

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

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THERE is nothing sadder than a betrayal. I well remember, as a child, the sorrow and indignation I felt at reading how William Wallace, whom I then took for a patriot and martyr, was betrayed by Monteith into the hands of Edward the First of England. And it seems but the other day that the heroic Gordon perished, through treachery, at Khartoum.

Four things usually go to make up a betrayal.

First. The betrayer must be a familiar acquaintance and supposed friend of the person betrayed. No other is in possession of such knowledge, or of such an opportunity as will make it possible to deliver up the victim suddenly to those who are seeking him. And in this lies the most painful sting. It was the stab of his friend Brutus that broke the heart of Cæsar.

Secondly. The plan must be kept so secret that the betrayed shall be in ignorance of the matter. Had Wallace known what would follow he would have shunned the company of his treacherous friend. Gordon, it appears, was in some degree aware that he was surrounded by traitors. Yet he too long trusted one who afterward turned against him.

Thirdly. Plans must be laid so surely that the betrayed may be powerless to escape his fate. If it were otherwise the betrayal would come to nothing. Could the bird escape the snare it would be no genuine snare.

Fourthly. The betrayal of the victim is usually followed by the ruin of his cause. When Gordon perished the hopes that centered in him were all destroyed and the enemy triumphed.

Let us see how far these four points were fulfilled in the betrayal of our Lord.

1. *Who was the betrayer?* The close companion of the betrayed. Judas was one of the number chosen to be with our Lord constantly. No person outside of the twelve would have been suitable for the purpose. His public resorts were known to all, but in the presence of the multitude none dared to lay hands upon him. It had to be done in private. No wonder that when the chief priests heard the offer of Judas, who knew his Master's resorts (ver. 2) and his Master's habits, "they were glad." Mark 14. 11; Luke 22. 5. And herein lay the sting to the tender, loving heart of Jesus: "One of you shall betray me." As the "Son of Man" he bore the pain of disappointed friendship and trust betrayed: "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Psa. 41. 9.

2. *Was the plan laid in secret?* When Judas left the supper table on that eventful night, "no man at the table" knew what he was gone for. His treachery was hidden from all. John, alone, had any idea that Judas was a traitor, and that, not until the time of action was come. The chief priests and scribes kept their secret from the people until the Victim was in their hands.

Yet Jesus knew it all (John is particular to tell us this)—knew it, not in a vague manner, like Gordon at Khartoum, but through and through from the beginning to the end. And "knowing all things that should come upon him" (ver. 4), he went deliberately to meet treachery, bonds, and death.

3. *Was the plan laid surely?* Every possible precaution was taken. A band of soldiers was procured from the governor. A crowd of officials and servants from the chief priests accompanied them. They came with "lanterns and torches," ready to search into the darkest recesses of the garden where Jesus was to be found, and "weapons"—"swords and staves," as we read in Matthew and Mark—so that they who might choose to make resistance should be quickly overpowered.

And yet they had no power over their Victim unless he chose. John is particular to show us this too.

The mere presence and word of Jesus were enough to repel his assailants. This armed multitude, accustomed to war and tumult, "went backward and fell to the ground" when he addressed them. And though he freely gave himself up he would not permit them to lay a finger upon his disciples. Ver. 8. How poor, after this, seems the attempted resistance of Simon Peter, which called from our Lord an announcement of the reason why he gave himself up to his enemies: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

4. *What was the result of the betrayal?* Was it the ruin of Christ's cause? John specially recalls to our remembrance (ver. 14) the opinion and counsel of Caiaphas "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people," in order "that the whole nation perish not." Chap. 11. 50. He thought that the triumph of Jesus would be the ruin of their nation. If he could be put out of the way, his followers would melt away, his cause would perish, and all would be well. But what a mistake they made! The betrayal of Jesus "into the hands of sinners," his seizure, and his death were exactly what was necessary for the triumph of his cause. "Now," said our Lord, when Judas had gone out on his errand of treachery, "is the Son of man glorified." Chap. 13. 31. Compare chap. 12. 23, 24. The cross was the way to the glory.

There is a picture by Gustave Doré, in which this idea has been wonderfully put on canvas. Those who have seen his "Dream of Pilate's Wife" will recall the pale, suffering victim standing in the midst of his enemies and the wonderful throng of saints, martyrs, kings, and people of all kinds rising up as his disciples, tier above tier, till the multitude is lost in the distant glory. Yet, grand as is the painting, what is it compared to the reality, of which such passages as Rev. 7. 9, etc., give us a glimpse? "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." He shall bring "many sons unto glory." Heb. 2. 10. His cause has triumphed, is triumphing, and shall triumph. Whoever follows the crucified Jesus is on the winning side!

And now look back over the three other points.