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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 23rd.

Jesus in Gethsemane.—Matthew xxvi. 36-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He went away again, the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Matthew xxvi. 42.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 36-39.

SUMMARY.—"In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

ANALYSIS.—I. To the place of prayer. 11. The first prayer. 111. The second prayer. 1V. The third prayer.

EXPOSITION.—*Connection.*—Our last lesson was on the institution of the Lord's Supper. The last words of the Scripture of that lesson were: "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." This "Mount of Olives" lay to the east of Jerusalem, separated only by a deep ravine called Kidron. From this same mountain, which commanded the finest possible view of Jerusalem, Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He now returns to it by night, at the close of the feast.

Verse 36.—Then. After the conversation recorded in vs 31-35. John, in chaps. xv-xvii of his Gospel, gives us other words of Christ, which were spoken after they had left the room of the Supper. *Cometh with them.* That is, with the eleven. This was a customary resort of Christ and his disciples. Chap. xviii. 2. It now hardly deserves the name "garden," because covered with stones; and that only eight old olive-trees remain. The Franciscans, in 1847, built a new wall round the place, which is "in length 200 paces, in breadth, 150 paces." The eight olive-trees still standing are very old, dating back, according to evidence, to A. D. 636; but it is not known that they date back to the evening of the betrayal. *Saith unto the disciples.* That is, to the eight remaining after taking away from the twelve Judas and the three that went further forward. These disciples were asked to remain there at the border, because Jesus, in his present state of mind, craved solitude. *While I go and pray yonder.* Jesus was in the world to do the will of his Father, and that will called him to a work which no man understood, and with which no human friend could sympathize. He seemed called upon to grapple single handed, with the powers of darkness.

Verse 37.—And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. That is James and John, the three most appreciative and most loved apostles, who, as we saw, were thus singled out at the Transfiguration. It was a preparation for the special duties that were to be theirs. We see that those who are to share most richly in the Saviour's joys share also most deeply in his sorrows; and the same preparation of heart is required for the one experience as for the other. *Began to be sorrowful and very heavy*—[sorely troubled]. It reminds us of the wonderful peace, and even joy, which the Saviour had experienced during the Supper, and on his way to the garden, as revealed in the heavenly discourse and prayer recorded in John xiv-xvii.

Verse 38.—Then. As other waves of trouble began to dash against him. *Saith he unto them.* The three chosen to share the mysterious grief of this hour. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Stronger language could not well be used; yet it is doubtless weak, as compared with the real sorrow of Christ's soul. "Unto death" means, not of course till the time of death, but unto the degree, of death; having in it the blackness and horror of death; which seems strong enough to bring down to death—a death-sorrow, an "exceeding" sorrow, unmixed with any of the joys of life. Whence came it? What caused it? What was it? These are questions that have been deeply pondered and variously answered. The Bible seems to leave them mostly unanswered, they are included in the woes described in Isa. liii. Hence they were vicarious; that is, wounds, bruises, griefs, sorrows, etc., etc., experienced in order to redeem his people, and as the ransom, or price of redemption. Again, they were endured as from the hand of God. Isa. liii. 10. "It

pleased the Lord to bruise him." The prayer of Jesus in vs. 39, also shows this. It seems to have arisen from some peculiar relation of his to God's law on the one hand, and to sinful humanity on the other, by virtue of which he, as the sin-bearer, took on himself and endured in his own person the woes which the world's sin incurred. How it was that this burden was rolled upon him just now and here—whether by some new combinations of his Satanic foes, or by some withdrawal of Divine support, or by some new manifestation to him of human woe, or by all these and other causes combined—we may conjecture, but cannot affirm. The sorrow seems not to have remained at this pitch of intensity till his death, we are doubtless to regard it as not really removing till its disappearance is signalled in the victor's cry, "It is finished." *Tarry ye here, and watch with me.* He must be alone, alone with God; yet he wants these bosom-friends near.

