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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 22nd, 1874.

The Anointing at Bethany.—Mark xiv. 3-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Mark xiv. 9.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 6-9.

SUMMARY.—"She hath done what she could."

ANALYSIS.—1. The anointing. Vs. 3-5. 2. The complaint. Vs. 4, 5. 3. The commendations. Vs. 6-9.

Parallel passages are Matt. xxvi. 6-13; John xii. 2-8, but not Luke vii. 36-50.

EXPOSITION.—Introductory.—The scene of the anointing which we to-day study is to be carefully distinguished from that recorded in Luke vii. 36-50. They are alike being both at a feast, and the feast at the house of a man named Simon, both by a woman as an act of loving devotion, and both awakening censure to which Christ gave his pointed rebuke. They are unlike as to place, namely, Nain, and Bethany; as to time, namely, the midst, and the close of Christ's ministry; as to the host, namely, a Pharisee and a leper; as to the anointer, namely, a despised "sinner," and the respected Mary; as to the censurer, namely, Simon, and Judas; as to the censured, namely, Jesus, and the anointer; as to the ground of censure, namely, defilement through ignorance, and wastefulness; and as to the grounds of defence, namely, the purity of loving gratitude, and the sacredness of the desire of the anointing. The two are often carelessly confounded despite all these distinctions, and the more readily because Luke, who tells of the feast at Nain, does not speak of that at Bethany; and Matthew and Mark and Luke, who write of that at Bethany, are silent as to that at Nain. Why this should be we can more easily ask than answer.

Verse 3.—Being in Bethany. We have before seen that he was wont (Luke xxii. 39) to retire from Jerusalem to this village to spend the night; hence he might have been there at a least any afternoon or evening before the Passover. At the house of Simon the leper. Though once a leper and healed, probably by Christ, he still bore the name, a reminder of Christ's grace, because of that from which Christ's gracious power had saved him. The name Simon, or Simeon, was a common one among the Jews. Hence it is not strange that two of this name should have given feasts to Christ. This feast was perhaps a tribute of gratitude to his restorer for his restoration. It seems from John (xii. 2) that at this feast "Martha served." This has suggested the query, What was the relation of Martha to Simon, that she should serve at his table? One guesses that Simon was her father; another that he was her husband; another that the family of Simon lived in the same house with Lazarus and his sisters. Let each guess as he will, and frankly own that after all it is only a guess. This much is certain, the two families were on intimate terms, and both were friendly to Jesus. The serving by Martha was in exact keeping with Luke's account of her (x. 38-42). There came a woman. Only John (xii. 3) tells us that this woman was "Mary," the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and that "Lazarus, was one of them that sat at the table with them." Having an alabaster box. A variety of gypsum, white and semi-transparent. Ointment of spikenard very precious. Literally, "ointment [or myrrh] of genuine spikenard, very costly." It was genuine, perfectly pure, unadulterated; great account was made of choice cosmetics in the early times in those regions. Ex. xxx. 25; Psalm cxviii. 2; Cant. i. 3. How "precious" or costly this ointment was, we learn from the fifth verse. The amount, John says, was a pound. And she brake the box. The alabaster [flask], that is, the neck of it. And poured it on his head. Literally, "poured down," etc. Holding the bottle above, Matthew and Mark say, she anointed his head; but John says, "his feet." With such a quantity she could easily have anointed both his head and his feet; and each narrator, if he chose not to tell everything, but only what suited his purpose, could notice whichever part of the act he chose. It was not uncommon to

anoint a guest, whether the feet or the head, on such occasion as a token of honor, and in order to refresh and exhilarate the weary. Luke vii. 46.

Verse 4.—There were some that had indignation within themselves. Matthew says that these indignant persons were his disciples, while John says Judas Iscariot raised the objection, but he says nothing as to the rest of the twelve. He explains why Judas was so angry; says he was treasurer of the little company, and was a thief. And said. It is worthy of note that here Judas was the mouth-piece of the disciples. It is not needful, to the truth of Mark, that we suppose any one save Judas to have spoken. The immediate mention of Judas, in verse 10, seems to connect his act of betrayal with this feast, and thus brings into more manifest harmony this account and John's. Why was this waste of the ointment made? The question was not "from what?" What feeling prompted it? "Waste," or more exactly, destruction. The precious perfume was totally destroyed, nothing left of it, vanished.

