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Second Quarter.

Lesson VII. May 19. Mark 14: 12-26.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This do in remembrance of Me.—Luke 22: 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER. 12. *And the first day of unleavened bread:* the Passover Feast, lasting seven days in which no leaven was to be used.

SYMBOLISM OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD. This specially symbolized three things: (1) The haste with which they fled from Egypt, not having time to wait for bread to rise (Ex. 12: 34, 39). (2) Their sufferings in Egypt, hence called the bread of affliction (Deut. 16: 3), and hence all the afflictions of the bondage of sin. But (3) chiefly their purity as a consecrated nation, since fermentation is incipient putrefaction, and leaven was thus a symbol of impurity. *When they killed the passover:* that is the lamb for the Passover feast.

13. *And He sendeth forth two of His disciples:* Peter and John, according to Luke (22: 8). *And saith unto them:* there can be no question that this direction was given them in superhuman foresight. *Go ye into the city:* of Jerusalem, two miles away. *And there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water.* A very unusual sight in the East, where water was drawn by women; and hence it was a definite sign that they had found the right person, probably a servant of the house.

14. *And . . say ye to the goodman of the house:* or, *master of the house.* Evidently not the man they followed. *The Master saith.* Literally, the Teacher. *Where is the guestchamber.* Rev. Ver.: my guest chamber: the one designed for my use. *Where I shall eat the passover.* During the Passover week hospitality was recognized as a universal duty in Jerusalem; pilgrims and strangers were received, and rooms were allotted to them for the celebration of the feast. But it is not probable that a room would have been given to entire strangers without previous arrangement.

15. *And he will show you a large upper room.* It is still common in Oriental houses to have the principal rooms in the second story. *Furnished, i. e.,* with tables and couches, and the necessary dishes. *Prepared:* already swept, and clean, and in order for the feast.

II. THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER. 17. *And in the evening he cometh:* from Bethany, in the twilight when he would not be recognized by his enemies.

18. *And as they sat:* or rather reclined on couches, as was their custom. We know from the gospel narrative that John occupied the place on Jesus' right, at the end of the divans, as we may call it, at the head of the table. But the chief place next to the Master would be that to His left, or above Him. In the strife of the disciples, which should be accounted the greatest, this had been claimed, and we believe it to have been actually occupied by Judas. This explains how, when Christ whispered to John by what signs to recognize the traitor, none of the others heard it. It also explains how Christ would first hand to Judas the sop, which formed part of the paschal ritual, beginning with him as the chief guest of the table, without thereby exciting special notice. Lastly, it accounts for the circumstance that when Judas, desirous of ascertaining whether his treachery was known, dared to ask whether it was he, and received the affirmative answer, no one at the table knew what had passed.

III. EVENTS AT THE PASSOVER. 18–21. FIRST, THE STRIFE. We must now return to the time when the disciples were assembling in the upper room and were about to take their places at the table. Even in this most solemn hour there arose a strife among the disciples as to who should be the greatest (Luke 22: 24–30).

SECOND, JESUS WASHES THEIR FEET (John 13: 4–17). When they had taken their places at the table, Jesus gave them a natural object lesson, which burned its truth upon their inmost soul. He, the greatest of all, took the lowest place, and performed the menial service which their pride had refused.

THIRD, THE TRAITOR ANNOUNCED. 18. *And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said:* being troubled in spirit (John 13: 21). *One of you which eateth with Me:* an intimate friend; one who was pledged by thus eating with Him to be faithful and true. The rites of hospitality were very sacred in the East. *Shall betray Me:* Judas had already agreed to betray Him for 30 pieces of silver; but this announcement (1) gave Judas opportunity to repent. (2) "The words would seem to have been intentionally vague, as if to rouse some of those who heard them to self-questioning. (3) The announcement showed the disciples that Jesus was not taken by surprise, but knew all that was before Him.

19. *And they began to be sorrowful:* because Jesus should be betrayed; because one of their number should fall so low as to be a traitor. *To say unto him:* to Jesus, as well as to one another (Luke 22: 23). *One by one, is it I?* All their want of nobility, all their failure in love, all the depth of their selfishness, all the weakness of their faith; all crowded upon their memories, and made their consciences afraid. *None* of them seemed safe from *anything.* Better that question than "Is it *he?*"

20. *It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.* This did not point out any particular person, but is a repetition of what is said in her. 18. All the disciples dipped their bread with their fingers in the common dish, knives and forks and plates being unknown.

In response to the whispered question of John, who sat next to Jesus, he points out the traitor to him by an act which would attract no notice from the others, because it was an ordinary incident of their daily meal (John 13: 23–36).

21. *The Son of man indeed goeth* (to His death), *as it is written:* in such passages as Ps. 22 and Isa. 53. He must die if He would save the world. *But woe to that man.* Not a threatening, not an utterance of passion, but a sad statement of a terrible fact, thus giving Judas another opportunity and warning to repent. *Good were it for that man if he had never been born.* Such a life was not worth the living.

At this point Satan took possession of Judas, and he went out from the company of disciples to betray Jesus to the chief priests.

IV. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. 22. *And as they did eat.* Sometime during the feast. *Jesus took bread. Took the loaf* or thin cake of unleavened bread, which was before Him. *Blessed.* Invoked God's blessing upon it, as was the wise and pious custom. *And brake it.* Signifying Christ's body broken for us. *Take, eat; this is my body.* Luke adds, *which is given for you* (22: 19); Paul, *which is broken for you* (1 Cor. 11: 24); and both add, *this do in remembrance of Me;* signifying not only that Jesus is Himself the spiritual bread to them, but also that they in receiving and eating it accept of Him and His atonement by faith. *This* (object, in the neuter, not "this bread," in the masculine) *is My body:* represents, expresses my body. We interpret it as we do His other sayings: The seed is the Word, the harvest is the end of the world, I am the door, I am the vine.

