



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1908.

Jesus Betrayed and Denied.

John xviii., 1-9, 24-27. Memory verses 2, 3. Read John xviii., 1-27.

Golden Text.

Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men. Matt. xvii., 22.

Home Readings.

- Monday, May 11.—John xviii., 1-14.
- Tuesday, May 12.—John xviii., 15-27.
- Wednesday, May 13.—Matt. xxvi., 31-46.
- Thursday, May 14.—Matt. xxvi., 47-68.
- Friday, May 15.—Mark xiv., 32-52.
- Saturday, May 16.—Mark xiv., 53-72.
- Sunday, May 17.—John xviii., 21-38.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Have you any particular chum at school, Fred? I suppose you all like certain friends better than others, because that is a way we all have, and when Christ was here upon earth he had twelve friends who went with him everywhere, and out of those twelve three in particular, Peter, James and John, who were his closest friends. Just try to think, Fred, what it would mean supposing you were accused of stealing something in school. Of course you had not done it, but while you were out playing your teacher and a lot of the boys should come out to find you and at the head of them all was one of your friends, a boy who had known you for years, and that he should say, 'There he is. Take him; don't let him escape!' Then when you were taken away in disgrace as a thief, all your friends should leave you, and when you were being tried you should overhear your greatest chum telling other people that he didn't know you at all, that he wouldn't have anything at all to do with a fellow like that. Can you think how that would hurt you? In our lessons lately we have been learning about how the officers of the Jews have been trying to arrest Jesus because they hated him; he was so good and they were so bad. To-day, however, we have to learn about something sadder than anything like that, because we learn how one of Christ's own twelve disciples led the soldiers to arrest him, how all the disciples ran away and left him, and how one of his dearest friends, Peter, declared that he didn't even know Jesus.

FOR THE SENIORS.

A study of the four gospels on these incidents will be necessary to obtain a complete account, for no one gives all the incidents and each takes into account something omitted by the others. This is the complete failure of human friendship in the dark hour of our Redeemer's life on earth and none the less bitter for him to bear, that he knew it was inevitable, part of the cross he had come to take up (Mark xiv., 27). Yet that he longed for human sympathy is evident in his returning three times from the throes of his agonized prayer to his sleeping disciples (Mark xiv., 37-41). John passes briefly over the scene in the garden, staying only to record the involuntary homage of the rabble force who came to arrest Christ and Peter's rash impetuosity in drawing his sword, but our lesson is concerned with the whole story. Hard and bitter as it must have been for the Master to see Judas on the side of his enemies, yet it remained for Peter, the trusted and loved friend, to give the Lord the bitterest drop in his cup of sorrow. In this there is one of the deepest

lessons of our study. Our Saviour's heart is no less loving to-day, and the rejection of the outside world does not bring him the sorrow that there is in the craven fear of his professed disciples to stand to their colors in the face of the world's jeers. We have protested our love to him and felt the power of his tender love to us, and yet in the face of a covert sneer from a chance acquaintance we as surely deny our Lord as ever did Peter of old. What, too, is the risk we think we run as compared to that Peter thought to stare him in the face? And are we in the depths of despair over a dishonored Lord as was he? Rather, we know a victorious Lord and in our hearts no doubt assails his victory. We talk of Peter's denial with a shock of horror, but about us and in us day by day is this sin repeated in far blacker dye than colored his failure. The Master was on trial the day that Peter failed him; to-day before the world our Master is still questioned and rejected; let us look to ourselves that we do not betray his cause, that we do not fail him when our Lord seeks our help, that we do not fall into a more cowardly denial than was Peter's.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE')

Now, when you read how Peter declared with oaths and curses that he knew not Jesus, what do you think with reference to yourself? If, when we read that account, we feel, 'I would never do that,' then we are in a place of peril. If, on the other hand, we feel like praying, 'O God, keep me by Thy power, lest I fall in such a way,' then we are in a place of safety. The man who is positive he will not deny Christ is the very one who is in danger of denying Him first. The spirit of self-assertion and of self-satisfaction cannot live in the region of close communion with Christ. The nearer to Christ we come, the greater in some respects is our sense of distance from Him. The better we know the Master the more we see our own imperfections, and the more we tremble because of our own weakness. We may have a confidence that Christ can keep; but it is very different from the self-confidence which leads us to say that we shall never fail.—G. Campbell Morgan.

