

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., DECEMBER 10, 1873.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873. INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, December 14th.

The Crucifixion.—Matthew xxvii. 45-54.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Philippians ii. 8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 46-50.

SUMMARY.—"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."

ANALYSIS.—I. The darkness vs. 45. II. The death, vs. 46-50. III. The earthquake, vs. 51-54.

EXPOSITION.—Connection.—We last week left Christ in Pilate's palace, surrounded by a company of Roman soldiers. The shameful mockery and insults to which he there submitted are graphically related in vs. 28-31. Compare also Mark and John. The mockery was mostly with reference to his kingly pretensions, and shows that that was the ground on which Pilate felt that he might recognize the conduct of Christ as a criminal. From John xix. 4-16, it seems that even after the mockery and

save cross. He still does everything except his duty. His duty he does not do, because his own office is to him dearer than justice and the life of Jesus. Then they took off from Christ the insignia of mock-royalty and put on his own clothes, and led him away to crucify him. According to custom, criminals were obliged to carry their own cross. John xix. 17. Tradition reports that Christ sunk to the ground beneath his cross, and that for this reason another was required to bear it for him. vs. 32. Most touching is the incident in Luke xxiii. 27-32. If he did it as a disciple lovingly, God and the good will honor him. The place of crucifixion was outside the city, as originally it was outside the camp. Num. xv. 35; Act. vii. 58. The crucifixion view is that Golgotha, or "place of a skull," or "place called skull," took its name from its skull-like form, and not from the fact that it was a customary place of execution. Calvary is from the Latin word meaning skull. Mark makes the time of crucifixion "about the third hour," chap. xv. 25, while John xix. 14 says that it was about the sixth hour when Pilate pronounced the sentence. Both statements are general, and would be true if the sentence and its immediate execution were between the third and the sixth hours, that is, between nine and twelve. It would seem to have been soon after nine, at latest. Other explanations have been proposed. By Roman law, crucifixion was only for the worst criminals, and never for a Roman citizen. The "two thieves," or, rather, robbers, were of that class. The placing of the title on the cross, and the partings of the garments, were established customs. The mockery that followed was like that which preceded, and came from both the Jews and the Romans, and even from one of the robbers. Yet the presence of sympathizing friends and disciples was not wholly denied our Lord. John xix. 25-27.

Verse 45.—From the sixth hour. It had been nearly three hours since Jesus was nailed to the cross, (Mark xv. 25), and it was noon when the darkness came on. Darkness over all the land. At high noon it suddenly became dark. This was not the result of an ordinary total eclipse, for it was at the time of full moon. Light is the symbol of life and joy. It was fit that God, who is the God of nature as well as of redemption should take from the eyes of men the light, when the Lord of light and of life was thus dying at the hands of men. It matters not how or by what means he did it. Enough that he did it, and that too in order to express, in symbol, his abhorrence of this great crime and the extent of its meaning, as also the horror of darkness in Christ's woes. It has been questioned whether "all the land" here means the whole sunlit atmosphere, or only Palestine. That it refers to Palestine, without indicating, however, that the darkness extended so further, seems most probable. Unto the ninth hour. That is, three o'clock, P. M.

Verse 46.—About the ninth hour. Thrown in the more carefully to identify the limit of Christ's sufferings with the limit of the darkness. Jesus cried with a loud voice. Showing that his soul was mightily, terribly moved. The tone of voice heightened the energy of his spirit. The

body, though so near to death, could yet be used by the spirit. This clause is a window through which we look into the Saviour's soul, and see the intense action which characterized his "passion," the doing which prevailed in his suffering. Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani. Instead of "Eli" Mark has "Eloi"—the same word, but given by Mark in the vernacular Syro-Chaldaic, and by Matthew in the pure Hebrew. Both Gospels give the words thus, because this explains the mockery of which the next verse speaks. This is a quotation from Psalm xxii. 1. In Col. ii. 15, there seems to be a reference to the agonies of these hours, and the many passages which teach that Christ's death was in place of ours, justify the belief that he entered into the woes of the finally lost, or took them on consciously upon himself. So deep was the spring of his anguish.

