Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER.

(Condensed from Peloubet's Notes.)

Lesson I. Dec. 6. John 19: 17-30.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins."—1 Pet. 3: 18.

EXPLANATORY.

I. ON THE WAY TO CALVARY.— 17. "And He bearing His cross." (Note the Rev. Ver.) All the preparations having been made, the sad procession moved out of the castle. "Into a place called the place of a skull, in the Hebrew Golgotha." Golgotha is a Hebrew word meaning a skull. From its Latin equivalent, *calvaria*, comes our English word Calvary. The place was doubtless so named because it was a small knoll in the shape of a skull. As Dr. Broadus says, 'It is common among us to call a rounded mountain top or hill-top a head, as Cæsar's head in the Blue Ridge.' The exact site is unknown. But we know that it was (1) apparently a well-known spot; (2) outside the gate (compare Heb. 13: 12); but (3) near the city (John 19: 20); (4) on a thoroughfare leading into the country (Luke 23: 26); and (5) contained a garden, or orchard.

II. THE CRUCIFIXION. — *About nine o'clock* (Mark). The hour of the usual morning sacrifice of the lamb, which was the type of Jesus the Lamb of God slain for the sins of His people. 18. "Where they crucified Him." On reaching the place of crucifixion, just before He was nailed to the cross, there was given Him, probably by some of the good ladies of Jerusalem, who were accustomed to perform this act of mercy for the sufferers, a cup of the common sour wine, such as the soldiers used, mingled with a powerful narcotic drug, bitter, but offered as an anæsthetic, to stupify and dull the sense of pain. This Jesus refused to drink. Why? (1) He deliberately chose to have all His powers alert at this last hour, so that nothing should dull His consciousness of suffering nor the clearness of His communion with God. (2) Because He would drink to the very dregs the cup of suffering which God gave Him; for only thus could He make full atonement for the sins of the world.

THE FIRST OF THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,*" was probably spoken at this moment of agony.

The feet of the sufferer were only a foot or two above the ground,—a fact of some weight, as showing that Jesus suffered in the midst of His persecutors, and not looking down from above their heads. Death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds,—all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed.

"And two others with Him, one on either side." These were robbers (Matt. 27: 38), probably like Barabbas, who, in those wild times, had united plunder with insurrection. The object of placing Jesus between these robbers was to give the impression to the people that He was there as a criminal like them.

19. "And Pilate wrote a title." According to the Roman custom that the criminal should have upon his cross the nature of the crime for which he suffered. Pilate himself saw to the title in this case, in order by a sarcasm to vent his feelings towards the Jews, and give at the same time an honorable title to Jesus, which proclaimed Him innocent of any criminality. "The writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

20. "In Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." This title was written in three languages then in common use, so that all could read. In *Greek*, for the foreigners and visitors, Greek being the learned language of all nations; in *Latin*, for the Romans; in *Hebrew*, for the Jews.

21. "Then said the chief priests." Who, as representatives of the Jews, felt that they and their nation were insulted by the Roman governor.

21. "What I have written I have written." Pilate refused to make the change.

III. THE SOLDIERS DIVIDE THE GARMENTS OF JESUS AMONG THEMSELVES. 23. "Then the soldiers." The four who had charge of the crucifixion of Jesus. The clothes of executed criminals were the perquisites of the soldiers on duty. "Took His garments." His sandals, girdle, outer robe, head-dress, etc. "Also His coat; now the coat was without seam." More exactly, the *tunic*, or *under garment*. It reached from the neck to the feet, while the outer garment was a square rug thrown round the body. Ordinarily, the tunic consisted of two pieces connected at the shoulder by clasps; but that worn by Jesus was made in one piece.

24. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled." The Scripture referred to is quoted from Ps. 22: 18, Septuagint Version. In this psalm, David doubtless had some reference to his own experience, but even if he speaks of himself, yet he was a type of Christ; and what is said of the type is more perfectly true of the antitype, and was so intended by the Holy Spirit. It would thus be a typical prophecy. "These things therefore the soldiers did." Therefore, *i. e.*, because they were embraced in the divine plan. Here, as often, this was done by the voluntary acts of free agents, who knew nothing of the will of God, and cared nothing for it.

