

all three occasions the attendance was large, and the contributions liberal. Monday evening the annual festival was held in the large hall adjacent to the church. The attendance, as on the preceding day was quite large. After tea the remainder of the evening was devoted to music and addresses. The pastor was in the chair, and around him on the platform were Dr. Smith, Mr. Fraser, Mr. McCaul, Montreal; Mr. Ryland, Lancaster (Methodist), and Mr. M. McGilvray.

GOSPEL WORK.

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

The following particulars are taken from a private letter written a few months ago. The writer goes on to relate how after his conversion he became a backslider, through the influence of worldly companions, and how he was restored to fellowship and peace with God by means of the consistent life and example of a lady friend:

"On April 15th, 1876, I went, partly out of curiosity, and partly through my sister asking me, to hear Mr. Moody, the evangelist, at Camberwell. I was alone, and his remarks made such an impression on me that I waited for the inquiry-meeting. Well, whilst waiting there, some clergyman came and spoke to me about the Saviour. I could feel the Holy Spirit striving with my wicked nature, and very keen the struggle was. I was just hovering on the brink between salvation and destruction.

"After talking to me, and showing that Christ had done all the work, and that all I had to do was to believe in His finished work, and accept the salvation Jesus offered, he asked me to pray for mercy. Not a word would escape my lips, I felt so vile, and such a stranger to God. But my guide knelt down, and poured forth a most fervent prayer for us—there were two others. Then, in response to his supplication, I could distinctly feel the Divine Spirit abiding in me, and I rose up a saved soul.

"My whole life was changed from that moment. The things I had taken most delight in pleased me no more. After my conversion all was changed. My chiefest pleasure now was to read God's Holy Word, and to hold communion with Him in private prayer. Before 1876 I had not attended church regularly at all, now I embraced every opportunity, and never missed a week-night service or revival meeting."

MR. AITKEN AT BRISTOL.

A most interesting and remarkable work has been carried on within the walls of Colston Hall. The eloquence, energy, and power of this truly devoted and faithful servant of God have never been more clearly demonstrated than during his mission in this place. With a yearning thirst for the glory of his blessed Master in the salvation of his fellow-men, Mr. Aitken has placed before the vast crowds which have attended the services the nature and consequences of sin, and the remedy for that sin, as exhibited in the love of God in the crucified Saviour. The appeals to the unconverted to turn from sin, and to accept the gift of eternal life, have been very heart-searching, and have been pressed home with much power and pathos. Eternity alone will reveal the inestimable blessings which have resulted from the labours of this dear servant of God.

The special services to working-men have been most remarkable; the spacious hall has been crowded, and the personal dealing with individual souls at the after-meetings has been the means of clearing away not a few difficulties, and leading a large number to actual decision for Christ. The writer will not soon forget the effect produced as Mr. Aitken sang with his beautiful rich and melodious voice, "O, prodigal child, come home." One could not help feeling that God was indeed calling many wandering sinners back to Himself. The morning and afternoon addresses to believers have been largely attended, and greatly appreciated. Many doubting, fearful children of God have been built up, strengthened, and refreshed by the rich spiritual food which these services have afforded.

Mr. Aitken has been greatly assisted in his arduous duties by the kind assistance of the Church armies in connection with St. Paul's, Westminster, and Trinity Church, Bristol, who have laboured most assiduously in bringing in large numbers to the various services.

Nor must we forget to recognise the unwearied exertions and self-sacrificing devotions of Mrs. Crouch and Rev. J. Stephens, who have conducted the overflow meetings and special services for ladies and children. These sermons have been much valued, and

great blessings have resulted from them. It is sad to witness the apathy of many pastors in the spiritual welfare of the young. Such services as those carried on by Mr. Stephens cannot fail to produce never-ending results.

Believers in the Lord! Let us join in praising God for the blessed results of this Mission, and let us plead that much grace and power may be given to these devoted servants of God, as they prosecute the arduous work in which they are so successfully engaged.—*The Christian*.

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SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XLVII.

Nov. 19. } YESUS MOCKED AND CRUCIFIED. { Mark 15: 18-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"They pierced my hands and my feet."—Ps. 22: 16.

TIME.—Friday—as last lesson—about nine o'clock in the morning.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, Golgotha or Calvary—outside the walls—north-western part of the city.