Verse 47.—This man calleth for Elias, were spoken derisively—not from mistake of his meaning. The natural awe which the darkness would inspire seems to have passed away. Verse 48.—I appears from John xix. 28 that, after that loud cry, Jesus said, "I thirst." One of them ran. Not therefore at his own instance, but in answer to Christ's announcement of his thirst. The vinegar was the ordinary sour wine used by the soldiers as their drink. The act of giving it in the convenient manner adopted was really an act of kindness, and may possibly have been so intended. The former refusal of wine, (vs. 34), was because the wine offered him was drugged, and would have interfered with the full use of his faculties. Jesus drank that which was given him in the sponge. John xix. 30.

Verse 49.—The rest said. Mark says that the man who gave the drink said what follows. There is no lack of harmony in the two accounts. The man called out to those who would prevent his giving the drink, and they tried to prevent him by the very consideration which he urged in self-justification. Verse 50.—When he had cried again with a loud voice. "Again," referring to verse 46. What he cried Matthew does not state. John says that after drinking the wine he said, "It is finished," vs. xix. 30; and Luke says that he cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The words, "It is finished," were doubtless spoken before the others, which may have immediately followed. The two would thus unite, so as to be a single cry or utterance. He commended, or, more exactly, committed, delivered, or deposited his spirit, himself, into the Father's hands, and so yielded up the ghost—expired. We see that it was not the decease, the expiring of Christ, which makes atonement for sin. Thanks to our blessed Lord, who did for us what no one of us could ever have done for himself. To him be the glory forever.

Jesus was the Son of God, and to take him, once for all, as our Lord and Saviour. QUESTIONS.—The subject of the last lesson? Where did he leave Christ? State what occurred in the interval between the last and the present lesson? vs. 28-53. Compare Mark, Luke, and John. Vs. 45. What occurred between the 6th and 9th hours? What caused this darkness? Why was it? Vs. 46. What was Jesus' cry? Why is the form of words used by him preserved? Vs. 47. What, think you, caused him to cry "with a loud voice"? Was he forsaken of God? What caused the anguish of Christ? Isa. liii; Heb. ii. 14. Vs. 47-49. What did some of the bystanders say to this call? In what spirit? What was done? vs. 48. Why done? John xix. 28. Did Christ drink the sour wine? John xix. 30. Compare Matthew xxvii. 34. Do you suppose the darkness had passed away? What did the rest say to him? Vs. 49. What did he say? Mark xv. 36. How do you explain this? Vs. 50. What did Christ utter in this cry? John xix. 30; Luke xxiii. 46. How long had he been on the cross? Who triumphed in this death, Christ or his foes? Col. ii. 15. Vs. 51-53. What events followed the death? What spiritual meaning had the rending of the temple veil? Heb. ix. 7-12. The earthquake? The opening of the graves? When did the dead saints rise and appear in Jerusalem? Vs. 53. Vs. 54. What effect had all this on the centurion?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 157. SUNDAY, December 21st.—The Resurrection.—Matthew xviii. 1-8.

Youths' Department.

WARM FEET.

To go with cold feet is to undermine the constitution, and this half the women and the girls are doing. They have a habit of cold feet, and an accompanying habit of ill health. Thick home-knit woolen stockings are not very fashionable. Once, no country girl was reckoned fit to be married until she had knit her pillow-case full of stockings, but it is not so now. I do not regret that less hand-knitting is done now than formerly, but I hope we shall not give up warm woolen stockings for winter until we can replace them with something better. Merino, or the common "boughten" white wool stockings, are rather thin, but some of us supplement them with an additional pair of cotton stockings, wearing the cotton or the woolen pair next the feet, as individuals prefer. Cold feet are often caused, in part, by too tight elastics or bands at the tops of the stockings, or by tight shoes, or shoes tight in the ankles. These interfere with the circulation of the blood, and there cannot be a comfortable degree of warmth without a good circulation and aeration of the blood.

