

## The Sabbath School.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

December 8th.] A.D. 33. [Luke xxiii: 33-46.  
**THE CROSS.**

**GOLDEN TEXT:**—*God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Galatians 6: 14.

Jesus has been adjudged guilty of "blasphemy" by the Jewish council, but having no power to execute the sentence of the Law (Lev 24: 16), they bring him before the Roman governor, accusing Him of treason or rebellion. Pilate soon discovers His entire innocence and detects the motives of the chief priests and the mob, he delivers Him to be crucified (v. 23, Matt. 27: 24-26). And now, with two malefactors (thieves—Matt.) He is led to Calvary, the place where He should suffer. Calvary (Golgotha in Hebrew) signifies "the place of a skull": so called, as some suppose, from its being the usual place of execution; as others think, from the shape of the hill or rock. The Lord thus dies a most ignominious death (He endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. 12: 2), publicly, at the great feast, Himself the true Paschal Lamb. The first recorded word of Jesus on the cross (it may be during the act of crucifixion) is His prayer for His murderers—for the four soldiers who fastened the nails, for those who condemned Him, and for sinners of mankind represented by them. Their forgiveness is sought because they were ignorant of the real extent of their guilt. See 1 Tim. 1: 13; also Acts 7: 60. "This is the prayer of the great Intercessor, which is always heard." The soldiers fulfil Scripture in dividing His raiment by lot. Ps. 22: 18. The people and their rulers, unite in mocking of Him, reproaching Him with the miracles in which "He saved others" while now "He could not save Himself." There was now truth in their words than they supposed. The rough soldiers join in mockery, and again fulfil Scripture in offering Him of the "vinegar" or sour wine which they used at their meals. Ps. 69: 21. A "superscription" designed as a mark of ignominy, but really giving the true title of the sufferers, was placed on the cross over His head. It was in three languages and was read of many (Jn. 19: 20); fully symbolizing—though Pilate meant it not—the universality of Messiah's kingdom. Ps. 72: 11. Luke has recorded the most interesting fact that one of the malefactors showed repentance on the cross and received a blessed promise from the Lord: teaching us that while life lasts those who truly repent shall find pardon. Reproving his companion in crime and punishment, who was scoffing with the mob, the penitent acknowledges the justice of his own sentence and vindicates the innocence of Jesus. But more; addressing Him as *Lord* he prays to be remembered when He should come in His kingdom—in His glory. "His faith lays hold on the truth that this is the King of the Jews in a higher and immortal sense." What measure of knowledge he had we cannot tell, nor how he got it, but taught by the spirit, he at least knows that his Lord and Saviour is hanging beside him. The gracious Lord—the conqueror of death even in dying—does more than grant his request. He assures him that "to day" he should be with Himself in the region of blessedness to which death should introduce Him—"Paradise." (The Scripture calls the garden of Eden *Paradise*. Gen. 2: 8. As used by the Jews, it denoted the "place of rest and peace into which the souls of the faithful are conveyed at death."—Abraham's bosom.—1st Cor. 12: 4, Rev. 2: 7, it means *heaven* or the *third heaven*. The awful and mysterious import of what is transpiring, is testified by the darkening of the sun for three hours:—"from the seventh to the ninth hour" (from noon till 3 p.m.) The rending of the veil signifies the end of the old economy, and the opening of the way by Christ's death into the most holy place—even heaven. Heb. 9: 8 and 10: 19. "With a loud voice," showing unexhausted strength, Jesus surrendered His spirit into His Father's hand. "I have power to lay down my life," &c. John 10: 18. See also Ps. 31: 5.

December 15th.] A.D. 33. [Luke xxiv: 13-42.

### THE WALK TO EMMAUS.

**GOLDEN TEXT:**—*And they said one to another did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scripture.*—Luke, 24: 32.

The angels at the tomb have already announced to the "women" that the Lord has risen. They have informed the Apostles, and Peter and John have ascertained by inspection that it is as reported. "On the same day"—the day of the Lord's resurrection—"two of them," i. e., of the disciples (one is Cleopas, v. 18) are going to Emmaus, a village about 6 miles from Jerusalem. They talk of the matter of which their hearts are full; and as they "reason" or "dispute" the Lord Himself, apparently in guise of a traveller (Mk. 16: 2) overtakes them. Their eyes were "holden"—supernaturally influenced—so that they did not know Him. He enquires regarding the eager discussion in which these evidently sorrowful men are engaged. Cleopas expresses surprise that He should need to ask: *open a stranger* in Jerusalem must know what every one is thinking and speaking of at this time. Even if a stranger, he must be the only one who knows not these things.

"What things?" says the risen Lord; wishing by their statement of the case the better to prepare them for His own exposition. "They said" (one speaking for both, or alternately) that their discourse was about "Jesus of Nazareth," which was a Prophet mighty, &c." See Acts 2: 22 and 7: 22. Their rulers procured His condemnation (by Pilate) and then crucified Him, but *they* (disciples) trusted ("were hoping") that He would prove the Redeemer (politically and spiritually) of Israel. This was now the third day since His death. Their perplexity was increased—they could hardly sav their hope revived—by the report of "certain women of their company" (disciples) that His restoration to life was declared to them by angels whom they saw. (v. 1-10, Matt. 28: 1-8, Mk. 16: 18) on which report "certain of them which were with them" (Peter, v. 12, John tells us he was with Peter: Jn. 20: 3-8) ran to the sepulchre and verified the word of the women. Despondingly they must close their statement: "Him they saw not."

Having permitted them to pour out their hearts, the Lord addresses them. "He upbraids them with their unbelief" (Mk. 16: 14) as afterwards the eleven, "Fools and slow of heart" (*without understanding and sluggish*) to believe all, &c. How could Scripture be fulfilled unless Messiah both died and rose again—His rising preliminary to "glory"? (His glory was so near that He speaks of it as if in it) and now *consecutively* ("beginning with, &c.") He goes through Scripture, showing how promises, prophecies, types, even the law, have their fulfilment in Him. ("The things concerning Himself" mean more than prophecies of Him. Emmaus is reached, and the Lord, still concealing Himself, seems disposed to go further. "He would have gone farther, but they held him back with the might of love." "If we desire to have Christ with us, we must use effort for that purpose." The words "abide with us" do not imply that the disciples lived at Emmaus.) At table with His fellow-travellers, He, acting as master of the house, "takes bread, &c." (This is a common meal and not the *communio in*: no argument, therefore, for the communion in one kind—as Romanists would have it.)

And now the discovery comes. The *same* power that "held" their eyes "opens" them. This marvellous stranger is the Lord.

Immediately he "vanishes out of their sight" (See Jn. 20: 13-26.) His body, however, was still a real body.

The Lord having gone, they cannot but express the extraordinary emotion which His exposition of Scripture had kindled within them—emotion of joy, hope, desire, love. Should they not (we seem to hear them say), have sooner known that this could only be the Lord?