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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for January 30
Golden Text.—For we have not an
high priest which cannot be touch-
ed with the feeling of our infirmities;
but was in all points tempted
like as we are, yet without sin.
—Heb. 4:15

Approach to the Lesson

Why was Jesus tempted, and, be-
ing tempted, was there a possibili-
ty that He might have sinned and
so jeopardized or annulled the
whole plan of redemption? These
are questions asked often, and it
behoves us to be able to give
Scriptural answers.

If we would be clear in our
thinking as to this, we must
remember that while our Lord
was, and is, both human and
divine, He is not two persons, but
one. Personally He is God the
eternal Son, who took humanity
into union with His deity in order
to redeem sinful men. He has
therefore two natures; the divine
and the human, but He remains
just one person, therefore, as man
here on earth, He could act apart
from His deity. Those who main-
tain that He might have sinned
may well ask themselves, "What
then would have been the result?"
To say that a man He might have
failed in His mission is to admit
the amazing and blasphemous
suggestion that His holy, divine
nature could become separated
from a defiled human nature and
so the incarnation proves a farce
and a mockery. But if we realize
that He, who was both God and
man in one person, was tempted,
not to see if He would (or could)
sin, but to prove that He was the
sinless One, all is clear. The tempta-
tion was real, but it was from
without, as Adam's was in the
beginning. But Adam was only an
innocent man; whereas Jesus, the
last Adam, was the Lord from
Heaven, who had become man
without ceasing to be God, in order
that He might be our Kinsman-
Redeemer (Lev. 25:48). The
Temptation, and His attitude to-
ward it, proved that He was not a
sinful man, either in nature or in
act, and He could therefore take
our penalty upon Himself and bear
the curse of the broken Law for
others, because He was not under
that curse Himself. Scripture tells
us definitely that He "knew no sin"
(2 Cor. 5:21); He "did no sin"
(1 Pet. 2:22); "in him is no sin"
(1 John 3:5). He could say, "The
prince of this world cometh, and
hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).
There was no lurking traitor with-
in to answer to the voice of the
enemy without. He "was tempted
as we are, sin apart" (Heb. 4:15,
lit.). That is, there was no sin
within to tempt Him. From the
moment of His birth He was holy,
not merely innocent (Luke 1:35).

The Historical Setting

The temptation of Jesus took
place, if we may trust tradition, on
Mt. Quarantania, west of the
Jordan, across from Jericho, a very
forbidding and desolate wilderness.
It followed His baptism almost
immediately, in the early part of
A.D. 27, shortly before the Pass-
over.

Verse by Verse

Luke 4:1.—"Jesus..... was led by
the Spirit into the wilderness." As
the perfect man, Jesus was ever
subject to the Spirit's control.
Mark tells us the Spirit drove Him
into the wilderness (Mark 1:12).
He was impelled to go, for it was
imperative that His holiness be
demonstrated from the very begin-
ning of His ministry. Temptation
is really testing. He was tested by
Satan, that evil personality who is
the foe of God and man. It was he
who tested the first Adam and
found him wanting. Now he must
needs be overcome by the second
Adam.

Verse 2.—"Being forty days

tempted of the devil." Forty is the
number of testing and probation.
Consider Israel's testing for forty
years in the wilderness, Elijah's
forty days of trial, Nineveh's forty
days of probation, and the like. So
Jesus was tested for the full period
of forty days, the supreme tests
coming at the close.

Verse 3.—"If thou be the Son of

God." Every test was a direct
assault upon the truth of His
divine, human personality. There
might seem to be nothing inher-
ently wrong for Jesus to satisfy
His hunger by making bread from
stones, but He had taken the place,
as man, of dependence on the
living Father (John 6:57). As such,
He acted only in obedience to the
Father's will, and He could not
entertain any suggestion coming
from another and an opposing
source. He would not act, even to
relieve His hunger, upon the
Enemy's advice.

Verse 4.—"Man shall not live by

bread alone." Jesus met each tempta-
tion with a definite word from
God—a quotation from the Holy
Scriptures. In this instance, He
quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, where
Moses reminded Israel that of far
more importance than material
food was the spiritual nourishment
that is found in the Word of God.

