

rital factors... Mrs. R. Cook, N.B.,... for some prostration... feeling... sleep-time. My... began... Heart and... alized that... soothing... the nerves... sleep, nerves and... system.

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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

First Quarter, Lesson 4, Jan. 28, 1900.

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS.—Matthew 3: 13-4: 11.

Compare Luke 3: 21, 22 and 4: 1-13. Commit 3: 16, 17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3: 17.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Probably about January, A. D. 27.

Place.—In some wilderness, probably the northern part of the wilderness of Judea just above Jericho, west of the Jordan. Tradition names Mount Quarantania. It was named Quarantania (which means a space of forty days) because Jesus was supposed to have passed his forty days of fasting in one of its caves.

Jesus about 30 years old (Luke 3: 23).

BAPTISM.—Vs. 13-15. Then cometh Jesus. Probably in January, A. D. 27, after John had been preaching six months; from Nazareth, his home in Galilee. To Jordan. Probably at the ford near Jericho. To be baptized of him. Why did Jesus wish to be baptized? (1) It showed where Jesus stood in relation to the preaching of John. It was a public profession of the true religious life. It was taking sides with righteousness, against sin. (2) It was doing what he wished others to do. He expected his followers to make a public confession by baptism. (3) It was the solemn inauguration of his mission. John forbade him. R. V., "I would have hindered him." I have used I am the inferior, the preparer of the way. Suffer. Permit. Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. For the reason given above (v. 13). It was the right thing to do.

RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.—V. 16.

Went up straightway out of the water and up the bank of the river. The heavens were opened. And the way was shown from heaven to earth. He (Jesus) saw, so did John (John 1: 34). The Spirit of God descending like a dove. The Holy Spirit descended not only in the manner of a dove, but in the bodily shape of a dove. The Spirit produces, in the hearts of those who dwell in the Spirit, the dove-like nature,—gentle, loving, attractive. The dove and the fire are complementary symbols expressing different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The object was: (1) To complete his growing consciousness of his relation to God. (2) It marked the official beginning of his ministry like the anointing of a king. (3) It pointed Jesus out as the Son of God (John 1: 32-34).

THE DIVINE TESTIMONY.—V. 17.

Lo, a voice from heaven, etc. Thus God endorsed him and his mission, and showed to the Jewish nation that he was the Messiah.

Practical. Every Christian needs to publicly confess his faith in Christ and to stand pledged on the side of righteousness.

2. Needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whose symbols are a dove and fire.

3. Needs the approval of God, manifest to himself and to others; a divine call and endorsement in some form.

WHAT IS TEMPTATION? Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit. It was just after his baptism. It was some impulse of the Spirit that impelled him to go (Mark 1: 12) into the wilderness. Where in solitude he could be absorbed in intense meditation, and fight for himself the great battle with temptation. To be tempted of the devil. For the whole forty days. It was not merely one sudden assault. The temptations were either a summary of the whole forty days' experience, or the final assaults at the close.

Temptation is a testing of a person either to see what he is fit for, with the desire that he stand the strain; or with the intent to make him fall. The first is God's way; he tests and tries men. The second is Satan's way; he tempts. God never tempts men (Jas. 1: 13). But God does transform the temptations of Satan and of men into trials for their good.

TWO ELEMENTS IN TEMPTATION.—There is some strong allurements or attraction, and the strength of the temptation depends upon the intensity and continuity of the allurements. (2) There must be something wrong in the thing desired or in the way and conditions of attaining it.

THE KINDS OF TEMPTATION.—Temptation may come (1) as a sudden assault, as from an ambush or midnight attack, or (2) as a siege, wearing us out by unceasing repetition. Jesus experienced both kinds. THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS WERE REAL.—In whatever form the temptations came, the battle was real. It was no mere form, for example's sake. Satan was in earnest, and intended to prevent the coming of the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus knew that he could choose good or evil, and that the result for himself, for the human race, and for the kingdom of God depended upon his choice. There was no foreordained certainty of victory.

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TEMPTATION IS NOT NECESSARILY SINFUL.—To the question how Jesus could be holy and yet be tempted, we must distinguish between (1) the desire, which may be natural and right, and (2) the indulgence of that desire in forbidden ways. It is not sinful to be hungry, but it is sinful to satisfy that hunger by lying, or stealing, or disobedience. We are tempted by our natural desires, especially when the evil nature within us responds to outer temptation.

THE TEMPTER.—Jesus was tempted of the devil. "Devil" means calumniator, slanderer, accuser, one who seeks by vile, false means to injure others by slandering God, misrepresenting the truth, and so leading men astray. He is the leader, the chief of evil spirits. It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal devil than in bad men, bad leaders on earth.

