, and used as a description of what transpired.⁷

That Gen. 3 is understood as an account of how Adam and/or Eve were/was deceived does not rule out the possibility that Gen. 3 is a testing/temptation narrative. As we have seen, deceit enters into various narratives which are explicitly described as experiences of testing/temptation. J. H. Korn is of the opinion that our vocabulary

could not be used of the Gen. 3 narrative because there is no tradition indicating that Adam and Eve were people of faith prior to the Fall.⁸ However, the fact that they apparently accepted God's prohibition against eating of the forbidden tree when it was communicated to them, suggests that they were people of faith, whose faith failed when they encountered the blandishments of the serpent. In our opinion the testing of Eve, and Adam, was a test of their faith.⁹

It is to be noted that there are the marks of a testing/temptation experience on the part of Adam and Eve in a legend concerning Adam and Eve after the Fall. The legend occurs in *The Life of Adam and Eve*. Subsequent to the Fall and their expulsion from the Garden, Adam and Eve repented (1-8). Then Satan deceived Eve again (9:1-11:3). But Adam "cried out with great weeping and said, 'O Lord, . . . Remove far from me this my opponent, who seeks to destroy my soul . . .'" And immediately the devil disappeared from him. But Adam persisted forty days standing in repentance in the water of the Jordan" (17:1-3).

2. Abraham

Not only is Abraham the first person of whom it is specifically stated in the Bible that he underwent testing, beginning with Sir. 44:20 he is renowned in Jewish literature for his faithfulness in it. Moreover, by the time of the writing of 4 Macc. it is clear that his faithfulness at that time has become the supreme example for all who undergo it. According to this writing, the mother of the seven Maccabean martyrs not only "remembered his (Abraham's) fortitude" (15:28), she exhorted each of her sons, "For his (God's) sake also our father Abraham was zealous to sacrifice his son Isaac . . ." (16:20).¹⁰

Primarily, of course, Abraham was renowned for his reaction to the command to sacrifice Isaac recorded in Gen. 22, but as time went on other events in his life came to be considered as testing times. Indeed, it came to be held that his whole life was almost, if not always, a life of faithfulness in testing. By the time the Book of Jubilees was written it was apparently a widespread doctrine that he had undergone ten tests. At any rate Jub. 19:8, "This (is) the

tenth trial with which Abraham was tried," leaves the impression that the idea that he had experienced ten trials was common knowledge, since the preceding references to his trials neither number them nor indicate how many of them there were. It is to be noted, however, that despite the frequent reference to ten trials, there is no agreement as to which of his experiences are to be considered as such.¹¹

It has been suggested that Abraham's renown as one tried ten times owes something to the desire to make him measure up to Hercules, who was famous for his twelve exploits, and in whose honour "decimal feasts of ten days" were observed.¹² The renown of his endurance is evident in Euripides, *Heracles*, 1:1250, "Is this that Heracles who endured so much?" However, I doubt whether the influence of the Hercules cult was of much, if any, significance in the development of the tradition that Abraham underwent ten trials, because

- a) Ten trials are hardly sufficient to make Abraham equal to Hercules with his twelve exploits; and
- b) In Num. 14:22 the number ten is associated with our vocabulary, albeit in reference to ten tests of God by Israel in the Wilderness.

It is possible that there was a tendency to make the faithfulness of Abraham, who was recognized as the father of the nation, and who was renowned for his faithfulness in the matter of the sacrifice of Isaac, the counterpart of Israel's lack of faith in putting God to the test.¹³ Alternatively, the description of ten plagues in Egypt and the mention of ten commandments may have led to the tracing of a scheme of tens in the Pentateuch, though definite evidence of such a scheme is first found in Pirke Aboth 5.

In addition to his ten trials, as time went on Abraham came to be credited with the same kind of trials as other Old Testament worthies. In Apoc. Abr. 12 wilderness motifs are used in describing the trial of Abraham in such a way as to suggest that he underwent experiences similar to those of Moses in the Wilderness. In Ex. R. 18:5, and in the Targum of Jonathan on Gen. 11:28, it is declared that he had been thrown into a fiery furnace, just as Daniel's three friends were. In Yashar Way-yera 43b the story of the trial of

Abraham is begun in language which is clearly borrowed from Job 1:6ff.¹⁴ Evidently the idea that Abraham was the type of all persons who are steadfast in times of trial led to the development of traditions which credited him with having suffered the various kinds of trial which people have endured.¹⁵

Abraham's response to his trial or trials is not only significant in that he thereby became the type and example of all pious people, but also because his renown for "faithfulness" is based thereon. That he was "faithful" in trial is declared first in Sir. 44:20, and is repeated in Jub. 17:15, 17, 18; 19:8, 9; 1 Macc. 2:52; 1 Clem. 10:1. "Faith" in connection with the offering of Isaac is affirmed of him in Heb. 11:17-19; Jas. 2:21-23. Abraham's response to trial was also related in the mind of later generations to the fact that he became known as the "friend of God."¹⁶

It remains only to note that in early Christian literature Abraham's faithfulness in trial seems not to be as prominent as in Jewish literature, no doubt because Jesus is the supreme type and example of faithfulness in this literature. Besides the implicit reference to Abraham's faithfulness in Jas. 2:21-23, it is to the fore in such passages as Heb. 6:13-15; 11:17-19; 1 Clem. 10:1-7.

3. Other Old Testament Individuals

It was undoubtedly natural for a consideration of Gen. 22 to lead to the view that it contained a trial of Isaac as well as of Abraham. In Judith 8:26 a test of Isaac is reported alongside that of Abraham in such a way that it is natural to understand a reference to Gen. 22. In 4 Macc. the renown of Isaac as one who was faithful when about to be sacrificed was such that he is mentioned frequently therein as providing a pattern of fidelity second only to that of Abraham.¹⁷ Probably because of the frequency of the association of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Jewish literature, there are occasions when all three are mentioned together as having been faithful in trial.¹⁸

In T. Jos. 2:7 it is stated that Joseph endured ten trials, a statement which seems to owe something to Abraham's renown as one who had been tested ten times. Apart from the extended

discussion of the agency of Potiphar's wife in the matter, it is of special interest to note that according to the context, trial is due to the fact that "for a brief time he (the Lord) may stand aside in order to test the disposition of the soul."¹⁹

It is possible that there is reference to a testing of Moses in Ex. 15:25, "There he put them to the test." Instead of "them," both the Massoretic text and the Septuagint have the third person singular pronoun, and may refer to "Moses" rather than to "the people" as a unit. Support for such a view is possibly to be found in Deut. 33:8, "Give to Levi your Thummim, and your Urim to your loyal one, whom you tested at Massah, with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah." In Deut. 33 Moses gives his blessing to each of the tribes of Israel just prior to his death, and this verse is part of his blessing of the tribe of Levi. Since the testing at Massah was many years before, "the tribe is characterized representatively, in the person of Moses and (perhaps) Aaron."²⁰ A test of Moses by God may, therefore, be in view. However, the most natural interpretation of Deut. 33:8 is to understand that it does not refer to a test of Moses, but to a test of the tribe of Levi. The occurrence of the plural pronominal suffixes in the latter part of v. 9 and in v. 10 indicate that the tribe is in view, and make it virtually certain that the change from the singular pronoun in v. 8 to the plural pronoun is no more than a change from the conception of the tribe of Levi as a unity to the conception of it as a number of persons. Moreover, the Pentateuchal narratives concerning Massah and Meribah say nothing of Moses or Aaron being tested. However, references to Moses as one who suffered trial occur in Judith 8:22-23 (Vulgate); Cant. R. 4:4:1; Heb. 3:2-5; 11:24-28; cf. Sifre Num. 12:7.

It is of interest to note that the rabbis disagreed on the question of David's faithfulness in trial. This disagreement is made explicit in bB.B. 17a, "There were three over whom the evil inclination had no dominion, to wit Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. . . Some include also David." On the one side is the witness of Cant. R. 4:4:1, in which David is listed with Moses and Ezra as a person who "stand(s) and rule(s) over (his) evil inclination and master(s) it." On the other side is the witness of bSanh. 107a which contains a legendary expansion of the taking of Bathsheba and includes the statement attributed to David, "Had I wished to suppress my lust I could

have done so." A similar view of David seems to be in evidence in the Midrash on Ps. 26:2, in which David is represented as pleading for God to test him as He tested Abraham, Isaac and Joseph, but which concludes, "While God was proving David, he said: 'I have no strength to endure. I beg Thee, be lenient with me.'" ²¹

The one book in the Old Testament which may be said to be devoted entirely to testing and trial, and to the testing and trial of a single individual, is the book of Job. Though our vocabulary is not used in it, the prologue makes it clear that the piety of Job is being tested. That Job himself is credited with such an understanding of his troubles may be implied in the Septuagint version of 7:1; 10:17; 16:10 (9) (A); 19:12; 25:3. ²²

In T. Job great emphasis is placed on Job's steadfastness, though, in contrast to the Old Testament, the struggle is one which Job himself has invited (3:6-5:2). The idea that Job's piety is being tested is not mentioned in the book, though it is clearly implicit in the portion of the narrative which describes his wife's urging that he deny God (24:1-26:5).

It is surprising that Job's testing does not have great prominence in later Jewish literature, though the Prologue of Job provided the pattern for a variety of legendary expansions of Gen. 22 and in bSot. 31a Job 1:1 and Gen. 22:12 are compared. In Ex. R. 21:7 there is a strange legend to the effect that God delivered Job into the hands of Satan while Israel was crossing the Red Sea, so that they could not be molested by the devil during that time. Job is represented as saying, "In order that Israel may not emerge guilty from the trial, He hath delivered me into his (Satan's) hand." In Num. R. 17:2 there is another strange legend in which it is stated that following the sacrifice of Isaac Abraham asked not to be tested again, and that God granted the request saying, "Sore afflictions and additional trials should have come upon Abraham but they will not come." It is immediately added that the tribulations which should have befallen Abraham were visited on Job.

In the New Testament the reference to "the endurance of Job" in Jas. 5:11 undoubtedly implies that Job suffered trial, in view of the concern of the epistle with "endurance" in relation to trial (1:2-3, 12).

Other Old Testament individuals who are described, or seem to have been described, as having suffered trial include Cain,²³ Noah,²⁴ Isaiah,²⁵ Hezekiah,²⁶ Jonah,²⁷ Ezra,²⁸ Daniel and the three Holy Children,²⁹ Tobit³⁰ and his son Tobias.³¹ It will be observed that the trial of no other Old Testament person has the significance accorded to that of Abraham. How others responded to trial may be set forth for edification, and what is said concerning the source of Job's testing seems to have had a formative influence on the understanding of the origin of testing generally, but Abraham remains the supreme type of the person who remains steadfast in the time of trial.

4. *The People of Israel*

Testing as a collective experience of the people of God occurs in the Pentateuch and in the early chapters of Judges. The first Pentateuchal reference is in Ex. 15:25, unless we are to see in this verse a testing of Moses. The context as we have it suggests that God is testing the faith of the people by laying upon them a command or commandments. But whatever may be the proper understanding of Ex. 15:25, it is clear that in Ex. 16:4 a commandment is laid upon the people, the observance or non-observance of which will disclose whether they are loyal to God or not. The faith and loyalty of the nation is likewise tested, though by means of enticement to idolatry, according to Deut. 13:1-4; Jud. 2:22; 3:4.

Testing by other means than through commands or through enticements to idolatry seems to be in evidence in Ex. 20:20; Deut. 4:34; 8:2-16. In Ex. 20:20 the "thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking" are described as means of testing. In Deut. 4:34 the plagues visited on Egypt, and in Deut. 8 the afflictions suffered by Israel in the wilderness fulfil a similar function. In obvious reference to Deut. 8, though without specific reference to testing, Philo says concerning Israel in the Wilderness, "He (God). . . devised new forms of benefaction that they might be schooled not to show bitter resentment if something did not at once turn out as they would have it, but bear it patiently in expectation of good to come" (*de Vita Mosis* 1:3b). In contradistinction to the

interpretation we have followed, the miracles are not themselves the means of testing, but only the preparation for times of testing to come.

Josephus represents Moses as saying at Elim that it is the “want of food and scarcity of water” which are the means whereby Israel will be tested, “He (God) will first try their fortitude, and the pleasure they take in their freedom, that He may learn whether you have souls great enough to bear want of food and scarcity of water on its account, or whether you rather love to be slaves” (*Antiq.* 3:19-20). It is to be observed that it is not steadfastness in keeping the commandments of God which is in question, but the love of freedom!

That Israel corporately suffered testing in the Wilderness is clear enough. That there were different interpretations of the nature of the tests, even within the Pentateuch, is also clear.³²

What is of more significance for us is the evidence that the failures of Israel in their times of testing in the Wilderness came to be understood, at least by Paul, as examples of how not to respond to testing, just as Abraham was worthy of emulation for his faithfulness when tested. He emphasizes the bad example set by Israel when she was tested in the Wilderness in 1 Cor. 10:6-11, where their failures when tested are described as “examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. . . These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” Whether Paul is restricting its significance or not, he is certainly declaring that this faithlessness is typical of an unworthy response to testing. As we shall see later in this chapter a similar conception of Israel in the Wilderness may be implicit in the narratives of which describe the temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness.

