

would appear that Christ spake not a word before Herod. This proud, licentious man was actuated by empty curiosity. Galled by this silence, Herod subjected Christ to many indignities, and then sent Him back to Pilate. Pilate proposed to the Jews that he would scourge Jesus and then release him. See Luke xxiii. 14-16. How inconsistent! If innocent why chastise him at all?

Vv. 15-18.—Pilate singled out Barrabas that the Jews might be induced to release Jesus, rather than so great a criminal.

V. 19.—A solemn warning! Well for Pilate if he had heeded it.

V. 20.—Pilate asked this question three times, (Luke xxiii. 22), hoping that the Jews might relent.

V. 24.—A pitiful attempt to satisfy a conscience ill at ease, and to place the responsibility upon others. Washing the hands did not wash away the guilt of shedding innocent blood.

V. 25.—A terrible imprecation! Little did they think what would result. They invoked vengeance and it came. In less than forty years this city was destroyed, when more than a million people perished. To this day the Jews are a nation scattered and peeled.

LESSONS.

1. Learn the perfect sinlessness of Jesus. He was tried before both a Jewish and a Roman court, but his bitterest foes could find not the slightest stain upon his character.

2. See how God overrules evil for good. The fact that every effort was made to criminate Jesus has shown his innocence.

3. Mark the patience of Christ. He answered never a word. Nor was his a sullen silence. It was the silence of meekness. See Is. liii. 7. Let us strive to imitate him. See 1 Pet. 20-23.

4. In verse 17 is an illustration of the great doctrine of release. Christ the innocent is condemned; we the guilty are set free.

5. God often by the voice of conscience, and by his providence warns men to stop when they are in a sinful career. V. 19.

6. We should take a firm stand on the side of conscience and truth, not fearing consequences. Pilate knew that Christ was innocent, and he sought to release Him. But fearing the people he condemned Christ. It is interesting, yet sad, to mark the conflict that occurred in this man's mind between conscience on the one hand, and timidity on the other.

7. From verse 24 we learn that if we pursue a course of conduct which our conscience disapproves, hoping that we are guiltless, because others assume the responsibility, we are acting the part of Pilate.

DOCTRINE.

Jesus was without sin. 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. vii. 26; i. Pet. i. 19.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Crucifixion*. Mat. xxvii. 26-50.

See parallel passages in Mark xv. 15-37; Luke xxiii. 25-46. John xix. 16-30.

V. 26.—Scourging was preliminary to crucifixion.

Vv. 25-31.—These indignities were heaped upon Christ by a brutal Roman soldiery in the judgement hall, out of sight of the crowd still waiting without. Pilate then brought him out to the multitude, hoping that their thirst for blood would now be appeased. But he was mistaken. Again he took Christ apart and questioned him. He strove again to release him; but again he failed. See John xix. 4-12.

V. 23.—Christ went forth bearing his cross, but sinking beneath the load, they placed it upon Simon. Cyrene was in Africa. On his way to Calvary Christ addressed the women who bewailed him. (Luke xxiii. 27-31.)

V. 33.—*Golgotha*—or the place of a skull, so called either from its shape or from the fact of its being the usual place of executing criminals.

V. 24.—This drink was offered either in derision or as an opiate to deaden the sense of pain. See Ps. lxxix. 21.—*He would not drink*—He would do nothing to alleviate his distress or impair the clearness of his mind.

V. 35.—See Ps. xxii; 18.

V. 37.—This title was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, that it might be read by all. For Christ's prayer on behalf of his enemies, see John xxiii. 34. Compare i. Cor. ii. 8.

V. 38.—See Luke xxiii. 38-43 for a fuller account of the two thieves. Verse 44, speaks as if both the thieves reviled Christ, while Luke speaks only of one as reviling. Luke's is the minute account, while Matthew and Mark, dwelling upon the fact that Christ was derided by all, speak in general of the thieves as doing it.

V. 40.—*Thou that destroyest &c.*—referring to what Christ had said in John ii. 19.

V. 43.—These words were predicted in Ps. xxii. 8. About this time occurred the touching incident recorded in John xix. 25-27.

V. 45.—A miraculous darkness emblematical of the great inner darkness which enveloped the Soul of the Redeemer.—*The sixth hour*—our noon.—*The ninth hour*—our 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

V. 46.—Probably during the whole period of the three hours Christ experienced the hidings of his Father's countenance. About