

The Ministering Hand.

Across the fields I saw her go,
A fair young maid of motion fleet;
The falling petals drifted snow
From pale white blossoms grazed her feet.
The morning breeze was fresh and clear,
The blue sky crowned a perfect day,
While that fine chorus filled the ear,
Which makes the orchestra of May.

So rosy-cheeked, so young and fair,
Her steps I noticed long and well,
And found they took her quickly where
A suffering household chanced to dwell.

She bore within her basket's space,
Dainties and food for those in need;
And all the sweetness of her face,
I saw reflected in her deed.

She lifted up the hearts struck down
By lifelong sorrow and despair,
And by her presence, shed around
Their humble home her love and care.

She did not seem to make a task
Of what befell so fair and free;
But nothing more could crushed hearts ask,
Than her most welcome ministry.

O, there is beauty in the spring,
And strange delight in summer days—
But oh, what joy one hand can bring
When touched by Love's transcendent
grace.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

A.D. 30.] LESSON III. [Oct. 17.

JESUS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED.

John 19. 1-16. Commit vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.—John 19. 16.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Jesus condemned contrary to justice and to conscience.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 19. 1-16. Tu. Matt. 27. 19-31.
W. Mark 15. 11-20. Th. John 10. 23-39.
F. Ps. 2. 1-12. Sa. Matt. 10. 16-39. Su.
Matt. 23. 25-39.

TIME.—6 to 8 o'clock Friday morning,
April 7, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Pilate's palace in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL HISTORY.—With vs. 1-3, Matt.
27. 26-30; Mark 15. 15-19.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—Order of Events.—(1) PILATE WARNED BY HIS WIFE'S DREAM (Matt. 27. 19). Pilate's palace early Friday morning while the people were deciding to choose Barabbas. (2) THE END OF JUDAS (Matt. 27. 3-10; Acts 1. 18, 19). As soon as Judas saw that Jesus was really condemned to death, and made no resistance, he was struck with remorse, and committed suicide. (3) PILATE ORDERS JESUS TO BE SCOURGED (v. 1; Matt. 27. 26; Mark 15. 15). Court of Pilate's palace, 6 to 7 o'clock A.M. (4) MOCKERY BY THE SOLDIERS (vs. 2, 3; Matt. 27. 27-30; Mark 15. 16-19). 2. A purple robe—One of the soldiers red cloaks. Matthew says they put a reed in his hands, and Mark that they spat upon him. (5) PILATE MAKES ANOTHER EFFORT TO RELEASE JESUS (vs. 4-7). Outside the palace. His object was to appeal to the pity of the multitude. 7. We have a law (Lev. 24. 16)—Blasphemy was to be punished by death by stoning. (6) PILATE CONFERS WITH JESUS (vs. 8, 12). Within the palace. 11. From above—From God. Governments are ordained of God. The greater sin—Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders sinned against greater light, filled an office more especially ordained of God, and were trying to persuade Pilate to disregard the duties of his office. (7) THE JEWS ACCOMPLISH THEIR PURPOSE (vs. 12-16). 13. Gabbatha—i. e., A hill. It was a tessellated pavement on rising ground, outside the palace. 14. Preparation—For the Sabbath, the great day of the feast. Sixth hour—Six o'clock. Roman notation, like ours, as always in John. This was when Pilate's proceeding began. (8) END OF THE MURDERERS. Judas hung himself; Caiaphas was deposed the next year; Pontius Pilate was soon deposed, and committed suicide 40 years after the crucifixion. Jerusalem was destroyed, and many of these very Jews or their children were crucified by the Romans.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The mockery.—Why Pilate hesitated to do justice.—The influences that would lead him to do right.—The end of Judas.—Why

Pilate was afraid.—Pilate's power given from above.—The greater sin.—What induced Pilate to yield at last

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—In what books of the Bible is our lesson to-day recorded? Give the state of things at the close of our last lesson. When and where did the events of this lesson take place?

SUBJECT: THE UNJUST DECISION.

I. BY THE SOLDIERS MOCKING CHRIST (vs. 1-3).—How did the soldiers treat Jesus? What was their object? Why was it mean as well as wicked?

II. BY THE JEWS (vs. 4-7).—Where did Pilate bring Jesus? What was his object? What did he say to the Jews? What was their reply? What law of theirs did they charge him with breaking? Would he have been guilty if he were not divine?

III. INFLUENCES TO LEAD PILATE TO A RIGHT DECISION (vs. 8-12).—How did Pilate's wife try to influence him? (Matt. 27. 19.) How did the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God affect him? (v. 8.) Must Pilate have known something of Jesus' miracles? What did Pilate say to Jesus? (v. 9) From whom did Pilate receive his power? Who were greater sinners than even he? Why? How did this varying influence Pilate to release Jesus?

IV. BY PILATE (vs. 12-16).—What was the last argument used by the Jews? Why was this effectual? Where was the final decision rendered? At what time had these things taken place? How did Pilate try to remove from himself all blame for his decision? (Matt. 27. 24-26.) In what ways do people now try to throw the blame of their sins on others? What was the final decision? Was Pilate greatly to blame? Are we always to blame if we reject Christ?

V. A GLANCE FORWARD.—What became of Judas? (Matt. 27. 3, 10; Acts 1. 18, 19.) What became of Caiaphas? What calamities soon came upon the Jews? What might they have been had they accepted their king? What will be the results to us whether we reject or accept Jesus?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Vain are our efforts to escape a decision as to what we will do with Jesus.

