

## The Quiet Hour

Rev. Canon G. OSBORNE TROOP, M.A.

### BROKEN CISTERNS.

"MY people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." In these striking words does Jehovah, through the prophet Jeremiah, appeal not only to perverse Judah but also to perverse Christendom. For even the professedly Christian world is full of "broken cisterns." I am writing these lines in New York, en route to Jamaica. On my way here from Toronto I passed through Montreal. The engineers of the water works in Montreal celebrated the New Year by an act of supreme selfishness, inasmuch as they, without warning, went on strike and cut off the water supply of that great city. You can imagine the distress caused by this ruthless act to thousands of innocent sufferers in hospitals as well as in private homes. Water was at a premium. I was myself thankful for one tumblerful of water in which to perform my morning ablutions. One only finds out the value of water when suddenly deprived of it. What would it be to be cut off from all access to "the fountain of living water"? Who could imagine madness capable of wilfully forsaking that heavenly fountain? Yet that was the sin of Judah, aggravated by turning to "cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water."

A cistern indeed is better than nothing, but a "broken cistern" is a hollow mockery. Those who turn away from the fountain of living water can never find a substitute that will save them from perishing of thirst. Toronto, Montreal, New York are full of broken cisterns, and it is heart-breaking to see the multitudes turning a deaf ear to the patient Saviour still crying—"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

Even within the Church there are "broken cisterns." Wealth lavished on stately buildings and gorgeous ceremonial may only serve to rob the soul of the living water. External ceremonies, however impressive, can never take the place of that spiritual communion with the Divine Fountain head, which alone can release the living water in our hearts and through our lives. It is well to remember that for the first century of Christian experience there were no church buildings, such as we understand by that term. Yet perhaps those early Christians knew better than we do the secret of real and abiding communion with God.

That broken cisterns abound in the political world is tragically evident. Lasting peace can never be secured by the wit of man. The world can only slake its thirst at the Fountain of living waters. From all over Christendom, and also from the heathen and Mohammedan world, and most pathetically of all from wandering Israel, the cry goes up—We thirst. There is only one answer to that cry. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and he that is athirst, let him come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"What then is the present situation (in England)? It may be expressed in a single sentence. It is the almost total alienation of the working classes from all forms of organized religion. I mean that the workers are not, and do not desire to be, attenders at any church or chapel, or members of any religious denomination. . . . If my reader is a clergyman, let him go through the registers of his day-schools or Sunday Schools, and put to himself this question: How many of the fathers of these children are even occasional worshippers, much less communicant members of my church? . . . The only possible course of safety is the entire democratization of the Church. I am not sure it is not too late."

—Canon Peter Green, of Manchester.

## The Bible Lesson

Rev. Canon Howard, M.A., Montreal, P.Q.

First Sunday in Lent, February 22nd, 1920.  
Subject: Our Lord's Temptation, St. Luke 4:1-13.

THE lessons of the past quarter traced the life of Jesus up to the great event of His Baptism. The Baptism seems to be divine preparation for His work of ministry. But before that ministry is begun there comes the experience of the Temptation in the Wilderness. It was Satan's attempt to defeat Him before He could begin His work. Such assaults are made upon the young that, if yielded to, they become a handicap in one's whole life.

1. **The Reality of Our Lord's Temptation.**—One thing we must bear in mind in thinking on this subject is the real humanity of our Lord. He met in His pure human nature the assaults of the Evil One. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. That is, He did not yield to the Tempter in the least degree of will or of thought. But the temptations were just as real in His experience as temptations are in ours. Perhaps we do not recognize in the temptations here described the types of our own temptations. Yet our greatest temptations are just these: Desire, Ambition and Spiritual Presumption. They are presented in different ways, but they are the temptations which are common to man. It was that common experience of the intensity of temptation which our Lord passed through. His perfect Human nature felt the full power of the temptations as they were pressed upon Him by the Adversary.

2. **Temptation is Not Sin.**—For our own encouragement let us remember this fact. Just as we believe in our Lord's perfect Humanity, so we also believe in His absolute sinlessness. He did not yield, but resisted. Herein He is our example. Often we feel that the fact of temptation in our life is of the nature of sin. That is a suggestion of the Tempter himself, as though he would say to us, "You have already sinned by feeling this temptation." It is not true. Sin only enters when we begin to yield.

3. **The Devil is the Tempter.**—It is not necessary to believe that the devil came to Jesus in the form of a black-winged creature, such as the artists have depicted him. The artists' conception of his character is quite right, and that is the justification for their method of conveying the impression of an hideous monster. But although the devil is such, he does not thus appear to the tempted. He is more likely to appear as an angel of light. Our experience, in general, is that he does not appear at all. He suggests, tempts in such ways that it seems to us the most natural, easy and pleasant thing possible to follow his suggestion. If we had more of the artists' vision it would help us to resist. The true artist sees reality. If we could see the Tempter as he really is it would help to destroy the power of his temptation.

