

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson X.—JUNE 6.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Matt. xxvii. 35-50.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 45-50.

After his arrest Jesus was led to Annas, an ex-high-priest (John xviii. 13), who sent him bound to Caiaphas, when an informal session of the Sanhedrim was held (John xviii. 24). Later, a formal session of this body condemned him (Luke xxii. 66) and sent him to Pilate, the governor (Matt. xxvii. 2.) Pilate sent him to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, who was then in Jerusalem (Luke xxiii. 6, 7), and he sent him back to Pilate (Luke xxiii. 11) who then condemned him to be crucified (Matt. xxvii. 26). Parallels, Mark xv. 24-37; Luke xxiii. 33-46; John xix. 18-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."—1 Peter ii. 24.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Crucifixion, Matt. xxvii. 35-50.
T. Before the Council, Matt. xxvi. 57-68.
W. Denied by Peter, Matt. xxvi. 69-75.
T. Condemned by Pilate, Matt. xxvii. 11-34.
F. On the Cross, Mark xv. 24-37.
S. On the Cross, Luke xxiii. 33-46.
S. On the Cross, John xix. 17-30.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 35: Psalm xxii. 16, 18; John iii. 14, 15; John xii. 32.
With vs. 38: Isa. liii. 12.
With vs. 39: Psa. xxii. 6, 7; Psa. cix. 25.
With vs. 40: Matt. xxvi. 61; John ii. 19; Matt. iv. 3, 6; Matt. xvi. 4; Luke xvi. 31.
With vs. 41: Job xlii. 9; Psa. xxxv. 16; Isa. xxviii. 22; Luke xviii. 32.
With vs. 42: John xi. 47; Matt. ii. 2; John i. 49.
With vs. 43: Psa. xxii. 8; Psa. xlii. 10; Psa. lxxi. 10, 11; John v. 17, 18; John x. 30, 36.
With vs. 45: Amos viii. 9.
With vs. 46: Heb. v. 7; Psa. xxii. 1; Isa. liii. 10; Lam. i. 12.
With vs. 48: Psa. lxxix. 21.
With vs. 50: John x. 11.

THE KING ON THE CROSS.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Crucified. Vss. 35-38. II. Reviled. Vss. 39-44. III. Forsaken. Vss. 45-49. IV. Dead. Vss. 50.

QUESTIONS.—Give an account, in your own words, of what took place in Gethsemane? Between the arrest there and the crucifixion? What views of the King are given in the lesson? (Outline.)

I. Vss. 35-38.—What was the usual mode of crucifying a man? What was done with Jesus' garments? (See also John xix. 23, 24.) What Scripture did this fulfill? What was placed over the head of Jesus? What was the full inscription? (Combine from the Parallel Narratives.) In what languages was it written? (Luke xxiii. 38.) What request did the Jews make concerning this inscription? (John xix. 20-22.) What great truth did this inscription tell? In what did it come short of the truth? (Rev. xix. 15.) Why was Jesus crucified? (Golden Text.) How should this influence us? (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

II. Vss. 39-44.—How did those who passed by revile Jesus? How did the chief priests, with the scribes and elders? How did the thieves? How did the soldiers? (Luke xxiii. 36, 37.) What did the people do meanwhile? (Luke xxiii. 35.) How did Jesus endure all this reviling? (1 Pet. ii. 23.) What practical lesson may we learn from this example? (Heb. xii. 3.)

III. Vss. 45-49.—Who of Jesus' friends stood by the cross? (John xix. 25-27.) Where were all the rest? (Mark xiv. 50.) What came over the land at the sixth hour? What cry did Jesus make at the ninth hour? Whence are these words quoted? What was it understood to mean by those about the cross? How did they act upon it? What is the true meaning of the cry, as Jesus used it? What should we do for such a friend? (Luke xiv. 33.)

IV. Vss. 50.—What does vs. 50 tell us of the Lord? What is meant by "Yielded up the ghost"? What was this cry of Jesus? (John xix. 30.) When he had uttered this cry, what were his final words? (Luke xxiii. 46.) Name some of the scenes which followed immediately upon the death of Jesus. (Vss. 51-53.)—What blessings has the death of Jesus brought to the world?