C. New Testament Individuals and Groups

1. Jesus Christ

Just as Abraham's faithfulness dominates consideration of the subject of testing/temptation among Jewish writers beginning with Sir., so Jesus' faithfulness dominates consideration of the theme in early Christian literature. Moreover, just as Abraham's life came to be treated as a life characterized by a series of tests, it appears that Jesus' life could be so characterized as well. At least such a view is intimated in Luke 22:28, "You are those who have stood by me in my trials."³³

Since it is intimated in the third gospel that the life of Jesus was a life characterized by trials, it is not surprising that his tests/temptations have considerable prominence in the Synoptic Gospels.³⁴ All three of them report that He was tempted immediately following His baptism and just preceding the beginning of His ministry. The first and third gospels provide what purports to be a detailed account of that temptation. All three Synoptics report also that there were a number of occasions during His ministry when questions were addressed to Him "to test him." Some commentators are of the opinion that the use of our vocabulary indicates that religious tests of Jesus are being described. Though we have argued in Chapter III that such is not the case, that religious testing was involved in some of the interrogations to which He was subjected is not impossible, and may even be probable.

Whatever the judgment concerning these passages, the first two gospels record one experience of Jesus during the period of His ministry which must surely be considered an experience of religious testing. When Peter rebuked Jesus at Caesarea Philippi for stating that the Son of Man must suffer and be killed, Jesus replied, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mark 8:33 [Matt. 16:23]) -- almost the identical words He is reported to have addressed to the devil at the end of the Temptation in the Wilderness (cf. Matt. 4:10). Is it not highly probable that Peter is recognized as the mouthpiece of Satan, tempting Him to avoid the Cross?

A further intimation that the will of God that He should suffer

caused him to experience testing/temptation may possibly be seen in Luke 9:51, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."³⁵ The notice in Luke 22:3 that "Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot" may be still another intimation. In Chapter IV we had occasion to note the speculation that Luke 22:40 originally read, "Pray that I may not come into the time of trial." If this is indeed the original reading of the verse, trial in relation to His impending passion is indicated. Trial in relation to His passion is certainly implied in Mark 14:33, 34, 36 (cf. Matt. 26:37-39), "He. . . began to be distressed and agitated. And said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death. . .'. . . He said, ' . . . Remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want'"; and in Luke 22:44 (v.l.), "In his anguish³⁶ he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground." We have also seen reason to suppose that the Cry of Dereliction implies the experience of trial.³⁷

Turning to the question of the significance of Jesus' trials, we consider first their significance according to the Synoptic Gospels, then according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the one epistle in which their importance is emphasized, and finally according to other early Christian writings.

Though the trials of Jesus have a prominent place in the Synoptic Gospels, we are never told why. In the paragraphs which follow we discuss the suggestions we consider worthy of attention, but with little attempt to do more than set forth the arguments for and against each. One's general view of the theology and purpose of each of the Synoptists will largely determine his/her estimate of each one.

- a) It has been plausibly suggested that the testing/temptation narratives in the Synoptics are intended to set forth Jesus as the example of faithfulness for Christians in their trials. More specifically, it has been held that the narrative of Jesus' victory over the tempter in the Wilderness, coming as it does immediately following His baptism, was included in order to provide new converts with an example of the kind of steadfastness they would need in the days of testing

which they could expect following their initiation into the Christian fellowship.³⁸ Similarly, it has been stated that the narrative of the agony in Gethsemane is found in the first three gospels because therein Jesus appears as “the ideal martyr, . . . he goes to his death with soul prepared, his loins girt for the struggle, the ‘athlete’ of God utterly obedient to the Father’s will, wholly consecrated for his ordeal.”³⁹

- b) In the estimate of some writers, Jesus’ victory in the Wilderness was intended to suggest that He was qualified to be the religious leader of mankind. This is what is apparently implied by those who have noted in connection with the Temptation narrative that leaders and prophets of other religions were frequently described as persons who had undergone testing.⁴⁰ Entirely apart, however, from the possible influence of non-biblical religious traditions,⁴¹ the description of Jesus as victorious over Satan just preceding the inauguration of His ministry may be intended to suggest that His victory was one of the ways in which He was prepared for His life work, a life work which involved becoming a religious leader. In view of their extended treatment of the struggle, the first and third gospels especially lend credence to this view.
- c) That Christ’s faithfulness in testing qualified Him to be the eschatological king is possibly to be inferred from Luke 22:28-30, “You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” That such an interpretation is warranted is supported by Rev. 3:21, “To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” It has been suggested that this verse is “another phrasing” of Luke 22:28-30.⁴²
- d) It is the judgment of those scholars who hold that the

second gospel is an elaboration of the advent of the eschatological age, that the significance of Jesus' tests reported therein is that they are in fulfilment of the apocalyptic expectation that the new age would follow upon the heels of an intensified conflict with Satan in which the latter was overthrown.⁴³ In the elaboration of such a view U. Mauser has stated that "in Mark Jesus' whole ministry is an incessant temptation." The Wilderness struggle, the exorcism narratives, the enemies who "test" Jesus, the description of Peter as "Satan" at Caesarea Philippi, and the passion narrative are adduced as evidence of this "incessant" struggle. Concerning the agony in Gethsemane, he says, "Temptation is here. . . not the time of testing for the pious, but the sphere of Satanic power and the time of his dominion against which there is no protection."⁴⁴ Whatever may be said of the conception that Jesus' victory over Satan is meant to convey the idea that the eschatological age has been, in some sense, inaugurated, it seems to me that Mauser's interpretation of the Gethsemane narrative in the second gospel is extreme in view of the complete lack of any clear reference to Satan in the whole Markan Passion narrative.⁴⁵

- e) In light of the many points of contact between the Wilderness narratives in Matthew and Luke on the one hand, and Deut. 6-8 on the other, it has been suggested that Jesus' victory over Satan following His baptism is intended to set Him forth as the counterpart to Israel which had been unfaithful in her Wilderness tests. As noted earlier in this chapter, at least in 1 Cor. 10 Israel's response to her tests in the Wilderness is considered to be typical of failure in time of testing. Indeed, G. H. B. Thompson has argued that Jesus' faithfulness not only is intended to set him forth as the counterpart of Israel, but to signify that He is the New Israel,⁴⁶ qualified by His victory to be the "Israel" of God as national Israel was not because of her failure when

tested. According to Thompson, "Jesus is in fact the faithful and obedient Israel, conforming to the will of God, and in him the covenant is not only to be preserved and maintained, but also renewed."⁴⁷

The points of contact with Deut. 6-8⁴⁸ on which this view is based include:

- (1) In the brief narrative Jesus is credited with three quotations from these chapters of Deuteronomy.
- (2) All three of the verses quoted by Jesus are in contexts in which there is specific use of testing vocabulary. That two of them are in contexts which warn against putting God to the test is not significant in view of the fact that, in the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' temptations in the Wilderness, the appeal of the suggestion to put God to the test is understood as a means whereby Jesus was tested.
- (3) Luke 4:1-2, "Jesus. . . was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. . . He was famished," is strongly reminiscent of Deut. 8:2-3 (LXX, A text), "Remember all the way that the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness, in order to afflict you and test you. . . He afflicted you and suffered you to hunger. . ." ⁴⁹
- (4) Just as Jesus hears the voice of God and is commissioned for His ministry at His baptism preceding His temptation in the Wilderness, so great stress upon the voice of God calling and commissioning Israel is found in Deut. 5. It appears that the baptism and temptation narratives follow the pattern in Deut. 5-8, according to which Israel is first called, then tested, to see whether she would be loyal to the one who had brought her out of Egypt.
- (5) The means of testing are more or less parallel; just as hunger was a means of testing to Israel (Deut. 8:3), so it was to Jesus; just as the Israelites required

proof at Massah that the Lord was among them (Deut. 6:16; cf. Ex 17:7), so Jesus is tempted to demand a sign which would confirm God's choice of Him; just as Israel had to be warned against serving other gods (Deut. 6:13-14), so Jesus is tempted to worship Satan.⁵⁰

The foregoing argument is subject to several criticisms:

- (1) It is doubtful whether Jesus' temptation to thrust Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple was a temptation to demand a sign which would confirm God's choice of Him.⁵¹
- (2) It has been argued that Jesus' temptations in the Wilderness had little to do with His peculiar vocation.⁵²
- (3) In the emphasis on the parallel between Jesus' temptations and the testing of Israel in the Wilderness there seems to be a tendency to overlook the significance of the special powers which Jesus has as Son of God, and of His refusal to misuse those miraculous powers.⁵³

Such criticisms do not deny the significance of Deut. 6-8 for an understanding of the Wilderness temptation of Jesus. They do, however, warn against any effort to find an exhaustive explanation of this temptation in Deuteronomy. With these reservations, I am of the opinion that the parallels with Deut. 6-8 are so considerable that the possibility that Jesus is being represented as the counterpart to Israel, is not to be denied.⁵⁴

- f) In view of the sacrificial interpretation placed upon Christ's death in the Synoptic Gospels, and in view also of the importance of the Gethsemane narrative in these Gospels, it must be asked whether faithfulness in testing was not considered to be somehow necessary to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. It is to be noted that the Gethsemane narrative follows quite closely the narrative of the institution of the Last Supper with

its paschal associations in all three Synoptics, and its reference to Christ's blood as the "blood of the covenant" in at least the first two of them.⁵⁵ It has been suggested, furthermore, that there is an intimation in the Gethsemane narrative that its agony is to be interpreted as the agony of the Suffering Servant whose suffering, according to Is. 53:10, was sacrificial.⁵⁶ Mark 14:33-34, "(Jesus) began to be distressed and agitated. And said to them, 'I am (lit.: 'My soul is') deeply grieved, even to death,'" is reminiscent of Is. 53:11-12, "His anguish. . . He poured out himself (lit.: 'his soul') to death."⁵⁷ It must be stated, however, that if the writers of the Synoptic gospels did consider that faithfulness in testing was necessary or significant in the qualification of Jesus to render, or to become, an adequate sacrifice for sins, they have nowhere given clear indication that this was the case.⁵⁸

We turn now to a consideration of the significance of the testing of Jesus according to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here we are on more solid ground, inasmuch as it is not so much speculation as exegesis which is required. In this epistle the testing of Jesus is accorded significance in the following ways:

- a) Through steadfastness in time of testing He attained "perfection": He was made "perfect through sufferings" (2:10); "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death. . . He learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect . . ." (5:7-9); "The word of the oath. . . appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever (7:28)." The second of these passages, which almost certainly alludes to Jesus' Gethsemane experience, occurs in the course of elaborating on the statement in 4:15 that Jesus Christ is a high priest "who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin."⁵⁹

The meaning of "perfect" in these passages is debated.

Certainly complete dedication to His mission is involved. The reference to “learning obedience” in 5:8 seems to make this clear. Furthermore, as we have seen, there is Pentateuchal evidence that the verb “to perfect” is used in the Septuagint of Jewish priests with the meaning “to dedicate.”⁶⁰ This evidence is especially significant in view of the intimation in Heb. 5:10 that there is a close relationship between the “perfection” of Jesus and the fulfilment of his high priestly function, to say nothing of the fact that in this epistle the doctrine that Jesus is a high priest of an order superior to that of Jewish high priests is at the very centre of attention.

Though it has been argued otherwise, there is reason to believe that the “perfection” which is here connected with testing includes moral perfection. In Heb. 7:26-28 Jesus is described as “holy, blameless, undefiled. . .” In contrast thereto Jewish high priests are described as guilty of “sins.” Finally, it is stated in v. 28, “The law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.” In these verses a moral element seems to be understood as involved in the perfection of Jesus. Moreover, the reference to the “weakness” and “sins” of Jewish high priests in 5:2-3 suggests that “having been made perfect” in 5:9 has a moral as well as a religious reference. More especially is this the case in view of the contextual emphasis on Jesus’ ability as high priest to “sympathize with our weaknesses” because “in every respect (he) has been tested as we are”(4;15).⁶¹

- b) Christ’s faithfulness in testing is the supreme example for those whose faith is being tested. To those to whom the epistle is addressed, the author writes, “Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,⁶² who . . . endured the cross, disregarding its shame. . . Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from

sinner, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart” (12:1-3).⁶³

- c) Jesus’ faithfulness in testing qualified Him for spiritual leadership. This is implied in the description of Jesus as the “pioneer⁶⁴ . . . of our faith” in the passage quoted in the preceding paragraph. It also seems to be implied in 3:1-6, where the writer appears to be combatting a tendency to follow Moses rather than Jesus, because Moses was “faithful.”⁶⁵ He avers that Jesus was “faithful” too, and, besides, is both the builder of God’s house and the one who presides over it, whereas Moses was only faithful as a servant in God’s house. So far as faithfulness is concerned, He is just as well qualified as Moses to be a leader. In these other ways He is better qualified.
- d) It is intimated, in my opinion, that faithfulness in testing helped qualify Jesus for His crowning with glory and honour in anticipation of His eschatological reign.⁶⁶ Is not the understanding that His suffering involved testing, an understanding made explicit in 2:18, included when the author writes 2:8-9, “We do see Jesus. . . now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death”? That the eschatological reign is in view is evident from 2:5, “God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels.”
- e) Christ’s faithfulness in testing helped to qualify Him for His high priestly function.⁶⁷ This is succinctly stated in 2:17-18,

He had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

In these verses it is intimated that Christ needed to

become a “merciful and faithful” high priest, and that He assumed full humanity so that this might be possible. The author indicates in succeeding paragraphs how His experience of testing enabled Him to be a “merciful” high priest, and how his response to testing qualified Him as a “faithful” high priest.

