

GARMENTS—The Mishna prescribes that a person crucified is to have a cloth round his loins, but Roman soldiers were not likely to lose any of their perquisites through delicacy. The head-dress, the outer cloak, the girdle and the sandals would be easily ap-

portioned; but the inner woven tunic, which was apparently a garment of some value, no doubt the gift of some wealthy friend, would have been destroyed by being divided, and so for it they probably shook dice in a helmet.

APPLICATION

He received it not, v. 23. Jesus is the supreme Example to us of complete surrender to the will of God and unquestioning faith that God's appointments are the best for us. The divine will may seem to be leading us into the worst straits, as it brought this Son of God face to face with starvation in the wilderness, and with unspeakable sufferings on the cross. But from Him we learn that our highest good lies, not in rebelling against the hard things in our lot, but in cheerfully and lovingly accepting them from the Father's hand.

Casting lots, v. 24. Gambling at the foot of the cross! How audacious a vice is this! It respects not the eyes of a dying Saviour, and makes the very possession of His clothes depend upon the cast of a die. Few vices have borne such a train of misery behind them.

Success has often started the winner on the road to ruin, and failure has not seldom driven the loser to desperation, and even suicide. The gambler, deceived by bright prospects of riches easily got, is lured on to certain moral and probable financial shipwreck.

They crucified him, v. 25. The Jews, and especially their leaders, were fully responsible for the death of Jesus. Bitter indeed is the harvest which this race has reaped. But the guilt is not theirs alone. For be it ever remembered that it was for sin the Saviour died. It was sin that nailed Him to the cruel cross. And there is sin in each one of us. We, in so far as we cherish and yield to sin, are guilty, with the Jews, of Christ's death. But blessed be His name, the blood shed on Calvary can cleanse our guilt and theirs.

THE KING OF THE JEWS, v. 26. God made choice of the Jews to be a reservoir in

which His grace might be stored for distribution in life-giving streams among all nations. They mistook the divine purpose. They selfishly imagined that the favor of heaven was for themselves alone. This error was their ruin. In like manner we have been enriched with gospel privileges. What can we expect but condemnation, unless we share them with others for whom they are intended as well as for us.

Come down from the cross, v. 30. The tempter is ever with us, plying us with persuasions to avoid the hard ways, and seek success by easy and pleasant methods. Let us always go to the cross for our answer. To come down would for Jesus have meant defeat; it was by enduring that He won His victory. Not otherwise is it with us. The crown is for those who overcome.

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? v. 34. These are words to be read whenever we are inclined to think lightly of sin. They reveal to us in God a hatred of sin so intense that He cannot look even on His own sinless Son bearing the load of the world's guilt. And at the same time they open up to us the depths of the divine love, which moved the Father to allow such a burden to come upon His only-begotten Son. At the cross is an undying fire, to kindle afresh our hatred towards sin and our grateful love to the God who has saved us at so great a cost.

He saved others; himself he cannot save, v. 31. No one can save others unless he is prepared to sacrifice himself. The physician can save his patient's life only by exposing himself to toil, anxiety, sometimes danger. The soldier who would save his country in the hour of peril must be ready to lay down his life. On the other hand, there is no sacrifice so small

God's Will
Best

A Deadly
Vice

Who Are
Guilty

Our Mission

Winning by
Endurance

Our Sin and
God's Love

Saved by
Sacrifice