



LESSON XI.—MARCH 17.

Jesus and Pilate

Luke xxiii., 13-26. Memory verses, 20-24.
Read John xviii., 28; xix., 16; Luke
xxiii., 1-25; Mark xv., 1-20.

Golden Text.

'I find no fault in this man.'—Luke xxiii.,
4.

The Bible Lesson.

13. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

19. (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spoke again to them.

21. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

22. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

Suggestions.

Judas Iscariot the traitor had severed his connection with Jesus and his disciples, his act of unparalleled treachery proved that he had never really been joined to them in heart. If he had at all understood the heart of Jesus, if he had cared anything about his love, if he had not been blinded by jealousy and greed, he might, even at that late hour of the Passover supper, have fully repented and been freely forgiven. Our Lord, though knowing the treachery of Judas's heart and purpose, gave him every token of love and even warned him openly against that which he was about to do. But there is no record of repentance on Judas's part, after the fatal deed was done. He was filled with remorse and went out and hanged himself in the field which had been bought with the price of blood. (Acts 1, 16-18; Matt. xxvii., 3-10; Zech. xi., 12, 13.)

But what of the other disciples? Did they not all forsake Jesus at the hour of the betrayal in Gethsemane? Ah, but their forsaking was a very different matter, Judas went out because his heart led him, the disciples fled from physical fear; they were frightened and they ran away, but their hearts were loyal still. They would follow Jesus again when they got over their fright, and after Pentecost they would rejoice to suffer every sort of persecution and even death for his sake.

In the meantime Peter followed his Master at a distance and John who had gained an entrance to the high priest's palace, where Jesus was being tried, got the door-keeper to let Peter in, too. Peter, cold and weary, brooding over the sad events of the past few hours, sat down by the fire. Suddenly a maid servant, looking at him carefully, announced that he was one of the disciples. With hurried impatience he denied the fact. But another, and yet another, accused him, and as he was denying for the third time, the cock crew. Near the

judgment seat, probably in the same hall, our Lord was standing and at this moment he turned to look upon Peter, with what infinite compassion and love only those who have stood in Peter's place and felt that look can know. Peter went out and wept bitterly, but it was not by those tears that his guilt was washed away, but by the precious blood which was shed that very day upon the Cross of Calvary.

The Sanhedrim, having condemned Jesus Christ to death, could do nothing farther until the case was presented to the Roman Governor, for only he could officially pronounce the death sentence. So, in the morning, about six o'clock, the priests and scribes and elders and common people hurried their prisoner over to the Pretorium and called upon Pontius Pilate to pass the death sentence on their King. Pilate declared that he could find no fault in this Man, and sought to get rid of his responsibility by sending him to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was visiting Jerusalem at that time. Herod only mocked at Jesus and sent him back to Pilate clothed in a gorgeous robe. Pilate, afraid to condemn the righteous Man, yet not daring to offend the Jewish leaders by instantly setting the prisoner free, told the chief priests that as he could find no fault with Jesus, he would order him to be chastised and released. It was the custom to release one prisoner always at the feast time. Pilate wished to release Jesus, but the people, goaded on by the priests, kept shouting out that they did not want Jesus released, he must be crucified, they wanted Barabbas, a murderer, released, and they got their way. Pilate weakly assented to the voice of the multitude and condemned the Son of God to the Cross.

O break, O break, hard heart of mine:
Thy weak self-love and guilty pride,
His Pilate and His Judas were;—
Jesus, my Lord, is crucified.

C. E. Topic.

Sun., Mar. 17.—Topic—Christ our High Priest.—Heb. vii., 24-28.

Junior C. E. Topic.

NO DRUNKARDS IN HEAVEN.

Mon., Mar. 11.—Liquor-drinking ruins the home.—Deut. xxi., 20.

Tues., Mar. 12.—Causes innocence to suffer.—Rom. xiv., 21.

Wed., Mar. 13.—The drunkard is against God.—Rom. viii., 7.

Thu., Mar. 14.—Wrong doing is punished.—I. Cor. iii., 17.

Fri., Mar. 15.—Evil cannot go to God.—Rev. xxi., 27.