How the experience of testing enabled Jesus to become a merciful high priest is set forth in 4:15-16, “We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,⁶⁸ but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in times of need.” In these verses it is indicated that His experience of the same kind of tests that we experience enables Him to sympathize with us, and that this sympathy leads him to respond to our petitions with “mercy. . . grace to help in time of need.” This assistance, which issues from His mercifulness, was already indicated in 2:18, which spoke of His tests as enabling Him to “help those who are being tested.”⁶⁹

How His response to His times of testing qualified Jesus as a “faithful” high priest is treated in 5:8-10, “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek”⁷⁰ We have argued under (a) that the “perfection” to which reference is being made was attained in reaction to testing. Now we observe that this “perfection” qualified Him to be “the source of eternal salvation,”⁷¹ evidently through the exercise of His priesthood. In conformity with this suggestion, it is indicated in 2:17 that this “perfection” is necessary so that He may “make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people,” an obvious allusion to the high priest’s function on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). When it is asked why

Jesus had to become “perfect” through victory in trial in order to carry out His responsibility as high priest, the answer seems to be that His “perfection” made it unnecessary for Him to offer any sacrifice for Himself, and so made His high priesthood superior to that of Jewish high priests, and, by implication, more efficacious:

Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day,⁷² first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever (7:27-28).⁷³

- f) It is possible that the writer of the epistle considered that Christ’s steadfastness in testing qualified Him to be the kind of sacrifice which was needed. The idea may be implied in the words “without blemish” in 9:14, “Christ. . . offered himself without blemish to God.”⁷⁴ On the other hand, it is only the prominence in the epistle of Christ’s faithfulness in testing, which suggests that the idea of faithfulness in testing may lie behind the statement.

It is to be noted that the significance according to the testing of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews is remarkably parallel to the significance which it has been thought to have in the Synoptic gospels. The chief differences are as follows:

- a) Hebrews does not contain the suggestion that the testing of Jesus represents the intensified struggle with Satan which precedes the inauguration of the new age. On the other hand, as we have seen, it does contain the suggestion that it qualified Jesus for the crowning of glory and honour which has already taken place, and which is the earnest of His rule in the eschatological age.

- b) Hebrews does not contain any suggestion that Jesus' faithfulness in testing constituted Him as the counterpart of Israel in the Wilderness, and as the new Israel. It does, however, suggest that His faithfulness therein qualified Him for spiritual leadership just as fully as Moses' faithfulness qualified him for it.
- c) The Synoptics nowhere suggest that Jesus attained moral perfection through encounter with testing.⁷⁵
- d) The Synoptics nowhere indicate that faithfulness in testing helped qualify Jesus for a high priestly function, though they may be interpreted to mean that such faithfulness was necessary for the efficacy of His death, which is understood in sacrificial terms.

Outside the Synoptics and Hebrews, the testing of Jesus seems to be recalled for one reason only: to set Him forth as the example of faithfulness for Christians who are being tested in the fires of persecution. The emulation of Jesus' example in testing times is emphasized in 1 Pet. 2:20-21, "If you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps" (cf. 4:1). The context makes it clear that the suffering of Christ here mentioned is His crucifixion. That the sufferings of those addressed are considered to be tests is evident from the use of "endure," which is characteristic of testing contexts, but even more so from the specific use of testing vocabulary in 1:6 and in 4:12.

In view of the quotation of 1 Pet. 2:22, 24, in Polyc. *Phil.* 8:1 it is certain that the point of 1 Pet. 2:20-21 recurs in Polyc. *Phil.* 8:2, "Let us then be imitators of his (Christ's) endurance, and if we suffer for his name's sake, let us glorify him. For this is the example which he gave us in himself, and this is what we have believed." Further pursuit of the theme occurs in Polyc. *Phil.* 10:1, "Stand fast therefore in these things and follow the example of the Lord. . . ." ⁷⁶ It is possible that the thought that Jesus is our example in times of testing is also implied in Ign. *Mag.* 9:1, "For this reason also we suffer (lit.: 'endure'), that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher." ⁷⁷

2. Individual Christians

Of the trials of individual Christians in the New Testament, the most outstanding are those of Paul, who is credited with speaking in Acts 20:19 of “serving the Lord. . . with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews.” In Acts 15:26 (v.l.) he, along with Barnabas, is described as having delivered himself “to every trial.” In Gal 4:14 (v.l.) he is credited with writing of “my trial in my flesh.” In 2 Cor. 6 he uses words typical of testing contexts when he writes in v. 4 of his “great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities. . .,” and also in v. 9 when he describes himself as “punished (v.l.: ‘tested’), and yet not killed.” Though he does not use the terminology, the catalogue of his sufferings in 2 Cor. 11:23-28 is probably to be considered a catalogue of his trials, since the kind of experiences listed were customarily considered to be trials in his day.⁷⁸

Turning to Peter, it is probable that we should include his experience in the High Priest’s courtyard (Mark 14:66-72⁷⁹) as an experience of testing in which he failed. Not only were the disciples warned in Gethsemane, “Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial” (Mark 14:38 [Matt. 26:41; Luke 22:40, 46]), but, according to Luke 22:31, Jesus had said to Peter at the Last Supper, “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat,” a statement reminiscent of the Prologue of Job and of the origin of the testing described there. In 1 Clem. 5:4 Peter is described as one who “suffered not one or two by many trials (*ponous*).”⁸⁰ Words characteristic of testing contexts are used in the succeeding verses, so that it is probable that the trials of Peter are in view.

Other persons who are reported to have suffered testing include Ananias and Sapphira according to Acts 5:3 (v.l.); Clement according to 2 Clem. 18:2; and Hermas according to Hermas *Sim.* 7:1. It seems to be implied in Polyc. *Phil.* 9:1 that Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus, as well as Paul and the other apostles, had times of testing.

No doubt the narratives of those who failed in times of testing are reported, at least in part, as a warning of the dangers of testing

times. That such warnings were needed is suggested by the emphasis on Peter's boast that he would never deny the Lord, a boast which proved to be completely unwarranted.⁸¹ That they were needed is evident from the explicit statement in relation to testing/temptation in 1 Cor. 10:12, "If you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."

The emulation of Christians faithful in testing times is encouraged in the New Testament in Heb. 6:12, where those being addressed are exhorted to be "imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."⁸² It is possible that, when Paul urges his readers to imitate him in Phil. 3:17, it is his own faithfulness in times of testing that he has in mind.⁸³ In light of the vocabulary it is almost certain that Paul's example when tested is in view in 1 Clem. 5:5-7, "Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance; seven times he was in bonds, he was exiled, he was stoned⁸⁴. . . he gained the noble fame of his faith. . . -- the greatest example⁸⁵ of endurance." The following of Paul's example, as well as that of certain other Christians, is encouraged in another passage which seems to have testing in view, namely Polyc. *Phil.* 9:1, "Now I beseech you all to obey the word of righteousness and to endure with all the endurance which you also saw before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius⁸⁶ and Zosimus and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself and in the other apostles. . ." ⁸⁷

3. *Christians in General*

We have noted that testing/temptation is considered a typical experience of the righteous. The eschatological testing of the righteous -- and of others as well -- has also received attention. The disciplinary value of testing/temptation, moreover, has not been overlooked. It remains to examine the particular significance of testing for Christians, and this means its significance for the relationship of Christians to Christ.

The significance of testing for the relationship of all Christians to Christ is not indicated in the Synoptics, but there is a clear intimation of its significance for the apostles in Luke 22:28-30, "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on

you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It appears that the trials of Jesus were occasions of trial for His disciples, in which they as well as He were faithful and steadfast.⁸⁸ A bond of unity was thereby established which would be rewarded by the sharing of His rule in the eschatological age.

In the Gethsemane narrative the desire that His disciples share His steadfastness seems to be indicated in the exhortation, "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41 RSV). Is it not implied that He was asking them to do exactly what He was about to do, watch and pray that He might not enter into temptation?⁸⁹ In this connection Jesus' rebuke seems significant, "Could you not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26:40 RSV).⁹⁰ "With me" surely makes it clear that He expected His disciples to be united with Him in steadfastness.

The idea that faithfulness in the time of testing is a blessed bond of unity, not only between the apostles and Christ, but also between all Christians and Christ, is suggested in 1 Pet. 4:12-13, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed." Though our vocabulary is not used, a passage even more reminiscent of Luke 22:28 is the "saying" recorded in 2 Tim. 2:11-13, "If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful--for he cannot deny himself."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is emphasized that we belong to Christ and are associates of His only if we are steadfast in trial. In 3:1-6 the faithfulness of Christ is first emphasized, and then it is added, "We are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope." Faithfulness in testing times is here set forth as a condition of membership in the household, or the community, over which Christ presides. A similar statement occurs in 3:14, "We have become partners of Christ,⁹¹ if only we hold our

first confidence firm to the end.” On the other hand, “it is impossible to restore again to repentance” those who do not remain steadfast, but have “fallen away.” They are like “ground that drinks up the rain falling on it repeatedly. . . . If it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over” (6:4-8). “If we wilfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (10:26-27; cf. 12:15-17, 25-29).

In the letters of Paul the idea recurs that steadfastness in trial is a bond of unity with Christ which eventuates in the sharing of His eschatological reign. Significant in this respect is Rom. 8:16-17, “We are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ -- if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.” As we have argued earlier, these verses occur in a testing context. The points of contact with Luke 22:28-29 and 2 Tim. 2:11-13 are also to be noted.⁹²

Next we note a Pauline passage which seems to suggest that the steadfastness of disciples in trial exemplifies Christ’s abiding victory over death. According to 2 Cor. 4:8-11,

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

In view of the fact that affliction and persecution were often, if not always, considered to be occasions of trial when the New Testament was written, to say nothing of the implications of “not crushed” and “not driven to despair,” it may well be that testing is at least in the background of the thought. I find it difficult not to see in the passage an intimate relationship between steadfastness in trial and the peculiar kind of unity with Christ which is described in such passages as Gal. 2:19-20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And

the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” It is perhaps possible, moreover, that Paul is indicating here that his tribulations and persecutions are an evidence of his participation in the death of Christ, even though he customarily refers to his death to sin and self when he speaks of his dying or being crucified with Christ.⁹³ On the other hand, I find it well nigh unimaginable that Paul should speak of “Jesus” in him, or of “the life of Jesus” in him. Indeed, it has been pointed out that he never speaks of being “in Jesus Christ,” let alone of being “in Jesus,” but always of being “in Christ Jesus” or “in Christ.”⁹⁴ It is probable, therefore, that the apostle is intending to convey simply the idea that his recurrent tribulations exemplify the sufferings of Jesus, sufferings which eventuated in His death, and that his ability to carry on despite the severity of these tribulations, exemplifies the power of Jesus to rise victoriously and be alive forevermore.

One further writer claims our consideration, namely Ignatius. The idea that steadfastness in trial is a bond of unity is probably to be seen in *Smyr.* 4:2, “In the name of Jesus Christ alone I am enduring all things, that I may suffer with him, and the perfect man himself gives me strength.”⁹⁵ The emphasis on endurance suggests that testing may be in view.⁹⁶

In conclusion it may be noted that the following doctrines are implicit, if not explicit in a variety of early Christian writings:

- a) Steadfast endurance in trial is a necessary qualification of Christians.
- b) Steadfast endurance in trial constitutes a sharing of Christ’s sufferings here and leads to a sharing of His rule hereafter.

In addition it seems that Paul teaches that steadfast endurance in trial exhibits Christ’s suffering and victory to the world.

Notes

- ¹ Note that it is not said of the wicked that they have no faith which may be tried, but that they could not withstand the test.
- ² Deut. 33:8, which uses our vocabulary concerning Levi, is quoted.
- ³ Quoted from Prov. 3:12.
- ⁴ In Biblical literature the passages which imply that testing is typically, if not always, an experience of God's "children," seem to be passages in which testing is used in a sense in which the idea of discipline is prominent.
- ⁵ Is it possible that testing/temptation is commonly the experience of those who have responded to special revelation, but that there is, or will be, the experience of testing/temptation on the basis of general revelation, which all have received?
- ⁶ Apoc. Mos. 16:5; 2 Enoch 31:6; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14; *Ep. to Diog.* 12:3; *Protevangelium of James* 13:1; *Gospel of Bartholomew* 4:58-59.
- ⁷ P. Vallotton, *Essai d'une Doctrine Chrétienne de la Tentation* (Unpublished Thesis presented to the Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante de Montpellier, 1954), 8, holds that Eve's statement was an excuse, an attempt at disclaiming responsibility. I submit that though she could not escape responsibility, yet it was also true that she had been deceived. The paradox is not to be denied.
- ⁸ *PEIRASMOS, die Versuchung des Gläubigen in der griechischen Bibel* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1937), 62-63.
- ⁹ Cf. H. Seesemann in *TDNT*, 6:25; Vallotton, *Tentation*, 8.
- ¹⁰ Cf. 16:24; 14:20; 17:6. According to C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Theology* (London:

Macmillan, 1938), ci, "The readiness of Abraham and Isaac to follow the divine command at all costs was elevated to a liturgical theme -- as it still remains. The poems in the liturgy on the *Akedah* and the appeals to the merit of the patriarchs, are, in fact, regarded as prayers to God to make us worthy of our ancestors and capable of following their example."

