

The Quiet Hour.

The Preaching of John The Baptist.

S. S. LESSON—Jan. 10. Matt. 3: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT—Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matt. 3: 2.

BY REV. C. MACKINNON, B.D., SYDNEY, N.S.

Preaching in the wilderness, v. 1. John the Baptist did not "conduct a service"; he preached, heralded a message. Consequently there was no necessity for an ornate ceremony, a melodious choir, a splendid sanctuary. The wilderness was good enough. The crowds flocked thither. People are not punctilious about their surroundings, when they hear burning words from a heart on fire. What our own age in its heart of hearts hungers for, is not a service, but a message.

Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, v. 2. "There is no going to the fair haven of glory without sailing through the narrow strait of repentance." The Greek word for repentance means change of mind and purpose. You set out to visit a certain city. But you hear that a dangerous contagious disease is raging there. You change your mind: you turn back—you have "repented." Our word repentance means "sorrowing back." He who says: "I will no longer mistrust God, but believe Him; I will no longer disobey His laws, but will strive to keep them," has repented. "Real repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin and from sin."

Were baptized of him, v. 6. Earnest and faithful preaching or teaching is sure to incur opposition; but it will bear its fruit. Luther fearlessly proclaimed justification by faith, and the Reformation was the result. Rev. John Livingstone, suffering for the Word, preached one burning sermon at Shotts in 1630, and about five hundred were converted by its agency. In 1812, religion in Skye was well nigh dead, but he preaching of a poor blind fiddler, who had been converted, brought about a revival still vividly remembered.

The Pharisees and Sadducees come, v. 7. "Go easy to-day, John, moderate your thunder a little; for we see some of the grandees from Jerusalem in the crowd, and it is a great thing for the new movement to have the patronage of these learned and wealthy persons." But the bold, blunt, impolitic man, who had only fed on "locusts and wild honey," when he saw them, cried out the louder, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Never compound with the world for the sake of momentary success. "The man," it has been well said, "who, in pursuit of a wise reform, is afraid of the breath of the thing to be reformed, is already defeated." When it is a question of men's eternal welfare, be brave, and your very courage will vanquish the Pharisee and Sadducee, and win his soul for Christ.

Now, v. 10. Like a bell the word "now" calls to instant action. Youth is, above all others, the age to decide for Christ. At a recent meeting of Sabbath School workers, mostly college students, a speaker asked those who had given themselves to Christ before sixteen to rise; nearly all present rose. Those who pass this age without taking this decisive step are less likely to take it later.

Baptize you with water, v. 11. It has been a matter of surprising concern to some people, how much water should be used in

baptism. If a man feels the need of the whole Atlantic, by all means let him have it. If he is satisfied with a few drops, they are sufficient. The grave question is, With what have I been baptized? With the mere material water, which can only cleanse the body, or with the living fire of God's Holy Spirit, which will consume my sins and illumine my soul?

The ax...the fan...the fire, vs. 10, 12. "Fear," says Dr. Peloubet, "in the sense not of terror, but of foreseeing consequences, is simply wisdom and common sense. President Stanley Hall, in his Study of Fears, declares that such fear is essential. The question of life is what we shall fear, whether men, or danger in the paths of duty, or dishonor, failure, sins."

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Faith and Personal Care.

BY C. H. WETTERBE.

There are so many people who have a deranged and dangerous faith, that it is the duty of better established persons to try to doctor the unfortunate ones. The following question was recently sent to Rev. James M. Gray, of Boston, to be answered in the Union Gospel News: "Is the carrying of life insurance by a Christian, in any way contrary to the teaching of the Bible, and would you apply the same principles to any other kind of insurance?" Here is a part of Dr. Gray's answer: "The best answer I can give to this question is to say that I carry insurance, both on my life and on my property, which I certainly should not do, did I consider either contrary to the teaching of the Bible." He further says: "This matter is a very serious one to many sensitive and conscientious Christians, and warrants a further word of brotherly counsel."

There are those who feel that a life of faith means a disregard of the ordinary suggestions of natural reason and intelligence, and that to make provision for the earthly future of one's family is to doubt God and to retain the reins of government in one's own hands. But this is not so, necessarily. There may be isolated instances in every age and nation where God calls upon his witnesses to step forth into an extraordinary kind of experience, like the patriarchs, of the Old Testament, or the apostles of the New, but I feel satisfied that they are isolated and extraordinary."

I wish that thousands of those who are exercising a crazy faith could read those words, and then would put the principles into practice. The teaching is especially needed by those who believe that when they are seriously sick they do not require the use of any medicine, for they are sure that such use would be contrary to faith in God. They should be taught that God, by his directions in the Bible, commands the use of appropriate means in cases of illness, and that such a thing is thoroughly in harmony with true faith. Faith and personal care are bound together. We are to provide and protect ourselves to the best of our ability, and we show real faith in God by pursuing that course.

It is better to be a good failure than a bad success.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Microbes.

By MRS. H. M. McCLUSKY.

These are the days of microbes. They are in the water, and the air; they lurk in all imaginable places in readiness to fasten themselves upon unsuspecting humanity; and woe to the individual who has not a strong, robust body that resists and throws off the disease infected germs. No part of the body is exempt from these ravagers. A dentist impresses upon his patient the need of scrupulous care of the teeth in order that the microbe find no place to lodge, and so the entire physical being must be hygienically fortified against these marauders. Is there not a parallel in the spiritual realm?

In these days of material ascendancy, the preservation and perfecting of the physical nature require so much attention that the spiritual nature is largely ignored; and yet, are not the unseen things the real and eternal ones?

What are some of the spiritual disease germs which correspond to the microbes of the physical world, and what the required spiritual condition whereby they are thrown off without personal loss? Indeed, one may become stronger through the very act of resistance. One insidious foe is discouragement; if it is given a place its ravages are rapid and disastrous; it soon develops into doubt, which ultimately results in unbelief. Another germ, which is almost more deadly, is spiritual pride; it hides behind every good deed, ready to thrust itself with complacency into the life, and if one is predisposed to the malady, it becomes well seated before consciousness is aroused to the fatal condition. There are many other germs which only wait for the opportunity to poison the spiritual life, and how can one be safe with such environments? What is the process that insures safety in the physical world? Hygiene, under Spanish rule, had yearly the fever scourge, but when for a time, the United States had control, it was thoroughly cleansed and the sanitary conditions were so entirely transformed, that the deadly microbe could not find quarters for its annual campaign. Cleanliness and pure food supplies are the two important requisites for physical self protection.

Is there not an exact correspondence in safe-guarding the spiritual life? Cleansed by the atoning blood of Christ, not once only, but daily, that no dust or stain be allowed to accumulate; for there is, first, receiving Jesus for salvation, then the daily and hourly need of His keeping power. By contact with the world, spiritual perception becomes dimmed, and it is only as the life is in Christ and His words in the life, that there can be a vigorous, overcoming personality. Jesus said: "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you." Of the pure toads physically, consider the thought that is given to it; milk and water are sterilized—while solid foods undergo the most rigorous scrutiny. Is there as much thought given to obtain a pure food supply spiritually? When the city or village water becomes polluted, no time or expense is spared to purify it, and rightly so, but is it not equally important that spiritual nourishment be pure and wholesome? Yet, pernicious doctrines are sowed broadcast over our land; words that are taking all the life out of the Christian religion, for in them there is no Jesus as the risen Lord, Who manifests Himself in love and power through His followers by the Holy Spirit. In His place are written Culture, Education, and