Verse 39.—A little further. From the place where he left the three. Only a little further. There was such a burden on him he could only stagger a little way. He must and does soon sink down; must and does fall upon the ground, and upon God's mercy. *On his face.* In lowest prostration—in deepest sense of utter helplessness and wretchedness. *O my Father.* Neither here nor on the cross does he lose his consciousness of being God's Son—God's own. *If it be possible.* Mark (xvi. 36) reports his words to have been, "All things are possible unto thee." The one phrase helps interpret the other, and the two together teach this: That the necessity under which Christ lay to suffer for us was moral, not natural; that God could have saved him from this experience; but could not both save him and save sinners. Hence it was both possible and impossible to let the cup pass from him. He drank it freely, for he chose that it should not pass, since God's will, that is, Divine nature, law, and government, called for this sacrifice. The words, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,* are the key-note to the whole earthly life of Jesus, as indeed they are to the earthly life of the church of Christ.

Verse 40.—Unto the disciples. That is, the three. *Asleep.* From the fatigues of the day and evening, the sorrows of their own souls (Luke xxii. 48), and the lateness of the hour. *Saith unto Peter.* Who had been the foremost to boast of his unconquerable devotion (vs. 35), but also to the others, who also had joined in the boast. Compare also their sleep on the Mount of Transfiguration. *What!* Instead of this, read, "So then"—contrasting this doing with the former boasting.

Verse 41.—Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Compare the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." Into it; to be left in it, given over to it, not carried through it, or delivered from it. *The spirit.* Their own, in so far as under the influence of the Holy Spirit. *Willing.* Or, rather, "ready." *The flesh.* Their earthly, sensual nature, through which temptation assailed them.

Verse 42-45.—One after another, the waves of anguish roll over Jesus, and he keeps the same submissive spirit. The words, *Sleep on now, etc.,* are ironical, and indicate that the time for such watchfulness and prayer as he had urged had passed unimproved. *Now.* More accurately, "henceforth." *Is betrayed.* Virtually.

Verse 46.—Rise, etc. No more time for sleep. *Let us go.* But not to escape betrayal.

QUESTIONS.—The subject of our last lesson? Where did that lesson find Jesus? To what mountain did he and the eleven go from that room? vs. 30.

vs. 36. Into what place did they enter? What do you know of this place? John xviii. 1. Which of the disciples were first left to sit and wait? Why, at such a time, should Jesus specially wish to pray? Why to be alone in prayer?

vs. 37. Who were the two sons of Zebedee? Mark xiv. 33? Where have we found these three thus honored before? Matt. xvii. 1. Why were they thus distinguished?

vs. 38. What does Christ say of his sorrow? Meaning of the words, "unto death"? What caused this sorrow? What was its nature? Isa. liii. What did he ask of the three apostles with him? Why this request?

vs. 39. What did he then do? What does the word "cup" here mean? Chap. xx. 22; Rev. xviii. 6. In what sense was it possible, and in what sense not possible for God to save Jesus from these sufferings? Mark xiv. 36. What was Christ's will as to his sufferings?

vs. 40, 41. In what condition were the three on Christ's return? What was the cause? Luke xxii. 45. Was his question

to them a rebuke? What are here meant by "the spirit" and "the flesh"?

vs. 42-45. How many times did Christ make the same prayer? What reproof did he give the three? Did he go away in order to escape betrayal?

Abridged from the *Baptist Teacher*. Scripture Catechism, 153.

SUNDAY, November 30th.—Jesus before the High-Priest.—Matt. xxvi. 59-69.

Youths' Department.

PLUCK WINS.

About thirty years ago (said Judge P.), I stepped into a bookstore in Cincinnati, in search of some books that I wanted. While there, a little ragged boy, not over twelve years of age, came in and inquired for a geography.

"Plenty of them," was the salesman's reply.

"How much do they cost?"

"One dollar, my lad."

"I did not know they were so much."

He turned to go out, and even opened the door, but closed it again and came back. "I have got only sixty-one cents," said he; "could you let me have a geography, and wait a little while for the rest of the money?"

How eagerly his little bright eyes looked for an answer! and how he seemed to shrink within his ragged clothes when the man, not very kindly, told him he could not!

The disappointed little fellow looked up to me, with a very poor attempt at a smile, and left the store. I followed him, and overtook him.

"And what now?" I asked.

"Try another place, sir."

"Shall I go, too, and see how you succeed?"

"O yes, if you like," said he in surprise.

Four different stores I entered with him, and each time he was refused.

"Will you try again?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, I shall try them all, or I should not know whether I could get one."

We entered the fifth store, and the little fellow walked up manfully, and told the gentleman just what he wanted, and how much money he had.

"You want the book very much?" said the proprietor.

"Yes, sir, very much."

"Why do you want it so very, very much?"