Sat., Mar. 16.—Heaven is God's home.—John xiv., 2.

Sun., Mar. 17.—Topic—Why drunkards cannot enter heaven.—I. Cor. vi., 9, 10.

Free Church Catechism.

33. Q.—What is the Holy Catholic Church?

A.—It is that holy society of believers in Christ Jesus which he founded, of which he is the only head, and in which he dwells by his Spirit; so that, though made up of many communions, organized in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in him.

34. Q.—For what ends did our Lord found his Church?

A.—He united his people into this visible brotherhood for the worship of God and the ministry of the Word and the sacraments; for mutual edification, the administration of discipline and the advancement of his kingdom.

'One great defect in our boy theology has often since those days, been subject of thought. Some of the teachers used to say to us, 'Now you must all be good little boys, and then when you die you will go to heaven.' We were taught to rely on our own good works, so we were in danger of being made into as arrant a lot of little Pharisees as ever trusted to their own righteousness. This practice still abounds all over the land. The pupils go to church, and the pastor pounds away about eternal judgment, but what have "good little boys" to be afraid of in the way of judgment? They should have been told they were sinners—little boy-sinners, and that they should repent and do works meet for repentance even if they were little boys.'—Dr. Ashmore.



Rotted Off by Beer.

This is not a temperance treatise, but it has a bit of fact in it that the total abstainer may show to the beer drinker, whenever occasion offers, says the New York 'Mail and Express.'

The attention of the New York hospital surgeons has been called to the big number of bar-tenders that have lost several fingers of both hands within the past few years. The first case was that of an employee of a Bowery concert hall. Three of his fingers of his right hand and two of his left were rotted away when he called at Bellevue one day and begged the doctors to explain the reason. He said that his duty was to draw beer for the thousands who visited the garden nightly. The young man was in perfect health otherwise, and it took the young doctors quite a time to arrive at any conclusion. But they did finally, and it nearly took the beerman's breath away when they did.

'Your fingers have been rotted off,' they said, 'by the beer which you have handled.'

Other cases of a similar nature came rapidly after this one, and to-day, the physicians estimate, there is an army of employees of saloons whose fingers are being ruined by the same cause. The acid and resin in beer are said to be responsible.

The head bartender of a well-known down-town saloon says he knows a number of cases where beer-drawers have, in addition to losing several fingers of both hands, lost the use of both members.

'Beer will rot iron, I believe,' he added, 'I know, and every bartender knows, that it is impossible to keep a good pair of shoes behind the bar. Beer will rot leather as rapidly almost as acid will eat into iron. If I were a temperance orator, I'd ask what must beer do to men's stomachs, if it eats away men's fingers and their shoe leather? I'm here to sell it, but I won't drink it—not much.'—Western Christian Advocate.

Smoking Among Boys.

The evil of tobacco-smoking by boys is one that is engaging increasingly the attention of those engaged in practical education. Teachers speak out with no uncertain sound as to the disastrous consequences to their general morals, their physical health, and their powers as students, which follow indulgence in this habit by boys. Whatever may be said of smoking by men, and we incline to the belief that very little can be said in its favor, there is no question whatever as to the dire effects of the use of tobacco upon growing boys. And it is to be noted that, however much a man may be himself addicted to indulgence in the habit, he is sternly opposed to the use of tobacco by his children. All the same, the public generally is not sufficiently alive to the importance of checking an evil which is unfortunately becoming more and more prevalent.

The headmaster of a boys' school of much experience, writes:—'In making enquiries as to the suitability of boys for certain situations we have often been asked, "Does he smoke?" The assumption that suggests the question is, of course, that smoking is bad for boys, and, therefore, bad for their employers. Only recently we had to fill in a character form, in which this question had a prominent place.'

The subject is being dealt with very seriously by the educational magazines on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus the 'English Educational Review' says: 'This practice has greatly increased of recent years, and medical evidence seems clearly to prove that no habit is more injurious to young people than this; in fact, without prejudging the question of smoking among adults, we can safely say, that for the young, the practice is an unmixed evil. It is a source of heart disorders, nervous disorders, stunted growth, and mental laziness and incompetence. Juvenile smokers can generally