

The Sunday-School.

SECOND QUARTER,
LESSON X.—June 5.

CHRIST'S TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

Mark 15: 1-15.

THE LESSON includes the whole story of the trial of Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.—Luke 23: 4.

HISTORICAL SETTING. Time.—Friday April 7, A. D. 30. Agony in Gethsemane, midnight to 1 a. m. Arrest, about 1 a. m. Trial before Jewish authorities, 1.30 a. m., to sunrise 6 a. m. Trial before Roman authorities, 6.30 to 8.30 a. m.

Place.—The trial before Pilate was probably in the Tower of Antonia, just outside of the northwest corner of the temple area, in Jerusalem. Possibly at Herod's palace on Mt. Zion, overlooking the temple area, and connected with it by a bridge.

THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE.—From the supper in the upper room in Jerusalem Jesus and his disciples went outside of the walls of the city, crossed the valley of the Kidron, to the Garden of Gethsemane. Here Jesus' spiritual conflict was so intense that he sweat, as it were great drops of blood in his agony.

THE BETRAYAL AND THE ARREST.—It must have been about one o'clock on Friday morning while Jesus was being comforted by an angel from heaven, that Judas, guiding the Jewish and Roman soldiers came to Jesus and betrayed him with a kiss. Jesus gave himself up, the disciples all fled, and Jesus was taken to Jerusalem to be tried before the Jewish court of the Sanhedrim.

THE TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES.—Jesus was first taken before high priests Annas and Caiaphas, who hastily assembled the Sanhedrim. It was not lawful to try a capital case between sunset and sunrise. But there was haste to condemn Jesus.

The Charge against Jesus was blasphemy, the Jewish penalty for which was death.

The Witnesses. The authorities, after search, found two false witnesses.

The Verdict of the court, that Jesus was guilty, had been previously determined upon.

The Sentence was Death.

The Mockery. Jesus was exposed to insults and mockeries. They spit in his face, they struck him with their fists, they smote him with rods, they ridiculed him.

The Denials of Peter. During the trial and the interval following, Peter thrice denied his Master, as Jesus had forewarned him. But when the cock crowed and Jesus looked at Peter, he remembered, and he went out and wept bitterly.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE AND THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES.—Vs. 1-15.

FIRST TRIAL.—Vs. 1-5. And straightway in the morning, after the condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrim, the chief priests held a consultation with the scribes and the whole council, as to the best way of bringing their case before the Roman court. For the Jews were not permitted by the Romans to put any one to death. Delivered him (up) to Pilate at his judgment hall.

The Charge Against Jesus.—Vs. 2-5. The Jews suppressed the religious accusation and charged Jesus with Treason against the Roman Government. There were three counts in the charge (Luke 23: 2).

1. Sedition, perverting the nation, stirring up the people by his teaching. There was a revulsion of feeling against the Pharisees. But it was not treason against Rome.

2. "Forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar," apparently a false inference from his saying that he was a king, but Pilate could not know but it might be true.

3. That he claimed to be Christ, a king. This charge had a basis of truth. It suggested the governor's question, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* as these Jews claim you pretend to be. *He answering said unto him, thou sayest. I accept your statement.* It was true from one point of view, and not true from another. *Accused him of many things,* as shown above. *He answered nothing,* for they would pervert everything he said. *Pilate marvelled.* Jesus' silence and his whole attitude were so different from that of other prisoners.

The Verdict of Pilate was (Luke 23: 4), *I find no fault in this man.* This was the first of the six times that Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent.

THE TRIAL BEFORE HEROD.—Lukes 23: 5-12. The leaders were so angry at the acquittal of Jesus by Pilate, that Pilate hesitated about releasing him. Jesus was a Galilean; and Herod Antipas, the governor of Galilee, was in the city. Pilate, therefore, sent Jesus to Herod as the one who should have jurisdiction over this case. Herod looked upon Jesus as a pretender. Jesus was arrayed in a gorgeous white robe, a parody of his royal claims.

The Verdict of Herod was that *Jesus was innocent of crime* (Luke 23: 15).