TOPICS.—Methods of crucifixion; fulfillments of prophecy in Jesus' experience on the cross; the seven sayings of

Jesus upon the cross; the words addressed to Jesus on the cross; the physical cause of Jesus' death; the place of crucifixion.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 35.—Crucified. Crucifixion was the cruel Roman mode of execution, confined to the lowest and worst of criminals. The cross usually consisted of an upright beam of wood, with a transverse beam, sometimes at, sometimes near, the top. The sufferer, quite naked, was fastened to the cross by nails or pins piercing his hands, (his arms being stretched to their full length), and passing into the cross-piece of wood. His feet were sometimes bound, sometimes nailed, either apart or together, to the upright beam. The body was supported by a pin, on which the victim in a manner sat. This support at the same time relieved the intensity and prolonged the duration of the victim's sufferings. In the case of strong young men, life would sometimes not succumb until after three days of agony. The height of the feet would, perhaps, not be more than from twenty to twenty-five inches from the ground. Unmeasured, indeed immeasurable, physical pain is implied in that one word "crucified." Parted his garments, casting lots. Matthew thus summarily reports what John relates in detail (chap. xix. 23, 24). The form of the word shows that "parted" means "parted among themselves." The place is often called "Mount Calvary," but there is no authority for calling it a Mount.

Verse 36.—Implying the leisurely, bivouacing spirit in which those Roman soldiers performed the duty for which they had been detailed. Verse 37.—Over his head. This probably implies that, in the present case, the transverse beam of the cross was below the top of the upright. The "title" or "accusation," inscribed on a white tablet, was sometimes borne on the victim's neck, as he carried his own cross to the place of execution. The wording of the "title" or "accusation," prepared by Pilate to be affixed to the cross of Jesus (John xix. 19), differs in the different Gospels. The substance is the same in all. Verse 38.—Then. This indicates that Jesus had previously been raised on the cross. Thieves. "Robbers," "highwaymen." Not unlikely that the two crucified robbers were political offenders.

Verse 39.—They that passed by. Chance passers, perhaps; or, perhaps, people attracted by the spectacle of the crucifixion. Reviled. Literally, "blasphemed." Wagging their heads. A gesture of malignant triumph. See Pa. xxii. 8. Compare Job xvi. 14; Psalm cix. 25. Verse 40.—For the first taunt, see chap. xxvi. 61; for the second, same chapter, verse 64. For the explanation, see John ii. 19-22. Verse 41.—Likewise. "In like manner," "similarly." The chief priests. Ex-high-priests, probably. Some of these, with scribes and elders, had condescended to mingle with the crowd of spectators. Verse 42.—Two separate gibes. Now. There is some slight emphasis on this word. Believe him. The more approved text reads, "believed on him." Verse 43.—Quoted in derision from Psa. xxii. (a Messianic Psalm), verse 8. If he will have him. To outward seeming, it was indeed a strange contrast to the scene of the Jordan, when God, speaking from heaven, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Verse 44.—Cast the same in his teeth. "Reproached him with the same thing." Matthew does not relate the repentance that occurred in the case of one of the robbers. This one, perhaps, joined at first with his fellow in reviling Jesus. Verse 45.—The sixth hour, noon. The ninth hour would be three in the afternoon. All the land. It would certainly seem to cover the whole land of Judea—perhaps the entire hemisphere. This darkness is attested by three evangelists. The early Christian fathers appealed to profane testimony in corroboration. Verse 46.—After six hours of suffering, Jesus drew near the end. With a loud voice. The strength of the sufferer's voice implied a physical nature not yet exhausted with pain. The words uttered in this vehement outcry, were those of the first verse of Psa. xxii.

