

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—NOVEMBER 19, 1882.

JESUS MOCKED AND CRUCIFIED.

Mark xv. 16-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 22-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"They pierced my hands and my feet."—Psalm xxii. 16.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Mark xv. 16-26.

T. Pilate's Last Effort, John xix. 4-16.

W. Jesus Going to Calvary, Luke xxiii. 26-38.

T. Jesus Bearing His Cross, John xix. 16-24.

F. Going Without the Camp, Heb. xiii. 8-21.

S. Glorifying in the Cross, Gal. chap. vi.

S. Christ Crucified, the Power of God, 1 Cor. i. 20-31.

JESUS MOCKED AND CRUCIFIED.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Mockery, Vss. 16-20.

II. The Crucifixion, Vss. 20-25.

III. The Accusation, V. 26.

QUESTIONS.—Review last four Lessons.

What two previous mockings had Jesus undergone? (Mark xiv. 65; Luke xxiii. 11.)

What terrible infliction? (V. 15.)

In what condition must he now have been?—What did Pilate try to do after the mockery?

Vss. 16-20.—Where did the guards take Jesus? How did the idea of his being a king strike them? How did they mock Jesus? How did he bear it? What prophecies were fulfilled?

Vss. 20-25.—When the mockery was over, what was done? Who had charge of the execution? Who bore the cross? What sign of failing strength in Jesus? What does Golgotha mean? What was a cross?—How was the sufferer fastened to it? At what time of day was Jesus crucified? What was offered him? Why did Jesus refuse? What suggestion here as to alcoholic drinks? What command and warning does Paul give? (Eph. v. 18; 1 Cor. vi. 10.)

What was done with the garments of Jesus? What prophecies fulfilled in these things? What prayer did Jesus offer when crucified? (Luke xxiii. 34.)

Vs. 26.—What was placed on the cross? Why? In what language? What did Pilate mean? What solemn significance in this inscription?

SPECIAL SUBJECTS.—Roman soldiers; their character. The three mockings. Simon the Cyrenian. Location of Calvary. The process of crucifixion: its extreme cruelty. The "superscription." "Glorifying in the cross."

NOTES.—I. The Mockery, (Vss. 16-20).

Vs. 16.—The soldiers. Jesus was now delivered into Gentile and military hands to be crucified. But, before executing this sentence, the soldiers who had him in charge, led him away into the hall, or open court of the procurator's mansion house, to make sport of his claims upon their own account. Thither he went with bleeding back, and painful steps, to be an object of mockery for the whole band. The Roman band, or cohort, was, strictly speaking, the tenth part of a legion; but, like our regiments and companies, the number of soldiers in it had a wide variation. "These brutal men, accustomed to gladiatorial shows, and other savageries, wanted to get some sport out of their Hebrew prisoner."—Morton. Preface.

The name given to the whole of the Governor's residence, but here put for a part, or for this inner court spoken of above.

Vs. 17, 18.—Clothed him with purple. Herod Antipas had mocked him in like manner (Luke xxiii. 11), and it is not strange that the common soldiers should follow a ruler's bad example. Morton suggests that this "purple" may have been some cast-off robe of Herod. Or, it may have been a discarded robe of state out of the praetorian wardrobe. As purple was the royal color, this was in derision of his claims to be a king. Platted a crown of thorns. Authorities say that these thorns were, most likely, "twigs of the commonest thorn-bush in Palestine, growing everywhere on waste ground, and ready at hand. The branches are long, slender, and very thorny, though the thorns are far apart; so that it was well suited to the purpose of the Roman soldiers." The sharp spines were calculated to give pain, as the crown was placed about his head. It is also said that the leaves of this plant resemble those of the ivy, with which emperors and generals were crowned. Thus, what appeared to be a victor's wreath, but was a source of suffering, was, in mockery, put upon him. Began to salute him. Mark gives their form of salutation—Hail, King of the Jews. The word rendered hail, meaning, literally, rejoice, was the common form of salutation. The application to him of the title, King of the Jews, doubtless seemed to them very droll.

