



LESSON IX.—MAY 28.

Christ Before Pilate.

John xviii., 28-40. Memory verses, 38-40. Compare Matt. xxvii., 11-26; Mark xv., 1-20; Luke xxiii., 1-25.

Golden Text.

'I find no fault in him.'—John xix., 4.

Home Readings.

M John xviii., 28-40. Christ before Pilate.
T. Luke xxiii., 1-12. Mocked by Herod.
W. Matt. xxvii., 15-25. Rejected of men.
T. John xix., 1-16. No fault.
F. Acts iv., 23-30. Powerful enemies.
S. Heb. xii., 1-6. Example of suffering.
B. Heb. v., 1-9. Perfect by suffering.

Lesson Story.

After the trial before the Sanhedrim, the chief priests and elders led Jesus from Cai-phas' palace in Jerusalem to the Pretorium, Pilate's hall of judgment in the same city.

It was very early in the morning of the preparation day before the festival Sabbath, and the Jews would not enter the hall of the Roman governor for fear of ceremonial defilement. They sent in their Prisoner bound with cords, and waited outside to accuse him to Pilate. The governor went out to ask what charge they had against Jesus; they answered, haughtily, that they would not have brought him to be judged if he were not a criminal. Then Pilate sneeringly bade them take away the Prisoner and judge him by their own law. But the Jews replied that they could not deal with him, as it was against the Roman law for the Jews to put any man to death. (Jesus had prophesied his death, Matt. xx., 18, 19; John xii., 32; and they were bound to fulfil his prophecy.)

The Jews then brought three charges against their Messiah. These charges were political, as the governor would listen to no other sort. They accused our Lord (Luke xxiii., 2) of perverting the nation, of prohibiting taxpaying and of calling himself the appointed king. These charges were utterly false in the way they meant Pilate to understand. Truly Christ was the King of Israel, but not in the worldly, political way that they pretended to fear.

Pilate was astonished at these charges against the meek and lowly Prisoner, and did not believe or take the trouble to investigate them. Going back into the judgment hall, he called Jesus to his trial, asking simply, as a matter of form, Art thou the King of the Jews? But it was our Lord's turn now to question, 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?' This was a most important question; if Pilate were asking from a Roman, political standpoint, Jesus must deny the charge. But if he were asking from the standpoint of a Jew and speaking of the Messianic kingdom, Jesus must acknowledge the title and stand by the consequences, for he is Lord of Lords, and Kings of Kings.

But Pilate rudely answered, 'Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?' Jesus answered, with calm dignity, 'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not of this world.' 'Art thou a king, then,' asked Pilate again.

Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.' The kingdom of Christ is vaster far than that of the proudest earthly monarch. The kingdom of truth has for subjects all who will hear the voice of Truth (John xiv., 6), and be led by the Spirit of Truth.

'What is truth?' demanded Pilate. Then, conscious of his own false, weak nature, he would not stay to hear the answer, but hastily leaving Jesus, he went out again to the Jews, acknowledging that he could find no fault in the Prisoner. Then the priests were more fierce, saying that Jesus had stirred up the people all over the country from Galilee to Jerusalem. When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he

at once sent him to Herod, the governor of Galilee, who happened to be staying at Jerusalem at that time. Herod was glad to see Jesus, hoping the Lord would perform some great miracle for him to see. But to all Herod's questionings, Jesus answered nothing, though the chief priests and scribes vehemently accused him. Then Herod and his men of war mocked the Saviour with cruel sneers, and robing him in purple sent him back to Pilate.

Then Pilate called the chief priests and scribes and again declared that he could find no fault in Jesus, and neither could Herod find any fault in him. Pilate then offered to chastise our Lord and let him go free, as one prisoner was always released at the time of the passover feast. 'Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?' But the priests stirred up the people to clamor for the crucifixion of the innocent Jesus, and for the release of a noted criminal, named Barabbas.

Lesson Hymn.

Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall,
Friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all;
Harken, what meaneth the sudden call—
'What will you do with Jesus?'

Will you evade Him as Pilate tried?
Or will you choose Him what e'er betide
Vainly you struggle from Him to hide—
'What will you do with Jesus?'

Will you, like Peter, your Lord deny?
Or will you scorn from His foes to fly?
Daring for Jesus to live or die—
'What will you do with Jesus?'

—A. B. S.

The Bible Class

'The King'—Matt. ii., 1, 2; xxi., 5; xxv., 34, 40; Luke xix., 37, 38; John i., 49; I. Tim. i., 17; vi., 13-15; Rev. xv., 3; xvii., 14; xix., 11-16.

'The Kingdom'—Matt. vi., 33; v., 3, 10, 19, 20; vii., 21; viii., 11; xiii., 11, 24; 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; xviii., 3, 4, 23-25; xix., 14, 23; xxii., 2; xxv., 1; John iii., 3, 5; Acts xxviii., 23, 31; Rom. xiv., 17; I. Cor. v., 20; Rev. xii., 10.

