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INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

BY REV. E. P. ROGERS.

JANUARY 25.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

MATT. 4:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”—Hebrews 2:18.

Central Truth:—Christ was tempted in all points like as we are.

The event recorded in this lesson occurred directly after the baptism of Jesus. It is noticed that the time of temptation followed the time of exaltation. Jesus had just received a special manifestation of the divine favor. The Holy Ghost, in a visible, symbolical representation, had rested on him, and a proclamation had been made before the assembled people that he was the “beloved Son” in whom the Eternal Father was “well pleased.”

Immediately after this, we are told that he was “led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”

The question has often been asked, How could Christ, who was a perfectly holy being, be tempted to sin? The answer is easy. Christ was man, as truly so as he was God. As such he had a nature like ours, with all the constitutional passions and appetites belonging to it. This was necessary to enable him intelligently to sympathize with us, and help us to resist our temptations. He could feel hunger, thirst, weariness and pain as much as we can. And they were not pleasant to him any more than they are to us. They could produce suffering in him as truly as in us. He would feel a natural desire to escape them as truly as we should. But constitutional desires are not in themselves sinful. The sin lies in gratifying them unlawfully, both in spirit and in method. We may desire physical gratification; we may desire fame, or power, or pleasure and it may not be sinful. But when these desires seek to be gratified at the expense of law, or moral principle, or duty to higher interests or relations, sin begins. Temptation assails us and we weakly and culpably yield.

In this way Christ could be tempted, and good men can be tempted. But Christ had no sinful nature, and so he was able in his own strength to resist and foil the tempter.

But this story is not a myth, or merely an allegory. It is not an unreal drama. It is the history of a real experience. Christ was truly tempted, and the temptation was oppressive and painful. “He suffered, being tempted.” And it was not a merely arbitrary thing. There were good reasons for it. There were wise and good purposes to be answered by it. It proved his fitness for the great office which he had assumed. It established a tie of sympathy between him and his people. The three temptations to which he was subjected represented the common temptations of life. To be truly and effectually our helper in these, it was necessary that he should not only feel them, but conquer them. Had Satan succeeded in mastering Christ, it would have been the greatest possible triumph, and redemption would have been impossible. Satan staked everything on this effort to lead Christ to sin, and failed!

I do not know that it was necessary for us to hold that the language of the narrative is to be in all details understood literally; that a personal tempter, real stones, a literal temple, or mountain, are to be insisted on as parts of the occurrence. Nor do I hold it necessary, on the other hand, to claim that the history only clothes in dramatic form a real but internal experience; that the narrative describes a series of images or pictures which were presented to Christ’s imagination, by which Satan hoped to seduce him into sin. The difficulties which beset us in any conception of Christ as tempted to evil, are inherent, and we must be con-

tent to believe that Christ was “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” He was subjected to this test by God’s permission, and for God’s wise and good purposes. It was according to the divine plan. Its issue was a glorious success. Christ triumphed over Satan and thus prepared the way for his believing people to triumph also.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Seasons of unusual exaltation often lead us into strongest temptations.

Times of unusual prosperity or success; seasons of extraordinary popularity or eclat; when things are flattering and very promising, are often occasions for the tempter. The proverb which is so common, “Woe to us when all men speak well of us,” illustrates this idea.

“We should suspect some danger nigh When we possess delight.”

2. Temptation is not a thing of mere place or surroundings.

Satan is in the wilderness as truly as in the city. The old monastic systems were found to be full of corruption, and men found that to lock themselves with in a cell was not to lock Satan out. Our evil natures and wicked hearts render us an easy prey to the tempter anywhere. Even the closet or the communion table are familiar with his presence. When “the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them.”

3. Our temptations are in proportion to our responsibilities.

Christ was tempted because he was the Messiah, the great Saviour of the world. For such a lofty place, it was essential that his fitness should be fully proved.

Many men have been found unequal to lofty station or important trusts. Under ordinary pressure they might have stood firm.

4. There is no sin in being tempted, or in feeling the power of temptation.

The sin lies in yielding, in sacrificing principle to policy, or supposing that “gain is godliness.”

5. Satan is a splendid liar, but a liar still.

He made magnificent promises to our Lord, but he could not have performed them. He makes equally splendid promises to men, but they who trust him do it at their peril.

6. Temptation comes from Satan; victory comes from God.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” is one of the most pertinent petitions of the “Lord’s prayer.”

“Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees.”