- ¹¹ See Aboth R. Nathan 33; Pirke R. Eliezer 31A-38A. References to ten trials, but without listing them, are also found in Pirke Aboth 5:4; Num. R. 15:12.
- ¹² J. G. Winter, "The Myth of Hercules at Rome," *UMS*, 4:2:262. See also H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, Sixth Edition (London: Methuen, 1960), 210-216. The twelve exploits are set forth in detail in Apollodorus 2:74ff.
- ¹³ Is there evidence of the tendency to associate the number ten with our vocabulary in Rev. 2:10 ("... that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction")?
- ¹⁴ See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909-25), 1:272; cf. Jub. 17:16; bB.B. 16a.
- ¹⁵ On the other hand, following a retelling of the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Num. R. 17:2, it is stated that Abraham asked God not to test him again, that God granted the request, and that the additional trials which should have befallen Abraham were visited on Job.
- ¹⁶ See Chapter VI. Occasionally others are designated as "friends" of God, e.g., Levi in Jub. 30:20; Isaac and Jacob in CDC 3:1-3; Israel, including proselytes, in Mekhilta to Gen. 22:20.
- ¹⁷ 7:14; 13:12; 16:20. Other references to the trial of Isaac are found in Gen. R. 56:4; Num. R. 15:12; Midrash on Ps. 26:2.
- ¹⁸ See Judith 8:26; bSanh. 107a; bB.B. 17a; Num. R. 15:12.

- ¹⁹ Cf. 2 Chron. 32:31; Mark 14:34 (Matt. 27:46) (?). Num. R. 15:12 contains a further reference to a test of Joseph through Potiphar's wife.
- ²⁰ P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 396.
- ²¹ For a quite different reference to trial in connection with David, see Ex. R. 19:2.
- ²² See Chapter III; cf. Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 68-69.
- ²³ See Gen. 4:7; Gen. R. 20:7; M. Buber, *Images of Good and Evil* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 31.
- ²⁴ See Gen. 7:1; Sir. 44:17; Gen. R. 30; Ex. R. 34:2; Heb. 11:8; 2 Pet. 2:5.
- ²⁵ See *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 5:1-14.
- ²⁶ 2 Chron. 32:31.
- ²⁷ See Pirke R. Eliezer 11A.
- ²⁸ Cant. R. 4:4:1.
- ²⁹ 4 Macc. 16:21.
- ³⁰ Tob. 12:13 (Vulgate).
- ³¹ Tob. 12:14 (Aleph). For a testing of the town of Bethulia see Judith 8:25-27. For Jewish individuals of a later period who were subjected to trial see bKid. 40a, 81a, 81b; jSchab. 1:3:3b;64; Tanhuma B. Hukkat 66a.
- ³² For an intimation that Israel was tested in the time of Isaiah, see bSanh. 105a.
- ³³ M. E. Andrews, "Peirasmos--A Study in Form Criticism," *ATR*, 24 (1942), 238, remarks, "Abraham . . . becomes the counterpart of the temptations and triumph of Jesus, with the result that the whole of Jesus' life is viewed as a series of temptations" in the Synoptics, and especially in Luke 22:28. In view of this correspondence between Abraham and Jesus it is surprising that there is no

the test (lit.: “proof”) they escape.”⁶⁵

In my view, however, it is doubtful that “test” is an acceptable rendering of the respective Hebrew word in Mal. 3:10. Is not the idea that of proving God, rather than that of testing Him? Indeed, what would be involved in following the exhortation in Mal. 3:10 would be a return to faith, rather than lack of faith, so that the conception is quite unlike the typical conception of testing God.

It may be added that the Hebrew word for “prove” in Mal. 3:10 and in Mal. 3:15 is not rendered either by the Greek word for “prove” or by the Greek word for “atest” a in the Septuagint. In Mal. 3:10 it is rendered by a Greek word meaning “examine, inspect,” and in Mal. 3:15 by a Greek word meaning, “set oneself against, oppose, resist, withstand.” Was this because it was realized

- a) that the conception in Mal. 3:10 was not that of the reprehensible putting of God to the test (cf. Deut. 6:16), and
- b) that the conception in Mal. 3:15 was different from the one in Mal. 3:10?

In my opinion the Vulgate, with its use of the Latin verb for “prove (*probo*)” in Mal. 3:10, and its use of the Latin verb for “test (*tento*)” in 3:15, properly recognizes that the former verse is concerned with putting of God to the proof and the latter verse with putting Him to the test.⁶⁶

Notes

¹ The Septuagint reading, “this tenth time,” explicitly calls it an occasion of testing God. In Midrash on Ps. 95:8-9 it is described as the “most provoking” of the ten occasions when Israel tested the Lord. K. F. Krämer, “Numeri und Deuteronomium.” *Die Heilige Schrift für das Leben erklärt* 2/1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1955), 76, states that “ten times” in MT means “countless times.”

- ² A different version of what happened at Massah seems to receive mention in Deut. 33:8, though the text may be corrupt.
- ³ The last of these quotes a variant of Ps. 94 (95):8-9 (LXX:A), in which it appears that the whole forty years in the Wilderness was one "day of Temptation." Cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 45.
- ⁴ See bArak. 15a; Midr. on Ps. 94 (95):8-9; Aboth R. Nathan 34. There is disagreement concerning the narratives to be included.
- ⁵ Of the five occurrences of the idea in the New Testament, two are in quotations from the Old Testament (Luke 4:12 [Matt. 4:7]; Heb. 3:8-9); and one explicitly refers to an experience of Israel in the Wilderness which it interprets as a testing of God (1 Cor. 10:9).
- ⁶ I have not noted any reference to the testing of the Lord in the Apostolic Fathers; but see *Prot. of James* 20:1; Acts of John 57, 90; Pseudo-Ignatius, *De Baptismo ad Philipp.* 11.
- ⁷ Cf. Ex. 14:10; 15:23; 16:3; Num. 20:2.
- ⁸ If those are correct who interpret Jesus' temptation to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple as due to the desire to win followers through a miraculous feat, another example occurs in the narrative of Jesus in the wilderness.
- ⁹ Cf. Mal. 3:15.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Ps. 81:8. See S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 399, for a discussion of the question whether the tribe or its leader(s) is meant by "Levi" in this verse.
- ¹¹ So Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2:71.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 2:71, 72, 74.
- ¹³ That "today" has an eschatological character is

emphasized by Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 30; and W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 55.

- ¹⁴ Cf. Deut. 4:34-35; 29:2-6 (3-7).
- ¹⁵ Note the comment on this verse in bArak. 15a, "R. Huna taught. . . The Israelites of that generation were among those of little faith."
- ¹⁶ Cf. vv. 40-55; A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1939), 468, 472, 476.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Ps. 105 (106):13-14.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:73; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1918), 156.
- ¹⁹ Cf. 1 John 2:15-17. The writer considers it necessary to remind his readers that "the world and its desire are passing away"!
- ²⁰ Cf. Rev. 3:17.
- ²¹ Cf. v. 7; Ps. 94 (95):9-10; Heb. 3:9.
- ²² Cf. Ps. 105 (106):7; Neh. 9:16-17; bPesiq. 55a; Pirke R. Eliezer 61.
- ²³ For the hardening of Pharaoh's heart see Ex. 4-14; Rom. 9:17-18; Driver, *Exodus*, 53-54.
- ²⁴ Cf. J. Behm in *TDNT*, 3:614.
- ²⁵ Jer. 17:23; cf. 7:26; 19:15; Ezek. 2:4-5; 3:7; Acts 7:51.
- ²⁶ Neh. 9:16-17; Acts 19:9; Heb. 3:12 (?), 18-19 (?).
- ²⁷ See 2 Kgs. 17:14; Prov. 28:14; Acts 19:9; Heb. 3:12, 18-19; Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:73. According to Rom. 11:7-10 part of Israel rejected Christ because they "were hardened." They were therefore incapable of the perception which would have made a positive response to the gospel possible, and, as a result they became, or were rendered, "obstinate (in their) adherence to their own views" (Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 315); cf.

M. E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990), 502-503; W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1991), 86.

²⁸ The vocabulary in LXX is the same as in Ps. 94 (95):8 LXX.

²⁹ Cf. Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 627, "They refused to wait for God's plan of providing for their wants."

³⁰ A. B. Taylor, "Decision in the Desert," *Interpretation*, 14 (1960), 306-7, contends that the omission of "in all your ways" from Satan's quotation of Ps. 91:11-12 made "the promise appear to apply to extraordinary circumstances only, rather than to the usual events of everyday living." I doubt that the omission was significant.

³¹ Cf. Sir. 18:23, "Before making a vow, prepare yourself; do not be like one who puts the Lord to the test."

³² Cf. 17:7; 16:2-3; Num. 11:4-5.

³³ See also Ex. 14:11-12; 15:24; 16:2-3, 7-9; Num. 11:20; 16:11, 41; 20:3-5, 13. Note Wisd. 1:9-11, "Inquiry will be made into the counsels of the ungodly, and a report of their words will come to the Lord, to convict them of their lawless deeds; because a jealous ear hears all things, and the sound of grumbling does not go unheard. Beware then of useless grumbling, and keep your tongue from slander, because no secret word is without result, and a lying mouth destroys the soul." Is the murmuring mentioned in these verses related to the testing of the Lord mentioned in 1:2?

³⁴ Note: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, . . ." (Luke 4:9 [Matt. 4:6]).

³⁵ Cf. Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 36. See also Ex. 32:4, 7-8.

³⁶ Cf. v. 10. According to v. 58 idolatry was the sin with which they tested God. Cf. Deut. 32:15-17.

³⁷ Cf. Acts 15:5-11; Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 43; H. E. Luccock,

The Acts of the Apostles in Present-day Preaching
(Glasgow: John McCallum, 1939), 103.

- ³⁸ So *BDB*, 1063.
- ³⁹ Cf. 32:16, 21, 22; Num. 11:10; 14:11-12; Jud. 6:39.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. vv. 21, 62; 95:11.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Heb. 3:10, 17.
- ⁴² Cf. Deut. 32:16, 21.
- ⁴³ See also Ex. 14:13-31; 15:25; 16:4, 13-14; Num. 11:18-20, 31-32; 20:7-11; Ps. 105 (106):8-11.
- ⁴⁴ Ex. 32:7-14; Num. 14:11-20.
- ⁴⁵ See Ps. 77 (78):30-31; 105 (106):15.
- ⁴⁶ Ex. 32:35; Num. 11:33; 14:12; 16:47-49; Ps. 77 (78):31. Ps. 105 (106):15 refers to the plague mentioned in Num. 11:33, and describes its nature: "He sent a wasting disease among them (lit.: 'leanness into their souls')." Cf. *BDB*, 931; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 628. Deut. 32:24, if it is to be included, provides another example of punishment by pestilence, and adds "wasting hunger" and "burning consumption" as well.
- ⁴⁷ Num. 21:6; 1 Cor. 10:9. Note Deut. 32:24 concerning wild beasts.
- ⁴⁸ Ps. 77 (78):21; cf. Num. 11:1. Other punishments which may be for putting God to the test include being slain by one's brethren (Ex. 32:27-29), being swallowed up by an opening in the earth (Num. 16:31-33), and receiving flesh that is desired but becoming so surfeited by it that it becomes loathsome (Num. 11:20). According to Pirke R. Eliezer 61, R. Joshua son of Korchah interpreted the fierce struggle with the Amalekites, which is described in Ex. 17 immediately following the Massah narrative, as a punishment of Israel for her conduct at Massah.
- ⁴⁹ Num. 14:22-24, 29-33; Ps. 94 (95):11; Heb. 3:11. Though "my rest" (Ps. 94 [95]:11) is clearly Canaan (see Deut

4:1-9; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 575), in Heb. 4:1-9 it is argued that the eschatological rest is in view. It may be noted that according to Aboth R. Nathan 34, "R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: For this iniquity (putting the Lord to the test ten times) there is enough to punish Israel from now until the dead are resurrected."

⁵⁰ Ps. 77 (78):60-64; cf. 1 Sam 4:10-22.

⁵¹ Is the punishment of death mentioned in Wisd. 1:12 due, at least in part, to the testing of God mentioned in 1:2?

⁵² C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 126; H. Conzelmann, *I Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 97; R. A. Harrisville, *I Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 83. *Per contra* G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 209-212.

⁵³ If Luke 11:29-32 (Matt. 12:38-42) relates an occasion when God was put to the test, it is suggested that those who did so will receive their condemnation "at the judgment," but what that condemnation will involve is not stated.

⁵⁴ According to 1 Cor. 5:5; 11:32; 1 Tim. 1:20, the punishment of such testing has a disciplinary purpose.

⁵⁵ Cf. Wisd. 7:25-27.

⁵⁶ According to Wisd. 1:13-14; 2:23-24, death is due to sin. Cf. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12.

⁵⁷ H. Wolf in *EBC*, 3:424 speaks of "Gideon's lack of faith." On the other hand, J. A. Soggin, *Judges* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 133, says of the first request for a sign, that it "is not in fact a sign of doubt," and of the second request, "The character of proof. . . is absent in the preceding element." Cf. J. M. Myers in *IB*, 2:736-37.

See the discussion of Is. 7:12 which follows concerning

the significance of signs. Did Thomas verge on putting God to the test? See John 20:24-30, noting (1) the reproach in v. 29; and (2) the reference to "signs" in v. 30.

