



LESSON IV.—NOVEMBER 11, 1906.

Jesus in Gethsemane.

Matt. xxvi., 36-50.

Golden Text.

Not my will but thine be done.—Luke xxii., 42.

Home Readings.

Monday, November 5.—Matt. xxvi., 36-50.
 Tuesday, November 6.—Is. liii., 1-12.
 Wednesday, November 7.—Ps. xxii., 1-8;
 14-19.
 Thursday, November 8.—Matt. xxvii.,
 1-10.
 Friday, November 9.—Mark xiv., 26-45.
 Saturday, November 10.—Luke xxii., 39-48.
 Sunday, November 11.—John xviii., 1-9.

(By Davis W. Clark)

The harvest moon lighted coldly a weird scene,—pale faces of tombs peering down into a shadowy valley; a brook on its way to a Sea of Death, and running red with the blood of two hundred thousand lambs slain that day; gnarled old olive-tree, whose twisted trunks seemed to express for the vegetable world that tribulation under which the whole creation groaneth.

As Jesus passed the snowy porches of the temple, and came down into the forbidding chasm, would He not recall to Him how His great progenitor, thrust out of the same city, had crossed this very brook Cedron with face toward the wilderness; how as he went up the further side, he wept and had his head covered and went barefoot.

The separation of the disciples into two bands was not an act of caprice or favoritism. In this instance, paradoxically, the station most remote from the Shepherd was the safest. The feeling that can be touched for human infirmity showed itself in the very disposition which Jesus on this occasion made of His followers. And if even on the burning edge of His inscrutable sorrow, He could still think of and provide for the safety of His own, will He neglect us now, that He is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens?

The two who had asked to be baptized with His baptism, and the one who had first acknowledged Him the Son of God—these three, the same who had gone with Him to the Transfiguration height—were deemed best inured to go with Him into the depth of His humiliation. Jesus wanted the consciousness that human sympathizers were near; wanted to be guarded from intrusion; wanted that there should be witnesses, so that the scene might be transmitted to the Church. The disciples were drowsy, but not wholly disqualified for this threefold purpose. Even to those comparatively hardy companions He does not bluntly announce the nature of His ordeal, lest He should terrify them. He says only, and considerately, that He goes to pray.

The source and nature of Jesus' agony is inexplicable. If you say it was natural shrinking from the hour and article of death, then I must say Jesus appears to have died less heroically than many a martyr—nay, even infidel, heathen, or apostate. The suffering of Jesus seems to be unlike in nature, and to surpass in degree human anguish with which we are familiar.

I suggest that, though the suffering manifested itself in His physical nature, the chief seat of it was in His moral nature. It

was reversed on Golgotha. There only one word out of seven indicated any degree of moral suffering.

Away with the idea that Jesus had a sense of personal condemnation, as if He were the object of His Father's wrath, and so that, in that sense, Gethsemane was the 'Hell of the Son of God.' It occurs to me that He so became one with us as to appreciate the grief and sorrow of the whole race with such a keenness and to such a degree as that it became his very own, and well-nigh insupportable. May not this have been that cup which, if it were morally possible, He wished might be supplanted by some other?

It is with Him only a question of means. His unshaken purpose is to do His Father's will. The Father is not harrying the Son on to something from which he revolts. Father's will is Son's delight.

The loneliness of Jesus is nowhere more conspicuous and touching than in Gethsemane. He coveted human sympathy. It failed Him. He looked for comforters, but found none. He trod His wine-press alone, unhelped.

The quality of Jesus' submission is not deprecated by the agony through which He passed. It is rather enhanced. Its perfection is manifest thereby. The Captain of salvation is made to appear—as He really is—perfect to us through the medium of His suffering.

It is sweet to think that from the top of this same mount, at whose base Jesus suffered such agony, He ascended in triumph until the cloud of the Divine presence received Him out of the sight of man. He stooped here; He conquered there.

ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. Approach to Gethsemane.
Scenes and incidents.
An historical parallel.
2. Separation of disciples.
Object—Principle of classification.
3. Agony inexplicable.
Source and nature of.
Not shrinking from death.
Seat of it in moral not physical nature.
Reversed on the cross.
Not sense of personal condemnation.
4. A suggested explanation.
Jesus' identification of Himself with human race.
So complete that total of human sorrow is assumed by Him.
5. Father and Son's oneness of purpose.
6. Loneliness of Jesus illustrated.
7. Jesus' perfection manifested through the medium of His suffering.
8. Scene of triumph next to that of humiliation.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Gethsemane was one of Jesus' trysting-places. Oft on a starry night had He communed with His disciples there. In its deeper depths, a stone's throw from the nearest of them, He had often met His Father in completest fellowship. The ground was already hallowed for this final ordeal.

His Father's face was not eclipsed even by Gethsemane's midnight gloom. No shadow of a doubt of His Sonship or even acceptance with His Father crosses His mind. 'Father! Father!' is His confident and reiterated address.

The exudation of blood from the pores is not a physiological impossibility; but it is not affirmed. A comparison only is expressed. The moisture was not first evenly disposed and afterwards gathered into drops. As in the death-sweat, it was pressed out at once in the form of drops or beads, which of their own weight fell to earth.

How true to nature the account of the Saviour's prayer! The dying and those in extreme distress commonly repeat the same words.

Stier pronounces the Epistle to the He-

draws, chapter v., verses 7, 8, as the 'most apostolical commentary on Gethsemane.'

Spirit willing, flesh weak, is one of the best perverted Bible texts. It is used as a salve to conscience. Meanest vices are excused and justified by it. The text does not belong to the sinner at all. Only of the regenerated son of God can it be truly said, 'His spirit is ready, willing to do as God wishes.' But even such a one needs to be ever alert against the susceptibility of nature. In the sinner the flesh is willing as well as weak. His spirit is not willing to do at all as God wishes.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Nov. 11.—Topic—Christ's life. XI. His sorrows, and how He bore them. John xi., 30-38; Isa. liii., 3-5.

Junior C. E. Topic.

LIVINGSTONE IN AFRICA.

Monday, Nov. 5.—A prayerful man. Dan. vi., 10, 11.

Tuesday, Nov. 6.—A faithful man. Neh. ix., 8.

Wednesday, Nov. 7.—Bearing hardships. I. Cor. iv., 11, 12.

Thursday, Nov. 8.—In journeyings often. II. Cor. xi., 26, 27.

Friday, Nov. 9.—Preaching among the heathen. Eph. iii., 8, 9.

Saturday, Nov. 10.—Where Christ was unknown. Rom. xv., 16-21.

Sunday, Nov. 11.—Topic—What Livingstone did for Africa. II. Cor. vi., 4-7.

The more people are educated the more they appreciate and value pictures of current events—for they contribute delightfully at a glance to a still further education.

* *

The less people are educated the more they appreciate and value pictures because they tell them at a glance of interests of which they cannot or perhaps will not read. That is why they please and instruct the children.

* *

Everybody likes pictures and no home should be without its picture paper. The cheapest and best is the "Canadian Pictorial." It contains about a thousand inches of pictures and costs about a thousand dollars each issue.

Only ten cents a copy.
One dollar a year.

THE PICTORIAL PUBLISHING CO'Y,
142 St. Peter St., Montreal.

Or JOHN DOUGALL & SON, Agents,
"Witness" Building, Montreal.