This Psalm may have been thus quoted aloud by the Lord, in order for the sake of the people, to draw their attention to a great prophecy of a suffering Messiah and to connect that prophecy with its visible fulfillment before their eyes. Verse 47.—This man. An expression implying some contempt. Verse 48.—Jesus would, according to John, seem to have exclaimed, "I thirst," before. This (probably a second) offer of drink was, perhaps, dictated by a motive of compassion. Vinegar. The sour wine, used as a customary beverage by the Roman soldiers. Reed. Probably a stalk of hyssop. Jesus accepts this offer of assuagement to his thirst. Verse 49.—The rest said. While the offer of drink was being made. Verse 50.—With a loud voice. This repeated phrase shows that at the very point of dissolution Jesus had a great remainder of physical strength. He did not die from exhaustion. He died voluntarily. The word "ghost" is old English for "spirit." Jesus died of his own accord. There is no sufficient cause furnished in the crucifixion itself for so speedy a dissolution. The malice of his enemies had expended itself. There was nothing further that could be done by them to carry out their determination to take his life. He was stripped and publicly executed, and that as one of the vilest of malefactors. The sacrifice was now complete and he was offered up a victim of men's vilest passions; and he then gave his consent and died.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class. The story of the lesson itself may be told in five parts, one for each finger. Where, Way, Wanders, Words, Why. Where.—Picture the procession, as it wended its way through the city, out of the gate, to the place called Calvary. Way.—Draw the cross, and tell of its being a punishment for the worst sinners; so the shame, as well as the pain, was great. The two thieves were examples of the class so punished. Illustrate by boy punished in school for another's fault, and some of the worst boys in school were stood by him, so that he was counted one of them. Words.—Under this head may be given the writing over the cross, and mockings of people, priests, and thieves, and then the words of Jesus himself: "My God," etc. Wanders.—Tell of the darkness, as if the sun hid his face in grief, the earthquake, the opening graves, etc. Why.—If a boy in school who, though he had done no wrong, offered to be whipped instead of the bad boy who had broken several rules, would it then be right to punish the other for the same fault? Tell of the old punishment of drinking a cup of poison, when men were sentenced to die. Now, suppose we all had a cup of poison in our hand to drink, and Jesus comes and takes each cup, and drinks it himself. The Bible says, "He tasted death for every man."—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Answer to Bible Enigma. No. 73. B unyan. A lphabet (or A). B abylon. Y outh. L ove. O g. N icodemus. F aith. A esop. L azarus. L ight. E ve. N ero. BABYLON IS FALLEN. ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS. 50. A man does not live as long as his widow. 51. The vowel E. Persevere ye perfect men. Ever keep these precepts ten. 52. The words of four anagrams. 1. Noticeable. 2. Epigrammatic. 3. Requisite. 4. Ragamuffin. Transliteration. A NEW PUZZLE WITH WORDS. Students at the Institute of Technology have designed a rival to the gem puzzle, which is beginning to excite considerable interest about town. Given two words of an equal number of letters, the problem is to change one to the other by altering one letter at a time so as to make each a legitimate English word, continuing the alterations until the desired result is obtained. The conditions are that, Only one letter shall be altered to form each new word; and that None but words which can be found in English dictionaries shall be used. Here are some examples of the changes: East to West—East, vast, vest, West. Boot to Shoe—Boot, soot, shot, Shoe. Dog to Cat—Dog, dig, fig, fit, fat, Cat. Milk to Hash—Milk, mile, male, mate, hate, hath, Hash. Road to Rail—Road, rood, root, coot, coat, coal, coil, toil, tail, Rail. Soup to Fish—Soup, soul, soil, foil, fowl, fool, foot, coot, cost, cast, fast, fist, Fish. The game is becoming quite popular in railway offices, as well as family circles, and seems to furnish instruction with amusement.—Boston paper.

Select Serial. Florence Walton, OR, A Question of Duty. BY MAY F. MCKEAN. CHAPTER XIV.—THE SUNDAY EXCURSION. But Florence was not infallible; much as she enjoyed communion with her Saviour, rare as was the Christian privilege to which she had attained, verily, "the spirit is willing, though the flesh be weak." Even Paul, who could write to the church at Corinth, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me," confessed that sin is so inherent in our nature that "what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

It was a lovely Sunday afternoon late in October. Florence was walking slowly homeward from Sunday-school, enjoying the rich sunny stillness of the day, when she was joined by Dr. Ronselle, who more frequently than ever of late found it convenient to be returning from some "professional call," real or fancied, just in time to accompany her in her walks, be they from day or Sunday-school. As they neared the house they perceived Ethel and Clifford Walraven, with Mr. and Mrs. Davidson, on the porch, evidently waiting their coming. "How slowly you have been walking! You and the doctor must have enjoyed your walk immensely this beautiful afternoon," said Maud in a tone of light raillery. "Yes, we've been waiting for you ever so long. Is it not beautiful out to-day?" asked Ethel cautiously as she drew another camp chair close to her own. "Waiting for me?" asked Florence in surprise. "What for, pray?" "Just listen to the child," cried Ethel as she threw one arm carelessly around the little figure, drawing her closer to herself. "She can't imagine that we all love her and would dearly like to enjoy a few hours of the society she so studiously deprives us of.—Besides, little cousin we thought you would like a ride with us in this lovely sunshine you seem to enjoy it much; but—"

"There are no 'buts' in the case; we are all of us perfectly aware to-day is Sunday," interrupted Clifford impatiently. "Yes," answered Florence, "it is God's day."