- ⁵⁸ Cf. J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 203; G. W. Grogan in *EBC*, 6:62.
- ⁵⁹ Num. 14:22; Ps. 94 (95):9; cf. Ps. 77 (78):12-22, 41-43, 44-56; 105 (106):8-14; Philo, *de Vita Mosis* 1:36; bPesiq. 55a.
- ⁶⁰ Was the demand of the Pharisees (and Sadducees) for "a sign from heaven" concerning Jesus a putting of God to the test? See Mark 8:11-12 (Matt. 12:38-40; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-32); cf. 1 Cor. 1:22. Did they have a sufficiency of signs already? See Mark 3:1-6 (Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11), 22-30 (Matt. 12:22-32; Luke 11:14-23); Luke 7:22 (Matt. 11:4-5); 10:13 (Matt. 11:21). Note John 11:47-48, "The chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, 'What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him.'"
- ⁶¹ Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 203-4, points out that Ahaz' mind was made up. He would appeal to Assyria for help against Rezin and Pekah, an appeal that would lead to serious results for Judah (cf. Is. 7:17).
- ⁶² Grogan in *EBC*, 6:62. R. B. Y. Scott in *IB*, 5:217. says, "The king cloaks his unwillingness to obey by pious cant."
- ⁶³ Cf. Codex 86. See also Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 40.
- ⁶⁴ See bTa'an 9a.
- ⁶⁵ Mal. 3:15 (Sym., Theod., Vulgate) provide evidence additional to that of Ps. 94 (95):9.
- ⁶⁶ Cf. Korn, *PEIRASMOS*, 39-41.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The theme of this paper has placed biblical teaching concerning the human experience of testing/temptation at the very centre of our attention. In order that our survey might be complete, and also because of the light to be shed on the chief area of study, we have had to consider the profane use of the vocabulary, and its religious occurrence elsewhere. We have also had to give special attention to a particular kind of reaction to the experience of testing/temptation, a reaction which is itself a testing, though, in this case, a testing of God. Our chief concern, however, has been with the nature of the human experience of testing/temptation, the source of it, the means to it, the proper response to it, and the rewards and/or results of faithfulness or of failure in it. In addition we have been concerned with the significance attached to the testing/temptation of particular individuals and of the people of God in general.

Our studies have shown that testing/temptation is basically and fundamentally an experience in which the unconditional allegiance of the people of God is called in question by confrontation with such circumstances, or with such a demand, that they are compelled to a display of their religious disposition.

Our studies have shown, furthermore, that testing/temptation is a distinctive conception, one which is not to be confused with other conceptions, as is intimated by the fact that those who were

responsible for the Septuagint version of the Old Testament almost completely reserved the Greek verb for test/tempt, and cognate words, for the translation of the Hebrew verb for "test/tempt" and its derivatives.

On the one hand, testing/temptation is to be distinguished from the idea that man's allegiance to God may be put to the proof, despite that fact that the Hebrew words for "test/tempt" and "prove," and the Greek words for "test/tempt" and "prove" could be used more or less synonymously, and despite the evidence that certain rabbis tended to assimilate the meaning of the Hebrew word for "test" to that of the Hebrew word for "prove." Undoubtedly many experiences could be described as both a test and a proof of the people of God. To describe them as tests/temptations, however, involved the recognition that the faithfulness of the person(s) involved was really being called in question.

On the other hand testing, which also qualified as temptation, is to be distinguished from enticement to evil, despite the fact that such enticement became prominent in certain of the experiences we have been considering. Undoubtedly enticement to evil, when directed towards the people of God, is a means of testing, but the Jewish literature we have considered, the New Testament, and the Apostolic Fathers, do not often refer to it without indicating that it served a positive purpose. When they do refer to it apart from such consideration there is always reason to believe that their view of the experience is not fully represented.¹

Implicit in what has just been stated is the fact that the conception of testing/temptation remains remarkably constant in the writings we have investigated. From its earliest meaning as a test of religious devotion the circle of ideas represented by the conception became enlarged in various ways, but there was never any radical departure from the meaning with which the term was first used, nor is there any radical difference between the various connotations which occur in our literature.² The time came when the vocabulary was used to convey the idea that religious testing has disciplinary value, an idea which is latent in the use in Deut. 8, and perhaps as early as the use in Ex. 20, but which was only brought to the fore by the later Sages. On the other hand, it came also to be

used in the sense of temptation, the development of such a connotation probably being facilitated by the fact that the testing of one's faithfulness always involves the attractiveness of some course of action which is inconsistent with unconditional allegiance to God. Besides the development of connotations which stressed, on the one hand, the positive potential of testing, and, on the other, the danger with which it was fraught, the vocabulary came to be used in a way which implied the experience of harsh circumstances. This came about as a result of the frequency with which such circumstances constituted the means of testing.³ In some circles a refinement of this connotation is found, in which the use of the vocabulary implies the experience of persecution. This came about because of the frequency with which active opposition tested the faith of the members of those circles. In all of these developments, however, the maintenance of the basic meaning of the conception is evident.

In accord with the fact that the basic meaning is maintained throughout our literature is the fact that the means whereby it becomes a human experience, and the nature of the proper response to it, seem to be relatively constant throughout that literature.⁴ The increased importance accorded to the Torah, and then to the Scriptures, as time went on, is of little, if any, material significance, because the known will of God, of which these became the acknowledged expression, is always fundamental to the possibility of testing, and is always related to worthy response to it. There is development in the matter of the source, and, therewith, there is a modification of the purpose, but the nature of the experience is not fundamentally changed.

That the conception remains fundamentally unchanged throughout our literature argues for a minimum of influence from outside sources. The contact which Jews had with Iranian religion seems not to have significantly affected the conception itself. The basic dualism of Zoroastrianism makes it doubtful whether it had a conception of testing, as distinguished from enticement to evil. Whatever influence it may have had was on the side of bringing into prominence this very idea of enticement, an idea which was always potential in the use of the conception. Any further influence was on the view held concerning the source of the experience. In

Greek thought the conception of religious testing was rare, if represented at all. At most it had something approaching it at one or two points, notably in the thought of the Stoics.⁵ The influence of Hellenism seems to be confined to a drawing out of the latent emphasis on the disciplinary value of the experience. The significance of education in Greek thought may well have been influential at this point.

The rise of Christianity, moreover, seems to have had no effect upon the conception. It is no doubt true that the connotation in which enticement to evil is prominent occurs more frequently in the New Testament and in the Apostolic Fathers than it does in the Jewish literature which has received our attention, but this is far from being a distinctive development. Indeed, it appears that at this point Christianity is more in accord with sectarian Judaism than with its main stream.

In accord with the fact that the conception of testing is a distinct conception which retains its basic meaning throughout our literature, it is to be noted that the idea that God is involved in the onset of the experience is never relinquished.

In the earliest literature, in which testing is understood as an experience which serves a good purpose, testing is traced simply and unequivocally to God. For reasons which we have had to consider in detail, the conviction arose that it was inappropriate to attribute testing to God in this simple way, since an unworthy view of God was involved in doing so. Probably during the Exile--the Prologue of Job may indicate otherwise -- it became common to accord responsibility in the matter to Satan. There also developed the view which we find first in Sir., that there is in people an evil impulse which is a subjective tendency to evil and therefore a source of testing. Still later it appears that Satan and the evil impulse are treated in some writings not as alternative, but as complementary sources of testing, the one being external to people and the other internal to them. But even though the conviction becomes widespread that the earliest view of the source of testing needs modification, it is always held that God is involved in its onset. There is no testing which He does not permit, and most of the writings make it clear that it only comes about as a result of His

positive will.

In this connection it is to be noted that Satan is never represented in the literature with which we have been concerned as a power entirely independent of God. We first confront him in the Book of Job as an official in the divine court. (The identification of Satan with the serpent of Gen. 3 does not occur in the Old Testament.) Later we find him described, at least in some writings, as a fallen angel. In the apocalyptic writings both of Judaism and Christianity his hostility to God is described in the most extreme terms. But even his most hostile attacks serve God's purposes and accomplish His will. Be it noted that God does not merely bring good out of them. Rather it appears that the good God would secure could not be secured in any other way than through the rigorous kind of testing to which Satan subjects His people because of his hostility to them. No matter how much Satan's hostility may be emphasized, monotheism is never relinquished.

In accord with the foregoing, our researches have made it clear that testing is a significant, indeed a critical experience of the people of God.⁶

In the pre-exilic writings testing is described as a significant experience because it compels the people of God to display their religious disposition, and this display is represented as being with a view to God's "knowledge" of them. That such was the purpose is indicated very infrequently thereafter. Beginning with the Prologue of Job -- at least so far as the extant literature is concerned -- the idea becomes common that the display was occasioned by Satan. Though primitive Christian writings emphasize but little the display value of testing, there may be a hint in Jas. 1:12 and in 1 Pet. 1:6-7 that the display serves God's purpose,⁷ and Luke 22:31 seems to intimate that it could be a concession to the devil.

Besides the objective significance of testing, it also has significance for the person who undergoes it. Though there are intimations of the idea in the Pentateuch, the later sages emphasized that the experience had disciplinary value. In the New Testament the emphasis is continued. Indeed it is indicated in several passages that it is through the steadfast endurance of trial that one may become "perfect." It is for this reason that James exhorts, "My

brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy" (1:2). On the other hand, it is implied in Jewish literature and is emphasized in the New Testament that the experience makes it possible for one to "turn(s) away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). Because such a falling away is regarded as a real danger, Paul exhorts those involved in it, "If you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12); and Jesus urges His disciples to pray, "Do not bring us to the time of trial" (Luke 11:4 [Matt. 6:13]).

Not only is testing a significant and critical experience in the life of the people of God, it is an experience of special significance for religious leaders. It is indicated that a necessary qualification for such leadership is a devotion to God which has been thoroughly tested, and has been proven to be steadfast and genuine. Indeed it would seem that those who are to benefit from their leadership need to be assured that they have been rigorously tested and have proven steadfast. In the case of Jesus the Epistle to the Hebrews goes a step farther and emphasizes that such steadfastness was not only a necessary qualification in order that He might be a religious leader, but also that He might be qualified for His priestly function, in the fulfilment of which He would prove Himself superior to Jewish high priests and would supersede them.

In brief it may be stated that the New Testament represents testing as an experience of the people of God, an experience into which the Lord leads them, an experience in which their loyalty to Him is called in question, and an experience which is critical for their relationship to Him, and so also for their own character and destiny. In addition the New Testament represents it as an experience which helped to qualify Christ for His unique mission.

Notes

- ¹ To designate an experience as a "test" seems to give a fuller account of it than to designate it as a "proving" of one's devotion, or an "enticement to evil"— provided,

of course, that the designation is appropriate.

- ² The *Clementine Homilies* do indicate a radical departure and difference. See Chapter IV.
- ³ The development of this connotation, and the one in which its disciplinary value is prominent, seem to be related.
- ⁴ Note the extent to which the important elements of religious life enter into a proper response: Prominent are such elements as faith in God (in the Old Testament sense), the fear of God, love to God, obedience to God, knowledge of the Scriptures, prayer, etc.
- ⁵ Even there it must be asked whether the distinctive meaning of the vocabulary is not so far in the background that the existence of the idea of religious testing is doubtful.
- ⁶ One or two passages seem to suggest that it is an experience of other people as well, but such passages are not typical.
- ⁷ In Jas. 1:13 it is emphasized, however, that God is not the active source of testing/temptation.

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passage in early Christian literature in which their faithfulness in trial is compared, especially when it is recalled that Jesus' faithfulness in trial is explicitly compared with that of Moses in Heb. 3:2-6.

- ³⁴ The theme of the Johannine Gospel (John 20:30-31) precludes any great interest in Jesus' trials.
- ³⁵ Is it hinted also in Mark 10:32? Cf. F. C. Grant, "The Gospel according to St. Mark," *IB*, 7:810.
- ³⁶ "Properly the feeling of the athlete before a contest" (A. Souter, *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1946], 5). Note the use of the cognate noun and verb in 4 Macc. 17:11-14; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1, all of which appear to be passages dealing with testing/temptation. One who was steadfast in trial was frequently called an "athlete."
- ³⁷ That His passion involved testing/temptation is clearly implied in Heb. 2:18; 4:15-5:9; 12:2-4; cf. Polyc. *Phil.* 8:1-2.
- ³⁸ See V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 163; cf. U. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness* (London: S C M, 1963), 98; A. Farrer, *The Triple Victory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 1965), 21.
- ³⁹ Grant, "Mark," 7:881; cf. M. Dibelius, "Gethsemane," *CQ*, 12 (1935), 260-61; D. C. Heser, "Luke 4:1-13," *Interpretation*, 31 (1977), 58.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. S. E. Johnson, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," *IB*, 7:269; M. Dods, "Temptation (in the Wilderness)," *HDCG*, 2:715a; H. Willrich, "Zur Versuchung Jesu," *ZNW*, 4 (1903), 350; D. C. Heser, "Luke 4:1-13," *Interpretation*, 31 (1977), 55; P. Pokorny, "The Temptation Stories and their Intention," *NTS*, 20 (1973-74), 118. Especially noteworthy is the parallel with the struggle of Zoroaster with Angra Mainu. See H. P. Houghton, "On the Temptations of Christ and Zarathushtra," *ATR*, 26 (1944), 166-175.