'The Truth'—John i., 14; iii., 21; iv., 23, 24; v., 33; viii., 32; xiv., 6, 17; xv., 26; xvi., 13; xvii., 17, 19; Matt. xxii., 16; Eph. iv., 24, 25.

Suggestions.

As Palestine was under the Roman control, the Jews had to refer all civil-legal matters to the Roman governor, they were forbidden by law to punish with death. The worst punishment was the Roman death by crucifixion, this they decided would be the best way to get rid of Jesus, the Son of God.

Pilate, the governor of Judea, was a cruel, cowardly tyrant, the Jews hated him, and he feared and hated the Jews. The priests thought that he would naturally be glad to put Jesus, the Jew, to death without asking any reason. But Pilate was willing to spare Jesus in order to spite the chief priests.

When they threatened to report him as hostile to Caesar, the Emperor, if he let the King of the Jews go free, he cowardly did their bidding, though he three times declared that he could find no fault in Jesus.

Pilate's wife sent word to him that she had been warned in a dream that he must not condemn this righteous Man. But the mob clamored for the crucifixion of their king, and Pilate weakly yielded. Taking water, he washed his hands before the multitude, saying that he would be innocent of the blood of Christ, and the people answered: 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' But water could not wash away Pilate's guilt. It was his duty to protect the prisoner in whom he could find no fault. Everlasting dishonor and contempt rests on his name because of his treatment of the Son of Man.

How are you treating the Son of Man, your Saviour?

Practical Points.

BY A. H. CAMERON.

The Jews were more afraid of ceremonial defilement than of bad morals. They strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel (verse 28).

The Jews were too haughty to answer Pilate's searching question. How can we answer it? (verses 29, 30).

The Gentiles as well as the Jews had a hand in the crucifixion of Jesus. Well may we regret sins, since they slew our best Friend (verses 31, 32).

The kingship of Jesus shines out bright and clear in the dialogue between Pilate and

Christ, but the governor does not see the sun as it gleams through the clouds (verse 37).

Pilate asked a practical question, but would not wait for an answer (verse 38).

Pilate wished to wriggle out of the box into which the Jews had placed him, but his wavering will was cowed by the voice of the rabble (verses 38-40).

Tiverton, Ont.

C. E. Topic.

May 28.—Established in heart. Rom. i., 11, 12; Pa. cxii., 1-10.

Junior C. E.

May 28.—What lessons can we learn from Paul's shipwreck? Acts xxvii., 9-44.

**The Catechism on Beer.**

(By Julia Colman, National Temperance Publication House.)

LESSON XV.—THE HISTORY OF BEER.

'The glass of beer prepares the palate for the glass of whiskey.'—Gustafsson.

Do we know the origin of beer?

There is no reliable account of its invention.

What is its earliest historical mention?

That Osiris, King of Egypt, introduced a drink made of barley 1960 before Christ.

What is the earliest mention of beer in Europe?

Tacitus and Pliny about the time of Christ speak of the Germans having a liquor made of barley or wheat, and fermented to a spirit.

Beer was probably introduced into England about this date by the Romans, and its use afterward increased by both the Danes and the Saxons, who successively came as conquerors.

How long was it the prevailing drink in England?

Till about 1700, when they took to drinking gin on a large scale, and since that time both gin and beer have been popular.

Old English history is full of references to beer and beer-drinking customs. When we come to the time of Queen Elizabeth, we find each serving-maid with the allowance of a gallon of ale for breakfast, and some of the poets professing to care neither for food or clothing, so they could have 'plenty of good ale and old.'

What greatly increased beer-drinking in England in 1830?

The Beer act, making it an easy matter for anybody to open a beer-house.

When was beer introduced into America.

In 1620, by the Puritans, who brought it with them in the 'Mayflower,' and thought they could not live without it.

Did they continue to use it?

Not to any great extent, for it was some years before they could raise grain enough for bread, and their own severe starvation starved out the beer.

For many years the settlers of New England lived mostly without intoxicating drinks—till Jamaica rum was introduced during the French and Indian war. Then slowly followed cider and whiskey, and, quite recently, the German beer. So America laid its foundations and largely developed without much beer.

When did its use begin to increase rapidly?

In 1850, when the use of lager-beer began to be pushed and cried up by the Germans.

Are Doctors to Blame?

A short time ago in a certain town (which shall be nameless, because the local circumstances are only referred to as an illustration) a number of ladies interested in the temperance cause sent a memorial to the medical men, asking them to refrain from ordering alcoholic liquors on the ground that such prescription might give rise to the formation of intemperate habits; they also pointed out that if alcohol were required it was quite possible to give it in the medicine. It appears that this action was much resented by at least some of the doctors, and a medical paper has lectured the ladies on