

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

V. 1.—Christ was led into a “trying” position, to be “tried.” So God often leads His people into difficult places to test them and also to strengthen them. It is one of His “Means of Grace.” “Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations,” James 1: 2. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,” James 1: 12. “We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Rom. 5: 3.

V. 2.—How intensely human Christ was! How greatly these thoughts which haunted Him, worried and tried Him; so that for the long, long, period of forty days His bodily wants were forgotten in the struggle. How human too, in that when resolve could in no wise be shaken, and He would go forward in the path of duty at all costs, the greatness of the difficulties vanished and ceased to perplex, and calm and peace came. How near the temptation brings Christ to us.

V. 3, 4.—This temptation comes to men to-day. They are out of work and bread. A position offers. There is something about it they do not approve; but they must live. In such circumstances each one must judge for himself, but we have here what Christ did. He trusted Providence rather than use means which He knew God did not wish to be used.

V. 5-7.—To go needlessly into danger of any kind, when unnecessary, and merely for the sake of a short cut to wealth or power, is to tempt God to leave us to the consequences of our act. Only when in the way that He leads can we expect His blessing.

V. 3-10.—How often this temptation comes. A man sees three dollars for a barrel of apples instead of two, if he puts the big ones on top. He sees an extra fifty cents out of an ignorant customer by telling him that the article cost more than it is offered for; or ten dollars more by concealing a bad habit of a horse he is selling; or hundreds of dollars to be made by grinding employees; or a ten dollar bill if he

will sell his vote; or a prominent position if he will use mean ways of gaining it. Satan is constantly showing men some part of the world and saying “all this I will give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

V. 11.—The way to get clear of temptation is to refuse to listen to it. The devil does not spend his time where He gets no encouragement. Resist him and he will flee.

11.—What a precious thought is the ministry of angels. “Are they not all ministering spirits?” And perhaps the dear ones who have gone, who are “like unto the angels,” are sent forth on missions of love and mercy; they, as spirits, speaking in spirit language to our spirits, and giving strength and cheer and peace.

SOME GENERAL LESSONS.

1. The lesson teaches that the Devil is a real person and not a mere influence. He is as real as any other part or person of the unseen, the spirit, world.

2. All thoughts in the mind that are not in accord with God’s mind and will, are put there by Satan. The thought came to Annanias to keep part of the price of the land and act as if giving all. Peter said “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie.”

3. There is no sin in being tempted. Christ was tempted, but He knew no sin. The sin is in harboring the temptation.

4. Christ was familiar with Scripture and a timely text always came to mind. What an argument for storing the minds of the young with Scripture truth, so that when tempted, the Spirit may bring it to mind to save them.

A tempted boy stood under a fruit tree one night, and with outstretched hand was reaching after fruit that had been forbidden. As he looked up at it, he saw through the leaves a star. The text “Thou God seest me” flashed through his mind. It seemed the eye of God looking down. His hand dropped. He was saved by means of that text.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

1. When and where did the Temptation take place? Other instances of bodily removal under the influence of the Spirit—1 Kings 18: 12; 2 Kings 2: 16; Ezek. 3: 14; 8: 3; 11: 1, 24; 43: 5; Acts 8: 39. Why was Jesus tempted?

(Heb. 5: 8; 4: 15). What assurance have we of victory over temptation? (1 Cor. 10: 13).

2. How long did Jesus fast? Was this an entire abstinence from food? (Luke 4: 2). Other forty-day fasts—Ex. 34: 28; 1 Kings