Verse 5.—The objection has been taken. Now it is backed by arguments. It might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. This ointment would thus have then brought coin to the amount of over forty-five dollars, and this money represented at least a year's work of a laborer. From this we learn that not only did Christ and the twelve bless the needy with words of sympathy and works of healing and helping, but also even "of their penny," with money from their treasury. Comp. John xiii. 29. They have thus taught us to hold both ourselves and our property, be this little or much, as for the aid and benefit of those whom we may aid and benefit. And they murmured against her. The original indicates that they half expressed and half suppressed their wrath at her. They were restrained, partly perhaps by natural politeness, partly by their knowledge of her pure and lofty character.

Verse 6.—Jesus said. They had not spoken to him, had not first asked him whether the act was right. Matthew more clearly shows this by saying: "When Jesus understood it"; or, literally, "Jesus knowing." How much better, if they had been in doubt, to have spoken at once to the Lord. Let her alone; why trouble ye her? The rebukers are rebuked. On the angry disciples the Lord's anger falls. The defenceless is defended. It seems from this that the sensitive soul of Mary was most deeply pained and wounded by the bearing, looks, and words of the displeased disciples. It could not well have been otherwise, especially at such a time. It was a very base and cruel act on the part of Judas, and not altogether excusable on the part of the rest. This rebuke of Jesus is one which ought to have great influence in holding us back from like acts, in drawing us back, if we have been betrayed into such acts. She hath wrought a good work on me. More fully explained in verse 8. Enough here that this is a complete justification of Mary as against the rest.

Verse 7.—Ye have the poor with you always. See Deut. xv. 11. This has, thus far, proved true of the church at large. The poor have been no small fraction of its members. Whosoever ye will, etc.; but ye have not always. He thus reminds them of the nearness of his end, and that it is a law of love to do most for that object which one knows is soonest to be taken away.

Verse 8.—To anoint my body to the burying. The sad anticipation of Christ's departure moved her to this act of love. Christ connects this feeling with the fact that he was soon to die, and that no other anointing would or could be given. Though she did not intend it as a preparation for his burial, she did perform it from a deepened, and deepening sense of the nearness of that burial. What a splendid commendation in the words: She hath done what she could.

Verse 9.—Verily I say, etc. This marks his approval of her spirit, his assurance that his cause was to triumph gloriously, his certainty that the gospel was to be written and circulated in all the world till time's end. How exactly is this prophecy being fulfilled!

QUESTIONS.—Vs. Where was Bethany? Who gave to Christ a feast? Do you suppose he had been healed of his leprosy by Christ? Might this account for his giving to Christ this feast? Who "served" at the feast? John xii. 2. Who was the "woman" that brought the ointment? John xii. 3. What is said of these sisters in Luke x. 38-42. What is said of the quality of the ointment? The quantity? John xii. 3.

The value? Vs. 5. The value in our money? A "penny" was a coin worth a little more than fifteen cents. What part of Christ's body did she anoint? Compare John xii. 3. How do you reconcile the two statements? Why were guests usually thus anointed? Luke vii. 44-46.

Vs. 4. What feeling was excited by this act? In whom? Comp. Matt. xxvi. 8 and John xii. 4-6. What was said? Who was spokesman? What was the real cause of Judas' opposition? How came he to get any of the eleven to join him?

Vs. 5. What reason was given? Show how these words of Judas are a testimony to the purity and benevolence of Christ.

Vs. 6-8. What did Jesus say? Why would Mary be deeply grieved by the disciples' expressions? Why was hers a good work? How does the feeling that Christ was soon to be taken from her justify her act? Would Christ's words, "Ye have not always," remind the others of his speedy removal? Did Mary intend the anointing to be for Christ's burial? Was she permitted again to anoint his body? xvi. 1-5.

Vs. 9. What do these words show of his regard for Mary? Of his knowledge of the future? Have you the same mind that was in Mary?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 29th, 1874.—The Betrayal.—Mark xiv. 42-50

Youths' Department.

THAT HATCHET AGAIN.

A little boy having heard a beautiful story about a little boy and a hatchet, and how, because the little boy wouldn't tell a lie, he, in time, got to be President of the United States, was very much impressed by it.

Now, it so happened that on the last day of March he was just ten years old, and his father asked him what he would like to have for a birthday present. Very naturally the boy's answer was, "A little hatchet, if you please, papa."

The father bought him a hatchet that very day, and the boy was so delighted that he actually took it to bed with him. Early the next morning he got up, dressed himself, took his little hatchet, and went out into the garden. There, as luck would have it, the first thing that caught his eye was his father's favorite cherry tree. "My eyes!" exclaimed the little boy to himself, "what a time my father would make if a fellow were to cut that tree!"