Vs. 19, 20.—They smote him on the head with a reed. This reed had been put into his right hand as a mock

tre, (Matt. xxvii. 29). Now they snatched it from him, and, in the spirit of cruelty, struck the crown of thorns, driving it down upon his brow. Spit upon him. This indignity had been cast upon him by members of the great council of the Jews, (xiv. 65); why should a brutal and ignorant soldiery hesitate? The tense of the verb implies repetitions of the act. Bowing the knees, etc. All in the same spirit of mockery. Having finished what seemed to them excellent sport, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. He was led out of the city; he must suffer "without the gates," (Heb. xiii. 12), as one bearing the "sins of the world." See Lev. xvi. 27.

II. The Crucifixion, (Vss. 21-26.)

Vs. 21.—A last effort of Pilate to rescue him whom he had unjustly condemned, is recorded in John xiv. 4, 5. It took place while the soldiers were engaged in their mockery of Jesus. But this having failed, the crucifixion scene ensues. The victim generally bore the instrument of torture to the place of execution; but Jesus, in his weakened condition, exhausted by his agony in the garden, and by the scourging and abuse, may have fainted under the burden of the cross. The soldiers, on duty, had authority to press into service, for a special service, either horses or men. They, therefore, compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, . . . to bear his cross. This Simon is distinguished from the numerous Simons of that day, both by designating his city, Cyrene, located in North Africa, and by giving the names of the sons, Alexander and Rufus, who were, doubtless, well known among Christians, at the time when Mark wrote. They may have been devoted and conspicuous disciples; and this impression of the father into service, may have brought salvation to his whole household. Who passed by, coming out of the country. The choice seems to have been a random one. Simon was, likely, on his way from his home to Jerusalem, to attend the Passover; and chanced to be passing that point at that moment. It does not appear that he was unwilling to save the sufferer in this way.

Vss. 22, 23.—Golgotha. A Hebrew word. Some suppose it to have been the place of execution, and that the name had reference to that fact. Luke, writing for the Gentiles, calls it Cranion, the Greek for skull; and our translators have given us the Latin form, Calvaria, or Calvary, (Luke-xxiii. 33). It was outside, yet near, the city, (John xix. 20); but the place cannot now be identified. Wine mingled with myrrh. Drugged wine, intended to produce a stupefying effect. Meant in kindness and was the offering, perhaps, of some benevolent bystander. Received it not. Matthew mentions that he tasted it, but, discerning what it was, "would not drink." He would not avoid one pang, nor allow his mind to be obscured when engaged in the great work of sin's expiation.

Vs. 24, 25.—Parted his garments. He who made the world had no property but his garments to leave behind him, as he passed away. These, the four soldiers deputed to watch the crucified—a quaternion—divided into four portions, one for each soldier; but the seamless upper robe could not be divided without rendering it useless; and for it they cast lots with their dice—thus, unconsciously, fulfilling prophecy, (Ps. xxii. 18). The third hour. Nine o'clock in the morning. But John says, sixth hour, (xix. 14). Many theories of reconciliation have been advanced. The most probable one seems to be that John, writing in Asia Minor, used the Roman official mode of reckoning, from midnight to midnight, instead of the Jewish, from sunset to sunset. This would make John's sixth hour six o'clock in the morning. But he mentions that hour, not as the time of crucifixion, but of an event which preceded the crucifixion. There is some latitude, also, in his expression, "about the sixth hour."

Vs. 26.—Superscription. It was customary to put over the head of the crucified a placard, stating the crime for which he suffered. Pilate had the inscription on the cross of Jesus written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. In Hebrew, the language of the Jews; in Greek, the language of the foreign population; in Latin, the language of Roman power. Though varying in expression, the sentiment in each was the same. The King of the Jews. This was the crime of which Jesus was accused.—There was a grim satisfaction in Pilate's mind, in making public declaration on the cross of Jesus, that it was a crime, in the estimation of the chief priests, and scribes, and elders, to seek to have a Jewish king. The chief priests desired him to charge the inscription to, "He said I am King of the Jews"; but he silenced them with the

answer: "What I have written, I have written," (John xix. 21, 22).

