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The HOUSE OF PLENCY

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Commentary.—I. Christ's burden (vs. 32-34). 32. Came—Jesus and His disciples, except Judas, left the upper room at about midnight, passed out an eastern gate of Jerusalem and crossed the Kidron valley toward the Mount of Olives. Gethsemane—The name means "oil press," probably from there having been an oil press there to extract the oil from olives, which grew in abundance in that locality. It was an enclosure, and may have belonged to some friend of Jesus. At least he was accustomed to retire to this place (Luke 22:39; John 18:2). In the place now said to be Gethsemane there are several very old olive trees which are thought to be a thousand years old. They may have been shoots from the roots of trees that were standing in Christ's time. Sit ye here—This Jesus said to eight of His disciples, placing them at the entrance of the garden. They were familiar with his practice of retirement for prayer. A crisis, if not the great crisis, of His earthly ministry was at hand. He knew what awaited Him, and He realized His need of communion with the Father. 33. Taken with him Peter and James and John—These three were the inner circle of Christ's disciples. They were near Him because of their faith, devotion and capability to enter into deep sympathy with Him. They had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the room where He had raised the dead to life. They seemed to understand Him better than did the others, and this was a time when His human nature craved companionship. Some amazed—The expression indicates both great amazement and a failure to grasp the nature of the new feelings that possessed Him. This has reference to the human side of His nature. Heavy—The root idea of the word is that of being sorrowful unto death—This was not physical suffering; it was anguish of soul. It was so severe that it would have resulted in death had it continued long. Tarry ye here, and watch—Jesus knew that the three disciples whom He addressed loved Him, even though they were not strong, and He desired that they should be near Him. 34. Christ's prayer (vs. 35, 36). 35. went forward a little—Jesus went "about a stone's cast" (Luke 22:41) from where the three were and prayed alone. fell on the ground—Fell on his face" (Matt. 26:39). He knelt down and pressed his forehead to the ground in token of his deep humiliation and earnest supplication, prayed—There are seasons in human experience when nothing avails but prayer. Jesus was human as well as

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divine, and he poured out his sorrowful and oppressed soul in prayer. "We are here in full view of the deepest mystery of our faith—the two natures in one Person." If it were possible—The human nature of Jesus appealed to the Father that, if there was any way to accomplish man's redemption without the agonies of that and the succeeding hours, it might be so done. 36. Abba—The Aramaic word for father. It is doubtless the very word that Jesus used. The word is used only twice besides this in the scriptures, and both times by Paul (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). All things are possible—This is an ascription of omnipotence to the Father, yet there was an implied recognition of the divine wisdom, and a submission to the divine plan in the redemption of the world, take away this cup—Luke says, "If thou be willing." Jesus was not shrinking from his approaching death upon the cross. He knew that it was awaiting him. The cup that he mentioned in his prayer, and which even then was being pressed to his lips, was the crushing weight of the sins of the world that was resting upon him. His human feelings and human reason were craving relief, if such relief was in the divine will, not what I will, but what thou wilt—His own will was gladly yielded to the Father's will. This is the only satisfactory attitude for anyone to take, that of glad submission to the will of God. It has been suggested that Jesus feared the agony of Gethsemane might produce death, so that he could not come to the cross, there to pour out his life for the sins of the world.

III. The disciples asleep (vs. 37-42). 37. Findeth them sleeping—Jesus came to them to receive the sympathy they might afford. His coming to them and the words he spoke to them afforded them a lesson in watchfulness and prayer, which has come down to us with great force. They could scarcely have realized the full significance of the hour, yet their hearts were bowed down with grief, for Luke says they were sleeping because of sorrow. It was past midnight and the disciples were weary with the great events of the preceding day and evening. In the quiet of the place and the hour they yielded to the desire for rest. Had they comprehended the real situation, they doubtless would have resisted the tendency to slumber, and would have performed the service for Jesus which he desired. Simon, sleepest thou—On the way to the garden Peter had declared in the strongest terms his loyalty to his Master. In these words Jesus administered a gentle rebuke to Peter for so soon becoming indifferent to him. One hour—Jesus had been in the deepest agony of soul and "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44), but his disciples were apparently indifferent to his suffering and went to sleep.

