

III. THE TEMPTATION TO DENY GOD. vers. 8-11

The following are the subdivisions of this part: (1) The lesson (1) A Magnificent Offer, (2) The Bible Again, (3) Victory.
1. A Magnificent Offer.—vers. 8, 9. Foiled a second time, the adversary makes a bid which from his experience of human nature he thinks irresistible.

All the kingdoms of the world. It would be utterly useless for us to spend our time searching on the map of Palestine or elsewhere for such an exceeding high mountain that all the kingdoms of the world could be seen from it "in a moment of time" (Luke iv. 5). All we know is that the thing was done; how it was done we are not told. The kingdoms of this world shall yet be "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15), for they are His by promise and by purchase, but Christ would not take them at the hands of Satan, and on condition of yielding homage to him and becoming his vassal.

2. The Bible Again. ver. 10. To show us how temptation may be resisted, the Saviour a third time replies simply by appealing to scripture.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve. The sense of these words, if not the exact words themselves, is to be found in Deut. vi. 13; x. 20.

Advancement in holiness does not, in this life, exempt Christians from temptation. There is no sin in being tempted; the sin is in yielding.

3. Victory.—ver. 11. The Bible, "The sword of the Spirit," is fitted to repel every form of attack which the enemy can make.

Then the devil leaveth Him. In Luke iv. 13 we find that he left Him only "for a season." He was defeated, but not rendered powerless or chained down as yet. The warfare still goes on. But believers in Christ will be safe from all attacks if they follow His example. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" James iv. 7.

THE HORRORS OF SIBIRIAN LIFE

Of the treatment of political exiles in Siberia I have before me a thrilling description from the pen of Mr. Robert Lemke, a German writer, who has visited the various penal establishments of Russia with an official legitimation. He had been to Tobolsk; after which he had to make a long weary journey in a wretched car, until a high mountain rose before him. In its torn and craggy flank the mountain shewed a colossal opening similar to the mouth of a burnt out crater. Fetid vapours which almost took away his breath ascended from it.

Pressing his handkerchief upon his mouth, Mr. Lemke entered the opening of the rock, where he found a large watch-house, with a picket of Cossacks. Having shown his papers, he was conducted by a guide through a long, very dark and narrow corridor, which judging from its sloping descent, led down into some unknown depth. In spite of his good fur, the visitor felt extremely cold. After a walk of ten minutes through dense obscurity, the ground becoming more and more soft, a vague shimmer of light became observable. "We are in the mine?" said the guide, pointing with a significant gesture to the high iron cross-bars which closed the cavern before them.

The massive bars were covered with a thick rust. A watchman appeared who unlocked the heavy iron gate. Entering a room of considerable extent, but which was scarcely a man's height, and which was dimly lit by an oil lamp, the visitor asked: "Where are we?"—In the sleeping-room of the condemned! Formerly it was a productive gallery of the mine; now it serves as a shelter.

The visitor shuddered. This subterranean sepulchre, lit by neither sun nor moon, was called a sleeping-room. Alcove-like cells were hewn into the rock; here, on a couch of damp, half-rotten straw, covered with a sackcloth, the unfortunate sufferers were to repose from the day's work. Over each cell a cramp iron was fixed, wherewith to lock up the prisoners like ferocious dogs. No door, no window anywhere.

Conducted through another passage, where a few lanterns were placed, and whose end was also barred by an iron gate, Mr. Lemke, came to a vault which was partly lit. This was the mine. A deafening noise of pickaxes and hammers. There he saw hundreds of wretched figures, with shaggy beards, sickly faces, reddened eyelids, clad in tatters, some of them barefoot, others in sandals, fettered with heavy foot-chains. No song, no whistling. Now and then they slyly looked at the visitor and his companion. The water dripped from the stones; the tatters of the convicts were thoroughly wet. One of them, a tall man of suffering mien, laboured hard with gasping breath, but the strokes of his pickaxe were not heavy and firm enough to loosen the rock.

"Why are you here?" Mr. Lemke asked.

The convict looked confused, with an air almost of consternation, and silently continued his work.

"It is forbidden to the prisoners," said the inspector, "to speak of the cause of their banishment."

Entombed alive; forbidden to say why!

"But who is the convict?" Mr. Lemke asked the guide, with low voice.

"It is number 114!" the guide replied facetiously.

"This I see," answered the visitor; "but what are the man's antecedents? To what family does he belong?"

"He is a count," replied the guide; "a well-known conspirator. More, I regret to say, I cannot tell you about 114!"

The visitor felt as if he were stifled in the gravelike atmosphere—as if his chest were pressed in by a demoniacal nightmare. He hastily asked his guide to return with him to the

upper world. Meeting there the commander of the military establishment, he was obligingly led by that officer

"Well, what impression did our penal establishment make upon you?"

Mr. Lemke, stilly bowing in silence, the officer seemed to take this as a kind of satisfied assent, and went on

"Very industrious people, the men back there, are they not?"

"But with what feelings," Mr. Lemke answered, "must these unfortunates look forward to a day of rest after the week's toil?"

"Rest!" said the officer; "no, no, they must always labour. There is no rest for them. They are condemned to perpetual forced labour, and he who once enters the mine never leaves it."

"But this is barbarous!"

The officer shrugged his shoulders, and said: "The exiled work daily for twelve hours; on Sundays, too. They must never pause. But no; I am mistaken. Twice a year, though, rest is permitted to them—at Easter time and on the birthday of his majesty the Emperor." *Karl Rind in the Contemporary Review.*

COSTLY CHURCHES.