Many women are obliged to work in kitchens where the floors in the winter are always cold. It helps matters to have a carpet down, but the kitchen carpet is objectionable on the score of cleanliness, especially where there are many children. A few large thick rugs are better. These can be shaken often, and will afford the kitchen occupants warm places to stand or sit at their work. There are some very cold days when I wear my arctic overshoes all day, and the children also keep on overshoes. The floors of our houses are many degrees colder than the air about our heads.

One thing too little thought of in this connection is absolutely essential to healthy warmth of body. That is pure air. Men who work in the open air some every day have a great advantage over housekeepers. Their blood gets oxygenated, and so purified (as far as such a degree of air can do it) and prepared to warm and nourish the body, of which the blood is the constant upbuilder. Everybody, male and female, old and young, ought to get out of doors some every day, and breathe freely with the mouth.

The air of sleeping rooms and other living rooms should be purified each day. Keep brick or soapstones in the oven, to be wrapped up and put under your feet when you are obliged to sit for some time at a distance from the fire, especially if you are writing or studying.

COURAGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

"Moral Courage" was printed in large letters and put as the caption of the following items, and placed in a conspicuous place on the door of a systematic merchant in New York for a constant reference: Have the courage to discharge a debt while you have the money in your pocket. Have the courage to speak your mind

when it is necessary that you should do so, and hold your tongue when it is prudent that you should do so.

Have the courage to speak to a friend in a "seedy" coat, even though you are in company with a rich one, and richly attired.

Have the courage to own you are poor, and thus disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.

Have the courage to tell a man why you refuse to credit him.

Have the courage to tell a man why you will not lend him your money.

Have the courage to cut the most agreeable acquaintance you have when you are convinced that he lacks principle, a friend should bear with a friend's infirmities, but not with his vices.

Have the courage to show your respect for honesty, in whatever guise it appears, and your contempt for dishonesty and duplicity, by whomsoever exhibited.

Have the courage to wear your old clothes until you can pay for new ones.

Have the courage to prefer comfort and propriety to fashion, in all things.

Have the courage to acknowledge your ignorance, rather than to seek for knowledge under false pretences.

Have the courage, in providing an entertainment for your friends, not to exceed your means.

Have the courage to insure the property in your possession, and thereby pay your debts in full.

Have the courage to obey your Maker at the risk of being ridiculed by man.—Morning Star.

LEARNING CHURCH HYMNS.

A writer in the Baptist Teacher recommends that the children in our schools should be taught some of the hymns that are used in the worship of the church, as well as the child-songs of the school; and for this suggestion gives the following excellent reasons:

First.—These hymns, lodged in the young mind are a priceless treasure.

Second.—Familiarity with them tends to counteract the bad effect of presenting religion, even to children, in an exclusively childish garb. As they study the Bible of the church, they ought to sing the hymns of the church. It is undesirable to the last degree that our young people should grow up with no taste for solid hymns and music.

Third.—This would tend to link the church and the Sunday school together, and to interest the children in the church services.

Fourth.—It would be the best possible feeder of congregational singing. Young people trained to sing in the Sabbath school in the manner recommended, will join without difficulty in singing the same hymns and tunes, thus made familiar to them, when they are used in public worship.

THE PASTOR.

"The power to please may be found anywhere, but the power to seize the conscience and bring the sinner face to face with his own worthlessness and condemnation, comes of simple faith and happy fellowship with God." So says the author of the life of John Milne; and how true! And yet it is the former which most Christians and some preachers seem to covet most earnestly. It is that which some congregations chiefly value in a pastor. Above all, he must be able to please. And we would not be understood to suggest that this power has no value. There is no virtue in being disagreeable. Repulsiveness is far from being a grace. But in one whose chief business is to bring souls to Christ, the power to please is by no means the prime essential. To think chiefly of that indicates a low state of piety. It is a sign, not of ardent, but of feeble love to Christ. It indicates but a secondary regard for God's honor, and a subordinate interest in the work of turning men to him. And then, is it not at the root of much of that sensitiveness to the opinions of others which makes the worker in the vineyard so unhappy? If one would live in spiritual sunshine, he must cease to live to please men. To please the Master is a nobler ambition. To live for that end, and to bring back the wanderers to his fold, is a higher and more satisfying purpose.—Congregation.

