

sion to hide a defect in something we have to sell ; or to "take it easy" when a master's eye is absent. These thoughts are sometimes

yielded to, sometimes resisted. Christ was "in all points" tempted like as we are, except that in no case did He yield.

- LESSON PLAN. { I. Temptation in the wilderness. vs. 1-4.
II. Temptation on the Temple Roof. vs. 5-7
III. Temptation on the Mountain Top. vs. 8-11.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

I. Led up of the Spirit.—Just as the Spirit leads us. If one were newly appointed as S. S. Teacher to a very difficult class ; or as a missionary, to a savage, cannibal people, and his human nature shrank from it, he would naturally wish to get away alone ; to think, to pray. He would not wish others near. And yet, that very wish would be the Spirit's leading, Ps. 37 : 23. Rom. 8 ; 14. So with Christ. From the quiet of private life He had just been publicly set apart to His great work. With all its difficulties that work arose before Him, the cross at the farther end. How natural, that just at this point He would like to get away from men, and so He hurries away to the wilderness to be alone. He follows His own will, and yet, as with us, it is the Spirit's leading. He is filled with the Spirit, and in proportion as the will of men is surrendered to God and they are filled with His Spirit, their thoughts and will are the Spirit's thought and will, and their acts are His leading.

To be tempted of the Devil.—The devil wished above all things to prevent Christ carrying out His work of redeeming man from Satan's bondage ; and the Holy Spirit, to enable Christ in His human nature to experience what men have to bear, that He might be able to sympathize with them when they are tempted, gave Satan full opportunity to put any thoughts he wished into the mind of Christ.

These thoughts would be thoughts of shrinking from the hard task before Him, just as with us. In the Garden, when the keenest suffering of His life was very near, He was in an agony, sweating as if drops of blood, and He prayed "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." This agony in the Garden, thoughts of dread that troubled His human nature, were no doubt the same that troubled Him for forty days in the wilderness ; His human nature shrinking from drinking the life cup now set before Him. These thoughts of fear and shrinking Satan was permitted to put into His mind.

2. Fasted forty days.—His agony in the garden was great. In the wilderness the same thoughts, the shrinking from the bitter cup, thoughts persistently put there and kept there by Satan, so worried and troubled Him that for forty days He was in such unrest of mind that He felt no hunger. So it is with men. In times of intense anxiety or excitement, bodily wants are forgotten and meal time passes unheeded. How intense must have been the struggle going on in the mind of Christ.

He afterwards hungered.—Satan finding it useless to continue putting such thoughts into His mind, left him for a little. With calm and peace of mind came a sense of His bodily wants. With us there may be a struggle of mind over some duty, but when with the Spirit's help there is the decision to go forward at any cost, there is peace. He who was putting thoughts into the mind, not completely in accord with God's will, gives up the effort as useless, and calm and peace returns. The devil, resisted, flees. So it was with Christ.

3. When the tempter came.—He had gone for a little time, now he returns and tries another plan.

If Thou be—Command.—How naturally such a thought would come to Christ, as to us if in his place. He is very hungry and thinking how He will get some food. The thought comes to Him : "I have just been declared to be the Son of God. If so, I can turn these stones into bread and eat them. Why not do it ?" But as He thinks, a verse of Scripture occurs to Him, "It is written : man shall not live by bread alone," etc. God brought me here and He will care for me in His own way. And He does not carry out the thought that had come to Him. He trusts the God who led Him there, to provide for Him when He is there.

5. Devil taketh Him.—The Spirit led Him into the wilderness, v. 1 ; and the devil took Him to Jerusalem, v. 5. These are but two sides of the same act. The devil wished to have Christ in both cases. The Spirit suffered Him thus far and in His own way led in both cases.