IN WHAT FORM THE TEMPTER CAME TO JESUS we do not know, but we do know that he was tempted "like as we are." And this assures us of several things. 1. Satan could not have come as Satan. The appearance would drive us away, not attract us. It is not the drunkard in his wretched home, but the gilded saloon that tempts men to intemperance. 2. If he came in bodily form at all, it must have been an angel of light, or in the guise of a friendly stranger, with gracious manner and plausible speech.

3. Temptation is all the more effective because so insidious, seeming to rise out of our own minds.

WHY JESUS WAS TEMPTED.—(1) God was putting it to the test whether Jesus was qualified for his office,—whether he would remain true to the spiritual idea of the Messiah. (2) In order to be the Saviour of tempted mankind, it was necessary that he himself should be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4: 15). He must fight the battle to show us how to gain the victory. (3) There was, doubtless, need that the human Jesus should grapple with the great question of his life. Satan could not let such an opportunity go by. It was the real crisis of the world's history.

FLOWERS OF COMFORT IN THE WILDERNESS OF TEMPTATION.—No one can enter upon the great world of life and usefulness without first being tempted and tried. Thus at the beginning of the Christian life comes the great temptation,—the battle as to who shall rule the soul. Men gain victories only through battles. They cultivate courage through things that test courage. They grow in faith through the things that try their faith. People without trials and temptations are always failures.

Again, the fact that Christ was tempted shows us that the fact that we are tempted is no proof that we are wicked. Some sensitive natures conclude that they must be very sinful because they are so much tempted, whereas multiplicity of temptation is often rather an evidence of faithfulness and integrity. The strongest attacks are made upon the strongest forts. Repeated temptation argues the existence of resistance.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION THROUGH NATURAL APPETITES AND DESIRES.—Vs. 2-4. Fasted forty days and forty nights. Being tempted all the time. He was probably thinking, praying, planning. He was afterward an hungered. When the reaction has begun, hunger asserts its claims with force. The tempter came to him. In this hour, when his desire for food was strongest, and his powers of resistance weakest. Satan watches his time, and attacks us when weary, sick, troubled, disheartened, and nervous. If thou be (art) the Son of God, if you really are God's Son, and possessed of miraculous powers, command that these stones, which looked like their loaves, be made bread, and thus satisfy your hunger. The temptation was intense, but entirely innocent. What was the harm in yielding to his desire for food? None in satisfying his hunger, for he accepted food from the angels soon after (v. 10), but he refused to satisfy his appetite in Satan's way.

The victory came through the truths and promises of God's Word. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone. By food for his body. This quotation referred to the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness, when God sent them manna. God, by his Word, could give other kinds of food, in his own time and way. Jesus meant (1) that God could feed him in other ways than by his doing wrong; (2) that there was something higher,

better, more needful than earthly food, even obedience, faith, love, character, righteousness.

APPLICATIONS. Our bodies and our souls are full of desires, appetites, hungers, which are innocent in themselves, but which we are tempted to gratify in wrong ways. Eve losing paradise by eating the forbidden fruit. Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. David blackening the close of his life by yielding to passion.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION. THROUGH THE MISUSE OF FAITH.—Vs. 5-7. I is the expectation of results and blessings, without fulfilling the conditions. Taketh him up into the holy city. Jerusalem, literally, or in spirit. On a (the) pinnacle, or rather, wing, of the temple. The roof was flat. From it one looked down six hundred feet in the valley of Hinnom. If thou be the Son of God. Thus suggesting a doubt. Cast thyself down. Into the court of the temple among the crowds.

What Tempting Allurement in This? (1) It would prove that he was indeed the Son of God. (2) It would seemingly prove his perfect trust in God. For it is written, in Psa. 91: 11. The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. He shall give his angels charge, etc. Satan's meaning is, You can do this act in perfect safety, for you rest on God's promise.

The act suggested was one of presumption, not of faith. God had not promised such care to the reckless breaker of his natural laws. It was tempting God. It would have been disobeying the Scriptures, which defined what the Messiah should do.

The means of victory was a right use of the weapon Satan had used against him. Jesus met the temptation with the Word of God; a weapon that we too may use. It is written (Deut. 6: 16) again. On the other hand. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. That is, distrust God or test his power presumptuously.

APPLICATIONS. The attempt to build up the church or Sunday school by pandering to fashion or wealth, instead of by spiritual life. Men expect heaven without the faith and love that make heaven. They expect the fruit of victories without fighting the battles. They expect health, while they violate all laws of health. They expect results, while they refuse to use the means, and call it faith. They complain of God as bringing upon them the evils which are the result of their own sins and errors. They blame God for punishment, while they refuse to forsake their sins. They put themselves in needless perils, and blame God if he does not protect them.