2. Cowardly fear is the motive not of the Christian, but of those who dare not become Christians.

3. Those who tempt others to sin are worse than their victims.

4. By rejecting Jesus as King, the Jews rejected their hope, and glory, and true kingdom.

5. Pilate, by his crime, lost the very things he sought to preserve by it (Matt. 16. 25).

REVIEW EXERCISE.

11. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? Ans. They crowned him with thorns, and mocked him. 12. What was Pilate's three-fold testimony to Jesus? Ans. I find no fault in him. 13. What final argument did the Jews bring? Ans. That releasing Jesus would be treason to Rome. 14. What did Pilate then do? Ans. He delivered Jesus up to be crucified.

A.D. 30.] LESSON IV. [Oct. 24.

JESUS CRUCIFIED.

John 19. 17-30. Commit vs. 17-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.

It is finished.—John 19. 30.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God for the salvation of man.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 19. 17-30. Tu. John 19. 31-42.
W. Matt. 27. 32-50. Th. Mark 15. 22-39.
F. Luke 23. 33-45. Sa. 1 Cor. 1. 18-31.
Su. Isa. 53. 1-12.

TIME.—Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, from
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PLACE.—Calvary (Golgotha), just outside
the walls of Jerusalem on the north-west.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 27. 32-50;
Mark 15. 22-37; Luke 23. 33-45.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—(1) ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS (v. 17). And he bearing his cross—Each victim was accompanied by four soldiers. Jesus bore his cross as long as he could, and then Simon from Cyrene in Africa was compelled to help him. A great multitude followed. Golgotha—Hebrew for "skull." Calvary is from the Latin for skull. The place was a knoll in the shape of a skull. (2) THE CRUCIFIXION (vs. 18-22).

Jesus was nailed to the cross so that his feet would be but a short distance from the ground. 20. Hebrew, etc.—The three chief languages there spoken. (3) THE FIRST OF THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS. "Father, forgive them," spoken while Jesus was being affixed to the cross (Luke 23. 34). (4) THE FOUR SOLDIERS DIVIDE THE GARMENTS OF JESUS AMONG THEMSELVES (vs. 23, 24). Soon after 9 o'clock 23. His coat—A long tunic, or undergarment. 24. The Scripture fulfilled—Ps. 22. 18. (5) MOCKRIES AROUND THE CROSS (Matt. 27. 39-44). 9 to 12 o'clock. (6) CONVERSION OF THE PENITENT ROBBER (Luke 23. 39-43). Towards noon. 25. His mother's sister—Salome, the mother of John. Cleopas—Rather Cleopas, the same as Alphaeus, the father of James the less. (8) DARKNESS OVER ALL THE LAND (Matt. 27. 45). From 12 to 3 o'clock. (9) THE CLOSING SCENES (vs. 28-30). About 3 o'clock. 28. All . . . accomplished—the same word as finished (v. 30). His whole work was done; all that the Scriptures had foretold; all necessary for redemption. Scripture—Ps. 69. 21. 29. Vinegar—Common sour wine for the soldiers to drink. (10) ACCOMPANYING SIGNS. Earthquake, veil of the temple rent, and graves opened.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Crucifixion—Calvary—The title.—The women around the cross.—John and the mother of Jesus.—It is finished.—Accompanying signs.—The atonement.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Jesus in our last lesson? In what other Gospels are the scenes of to-day's lesson recorded? Have you read them?

SUBJECT: THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

I. THE CRUCIFIXION (vs. 17-19).—Where was Jesus crucified? What is its common name? Give some of the incidents that took place on the way? (Matt. 27. 32; Luke 23. 26-32.) Give an account of the method of crucifixion. Why must Jesus die such a terrible death? At what hour was he crucified? (Mark 15. 25.) What title was placed over the cross? In how many languages? Why? Was this title a truth? Who were crucified with Jesus? Relate the story of the conversion of one of them. (Luke 23. 39-43.)

II. THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.—What did Jesus say while they were nailing him to the cross? (Luke 23. 34.) What to the penitent robber? (Luke 23. 43.) What to his mother and John toward noon? (vs. 26, 27.) What was the fourth word, toward three o'clock? (Mark 15. 34.) What was the fifth word? (v. 28.) What was the sixth? (v. 30.) What was the seventh? (Luke 23. 46.) What lessons can you learn from these seven words?

III. THE WATCHERS AROUND THE CROSS (vs. 25-27).—What did the soldiers do near the cross? What Scripture was fulfilled by them? (Ps. 22. 18.) What did the crowd do? (Matt. 27. 39-44.) What friends were around the cross? How many are named? Why did these remain, while his disciples feared to approach? What touching scene took place in regard to his mother? What lessons does this teach us? Would you have been one that watched near the cross? How can you prove whether you would?

IV. THE CLOSING SCENES (vs. 28-30).—What took place at noon? (Matt. 27. 45.) At what hour did Jesus yield up his life? (Matt. 27. 46.) What were his last words? (v. 30; Luke 23. 46.) What was finished? What took place immediately after his death? (Matt. 27. 51-54.)

LESSONS FROM THE CROSS.

1. Calvary is the centre of the history of the world.

2. Even by those who have no interest in it, the Scripture is being fulfilled.

3. There is one death-bed repentance in the Bible, that all may hope; there is only one, to prevent presumption.

4. The cost of our salvation should make us feel its worth, and take great pains to obtain it.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

15. Where was Jesus crucified? Ans. On Calvary, called Golgotha, near Jerusalem, on the north. 16. When? Ans. On Friday April 7, A.D. 30, from nine to three o'clock. 17. What did he say? Ans. He spoke seven times, called the seven words from the cross. 18. What were the last words? Ans. "It is finished; Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." 19. Why was he crucified? Ans. To make atonement for our sins.

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