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

It has been well said: "As the death of Jesus was designed to atone for all guilt, nearly all guilt combined to accomplish it. Covetousness betrayed him; perjury bore false witness against him; envy delivered him up; cruelty scourged and crowned him with thorns; popular fickleness chose Barabbas, and rejected him; and coarse brutality buffeted and mocked him."

Simon won a great fame by following Jesus with the cross. His name will go down to the latest age, as recorded in the Word of God. And they that bear the cross now, and thus follow the Redeemer, will find their names recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

He who bequeathed the greatest of all blessings to men, had but the garments which he wore to leave behind him at his death.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Describe the way in which the soldiers treated Jesus; pretending to do him honor as a king. Dwell on the mocking words, the bended knees, the cruel blows, the dress, the make believe scepter, and the crown of thorns. Yet he bore it all so patiently.

Describe him bearing his cross on his poor, wounded, bleeding back, till even these men saw that he could carry it no longer, and seized a stranger from the crowd, to carry it the rest of the way. Even his dress was rudely torn from him; the rough soldiers joking or quarreling as to who should have each piece, dividing it among themselves, excepting his outer dress, which, as it had no seam in it, seemed a pity to cut. So they cast lots for that.

He laid his hands on blind eyes, and they were opened; on deaf ears, and they heard; he held out his hand to sinking Peter, who, grasping it, was held up safely. His hands were laid in blessing on the heads of little ones.

Each of his hands was seized by a rough soldier, and a nail driven through the tenderest part. His two feet, probably placed one upon another, were pierced by a third nail. Jesus, instead of crying out at his own great pain, cried to his Father—for what? To punish his enemies? No; to forgive them! We can hardly think of such wonderful love.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. From Germany.

Berlin, Oct. 16, 1882.

Four German expeditions have left Hamburg for America to observe the transit of Venus on December 6th, being destined to different points of view on the Northern and Southern Continents. Each party consists of two proved astronomers, and a student assistant. The points of observation allotted to the Germans are in Connecticut, South Carolina, Costa Rica, and the Straits of Magellan. The observers will remain at their appointed stations several months, and those at Punta Arenas will be attended and assisted by the Imperial gunboat Albatross.

Emigration to America from the Province of Pomerania is assuming unprecedentedly large proportions. Within the past three weeks more than 5,000 persons left Stettin, both by land and water, for Hamburg and Bremen. The last direct steamer from Stettin to New York took 600 emigrants. Nearly 200 emigrants are passing daily through Stettin en route for trans-Atlantic ports, many of whom are already furnished with passage-tickets sent them by friends and relatives in America.

Emperor William would make a capital hand at a trade. Some English visitors went to Babelsberg the other day, and were, as usual, shown over the grounds and castle by the daughter of the castellan, whom many of the readers may remember. Our party saw little to admire, and expressed their disappointment rather freely, much to the annoyance of their guide. The only thing that struck paternalism was the collection of walking sticks in the Emperor's study, most of which are presents from foresters, with the exception of a very knotty one, his favorite, which the Emperor himself cut more than forty years ago, and which he likes to take on his promenades in the park. On leaving the castle our Englishman offered the girl a roll of gold pieces for this identical stick, an offer which was at first politely and then curtly declined; the more curtly, in fact, the higher the offer rose. The party left. The incident was reported next day to the aide-de-camp on duty, who, in turn, told the Emperor of

it. The Emperor laughed heartily, and said, "What a pity it is I was not there. I should gladly have sold the stick and given the money to the Invalid Fund."

Emperor William has finally given his consent to another Cologne Cathedral lottery during 1882-83 being started, on condition that the money thus raised shall be applied to the fund created for the purchase of the houses at present encumbering Cathedral Square. These houses are to be demolished in order to afford free open space to worthy set off the grandest monument of German architecture.

AUGUST.

For the Christian Messenger. The Drift to Infidelity.

A remark made by one of the ministers of the Western Association has fixed itself upon my mind with force, and clamors for criticism. It is this: "The drift to infidelity demands a cultured ministry." We may say, in the outset, after all it is only a drift. And we know that drifts amount to little; of course a little troublesome and somewhat obstructive, but still unsettled and changing whether of sawdust, sand, or snow. So then the term chosen by the speaker as descriptive of the trend infidelity was not inappropriate after all.

