

Our Contributors.

LIFE OF CHRIST.

Bible Institute Course.

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Christ's Preparation for the Ministry.

Two great facts stand out as Christ's final preparation for the ministry. First, His years of manual labor in Nazareth. These years bring him into the life-experiences of the laboring man, who has the dust of the world's toil on his hands and on his garments. Every laborer in the world's workshop must feel kindred with the Son of Man during these years of His life. And if you working men will take up these studies in the life of Christ, and master them, you will find yourself keeping company with Christ as He leaves the workshop and enters upon His work of redemption. If you will accompany your friend, Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth, through His journeys and ministry, to Calvary and Olivet, and will watch Him ascend to the Father's House, your friendship for the Son of Man will have become friendship for the Son of God. You will then understand the expressions, love for Christ, communion and fellowship with Christ, as you never did it before. As you have walked with Jesus, He will walk with you, and the words of the hymn will become clear to you,

"My Saviour comes and walks with me,
And sweet communion here have we;
He gently leads me by the hand,
For this is heaven's border land."

Do not forget that the Saviour is your Friend, my Friend, the Friend of man. Come with me and we will study His life and ministry together.

The *Second* great fact in Christ's final preparation for the ministry is the Temptation. Here again He comes very near to us, even if He stands transcendently above us.

Read Mat. 3: 13 to 4: 11, Mark 1: 9-13, Luke 3: 21-22 and 4: 1-13.

Read each of these passages of scripture over and over again, until every fact in the narrative is clearly grasped. Then memorize every verse which has impressed you.

The following divisions may help you to master the Temptation and its lessons.

First, the occasion of the Temptation. Luke 3: 21-22, 4: 1. It followed immediately (so Mark 1: 12) after Christ had received special spiritual blessings. Count them as Luke records them, 1st He was just baptized, 2nd was praying, 3rd saw heaven opened above Him, 4th, Holy Spirit descended on Him visibly in form of a dove, 5th, a voice from Heaven, 6th, this voice proclaims Him God's Son, 7th, He was full of the Holy Ghost. Take your bible and number these spiritual blessings on the margin, and remember that Christ's great temptation immediately followed these glorious experiences. Then learn this first lesson: When God gives us special blessings He will test our newly acquired strength. Note Paul's experience, Rom. 7: 21. The devil is especially vigilant at the gate of the man who is intent on doing good. Strong temptation is not an evidence of spiritual deadness, lent of spiritual life.

Second. Christ was tempted by the devil, but He was led by the Spirit into the place of struggle, Luke 4: 1, Mt. 4: 1. Compare Job chapters 1 and 2. Lesson: temptation is not sin, but an evidence that the devil

considers us a menace to his kingdom.

Study Jas. 1: 2, 3. 12-14. Yielding to temptation is not only sin but death.

Third. The character of Christ's temptations.

a. Tempted as are the poor who cry for bread. Luke 4: 5-7. The devil takes Christ where he can unfold to Him in magnificent panorama the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The possession of these was what Jew and Greek and Roman would have admired. They would have taken away the reproach of the manger and the cross. Men would have received the Son of God with ovations. Riches and power would be mighty agents to the preacher. The face of Christ is thoughtful as He looks on the outspread glories with these possibilities; but Satan's scrutiny can detect no trace of selfishness in the Saviour's gaze.

c. Tempted as are the devout, holy, trusting souls who confide implicitly in God and in His word; and who sometimes long to give a coldly sceptical world proof that there is such a thing as faith, Luke 4: 9-11. Lesson from these Temptations, Heb. 4: 15-16.

Fourth. The weapon in the hand of Christ during temptation, Luke 4: 4, 8, 12. Though Son of God Jesus uses the Word of God to foil the devil. Adam had fallen through losing faith in God's word. Christ, the second Adam, the second representative of humanity, will exalt it as of final authority on questions of faith and conduct, short of whose commands we must not stay, beyond whose permissions we dare not go. Lesson: Eph. 6: 11-19.

Fifth. Victory is only for a season, Luke 4: 13. It is not safe to put off the armour of God, Gethsemane may be yet to come, and many an hour of weeping before that. Lesson 1 Cor. 10: 12-13.

Sixth. The fruit of victory, Matt. 4: 11. Lesson: Angels will minister to those who refuse food from the devil. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1: 14.

Complete your study of the Temptation by memorizing 1 Pet. 1: 3-9.

Life's Best Days.

The late Dr. Richard S. Storrs leaves us this cheering word of testimony: "I had as happy a childhood as falls to the lot of most children, and many a time it has been said to me by those who were visiting at my father's house, 'This is the happiest time in life for you.' I did not believe it then; I did not believe it as I grew older; and I know now that it was not true. The happiest time in your life is to come hereafter. If you try to do that which is right and useful to others, that which is honorable to yourself and that which is for the glory and praise of God, every year of your life will be happier than that which went before it. So do not feel that you are entering an oppressive, grinding, hateful world. Life on earth grows better and sweeter as one goes on in it, and what you are to do is to try to make a success of that life—each one of you.

The Lost Prayer Book

BY A PRESBYTERIAN ELDER.

In connection with the mid-week prayer-meeting problem, which is receiving considerable attention in the columns of the religious press, an incident of which I read a good many years ago comes to memory. A good old minister who had toiled faithfully and long in his field of labor, was filled with sorrow at the evidences he seemed to see on every hand that the results from his work were painfully meagre. To this was added the discouraging knowledge that not a few of his parishioners laid the spiritual harvest failure at his door. The faithful old veteran felt at times not merely discouraged but almost broken-hearted; and still he toiled on.

One day a deputation of his people waited upon him to discuss the situation and enquire why there were such meagre results from his labors. It is needless to say many of their observations were neither complimentary nor encouraging.

Finally, the old minister in tremulous and saddened tones remarked: "The fact is, brethren, I have lost my prayer book." "What do you mean, queried the deputation in chorus. Then the old servant of God told them that they neglected the weekly prayer-meeting, which was usually attended only by a little handful of old people; and further told them that he had every reason to believe that they rarely asked for God's blessing on his labors either at family worship or in their closets. So far as his people were concerned they left him to continue the fight alone. That was how he lost his prayer book, and because his people were not Aarons and Hurs upholding his hands by their prayers, the heavens above were as brass and the earth iron.

The deputation saw the point; the lost prayer-book was recovered, and ere long times of refreshing came from the hands of the Lord to the long barren field of labor.

How many faithful ministers all over Canada have "lost their prayer books" in this way? And because of this there are no blessed revivals of religion, few are being added to the churches, and the faithful toilers, not the indifferent, self-satisfied professing Christians, are unjustly blamed. What is wanted in addition to faithful telling of the old, old story, is a revival in mid-week prayer-meeting attendance, earnestness and faithfulness, and loving remembrance of the pastor and his labors at the family altar and in the closet. When the people faithfully uphold their pastor's hands in this way they will have their own hearts quickened and realise in some measure how blessed it is to tell the old, old story to others. Then they may expect "showers of blessing," on their pastor, on themselves and on all around them.

As We Forgive.

I joined with a congregation of several hundred in repeating the Lord's Prayer. When we came to the words, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," I could not help thinking: Do many of us, nay, do any of us, realize the real force and meaning of that petition? It is the only one in the prayer that is conditional. We do not ask for full and free forgiveness, as we ask for daily bread, for leading and for deliverance. Our request is that God, seeing how lovingly we deal with others, will deal with us in like manner and measure. We assume, in the asking, that we are really doing to others what we want God to do to us. But how few of us would be willing to abide by that