The Commandments. All the commandments are connected with temptation, when men break them, and yet expect that God will violate his own laws to preserve them from the consequences.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION. TO GAIN SUCCESS BY WRONG DOING.—Vs. 8-10. The devil taketh him up, probably in vision or imagination, as there is no mountain which can be seen with the natural eye all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. The splendid courts and cities like Rome, and possibly a vision of the future, with its civilizations, with its redeemed peoples, fulfilling all that the prophets foretold. All these things will I give thee. In a measure Satan did have these things. Christ later called him the "prince of this world." The kingdoms were ruled largely according to Satan's principles.

Satan offered him at once, with out waiting long centuries for wrongs to cease, the very things he had come on purpose to gain. There will be no slow and painful process, no conflict, no persecutions, no gr at self-denial's, no martyrdoms. If thou wilt fall down and worship me. Satan does not mean a bald act of worship, a bending in outward reverence. Rather, Satan asked such an act of worship as when men worship money by loving it better than God; when they worship success by placing it before duty. Satan is too shrewd to insist on the form if he can gain the heart. It may have meant: "Flatter the people; be more politic in your teaching. Lower your standard a little; don't have so much to say about the cross, about self denial." Let thee hence, Satan. It was by this proposal that Satan revealed himself. Jesus may not, before this, have realized that the tempter was Satan; but now the robes of light fell off, and Satan stood undisguised before him. To give up dying for the sins of the world, to let Satan really rule,—this could come only from Satan, the great adversary of all good. For it is written (Deut. 6: 13). Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. The first and great commandment. There is no other way of gaining the true kingdom of God.

APPLICATIONS. We find this temptation in the attempts of the

church to fulfil its mission by worldly power and pomp, by secularizing the church. The result has always been a spiritual failure. It is the gaining any success by wrong-doing; attaining power, or wealth, or rank by any kind of wrong-doing.

CONSOLATION AFTER VICTORY.—No greater victory has ever been recorded. Then the devil leaveth him "For a season" (Luke 4: 13). He was tempted again and again; at last in Gethsemane and on the cross. And, behold, Angels. Spiritual beings; probably in visible form on this occasion. Ministered most naturally means "supplied him with food," and with all spiritual support, comfort, and companionship.

The First Sunday School.

In his recent book, on the life and work of Robert Raikes, J. Henry Harris gives the following interview which took place in 1863 between his father and William Brick, an old man of Gloucester, England, who was one of Mr. Raikes Sunday-school scholars. It gives a graphic description of the modes of discipline used to enforce order among the ragged urchins of Sooty Alley in 1683. Mr. Brick says:—

I can remember Mr. Raikes well enough. I remembered his caning me. I don't suppose I minded it much. He used to cane boys on the back of a chair. Some terrible bad chaps went to school when I first went.

Q. Did things improve? A. There were always bad 'uns coming in. I know the parents of one or two of them used to walk them to school with fourteen-pound weights tied to their legs.

Q. What for? A. To keep them from running away. Sometimes boys would be sent to school with logs of wood tied to their ankles, just as though they were wild animals, which I suppose they were, only worse.

Q. Did Mr. Raikes teach? A. He mostly looked on or talked to the boys. When a boy was very bad he would take him out of the school, and march him home, and get his parents to wallop him. He'd stop and see it done, and then bring the young urchin back, rubbing his eyes and other places. Mr. Raikes was a terror to all evil doers, and a praise to them that did well. Every one in the city loved and feared him.

Another old man named Cooksey who was interviewed, said: Sometimes Mr. Raikes would hold up his glass to his eye (an old-fashioned reading glass held in the hand) and, looking at a disobedient boy, say sternly: Ah, I can see you did not say your prayers this morning! The boys believed he could see through stone walls with that glass; and it magnified his eye, so that they were sometimes frightened, and told wonderful stories about what Mr. Raikes could do with his wonderful glass.

A Naval Solomon.

Captain McB, a credit to his race, says London Spare Moments, was once in command of a troop ship returning from India. On board he had as passengers three ladies, all wives of officers in her majesty's service.

Now, it fell out that the cabin allotted to them was fitted up to accommodate four, and consequently it contained four wash-basins, one of which was far larger than the other three.

For the right to use this particular basin each lady put forth her claim, citing her husband's position in the army. But the husbands unfortunately, all proved to be of equal rank, so to settle the matter the trio bearded the captain in his cabin.

We will leave it entirely to you, Captain, they said, and abide by your decision.

Captain McB, cogitated, and then declared solemnly, with the faintest twinkle in his gray eyes: Ladies, as it is no matter of rank I think it would be that the oldest among ye should have the biggest bowl.

With murmured thanks the ladies fled out again, but that basin was never used during the voyage.

What if it is midnight? Every stroke of the clock brings morning nearer.

AFTER A COLD DRIVE a teaspoonful of Pain-Killer mixed with a glass of hot water and sugar will be found a better stimulant than whiskey. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.

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