But is it true as a statement of an existing evil to be met as he suggested? Is the drift of this age to infidelity? Does the current of modern thought flow in that direction? Do the gulf currents of intellectual habit trend thither? Is it true that Christianity whirls in the yessing eddies of the river, while infidelity flows on in the central current? Has it come to this, that after all the tears, toil, and struggles in the bygone that the tide turns hell-ward? That after all the soul-upheavals of the past that the continents and islands of holy thought and redemptive truth are being submerged beneath the on-rolling tide of skepticism? Are we to have as in the natural, so in the moral atmosphere "drift period," and a world deluged with the polluted waters of infidelity; unless an educated ministry dam up the tides of error, or breast the billows of infidelic speculation? Is the drift of the present age to infidelity or not? We think not. But assume that it is,—what then? An uneducated man over-awed by the unnatural aspect of the present comet, and on being informed of its incredible velocity, and of its immense size, may imagine that in its majestic sweep it will hurl the stars from their sockets, and jostle the earth from its throne, and augment the fires of the sun, if it should dip into it. But we know better than that, and what he regards with so much fear, we look upon with perfect indifference. It is only a drift of vapor after all, and can do no real harm even if it act a little eccentric.

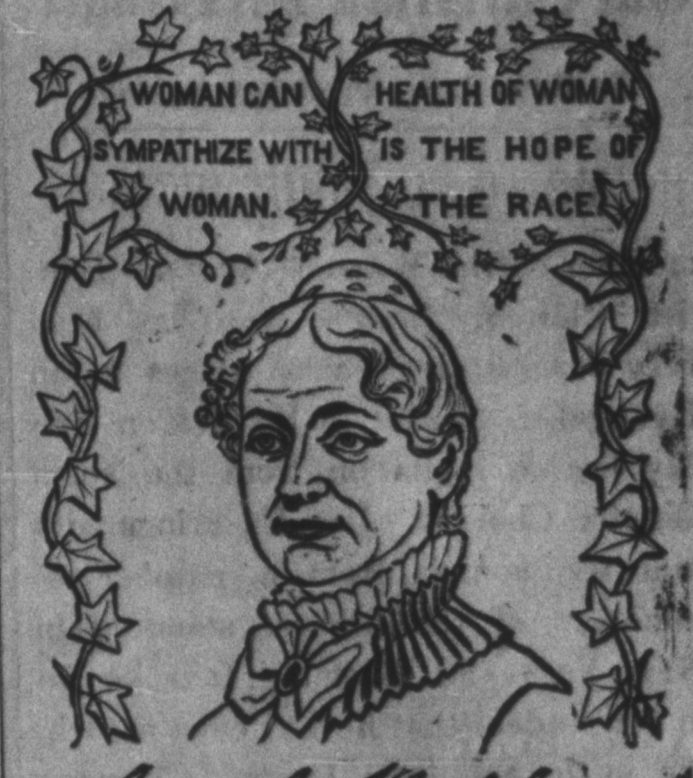
One who understands little of the laws which govern our solar system, and yet learns of the terrible velocity of our earth in its swing around in the year, may fear that such speed must carry it away from the sun, to wander a lost world in the darkness of immensity; but the philosopher knows better than this, and, although the fact is calculated to startle the mind, the thought of such a catastrophe is only a drift from the truth. The laws remain as ever. The sun still holds his grip upon our careering earth. And so infidelic thought, which so much startles some very good people, has its eccentric orbits, dazles and dazes for a moment, whirls grandly among the suns of truth, but none are destroyed, and when the vapory, gaseous substance is gone away into the darkness illimitable the firmament grows brighter than ever. It was only a drift of vapor. The human mind may have its periods of wandering and becoming prodigal and wasting its substance in riotous thinking, but in its more sensible moods, when it comes to itself, it goes home to its father again and says, "Father, I have sinned," and there's joy in heaven over restored sanity. All of these so much dreaded tidal waves of skeptical thought sweep about the throne of God, and can do no other harm than startle a few timid people. As the sun grips the earth, so God and truth and grace hold man to themselves by means of the sure law of moral gravity. The drift of the present age, as of every other age, will have its rush and roar and sweep, but it will pour its tide at last into the sea immortal. We might, however, show that the assumption made is not true, viz., "That the drift is toward infidelity." Proofs are at hand ocular, cartular, and historical. But, for argument's sake, let us assume the statement as true; that men are breaking faith with their Divine Father; that reason and pride are inflated and arrogant, are going away from home prodigal; that mariners immortal are cutting cables, and, defiant of log, lead, and compass, and drifting whether the sweep of wind and roll of