"To study, sir. I can't go to school, but I study when I can at home. All the boys have got one, and they will get ahead of me. Besides, my father was a sailor, and I want to learn of the places where he used to go."

"Does he go to these places now?" asked the proprietor.

"He is dead," said the boy, softly.

Then he added after awhile, "I'm going to be a sailor, too."

"Are you, though?" asked the gentleman, raising his eyebrows curiously.

"Yes, sir, if I live."

"Well, my lad, I will tell you what I will do; I will let you have a new geography, and you may pay the remainder of the money when you can, or I will let you have one that is not new for fifty cents."

"Are the leaves all in it, and just like the others, only not new?"

"Yes, just like the new ones."

"It will do just as well, then, and I will have eleven cents left toward buying some other book. I am glad they did not let me have one at any of the other places."

The bookseller looked up inquiringly, and I told him what I had seen of the little fellow. He was much pleased, and when he brought the book along, I saw a nice new pencil and some clean white paper in it.

"A present, my lad, for your perseverance. Always have courage like that, and you will make your mark," said the bookseller.

"Thank you, sir, you are so very good."

"What is your name?"

"William Haverley, sir."

"Do you want any more books?" I now asked him.

"More than I can ever get," he replied, glancing at the books that filled the shelves.

I gave him a bank note. "It will buy some for you," I said.

Tears of joy came into his eyes.

"Can I buy what I want with it?"

"Yes, my lad, any thing."

"Then I will buy a book for mother," said he; "I thank you very much, and some day I hope I can pay you back."

He wanted my name, and I gave it to

him. Then I left him standing by the counter so happy that I almost envied him, and many years passed before I saw him again.

Last year I went to Europe on one of the finest vessels that ever plowed the waters of the Atlantic. We had very beautiful weather until very near the end of the voyage; then came a most terrible storm that would have sunk all on board had it not been for the captain.

Every spar was laid low, the rudder was almost useless, and a great leak had shown itself, threatening to fill the ship. The crew were all strong, willing men, and the mates were practical seamen of the first class; but after pumping for one whole night, and the water still gaining upon them, they gave up in despair, and prepared to take the boats, though they might have known no small boat could ride such a sea. The captain, who had been below with his charts, now came up; he saw how matters stood, and with a voice that I heard distinctly above the roar of the tempest, he ordered every man to his post.

It was surprising to see those men bow before the strong will of their captain, and hurry back to the pumps.

The captain then started below to examine the leak. As he passed me I asked him if there was any hope. He looked at me, and then at the other passengers, who had crowded up to hear the reply, and said, rebukingly:

"Yes, sir, there is hope as long as one inch of this deck remains above water; when I see none of it, then I shall abandon the vessel, and not before, nor one of my crew, sir. Everything shall be done to save it, and if we fail, it will not be from inaction. Bear a hand, every one of you, at the pumps."

Thrice during the day did we despair; but the captain's dauntless courage, perseverance and powerful will mastered every man on board, and we went to work again.

"I will land you safely at the dock in Liverpool," said he, "if you will be men."

And he did land us safely; but the vessel sunk moored at the dock. The captain stood on the deck of the sinking vessel, receiving the thanks as the blessings of the passengers, and they passed down the gang-plank. I was the last to leave. As I passed, he grasped my hand, and said,

"Judge P., do you recognize me?"

I told him that I was not aware that I ever saw him until I stepped aboard his ship.

"Do you remember the boy in Cincinnati?"

"Very well, sir; William Haverley."

"I am he," said he. "God bless you!"

"And God bless noble Captain Haverley."

PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE.

In a paper contributed to this month's "Antiquary" Mr. H. J. Stokes, the Magistrate of Negapatam, has put upon record the details of the ordeal by fire as observed in South India. The custom is, of course, forbidden by law and is fast becoming obsolete as suttee. We shall detail the case, as it came before the narrator in his judicial capacity, and contrast the rites with those that have been observed from the earliest ages alike in Asia and Europe.

