

Lesson IX.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

December 2, 1906

Luke 23 : 13-25; Commit to memory vs. 20, 21. Read Matthew 27 : 3-30; Mark 15 : 2-19; Luke 23 : 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT—Then said Pilate, . . . I find no fault in this man.—Luke 23 : 4.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people : and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him :

15 No, nor yet Herod : for I sent you to him ; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas :

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

Revised Version—1 Omit when he had ; 2 and ; 3 Omit have ; 4 unto me this man ; 5 he sent him back unto us ; 6 behold ; 7 hath been done by him ; 8 Omit v. 17 ; 9 But ; 10 together ; 11 one who for a certain insurrection ; 12 spake unto them again, desiring to release Jesus ; 13 shouted ; 14 Omit him ; 15 this man ; 16 release him ; 17 asking ; 18 their voices prevailed.

20 Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again unto them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him : I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired ; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—Friday, April 7, A.D. 30 ; Pilate's judgment hall in Jerusalem.

Connection—The Sanhedrin hold a second meeting at daybreak, to confirm the illegal sentence of the previous night (see Lesson VII.), and to arrange for bringing Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor, since the Roman authorities alone could pronounce a sentence of death. (See ch. 22 : 66 to 23 : 1.) Then follow the first examination before Pilate (Matt. 27 : 11-14), and the appearance before Herod, Luke 23 : 6-12. This brings us to the Lesson, which tells of the final examination before Pilate.

I. INNOCENT.—13, 14. Pilate ; the Roman governor of the province of Syria, which included Judæa. Called together, etc.; before the judgment seat, placed on a pavement (Gabbatha) outside the palace, John 18 : 28 ; 19 : 13. Ye . . . this man. Jesus and His accusers are now face to face. As one that perverteth the people ; turns them away from their obedience to Rome. Two other charges were laid against Jesus,—forbidding to pay the Roman tax, and claiming to be a King, v. 2. Examined him before you. Pilate had given Jesus a public trial, and so His accusers had full opportunity to make their charges against Him. No fault. This Roman judge found Jesus innocent of every accusation made against Him.

15-17. Nor yet Herod ; the ruler of Galilee, then visiting Jerusalem to keep the Passover, to whom Pilate had sent Jesus a prisoner, having learned that He was from Galilee (see Connection). Nothing worthy of death ; nothing deserving the death sentence. Done unto him ; Rev. Ver. "by Him". Chastise him ; hoping to save Jesus from death,

by yielding thus far to the rage of the crowd. This was both weak and wicked on Pilate's part. Release him. This, Pilate should have done at once, when he found Jesus innocent. The custom of v. 16 was a common one in ancient times.

II. REJECTED.—18-21. Cried out all at once; influenced by the "chief priests," Mark 15 : 11. Away with this man ; away to the cross. Release . . . Barabbas ; who may have been brought out and placed beside Jesus in sight of all. Who for . . . sedition ; rebellion against the Roman government. He was thus guilty of the very crime with which Jesus was falsely charged. Murder ; while Jesus came to give life, John 10 : 10. Pilate . . . willing (wishing) to release Jesus ; which he might have done, had he only been firm at the first. Crucify him. The multitude was now like a wild beast thirsting for blood. Crucifixion was a Roman method of punishing criminals, inflicted only on slaves and subject races, never on a Roman citizen. The Jewish method of execution was by stoning, as in the case of Stephen, Acts 7 : 59.

22, 23. The third time . . . what evil . . . ? Twice before, in v. 4 and in v. 14, Pilate had declared Jesus innocent. No cause of death. Pilate was convinced ; well for him had he possessed courage to act on his convictions. But he was unwittingly fulfilling Isa. 53 : 7, 8. Again he proposes to chastise him, and let him go. Instant (pressing, urgent) with loud voices ; an excited mob shouting and gesticulating. Voices . . . prevailed ; not reason, nor justice, but the clamor of passion.

III. SENTENCED.—24-26. Pilate gave sentence ; saying to Jesus, "Thou shalt go to the



Christ Before Pilate (Munkacsy)