

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus and Pilate.

S. S. Lesson—March 17th, 1901. Luke 23: 13-26.

GOLDEN TEXT—Luke 23: 4. I find no fault in this man.

As one that perverteth the people, v. 14. The accusation of bad citizenship is one that has been often repeated against Christ's followers. It has been a common ground for persecution both by precept and example Christ inculcated the duties of good citizenship. (Matt. 17: 27; 22: 21.) Christian people should remember this to-day and should consider it as their duty not to separate themselves from the political affairs of the country, but to use their influence for the purification of politics and the elevation of the national life.

I, having examined him, v. 14. The Jews hoped that Pilate would be satisfied to ratify the sentence they had passed upon Jesus without further investigation. Pilate, however, insists on looking into the matter for himself. So far, Pilate is right, and acts the part of a just judge, and his conduct furnishes a wholesome example. For there are those who, when they hear that the Christian religion is attacked in any way are ready to believe that which is alleged against it without investigation. When the claims of Jesus are presented to them, they will not even consider them, but reject them promptly and utterly. This is most unwise and unfair. Christ and His religion should have a fair hearing.

I have found no fault in this man, v. 14. Such must be the verdict of those who regard Jesus Christ and His claims with an honest mind. That matchless life forbids the thought that His claims may not be just. He is the Son of God. He is the Saviour. He is the King of men.

I will therefore chastise him, v. 22. If a man is too weak to do what he knows he ought to do, the chances are that he will be weak enough to do what he knows he ought not to do. Pilate knew his duty, which was to set Jesus, as an innocent man, free. But he was not brave enough to do so. He was tempted to crucify Him; but he will not do that either—not yet! He will compromise. He will not do the crowning injustice, but he will do a little injustice. He will have Christ scourged, and perhaps that will satisfy the people. Now this was most illogical. The charge which was made against Jesus was one that deserved death. If He was not guilty of that charge, He did not deserve any punishment and should have been liberated. Men still find themselves in a similar dilemma and act as illogically. Christ is either worthy of our whole trust and services, or He is worthy of none. But there are those who try neither to reject Him utterly nor believe in Him utterly. They will not wholly serve Christ, nor will they wholly serve the world. They will not do all that a Christian ought to do, but they will do some things that a Christian ought not to do. They do not yet entirely forsake Christ, and they try to compromise with the devil. But he who compromises with the devil is lost.

Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required, v. 24. John tells us why. It was because Pilate was afraid. The Jews threatened to make his sympathy with Jesus the ground of an attack upon his loyalty to the emperor, and Pilate had a wholesome

dread of having his administration presented to the imperial notice in an unfavorable light. Actuated by this selfish fear, he crushed down the feeling of respect which Jesus had awakened in him, as well as his sense of justice and pity, and gave Jesus into the hands of His enemies to work their wicked will. It is cowardice that destroys many a man. He knows the right, he feels that Christ is worthy of his trust and service and that he ought to stand for Him against the world—but he is afraid; afraid of what his old companions may say if he should make a Christian profession; afraid of the self-denial that may be involved in the Christian life; afraid of losing the pleasure or the profit that are to be obtained in ways of which Christ would not approve. But so far at least as his name and influence are concerned, such a one leaves Christ in the hands of His enemies. "The coward stands aside, doubting in his abject spirit, till His Lord is crucified." The temptation under which Pilate gave way is ever strong upon us. Let us beware and let us be steadfast.

Let us choose the nobler part. Though many should forsake Christ, though many should oppose Him, let us be true. In the great day of decision, let us stand for Christ at whatever peril or sacrifice. He who does so can make no mistake, for "Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone 'tis strong."

The Word of God.

"The Bible is not an iron safe to be opened by those who are keen enough to discover the combination; it is rather a rare and delicate flower, that must have a certain atmosphere before it can be induced to unfold its petals and disclose its honey cup, and share with you its sweet perfume. The atmosphere of the book is the atmosphere of prayer. When you have entered your closet and opened the window toward Jerusalem and felt the heavenly breeze fan your cheeks—then the dull pages are transformed into a living voice and the book becomes indeed the Word of God."—Lutheran.

A Prayer.

CHARLOTTE FISKE BATES IN S. S. TIMES.

Duties are pressing on me,
And the time for work is brief;
What it with purblind vision
I neglect the very chief?

What if I do with ardor
What a thousand could, maybe,
And leave undone forever
What was meant for only me?

From that, O Master save me!
Move on my hand, thought, voice, and pen,
To their peculiar service
In this world of needy men!

And oh! whatever labors
Are not finished with my day,
Let them be for self—for others
Grant the doing, Lord, I pray!

As we say "for Jesus' sake" here, He says "for my sake" there.—Rev. G. H. C. Macgregor.

Temperance is a proper control of all appetites and passions.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

A Most Important Question.

BY D. C.

How are fallen, condemned and helpless sinners to become just in the sight of God? By the grace of God, and living faith in Christ Jesus. Paul says "By the grace of God I am what I am. The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That is, being justified by the sovereign will, love, mercy, counsel and purpose of the Godhead, through Christ Jesus "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (R. V.) "The testimony to be borne in its own time" as people become partakers of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection, which is the source and meritorious cause of being justified. The death and resurrection of Christ having fully met all the demands of God's law and justice. Law and justice have no further claim against the believing sinner, and no further provision is required or even necessary, on the part of the Godhead.

The source is, however, so deep, that no one unaided, in his natural state can reach it. That is the reason, why any one should perish. The ransom is for all, and sufficient for all, if one could reach it, and receive it as his own. What is to be done that sinners may reach it, and receive its benefits? The merits of Christ's death must be imputed and received by faith. Hence we read of being justified by faith. Faith receiving what Jesus Christ so freely provided and so freely bestows upon all believers. When the believing sinner is justified, all his sins are forgiven, as fully as if they had never existed, and a clean sheet is given him as far as all past sins are concerned. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Rom. 3: 25. "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all." All sins committed before regeneration are forgiven, in the mass—in their entirety.

This may be seen from many of Christ's sayings. It seems that the two thieves reviled Christ, as they hung on the cross one on each side of him. One of them however became penitent, and prayed unto Jesus to remember him when he would come to his kingdom. Christ answered him, saying, "Verily I say unto thee, to day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" Luke 23: 43. The thief was a great sinner when nailed to the cross. All his sins must have been forgiven him while on the cross for no sin or any unclean thing shall ever enter heaven. When ever any one believes in Christ all his sins are forgiven, up to that event. Jesus said to Simon regarding the woman that was a great sinner, "her sins which are many are forgiven her." Jesus said also to the man who was sick of the palsy "thy sins are forgiven thee," The Psalmist says "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." John writing to the little children says, "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake," 1 John 2: 12.

Forgiveness of sin is, however, conditioned upon living, individual faith in Jesus Christ, conviction of sin, repentance, hatred, forsaking and confessing of sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Wherever these conditions exist and practiced sins are forgiven—both