On the 30th April last a boy of fourteen died from the effects of attempting to walk through the fire to Draupati Amman, the local deity of the village of Periyangoodi. The ceremony had been observed for years at that place, in spite of the authorities who were in ignorance of the fact. When the Magistrate visited the spot it was ploughed over, but the inquest revealed the truth. Thirteen persons, including the deceased boy, took part in the rite, in the presence of from two to three hundred spectators. The pit was a depression in a large open plain before the temple, a span deep, and measured 27 feet long by 7½ broad. It lay east and west. The idol was borne by eight persons and placed at the west end. Six babool trees were cut and kindled at noon. The treading did not take place till five hours after, when the fire consisted of glowing embers. Beyond the fire-pit was the "milk-pit," at its west end, through the water of which the devotees passed after the fire. Each wore a cloth wrapped tightly round the waist, but we are not told if it was saturated with water. The arms and breast were daubed with sandal. The worshippers bathed and fasted all day as a preparation for the rite. Amid the sound of tom-toms

and drums and bells they passed through the fire to the goddess. First there descended a priest playing a fabor, and then the temple superintendents ringing a bell. Then came a Poojaree, or priest who had performed the rite, as a part of his duty, for eight years. He bore on his head the *karaham*, an earthen pot filled with water and crowned with Margosa leaves, believed to be supported miraculously above him. After him the others went in one by one and passed through both fire and water. One was an oil merchant. Another was a coolie returned from Mauritius, where for eight years he had suffered from dyspepsia. Then it was that he vowed to the village idol to "tread the fire for it" if he recovered. Last of all came the boy of fourteen, Pakkiri. His blind old mother, standing beside the dead body of her son, told touchingly how she had vowed to Draupati for him when he was ill of jaundice and how he got well. "So he trod the fire last year and the year before. But this year his fate came upon him. I am blind of both eyes. I did not go with Pakkiri to the fire-treading. I went when I heard news that he had fallen in the fire and been burnt. I and my daughter carried him home. He died last night. I have no one else in the house but him." On his first step into the pit the lad fell on his right side and then rolled over on his left. He was pulled out "burnt all over" as his sister described, complained of giddiness, probably from the fasting, and thereafter did not speak once.

Mr Stokes tells us of a recent case in the same district in which a young woman with her infant was fatally burned when passing through the fire. In Kurnool the devotees walk slowly in a circle round the fire-pit. As they become excited and move faster, they jump by turns into the fire and rapidly out again on the other side, some having their clothes well saturated with water. The discouragement of the inhuman rite by our Government has led to its modification in some places where it still lingers. In the Southern Mahratta country the boys and girls at fairs take a running leap through flames as they rise out of a narrow pit. Sometimes the devotee jumps on flames and at others rolls on heated embers, but only a handful of firewood is employed. In at least one part of Negapatam flowers are used instead of fire. It would be well if, as in Europe, the bloody rites of idolatry could thus pass into gentler phases till they become transformed by a purer worship.

The Periyangoodi case is marked by nearly all the rites which have been observed by the Hindoos from the earliest times and were common so late as the dark ages of European history. Thus in the first description that we have of the nine forms of trial by ordeal in India, which Warren Hastings himself communicated to the "Asiatic Researches," 1st volume, the writer, Ali Ibrahim Khan, chief magistrate of Benares, writes of the fire-treading:—

"An excavation nine hands long, two spans broad and one span deep is made in the ground and filled with fire of peepul wood. Into this the person accused must walk barefooted." He is pronounced guilty only if his foot is burned. But there is another form of the ordeal common to both India and Europe. It is described in the *Mayukha* as translated by Professor Buhler of Bombay. It consists of the accused slowly carrying a red-hot iron ball over nine circles marked on the earth close to each other. He starts from the first and throws the ball into the ninth. If, after that, he can rub barley in his hands without shrinking he is pronounced guiltless. The accused must have fasted and bathed, wears his wet garment and has a scroll on his forehead, but he proceeds from west to east. In the dark ages in Europe only persons of high rank were allowed the fire ordeal. It consisted either in carrying red-hot iron for some distance, or in walking blindfold and bare-footed over red-hot ploughshares, as the mother of Edward the Confessor is said to have done. The last recorded case of an appeal to the fire in Europe was at the close of the fifteenth century, when a follower of Savonarolo challenged a Franciscan to pass through a burning pile as a test of the truth of the reformer's teaching. The ordeal by fire was even more common among the Semitic than among the Aryan races. Passing through the fire to Moloch or Molech, the flame-king, was prohibited to the Jews under the penalty of stoning to death. Baal, the sun-god, Chemosh of Moab, and other deities of Western Asia, were similarly worshipped. If we may judge from the frequent passages in the Jewish law and annals Moloch was worshipped by