

to trust the rich lady for many more pounds than she had asked for shillings, and she had rather wished, indeed, for the opportunity. And then she had expected that her customer would go, but Mrs. Roberts had continued seated, and had heard her hasty remark about her husband's absence.

(To be continued.)

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, June 5.

The Crucifixion, Luke xxiii. 33-46. GOLDEN TEXT.—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John xii. 32.

Commit v. v. 41-46.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

Our last lesson left Jesus in the neighborhood of Jericho whence He proceeded towards Jerusalem, reaching Bethany six days before the Passover—that is, Friday evening, or the evening before the Sabbath (John xii. 1). It is probable that He spent the Sabbath in Bethany, and on the first day of the week (Sunday) made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem; (Luke xv. 28-38,) returning at night to Bethany. On Monday He returned to Jerusalem, (Mark xi. 12-17,) cleansed the temple, and at evening (v. 19) left the city, returning probably to Bethany (v. 20); thence to Jerusalem again on Tuesday (v. 27); and, after a day spent in teaching and discussion, returned again to Bethany. On Wednesday the anointing by Mary of Bethany probably took place (Mark xiv. 1-9); and on the afternoon of Thursday He returned to Jerusalem. Then followed the supper, the utterances recorded (John xiii. 31—xvii. 26), followed by the scene in the garden, the betrayal, the trial, and that which constitutes our present lesson.

LESSON NOTES.

(33.) *And when they* (the throng who accompanied Jesus to execution) *were come to the place which is called Calvary* (or Golgotha, Matt. xxvii. 33). This place was *outside* the city (Heb. xiii. 12) but *near* to it (John xix. 20). Calvary, or Golgotha, signifies "skull place," or place of a skull,—probably from the shape of the ground, possibly from the simple fact of its being a place where criminals were put to death.

*There they crucified him.* Crucifixion was not a Jewish form of punishment, but Roman; and was inflicted only upon the vilest criminals; yet the Jews themselves entreated that it might be inflicted upon Jesus. The crucified was nailed to the cross by the feet and hands. Death was usually slow and extremely painful. *Malefactors*—robbers (v. 32). *One on the right hand and the other on the left*,—indicating that, in their opinion, Jesus was the worst of the three,—also in fulfilment of Is. liii. 12—*numbered with the transgressors.*

(34.) *Father, forgive them*—His executioners, and also those who instigated this cruelty. This prayer can only be understood as asking that mercy might be extended to them in giving them time and opportunity for repentance. See Isaiah liii. 12—*made intercession for the transgressors. They know not what they do.* They knew they were crucifying an innocent man, but they did not know the extreme magnitude of the guilt they were incurring;—Acts iii. 17—hence, time for repentance granted them.

*And they parted* (or divided) *his raiment*, (John xix. 23, 24)—the clothing of criminals was given to the guards—divided as equally as possible among them. *Cast lots*—only upon His coat, or tunic. This was a seamless robe, symbolic of Christ's perfect righteousness; hence it was not rent, but went to the one upon whom the lot fell.

(35.) *And the people stood beholding*—or gazing. *And the rulers also with them derided* (or scoffed) *him*.—made use of mocking words and insulting gestures. *he saved others*—a most precious truth, though uttered in derision—*let him save himself, if he be Christ, the Chosen of God*,—that is, if He be what He professes. This contempt and hatred is more fully expressed, Mark xv. 29-32.

(36.) *And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, or a drink composed of sour wine and water.* The mockery of this consisted, probably, in the manner of the act, rather

than in the act itself. Some attempt to reconcile the statements of the different evangelists upon the supposition that there were *three* draughts offered to Christ;—one of wine mingled with myrrh, (Mark xv. 23, another of vinegar mingled with gall, (Matt. xxvii. 34), and a third of vinegar simply.

(37.) *If thou be the King of the Jews, &c.* As these soldiers were Romans this sneer is pointed at Jesus' claim to kinship.

(38.) *A Superscription*.—the paper in which the crime of the accused is stated in writing—*over him*,—above Him upon the cross. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, the three great languages of the world at that time. It was so written that all who saw might read it for themselves. This is THE KING OF THE JEWS, not an accusation, as probably it was intended to be, but a statement of fact, which Pilate would not, probably *could* not had he wished. John xix. 20-22 modify into an accusation.

