



LESSON X.—JUNE 5.

Jesus Condemned.

Matt. xxvii., 11-26. Memory verses 21-24.
Read xxvi., 47 to xxvii., 34.

Golden Text.

'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' I. Tim. i., 15.

Home Readings.

- M. Matt. xxvii., 1-34.—Jesus condemned.
T. Mark xv., 1-15.—'What evil hath he done?'
W. Luke xxiii., 1-25.—Pilate's testimony to Jesus' innocence.
T. John xviii., 28-19:16.—'My kingdom is not of this world.'
F. I. Tim. i., 1-17.—'Christ Jesus came . . . to save sinners.'
S. Gal. i., 1-24.—'Who gave himself for our sins.'
S. I. Pet. ii., 11-25.—When reviled, he reviled not again.

Lesson Story.

Jesus, having been betrayed into the hands of his enemies by the awful traitor Judas, having been thrice denied by the cowardly Peter, and forsaken by all his other followers except John (John xviii., 15), and having been condemned by the high priest, stands now friendless, weary and deserted, before the Roman governor.

Pilate asks, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' and stands awe-struck at the sublime majesty of the steadfast affirmative, 'Thou sayest.'

The chief priests and elders then accused him of many things, and Pilate amazed now at his silence, asks if Jesus does not hear the accusations, but our Saviour still stands steadfastly silent.

Now it was a Roman custom to release a prisoner at the time of any great feast, and Pilate taking advantage of this custom thought to release this innocent man by the choice of the people. There was in prison an especially vile criminal named Barabbas, Pilate asked the multitude whom he should release for them, Barabbas, or Jesus Christ? Then the chief priests went out and persuaded the multitude to ask for Barabbas and have Jesus crucified. While Pilate sat on his judgment seat awaiting the answer of the mob, his wife sent a message to him begging him to have nothing to do with the just and innocent prisoner, as she had suffered much in a dream concerning him. Pilate hoped that the people would ask the release of Jesus, but they, led by their priests, cried out for Barabbas.

'What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called Christ?'

The crowds which a few short days before had hailed him with glad shouts of praise, now cried out with one voice, 'Let him be crucified!'

'Why, what evil hath he done?' asked Pilate. But they could bring no just accusation against him, so they only cried out in unreasoning fury, 'Let him be crucified.'

Then, Pilate, seeing he could make no impression on them, washed his hands in water and declared himself innocent of the blood of this just man. Then the people took upon themselves the curse of this awful crime. But Pilate set free the murderer Barabbas, and, having scourged Jesus, gave him to the soldiers to crucify.

Lesson Hymn.

Have we no tears to shed for Him,
While soldiers scoff and Jews deride?
Ah! look how patiently he hangs;
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.
Oh, break, oh, break, hard heart of mine!
Thy weak self-love and guilty pride,
His Pilate and His Judas were:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.
Come let us stand beneath the cross;
The fountain opened in His side,
Shall purge our deepest stains away:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.
O love of God! O sin of man!
In this dread act your strength is tried;
And victory remains with love,
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.
—F. W. Faber.

Lesson Hints.

'The governor' — Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of Judea.

'Thou sayest'—'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.' (John xviii., 37.)

'He answered nothing'—there was nothing to answer, they knew that their accusations were false, no words were needed to prove them so. 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.' (Isa. liii., 7.)

'For envy they had delivered him' — the high priests wished his death because of his popularity with the people. Pilate, knowing this, sought to win from the people a vote for Christ's release. But the priests lashed them into mad unreasoning fury. The favor of the multitude is not to be trusted, neither is the majority generally on the right side.

'Washed his hands' — as a sign that he felt no further responsibility in the affair, henceforth he was simply the miserable tool of an angry mob.

'Scourged' — The Roman scourging was terribly cruel. The person scourged was bound to a low pillar, that, bending over, the blows might be better inflicted. The scourge was of thongs, made with bits of iron for tearing the flesh, and was called a 'scorpion.' All this Christ suffered for us.

Primary Lesson.

We have a very sad lesson to-day. We learn how the Jews rejected their Messiah, the Saviour of the world. They could find no fault with him, he was sinless and faultless, yet they cried out, 'Crucify him,' and asked for Barabbas in his stead. Now Barabbas had done everything that was wrong, he was a very bad person, yet the mad Jews chose him rather than Jesus.

Some one has said that Barabbas is a picture of our own wicked hearts. We think it very wicked and foolish, indeed, of the Jews to have wanted Barabbas instead of Christ, but how many times have we chosen our own self-will rather than the blessed will of Christ?

How many times have we chosen Barabbas or self instead of our Saviour? We think that if we had been those Jews we would certainly have chosen Jesus and crucified Barabbas. We have the chance to-day, which shall it be? Shall we cherish in our hearts the lawless Barabbas, self? Or shall we open wide our hearts and ask our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ, to come in and reign forever there?