7. “Blessed is the man”—not who escapeth, but—“who endureth temptation.” “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant greater than his Lord.”

8. The Word of God is a mighty weapon with which to resist the tempter.

The Psalmist said, “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword.” By it our Lord conquered Satan. “IT IS WRITTEN” was his all-powerful weapon.

He is a brave champion in the fight with the devil, who is “mighty in the Scriptures.”

9. Seasons of struggle are often followed by seasons of peace.

There is great force in the saying “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.” “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.”

Resist the devil, friends; for thus, after him, Angels!

Translate the sense of Scripture into your lives, and expound the Word of God by your works. Interpret it by your fingers. That is, let your workings and your walkings be Scripture expositions, as living epistles read and known of all men.

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Text Book Uniformity.

RESULT WHERE BOOKS HAVE TO STAND ON THEIR OWN MERIT.

At a Convention of School Directors, of Centre County, held at Bellefonte, December 26, 1878, pursuant to the call of H. Meyer, Esq., County Superintendent, for the purpose of considering the propriety of taking measures to secure a uniformity of the text-books used in the schools of said county, the following action was taken, over fifty directors being present and nearly all the district in the county being represented:

COPY OF MINUTES.

Upon motion of C. P. Stonerod, of Snow Shoe township, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS: Great expense and waste are frequently incurred by the present and constantly changing variety of text-books used in the common schools of Centre county, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the representative directors here in session, that a system of text-books, suitable, complete and uniform, be adopted in accordance with the laws of the State, throughout the county.

Upon motion of J. C. P. Jones, the following plan was adopted with but one dissenting vote, to carry into effect the following preamble and resolutions:

First. The various publishing houses to send samples of their books to each school board in the county for examination and to submit therewith the lowest exchange, introductory and wholesale prices, and the length of time they will guarantee to furnish them at said price.

Second. No agent of any publishing house to be permitted to do any work in the county, to be either general or local agent, beyond sending his books and terms as above stated. Any house or agent violating this understanding, their books to be counted out of the contest.

Third. The several school boards of the county, after examination of the various books which may have been submitted, to hold a meeting at which each director shall make out a list of the books which he prefers to have adopted in the county, and send it to Henry Meyer, Esq., County Superintendent, at Rebersburg, Pa., prior to the first day of June, 1879, who shall make several statements so sent, and the books upon the various branches having the highest number of votes or preference shall be the series recommended for county uniformity.

The County Superintendent, after having made the above canvass as above, to send the result of the same to each of the papers in the county for publication.

W. C. HEINLE, Chairman.

J. C. P. JONES, Secretary.

The following is the result of the votes of the Directors of Centre county, Pa., on the uniformity of Text-books in said county, with the number of votes cast for each book, under the foregoing plan and resolutions:

READERS.	No. vote for each
New Graded.....	74
Independent.....	20
Appleton's.....	17
New American.....	12
SPELLERS.	
Swinton's.....	83
New American.....	6
Independent.....	23
Appleton's.....	1
Patterson's.....	
Sander's Union.....	
Raub's.....	1
GEOGRAPHIES.	
Swinton's.....	100
Colton's.....	14
Mitchell's.....	10
Independent.....	1
Monteith's.....	5
HISTORIES.	
Swinton's.....	68
Redpath's.....	5
Barnes' Brief.....	7
Butler's.....	
Quackenbos'.....	1
Watson's.....	6
WRITTEN ARITHMETIC.	
Robinson's Shorter Course.....	57
Greenleaf's.....	14
Brook's.....	20
Gilne's.....	22
Boff's.....	12
Nrook's Union.....	8
Mew American.....	4
MENTAL ARITHMETIC.	
Milne's.....	7
Greenleaf's.....	4
ALGEBRA.	
Robinson's.....	53
Greenleaf's.....	1
COPY BOOKS.	
Spencerian.....	69
Appleton's.....	30
Ellsworth's.....	10
GRAMMARS.	
Kerl's.....	72
Swinton's.....	17
Clark's Brief.....	15
Bullion's.....	1
Harvey's.....	20
Quackenbos'.....	3
Fewsmith's.....	1
LANGUAGE LESSONS.	
Kerl's.....	5
Clark's.....	1
Harvey's.....	5
Morton's.....	5
BOOK-KEEPING.	
Bryant & Stratton's.....	44
Folsom's.....	6
Smith's.....	
CIVIL GOVERNMENT.	
Townsend's.....	..