(39-40.) *If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.* This was the language of one of the thieves, and was uttered in the spirit of railing and contempt. *But the other rebuked him*—probably he had at first railed also, Mark xv. 32, saying, *do not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation as this man?* In other words, are not you, a dying man, afraid to rail at another? The spirit of God had suddenly roused this man to a sense of his terrible condition; and revealed to his faith Christ in the person of Him who hung on the cross at his side. His language can be explained on no other supposition.

(41.) *And we indeed justly, &c.*—an additional proof of the working of the Holy Spirit in this man's mind, since only the Spirit could have given him the discernment of all that his words imply. *We indeed justly, for we receive*—are receiving—*the due reward of our deeds*.—a confession which could only spring from the enlightening and humbling influences of the Holy Ghost. *But this man hath done nothing amiss.* He discerned that Jesus is in "the same condemnation" with themselves, yet clearly recognizes His innocence and their guilt; and not only so, gains a wonderfully correct view of Christ's true character and dignity.

(42.) *Lord*.—an acknowledgment of His exalted dignity, *remember me*.—proof that he not only believed in a future existence for himself, but that the power of Jesus to benefit and bless reached beyond the death of the body. *When thou comest*.—evidence that he had faith in Jesus' return to Earth. *In thy kingdom*, that is, to establish all the claims to supremacy which He had made. These words, when carefully analyzed, will be found to contain the genuine elements of saving faith; and his *remember me* evinces at once the faith and the humility of a true penitent bowed beneath a sense of unworthiness, but encouraged by a spiritual perception of the tenderness and compassion of Christ.

(42.) *Verily I say unto thee*.—a most emphatic assertion:—*To-day*, not at some indefinite period in the future;—*thou shalt be with me*.—not in some separate place where I am not;—*in paradise*.—the place to which Jesus was taken when He said—*Father, into thy hands &c.*—(v. 46).

(44, 45.) *Sixth hour*.—noon:—sun was darkened.—a supernatural gloom:—*over all the Earth*. all the land of Judea, possibly over all Palestine;—*ninth hour*—3 p. m.;—*and the veil of the temple*.—a gorgeous curtain, sixty feet long, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, and suspended between the Holy, and the Most Holy Place;—*rent in the midst*.—that is, from bottom to top (Mark xv. 38) showing that, from that moment, all believers were free to approach God through Christ who was even then passing into the presence of God, to be their perpetual High Priest above.

(46.) *Cried with a loud voice*.—hence it could not have been from exhaustion; but it was the shout of a conqueror who saw that a full and complete victory had been won (John ix. 30). *Father, into thy hands, &c.*.—a peaceful resignation of Himself and His now finished work into the hands of His Father. *Gave up the ghost* (spirit,) that is, He died. Jesus lingered not after His work was finished. This explains the fact of His death's occurring so soon. God laid not one unnecessary pang upon His Son; the moment His work was finished He went away. Neither man's cruelty nor Satan's rage could follow Him one step further.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

Christ's endurance of the insults of men and the death of the cross were not, as some suppose, for the purpose of example. There are in it beautiful examples of various kinds, but its only explanation lies in the fact that He who knew no sin, WAS MADE SIN FOR US.

Christ endured no more than the *just* *deserts of sin*. *Less* would not have satisfied the claims of justice; *more*, it would have been impossible for the Father to inflict.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the Children)

(33.) *Where* was Jesus crucified? *How* was He crucified? *Who* were crucified with Him? What is meant by *malefactors*? (34) What did Jesus say about His cruel executioners? What was done with His clothes? Which one could not be rent? (see note and reference) (35.) Who stood looking on? Who else? What did they say? What did the soldiers do? (37.) What say? (38.) What was written and put over Him? In what languages was it written? Why? What were the words? Were they true? Was Jesus a King, then? Is He a King now? Is He your King?—or are you saying, *we will not have this man to rule over us?* (39.) What did one of the malefactors do? What is meant by *railed on him*? What did he say? (40, 41.) What did the other one say to him? (42.) What did he say to Jesus? (43.) What did Jesus answer? What strange thing happened at the sixth hour (noon)? How long did it last? What time was that? (44.) What happened to the sun? What to the veil of the temple? *What and where* was this veil? Why did Jesus cry out *with a loud voice*? (see note.) What did He say directly after? What is meant by *gave up the ghost*? *Why* did Jesus die? Will His dying for sinners be of any use to those who do not repent and believe in His name? Have you repented and believed in Jesus? Then, ARE YOU SAVED?