FINAL TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.—Vs. 6-15. Jesus was returned by Herod to Pilate's jurisdiction. Pilate's attempt to escape the responsibility of condemning an innocent man had failed. He tried one more expedient. *Now at that feast he released* (was wont to release) *unto them one prisoner.* As a fitting accompaniment to a feast that celebrated the redemption of the nation from slavery.

There was one Barabbas. A notable prisoner. *Made insurrection . . . committed murder.* He was a ringleader in the frequent fanatical insurrections against the Roman domination. *And the multitude crying aloud* were clamorous. *Do as he had ever done.* That is, release a prisoner. *Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?* Pilate knew that the chief priests had delivered Jesus for envy, on account of his influence with the people. If Jesus was such a favorite with the people, perhaps they would vote for him to be released. *The chief priests moved* (stirred up, persuaded) *the people* to choose Barabbas. *What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?* Something must be done with him. *And they cried out again, Crucify him.* Then follows a picture of a wild scene, an excited mob gesticulating, shouting "Crucify him," the silent Jesus standing bound within their sight, and Pilate vainly endeavoring to quiet them by declaring the innocence of Jesus. *Pilate said . . . Why, what evil hath he done?*

Why do you insist on crucifying an innocent man?

The Verdict again was *Jesus is Innocent of Fault and Crime.*

Pilate, willing (wishing) *to content the people,* for he was in danger of losing his place, if not his life, on the charge that he was not Cæsar's friend.

The Sentence. Delivered Jesus . . . to be crucified. After scourging with loaded thongs, and after being again mocked by the soldiers.

THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

The first great lesson turns upon our choice of leaders, Jesus or Barabbas; Jesus or the world; Jesus and his kingdom, or the kingdom of passion, of selfishness and sin.

What Shall I do with Jesus? This is a question every person must answer. Every person must do something with Jesus. He must accept or reject him. There is no avoiding the responsibility. To reject Christ is to reject the sum and soul of all goodness. Rejecting Christ is the great sin of the world.

FACING THE EAST WIND.

One cold day, as I was on my way to Sunday school, I noticed a little boy trudging along, whom I recognized as a scholar in the next class to mine. It was a very stormy day; the snow was falling fast, and the ground was already well covered, which rendered the walking difficult, in addition to which there was a very keen, piercing wind driving the sleet into your face, and nearly taking you off your feet. Little James was toiling on in front of me, and how he had courage to venture out at all on such a stormy day, I could not imagine. I overtook the little fellow as we drew near the church, and said to him:

"Well, Jemmy, you are a good boy to be going to Sunday school such a stormy day. Are you not almost frozen?"

"Oh, no!" said the noble little fellow, looking up at me. "If this was Monday, I should be out riding down hill on my sled; I shouldn't mind the cold then, and so I thought I oughtn't to mind it now. If it didn't blow so, I shouldn't mind it at all; but it is pretty hard when you have to face the east wind. Coming up from our house, I had to walk a good way against the wind, and it nearly took the skin off my face. Do you think Mr. Radley will be there today?"

"Yes, Jemmy, I think he will."

"I hope he will," said my little friend. "I love to see the minister, even when he does not speak to me, if he only smiles at me. When the wind blew so hard, I had a great mind to turn back, but then I thought I wouldn't because Mr. Radley would be pleased to see that I had come through the storm to Sunday school."

"Yes, Jemmy," said I, "such weather as this tries the mettle of Sunday school scholars; and remember, my dear boy, that it is not only your minister who is pleased with you when you do right, but that God from His throne on high looks down, even upon a little boy like you, and is pleased when He sees that you love to come to school to learn His Word."—*Christian Commonwealth.*

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To Prevent is Better than to Repent.—A little medicine in the shape of the wonderful pellets which are known as Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, administered at the proper time and with the directions adhered to often prevent a serious attack of sickness and save money which would go to the doctor. In all irregularities of the digestive organs they are an invaluable corrective and in cleansing the blood they clear the skin of imperfections.

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The problem is to make our visible lives transparent mediums, free from all stains and spots of injustice, unkindness, selfishness, and pride, that the light may shine through them for the attraction of the world.

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