- ⁴¹ In my view the influence of such traditions was not important. Cf. Dods, "Temptation," 2:715a; C. Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and its non-Jewish Sources* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), 317-18.
- ⁴² S. M. Gilmour, "The Gospel according to St. Luke: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, 8:382; cf. R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983), 130. Note the specific reference to testing/temptation in Rev. 2:10; 3:10; and the reference to eating with Christ in 3:20.
- ⁴³ See J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: S C M, 1957), 28, 51-52; T. A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), 22-23; Cf. U. Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 99-100; H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 81; G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," *Studies in the Gospels*, Ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 170; P. Pokorny, "Temptation Stories," 119. In this connection Robinson, *History in Mark*, 27 n. 1, points out that the baptism and temptation narratives in Mark 1 are remarkably parallel to T. Levi 18:5-12, which concludes, "Beliar shall be bound by him. And he (the Lord) shall grant to his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits."
- ⁴⁴ *Christ in the Wilderness*, 128-31.
- ⁴⁵ Contrast the emphasis on Satan in Luke 22:3, 31, 53.
- ⁴⁶ H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 76-77.
- ⁴⁷ "Called--Proved--Obedient: A Study in the Baptism and Temptation Narratives of Matthew and Luke," *JTS*, 11 (1960), 8. The church, by virtue of its union with Christ, is also the new Israel. Cf. F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 43; A. M. Farrer, "On Dispensing with Q," *Studies in the Gospels*, Ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 59;

Heser, "Luke 4:1-13," 56-57.

⁴⁸ The points of contact with Deut. 6-8 have often been noted. See B. S. Easton, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (New York: Scribner's, 1926), 46; Farrer, "On Dispensing with Q," 59; Beare, *Earliest Records*, 43; etc.

⁴⁹ If "forty days" is to be compared with "forty years" (Deut 8:2 MT), and if "tempted (lit.: 'being tempted')" (the same Greek verb as is rendered "testing [lit.: 'to test']" in Deut. 8:2) is taken as a present participle expressing purpose, the parallel with Deut. 8:2-3 is even closer. (For Lukan uses of the participle to express purpose, see Acts 3:26; 22:5.) Matt. 4:1-2, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished," is less closely parallel to Deut. 8:2. Mark 1:13, "He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him," has its closest parallel in T. Naph. 8:4, "The devil will flee from you; wild animals will be afraid of you, and the angels will stand by you." The reference in T. Naph. is also reminiscent, however, of the Wilderness wandering of Israel.

⁵⁰ Note that the worship of other gods is the worship of demons, according to 1 Cor. 10:20.

⁵¹ Cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: S C M, 1959), 277. Note that Jesus had just had the sign of the dove, and also the words from heaven, which are echoed in: "If you are the Son of God. . ."

⁵² Cf. W. E. Bundy, *Jesus and the First Three Gospels* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), 63, "The Jesus who emerges from the three-fold temptation is not the Messiah but a devout Jew who is loyal to the simplest lay precepts of his people's religion." But this argument fails to give due recognition to the relationship of the wilderness narrative to the

baptism narrative, a relationship in which it is not only the commissioning of Jesus which is important, but also the content of His commission. Cf. T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: S C M, 1949), 46; Gilmour, "St. Luke," 83; A. B. Taylor, "Decision in the Desert," *Interpretation*, 14 (1960), 302. Cullmann, *Christology*, 123, argues that Satan is seeking to turn Jesus aside from His vocation as Suffering Servant to that of political Messiah.

⁵³ Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 277; A. B. Taylor, "Decision in the Desert," 302-3.

⁵⁴ The points of contact with Deut. 6-8 are much more impressive than the points of contact with Gen. 2-3. It is tempting to think that Jesus in the Wilderness is the second Adam "undoing the work of the first Adam" (Thompson, "Called--Proved--Obedient," 7-8), but the emphasis seems to be on Jesus as the counterpart to Israel in the Wilderness. See, however, J. C. Fenton, "Paul and Mark," *Studies in the Gospels*, 106; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S. P. C. K., 1948), 42; Vallotton, *Tentation*, 69-70; Pokorny, "Temptation Stories," 120.

⁵⁵ Luke 22:20 does not occur in Codex D and in a number of lesser MSS. For a discussion of the meaning of "blood of the covenant," see V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 136-39.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 149-50.

⁵⁷ The language, however, seems to be derived from Ps. 41 (42):6, 12; 42 (43):5.

⁵⁸ According to R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 255, "One can only remain undecided whether the Temptation story (i.e. so far as the first two temptations are concerned) is more apologetically turned on the Church's enemies who said Jesus was a magician, or was meant as a warning to the church against thinking too much of miracles and

against using them for its own self-centred purposes.” He says the third temptation (according to Matthew) “gives expression to the general idea that obedience to God demands exclusiveness. . . and illustrates it by Jesus who will not surrender that obedience even for the sake of world dominion.”⁵⁹ In this passage Bultmann has not treated the Temptation in the light of its context. His statement is therefore of little consequence for our present inquiry.

- ⁵⁹ Note Sir. 31:10, “Who has been tested (*edokimasthē*) by it and been found perfect?”
- ⁶⁰ Cf. W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 57; G. Delling in *TDNT*, 8:83.
- ⁶¹ Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 94; G. Delling in *TDNT*, 8:83. For an extended discussion of the “perfection” of Jesus as set forth in Hebrews, see C. Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1953), 2:220-24.
- ⁶² Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 196, is of the opinion that as “pioneer” Jesus was the first to show us what faith in time of testing really is, and that as “perfecter” He has brought faith in such a time to its fullest degree and its ultimate expression. There is much to be said in favour of this interpretation (cf. Heb. 6:19-20).
- ⁶³ Is the emulation of Christ’s faithfulness not also urged in Heb. 3:6?
- ⁶⁴ With respect to the translation of the respective Greek word, see V. Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Third Edition (London: Epworth, 1958), 115 n. 3.
- ⁶⁵ Cf. Num. 12:7; *Assumption of Moses* 3:11; Sifre Num. 12:7. Testing is mentioned in the immediate context at Heb. 2:18.
- ⁶⁶ So Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 22-24, commenting on Heb. 2:5-9.

- ⁶⁷ The superiority of Christ's high priesthood to that of Jewish high priests is the main doctrine of the epistle.
- ⁶⁸ "Weaknesses" in this context is reminiscent of Mark 14:38 (Matt 26:41), "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." See also Rom. 8:3.
- ⁶⁹ According to 5:2 this sympathy characterized also the Jewish high priest: "He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness."
- ⁷⁰ "Yet without sin" in 4:15 is probably to be taken as limiting the extent to which Jesus experienced what we experience, and may even contribute a positive note if it is intended to suggest that "the best help is that afforded by those who have stood where we slip and faced the onset of temptation without yielding to it" (Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 59). If so, the idea that He is a "faithful" high priest may be implicit in the use of the phrase.
- ⁷¹ Cf. 2:10. In the light of 5:9, "pioneer" in 2:10 probably means "personal source," though it could also mean that He "broke open the road for those who followed him" (Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 31).
- ⁷² "The writer blends loosely in his description . . . the annual sacrifice of the high priest on atonement day . . . and the daily sacrifices offered by priests" (Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 102).
- ⁷³ Cf. 5:9 in the light of 5:2-3. Concerning our emphasis in this section, see Cullmann, *Christology*, 93-96.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. 4:15; Cullmann, *Christology*, 94.
- ⁷⁵ That He underwent spiritual, and perhaps also moral development, is indicated in Luke 2:52. Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 97.
- ⁷⁶ Curiously reminiscent of Heb. 11:1-12:2 is the urging of the example of steadfastness set by Ignatius, Zosimus,

Rufus, Paul and the other apostles in 9:1, followed by special emphasis on following the example of Christ in 10:1.

⁷⁷ Cf. Ign. *Rom.* 5:3; 6:6; *Eph.* 10:2.

⁷⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 4:8-11.

⁷⁹ Cf. Matt. 26:69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27.

⁸⁰ This word is not characteristic of testing contexts, though it occurs in such a context in 4 Macc. 15:16.

⁸¹ See Mark 14:29-31 (Matt. 26:33-35); cf. Luke 22:33; John 13:37-38.

⁸² Cf. 13:7; 1 Thess. 2:14.

⁸³ Cf. 1 Thess. 1:6.

⁸⁴ Is 2 Cor. 11 being emulated?

⁸⁵ The only New Testament occurrence of the Greek word used here is in 1 Pet. 2:21, which, as we have seen, is in a testing context.

⁸⁶ Concerning Ignatius see also Ign. *Smyr.* 4:2.

⁸⁷ In Ign. *Eph.* 12:2 martyrs are described as “fellow-initiates with Paul.” Ign. desires that he may be found in Paul’s “footsteps” when he “attains to God.” It may be noted that Peter’s steadfastness receives mention in the verse preceding the passage quoted in the main text.

⁸⁸ Marshall, *Luke*, 816, mentions the conjecture of Schürmann, *Jesu Abschiedsrede* (Münster, 1957), 38, that the Greek word rendered “stood (lit.: ‘remained’)”, replaces the original word for “endured” which is common in testing contexts.

⁸⁹ Matt. 26:41. I use “temptation” here in the pregnant sense of yielding thereto.

⁹⁰ I do not think that “watch” means merely “keep awake” (NRSV).

- ⁹¹ The idea is that we are associates of Christ, that we are identified with His enterprise. See V. Taylor, *The Atonement*, 110; C. P. M. Jones, "The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Lucan Writings," *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 140.
- ⁹² Do 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10-11; Col. 1:24, also suggest that faithfulness in trial is a bond of unity with Christ?
- ⁹³ See Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20-3:4.
- ⁹⁴ W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Second Edition (New York: Scribner's, n.d.), 160. In Eph. 4:21 he speaks of "truth" being "in Jesus."
- ⁹⁵ The last clause seems to reflect Eph. 4:13 and Phil. 4:13. Though speaking of Christ as "the perfect man" is reminiscent of Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:28, there is no suggestion of Christ being "made perfect."
- ⁹⁶ That such endurance is necessary he indicates in *Rom.* 4:2, "Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not even see my body." Cf. *Rom.* 5:3; *Eph.* 12:2; *Mag.* 14:1; *Trall.* 13:3; V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960), 251. That Ignatius did not mean to imply that true discipleship involves endurance unto martyrdom for everyone seems to be made clear in *Mag.* 1:2. Cf. Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 254.

CHAPTER VIII

PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST

Consideration of “testing” in the Scriptures requires that attention be given to a religious use of the conception of quite a different kind from the use we have been considering. We have given attention to testing as an experience of people, particularly of the righteous. However, there is a kind of testing which is initiated by people and directed towards God. It may be designated a religious use of the conception because it has to do with the relationship between people and God.

A. Persons who put God to the Test

Just as we saw that the testing of people is normally the testing of the righteous, so, too, when testing is directed Godward, it is the people of God who put Him to the test. This is only to be expected, since, in the nature of the case, a background of faith in God is necessary if there is to be any possibility of putting Him to the test.

So far as the Old Testament is concerned, examples of putting God to the test are restricted almost entirely to Israel in the Wilderness. Though there is only one Pentateuchal narrative, Ex. 17:1-7, in which it is specifically stated that Israel was putting God to the test, Num. 14:22 describes the people as having tested Him ten times. It seems to be implied that the story in the earlier part of the chapter, which relates the desire of the people to return to Egypt

after the spies reported on conditions in Canaan, is one of the occasions when Israel tested Him.¹ It also indicates that Israel was notorious for testing God during her Wilderness wandering, and perhaps that so doing was characteristic of her in this period of her history.

That Israel's testing of God at this period of her history was at least notorious is substantiated by later references. The incident concerning lack of water, which is narrated in Ex. 17:2-7, and which gave Massah its name, receives mention in Deut. 6:16; 9:22;² Ps. 94 (95):8-9 (cf. Ps. 105 [106]:32); Mekilta, Tractate Vayassa 7 on Ex. 17:2, 7; bSanh. 106a; Pesiq. R. 55a; Pirke R. Eliezer 61; Targum of Onkelos on Ex. 17:2, 7; and Heb. 3:8-9.³ Furthermore, in Luke 4:12 (Matt. 4:7) Jesus is credited with having turned aside the temptation to put God to the test by quoting part of Deut. 6:16, a verse which explicitly refers to Massah.

Though the Massah narrative receives the most frequent mention, there are other Wilderness narratives which became the basis for charging Israel with having tested God. According to Ps. 77 (78):18, "They (Israel) tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved." Whether the primary reference is to the narrative in Ex. 16 concerning quails and manna, or to the narrative in Num. 11 concerning quails, is not clear; there is indebtedness to both narratives in the context. In Ps. 105 (106):14 it is evident that the latter narrative is in mind when it is stated that Israel "put God to the test in the desert." In 1 Cor. 10:9 the mention of destruction by serpents as a judgment on Israel for putting God to the test in the Wilderness has in view Num. 21:5-6, "The people spoke against God and against Moses, . . . 'There is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.'" Various attempts to expound Num. 14:22 led Talmudic and Midrashic writers to designate a variety of other Pentateuchal narratives as descriptive of occasions when Israel put God to the test.⁴ Aside from the references to specific occasions the notoriety of Israel in the Wilderness in this respect is evident from Ps. 77 (78):41, "They tested God again and again."