4. **Jesus Led of the Spirit.**—No analysis of the temptations of our Lord will make clear their whole meaning for us unless we remember the fact of the presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. The discipline of temptation is necessary for all men. Jesus suffered temptation as part of His human experience. The Holy Spirit was with Him through it all. The same help is promised to us. We have the upholding power of the Holy Spirit, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to help us in our conflict. God does permit temptation, but He gives us help. We can't avoid all temptation, but we may conquer by the aid of divine Grace. "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us."

5. **The Threefold Temptation.**—Read the accounts given by St. Mark and St. Matthew and compare with St. Luke's narrative. The temptations appealed to body, soul and spirit. St. Luke arranges them in an ascending order of subtlety: desire, ambition, spiritual presumption. The Tempter put these forth as being desirable and as aiding and speeding the purposes of God. Jesus was filled with the idea of accomplishing His mission as the Messiah. The devil suggested

## What Men are Saying

W. F.

PEACE has been ratified with some of our former enemies, but I see no peace as yet in the souls of men. All the world over there are discontents, political conflicts and acts of violence. The Armistice which silenced the guns more than a year ago has not been followed by "cease fire" to human passions.

Here one finds among one's own friends, and, to tell the truth, in one's own heart, a melancholy and a disillusionment not easy of cure. Reading the newspapers one is distressed by the daily record of personal tragedies which seem to be caused by the sudden breakdown in the ideals of men and women who were formerly, it seemed, sound and sane. Leaving to one side the rising statistics of crime, there is a general depression of spirits among many people which they try to fend off by artificial gaieties and excitements, with an insistent demand for a greater margin of wealth in order that they may attain the happiness which at present they think beyond their reach.

What the individual, as well as the world, needs is a declaration of peace—a peace of mind.

PHILIP GIBBS.

The only party which interests me is the party that will force idlers into places where people will work. That will be my party.

BERNARD SHAW.

The year 1920 must be a return to a normal life, bearing the fruits of labour joyously performed. For four years all activity was consecrated to war. For one year all activity has been sacrificed to feasting. It is time to take a new path.

EUGENE BRIEUX.

We must remember that the Forward Movement is a movement, and not a spurt which we shall be done with in a few weeks' time.

The Kingdom of God is not built with money; it is built with men.

There is only one place where Christ has covenanted to dwell with men and that is the church—poor though it be.

BISHOP BRENT.

We reconstruct politics, industry, education, theology. We are willing to reconstruct everything in the world, except ourselves.

We cannot build up a strong character by continually insisting on our rights.

You can have the most venerable and honourable and even Divine of institutions, and if it is badly led it cannot do the work it would do. There is nothing that can take the place of a consecrated, intelligent, devoted and forceful Christian ministry.

But there does come the challenge to Canada. "What will you do with your money? How will you spend your goods? Will you spend them ostentatiously? Will you spend them in such fashion as to make those who have not determined that they will rise by force and take from those who have? Shall we spend our natural fortune that we shall create anarchists or shall we spend it as good stewards of that great dower that God has disposed?"

THE HON. DR. CODY.

As in the case of a nation so in the case of an individual, our real wealth is created by our exports, by our gifts and not by our gains.

these temptations as leading to the great end by a short and easy way. Instead of the way of the Cross he proposed other ways of winning the world for Christ. Short cuts are not always God's Way. Jesus saw God's purpose and resisted every appeal to turn aside from the appointed path. Exhausted, but victorious, He emerged from the conflict, and Angels came and ministered unto Him.

## Christ Bol

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BIDWELL, D.D.

WHILE the world has now discerned freedom for itself, it is not by any means where there is no gauda of anarchy spread far and wide to an extent which is totally unworkable and when they consider they may strike and unsuspecting political life a formation of growth of the communistic profession of goals alike may be, as being what it is, the direction of section of the Christian

### CHRISTIANI

There is no in the prevalence spread far and tianity. For it twin foundation and his duty to Bolshevism, which aims at destruction of a false freedom of the men to believe in and that the o freedom to serv laws which are whole community utmost importance instruction should but to all who strengthen their to which they Church is trying to enlist the desire peace, go rather than so disorder, Bols suppress it will cause they ar tianity is stro headway. We obligations as seriousness, arising on our part that living Church to be relied upon gauda by which mined and des

At the same time though as we to "make the though we have oligarchies result, yet we mocracy if it worth while. under so-called is little better does not merely impose the government credited representation whole people AND OF INDIVIDUAL SERVED. In kind the Christ For Christian (tic), and indicating that we are great body of God and