

The Quiet Hour.

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

S. S. LESSON—Matt. 3: 13 to 4: 11. Jan. 17.

GOLDEN TEXT—And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3: 17.

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Like a dove, v. 16. A village steeple was being chopped down. As it shook under the blows of the axe, a dove flew out and fluttered about. With every new stroke it became more agitated. "She has young ones there," said the carpenter. Just as the tower tottered, the bird flew inside, and was found afterwards crushed with its young in the ruins of the nest. The gentle, clinging tenderness of the dove well represents the holy affection of God's Spirit for us, how He broods over us, and also how, having descended upon men, He yearns through them for those who are nigh to ruin. The dove is the emblem of love, of peace, of soli cudi.

A voice from heaven, v. 17. God's voices are not silent to day. He still speaks to us in His word, in the church, through our conscience, in the events of providence; and the hearing ear and understanding heart always find Him pointing to Christ and saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Then, ch. 4: 1. When the south wind has blown softly for a season, then we may expect the bitter, chilling blast from the north. After the flowers of summer come the icicles of winter. So on the heels of the baptism came the devil. When the peaceful communion Sabbath draws to a close, and the heart, serene with a new sense of the love of God, is planning a life of consecrated service, look out! the devil is near. After a great calm, the experienced captain watches for a low barometer. As a quaint Puritan puts it: "Then when He was washed, did the devil attempt to soil Him."

Man shall not live by bread alone, v. 4. The old citizens of imperial Rome used to fill its streets with the cry, "Bread and the circus!" Food and games were all they tried to live upon. But the last vestige of their proud empire has long since passed away. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The will of God is expressed through His Word. We live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If a large, and easily spared fraction of the time, now expended in converting stones into bread, were devoted to acquiring the word of God, what bounding life would there not be in this world? But to neglect the Word, in order to convert stones into bread, is really, in the long run, to convert the true bread by which men live, into a stone.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, ch. 4: 7. Some years ago a demand was made in a British journal that there should be, in the same hospital, one ward where prayer was offered, and one where there was none, to see if prayer was of any avail on behalf of the sick. Such a demand was stark unbelief, blasphemously testing God, "tempting" Him. True faith trusts and believes and gets its own assurance. "God, if Thou wouldst give me, a praying man, a great crop, and starve the fields of that profane person over the road, people would

begin to think there is a God in heaven—do it." No, don't ask it. It is an unworthy trial of God. Thou shalt not tempt.

All the kingdoms of the world, v. 8. All are not necessary. "A pin will do it, a sweet smile, a fair face, the ruby wine, the love of money. Ah, for what has a man not sold his soul."

Him only shalt thou serve, v. 10. Here is a watch complete in all its parts. To whom does it belong? To its maker, all will agree, unless he has disposed of it to some other person. Has not the Maker of our bodies and spirits the right of ownership over us? We belong, not to ourselves but to Him. We rob God, if we use our powers for any purpose contrary to His will?

Angels came and ministered unto him, v. 11. Somebody has spoken of "unrecognized angels." We read of Manoah, the father of Samson, who knew not that his visitor was "an angel of the Lord," and of the servant of Elisha, whose eyes had only to be opened to see the Lord's protecting host. It is our lack of spiritual sight, alone, that prevents our seeing the messengers of God hastening to supply our need.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Our Future Homes

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

Blessed beings; ye who dwell,
In the realms unsearchable;
Far above the highest star,
Where the many mansions are;
For ever bright,
All day, no night.

In God's city light and fair,
No disease can enter there;
And no trouble, sigh or groan,
Tears or sorrows—death unknown;
Health unailing,
None are ailing.

'Tis a city strong and sure,
Built on Rock that must endure;
And its walls of crystal stand,
Firm as adamant and grand;
Its bulwarks vast
Shall ever last.

Its great wealth has ne'er been told,
For its streets are paved with gold;
And its air so mild and sweet,
Balmy—unknown cold or heat;
A place of rest,
Forever blest.

'Tis a home beyond compare
For the throne of God is there;
And its raptures, ever well,—
Great its joys, no tongue can tell:
Rich, fair, and grand,
Emmanuel's land.

London, Ont.

Not Higher Critics.

It isn't the higher critics that are destroying the influence of the church—and I have no more sympathy with the de-structive critics than you have. The trouble is not with the higher critics, but the lower living of Christians. The fog of higher criticism is not to be dissipated by firing great guns at it. That only adds to the fog the smoke of the powder. You can dissipate the fog only by the sunbeams of Christian living. I'll wear myself out preaching the evidences of Christianity, and some cross-grained representative of Christianity in the pews will spoil the whole inside of ten minutes after I get through.—P. S. Henson, D.D.

The Spirit Of Consecration.

"For their sakes I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth." In the shadow of the cross, he who had schooled himself daily to the repression of feeling, spoke the secret of his life and death. He interpreted his whole work as a consecration in the power of love. On the cross he consecrated himself as the atoning sacrifice—the absolute oblation for the sins of the whole world.

The great need of our time is real consecration, and this must be a consecration after the same manner. It is true that men are oppressed and haunted by the evils and miseries incident to our present social condition. They feel that something must be done; they do not know what; yet they are specially unwilling to abandon their present ways of life. Surely the time has come for a great and serious effort on their part to enter into more intimate communion with Christ. The beginning of this must be a return to the cross, in meditation and prayer beneath its shadow, and nowhere else, the lost enthusiasm will revive.

No man can in any degree contribute to the salvation of society who does not first purify himself. The gift is nothing without the giver. Consecration without sanctification is impossible. It is by daily surrender that men are led up gently to the great altars of sacrifice. "The indifference and levity which we see around us," said Isaac Taylor, "is the fashion of a day, and a day may see it exchanged for the utmost frenzy of fanatic zeal." The sea in the calm noontide gives little prophecy of the waves at nightfall when the winds are up. The final triumph of the love of God will be reached, we doubt not, through great surrenders. But if these come as the crown of consecrated lives, they will be made with the solemn quietude and anticipation of Jesus.—Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll.

Lord Strathcona's Advice.

Glasgow Weekly Leader: The life and success of Lord Strathcona will ever be an inspiration to young men struggling upwards through long years of toil and obscurity. To them the story of his rise from junior clerk to millionaire peer will ever possess all the charm of romance, and the charm will be all the greater because it is no fairy tale they are studying, but an actual record of effort and achievement. The principles which have guided Lord Strathcona throughout his long and arduous life are principles which all aspiring youth can make their own. On one occasion he was asked for some words of advice to young men, and this is what he said:—"Be content with your lot, but always be fitting yourself for something better and something higher. Do not despise what you are. Be satisfied for the time, not grumbling and finding fault. If you want to get higher, to a better position, only cheerful perseverance will bring you there; grumbling will not help you an inch. Your future really depends almost entirely on yourself, and is what you make it; I would like to impress this fact on you. Do the work yourself; don't wait for friends to use their influence on your behalf; don't depend on the help of others. Of course, opportunity is a great thing, and it comes to some men more frequently than to others. But there are very few it does not visit at one time or another, and if you are not ready for it, and have not prepared to welcome it, that is your fault and you are the loser. Apart from what we call genius, I believe that one man