So far we have the *fact* of Christ's death for men symbolized, "the purpose of His sacrifice of the object to be gained by it being first suggested by the cup.

23. *And He took the cup.* Nowhere in the accounts of the Lord's Supper is the word "wine" used, but "cup," "fruit of the vine," so that fresh, unfermented grape juice fulfils all the conditions of this observance, and is even a more perfect symbol than fermented wine. *Given thanks.* From the Greek word thus translated comes *The Eucharist; i. e., The Thanksgiving,* as a phrase for taking the bread and wine. *And they all drank of it:* for all would participate in the atoning sacrifice to be symbolized. "All" is significant in the view of the Romanist usage, which denies the cup to the laity.

24. *This is my blood.* A type or emblem of His blood, His life (Lev. 17: 14), which he laid down as the atonement for sin. The grapes must be crushed and destroyed before the juice or "blood" could be used for the strengthening of the sick. *Of the new testament:* or covenant. The word "new" is omitted in the most ancient Mss. Covenant is the preferable sense here. It need hardly be remarked that the title of the New Testament is derived from this passage. *Which is shed for many.* Multitudes, not merely a few, are to be saved by Christ.

25. *Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.* He would have no more social meals with them. This was His last. His death would come before there would be an opportunity for another. *Until that day that I drink it new:* not new wine, but "a new kind of wine, at a new supper." *In the kingdom of God:* completed and perfected, when all should assemble to commemorate the triumph of Christ and His kingdom, and partake of that which the fruit of the vine foretold and symbolized. It is a prophecy of His final triumph.

CLOSING SCENES. After the institution of the Lord's Supper, there occurred that wonderfully touching interview with the eleven disciples, and the closing prayer, recorded by John (13: 31 to 17: 26). It is well to read these chapters at this point.

26. *And when they had sung a hymn.* It was customary to commence the Passover service with singing or chanting Psalms 113 and 114, and to conclude the services with the 115th to the 118th, in which not only the events of the exodus are commemorated, but there is a direct reference to the sorrows of the Messiah, and His resurrection from the dead. *They went out into the mount of Olives.* This may have been for solitude simply, or also in part for safety. He went directly to the Garden of Gethsemane.

— Mr. Gladstone was only once flogged at Eton, and he underwent this punishment for the chivalrous reason that he would not give up the name of some other boy who had got into trouble. This must be under the head-mastership of Dr. Keats, of whom many anecdotes are afloat among old Etonians. One was told to ourselves not so long ago. A boy named Rashleigh, with all the others of his class, was set to write a theme on the maxim *Temere nil facias.* When the time came for giving in the papers, Rashleigh appeared without his. "Where is your theme, sir?" asked the formidable doctor. "I haven't done it, sir!" answered Rashleigh. "Not done your theme, sir?" "No sir!" persisted he, undaunted by the near prospect of the "apple twigs." "Why, you told me not to do it!" "I told you?" "Yes, sir; you said *Temere nil facias*—do nothing, Rashleigh." And the headmaster was so taken by the Latin pun, that the apple twigs were allowed to repose on the shelf.

—"Nobody," says John Ploughman in his Almanac for 1889, "has a word to say for that abominable thing called drunkenness; but many plead for moderation. But this very moderation robs a poor man of lots of comfort. You can altogether smell, most evidently see, and without a question feel the difference between the house of the total abstainer and that of the sipper. The difference made by that twopence in a day is a world of difference. Spend it in beer, and it means a bare look on the walls, and a sort of pigsty meanness in the cottage. Save it and bring it home, and the parlor has its nick-nacks, and Prince comfort comes to live in it. To give up the drink is a rare step in the right direction, if we only think of the look of the house, the clothes of the children, and the pockets of the father and mother. Besides, to be very plain, it is sipping the little which leads on to lapping the much, and they will never drink too much who never drink at all."

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A Side Gleam

So few are the strokes of the inspired pen that go to make up the picture of Christ's childhood and youth that every one of them is especially precious. But after we have turned the page whose brief record is only that "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him;" that he went home with his parents and "was subject unto them;" that "he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man;" then, as through a suddenly opened window, comes a little shaft of light that beautifully illumines the picture of the holy childhood.

When he went back to Nazareth, after a miracle-working visit to the Passover at Jerusalem, he went into the synagogue, "as his custom was."

Does there not flash before you at once a vision of the sweet, white-robed child, a very child, and yet with a light in his eyes that must ever have been a little awful to see, walking through the hilly streets of Nazareth to his Father's house Sabbath after Sabbath for all these thirty years?

Father—mother—do not fail to turn the restless little feet early towards the synagogue. Every Sabbath morning, as you go up with the great congregation where the Father has promised to meet with his children, take your children, reminding them as they run heedlessly at your side that they are following in his footsteps whose "custom it was" to go up to the house of prayer.—*E. P. A. in American Messenger.*

— The young emperor of China was royally reckless with his money on the day of his marriage, as the following sample items will show: The mandarins of Pekin were furnished with wines to the value of $150,000; the parents of the bride received a gift of a million tael dollars, with a "cumshaw" of silks and satins worth three-quarters of a million more. The mere bunting and floor coverings for the bride to walk on cost $750,000, and the palace was decorated at an expense of $3,500,000—so says the *Sin Ye Bo,* a Canton paper. And yet thousands of the subjects of Kwong Suey are dying of starvation, and collections are being taken in civilized countries for their relief! Strange—and yet not strange! It has been the custom for centuries for the ruling classes in China and other heathen countries to coin money out of the very life-blood of the people and to be indifferent to their sufferings. Our better way, our humane impulses, are due to the teachings of Christianity.—*Zions Herald.*

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