IV. JESUS COMMITS HIS MOTHER TO THE CARE OF JOHN. 25. "Now there stood by the cross." In Matt. 27: 55, we are told of many women beholding from afar off. That was at another period, toward the last. But now the four most loving of these stood close by the cross "His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas." The Greek, like the English, leaves us in doubt whether we here have two women or one, whether altogether there are four women or three. The former is much the more probable alternative. His mother's sister, was probably Salome, the mother of John himself, and wife of Zebedee. "The wife of Cleophas." Rather, *Clopas*. A Greek name, and not the same as Cleopas of Luke 24: 18, which is Aramaic. The spelling Cleophas of our common version is a mistake derived from Latin manuscripts. Clopas must be identical with Alpheus (Matt. 10: 3), for Mark 15: 40 says that this Mary was the mother of James the less. "Mary Magdalene." Was probably so called from Magdala in Galilee, the town where she may have dwelt. She was not the bad woman restored, of Luke 7: 39; but had been cured by Jesus of demoniacal possession, and thenceforth was one of those who ministered unto Christ of their substance (Luke 8: 2).

26. "The disciple standing by whom He loved." John, the author of this gospel.

THE THIRD WORD FROM THE CROSS: "Woman, behold thy son." Accept of him who has been so dear and so close to me, as your son, and receive from him the care which a widowed mother should receive from a loving son. Joseph, her husband, was probably dead.

27. "Behold thy mother." Accept, treat, and love her as your own mother. "And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home." It is uncertain whether John had a home in Jerusalem or not. But wherever his home was, the mother of Jesus shared it and was one of his family.

28. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished." Finished, the same word as in ver. 30. His atoning work was done; the Scriptures fulfilled, except the one now to be accomplished. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled" (Ps. 69: 21). He spoke of thirst, that the Scripture relating to Him might be fulfilled.

THE FIFTH WORD FROM THE CROSS: "*I thirst.*" The sole expression of bodily suffering.

29. "A vessel full of vinegar." Sour wine, the cheap, ordinary drink of the soldiers. "Upon hyssop." A stalk or reed of hyssop. "And put it to His mouth." This slight refreshment would tend to restore His natural forces.

THE SIXTH WORD FROM THE CROSS: "*It is finished.*" What was finished? His life on earth, His life's work, the cup of suffering, the atonement for the sins of the world, the old era and dispensation, the prophecies of Scripture.

A Pretty Good Heathen.

BY REV. ROBERT CAMERON, D. D.

Some time ago, friends who feel interested in the woman's college which we are seeking to establish in Colorado urged me to see a gentleman who was represented as very rich and very peculiar. It was, moreover, stated that he had on his mind the founding of an institution for the benefit of young women—that he had travelled over Europe on a tour of observation, and had returned dissatisfied with his own plans. In the minds of my friends this peculiar man wanted to meet me; or at least, he would want to meet me if he only knew of me. Of course I put no obstacles in the way. Why should I? He had money, and I needed it. He wanted to found an institution—I had one for him to found. He wanted to do something for his mother's sex, and that was the object for which I am working. We had much in common to begin with, and it helped to open the door into the presence of my would-be benefactor. The time and place were arranged, no matter how nor by whom. But, according to a summons, I appeared on time to the minute, was shown into a plainly furnished parlor, in a French flat in the city of Blank. My friend tarried at his lunch after my presence had been announced, and so I felt sure of a kindly greeting after the generous eating.

In due time he came, without a mark of wealth or distinction, or anything else that might have been embarrassing. In due time I was asked to unfold my scheme for the benefit of the rising generation of women in Colorado. I knew my friend was well acquainted with the special features of life in that region, for he had "freighted" with ox teams across the plains more than thirty years ago, and he had kept a part of his wealth in mines, lands and cattle up till to-day. So I plunged into my subject—told him of the good men and true who were on our board of trustees, of the desire they had to provide a place for girls to be educated away from the evil influences of the mining-camps; of their purpose to give our Western daughters a chance equal to the East, and of their determination to have them trained in sympathy with the genius of our American institutions, and to make them strong and brave, and industrious and womanly women. I also indicated that our climate would give many Eastern girls with narrow chests a chance to pursue learning and accumulate health, both at once. To all of this my hard-handed, strong-faced, clear-eyed and honest-hearted "diamond in the rough" listened and smiled.