38. Watch ye and pray—An exhortation applicable to that occasion and to all occasions. Lest ye enter into temptation—If they failed to watch and pray, they would be liable to be affected by temptation and to enter upon the performance of what the temptation suggested. Spirit truly is ready—The higher nature responded or assented to the call of duty. Flesh is weak—The lower nature has its limitations. The thought of the disciples sleeping at this critical time warns us of our duty to be constantly alive to the interests of God's cause.

39. Again he prayed—His going the second and third times shows how great was his burden and how intensely in earnest he was. Christ's prayer was answered, and answered in the same way that God answers our prayers. The fact that the angel strengthened him (Luke 22:43) was an answer to his prayer. Christ's praying thus furnishes an example to us. 40. Eyes were heavy—They seemed unable to keep awake. Neither wist they—They did not know what to say to Jesus when he aroused them from their sleep. They would not frame any excuse for their failure to heed Christ's injunction, "Watch ye and pray." 41. The third time—Three times Jesus prayed to the Father. He was earnest, submissive, trustful and persistent in prayer. Three times he came to his disciples and found them asleep. The contrast between Jesus' acts and those of the disciples is most affecting. A suffering, agonizing Master; and listless,

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sleeping disciples! Sleep on now, and take your rest—Jesus had gained the victory. The hour of watching was over, and now they could take their rest. The hour is come—The time drew near when the traitor would come. Jesus was alert to hear the approaching multitudes and to see the lanterns and torches. 42. Rise up, let us go—The time for praying was over, and the way to the cross was opening before the Saviour. He was ready to meet the mob and to go with those who sought his life, for his hour had come.

IV. Jesus betrayed and forsaken (vs. 43-54). 43-49. The prayer of Jesus was over, and Judas with a crowd from the Jewish leaders came into the garden of Gethsemane. As previously arranged, Judas designated to the mob which one was Jesus by kissing him. Jesus allowed himself to be arrested, though in John's account the crowd "went backward," and fell to the ground," as Jesus declared to them who he was. Peter undertook to defend his Master with his sword by cutting off the right ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus healed the severed ear and reproved Peter, 50-54. In this time of stress all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. As Jesus was led away to the high priest for an examination, Peter followed him afar off—Peter who had been exceedingly strong in his protestations of faithfulness to Jesus.

QUESTIONS.—Where had Jesus and his disciples spent Thursday evening? In what direction did they go from there? What does the name of the garden mean? Why did Jesus go into the garden? How did he place His disciples? Why was Jesus sorrowful? What was his prayer? What did he mean by asking that "this cup" might pass from him? Why did he tell his disciples to watch and pray? Why did they not obey him? How great were the sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane?

PRACTICAL SURVEY. Topic—Jesus' dependence upon his disciples. I. The suffering Saviour. II. The sleeping disciples. The Mountain of Transfiguration and the Garden of Agony stand apart from all other experiences in the life of Christ in profound and instructive isolation. They are intimately related to each other and inseparable from the great purpose for which he came. On the mount the divine life reached its culmination, touching the very heavens and enshrouded in glory. In Gethsemane we have the antipodal experience in which the divine life touches hell itself and moves in awful gloom into the final struggles with the powers of darkness. Our best outlook into the garden is from the mount of glory. 1. The suffering Saviour. No experience of more profound and sacred mystery entered into the earthly life of the Son of God. This is holy ground and it becomes us with unshod

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feet and hushed spirit to contemplate the scene. As Jesus entered the shadow a revulsion of feeling seems to have overwhelmed him. The calm and even joyous confidence of the "guest chamber" gives place to an unsupportable weight of spirit, a sorrow "even unto death." In the former he spoke of his own death as quietly as if the "mount of sacrifice" were another summit of blessing, and instituted a permanent memorial of the event. Now sorrow mingles with surprise. In the life of Christ it was the first shadow of the darkness of a world's sin swept between them. It was "as he prayed" that the transfiguration glory unfolded him; and he had recourse to prayer as the cloud of unspeakable darkness gathered over his spotless spirit. The scriptures are silent concerning the former, but disclose the subject of the garden petition. The "cup" was the experience of divine indignation against sin into which, as the Saviour, Jesus must enter. Into his experience as Redeemer must enter every element of suffering to which the race became subject through transgression. Physical, mental and moral agony are included in the sacred mystery.

