

the Lord Jesus, and make an end of his work, so far as they understood it. In the passage for today we see this wicked task brought to its completion. The blameless One, who "went about doing good," is led out of the city to suffer the painful and shameful death of crucifixion. "He, bearing his cross, went forth." What an hour of triumph for his bitter enemies! The terrible nailing is accomplished and the crosses are raised, the holy One in the middle, two thieves on either side, and the soldiers apply themselves to the division of the victim's clothes. Here is the day which the chief priests and Pharisees had so desired to see. Yet there is one thing to mar their feeling of triumph. The writing over the cross reflects upon their own honor and the honor of their nation, and Pilate refuses to alter it. Meanwhile some of the friends of Jesus who had been watching afar off (Luke 23. 40) drew near—"his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene," and with them John, the beloved disciple. This is the last farewell, as they deem it, and the mother of Jesus is given over into the charge of John. The mockers who are looking on behold all this; they hear the last expression of bodily need, "I thirst," and see the vinegar given and received. And then, in another moment, he has breathed his last. Their task is done, Jesus is dead.

Did the accomplishment give them satisfaction? Were they sure they had been successful? The behavior of the crowd as they turned away from the sad sight (Luke 23. 40) showed that they had not succeeded in inspiring the people with their own feelings of hatred. We learn from Matt. 27. 62-66, that they were not easy in their minds even after their victim was laid in the grave. And quickly enough they learned that their own work had really failed. Matt. 28. 11, etc. The task was accomplished, but there was a fatal flaw in it.

Now we turn to something very different.

2. *A work undertaken by the Son of God.*

Of this we have frequent mention in John's gospel. It is comprehensively defined in chap. 3. 17. "God sent His son"—the Lord Jesus held the commission from his Father—"that the world through him might be saved." In this work he delighted (chap. 4. 34); and this work he was diligent to fulfill. Chap. 9. 4. To the accomplishment of this he looked steadily forward. Chap. 5. 36. For this work, as we learned in the last lesson, was incomplete without death. If the "Lamb of God" were to take away the sin of the world, he must be slain. If the Living Water were to be given to thirsty souls, the Rock must be smitten. Exod. 17. 6. If the Bread of Life were to be given to starving souls, it must be broken. Luke 22. 19. If the "Good Shepherd" were to save his sheep, he must lay down his life for them. Chap. 10. 15. If his people were to have in him the "resurrection and the life," he, the Living One, must be able to say, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive again for evermore." Rev. 1. 18. And as Christ, all the Old Testament Scriptures bare witness of him that he

should suffer, and suffer unto death. Acts 3. 18. Thirty-three years had passed, and as the completion of his task drew near he looked eagerly on to it: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke 12. 50. And when the dread hour came he was ready: "Jesus, therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth." Chap. 18. 4. The bitter cross was not to him the triumph of his enemies, but the completion of the work he had undertaken. And after passing through the awful soul-suffering revealed by his exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (as recorded by Matthew and Mark), he knew that "all things were now accomplished" (ver. 28), and that only one more Scripture had to be fulfilled before he should yield up his soul to his Father. Calmly, therefore, he said, "I thirst," and received the vinegar. And then at length came forth the cry, not of the sufferer, but of the victor: "It is finished!" The work was done, the character of God vindicated, the glory of God secured, and full provision made for the salvation of sinners.

There was no fear that this work might not prove successful. The Son of God could estimate his own work, and he knew that there was not a flaw in it. There was nothing to be altered, nothing to be added, nothing to be done over again.

We admire a grand work—say some splendid building, on which the architect has been long and patiently employed, or a picture which has cost the artist years of toil. We can gaze and admire. But of the work of the Son of God we can say: "He did it for me—he loved me and gave himself for me!"

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

It might be well to compare the four accounts of the death of Christ, and fix the events in order, as follows: 1. The crucifixion. 2. "Father, forgive them." 3. The title. 4. The division of the garments. 5. The mocking of the people. 6. The penitent thief. 7. The mother and the beloved disciple. 8. The darkness. 9. "Eloi, Eloi." 10. "I thirst." 11. "It is finished." 12. "Father, into thy hands," etc. 13. The death.... Notice the seven utterances of Christ on the cross, and show their meaning, but do not permit discussion.... Observe seven prophecies fulfilled on the cross: 1. Isa. 53. 12. 2. Psa. 22. 18. 3. Psa. 22. 7. 4. Psa. 22. 8. 5. Psa. 69. 21. 6. Psa. 34. 20. 7. Zech. 12. 10. Find five wonders which took place at Christ's crucifixion.... The Analytical and Biblical Outline presents three aspects of Jesus on the cross; note them.... The Thoughts for Young People gives six lessons from the cross; enforce them.... In teaching this lesson keep the spiritual and practical in constant view, and avoid matters which minister only to controversy.

References. FREEMAN, Ver. 17: Bearing the cross, 820; Place of capital punishment, 728. Ver. 18: Crucifixion, 730. Ver. 19: The tablet on the cross, 732. Ver. 23: The guard, 731; The tunic, 821.