

Children to learn for next Sunday :

Collect.

Catechism—Answer to “What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?”

Texts—S. John xiii. 15 and 35.

LESSON XIII.

ARTICLE IV.: “*Was crucified, dead, and buried.*”

The Sufferings of our Lord (continued).

B. The death on the Cross. S. Matt. xxvii. 50–57.

a. Our Lord “*yielded up the Ghost.*” i.e. died much sooner than was usual in the case of crucifixion (Lesson xi. A. a., S. Mark xv. 43, 44). The expression used by S. Matthew, and that also used by the other Evangelists, are used to show that our Lord’s death was a voluntary act according to His words (S. John x. 17, 18). S. John adds that before He gave up the Ghost “*He bowed His head*” (S. John xix. 30), as in humble submission to the will of that Father into whose hands He was commending His spirit.*

b. *The rending of the veil of the Temple.* Josephus describes this veil as a Babylonian curtain, sixty feet high, of strong material. It hung between the Holy place and the Holy of Holies: the fact of its being rent would therefore only be known to the priests, one of whom, at the hour of rending, would enter within the Holy place to offer Incense; for the rending of the veil and the death of our Lord occurred at the hour when the evening sacrifice was offered. Had the veil been rent from bottom to top, the rending might have been ascribed to human hands, even though the curtain were in fact far too thick and strong for such an explanation, but since it was rent from *top to bottom* it must have been done by superhuman means. What the meaning of this rending was could not be known till revealed (Heb. x. 20, 21). The unrent veil betokened exclusion from God, so the rent veil betokened the pierced, the broken, the crucified Body of Christ, through Which we draw near to God† Hence we believe that it is through the sacramental veil, through the broken Body of Christ that we have true and complete access to God.

* Blunt on S. Matthew.

† Saddler on S. Matthew.

c. *The earth did quake, the rocks rent, the graves open.* The rending of the veil was known only to the priests—these signs were known and, at least, partly understood by all (S. Matt. xxvii. 54; S. Luke xxiii. 47, 48). The graves “could not be closed or reopened during the intervening Sabbath (between the Death and Resurrection of our Lord), and the risen bodies—probably those of believers in Christ—who had died before Him, appeared after His Resurrection as its first fruits.”*

d. *The women beholding.* This company of women were probably those who had been addressed by our Lord when He was carrying His cross (Lesson xi. b.; S. Luke xxviii. 27–32).

e. *The piercing of our Saviour’s side* (S. John xix. 34–38). The breaking of the legs of the two thieves was to hasten death; but in our Saviour’s case, this being unnecessary, the “soldiers, to satisfy the Jews,” says S. Chrysostom, “pierced His side with a spear, and now insulted the dead body.” S. John, in verse 35, draws particular attention to the fact that from our Saviour’s side proceeded both “*Blood and Water.*” This fact must have some deep meaning; a meaning explained by the Church in the words of the Baptismal Service, where she appeals to “God, whose most dearly beloved Son, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood.” The double stream is therefore symbolic of the two Holy Sacraments of the Church. S. John also tells us that here was fulfilled the Scriptures. Ex. xii. 46; Psalm xxiv. 20; Zech. xii. 10. See also Rev. i. 7.

Children to learn for next Sunday :

Collect.

Catechism—Answer to “What is the inward Spiritual grace in Baptism?”

Text—S. John x. 14, 15.

LESSON XIV.

ARTICLE IV.: “*Was crucified, dead, and buried.*”

The Sufferings of our Lord (continued).

C. The burial of our Lord (S. Matt. xxvii. 57–66).

a. *Reason why our Lord was buried.*

(a) To give assurance of the truth of His death. Amongst the Romans

* Saddler on S. Matthew.