WHERE WERE YOU?

Where were you last Sunday? "At home, not feeling very well." Did you ever close up your store, and by way of explanation, stick up a notice, "Detained at home by headache?" and why not, pray?

"Visitors came in, and I could not leave them." Ah! Would you continue in your service a young man who should offer you a like excuse for staying away from your store on Monday evening? And when you stand at the bar of God, and the Judge asks you why you did not go to His sanctuary more, will you look Him in the face and say "Oh! we had company."

"It looked like rain; indeed, it had begun to sprinkle." Did it? Had it? Would the prospect have kept you away from market or store? Indeed, are you not been known to go to a concert or a dancing party in the midst of what might have been the beginning of another deluge? Is it not time an umbrella was invented that would protect Church members from the rain on Sunday?

"I went to hear the Rev. D. Boanerges." And so the Athenians of Paul's time are not dead yet, but some still spend all their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing? Is this what the houses of God are for? Is this to make them "gates of heaven?"

"I had an engagement that prevented me from attending." You had? And on God's day you were immersed in business? Have you had advices that the fourth commandment has been repealed? Surely it is safer and more profitable to overcrowd Saturday than to lose a Sunday!

Men act the fool nowhere as in matters of religion. Here they expect to get everything for nothing. Unconscious of God's presence, insensible to His love, with a positive disrelish for His society, they would think themselves terribly abused if informed that they will not be permitted to spend an eternity with Him.

RELIGION THE SUPREME REALITY.

The Spirit witnesses to our spirits of God. The Spirit revealed Jehovah to the Jews, and reveals Jesus to us. The Old Testament promise was, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright shall be shown the salvation of God." The New Testament promise is "If any man's will be to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." The promise is the same and indicates the condition of the Spirit's acting upon our spirits. The more unreservedly we trust the promise, the more completely is our faith vindicated.

As regards influence on life, the difference between probability and certainty amounts to a difference of kind rather than of degree. To believe that Jesus is risen merely on the testimony of witnesses, who might have been mistaken, is not a working faith. To believe because the Spirit of Jesus also witnesses to our spirits that He is living and dwells in us, is the faith that conquers the world. Whoso hath this faith, though an angel from heaven preached another gospel, would not be unsettled. To whom else should he go? Jesus has the words of eternal life. No one else can solve for him all spiritual problems. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is for him the supreme verity. This great historic fact has become an all-satisfying spiritual fact. It brings the two opposite sides of God's character revealed in the Old Testament into the unity of a living Person. It lays hold upon us by the two opposite sides of our character, the self and the not-self, one or other of which all other philosophies of life ignore. We die to the lower, and we find the higher self. Dying, we live. We are born again, and nothing can be more certain than our consciousness of life.

Standing on this foundation, other than which no man can lay, we are on the rock. Unless we can get on this foundation of spiritual certainty, it is useless to expect that religion will influence secular affairs. The current of human life with its manifold interests will sweep on in its course, indifferent to all the appeals and argumentations of priests or presbyters. But, standing on this foundation, all life becomes religious. Life here will consist in following Jesus. Life hereafter will be to see Him as He is, to be with Him, to be like Him.

Religion, then, is the supreme verity. Its relation to the subordinate realities of secular life is the next point to be clearly understood. The relation is not of one form to another, but of spirit to all forms. As far as the religious and the secular are separate spheres they are not independent, much less hostile, but concentric. They revolve round one axis—have one centre and one law of life.—*Rev. Principal Grant.*

—Rather a romantic account is given of the marriage of Rev. A. W. Marling, a nephew of the Rev. F. H. Marling, formerly of Toronto, and Miss Janet B. Cameron, two American missionaries of the Gaboon Mission. Gaboon is under French law which requires the documentary consent of the parents, a condition that would postpone the wedding four months. Therefore a steamer was taken, and when three miles from shore, and therefore no longer under the dominion of France, Rev. W. Walker, the senior in the American Presbyterian Mission, performed the ceremony. The ring for the occasion was made out of African gold by a native jeweller. A daughter of Rev. Dr. Hopper of China was married a few years ago out at sea under somewhat similar circumstances.