It was a wicked thought, for it led him into temptation. There was the tree—tall, straight and fair, standing invitingly before him—just the thing for a sharp little hatchet. And there was the hatchet strong, sharp and shining—just the thing for a cherry tree.

In another instant the swift strokes of an axe were heard in the still morning air, and before long a small boy was seen running towards the house.

His father met him at the door. "My boy, what noise was that I heard just now? Surely you have not been at my favorite cherry tree?"

The boy stood proudly before him, but with downcast eyes and flushing cheeks. "Father," he said, "I cannot tell a lie. That cherry tree is —"

"Say no more," said the father, extending his arms. "You have done wrong, my son; and that was my favorite tree; but you have spoken the truth. I forgive you. Better to —"

This was too much. "Father," he whispered, "April fool! I haven't touched the cherry tree; but I most chopped the old apple stump to pieces."

"You young rascal, you!" cried the father, "do you mean to say you haven't chopped my cherry tree? April fool your old father, will you? Take off your coat, sir!"

With a suppressed sob, that little boy obeyed. Then, shutting his eyes, he felt his father's hand descend upon his shrinking form.

"My son," said the father solemnly, as he stroked the little shoulder, "it is the first day of April. Go thy way."

THE ATHEIST AND LOWER.

When Napoleon Bonaparte was Emperor of France, he put a man of the name of Charney into prison. He thought Charney was an enemy of his government, and for that reason deprived him of his liberty. Charney was a learned and profound man, and, as he walked to and fro in the small yard into which his prisoner, he looked up to the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and to the moon and stars which

he ordained, and exclaimed, "All things come by chance!"

One day, while pacing his yard, he saw a tiny plant, just breaking from the ground near the wall. The sight of it caused a pleasant diversion of his thoughts. No other green thing was within his enclosure. He watched its growth every day. "How came it here?" was the natural inquiry. As it grew, other queries were suggested. "How came these delicate little veins in its leaves? What made its proportions so perfect in every part, each new branch taking its exact place on the parent stock, neither too near another, nor too much on one side?"

In his loneliness, the plant became the prisoner's teacher and valued friend. When the flower began to unfold, he was filled with delight. It was white, purple, and rose-colored, with a fine silvery fringe. Charney made a frame to support it, and did what his circumstances allowed to shelter it from pelting rains and violent winds.

"All things come by chance," had been written by him upon the wall, just above where the flower grew. Its gentle reproach, as it whispered: "There is one who made me so wonderfully beautiful, and life it is who keeps me alive," shamed the proud man's unbelief. He brushed the lying words from the wall, while his heart felt that "He who made all things is God."

But God had a further blessing for the erring man through the humble flower. There was an Italian prisoner in the same yard, whose little daughter was permitted to visit him. The girl was much pleased with Charney's love for his flower. She related what she saw to the wife of the jailor. The story of the prisoner and his flower passed from one to another, until it reached the ears of the amiable Empress Josephine. The empress said, "The man who so devotedly loves and tends a flower cannot be a bad man." So she persuaded the Emperor to set him at liberty.

Charney carried his flower home, and carefully tended it in his own green-house. It had taught him to believe in a God, and had delivered him from prison.

LIFE IN CASHMERE.

BY THE REV. J. T. GRACEY.

European travel is becoming so commonplace and the facilities for reaching hitherto inaccessible and remote regions are increasing so rapidly that the tide of migratory English-speaking peoples is already setting in new directions. India, for instance, can be reached readily in from five to six weeks, and at certain seasons of the year presents an inviting climate, and a field for very interesting observation and study. Europeans, resident in India, have been in the habit of resorting much to Europe for what Americans call "recuperation," but of late other places have become more inviting to many of them, for this purpose. Amongst these "resorts" is the Vale of Cashmere. We are in receipt of a letter from a friend at present in that country, from which we make the following extracts:

"There are heaps of people here now. A hundred Europeans at least in Sreenggar, the Capital of Cashmere, alone. A few occupy the Mahajan's Bungalows, (Banker's houses), twenty or twenty-five in number, all near the river bank, and in or near the Munshee Grove. The rest live in tents, most of which are pitched in the Munshee Grove—among them, mine. The grove is an immense orchard of fruit, chiefly apple trees, and is about half a mile long, and an eighth of a mile broad, one edge resting on the river. The trees afford very good shade; the ground is everywhere covered with rich green turf, and although the tents are numerous they are by no means crowded. I enjoy the most perfect privacy, my tent being in a retired corner. Nothing strikes one more than the number of ladies and children here.