Verse 5.—"The devil..... shewed

unto him all the kingdoms of the
world in a moment of time." It was
the appeal to the lust or desire of
the eye, as the first had been to
the lust of the flesh. Note that
Luke gives the moral order of
these three temptations, while
Matthew apparently presents them
chronologically.

Verse 6.—"All this power I will

give thee." Satan presumes to have
all authority because men own him
as the prince and god of this world.
But actually it is God alone who
sets up one man and puts down
another, "working all things after
the counsel of his will." In Daniel
5:21 we are told that "the most
high God ruled in the kingdom of
men, and he..... appointeth over it
whomsoever he will." Satan's
claim was an idle boast.

Verse 7.—"If thou therefore wilt

worship me, all shall be thine." Jesus
was heir of all things and the
Devil knew it, but he was offering
the Kingdom without the cross.
Actually, it is not his to give, but
he sought to turn Jesus aside from
the place of absolute subjection to
the Father's will.

Verse 8.—"Jesus..... said..... It is

written." Once more the Lord met
Satan with the Word of God. He
recognized him, as the adversary,
and withstood him in the power of
the truth. Worship belongs to God
alone. Satan ever seeks to have
men put him in the place of God.

Verse 9.—"He brought him to

Jerusalem, and set him on a pin-
nacle of the temple." Whether this
was done literally or in vision we
are not told, nor is it important
that we should know. The point is
that even the sanctuary may be a
place of temptation, for pride of
grace is one of the greatest snares
to which we are exposed. From
that elevated place Jesus saw the
throngs gathered in the courts
below. Satan would use this as a
reason why He should display His
power.

Verse 10, 11.—"It is written, He

shall give his angels charge over
thee." Satan quoted only a part of
Psalm 91:11, 12. He omitted the
most pertinent portion—"To keep
thee in all thy ways." It was no
part of the holy ways of the Son
of God to leap spectacularly from
the Temple heights in order to
astonish the worshipping multi-
tudes below as they beheld Him
suspended in the air above them,
sustained by angel hands. This
would have been a presumptuous
use of the promise. When God
commands, faith can act on His
Word. To act without a command
from Him may often prove to be

Canada is Victim of Topsy-Turvy Weather



Topsy-turvy weather across
Canada varying from unseason-
able "heat waves" to blizzards
and record snow left room for
this normal winter scene at
Midland, Ont., ski meet where
Pete Patesen executed a 80-
foot jump to win the ski club's
competition. In Toronto golfers
took advantage of recent balmy
weather and played some golf,
but in Vancouver, where there
is six inches of snow, the
inhabitants got out their wool-
len clothing.

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His hunger by making bread from
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commands, faith can act on His
Word. To act without a command
from Him may often prove to be

mere presumption.

Verse 12.—"Thou shalt not tempt
the Lord thy God." Jesus did not
argue the case with Satan. He
simply met the Devil's misuse of
Scripture by another passage from
the Word. It is never right to do
anything just to see if God will
do as He has said. This in itself
implies unbelief.

Verse 13.—"The devil..... depart-

ed from him for a season." Jesus
had been tested in all three points
like we are, only to demonstrate
His sinlessness. This appeal to the
pride of life was as unsuccessful
as the other had been. So the
tempter retreated a vanquished foe,
for the time being.

The Heart of the Lesson

God's King must reign in righte-
ousness. The sinner's substitute
must be as an unblemished lamb
—with no defect outwardly or
inwardly. Therefore the Lord had
to be subjected to the most search-

ing test to demonstrate His fitness

for the great work He came to do.
Had the temptation brought to
light any evidence of inbred sin or
moral corruption of any kind, it
would have been the proof that
Jesus was not the Holy One of God,
destined to bring in everlasting
righteousness and to make propiti-
ation for iniquity. But nowhere
was the perfection of Jesus demon-
strated more clearly than when
Satan made every effort to find
some defect in His character, some
form of self-seeking in His heart.
The King was tested and proved to
be all that God the Father had
declared at His baptism—the one
in whom He had found all His
delight.

"If you don't dot your i's you're

not the punctual type," says a
handwriting expert. In other
words, not right on the dot.

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