

The second question is answered also in the text. "By the things that he suffered." That was the only way Jesus Christ could learn what obedience was. Obedience is the submission of one's own will to the will of another who has the right to claim it. But to do the will of his Father was the delight of the Lord Jesus; his meat and drink. It was no task, for it was done spontaneously, the prompting of his own nature. Yet that nature shrank from suffering. Had it been otherwise he would not have been truly man, "in all things made like unto his brethren." Here, then, came in the learning. And in the wonderful narrative we read to-day we behold him in the very act, and in the hardest part.

He goes apart from the company of the disciples, taking with him only Peter, James, and John. He begins to be "sorrowful and very heavy." He no longer keeps his feelings back, but tells them he is "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He craves sympathy in this hour of agony—"Watch with me." Then he pours out his soul in prayer, desiring that the awful cup which is before his lips might pass from him. Must he drink it? If we look a little further on in the chapter we see that he might have rejected it (verse 35). But his Father's will—that is with him the uppermost thing. His own will takes the subordinate place—"Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

This lesson has to be learned alone. The disciples cannot understand it, cannot in the least enter into it. Seeking again for sympathy, twice over he finds they have succumbed to natural weariness; they are asleep. But the words of the prayer are altered. "As I will" utterly disappears; it is only, "Thy will be done."

And presently the awful struggle is over. The Lord Jesus knows from actual human experience what obedience to the Father's will is, and knows it as none of us can ever know.

But in a limited degree all God's children must learn the same lesson. And now we come to the third question: Why did Christ learn it? The passage from which our Golden Text is taken supplies the answer. It is not for his own sake but his people's that Peter the Great of Russia went through the labor of carpentering and shoemaking. And it was for our sakes that the Son of God "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." It was this that made him a perfect sacrifice, a perfect Saviour, a perfect High-priest, and a perfect Example.

It is upon the latter—the perfect Example—that the passage specially calls our attention. Even in his hour of awful conflict our Lord remembered the need of his disciples. They had failed to watch with him. But the time was near at hand when they must "watch and pray" for themselves. Their "spirit was willing," and in some degree they had already done the will of the Father. Chap. 12, 49, 50. But they had much to learn. And if he, the spotless Son of God, needed to "watch and pray" over this lesson of obedience, how truly did they whose "flesh was weak" need the same! The tempter is always trying to get us to put aside this

lesson. "O! you can't do that, it is too hard; no one else does it; you will be laughed at; you will never get on; and there is no need for it; the task is quite unnecessary and quite beyond you." But let each one remember, the hardest lesson of all was learned by Christ, and we can learn ours "through Christ which strengtheneth" us. Phil. 4. 13.

The Lesson Council.

Question 18. What caused the agony in Gethsemane?

The agony in Gethsemane was a suffering entirely unknown before in the history of man. In the whole history of pain it stands unique, without a parallel. In my opinion no man will ever be able to comprehend it, or to assign its precise cause. It was not a fear of death, or a shrinking from physical pain, nor could it have been the anger of the Father against the well-beloved Son; and yet it grew out of the relation of the mysterious sufferer to a sinful world, and it was of the same kind as that which extorted from him the bitter cry, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"—*Rev. A. L. Long, D.D.*

Not only the natural shrinking from coming sufferings and death, a shrinking common to all living creatures, whether human or brute, but more especially "a terror of thick darkness" on account of the hiding of his Father's face from him who, though he knew no sin, was made to be sin for us. The intense bodily prostration and the bloody sweat were the outward and visible signs of the great spiritual suffering within.—*J. E. Hanauer.*

19. What is meant by "this cup?" ver. 39.

That "hour" of amazing (comp. Mark 14. 33) and unspeakable soul-agony in the garden.—*Prof. M. S. Terry, D.D.*

There were being crowded and forced upon our Lord at this time many bitter experiences. From every side came the attack upon his human nature, as though all the powers of evil had mixed a draught and were forcing him to drink it, or else turn aside from his work as a Messiah. The betrayal of his disciples, the satanic malice of his enemies, the approaching trial, when his work would be misrepresented and his life sworn away, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the cruel, ignominious death, the present awful sense of loneliness, the weak, shrinking flesh—all these things came together. He could at once escape them all and leave this unworthy, sinful world to its fate. Here is the power of the temptation. But the divine will and energy triumphed, and he drank the bitter cup, he went forth to give himself for our salvation. There are bitter cups for us to drink, and it is not strange that we sometimes shrink; but we can say, by his help—"Thy will be done."—*Rev. A. D. Vail, D.D.*

20. How are the words "sleep on now," in verse 25, and "Rise, let us be going," in verse 26, to be reconciled?

The great struggle is now over—a conflict as deep as life and more terrible than death. The human Christ longed for the sympathy of that inner circle of disciples who had been with him in his deepest and most sacred experiences. They had failed to help when he leaned on them in the crucial hour. The battle is now over, and he comes back to them for the last time in the conscious strength of victory. The struggle is past. They cannot help him now. "Sleep on now and take your rest." You will need strength for the coming