HOW TO GET RID OF A PASTOR.

Gather up everything within your reach against your pastor—his faults and foibles, misfortunes and mistakes. Talk about them. You need not say a word against him—simply talk about these items. You will find listeners whenever you want them, and very soon you will enjoy the hearty co-operation of quite a respectable group. One can paint the pastor with his defects, real or imaginary—it makes no sort of difference which; another can discourse in the intervals on Sunday on the admirable qualities of some preacher who would be a grand accession, could our preacher find another field better adapted to his talents; another could "take off" the man now and then, giving variety to the sketch with a dash at the family—for wife, children, and servants are parts of the preacher to which a church has an undoubted claim.

You see, dear brother, your work will soon become light—you will have so many to help you. By-and-by you will see even the best friends of the minister getting nervous and anxious, and then discouraged, and then inclined to the opinion that the pastor has nearly finished his mission in that region. When things have proceeded thus far don't be imprudent. A large measure of success in the greatest and most delicate enterprises should not beget an irrepressible ardour. Haste at just this point might tumble the church into confusion and factions, and make a lion of the man whom you have treated like a harmless lamb. You must not forget that though ministers bear many burdens for Christ's sake which other men are not expected to bear, and though ministers often, for the love of a church, or from a feeling of self-distrust, quietly withdraw from a church, and voluntarily cut off all resources, yet these same ministers are MEN. Some times, even before things have gone thus far, the pastor sees what is brewing, and has the shrewdness to discover the main actor; and he can, if he will, make this the test period of his ministry, by demonstrating his superiority to his persecutors, and making the church his pronounced and constant supporter. But your success thus far has demonstrated your ingenuity at this kind of business. Now, be patient—only keep the waters in motion—and your pastor will, before long, see that the current is too strong for him. If he doesn't see it, and still holds on to the helm, fondly believing that he can keep the ship afloat, and even find a quiet harbor at last, why, do not fear to visit him—not for your own sake, but on the behalf of a few families in the church and congregation whose influence is worth consideration. Tell him, in confidence, that the feeling against him cannot be restrained much longer, and that if he will resign now he will have the kind wishes of the entire congregation. The good man will probably believe you, and thank you with tears, and at the next meeting of the church you will probably hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

This is one way of getting rid of a minister. Whether it is the mode which a disciple of Christ should adopt is quite another question. We have known it, however, work admirably.

CRIPPLES MADE BY INTemperance.

The number of cripples in England and Wales alone is reckoned at not less than one hundred thousand; and the saddest thing of all is that by much the larger number of them owe their infirmities and deformities to bad fathers, bad mothers, and bad nurses. Tumbling out of the arms of staggering drunkards, parents or nurses, they get their bones broken, or their joints dislocated, or their limbs fractured. There is no doubt that the use of intoxicating drink is the root of this and of a host of other domestic, social, and political evils. Year by year it cripples thousands of innocent infants, more ruinous to the country than a pillage of the Bank of England, it costs sixty millions of money, and more fatal than the bloodiest battle-field, sixty thousand lives. Neither Moloch, nor Juggernaut, nor any other heathen idol was ever worshipped with such cruel and costly sacrifices as this Christian kingdom offers, year by year, to the demon of drink.—Dr. Guthrie.

RELIGIOUS TALK WITH CHILDREN.

We have especially cause to bear in mind a remark of Rev. O. Simeon's, when we are attempting to bring the young under religious influences. A lady had asked him if we ought always to be talking about religion. "No, no!" answered the good man, rather precipitately, "let your speech be seasoned with salt; seasoned with salt, madam, not a whole mouthful." Nothing produces more fatal results than "dinning" religion into a child; the "whole mouthful" crammed into the child's mouth being simply rejected with disgust. Though, in dealing with children, everything should be seasoned with the salt of true religion, yet we must remember that small vessels are soon filled, and he who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" certainly meant us to be touched with the infirmities of little children.—Sunday School Magazine.