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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 30th.

Jesus before the High-Priest.—Matt. xvi. 59-69.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Hebrews vii. 26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 62-65.

SUMMARY.—"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

ANALYSIS.—I. The resort to false witnesses. vs. 59-61. II. The appeals to Christ. vs. 62-64. III. The sentence by the council. vs. 66, 67. IV. The shameful abuse. vs. 68, 69.

EXPOSITION.—Introductory.—Each of the four evangelists gives a more or less detailed account of the events connected with the trial of Christ. If we compare these four accounts they will be seen to differ in such respects, and in so many points, as to make it difficult at once to harmonize them. The following statement of the chronological order of events is given by Dr. Lange, and will greatly aid in the study of this and the next lesson: "1. The preparatory examination by Annas. John xviii. 13. 2. The examination during the night before Caiaphas. 3. The final and formal examination before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim on Friday morning (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). This threefold examination by the ecclesiastical tribunals was followed by another threefold examination on the part of the secular authorities; first by Pilate, then by Herod (Luke); and, lastly, a second time by Pilate. Between these examinations the following events intervened: 1. The mocking and buffeting on the part of the servants of the Temple between the second and the third examination, by the ecclesiastical authorities. 2. The being set at naught after the second examination by the secular rulers, or before Herod—the white robe. 3. The setting at naught and buffeting after his third examination—the scarlet robe. Matthew, Mark, and Luke pass over the examination of the Lord by Annas. Though Annas had been deposed, the Jews seem still to have considered him as their real high priest, while at the same time they were obliged, in an official capacity, to acknowledge Caiaphas whom the Romans had appointed 'that same year.' As Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas, they would, in all probability, order their domestic arrangements so as to meet the views of the Jews without giving offence to the Romans. Accordingly, we would suggest that both lived in one and the same palace; which would also account for the fact that while the examination was successively carried on in two different places, the guard seems to have remained in the same inner court of the palace. This is evident from a comparison of the narrative of Peter's denial as given by John in its relation to the same event as given by the other evangelists. . . . We can thus understand how Matthew and Mark relate the first examination by the high priest, and then the denial by Peter, while this order is reversed by Luke. Evidently the threefold denial on the part of Peter extended from the first to the second examination of the Master."

Verses 59.—The chief priests, and elders, and all the council. This council was the Sanhedrim, the supreme tribunal among the Jews, which the Roman government, to which the Jews were now subject, still allowed to exist, though it, of course, deprived it of some of its ancient prerogatives. We recall the names of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The members of the council had doubtless been together all night, on the alert, and waiting for the coming of Judas, with whom, in the first of the night, they had concerted with the Roman soldiers and their own subordinates who in the dead of night, had been sent to Gethsemane for their prisoner. We shall bear in mind that this was a preliminary meeting, followed after daylight by a more formal one. Chap. xxvii. 1; Luke xxii. 66. They were truly "deeds of darkness. Sought false witness against him. Having no true and valid witness, they seek for something, no matter what, that may seem to warrant a sentence of condemnation. The original is a little more literally translated "were seeking;" but as the plot had been deliberately formed beforehand, and Jesus was here according

to an arrangement made with Judas. To put him to death. To adjudge him guilty of death, and then deliver him to the Roman power to secure confirmation and execution of the sentence. John xviii. 31.

Verses 60, 61.—Found none; i. e., that answered their purpose, hence: Yea, though many, etc. At the last came two, etc., who, it would seem, agreed in the report of these words. Perhaps the words, This one said, may have been spoken with a tone of contempt, indicated by the inserted word "fellow." Blasphemy against the Temple was regarded as blasphemy against the God whose house the Temple was. But how perfectly free the reported words of Christ were from blasphemy no reader of the New Testament need be reminded. Christ's statement was a recognition of the symbolic or typical relation of the Temple to his body.

Verses 62.—The high priest. Caiaphas. See verse 57. Arose. Some think through loss of self-control. Answered thou nothing? We are reminded of Isaiah liii. 7, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb." What is that? etc. What have you to say to this? These men had often before tried in vain to trap him.