"The fact is, people (Europeans in India) find it much cheaper to come to Cashmere for the summer than to go to Simla, Dalhousie, and other places of resort in the Himalaya Mountains; for although the journey to Cashmere is a very long and costly one, people are able to save enough in the course of five or six months to pay for both coming and returning. There is no house rent to be paid here, people living in their tents. Whereas at the other resorts house rents are enormous. People live here at fresco, no dinner parties, balls, &c., and therefore no expensive dressing. No dandies, jhapans or jhapanees (vehicles and porters for the carriage of ladies), boats being used instead, at a cost of \$5 to \$10 a month for a boat. Finally, boarding is very cheap. Wheat flour, for example, is

from 44 to 48 lbs. for fifty cents; others articles of food may be judged of by this schedule, viz:

"Good cows' milk, 32 quarts for 50 cents; butter and lard, (Ghee), 8 lbs. for 50 cents; good fat mutton, per leg or per 12 lbs., 50 cents; eggs, two or three for a pice, or three-quarters of a cent; chickens five to nine cents, or one-and-a-half to three annas a piece. You can thus imagine how little it costs to live here.

"I brought with me from Lahore some materials for summer clothes, viz.: Tussa silk for a coat and waistcoat, jute cloth for a second coat, and linen duck for two pairs of trousers and a waistcoat, in all two full suits. I found here lots of tailors, of the very best kind, accustomed to make European clothing, so I got both suits made up; paying \$1.50 for the making, lining, buttons, &c., of each suit. They are admirably made; quite as well cut and made as the clothes made by a European tailor in Bombay, which I gave as a pattern. I next got an entire piece of very light thin goods for \$2.50 and have had this made up, a whole new suit costing just \$4, and very good it is both in material and workmanship. I am now therefore, well supplied for the summer, with both thin and warm clothing.

"At present it is just warm enough to require the former; but in the rainy season we shall be in regions cold enough to require the latter. Cashmere is certainly a very beautiful place, but the weather has been against us most of the time. First, it did nothing but rain every day for a week after our arrival. Then followed a few days of very charming weather, during which the air was clear and the scenery lovely. But the air soon became filled with a dense haze, completely hiding the snows. So it still continues. At the same time it is very close, hot and sultry.

"We expect to leave this place soon, going first in boats to a lake named Manasbal, of which we hear glowing accounts, going down the river westward. Next we shall probably leave the low level of the valley—when the rains begin—and go up the hills to or towards a place called Sonamarg, the great sanitarium of Cashmere. It is said to be a charming plateau, covered with grass and flowers, 8,000 feet high. The resident doctor, chaplain, and almost all the Europeans here, are going there.

"I go generally to the bazaar to preach; sometimes alone, more often with M. C. We always have immense audiences, and of late the noisy and bitter opposition has been decreasing. Still it is a hard place to preach in, in some respects. The Mohammedans here are ferocious, and would, oh! so love to kill us if they dared. They often give us regular gali (filthy abuse) of the vilest kind, and use every means in their power to make us angry. Yet there is always a good proportion of really attentive listeners." N. Y. Methodist.

TAKE TIME TO REST.

Most men and women must keep in the traces, and keep pulling, the year round. All the more therefore, is it their duty to take things easier as the hot weather comes on. Take longer rests at work. Put on less steam when you go to work. Snatch a Sunday now and then from the middle of the week. You can't? You can. People find time to rest and keep well. Everything does not depend on finishing that dress or fencing that field; on "putting up" so much fruit or catching so many customers. Better that the children should wear old clothes than that their mother should be laid aside by a fever. Better that the corn-crop be a little lighter than that there be no one to harvest it. Let us have shorter sermons and fewer of them on Sunday; longer recesses for the children at school on week days. Put up the store-shutters earlier at night; prepare meals in the kitchen. Take a noon day nap yourself, and give your employees time to go a fishing of an afternoon now and then. That only is duty which the Lord lays upon us, and he is not so hard a master as we sometimes suppose.—Advance.

When our Tom was six years old he went into the forest one afternoon, to meet the hired man, who was coming home with a load of wood. The man placed Master Tommy on the top of the load, and drove homeward. Just before reaching the farm, the team went pretty briskly down a steep hill. When Tommy entered the house his mother said: "Tommy, my dear, were you not frightened when the horses went trotting so swiftly down Crow Hill?" "Yes, mother, a little," replied Tommy, honestly; "I asked the Lord to help me, and hung on like a beaver." Sensible Tom! Why sensible? Because he joined working to praying. Let his words teach this life-lesson:—In all troubles, pray, and hang on like a beaver; by which I mean, that while you ask God to help you, you must help yourself with all your might.—Young Pilgrim.