

3. The cross shows us the riches of God's love and grace. God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for the world. We see God's love in nature, but we see it far more shed abroad in Christ.

4. The cross shows to us the brotherhood of Christ to man. He died as our fellow-man, for as God he could not die. It was our brother who hung bleeding and suffering on Calvary.

5. The cross becomes in some way the meeting place between earth and heaven. Here God comes into communion with us, and accepts Christ as our mediator and substitute. We are saved because Christ died for us.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

In the Doré Gallery in London the principal sight is the artist's great picture of "Christ Leaving the Pretorium." There are benches placed in front of it that visitors may sit down quietly to gaze upon it, and as I one day took my place among the crowd some words in our passage for to-day came vividly to my mind: "And sitting down they watched him there."

Let us take these words, given in Matthew's narrative only, as the groundwork of our lesson.

We all know what it is to watch intently something that is going on. It may be because the sight gives pleasure and awakens interest. It may be that it rouses curiosity. It may be that the watching is a matter of duty. But however this may be it is those who have watched a scene from beginning to end who are likely to know something about it, and to be able to pronounce an opinion on it, and more particularly so if, having no personal concern in it, they are utterly unbiased about the matter.

Now, such was the case with the men who are spoken of as sitting down to watch Jesus Christ on the cross. His enemies passed by mocking him (ver. 29; Mark 15. 39); the multitude "stood beholding." Luke 23. 35. His "acquaintance and the women that followed him from Galilee stood afar off." Luke 23. 49. It was "the centurion and they that were with him" (ver. 54); the soldiers who had crucified Jesus and the two malefactors (vers. 35, 36) who sat down and watched him. It was a matter of duty to keep guard over the three victims, and the sight was not a new or a striking one to a Roman soldier. But there was probably an unusual degree of curiosity excited in their minds by this particular case. The fierce hatred shown the Jewish rulers, the efforts of Pilate to release the victim, the clamor of the multitude for his death, must have struck them as out of the common; and it was no doubt with some interest that, sitting through those long hours, "they watched him there."

What did they see? A meek, passive, uncomplaining sufferer. The stupefying drink offered him in compassion he refused. The stripping, the crucifying, the lifting up between earth and heaven, he endured in silence. To the taunts and insults showered upon him he answered nothing. One cry of agony alone escaped his lips (ver. 46), and that they did not understand.

But they witnessed something else. They saw the strange darkness which like a gloomy pall covered the scene for three hours. They heard his kingly promise to the penitent thief. They heard his last loud cry, "It is finished." Ver. 50; John 19. 49. They noticed how calmly he "gave up the ghost." See Mark 15. 39 (3. V.). And they saw the earth quake, and the rocks rent, and perhaps also the tombs opened (which remained so till after his resurrection).

And what was their verdict after watching and beholding all this? It is given in ver. 55: "Truly this man was the Son of God," or "a Son of God." He was not merely a patient and innocent sufferer; he was a righteous sufferer, a holy sufferer; they had nailed to the cross One who ought rather to have been exalted and honored, One whose character had been vindicated and his mission attested by divine interposition. The Roman soldiers could hardly rise to a higher conception than this. But the chief priests and scribes and elders of the Jews knew better what the words meant. They had challenged him to prove his assertion that he was the "Son of God" and a King. Vers. 42, 43. If this were true, then God would deliver him; he could "save himself" and "come down from the cross." This he answered not. But a divine answer was given when the earth quaked and the tombs were opened. The hand that wrought this could in a moment have set free the innocent and holy Victim. Why was it not done?

Some will tell us that the holy Son of God suffered to give men an example of self-sacrifice. But what should we say of a soldier who, being well able to conquer the enemy, yet gave himself up to captivity and death that he might set an example? There could be but one reason why Christ gave himself up to die; namely, because this was the only way to "save others." At the time the watchers on Golgotha saw him "give up the ghost," the priests of the temple were intent upon the offering of the usual evening sacrifice—the lamb. Exod. 29, 38, 39. What did these watchers see? The veil of the temple "rent in twain from the top to the bottom," leaving the awful "holy of holies," which might not be entered without blood, and that only once a year by the high-priest, uncovered—open. And we who in the narratives of the gospels can watch the events of that wondrous day, and compare them with the reading of the Old Testament, can see that the life of that holy Victim was given for the sin of the world, and that his sacred death has opened the way for sinners to come back without any to forbid them into the presence of God.

The Lesson Council.

Question 23. Where is the location of Golgotha?

The balance of evidence, in my opinion, favors the substantial correctness of the tradition which, ever since the third century at least, has located Golgotha or Calvary on or near the spot where now stands the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.—Albert L. Long.

The traditionary site since the fourth century has