wave and trend of current will carry them. Dropping a figure and speaking plainly, if it be true that the drift of the age is to infidelity, how is this to be met? The answer is at hand: By a cultured ministry. It is to be an intellectual "set to," in which encounter the best cultured gets the best of the quarrel, a kind of duel between educated gladiators, and he of the two who holds the best sword and exhibits the most skill is to come off victor. This might be true if the drift were mental merely and not moral actually, if it were only in the head. If the derangement were simply of the head, agreeable to mental law to show a man his mistake, or to convince him of his error, is to secure renouncement of his theories proportionate to the clearness with which you have shown him the truth. If the minister were doing the work of the schoolmaster, correcting mistakes and leading into higher mental facts, then the better educated the more successful—other things equal—will he become. If his work were the work of the scientist, to pioneer thought, unravel natural phenomena, and unseat false scientific dogmas, then the more bravely cultured the better equipped for his work. But the drift is not so much in the head as in the heart, not mental primarily so much as moral, not head disorder but "heart disease." The drift to infidelity does not start from the mental springs or flow along through intellectual channels, but it has its secret springs in man's moral nature, and carries its polluted tides into his mental nature. We cannot afford to overlook the indictment of one who understood these relations, and spoke with certainty "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and "Out of the heart proceedeth fornications, lies, adulteries," etc.; and the statement of David, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" and the prophet's verdict concerning man's turpitude, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked."

If the foregoing be true—on the principle that remedies must be adapted to the conditions and location of the disease—then to arrest this drift moral culture more than intellectual is the demand of the age. As a rule the ministry has culture enough. Some of it is cultured to death, so cut and polished are some of these passionless statues that no rough angles appear which might scratch or wound, and hence arouse the dead whom they touch by their influence. The ministry wants, and wants sorely, and the drift to infidelity demands, and demands imperatively, larger heart culture, greater moral power. More to do with God! Intellectual force or mental culture has its province, and holds its place in the methods and means of arresting the evil under consideration, but more than this is needed. That is demanded for which the highest and broadest culture is no substitute. That is—MORAL POWER. What means David when he cries: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways." He does not say, "Lord, send me to a Theological Seminary, and support me there until I graduate; help me to understand the dead tongues, and teach me elocution. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways." No! He asks for moral power. He knows this is the force he needs by which even "fools" can be converted. And whence the force that Peter wielded on the day of Pentecost?—Had he just graduated "in artium," or was he fresh from the presence of stern theological wisecracs? Did he stand before them blushing under the honors of a D. D. degree? No! He had just come from a throne of grace; from sitting at the feet of Jesus; filled with the Holy Ghost; and hence his power over the infidelic drift of that day and that hour. And is Paul an exception? Here is a man of massive mind, and thorough culture. A man accustomed to the niceties of logical thought, and skilled in the subtleties of long drawn arguments. Was it by his intellectual force he succeeded so well? Doubtless it was no hindrance, but it was not from this armory he drew the weapons by which he cleaved a highway to achievement. It is here we discover the secret of his power, "For me to live is Christ."—"What things were gain to me I count as loss that I might win Christ." "I press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling." "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ."

Moral power, heart culture, is the demand of the age. More likeness to Christ. Closer and oftener communion with God is the great need, and suggests the common sin of the ministry—lack of this, and if the drift to infidelity is to be arrested, assuming such to be the case, it will be when, when the ministry and the laity insulate themselves more completely from the world, and become more fully charged with the electrical currents of grace divine, that flow out to sinful humanity from the throne of God. The drift to infidelity demands a cultured Christianity!

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