References in Jewish literature to specific occasions of testing the Lord which do not relate to Israel in the Wilderness are few. Ps. 77 (78), which, as we have just noticed, describes Israel before

she entered Canaan as testing the Lord “again and again,” says of Israel in the period of the Judges, “They tested the Most High God, and rebelled against him” (v. 56). In Jud. 6:39 it is said that Gideon prayed, “Let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more.” It is quite uncertain, however, whether the test involved is a test of God in the usual sense. In Is. 7:12 King Ahaz is credited with refusing to “put the Lord to the test.” In Judith 8:13 the rulers of Bethulia are charged with “putting the Lord Almighty to the test.” In Ass. Mos. 9:4 it is urged, “If you investigate, you will surely know that never did (our) fathers nor their ancestors tempt God by transgressing his commandments.”

Even general statements concerning the testing of God are few. Indeed, they only occur in Mal. 3:15 (?); Sir. 18:23 and Wisd. 1:2. In the first of these, it is clearly the community of Israel which is being addressed; in the second it is “my child (lit.: ‘my son’),” which is evidently a form of address referring to anyone within the community of Israel who would come under the writer’s instruction; and in the third it is “you rulers of the earth,” who are exhorted, “Love righteousness. . . , think of the Lord in goodness, and seek him with sincerity of heart; because he is found by those who do not put him to the test, and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him.” Though it is those who “seek him” who are warned in Wisd. 1:2 not to “put him to the test,” rather than those who are part of the community of God’s people, the fact that they do seek Him indicates that they have some reason for faith in Him. This occurrence of our conception, therefore, does not constitute an exception to our contention that it is those who are of the community of the faithful who may test God.

In the New Testament there are several examples of individuals who put the Lord to the test, or are tempted to do so, including Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:9-12 [Matt. 4:5-7]), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9), and those gathered at the Council of Jerusalem who were demanding that Gentile Christians be circumcised (Acts 15:10). General exhortations to avoid putting God to the test are found in 1 Cor. 10:9, and, by implication, in Heb. 3:7-12.⁵ In every instance it is those who are within the ranks of the believers who are being warned.⁶

B. Its Occasion

1. Bitter Experiences

Bitter experiences often provide the occasion for the testing of the Lord. According to Ex. 17:1-7 at Massah in the Wilderness “there was no water for the people to drink” and it seemed as if they would die of thirst. In Num. 13-14 the “unfavourable report” of the majority of the spies made the entering of Canaan seem an impossibility to the people. In Ps. 77 (78):18-20 it is implied that there was lack of food for the people on another occasion during their Wilderness wandering.⁷ In Judith 8 the city of Bethulia is in desperate straits due to siege. Those to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed were suffering persecution.

2. Lustful Cravings

According to Ps. 105 (106):14 (cf. Num. 11:4) it was “a wanton craving” which led Israel to test God on a particular occasion in the Wilderness. It was illicit desire, apparently for undeserved approbation, which led Ananias and Sapphira to pretend that they had laid all the proceeds of the sale of their land at the apostles’ feet (Acts 5:1-4; cf. Num. 16:10). It seems that the danger lest his readers “desire evil” led Paul to warn the Corinthian believers against testing the Lord (1 Cor. 10:6-9; cf. 9:27; 10:14-33).⁸

3. Prosperity

That prosperity was sometimes the occasion of testing God is suggested by one or two of the narratives. Deut. 32:15-16 (Codex 85) states that it was when “Jeshurun grew fat. . . grew fat, bloated, and gorged” that she tested God “with abominable practices.”⁹ Another passage which may suggest it is the Acts 5 report concerning Ananias and Sapphira. The field they possessed was a measure of wealth which became an occasion of testing God.

It is to be noted that often those who are being tested themselves either put God to the test, or are tempted to do so. The experience of trial is the occasion for the testing of the Lord, though not a different occasion from those listed above, because the

occasions we have listed constitute in themselves the means of the testing of those who test God.

The earliest intimation that failure in a test may involve the testing of God is found in the Massah narrative. Massah is renowned in our literature as the place where the Israelites in the Wilderness put God to the test. In spite of this fact, however, in the Massoretic text of Deut. 33:8 it is stated that Levi was tested at Massah.¹⁰ Though it is possible that the text is corrupt, it is also possible that Massah was not only a place where God was put to the test, but also a place where God engaged in testing.

The first explicit example of the experience of testing as an occasion for testing God is found in Judith 8. Concerning the promise of the elders of Bethulia to surrender the city if God did not relieve its sufferings due to the siege within five days, Judith said, "You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test" (v. 13). Concerning the sufferings of the city she said, "The Lord our God . . . is putting us to the test" (v. 25).

In the New Testament most of the references to the putting of God to the test are in the context of the human experience of being tested. It is in the course of being tempted in the wilderness that Jesus is urged to put God to the test by throwing Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. A variant reading of Acts 5:3 makes it explicit that Satan "tempted" the heart of Ananias and Sapphira "to lie to the Holy Spirit." Concerning their deceit, Peter says, "You have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test." They were tempted to tempt the Holy Spirit! Unlike Jesus, they succumbed to the temptation. In the course of warning the Corinthians lest they "fall" in time of "testing," Paul urges, among other things, that "we must not put Christ (v.l.: 'the Lord') to the test" (1 Cor. 10:6-13). He implies that one may be tempted to "put Christ to the test."

Concerning their experience of testing, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes to his readers, "We are his (God's) house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope." He proceeds with these words of warning, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the

wilderness, where your ancestors put me to the test. . .” (3:6-9, in which Ps. 95:7-8 is quoted). In his view his readers are in danger of such hardening of their hearts that they will pay no heed to God’s word, and will thereby put God to the test.¹¹ Does he intimate further, that every human failure in time of testing involves hardening of the heart and disobedience, and that these, in turn, constitute a testing of God? C. Spicq, at any rate, is of the opinion that “today,” which is in the emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence, has such a significance,¹² a judgment which is supported by v. 13, “Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”¹³

C. Its Possibility

What makes the testing of God possible is essentially the declension or eclipse of faith. Not only do the texts with which we are concerned frequently bring this to our attention, they often stress that lack of faith in the particular situation being considered was reprehensible in view of the sound reason that there was for faith.

Lack of faith as the root of the testing of God comes to explicit expression in Num. 14:11, “How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?”; in Ps. 77 (78):22, “They had no faith in God, and did not trust his saving power”; in Ps. 77 (78):32, “They did not believe in his wonders”; and in Wisd. 1:2, “He is found by those who do not put him to the test, and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him.”

That lack of faith makes the testing of God possible is implied, moreover, in such Old Testament passages as the following, which emphasize that there was sound reason for faith:

- a) Num. 14:22-23, “None of the people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness,¹⁴ and yet have tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore

to give to their ancestors . . .”¹⁵

- b) Ps. 77 (78):12-18, “In the sight of their ancestors he worked marvels in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. . . Yet they sinned still more against him,. . . They tested God in their heart. . .”¹⁶
- c) Ps. 94 (95):9, “Your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.”¹⁷

It may be added that a similar emphasis occurs in Pesiq. R. 55a where R. Abbahu (c. A.D. 30) is credited with stating that after God had carried them in the Wilderness it was reprehensible for Israel to ask at Massah whether He was among them or not.

The particular occasion of a testing of God provides a clue to the reason for the eclipse of faith which results in that testing. The experience of bitter circumstances makes it easy to doubt divine providence.¹⁸ Lustful cravings may eventuate in an undue concern about that which is material and temporal and a concomitant decline of faith.¹⁹ The experience of prosperity may facilitate the loss of a sense of dependence on God.²⁰

It is doubtful, however, that the occasion of a test of God is even in itself a sufficient explanation of the eclipse of faith which is basic to that testing. In addition to it -- and perhaps facilitated by it--is the forgetting of the great deeds God has done which have provided a sound reason for faith. At any rate the number of references to such forgetting suggest that without it the eclipse of faith would not take place.

In the context of Deut. 32:16 (Codex 25) it is stated at v. 18, “You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.” In Ps. 77 (78), the Psalm devoted to our theme, it is said of Israel in the Wilderness at v. 11, “They forgot what he (God) had done, and the miracles that he had shown them” and at vv. 42-43, “They did not keep in mind his power, or the day when he redeemed them from the foe; when he displayed his signs in Egypt, and his miracles in the fields of Zoan. . .”²¹ Likewise it is said in Ps. 105 (106):13, “They soon forgot his works.”²²

There may be a hint in Acts 15 that those of the party of the Pharisees who urged that circumcision be required of Gentile

converts were “putting God to the test” in so doing because they were overlooking how they themselves had been saved. Peter reminds them,

My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. . . We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.

D. Its Expression

Given the kind of occasions we have described plus a decline of faith in God’s providence and power, it was easy to proceed to the actual putting of God to the test. Essentially this consisted in a challenge to Him to demonstrate His ability and authority. Depending on the circumstances, the challenge might be made in one of two ways:

- a) By demanding that He grant a specific request which was deemed beyond human accomplishment;
- b) By venturing to engage in some kind of wrongdoing or disobedience in disregard of the divine displeasure.

In the first case God is challenged to demonstrate His power by intervening to meet the demands made upon Him; in the second case He is challenged to demonstrate His power by visiting punishment.

Though the challenge of God may describe what is essential to the testing of God, there are certain attitudes and actions which are frequently part and parcel of the challenge. These include hardening the heart, presumption, murmuring and finding fault with

God, and the questioning of His presence and power. We consider these first, and then proceed to look at what is said concerning the two ways in which God may be challenged to prove Himself.

1. Hardening the Heart

Ps. 94 (95):8 warns, "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the wilderness." For the people of God to harden their hearts²³ means that they refuse to be amenable to Him and submissive to His will.²⁴ They will not "listen or incline their ear" to Him,²⁵ and they "refuse(d) to obey" His commandments.²⁶ Their faith and fidelity having been overthrown, they are in obstinate revolt against the one whom they had acknowledged as their Lord.²⁷ In the case of the Massah incident it probably means that Israel refused to accept humbly the difficult situation into which their allegiance to God had brought them, and became determined to have what they themselves desired.

Ps. 94 (95):8 (LXX) is quoted in Heb. 3:8, and the part of the verse about hardening the hearts is quoted again in 3:15 and in 4:7. In 3:13 the author is concerned "that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." It may be noted that the Septuagint translated "Meribah" by "rebellion," and in 3:16 the author of Hebrews used this word to describe those who hardened their hearts at Massah. As we have indicated, of course, a hardened heart is a rebellious heart. Indeed, those who tested God are described as rebelling in Ps. 77 (78):17, 40, 56.²⁸

2. Presumption

Presumption is involved in the testing of God by the rulers of Bethulia, according to Judith 8:12, 14, 16:

Who are you to put God to the test today, and to set yourselves up in the place of God in human affairs? . . . You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or understand the workings of the human mind; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought? . . . Do not try to bind

the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like a human being, to be threatened, or like a mere mortal, to be won over by pleading.

The rulers of Bethulia had agreed to surrender the city unless the Lord provided assistance within a given number of days. The presumption required for such a decision is most ably exposed and described in the verses quoted.

Though it is not so clearly and adequately stated anywhere else, presumption is implied in the condemnation of Israel in the Wilderness in Ps. 105 (106):13, "They did not wait for his (God's) counsel."²⁹ It seems likewise to be at the basis of the suggestion to Jesus that He cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, a suggestion which is reinforced by the quotation of Scripture.³⁰

Presumption of a somewhat different kind is implied in 1 Cor. 10:12, "If you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."³¹ An unwarranted confidence in oneself, due to thinking of oneself more highly than one ought to think, is implied.

3. Murmuring and Finding Fault with God

In the Massah incident as described in Ex. 17:2, 3, "The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink' . . . The people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?'"³² Moses' response, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" implies that the murmuring and faultfinding were really against God, even though not addressed to Him. The implication was justified inasmuch as it had been attested to them that Moses was leading them in accord with the behest of the Almighty.

What is implicit in the Massah narrative, is explicit in the narrative in Num. 14:2-3, "All the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron; the whole congregation said to them, 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword?'" On this occasion the people are represented as speaking against God Himself, as well as against Moses and Aaron.

Similarly, in Num. 21:5 it is related concerning another incident which is interpreted as a testing of God in 1 Cor. 10:9, that “the people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’”³³

4. Questioning God’s Presence and Power

Because of the lack of faith involved, testing God may also include the questioning of His presence and power. Again the supreme example is from the Massah narrative: “(They) tested the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’” (Ex. 17:7). This verse is quoted in Mekilta, Tractate Vayassa 7 on Ex. 17:7, with the added legendary expansion credited to R. Joshua: “The Israelites said: If He is master over all works as He is master over us we will serve Him, but if He is not, we will not serve Him.”

Num. 14:2-10 provides, by implication, a second example. Joshua and Caleb declare, “If the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, . . . The Lord is with us.” The people, however, questioned God’s presence with them and His ability to do what Joshua and Caleb said He would do, as is evident in that “the whole congregation threatened to stone them.” They were obviously convinced that any attempt to enter the land would mean that they themselves would “fall by the sword,” and that their wives and their little ones would “become booty.”

Ps. 77 (78):19-20 provides a third example of such questioning on the part of those who are putting God to the test: “They spoke against God saying, ‘Can God spread a table in the wilderness? Even though he struck the rock so that water gushed out and torrents overflowed, can he also give bread, or provide meat for his people?’”

We now turn to a consideration of the two ways in which God is put to the test through a challenge to Him to demonstrate His ability and authority:

1. Demanding God’s Intervention

Often, if not always, there is implicit in the questioning of

God's power the demand that He demonstrate His power by intervening in some specific way. Such a demand is implicit in the questioning of the people at Massah. In Ps. 77 (78):18 it is expressly stated that Israel in the Wilderness "tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved." In Ps. 105 (106):15 it is said, again of a testing by Israel in the Wilderness, that God "gave them what they asked."