II. The sleeping disciples. It is significant, though not surprising, that John omits the incidents of the lesson and that the chosen witnesses of his glory are the intended companions of his sorrow. It is not belittling to Christ to recognize his human longing for sympathy and companionship in the hour of agony. If any could understand, if any would sympathize, surely it was those who had scarcely passed from the radiance of his glory. But even these failed him, and he "trod the winepress alone." In the intervals of alleviation he returned only to find them sleeping. Jesus bade them "watch and pray," not so much for his sake, as their own. He knew the temptation which awaited them, and which proved too much for their unstrengthened spirits. Possibly the record of desertion and denial had remained unwritten, as in many another experience since, if the sleeping hours had been prayerful. Compassion mingles with reproof in the Master's address to Simon, whose former professions of utmost loyalty strongly contrasted with his present and later course. In our smaller lives there come hours in which bitter cups from which we shrink are pressed to our quivering lips. In "perfect acquiescence" we find perfect rest.

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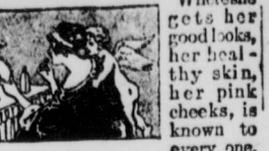
LANGUAGE AND BIBLE.

The Book That Standardized All the Dialects of Britain.

Before the printing of the Bible there was no English language. It was the Bible that standardized all the dialects of England and that bound them together into a living speech, and it was the Bible that was the foundation of the education and culture of England. As the English historian Green says, "The English people became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible."

To a large degree the same is true of Germany. The Bible has then become both the language textbook and the spiritual guide of these African nations. In mission schools the world over the Bible is the language textbook. The people of the mission lands want their children to learn the western tongue, and they send them to the school. They learn the missionary's language, but in the learning they find the missionary's God.—Christian Herald.

BEAUTY SECRETS!



Whereas she gets her good looks, her healthy skin, her pink cheeks, is known to every one, because it is apparent that it is not due to cosmetics, paint and powder. But the true womanly beauty comes from good health, and this good health is a woman's secret.

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CEREAL DISHES

In a house where there are several children it seems as if there was always a bowl of left-over cereal of some kind waiting to be used, and there are countless of most appetizing ways in which it may be incorporated into other dishes quite different from the usual run, if one only knows how. One young mother, as half a dozen recipes in her card index for this very purpose. If it is the fine white cereal that she has, she simply puts it into custard cups, sometimes with a spoonful of jam or left-over berries in the middle, and lets it get cold. Then she turns it out onto plates and serves it with sugar and cream or a mustard sauce, and it has become one of the favorite desserts at her house. A cupful beaten in with two eggs and a little milk makes enough omelet or scrambled eggs for her family of four, which is a great saving with eggs soaring every way.

BREAKFAST MUFFINS. Delicious breakfast muffins can be made with rolled oats. Soak a cup of them over night in a cup of sour milk. In the morning add one egg, a teaspoonful of soda, half a teaspoonful of salt, a cup of flour and a tablespoonful of shortening. Bake in a hot oven. A good company muffin for lunch or breakfast is made with grape-nuts. Beat two eggs until light. Add half a cup of sugar and one cup of milk. Sift two cups of flour with four tablespoonfuls of baking powder and half a teaspoonful of salt. Stir this in and then add two tablespoonfuls of shortening, melted. Just before putting into the muffin pans, put in a cup of grape-nuts. They will taste quite like nut muffins.

CAKES FOR TEA. Little cakes to serve with iced tea on the porch on a hot afternoon can be made at home. Beat an egg until very light and gradually, beating all the time, a cup of sugar. Then stir in two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, a cup of rolled oats, half a teaspoonful of salt and flavor with vanilla. Drop into the bottom of a large baking pan from a teaspoon. Bake in a moderate oven until a golden brown. Cool in the pan and then take out with a thin knife. Oatmeal pancakes make a very good breakfast. Beat two eggs well and add them to two cups of left-over oatmeal, half a cup of milk, two tablespoonfuls of shortening, and beat again well. Then add a cup of flour mixed with two tablespoonfuls of baking powder, three tablespoonfuls of sugar, and a teaspoonful of salt. Bake on a greased griddle. Serve with syrup for breakfast or spread with jelly, roll and sprinkle with powdered sugar for dessert.

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