But to renounce one's own strength is quite possible for one who is naturally strong. Paul was a man of great natural strength of character, almost unparalleled natural gifts; but when Paul came to Jesus Christ, he renounced all his native strength and looked to the Lord Jesus Christ for his strength; and instead of the great natural abilities of Paul, he got the supernatural abilities of God.—R. A. Torrey, in 'Northfield Echoes.'

If Peter had been arrested with Jesus and had been scourged he doubtless would have endured it bravely and remained loyal to his Master through it all. For such a great crisis he was prepared. It was the little, unexpected temptation that proved his undoing. Do I know what it is to make up my mind to some act of real self-sacrifice for others, and then to lose my temper under some little, annoying provocation?

It is a terrible thought that Judas was with Jesus and yet was made worse instead of better by the companionship. It is an equally true and equally terrible thought that we may be made worse by our familiarity with Christ's life and teachings. If we do not heed His words our hearts are becoming hardened, like the ground by the wayside into which no seed can penetrate and bear fruit.

'There is in this community to-day an amount of right conviction, which, if it were set free into right action by complete release from moral cowardice, would be felt through the land.'—Phillips Brooks.

Few things are so stumbling as our conceit of ourselves.—Henry Churchill King.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.—Confucius.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES')

Why did Christ choose Judas for a disciple? Not in ignorance of his character and tendencies, for we are expressly told that from the beginning Christ knew who should betray him (John ii., 25; vi., 64, 70). The

explanation will probably be found in the thought that Jesus from the first saw in this man certain evil tendencies which might develop into such enormity as that which they did reach at last, but that he saw better qualities which might possibly under his training overcome the baser thing.—Rev. F. G. Greenhough.

The Master did his best by Judas. He gave him one opportunity after another of confession. As he washed his feet, the touch of Jesus' hand; when he offered him the soap, the look on Jesus' face; when he told him to do his work quickly, the sound of Jesus' voice, were means of grace. If, at this last moment, he had cast himself on his Master's mercy, we should have mentioned his name to-day—the chief sinner saved. Judas was to be Jesus' failure.—Ian Maclaren.

'Never in all their lives could Peter, James, and John wipe out that failure from their memories. And yet, have we one word of blame? We have never been worn with sorrow such as theirs. Have we not also failed when our Lord has asked us to watch and pray?'—R. C. Gillie.

When Christ calmly declared who he was, why did they fall backward on the ground? 'Whether this was a supernatural event, or allied to the sublime force of moral greatness flashing in his eye, or echoing in the tones of his voice, we cannot say. He who had hushed the waves and cast out the devil, and before whose glance and word John and Paul fell to the earth as if struck with lightning, did perhaps allow his very captors (prepared by Judas for some display of his might) to feel how powerless they were against him.'—Pulpit Commentary.

Bible References.

Matt. xxvi., 36-75; Mark xiv., 32-72; Luke xxii., 39-62; I. Cor. x., 12; Matt xxvi., 41; John x., 17, 18; II. Cor. xii., 9, 10; Prov. xxviii., 25, 26.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 17.—Topic—Being a Christian. II. At home and in school. I. Chron. xiii., 12-14; Isa. liv., 13. (Union meeting with the Juniors.)

C. E. Topic.

Monday, May 11.—Helpers of others' joy. II. Cor. i., 24.

Tuesday, May 12.—Keeping God's commands. John ii., 5.

Wednesday, May 13.—Being kind. Rom. xii., 10.

Thursday, May 14.—Loving one another. I. John iv., 7.

Friday, May 15.—Walking in truth. II. John iv.

Saturday, May 16.—Doing good. Gal. vi., 9, 10.

Sunday, May 17.—Topic—Being a Christian at home and in school. I. Chron. xiii., 12-24; Isa. liv., 13. (Union meeting with the older society.)

All in Your School can Pray.

Dr. A. C. Thompson asks, 'Is it too much for even young children to plead in the fullest sense of the word, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth (in all the earth) as it is in heaven"?'

The Jews had a saying, 'He prays not at all in whose prayers there is no mention of the kingdom of heaven.' That there is a great measure of truth in this, we may learn from a study of that model prayer our Lord gave his disciples when they asked him to teach them to pray. There should be prayer for the world-wide spread of the gospel at every session of the Sunday school. We need to follow the example of the noble Moravian church in this.—Selected.

Sunday School Offer.

Any school in Canada that does not take 'The Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.