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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

To The Editor:  
 Father Time never stands still. One and tide waits for no man. We have just past another milestone in our lives. If I may I'd like for the time being to think of our lives as a book. We have turned over a leaf, and it is never to be turned back. There is no doubt that what we'd like to turn back many of those pages and re-write or re-live them again. Many of them we are ashamed of, and we'd like to blot them from our memory, because we have let so many golden opportunities slip through our fingers. Many things we've done we shouldn't have done and many things we didn't do we should have done. We can't turn back the pages of time, neither can we re-trace our steps, or make amends for things we've done but perhaps we can improve on our past mistakes.  
 We now start on a new page which is spotless and without blemish and in order to keep it

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so we are going to need help because the enemy of our souls (Satan) is too much for us to cope with, and if we try to fight our own battles we will most certainly go down in defeat. There is a supreme being, a power above all power, one who is interested in us, and understands our problems and wants to help us out of any difficulty we may get in. While it is true God isn't under any obligation to do the things for us we can do (Continued on Page 6)



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**Sunday School Lesson**

**JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS MINISTRY**

International Sunday School Lesson for January 6

Memory Selection: "Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." — Hebrews 2:18.

Lesson Text: Mark 1:1-13.

The purpose of our study today is to introduce the Gospel of Mark and to consider the preparation that Jesus and others made for his ministry.

In understanding any book it is helpful to know something of its historical setting. This is especially true of the Book of Mark.

The Book of Mark is not a biography, nor a history of Jesus of Nazareth. It is clearly and unapologetically evangelistic in its emphasis and in its purpose. It is the good news of one who was thoroughly human but unmistakably the Son of God. It is directed to those who were already Christians, but who were under persecution for their Christianity. They were disturbed by the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, and faced with imminent martyrdom themselves.

Mark was written to demonstrate to the Christian community in Rome the power and purpose of Jesus Christ, whose own life and death and life after death is the only answer to suffering and discouraged men. It is the "good news" of the strong Son of God whose mighty deeds overcame the sinister forces which blocked and beset him and even put him to death. In an understanding of the purpose of the death of Jesus Christ, traced through the condensed account of his active ministry, revealed in his own life and teachings, demonstrated in his death and vindicated in his resurrection, the Christian in the midst of his own crisis could find meaning and purpose, courage and spiritual resources.

The introductory section of the Gospel of Mark, with which we are concerned in this lesson, prepares us for the Galilean ministry. Here there were two important occurrences: John baptized Jesus, and Jesus faced temptation. Jesus' baptism introduced his public ministry. It identified him with John the Baptist's proclamation that the kingdom of God was at hand. And it identified Jesus with the sinful nation that was seeking God's forgiveness and grace. Jesus comes to where we are; he shares in our condition so that he can open the way for us to return to God.

Again, the baptism was a time of vocational change for Jesus. He was now aware of a new task, and he undertook a new mission. The event of his baptism introduced this new work. Jesus was baptized by John. John the Baptist was the transitional figure. He stood between the old age and the new. He was a part of the old covenant; he looked forward to the coming of the Messiah; but he was unique, for to him was given the task of announcing that the new time has come.

Jesus was baptized. And the revelation of the new age began—but with conflict. The temptations indicate the dimensions of this conflict. In these temptations the nature of Jesus' messiahship was defined: Jesus would not be a political Messiah. He was not to do the spectacular. He was to live faithfully by the word of commission he had heard. The temptation to turn stones into bread was a temptation for Jesus to prove to himself that he was the Messiah. But Jesus refused and stated that he must live by faith in the word of God which had been spoken to him. Then Jesus was told to jump from the top of the Temple, to prove to others that he was the Messiah. Do the unusual, the unexpected, the miraculous. But Jesus' refusal to do this meant that he would live among men and serve them as proof of his messiahship. And finally, Jesus was given the opportunity to rule the world. This was a temptation to be a political messiah. But again Jesus refused. He had come to minister, to serve, to give his life for many. He must fulfill this role.

Mark's Gospel is the story of God in man's history. God has identified himself with us; he (Continued on Page 6)

**what happened to the funnies**



Now there's a little man who knows what he wants! He wants the pretty funny papers. You might say, "He has a mind of his own..." That's correct, of course. Every child is endowed by his creator with a will and a mind; not developed, but it's there. Yet, how that child is trained from his earliest years, will mold his character, develop his mind and strengthen his will. Children should have good example, then. And the best example that parents can give is to go to church. The Church is for you and your family. It is the hope of your children. It is the means of bringing God's bountiful blessings to all.

**THE CHURCH FOR ALL — ALL FOR THE CHURCH**  
 The Church is the greatest factor in the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

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Sunday Deuteronomy 30:1-5	Monday I Timothy 4:11-16	Tuesday I Kings 3:3-14	Wednesday Matthew 18:1-6	Thursday I Samuel 2:18-25	Friday Proverbs 23:10-18	Saturday II Timothy 8:10-17
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