Verses 63.—Lest Jesus held his peace. Draw the contrast between the spirit and feelings of this silent prisoner, and the spirit and feelings of this enraged officer. *Adjure thee by the living God.* This was formally to put Christ under oath, to give true answer to the question about to be asked. Christ seems to have recognized the propriety and sacredness of the oath by giving answer. The command in chap. v. 34-37, is doubtless to be referred to other than judicial oaths. *Whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* This was the grand question on which everything turned. The claim to Sonship was that in which the blasphemy was supposed to reside, as appears from John x. 29-36. See especially the thirty-sixth verse.

Verses 64.—Thou hast said; i. e., Yes, I am. See Mark xiv. 62. Jesus gives himself, and is given by the Father, as our sacrifice. Not only does he boldly answer Yes, but he adds to it. *Nevertheless.* Or rather, "besides," or "moreover," for such only is the meaning of the original, and the demand of the connection. *Hereafter shall ye.* "Ye," who are sitting in judgment on me to condemn me. See the Son of Man. The title which, by preference, Jesus used to designate himself with reference to his human nature and his oneness with mankind. *Sitting on the right hand of power.* "Sitting," as in full, peaceful, permanent, undisputed possession of the place. "The right hand" is the place of honor, and "the right hand of power" is the place, position, or office of honor given by the Almighty, and is the figurative statement of the truth literally stated in Matthew xxviii. 18. *Coming in the clouds of heaven.* See chap. xxiv. 30; Daniel vii. 12-14. Clouds are "the attendants, or, at least, the symbol of the divine presence." This "coming" is especially "the second advent" at "the end of the world."

Verses 65.—Rent his clothes. His upper garment. *Hath spoken blasphemy.* In claiming the prerogatives of God. Blasphemy it would have been if Christ had not been God, as according to John i. 1.

Verses 66.—Guilty of death; i. e., justly deserving of death according to our law.

Verses 67.—Spit on his face. As upon an outlaw, and in token of extremest contempt and deepest abhorrence. Mark that they not only spit, but in his face. *Buffeted; i. e., struck with the fist.*

Verses 68.—Prophecy, etc. Recall that he had been blindfolded, as Mark and Luke record. Ah! to what shame was Christ put by those whose hearts were by nature not worse than ours.

QUESTIONS.—The subject of our last lesson? Where did that lesson leave Jesus and the eleven? What followed immediately after? vs. 47-56. Where does this lesson find Christ? vs. 57. To whom was he led before this? John xviii. 13. What there occurred? John xviii. 19-24.

Vs. 59-61. The name and nature of the council? How came it to be together at this time in the night? What does verse 59 show of its spirit toward Christ? What was the Jewish law as to the number of witnesses required? Dent. xix. 15. Did the council find the needed witnesses?

Vs. 62. What did the high priest do? Had Christ been called to answer?

Vs. 63. How did Christ treat this question? Why thus? What is Isaiah liii. 7? What did Caiaphas do next? Meaning of the word "adjure"? How did the Jews regard Christ's claim to "be the Son of God"? John x. 36.

Vs. 64. How did Christ treat this oath? Meaning of the words, "Thou hast said?"

Mark xiv. 62. What more does he add? Why should he here call himself "The Son of Man"? Explain the phrase, "sitting at the right hand of power." What time is referred to Matthew xiv. 30?

Vs. 65-68. What did Caiaphas do and say? What did the rest say and do?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 154, 155.

SUNDAY, December 7th.—Jesus before the Governor.—Matt. xxvii. 11-26.

Youths' Department.

OUR BABY.

BY BEATRICE.

Swing your hats! shout hurra!
Sound trumpet and drum,
Send the news far and near—
Our baby has come.

'Tis mamma's darling pet,
Papa's latest joy;
And the best of it is,
Our baby's a boy.

No more blind-man's buff
Shall make echoes ring,
For baby is sleeping—
Tyrannical king!

By virtue of love, his
Bright sceptre he'll wield;
The household ruler grows

We thank thee, O Father,
For this gift from thee;
We ask that our baby
Blest ever may be.

—Home News.

We copy the above from one of our exchanges. The *Home News* it appears, is a family paper, strictly so, a large neatly written sheet, prepared by a family, filled with verses, puzzles and sketches, with illustrations &c., done for recreation and mutual improvement. This—the preparation of such a paper—is a kind of occupation which might be made a source of much home enjoyment for the long winter evenings.

A CANNON BALL IN THE HAT.

