

the Jewish council without the necessary two witnesses, simply upon his own word, and Pilate had bidden the chief priests, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." Yet they had persisted in clamoring for his death at the hands of the Romans, by the common Roman punishment.

(3) The real offense of the prisoner in the eyes of the council was the favor he had won with the people. "Behold," they had said, "the world is gone after him!" Chap. 12. 19. Yet here we find the populace joining in the clamor for his death.

But reasons may quickly be found to account in some measure for all this. Chap. 19. 31, tells us why the chief priests persisted in handing over their prisoner to Pilate. Matt. 27. 20, tells us why the people joined in the clamor for his death. Verse 12 shows us why Pilate dared not refuse the demand. All these reasons could be discoursed at the time. But there was a far deeper mystery.

Let us look at it from the disciples' point of view. They had recognized in the Lord Jesus not merely a "Teacher come from God," but the Christ, the chosen one, the Messiah. They had heard him "preach good tidings to the poor." They had seen him heal the sick, open the blind eyes, and raise the dead. They could testify that he "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil." Acts 10. 38. They had heard him boldly rebuke vice and oppression. They looked for him to "redeem Israel" (Luke 24. 21) and establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace. Luke 19. 11. Why is his work of peace and blessing thus overthrown? Why his career thus stopped? Why is Pilate permitted to give him up to death? See what the Lord said to him in that second private interview: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." Here is the answer. This thing had been planned in the counsels of God.

"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified." It was done that the purpose of God might be fulfilled. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Isa. 53. 10.

But is this a full answer to our first "why?" Surely he had already suffered. Think of the bonds, the rough usage, the taunts, the blows, of that terrible night, and since morning had come the awful scourging (a punishment under which men sometimes died), and the crown of large sharp thorns, of which the merest touch of a single one would cause the blood to flow freely! Pilate hoped the sight of such a sufferer might cause the compassion of the people. Had he not indeed suffered enough?

Not enough to save sinners. To do that he must "pour out his soul unto death." Isa. 53. 12. The sinner's life was forfeited, and he who took the sinner's place must forfeit his own life. However much the Lord Jesus had done, had he stopped short of dying there could have been no salvation for men. One step short of the goal, and pardon, life, and peace would never have been won for the guilty. But he willingly took that last step. And

the Father "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Rom. 8. 32. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified." It was done that the sinner might be saved.

Now come three practical questions: Who is the sinner that needed thus to be saved? Whose is the sin that necessitated such a sacrifice? Who is to enjoy the benefits of this sacrifice? If a rich man died leaving large property to certain specified heirs, each one of these would be eager to prove his claim. And whoever succeeded in doing so would receive his share of the property. Whoever can honestly take the sinner's place may claim and enjoy the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Place together the four accounts of the trial and condemnation of Christ, read the events in consecutive order, and fix them in the memory. A "Harmony of the Gospels" will be found helpful for this. . . . Take two persons in the lesson—Pilate and Jesus—and note the contrasts of character: Pilate showing vacillation, selfishness, weakness of principle; Jesus showing purity, patience, self-sacrifice, etc. . . . After the teaching of the lesson, let some one read in the class, or the school, H. Bonar's poem, beginning "I see the crowd in Pilate's hall," etc. . . . We might follow the line of teaching suggested by the Analytical and Biblical Outline, presenting various aspects of Jesus in the lesson. . . . If the teacher can obtain an engraving or photograph of Correggio's "Ecce Homo," it may afford a good starting-point for the teaching of the lesson. . . . Do not fail to bring out (from the pupils if possible) the thought that all this was for us.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 1: Scourging, 724. Ver. 2: The crown of thorns, 864; the robe, 726. Ver. 3: Buffeting, 719. Ver. 14: The sixth hour, 866. Ver. 16: Executions outside the walls, 727.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

51. Is then the soul of man created to live for ever? It is immortal and will not die as the body dies. (Ecclesiastes xii. 7.)
52. What is the other part of man? His body, which is flesh and blood, and will die. (Matthew x. 28.)

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

O scene of shame! The King of heaven is forced to stoop as never was humbled the meanest citizen of Rome. Thus bowed, he is bound down to the low block where felons and barbarians are tied. There, upon the shrinking form that veils the Son of God, falls the bloody lash of the persecutor. "King of the Jews" did he make himself? Ha, ha! how the Roman loved to humble the Jew, and a Jew king, too. What chance like this to honor a Jew? Yes, they are making ready his coronation. They twist the branches of the stinging thorn into a wreath and press it with its sharp, lacerating points down upon his brow. There is his crown! They throw over him a martial cloak of purple. There is his royal robe! They put a reed in his hand. There is his scepter! And now how they away before him, rising, falling in mock adoration, crying, "Hail! Hail!" whose echo is the stinging blow which with rough, hard hands they give the uncomplaining Man of sorrows. But there is a waiting multitude of