

righteous man." Perhaps he used both expressions; and, to a Roman unacquainted with Scripture, the two sentences may have meant very much the same. It is cited here as a sort of unconscious declaration of a truth far greater than its utterer supposed. 2. Thus early does the cross of Christ begin its conquests!

40. Women looking on afar off. The mother of Jesus also had stood near by, (John 19. 25) but she had now gone with the beloved disciple. Probably the rest were at a more distant station, kept near by love, yet withheld from closer approach by womanly modesty and the rough crowd around. **Mary Magdalene.** Mary of Magdala, by the Sea of Galilee. See Luke 8. 2. She is not to be confused with "the woman that was a sinner," who washed the Saviour's feet, (Luke 7. 37,) nor with Mary the sister of Lazarus. John 12. 2, 3. **Mary the mother of James the less.** The wife of Cleophas. John 19. 25. Her son is called "the less" or "the little," perhaps from his size, or to distinguish him from James the brother of the Lord, a well-known leader in the early Church. **Of Joseph.** A person of whom nothing is known. **Salome.** Probably the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the apostles James and John. 3. What a privilege to be named among the friends of Jesus!

41. When he was in Galilee. During the earlier and more popular period of his ministry. Days of unpopularity had come since, but these had remained faithful. **Ministered unto him.** Aided him, and attended to his wants. **Many other women.** An outer circle of friends, besides the nearer ones named before. **Came up from Galilee to the feast,** perhaps expecting the Saviour to assume his throne as Messiah-king.

42. When the even. Sunset on the Friday of the passover; about three hours after the death of Jesus. **The preparation.** Or, as we should say, "sabbath-even." The sabbath began at sunset. **Before the sabbath.** And that sabbath was a peculiarly sacred day, the Paschal Sabbath. John 19. 31.

43. Joseph. He had been a secret believer in Jesus, and now stood forth boldly in his behalf. See John 19. 38. **Of Arimathea.** Probably Ramath, the home of the prophet Samuel, some miles north of Jerusalem. **An honourable counsellor.** Rev. Ver., "A counsellor of honourable estate," that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, of high social position. The word "honourable" refers rather to station than to character. 4. There are friends of Jesus to be found in all social grades, and even in the midst of his enemies. **Which also waited.** Rev. Ver., "Who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God." He was a pious man, a student of Scripture, and a believer in Jesus as the Messianic king. If, however, even the apostles erred in their expectations concerning it, (see Acts 1. 6) it is likely that Joseph had expected Jesus to establish a temporal throne. **Went in boldly.** The request might involve a charge of disloyalty, and would inevitably make his fellow-counsellors his enemies. A similar request to

another Roman governor cost the petitioner his life. 5. The cross of Christ has power to inspire the noblest moral courage. **Craved the body.** The Roman usage was to leave the bodies of the executed to be devoured by birds and beasts; the Jewish custom was to throw them amid the ashes and garbage in the valley of Hinnom. Joseph's request was that he might give honoured burial to one whom he now deemed a sincere but mistaken enthusiast.

44, 45. Pilate marvelled. Death by crucifixion did not generally occur until the third day, and he could scarcely believe that one in full strength would be dead within six hours. **Asked him.** He asked the centurion, as the one officially charged with the execution, as the one who had the body. **Knew it of the centurion.** This officer had been present while a soldier thrust his spear into the side of the dead Jesus, and had seen the water and blood pour forth. John 19. 35. **Gave the body.** "Granted" is the word in the Revised Version, indicating that it was given freely, and not purchased, as was sometimes required of the friends of condemned persons.

46, 47. Brought fine linen. "A linen cloth." (Rev. Ver.) This was the long roll of cloth used for a winding sheet. **Took him down.** From the cross. **Wrapped him in the linen.** In this he was aided by Nicodemus, a fellow-member of the Sanhedrin, who brought a quantity of drugs to be wrapped in the folds with the body. 6. The gifts of love to Jesus, whether a cup of water, or a hundredweight of costly spices, are not forgotten. **Laid him in a sepulchre.** "A tomb." (Rev. Ver.) The Oriental tombs are generally dug out horizontally in the sides of the hills, not like graves downward. This was Joseph's own new tomb (Matt. 27. 60), situated in a garden near the place of the crucifixion. John 19. 41. Authorities are evenly divided as to its site, whether it lies under the famous church of the Ho'y Sepulchre, or elsewhere. **Rolled a stone.** In shape like a millstone, fitting across the opening of the cave. This was afterward sealed and guarded, to prevent the removal of the body. **Beheld where he was laid.** This is stated, both to show the constancy of their affection, and to explain their going to the spot on the morning of the resurrection. 7. Let no follower of Christ fear the tomb which his presence has hallowed.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Truly this man was the Son of God. Verse 39.

OUTLINE.

1. The Veil, v. 38.
2. The Witnesses, v. 39-41.
3. The Sepulchre, v. 42-47.

LESSON HYMNS.

C. M.

Welcome, thou Victor in the strife,
Now welcome from the cave!
To-day we triumph in thy life
Around thine empty grave.

Our enemy is put to shame,
His short-lived triumph o'er;
Our God is with us, we exclaim,
We fear our foe no more.