

not the same as the cross Jesus bore. Ours are easy because His was hard.

"Is it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth,
Should touch the heart with softer power,
For comfort than an angel's mirth?"

An old author says of the crucifixion, "If you have not found out that Christ crucified is the foundation of the whole volume, you have read your Bible hitherto to very little profit. Your religion is a heaven without a sun, an arch without a keystone, a compass without a needle, a clock without spring or weights, a lamp without oil. It will not comfort you. It will not deliver your soul."

"He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Here is another assertion of His helplessness. And it is true. He had to die, because of the heroic temper of His nature. A man who has been shot in the heart will die and must die. Another man who has refused to deny his faith in the face of cruel, persecuting laws also will die, also must die.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

Begin by calling attention to the fact that the various incidents in connection with the crucifixion occupy a most prominent place in the four Gospels. As one has said: "The events of that afternoon have been burned into the consciousness of the modern world. The most competent writers in prose and poetry have striven to set that afternoon vividly before our imagination. One day throughout Christendom is devoted to the meaning of these hours. That Friday afternoon in April has become the outstanding day in human history." Try and get the class to realize the significance of:

1. *The fact itself.* Bring out its meaning to: (a) The Jews. It was in their thought only the death of an upstart who foolishly claimed to be the Son of God, a dangerous pretender. But there was more. It also meant the rejection through the leaders of God's highest revelation to them. By putting Him to death they and their interpretation of the law stood condemned. Their

But is there not a big difference between the two compulsions which send these men to death? One of them cannot help dying, the other can. For the one death is inevitable, for the other imperative. Now, we can tell the sort of person any one is by asking, What are the things that person must do? The lowest order is that which accepts only the inevitable. He will lie, steal, kill, disgrace himself in any way in order to save himself from discomfort. Another draws the line a little higher. He will not kill or do anything really shameful, but he will tell a few lies, and shirk a good many duties, in order to enjoy himself. Then there is the brave, pure soul which will not do anything which he ought not to do. "Must" for him is the same as "should." To that class Jesus belonged, and His example is for our imitation. We can tell that we are growing in grace if we feel that there are continually getting to be more things that we must do because they are right to do.

doom was sealed. (b) To the Romans. Show how the superscription, "The king of the Jews," was given by Pilate in derision to taunt the Jews. Jesus' death to Pilate was the occasion of repaying the Jews for their success in forcing him to do their bidding against his better judgment. But there is more. The Christ reigns, and Rome has disappeared. (c) To us. In glorious fact the death of Jesus replaced the evil associations of the cross by ideas of inexhaustible beauty and significance. His death was so full of dignity that it drove out the thought of shame. It is Jesus' way of manifesting the love of God and bringing deliverance from sin. To emphasize this take up the apostolic doctrine of the cross as the supreme triumph of God's plan in man's redemption. (d) To Jesus. His death meant the triumphant completion of His life work and the realization of His exalted ideal. One pain was at least spared Jesus: He had not to suffer the pain of mocking His own visions by any disloyalty or weakness in Himself.

2. *The many sided teaching of the crucifixion.* Take up: (a) Jesus' fixed habit of thoughtfulness for others, the women, His mother,