PARALLEL.—Matt. 27: 27-37; John 19: 2-3, 16-24, with verses 21, 26; Luke 23: 26-38.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 16.—Jesus is now in the hands of the soldiers, for the execution of the sentence of crucifixion, these led Him into "the hall called Prætorium;" the name given to a general's tent in a Roman camp, then it came to signify the residence of a provincial ruler, where the court of justice was also held; this was no doubt the open court before noted. "Whole band:" the tenth of a legion of 4,600 men, not likely, however, that all were then on service.

Vers. 17, 18. The soldiers, following the brutality of the gladiatorial shows to which they were accustomed, and following the example set by Herod's body-guard, begin to have sport with their prisoner. "Purple:" Matthew, "a scarlet robe," or cloak; the designation of these colours were used loosely in ancient times, purple signified any colour from scarlet to violet; possibly this was the gorgeous robe (so Luke) in which Herod had sent Jesus back to Pilate. "Crown of thorns:" which grew plentifully in Palestine, and would be ready to hand; the kind used is not certain, and it is useless guessing. Their object was to mock, as with the robe and sceptre used (so Matthew), the kindly idea; so also the "Hail, King of the Jews!" It would, however, wound as well as mock.

Ver. 19. "Smote—with a reed:" the mock sceptre. "Spit:" satanic mockery, brutal mal-treatment, and insults are mingled.

Ver. 20. Between this verse and the last occurred the incident of John 19: 4-15, the last attempt of Pilate to deliver Jesus: he brought the sufferer forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the mocking purple, and so presented Him to the people, to be met with shouts of "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Little wonder that Pilate, heathen as he was, and knowing nothing beyond a heathen's standard righteousness, gave up the contest, and delivered Jesus finally to their murderous designs. "Led Him out:" of the city. Why?—Heb. 13: 11, 12.—The Jews followed the practice of executing criminals outside the city walls; possibly, also the Romans.

Ver. 21. "They compel—Simon, a Cyrenian:" the Roman officer could press into service men or horses as needed. Simon was of Cyrene, a flourishing city of North Africa; he was probably a Jew who had come up to attend the Passover, and was pressed to the duty either because he just happened to be at hand, or because he had shown some sympathy with Jesus; the latter is the more likely, as, from the way his sons are mentioned, it is evident that they were well known to the Christians of that day, and their father might have been a disciple. Simon would not bear the whole cross but only the after part of it, and so somewhat relieved the weight from the Saviour, who would still bear the heaviest part—that is the true idea of Luke 23: 26—"bear it after Jesus."

Ver. 22. "Golgotha," or as Luke, "Calvary:" lit., the place of a skull. It is pretty generally received now that it was the shape, formation of the ground, a slight elevation, that had given the name; not, as was formerly supposed, that it was a common place of execution, with skulls lying about—a most unlikely thing, if we consider the customs of the Jews in these matters.

Ver. 23. "Gave Him:" Rev., "offered:" lit., were giving "wine—myrrh," Matthew says, "wine—gall." The wine of the Roman soldiers was a sour production little better than vinegar, the addition was a bitter narcotic; it was a stupefying draught, such as was usually given before execution. "He received it not:" "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" said Jesus in the garden. He will not put that aside but drain it to the dregs. Matthew tells us that He tasted it, to recognise the kindly intention, and shew that He was aware of its purpose, but will not take it.

Vers. 24, 25. "Crucified Him:" into the terrible details of

death by crucifixion we need not enter, they should be known to all teachers, if not, consult a Bible Dictionary. Suffice to say, that it was one prolonged torture of the most fearful kind, nails were driven through the hands and feet, and the sufferer left to die of exhaustion and agony. "Parted His garments—casting lots:" John tells us (19: 23) that there were four soldiers, and why it was necessary to cast lots—so fulfilling Psalm 22: 18. "Third hour:" John says "sixth hour:" nine o'clock and twelve o'clock, the crucifixion took place between those hours. It is, however, probable that John writing much later than Mark, when the computation of time was mostly Roman, used that method, which it is likely he did also in 1: 39: 4: 6.