An anonymous writer, generally supposed to be the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, after describing how, when a boy, he stole a cannon ball from the Navy Yard at Charlestown, Mass., and with much trepidation and more headache, carried it away in that universal pocket of youth—the hat, winds up with the following reflections—reflections which, though philosophically trite, are in this manner conveyed with much force and freshness:

When I reached home, I had nothing to do with my shot. I did not dare to show it in the house, nor tell where I got it; and after one or two solitary rolls, I gave it away on the same day to a Prince-streeter.

But after all, that six-pounder rolled a good deal of sense into my skull. I think it was the last thing that I ever stole (except a little matter of a heart, now and then), and it gave me a notion of the folly of coveting more than you can enjoy, which has made my whole life happier. It was rather a severe mode of catechising, but ethics rubbed in with a six-pounder shot are better than none at all.

But I see men doing the same thing—going into underground and dirty vaults, and gathering up wealth, which will, when got, roll around their heads like a ball, and be not a whit softer because it is gold, instead of iron, though there is not a man in Wall Street who will believe that.

I have seen a man put himself to every humiliation to win a proud woman who had been born above him, and when he got her, he walked all the rest of his life with a cannon ball in his hat.

I have seen young men enrich themselves by pleasure in the same wise way, sparing no pains, and scrupling at no sacrifice of principle, for the sake at last of carrying a burden which no man can bear.

All the world are busy in striving for things that give little pleasure and bring much care. I am accustomed, in all my walks among men, noticing their ways and their folly, to think, "there is a man stealing a cannon-ball;" or, "there's a man with a ball on his head; I know it by his walk."

The money which a clerk purloins for his pocket at last gets into his hat like a cannon ball. Pride, bad temper, selfishness, evil passions, will roll a man as if he had a ball on his head! And ten thousand men in New York will die this year, and as each one falls his hat will come off, and out will roll an iron ball, which for years he has worn out his strength carrying.

YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.

"Mother, mother!" said Mary Jay, running into her mother's room, "I believe I've found out what makes Clinton sick every day. I saw him just now, out in the garden, behind the lilac bushes, with big Fred Saunders, and Fred was smoking a cigar."

"Did Clinton have a cigar?" asked her mother.

"I will go and see, myself."

Saying this, Clinton's mother put on her bonnet, and walked out into the garden. There the children stood, in a shady corner, each with a cigar in his mouth, and Clinton with a bundle of matches in his hand.

The two boys who were with him ran when they saw her; but his mother called Clinton in a loud voice to stop; so the stood still. He knew he had been doing wrong, and his first impulse was to get rid of the cigar.

What do you suppose he did with it? It is very strange, but it is true, that people who are caught doing wrong never act as they thought they would if found out. It is as true of grown-up people as of children. It is very easy for persons to make up their minds what they will do if caught in a crime; but strange to say, they seldom do the thing they planned, and often do the very thing that is guilty.

Clinton might have thrown away his cigar, I suppose, before his mother reached him; but instead of that, he thrust it under his belt. He did not do this because he thought it the best plan, or because he thought at all; it was what is called an impulse.

"Clinty," said his mother, "have you a cigar?"

"No," said the little boy. One sin leads to another.

"Clinton," said his mother, solemnly, "is this the truth?"

"No, ma'am, I haven't got any," persisted he. "Fred and Benny had though."

Just at that moment a little blue smoke came curling from under Clinton's apron, and he saw a hole burning in his apron, and there was the burnt end of a cigar under it!

"Ah, Clinton, your sin found you out!"

I will not tell you how Clinton was punished, only you may know he did not smoke any more cigars.

"I think he was a silly fellow to put a lighted cigar under his apron!" some child says. "I would have hid it better than that!"

No you wouldn't. You do not know what you would have done. Unless you have been a great while learning to deceive, and grown cunning, you would not have been any wiser.

When a child or man, who is generally honest, commits some sin and wishes to hide it, the very thing he does to hide it quite often becomes the means of his being discovered.

"When you want to sin in safety go where God is not." But since God is in every place, you may be sure your sin will find you out!

SHAME ON YOU!

I mean you, Master George, and you, Miss Gerty! I know how you spend your study hours at school. You sit with your heads down, as if you were trying to get over your lessons. But you are only shamming. You are a couple of cheats, for on your laps, just below your text-books, are a couple of story-books, and you are reading them instead of studying your lessons. When your classes are called you slyly lift the covers of your desks, slip in your pleasure books, look very innocent, and go out to recite. No wonder you blunder over your recitations.

