

**FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL****International S. S. Lesson.**

LESSON II.—JESUS TEMPTED.—JAN. 9.

(Matt. iv. 1-11.)

**GOLDEN TEXT**—"For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 18.

**TIME AND PLACE**.—About Jan. A.D. 27. Probably Mount Quarantance, between Jerusalem and the river Jordan, south of Jericho.

**LESSON OUTLINE**.—I, The Temptation of Hunger, 1-4. II, The Temptation of Presumption, 5-7. III, The Temptation of Ambition, 8-11.

**INTRODUCTION**.—The events of the present lesson followed immediately after Jesus' baptism by John.

**VERSE BY VERSE**.—1. "Then."—Immediately after His baptism. "Led up of the Spirit."—By the Holy Spirit. "Wilderness."—See "Place." "Tempted."—To be tried or proved. "The Devil."—Satan, the great adversary of God and man.

2. "Fasted."—Abstained from food. "A hungered"—Very hungry.

3. "The tempter."—So called because he is always trying to tempt man to sin.

4. "It is written."—Deut. viii. 3.

5. "A pinnacle of the temple."—Supposed to have been Herod's royal portico, overhanging the valley three hundred feet from the ground.

6. "Cast thyself down."—He would thus show His mighty power as the Son of God. "It is written."—Psa. xci. 11.

7. "It is written again."—Deut. vi. 16. "Tempt the Lord."—To trifle with His promises, to treat His word lightly.

8. "An exceeding high mountain."—In reality or in vision Jesus was shown the kingdoms of the earth.

9. "Will I give Thee."—Permit Him to reign over them without opposition.

10. "It is written."—Deut. vi. 13.

11. "Angels."—Spiritual beings, servants of God, doing His bidding. "Ministered unto Him."—Some suppose they supplied him with food, others that they gave Him spiritual companionship.

**THOUGHTS**.—The time of temptation was a period of physical weakness. Forty days of struggle might seem enough to prove to Satan his failure in attempting to overthrow the Saviour and turn Him from carrying out His full mission for the world. Yet he made a bold attempt when the body was weak, and when nature was demanding food, to see if possibly he might through "the flesh" deceive and overthrow the firm reliance in the Father's care which Jesus exhibited. This temptation came also at the very commencement of His holy enterprise. It followed directly upon His anointing received at His baptism. Before He publicly proclaimed Himself the Messiah, He was subjected to those severe temptations which now sometimes confront the disciples of Jesus. These assaults came in the absence of human friends, who might have been a support or have rejoiced when He triumphed. Alone He met the cruel enemy and conquered him.

The place of temptation was the wilderness around, and hunger within. The dreary loneliness, amid physical weakness, was the place where Satan saw his opportunity. How little consequence the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven, which were given at His baptism, would be, if now Satan might prevent His career of self-denial, humility and good works. If he could but turn Him from making atonement on the cross by His death and suffering, and instead cause Him to follow on to suit the wishes of carnal men and establish a powerful temporal kingdom, his ends would be met. The place to do this cruel work was there in the desert loneliness, and before farther steps were taken.

**CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.****DAILY READINGS.**

First Day—Jesus tempted. Matt. iv. 1-11.

Second Day—"In the wilderness . . . with the wild beast."

Third Day—"Forty days tempted of the devil."

Fourth Day—"Able to succor them that are tempted."

Fifth Day—"In all points tempted like as we are."

Sixth Day—"Resist the devil, and he will flee."

**PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, JAN. 9.**—OUR TEMPTATIONS AND THEIR CONQUEST. Heb. iv. 1-10.

**TOPIC THOUGHTS.**

A temptation entertained is half-victorious.

There must be desire in the mind before there can be deed in the life.

The armor of unselfishness is invulnerable.

All are tempted, but none need yield. Our worst temptations are, after all, but common temptations, and such as Christ conquered.

Satan cannot make his home in the heart where dwell thoughts of Christ.

To be busy is to be out of the reach of half of sin's shafts.

To remember Christ's example is to be rewarded by Christ's victory.

The Holy Spirit is near, eager to help, when any of God's children are in danger of sin.

We are too much on the defensive. Those who are most aggressive are tempted least.

**SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT TEMPTATION.**

BY REV. WILLIAM T. GUNN.

There are four things about temptation that we need to learn.

First, "Temptation is not sin"—until we yield to it. Christ was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The great enemy loves to trap us this way. He sends evil thoughts to us, and then tries to persuade and discourage by getting us to say to ourselves, "How sinful our hearts must be to have such evil thoughts!" Beware of ever letting him lead you into Despair's Castle in this needless way. If we hate and put from us the evil thoughts he sends, we are not sinning, but growing in grace.

Second, "Temptation is not defeat."—To see an enemy is not to be beaten by him. Yet how many of our temptations—quick temper, sharp speech, slothfulness—we surrender to at once, saying: "It's my nature. I can't help it!" Shame on us, to give up without a struggle. "Don't give up the ship" without a battle. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Third, "Temptation is opportunity."—The letter Y was in olden times regarded as a sacred letter, because its stem represented the path of life, dividing constantly into two branches,—the way of good and the way of evil. Temptation is opportunity. We may choose the evil way and depart from God, or we may choose the right road and draw nearer to him than we were before.

Fourth, "Temptation is God's gymnasium"—for the exercise and development of the soul. In a gymnasium the teacher carefully examines every student, and then sets him at the exercise which will develop the muscles that are weak. Just so, only with infinitely more love and wisdom, does our heavenly Father know our needs, and allow us to come into contact daily with those special temptations by resisting which in His strength we shall best develop into the "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He will not suffer us to be "tempted above that we are able," but as our days and their need, so shall our strength be.

Thus do we learn what James meant when he said, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "Fall into"—not run into; for we are not to seek them, but to pray humbly, "Lead us not into temptation." Now, knowing these four things, we ask ourselves three questions:—

First, "How shall we know temptation when it comes?"

The answer is, By companionship with Jesus. The Comrades of the Quiet Hour will have little trouble here, especially if, as Dr. Clark advises, we "practice the presence of God." Imagine that Jesus were with you as a Friend by your side, with His eyes upon you,—would you do it? Remember, this is no imagination, but reality. He is by our side. His eyes do see, and His ears do hear us.

Second, "How shall we meet temptation when we know it?"

And our first answer must be, With Christ. When we can have Him with us to Whom "all power in heaven and in earth" be longed, how foolish to fight alone! He hath "been tempted in all points like as we are," and as we resist temptation, we shall find every victory bringing us into a deeper trust in Him.

But our second answer is, Not only should we meet temptation "with Christ," but "like Christ." And how was that? By prayer, earnest and solitary prayer. Remember Gethsemane. Also, by laying up in our heart God's word, the wonderful sword of the Spirit. Remember the temptation in the wilderness, and the repeated "It is written."

Third, "When shall we meet temptation?"

I cannot tell when my enemy will come against me, but I can tell whether I shall march against him at once or wait till he has chosen a good position and fortified himself strongly. We need to crush temptation as soon as we see it, take it by surprise, and give it no quarter. Do not dally with it one instant.

Evil is a weed that grows quickly, worse than pusley, which is said to grow from a single seed to a plant capable of ripening 120,000 seeds in one short summer. So, for the love of the Master and your own safety, meet the temptation at once, and crush it before it has time to grow.—*Christian Endeavor World*.