CURIOUS QUESTIONS. 54. Make a triangle of words from one word of six letters, meaning out of the way; which word-behead five times. 55. How many people are mentioned in Scripture as having been let down through a window to escape from their enemies.

Very true, cousin; and God made this beautiful sunshine for us to enjoy," answered Ethel quickly. "Therefore, why not enjoy it with us?" asked Mr. Davidson. "I cannot think it would be right for me to do so," Florence answered, though slowly, for she did not wish to dictate to others whose conscience offered no resistance. "Miss Florence, since, as you say, God made this beautiful day for us to enjoy, would you consider that you do him more honor by shutting yourself away from its beauties to read his word than if you shared his bounty under yonder trees, using Nature as your text-book, and studying his works as you receive them fresh from his hand?" asked Dr. Ronselle. "By no means, if there my thoughts wandered from nature up to Nature's God," answered Florence. "It is as I thought," responded the doctor. "Then why not join us in our drive, when we all wish it so much? You will then get a more comprehensive view of this same text-book; as Cowper has it: 'Enchanting Nature, in whose form And lineament divine I trace a Hand That errs not.'"

Florence did not answer immediately, but sat with eyes downcast, deeply thinking. After all, could there be so much harm in a Sunday drive? Strange as it seemed, whenever Dr. Ronselle began to argue any question of right or wrong he made things to appear in an entirely different light—a light before which her own views looked narrow and harsh. Was she, then, acting selfishly in depriving her friends of so much of her society? Could she not, after all, serve God as well in one place as another? "When you have finished that brown study pray consider we are waiting for your answer," said Ethel, with as much of impatience as she dared to show. Florence looked up confusedly from one to another of the group; all were regarding her fixedly, awaiting her answer. She flushed deeply—perhaps at finding herself the centre of their thoughts, perhaps at the intensity of one gaze—and asked with a little sigh, "What route do you propose to take, Cousin Ethel? or," she added, "had you determined upon none yet?"

The question was evidently not a welcome one to Ethel. However, anxious to follow up the advantage she perceived had already been gained, she resolutely kept the annoyance to herself, but it would never do to tell her cousin just where they expected to go; that would crush their hopes at once; so she answered gayly, "Yes, we had thought of one, but we have hardly time now to stop to discuss it. We should have been on our way an hour ago but that we were so anxious that you should go with us, and we knew it would be of no use trying to get you to forego the pleasures of that stupid Sunday-school for one day." So run up stairs now, dispose of your books, and get a shawl; it will be cooler riding than walking."

Florence went slowly up to her room to do as she was bid—more because she was bid than that she entered into the spirit of the excursion with the least particle of pleasurable anticipation. She had hardly yet satisfied her conscience that she was doing quite right, but when a moment later, glancing from the window, she saw Aunt Markwell's comfortable carriage with its two handsome black horses, their fine necks proudly arched, pawing the ground impatient to start, and just behind Mr. Davidson's stylish "falling top." She caught up her shawl and hurried down the stairs. Aunt Grace joined them just as she reached the front door. "Going to take a ride? That is right; and be sure, girls, you don't bring Florence back until she gets more color than this in her cheeks;" and she playfully pinched one as she spoke. One thing, be it said just here, to Dr. Ronselle's credit. He was not aware that he was helping to carry forward any preconceived plan in urging her to ride with them on the Lord's Day, although such really was the case. Ethel had learned by her last experience that he would make a more effectual worker could his sympathies be unconsciously enlisted than if he were consulted by forehand.

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT. Bible Enigmas. No. 74. While death is sin's just due, Bring God's free gift to view. 1. Find your first mother's name; 2. An evil none can tame; 3. The garden God once planted; 4. A gift to all men granted; 5. The place where Jesus dwelt; 6. Who first death's anguish felt; 7. The beast which Samson slew; 8. Where he on a thousand flew; 9. A son his father offered; 10. The vengeance Sodom suffered; 11. A man who never died. Then all their names divide; And what th' initials show May our young readers know!