There may even be an effort to force God to grant a demand. Sometimes this is through a threat to discontinue allegiance to Him. In Mekilta, Tractate Vayassa 7 on Ex. 17:7, the following comments on the Massah narrative are reported: "R. Joshua says, The Israelites said: If He is master over all his works as He is master over us we will serve Him, but if He is not we will not serve Him. R. Eliezer says: They said; If He supplies all our needs we will serve Him, but if He does not we will not serve Him." Very similar to such a threat to discontinue the service of God was the threat of the rulers of besieged Bethulia to surrender the city to the Gentiles if relief were not forthcoming within five days (Judith 8:11-16).

A somewhat different way of attempting to force God's intervention is implicit in the narrative of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Had He acceded to the suggestion that He thrust Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, Jesus would have been attempting to force God to perform a miracle in order to preserve the life of His Son.³⁴ Though the method by which it is proposed that the threat be enforced is different, the threat that He will lose one who belongs especially to Him is similar to the threat of the loss of worshippers. In essence such a threat is probably implicit in every demand that God demonstrate His power and providence.

2. Disobedience to God's Will

Besides testing God by demanding that He intervene to demonstrate His power and providence, there is also testing Him through disobedience to His will. This method of testing Him seems to be implied in Num. 14:10 where the congregation of Israel is represented as refusing to attempt an entry into Canaan, even though they had been warned that to fail to do so was to "rebel against the Lord." Inasmuch as the exhortation of Deut. 6:16, "Do not put the

Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah," is immediately followed by the further exhortation in v. 17, "You must diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his decrees, and his statutes that he has commanded you," it is probable that disobedience to the commands of God is understood as a way of putting Him to the test.³⁵ In Ps. 77 (78): 56 it is said of Israel in Canaan, "They tested the Most High God, and rebelled against him. They did not observe his decrees."³⁶

In Wisd. 1:1-2 it seems to be implied that unrighteousness is a testing of God: "Love righteousness, . . . think of the Lord in goodness and seek him with sincerity of heart; because he is found by those who do not put him to the test, . . ." In Ass. Mos. (Test. Mos.) 9:4 it is urged, "If you investigate, you will surely know that never did (our) fathers nor their ancestors tempt God by transgressing his commandments."

In the New Testament it appears that Ananias and Sapphira tested God by being deceitful concerning the selling price of their land, and so contravening the honesty required by God (Acts 5:3, 8). It is probable that disobedience to God's will was involved in the demand that the Gentiles be circumcised, and provided the justification for Peter's charge at the Jerusalem Council that the demand was a testing of God. Peter reminded those present that they knew that uncircumcised Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit, just as he and fellow members of the circumcision had. Does he not imply that to require circumcision is not in accord with the will of God which had been made abundantly manifest?³⁷

Before we conclude this section, it is to be noted that there is a point at which the two kinds of challenge to God become one. The challenge to God to demonstrate His power by granting a specific request implies, as has already been indicated, that, if He does not do so, allegiance to Him, and the obedience which is the concomitant of such allegiance, will cease. The disobedience which results is a challenge to God's power to punish. That there is such a relationship between the two ways of testing God is indicated in the literature with which we are concerned as follows:

- a) The attendant attitudes and actions which we have noted may be found in connection with either type of

test.

- b) The demand that God intervene to grant a particular request is frequently accompanied, as we have seen, by the threat of disloyalty.
- c) In Ps. 77 (78):17-18, testing God by demanding food is described as sin and rebellion against the Most High.
- d) That the Israelites demanded water at Massah is described as a loosing of themselves from Torah by R. Jehoshua (c. A.D. 90), according to bSanh. 106a.

E. God's Reaction and Response

1. He is Grieved and Provoked

There is one passage in which it is indicated that Israel grieved God when they tested Him in the Wilderness, namely Ps. 77 (78):40-41, "How often they rebelled against him (God) in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! They tested God again and again, and provoked the Holy One of Israel." The Hebrew verb translated "provoked" is a *hapax legomenon*, which, in the light of the cognate languages, probably should be translated "pained" or "wounded."³⁸ Such a translation would preserve the parallelism with the preceding verse. Of course the Septuagint is to be rendered "provoked."

That God is "provoked" by being put to the test is often affirmed. Sometimes it is added that He is provoked to anger or to wrath. The following examples illustrate this:

- a) Deut. 9:22, "At Massah. . . you provoked the Lord to wrath."³⁹
- b) Ps. 77 (78):56-59, "They tested the Most High God, and rebelled against him. . . They provoked him to anger. . . When God heard, he was full of wrath."⁴⁰
- c) Ps. 94 (95):10, "For forty years I was angry with that generation" (NIV).⁴¹

- d) Judith 8:13-14, "You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test. . . Do not anger the Lord our God."

When the testing of God took the form of idolatry it is said in Ps. 77 (78):58, "They provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols."⁴²

2. *He Responds with Positive Action*

Though God is grieved and provoked by those who put Him to the test, there are several passages in which it is made plain that He accepted the challenge of Israel in the Wilderness to prove His presence and power, and provided what they desired:

- a) Ex. 17:5-6,

The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

- b) Ps. 77 (78):23-24, 27, 29, "He commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. . . He rained flesh upon them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the sea. . . He gave them what they craved."

- c) Ps. 105 (106):15, "He gave them what they asked."⁴³

In the first passage the response we have quoted follows upon the statement, "Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.'" Is it possible that we are to understand that God's favourable response to the demand of Israel was related in some way to Moses' prayer?⁴⁴ In the last two instances, though it is stated that God gave what was demanded, it is immediately added that He visited with judgment.⁴⁵

3. His Response in Negative Action

Though God is represented as sometimes granting the demands by which He is put to the test, His characteristic reaction is to punish those who test Him. As is to be expected, since we are dealing chiefly with incidents in the early period of Israel's history, the punishments visited upon those who test God are almost entirely temporal. Such punishments are usually described in specific terms and related to the particular situation and environment of those who were guilty. For her testing of God during her wilderness wanderings Israel was punished with reduction of her numbers by pestilence,⁴⁶ with death for many through the bites of poisonous serpents,⁴⁷ with destruction of part of the camp by fire,⁴⁸ and with the loss of the privilege of entering the Promised Land for almost the entire male population.⁴⁹ Punishments visited on Israel because she put the Lord to the test after her arrival in Canaan include God's forsaking of Shiloh as His dwelling-place, deliverance of the Ark of the Covenant to the nation's foe, and devastation of the people by a war in which priests as well as ordinary warriors were slain, wives were widowed, and maidens were left without men to marry.⁵⁰

The frequency with which swift visitation with death is set forth in the Old Testament as the punishment for putting God to the test is to be noted.⁵¹ Apart from passages in which the Old Testament is either quoted or cited, the New Testament only once sets forth what happened to those whom it specifically describes as persons who have put God to the test. In Acts 5:5-10 it is stated that Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead as soon as they tested God by lying to the apostles.

There are New Testament passages which do not use our vocabulary, but which should probably be mentioned in this connection. In 1 Cor. 5:1-5 reference is made to a member of the Christian community in Corinth who was guilty of gross immorality. Was he not putting God to the test? If so, note Paul's instruction "to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh," instruction which probably involves physical death.⁵² In 1 Cor. 11:20-30 members of the Christian community are described who partook of the Lord's Supper "in an unworthy manner." It is stated that they "will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord." Of

interest to us in this connection is the comment, "For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." In addition to the intimation in the passage itself that the conduct which had such grave consequences was conduct which put God to the test, it is probable that Paul is drawing a partial parallel with what he had stated in 1 Cor. 10:3-10 concerning Israel in the Wilderness. There he had described Israel as having partaken of "spiritual food" and "spiritual drink," immediately adding, "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness." In succeeding verses he had cited examples of the conduct in the wilderness which was displeasing to God, among which is the reminder that some of them "put Christ (v.l.: 'the Lord') to the test. . . and were destroyed by serpents." If we are correct in judging that the improper conduct at the Lord's table which is being described was a testing of God, it is to be noted that the result was disease and death.

It is striking that the New Testament should indicate in these passages that putting God to the test leads to physical disease and death.⁵³ The continuity with the Old Testament at this point is to be noted.⁵⁴

So far as I have been able to discover, there is only one passage which specifically mentions the testing of God and which describes the result, if not the recompense thereof, in spiritual terms. The passage is Wisd. 1:1-4,

Love righteousness, you rulers of the earth, think of the Lord in goodness and seek him with sincerity of heart; because he is found by those who do not put him to the test, and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him. For perverse thoughts separate people from God, and when his power is tested (lit.: 'proven'), it exposes the foolish; because wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, or dwell in a body enslaved to sin.

It seems to be indicated in this passage that the testing of God separates one from friendship with God, and shuts him off from the spirit of wisdom, which mediates that friendship.⁵⁵ However, death as the result of putting God to the test seems to be indicated

in 1:12, "Do not invite death by the error of your life, or bring on destruction by the works of your hands." Despite the "spiritual" emphasis, which may well owe something to Greek thought, what is said concerning physical death is to be compared with what we find elsewhere concerning the result of putting God to the test.⁵⁶

F. Summary

The study of putting God to the test in Jewish and early Christian literature is largely a study of Israel in the Wilderness and in the period of the Judges. Indeed, Israel is largely portrayed in the records of her wilderness sojourn as a people who tested the Lord at almost every turn in her fortunes.

Our survey of the biblical material has indicated that the testing of God is ordinarily conditioned by bitter circumstances or lustful cravings, with the possibility that prosperity may have its part to play at times. It is possible because of lack of faith, with which is connected failure to duly consider what God has done. It expresses itself first of all in the hardening of one's heart, in murmuring and finding fault with God, and in the questioning of God's presence and power. Its expression comes to full flower either in the demand that God prove His ability by intervening in the situation, or by disobedience and rebellion, thereby in effect challenging His readiness or ability to punish evil. When put to the test God is grieved and provoked. He may intervene, even miraculously, and thereby prove His power, but even if He does so, He may be counted on to punish. The punishments usually involve loss, suffering or death, though there is at least one passage which indicates that spiritual loss may be the recompense of those who venture to put Him to the test.

It may be noted, in conclusion, that the prominence of the conception in relation to Israel in the Wilderness makes it surprising that we hear comparatively little of it in other contexts. Especially surprising is the paucity of specific references in early Christian writings, aside from the quotation, or at least citation, of Old

Testament passages which speak thereof.

Appended Note: Jud. 6:39; Is. 7:12; Mal. 3:10

Several Old Testament passages call for special comment in view of the points of contact they have with the theme of this chapter.

Jud. 6:39

According to Jud. 6:39, "Gideon said to God, 'Do not let your anger burn against me, let me speak one more time; let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more.'" Though, in our opinion, our vocabulary is used primarily in the sense of making the kind of experiment which will elicit supernatural knowledge concerning the future, a reprehensible testing of God may be implied in the petition, "Do not let your anger burn against me." He has already made one test with the fleece, and so already has what might be construed as a sufficient sign.⁵⁷

Is. 7:12

King Ahaz was invited to ask God for a sign that he need not fear conquest by Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel. Ahaz replied, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test" (Is. 7:12). But instead of commending him for his refusal to put God to the test, Isaiah condemns him with the words, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also?" At first glance it appears as though Isaiah was condemning Ahaz for an attitude which is commendable elsewhere in our literature. Under the circumstances, however, would the request for a sign have been a reprehensible testing of God, as Ahaz implied? The probability is that Ahaz was hypocritical in his refusal to ask for a sign and that Isaiah knew it.⁵⁸ On the other hand, why the appeal of Ahaz to the principle that testing God is reprehensible did not apply is not stated. Was it because a

person can only be guilty of testing God if he has a sufficient reason for faith, a reason which the mere assertion of a prophet did not provide? At any rate, it appears that the testing of God is reprehensible only if it involves disregard for evidence of which one is aware.⁵⁹ Though Ahaz had reason to trust in God's presence, power and providence, had he any reason to believe that God would preserve him from conquest by Rezin and Pekah? According to Num. 14:22 and Ps. 77 (78):43 it was because Israel had had signs, the significance of which she either disregarded or forgot, that she tested God. Especially instructive is Num.14:11, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"⁶⁰ But it would seem that Ahaz did not have reason to believe that God would preserve him from conquest by Rezin and Pekah. A sign would provide a reason. In such circumstances asking for a sign would not be reprehensible.⁶¹ Moreover, "it is not testing God to do as he says!"⁶²

Mal. 3:10

It is urged in Mal. 3:10, "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, . . . and thus put me to the test (lit.: 'proof'), says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing." Does this verse provide an exception to the doctrine that it is reprehensible to put God to the test? The following considerations favour such a view:

- a) Symmachus has our vocabulary in his rendering of the verse;⁶³
- b) In the third century A.D. Rabbi Johanan and R. Oshaia declared that in this verse there is set forth the one exception to the law forbidding the testing of God in Deut. 6:16;⁶⁴
- c) Though the Massoretic text has "prove" rather than "test," that the former could be used as a synonym for "test" when a reprehensible testing of God is under consideration is shown, not only by Ps. 94 (95):9, but by Malachi himself in the complaint quoted in 3:15, "Evildoers not only prosper, but when they put God to

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