

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

By Rev. J. W. Macmillan, B.A.

Led up of the Spirit (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. There is no shame or crime in being tempted. Evil will present itself to the purest. It is part of the providence of God that we are placed where temptations await us. For no one is good who has had no chance to be bad. There can be no credit except where there might have been blame. Let no one be cast down, then, because evil suggests itself to him. Let him keep his sorrows for his sins. The sin is in yielding. As Luther says, "We cannot prevent the birds from flying about our heads, but we can prevent them building nests in our brain."

The wilderness, v. 1. All temptations are lonely things. The seat of battle is your own heart. A young man may stand between two companies of his friends, one of which is enticing him to sin and the other urging him to resist. His ears are filled with pleadings. They press close to him, and perhaps lay their hands upon him. But, after all, the fight is within. The struggle is between his own good desires and his own evil desires. In silence and solitude these wage a desperate duel for the young man's soul. In the last resort, every man's deeds are his own. And if afterward one lie on an uneasy bed, he may reflect that he has made it himself. And if he overcomes, the victory also is his.

To be tempted, v. 1. There are three characters who have been known to warn others from sin. The first is the sinner whom sin has ruined, and who would save his friends from the same plight. He is like a traveller who has fallen into a ravine and shouts to another whom he hears approaching, "Beware!" The second is the sinner who has been saved. He is like one who, after struggling in the ravine, has gotten out on the other side and calls his warning back. His voice is apt to sound more clearly than that of the man in the ravine. The third is the man who has resisted temptation. He knows what sin is, but he is unhurt of sin. He is like one who stands on the hither side of the ravine to point it out to travellers, to hold them back if they are slipping toward it, and to pilot them safely around it. This One is Jesus, who was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" therefore He has the mightiest power to succor those that are tempted.

An hungered, bread, vs. 2, 3. "A man must live," people say.

"But is it so? Pray tell us why Life at such cost you have to buy? In what religion were you told A man must live? There are times when a man must die. Imagine, for a battle cry From soldiers with a sword to hold, From soldiers with the flag unrolled, This coward's whine, this liar's lie, A man must live!"

It is written, etc., v. 4. God's will first and only, even if it should mean death. The shame of cowardice and unfaithfulness is incident to death, as is illustrated in an incident of the siege of Port Arthur related by Mr. Richmond Smith, the great war correspondent. A company of Japanese soldiers refused to move out of the trenches in the face of the enemy's fierce fire, when ordered to do so by their officer. The officer was killed while urging them forward. This was their punishment: They were taken from among the fighting men, and made servants. The

hewing of wood and drawing of water, all sorts of menial tasks, were given them. And each day they were marched to a shrine erected over the body of their dead leader, and listened to the praises of their religion. At last they could bear it no longer, and petitioned to be sent to the place of peril, in the very face of the foe, where every man of them felt fighting bravely.

It is written, v. 6. Any good thing may be misused. The devil quoted the Bible. Food is good, but gluttony is bad. Work is good; slavery to work is bad. Learning is good, but there is much shallow and pretentious learning. And the cure of the misuse of anything is the restoration of its proper use. Our Lord replied to Satan's improper quotation with a text so fit and convincing as to vindicate the power of Scripture quotation. The cure for gluttony is not salvation, but moderation. The cure for overwork is not idleness, but regulated work. The cure for false teaching is not ignorance, but the truth. Like the woman at the Macedonian court who appealed from Philip drunk to Philip sober, we appeal from misuse to the proper use.

Get the hence, Satan, v. 10. Satan knew full well that he had met his Master. A single, short, sharp, decisive sentence, and the victory over the tempter was won. And a like conquest may be ours. Let us—the weakest of us—bid the evil one begone, and back of our words is the power that vanquished him in the wilderness. No one can put up an honest fight against temptation and lose.

PRAYER WHEN THE DOOR WAS SHUT.

I need not leave the jostling world,
Or wait till daily tasks are o'er,
To fold my palms in secret prayer
Within the close-shut door.

There is a viewless cloistered room
As high as heaven, as fair as day,
Where, though my feet may join the throng

My soul can enter in and pray.