After a pause he looked at me a moment, and then said: "My friend, you are on the right track. What you and your trustees—I know the most of them—want to do is the thing needed to be done. But you can't do it," and there he stopped. I waited, but nothing seeming to come, I plied the pump, and said, "Why not?" "Well, you see the women, as a rule, are indolent and trifling, and full of dress, and they will lie. Your college won't teach them to work and to contribute their share to the world's good and the world's wealth. I am going to have an institution to teach all boys and girls who are poor, and would get on if they only had a chance, how to make their way. Mind you, there will be no coaxing a boy who hasn't the ambition to push ahead; and a girl who won't cook and scrub and study will be turned out. I want to get hold of all the orphans I can, and will have full control or nothing. Then I want the young men and women who mean business to come, and spend their time equally between work and study. No higher mathematics or Greek and Latin will be taught, but they can learn all the history and science and modern languages that we can get them to take—everything that is needed for everyday life. You see, my friend, I will make them work, and teach them to tell the truth, and to do something for the benefit of society."

I listened patiently and wondered—wondered about many things. I then ventured to suggest that such an undertaking would not require much money. He replied: "I have ten millions of dollars for this object, and it will need it all. I am trying the experiment this fall. If it is a success, I will put all that amount in. If my scheme fails, come and see me, and I will help you. Indeed, if you will produce one single specimen of an honest, hard working woman without frivolity and a love of dress, I will give you plenty of money. What I want is to help the poor, who are cuffed about and get no chance, just as I was when a boy. I was an orphan; wore patched clothes. Society had no use for me, and I soon learned to have no use for it. I want to do some good to help those who have to struggle as I did."

"But," I said, "you are going to Europe. Suppose the ship goes down, what will become of your money?"

"That is all fixed. It is in writing. My daughter and executor will carry it out. You see I don't know much. I only got rich because I was stubborn and mulish, and would not sell. The property has grown. I have refused $680,000 for what I have in Denver. And it would only curse my children to leave it to them to spend. I will leave them comfortable, if they will be saving and work, but I could not die in peace—my conscience would trouble me to death if I did not do some good with this money. I have no faith in your Christ. I don't believe in revealed religion in any form. But I believe in a good, an All-wise Creator, who is about us all the time. I shall have to give an account to Him; and, my friend, I could not rest, I could not sleep, I would have no peace, if I kept all this property for my children—I know it would only be a curse to them."

It is needless to say that my reflections were many and my words few after this homily on the use of money by a professed heathen. Were not these feelings and purposes more Christian than is often seen in those who profess the name of Christ? A man was before me, with no faith in the Bible or in my Lord, and yet, nearly all of his money devoted, dedicated, and by writing given over to do good to struggling men and women. I could not help contrasting all this with those who profess to be disciples of the One who "although rich became poor for our sakes," and yet out of poverty they become rich, and clutch the riches until death opens the hand, and "they leave their wealth to others." Are they disciples of our Lord? Do they believe on Him? What good has their faith done them? What about the church members who are content to die rich? How do they compare with my heathen friend, who could have no peace until his money was devoted to some good purpose? He was a *Christian* heathen, and are they not *heathen* Christians? I wonder, and still I wonder, what it all means! Money made, kept, grasped until death, and then—a pittance to charity and millions to children for their injury.

Before I left, my friend was careful to make two statements. He assured me that while he held these things to be true about the character of the ordinary woman of the period, he was not one of those unjust and uncharitable men who doubted the goodness and purity of womanhood. She was merely spoiled by modern civilization and made trifling—that was all he meant. He then assured me that he did not know much about the future, but as for himself, he wanted to act in harmony with a good God, and with the order of nature, to do good even after he was dead. All the accumulations of trees go to support other trees after they die. What men accumulate should be as truly devoted to the good of their species, not to be wasted. This he had determined in his own case,—his money, which was the result of many years of struggle and self-denial, would go towards building up and helping the race. And now that the matter was fixed in that way, he was happy and could die in peace; hoped he would live to see the good done, but if he didn't it would be a comfort to know that the good would go on after he was gone.

Thus ended my visit. I went away bewildered, and I have not yet recovered. Brethren in the ministry, what kind of rich laymen is our preaching producing? Behold my noble heathen, and be confounded and wonder!—*Watchman.*