I am ashamed of and for both of you. You are playing false. You are beginning a habit that will stick to you like glue all your days; it will corrupt your character and ruin your influence. You need not imagine that your shamming will go undiscovered. You will know it. Others will find you out and despise you. God knows it! Stop shamming, then, I beg you, and learn to be true. Be what you appear to be. Do what you seem to be doing. Be true! Off with your masks! Show to the world that you are true boys and girls, and you will make true men and women. Then you will respect yourselves, and be respected by others.

Of all the disagreeable habits the world was ever tormented with, scolding is the most annoying. To hear a saw filed, to hear a peacock scream, or an Indian yell, is music compared with it.

SKEPTICISM AND ITS CURE.

The *Morning Star* makes a good statement of the source of skepticism and its only infallible cure.

"Skepticism may be chiefly the misfortune of some minds. It is just that. They are constitutionally 'slow of heart to believe.' Doubts and questionings have haunted them from their cradles upwards. Or unfavourable surroundings, and mischievous teachers, and treacherous and unprincipled professors of religion may have warped the understanding, and blurred the eyes with prejudice. They have to fight for every inch of the territory of a genuine faith which they gain and keep. The most earnest prayer they ever offer is that of the man in the gospel, 'Help thou mine unbelief!' Such souls as these deserve the charitable sympathy of men, as they are sure to have the infinite and helpful pity of God.

But there is another sort of skepticism which fights against the higher light and the diviner truth. It shuts its eyes. It stops its ears. It twists evidence. It keeps important witnesses away from the inner court, or it perverts their uttered testimony. It loves darkness. It craves the license which infidelity allows. It keeps on crying 'No God!' until it imposes upon itself, and believes its own passionate word to be the utterance of an infallible oracle, called Reason, or Philosophy, or Science. And thus it justifies and illustrates the statement of the Scriptures, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God!'

The best, nay the only real cure for much and even most of the skepticism that exists, is found in that vital experience which comes to the heart, that opens itself upward in earnest prayer, and then puts the truth it has learned into faithful Christian service. Logic is not the needed medicine, but Love; not metaphysical analysis, but an unselfish and consecrated life. For such prayer makes unseen things visible, and such service fills the soul with the very powers of the divine life, so that there is a grateful repetition of the old word, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

The new Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Alderman Lusk M. P. for Finsbury, is a notable example of the "self-made" man. Dick Whittington's story is hardly more romantic than that of Sir Sydney Waterlow's successor. Mr. Lusk, who is a native of a poor weaving village on the coast of Carrie, in Scotland, was in early life a struggling shopkeeper, and not so many years ago made his first upward step in the social scale when he opened a small grocer's shop in a thriving seaport on the Clyde. By sheer force of will and unremitting industry he is now the Chief Magistrate elect of the greatest city in the world. The same county which claims him for a son (that Ayrshire which produced Robert Burns) gave London an excellent Lord Mayor fifty years ago in the person of Sir James Shaw, a poor peasant's boy who distinguished himself by claiming precedence of the King's sons at the funeral of Lord Nelson in St. Paul's.

Dr. JACOBUS relates the following: A few years ago I visited the late venerable Cæsar Malan, of Geneva, Switzerland. He said, "You Americans hang your heads like a bulrush and do not rejoice in hope." I answered, "Doctor, we believe in Christ's work and word, and in Christ himself, but we distrust our own hearts." "Ah!" he said, "it is quite the same. You do not rejoice in God." On taking leave I said, "Tomorrow I must go to Chamounix and Mont Blanc." "Ah!" he said, I will give you a note to a gentleman there who will serve you on my account. "Thank you, Doctor," I replied; "that is a great favor. I am very happy." "Ah!" said he, "you are already very happy! Then you believe."

A WOMAN'S TACT.—A lady saw a driver angry with his horses for some fancied offence, about to lash them severely. She interrupted him by inquiring the way to a certain street, to a certain man's house, both of which she knew very well. But the driver, too gallant not to answer the lady's questions, had opportunity for his temper to cool, and restored the whip to its socket without striking a blow.

Good, kind, true, holy words dropped in conversation may be little thought of, but they are like seeds of flower or fruitful tree falling by the wayside, borne by some birds afar, haply thereafter to fringe with beauty some barren mountain side, or to make glad some lonely wilderness.