Ver. 26. "Superscription:" Matthew, "his accusation:" it was usual for a condemned criminal to carry to the place of execution a placard suspended from his neck, stating the crime for which he suffered; in crucifixion this was nailed on the cross. This was written by order of Pilate, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin; this may partly account for the various readings of the title in the four Gospels. It is worth looking at them for a moment. Matthew says, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;" Mark, "The King of the Jews;" Luke, "This is the King of the Jews;" John, "Jesus, of Nazareth, the King of the Jews;" weaving the four together, to get a complete sentence, we have, "This is Jesus, of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Prefatory.—We have reached the cross, let us take our devout stand there, and in the wondrous light of love that shines from it, let us teach this lesson; we have to tell of the greatest crime and the greatest sacrifice the world ever saw, seek to do so, teacher, with the spirit of the scene in your heart, in a way that shall prove you do indeed "love to tell the story," and that shall help to fulfil the Saviour's prophetic words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."

Topical Analysis.—(1) Jesus mocked by the soldiers (vers. 16-20). (2) Jesus Crucified (vers. 21-26).

On the first topic we may note how the savage jesting of the Roman soldiers preached a great truth. They clothed Him with the insignia of mock royalty, some cast-off purple garment, a crown, but of thorns, a reed for a sceptre, and, to complete the mockery, they bowed the knee before Him, with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Yet a greater truth was never proclaimed, for Pilate's condemned prisoner was, is, a King; a King, not of the Jews only, but of all men—the King of Kings, the King of heaven and earth. Rejected and crucified by His own people, they shall behold Him, when He is revealed from heaven with flaming fire, in the glory of His father; while accusers, judges and murderers shall stand trembling at His bar to hear their sentence, and receive their doom. Note again, in the midst of all these insults and this cruelty, the patient suffering of Jesus, one word of His could have smitten them dead, yet He spake not the word, but patiently endured to the end. Yet a thought on the soldiers—they called together "the whole band," to join in the sport of mocking Jesus: shall we not join in calling all the world to His cross, and crying "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world?"

On the second topic we may show that while one had the honour of helping Jesus to bear the cross, yet the Saviour still carried the heaviest part; so he who follows Jesus will find, when crosses are sent, as sent they may be, that the heaviest part is borne by the Master. Point out how the death of Christ has glorified forever the place and instrument of His sufferings—Calvary—then, the scene of a common execution, degraded by the violent deaths of malefactors; to-day, the place of all others most sacred to millions of hearts; a name around which the tenderest affection clings, and toward which the faith-look of myriads in every generation, from that day have been directed. The cross, a symbol of suffering, disgrace, infamy, transformed into the symbol of honour, dignity, everlasting life; that from which the multitudes turned away with loathing, become an object of delight and glorying; and so to the end of the world. When men assemble to fulfil the command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of Me," it is His sufferings and death that are recalled—a death that we might live. You can bring in other teachings here, it is very fruitful, but do not omit to press upon your class that each of them had an interest in that death, that it was for their salvation, as much as if no one else had sinned, that Christ died, and pray with them that they may take this Saviour for their Saviour, their Lord and their God.

Incidental Lessons.—On the first topic—That Jesus endured these mockings from those He came to save.

That the triumph of mockery and derision is not for long.

That while we shrink from the cruelty of these men, we may have their spirit.

Is Christ your king?

Shall we not exalt the name of our king?

The mocking, an instance of the power of evil example.

On the second topic—That if we have to bear the cross with Christ, He carries the heaviest part.

That Christ did not refuse any of the suffering His Father put upon Him.

Christ numbered with the transgressors that we might be numbered with the children of God.

Thorns came from the curse—Christ bore the curse for us.

Main Lesson.—On Calvary we see (1) the exceeding sinfulness of sin—Isa. 64: 6; Jer. 17: 9, 10; Rom. 3: 9; 8: 6, 7. (2) The great love of God—John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 8: 32; 1 John 4: 9, 10. (3) The suffering that saved us—Isa. 53: 4, 5, 7-10; Dan. 9: 25; Matt. 20: 28; Rom. 4: 25; 1 Pet. 2: 23; 3: 18; Rev. 5: 9. (4) The voluntariness of Christ's death—Matt. 26: 53, 54; John 15: 17, 18; 1 John 3: 15.

MR. FAWCETT, the British Postmaster-General, states that in exact proportion as the government has lost revenue from the tax on drink, it has been gained in the Postal Savings Bank.