A handsome church near New York was sold at auction, under mortgage foreclosure, last week. Several more that could be named have a similar fate impending, and the congregations that worship in scores of others are struggling so hard with their respective debts that they have no spirit for church work proper. A race for expensive houses of worship is at the bottom of the trouble. Nearly every old congregation wants a broader chancel, a higher ceiling, a larger organ, or something else that compels the erection of a new building on credit and the sale of the old one at a sacrifice. As for the newer societies, many of them seem to be formed for the express purpose of erecting new churches. Then comes the debt to be wrestled with. In the other ways of life people who are in earnest sometimes hope for help from outsiders, but the unanimity with which saints and sinners, rich and poor, stand aloof from a church with a big debt, is to many preachers one of the most terrible facts in existence. There are dozens of congregations in New York that earnestly desire their empty seats filled, but four out of every five families that would like to occupy them and contribute to the support of the pastor are utterly unable to assume a share of the debt, for the interest alone amounts frequently to more than the pastor's salary and other necessary expenses combined. Congregations that have costly buildings which are not yet paid for are beyond the reach of advice, but those who have not yet lumbered should remember that a church is esteemed for its works instead of its walls, and a willingness to incur heavy debts is not regarded a virtue by the sinners for whose benefit churches are supposed to exist.—*N. Y. Herald.*

THACKERAY ON THE CLERGY.

Mr. Thackeray writes as follows: "And I know this, that if there are some clerics who do wrong, there are straightway a thousand newspapers to haul up these unfortunates, and cry, 'he upon them!' while though the press is always ready to yell and howl excommunicatedly against these stray delinquent parsons, it somehow takes very little account of the good ones—of the tens of thousands of honest men who lead Christian lives, who give to the poor generously, who deny themselves rigidly and live and die in their duty, without ever a newspaper paragraph in their favour. My beloved friend and reader, I wish you and I could do the same, and let me whisper to you, *cher ami*, that of those eminent philopoiets who at against parsons the loudest, there are not many who have got their knowledge of the church by going further often. But you who have ever listened to village bells, or have walked to church as children on a sunny Sabbath morning; you who have seen the parson's wife tending the sick man's bedside, or the town clergyman treading the dirty stairs of noxious alleys upon his sacred business, do not ruse a shout when one of these tails away, or yell with the mob that howls after him."

In 1830 the native Christians in India, Burmah, and North and South Ceylon numbered 27,000. Last October there were 460,000.

THE Christian Reformed Church of Holland, which was founded in 1834 as a protest against the rationalism of the State Church, has 300 ministers and 350 congregations.

BISHOP McCLOSKEY'S decree that all Catholic children under nine years of age must be made attend Catholic parochial schools, upon pain of a refusal of absolution to the parents, creates commotion in Louisville, Ky., where 900 Roman Catholic children attend public schools.

There are many things which we may not be damned for doing, which are yet hurtful, and ought, therefore, to be avoided. We may engage in practices sensibly pleasant and attractive which are in themselves unexceptionable, but because they injure us by their influence or associations we ought to let them alone. It is a poor piety which seeks to live up to the line of its liberty.—*United Presbyterian.*

REV. CHAS. H. SPURGEON writes from note that the nation should listen to Gladstone as a call to make righteousness and peace their guide instead of blustering. He declares that England is wantonly trampling Afghanistan under foot, and warns Englishmen that under such tutors as the "Times" they are becoming a nation of demmons. The whole letter is an impassioned appeal to the Christian sentiment of the country.

Around the Table.

TO-MORROW

"I WILL plough my field to-morrow," said Jeannot, "I must not lose any time, as the season is advancing and if I neglect to cultivate my field I will have no wheat, and as a consequence no bread."

To-morrow arrived. Jeannot was up by daylight and was about going out to get his plough, when one of his friends came to invite him to a family festival. Jeannot hesitated at first, but on reflecting a little he said: "A day sooner or later makes no difference for my business, while a day of pleasure once lost is always lost." He went to the festival of his friend.

The next day he was obliged to rest himself, because he had eaten a little too much, and drank a little too much, and had a headache. "To-morrow I will make up for this," said he to himself.

To-morrow came, it rained. Jeannot, to his great grief, was unable to go out all day.

The following day it was fine, and Jeannot felt himself full of courage, but unfortunately, his horse was sick in his turn. Jeannot cursed the poor beast.

The following day was a holiday. A new week commenced, and in a week a great deal of work may be done.

He began by going to a fair in the neighbourhood, he had never failed to attend it; it was the finest fair held within ten miles.

He went afterwards to the christening of a child of one of his nearest relations, and afterwards to a burial, in short, he had so many things to occupy him, that when he began to plough his field the season of sowing was past, thus he had nothing to reap. When you have anything to do, do it at once.

WORK BEFORE PLAY.

A MAN who is very rich now was very poor when he was a boy. When asked how he got his riches, he answered: "My father taught me never to play till all my work for the day was finished, and never to spend money till I had earned it. If I had but half an hour's work to do in a day, I must do that the first thing, and in half an hour. After this was done I was allowed to play. I early formed a habit of doing everything in its time, and it soon became very easy to do so. It is by this habit that I have been able to do so well in the world."

LUTHER was nearly twenty years old before he saw a Bible: but one day, in looking over the books in the library at Erfurt, he found a copy of the Scriptures in Latin, and, opening the sacred volume at the beginning of the Second Book of Samuel, he read the history of that man of God; and we do not wonder that it is recorded that it filled him with the greatest surprise and delight.