— Why was John the beloved disciple? Not because he was the gentlest, the most placid, the most spiritual by nature, but because he was the one whom Christ most transformed, the one who, in the great loyalty of his love to Christ, was the most subject to the work of Christ in his soul, the one most plastic under the molding spirit of the Redeemer. As the sculptor likes that clay best which can best be moulded in his hand into the image which he would make; as the farmer counts that the best soil which will best receive his seed and respond to his cultivation; as the teacher loves that pupil best, not who has the most genius, but who shows the most receptive soul; as the preacher is most drawn, as he speaks to such a congregation as this, by some eager face evidently anxious to understand the preacher and drink in and carry away and make something of his sermon—so John was best beloved by Jesus because he was the one the door of whose heart stood always open, and whose soul was always saying to Christ, Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Can you and I become beloved disciples? Would we be nearest and dearest to Him? Not by a great zeal; then Peter would have been the beloved disciple. Not by a faultless character; then any one, almost, of the twelve might have been beloved rather than John. Not by great missionary activity; then Paul would have led and John would have followed. But by a great, loyal love that cares above all things else for the love of Christ, that makes the one fact, that Christ has loved me even a little, the grandest fact in my experience, that opens the door to Him, and is docile and obedient to His influence.—*Lyman Abbot, D. D.*

— Use Baird's Balsam of Horehound for all affections of the throat and lungs.

— Landlady.—"I am afraid those towels are too small." Clerk.—"They are our regular size for boarders, madam." Landlady.—"I know. But I want them for myself."

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Carrier Pigeons.

HOW THEY ARE UTILIZED IN THE SERVICE OF SCOTCH JOURNALISM.

The Edinburgh evening papers have a trained service of carrier pigeons for use at race meetings, football or cricket matches, shooting competitions; and in out-of-the-way districts, where there is no telegraph or telephone within easy reach, they are very useful, says *Chambers' Journal*. In connection with the Edinburgh *Evening Despatch* (with which the writer is most familiar) the pigeons are important adjuncts to the reporting staff.

They are housed in quarters specially erected for them on the flat roof of the office, the dovecot, including an ingenious trap arrangement and electric bell. Many people have a very hazy idea as to what a carrier pigeon can or can not do. They seem to imagine that is possible to send the bird out as well as in, and that with a little training it can even be induced to go to the nearest restaurant for the reporter's lunch. Of course that is all nonsense. What a reporter expects a pigeon to do is that it shall fly straight home from the place where it is liberated.

A few words as to how it is done. When a reporter desires to use the pigeons he leaves word the night before with the person in charge of them. This is very necessary. When they are to fly on a particular business it is better that they should be lightly fed in the morning. The pigeons—two or four, as may be required—are caught in the morning and placed in a comfortable wicker or tin basket—with compartments. The reporter, when he leaves the office carries the basket with him. He also provides himself with a book of fine tissue paper, "flimsy," and a sheet of carbonized paper "as black."

He writes his report very legibly and compactly, so as to put as much on a page of "flimsy" as it will possibly hold. Then he rolls the "flimsy" neatly up and attaches it to the leg of the bird by means of an elastic band. Or he may send two pages of "flimsy," one on each leg. The pigeon being released, makes straight for home. In the carrier pigeon the home instinct is strongly implanted; and if the bird has been taken off its nest it has an additional reason for wishing to get back as soon as possible. It also knows that there is a good feed of peas and maize awaiting it at the end of its journey.

Arriving at the newspaper office it alights on the edge of the dovecot. To get through the usual circular-headed opening it pushes before it a couple of light wires, and these falling after it close the aperture. The bird is, however, not yet in the cot. It has only got the length of the trap. This trap, two feet square or so, has a flooring set upon an electric spring. The weight of the bird pressing down the spring releases an electric current, which rings a bell in the sub-editor's room. The bird thus heralds its own arrival. A boy assistant proceeds up stairs, takes the pigeon from the trap removes the message from its legs, and opening the sliding door allows it to enter the cot, where it is welcomed by its sorrowing mate.

Some of the pigeons fly straight and fast. Others are not so reliable. Few loiter on the way; but they frequently are in no great hurry, if the weather be fine, to enter the trap. They prefer to sun themselves on the ridge of a neighboring house. The feelings of a sub-editor waiting for the end of a meeting or the result of a football match under such circumstances may be better imagined than described. At the Altcar coursing meeting the pigeon that brought the result of the final in the Waterloo cup was shot as it neared its cot, so as to prevent the possibility of any such delay. But the Edinburgh carriers have not yet had such hard times meted out to them. For press purposes carrier pigeons are seldom flown farther than twenty miles from home.

But they are constantly in use within a ten mile radius of the city, and often do good work. It was a carrier pigeon that brought to Edinburgh the intelligence that the first train with royalty in it had passed over the Forth bridge. The bird was liberated from a carriage window of the royal train exactly in the centre of the bridge, and went home in about eight minutes. Other pigeons took messages from both sides of the Forth recording the progress of the ceremonials.

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