No human step approaching breaks
The blissful silence of the place;
No shadow steals across the light
That falls from my Redeemer's face.

One hearkening even can not know
When I have crossed the threshold o'er;
For he alone who hears my prayer
Has heard the shutting of the door.

—Harriet McEwen Kimball.

DANGEROUS TINKERING.

A boy of fifteen years was the owner of a new watch. He was duly proud thereof, and consulted it with frequency. One day it stopped. He opened the case and saw among the wheels what seemed to be a hair. He thought it an obstruction, and with his pen-knife he removed it. Imagine his surprise, the next day, when the jeweller told him he had destroyed the hair-spring, which was essential to the time keeping of the watch. When we see men trying to eliminate passages from the Bible, we wonder whether they are acting with similar ignorance. In discarding what to them seems a superfluity in the Word of God, they may be taking away some of its most important features.—Selected.

There are those so sharp-sighted that they can discover innumerable blemishes in the most saintly characters, while others are for ever on the lookout for slights and grievances, imagining offences where none were in the least intended. What a mercy for us that Christ does not regard us critically though he sees our every defect! It is not as though he saw it not; he overlooks in love.—J. P. Cowling.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.

High Mountain—From a very early date, tradition fixed the scene of the temptation on the mountain called by the Crusaders Quarantania, and by the Arabs Karantel, about two miles north from the site of Jericho. This mountain rises almost perpendicularly from the plain of Jordan on its west side, and towers gloomy and weird towards the sky. From the fourth century it has been a resort of hermits, who selected this doleful spot to inflict doleful penances on themselves; and many caves and grottoes, some of them artificial, are still occupied by Coptic and Abyssinian recluses. These hermitages are about half way up the cliff and have been ornamented by their successive tenants with frescoes. In recent years the Greek hermits, joined by a number of their brethren, took possession of the summit of the mountain, and with incredible labor in transporting the materials, have built a convent of considerable size on it, with walls all round it to defend them against the Bedouins, who look on all this region as their peculiar property. With this modern addition to it, the whole hill looks like a mediæval fortress looming up against the clouds. It forms a fit setting for the story of the Lesson.—Teachers' Monthly.

CARE FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

It is the duty of the Church to care for the little ones. "Feed my lambs," is just as imperative as "Feed my sheep." There is a great commendation to those who look after the children: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me." To be much with the little ones brings sweetness and tenderness to our own hearts, and it is the child-soul that makes us great. Some one has told of a picture by Watts in which "an old man, worn and feeble, lies back in his chair, dying. Around him, dropped from his feeble hands, lie all the gifts of his culture. Wearily he fades away amid the wreck of his highest human experiences. Above him a great angel, benignant and strong, bears off his soul in the shape of a little child, soft and white and pure and warm." To have the soul of a child is greater than all philosophy; and to enter the kingdom "as a little child" is worth more than all the joy the arts and sciences can give. And to study the child-life is to win the child-soul. To bring to it God's love is to bring both it and God's love to us. To be in love with the little ones is to live not far from the gates of the blessed. There is no more hopeful field for culture than the heart of "one of those little ones."—Selected.

WE KNOW THE GUIDE.

Out of obedience and devotion arises an habitual faith, which makes Him, though unseen, a part of our life. He will guide us in a sure path, though it be a rough one; though shadows hang upon it, yet He will be with us. He will bring us home at last. Through much trial it may be, and weariness, in much fear and fainting of heart, in much sadness and loneliness, in grief that the world never knows, and under burdens that the nearest never suspect. Yet He will suffice for all. By His eye or by His voice He will guide us if we be docile and gentle; by His staff and by His rod, if we wander or are willful; anyhow, and by all means, he will bring us to his rest.—H. E. Manning.

Deliverance from sin means the transformation of life, the awakening or renewal of holy purpose, the control of pure, high, noble motive. The Scriptures express the fact felicitously when they speak of the converted person as a new man.

*S. S. Lesson—Matthew 4:1-11. Commit to memory v. 4. Read Mark 1: 12, 13; Luke 4: 1-13. Golden Text—In all points tempted like as we, yet without sin.—Hebrews 4:15.