Suggested Hymns.

'What will you do with Jesus?' 'While we pray,' 'Shall you, shall I?' 'I gave My life for thee,' 'Blessed be the Fountain of Blood,' 'Christ is knocking.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

June 5. — Matt. xxvii., 11-26.

The eloquence of silence was never more vividly seen than in the attitude of Jesus when quizzed by insolent questions. Enough for the disciple to be as his Master. Verses 11-14. Compare Matt. vii., 6.

What is customary may not be right, and what is legally right may be morally wrong. Verse 15.

Had Jesus not been on trial Barabbas would probably have suffered death. But in a higher sense the death of Jesus has released more than Barabbas. Verses 16-18.

In bible times the Lord, through the medium of dreams, often revealed his will in words of encouragement or warning. But now we have a more sure word of prophecy. Verse 19: I. Pet. 1: xviii., 19.

The fact that Christ gave his life for us does not excuse his murderers, who were unconsciously fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. The end does not justify the means. Verses 20-23: Psalm lxxvi., 10.

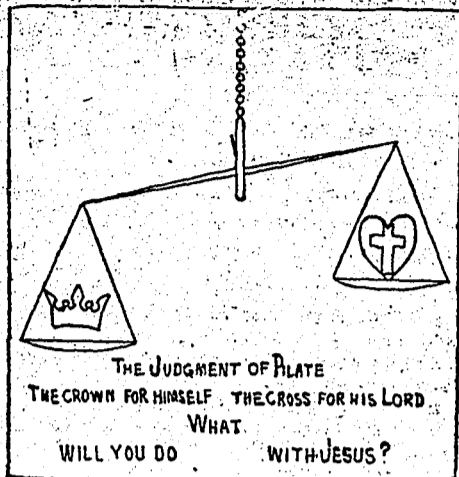
Water cannot wash away the stain of a guilty conscience. Verse 24.

If murderers are graded according to the character of the victim, how fiendish were the murderers of Jesus. Verse xxv., 26.

The Lesson Illustrated.

This is emphatically a weighing trial, so we bring out our scales again. Pilate weighed the keeping of his own crown against the crucifying of an innocent man. The chief priests weighed their own position against the crucifixion of the Messiah, their

profits from the temple against the Holy One whom the temple was built to reveal, and who cleansed it. The people weighed their king against a common robber, and all weighed self and sin against right and holiness, and



all chose wrong, and so condemned him for a time, but themselves for all eternity.

And we? Jesus waits before us also. When we choose sin and self rather than his love, his righteousness, in this way we crucify him again and pain again the most loving heart of all.

It is so easy to condemn Pilate, the priests and the Jews, and yet be doing in our way the same thing.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

June 5.—Christ's mission on earth.—John x., 7-18.

Punctuality, Intelligence and Piety.

(Bishop Dickson.)

'It is a good thing, and very helpful, to have wise officers, good literature, good music and an attractive room; but whatever else we may have, and however good they may be, if we have ignorant and indifferent teachers we will have but an inferior school; whereas, if we have intelligent, pious, devoted teachers, the school will accomplish much. The qualifications of the teacher and preacher are much the same. The first of these is punctuality. Like the preacher, he must be at his post every time. He must arrange for this and allow nothing to stand in his way. If sickness or any unavoidable circumstance prevents his attendance, he should be sure to have his class provided for, and not depend on the superintendent to pick up any one he can get at the last minute.

'The preacher is expected to prepare himself by study and prayer, to have for his people something worth listening to. Nothing can take the place of wholesome, impressive instruction. No matter how much noise we make or how many tears we shed or what else we do, all will be but a poor substitute for the intelligent presentation of the truth. I am surprised that with the abundant supply of helps we have in our day to assist us in the study of the lesson, any teacher should go to his class unprepared; and yet it is to be feared many do. It would be a strange class, indeed, that has no girl or boy in it who is hungering for knowledge and refuses to be satisfied till the teacher furnishes it. Nor will it take long for the bright boy or girl to detect the ignorance of the teacher. And then the sooner that teacher gets out of the way the better—the better for himself and the better for the class.

'The teacher must lead an upright, godly life. This is indispensable. No amount of booklore, no amount of study will serve as a substitute for piety. What Christian congregation would want an unconverted man to fill its pulpit? How could a man lead others to Christ who had never known him as a Saviour himself? As well put a hawk in the chicken-coop or a wolf in the sheep-fold as to put an unconverted person to lead these little ones to Jesus. The day must and will come when it will not be tolerated; when the parents will refuse to give the training of their children into the hands of men and women who know not God and obey not the Lord Jesus Christ. Punctuality, intelligence and piety—these three; but the greatest of these is piety.'—Evangelical Sunday-school Teacher.