

## July 21

*To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. John 18:37*

IT was our Lord's faithfulness to the Truth that brought upon Him the opposition of those who were blinded by the adversary. It was His witness to the Truth that cost

R1917 "At first Jesus "taught in the synagogues, being glorified of all," "and all bore him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth;" but very soon his faithfulness to the truth, which rebuked their unrighteousness, turned the praise of the people into wrath and persecution. This is the reward that faithfulness to the truth is sure to bring in the present life; and those who find it so should rejoice in this fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. Every new trial of faith, patience and perseverance, and every new victory in such trial brings to the soldier of the cross added power of the holy spirit--a courage born of endurance, a confidence in God born of experience, and a zeal born of a human appreciation of the power and intrinsic worth of divine truth, and a fuller appreciation of the righteousness of God and of all his ways. In this light the Christian should view every trial that comes to him, and, by drawing near to God in it, seek that measure of his holy spirit which will enable him to overcome, and in the conflict to gain new strength for further service.

The text of our Lord's discourse on this occasion was chosen from Isaiah 61:1-3, which declared his commission from God to preach the gospel--"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach," etc. This was the object of his anointing...

Through him, this same anointing has come upon every true member of the body of Christ, which is the Church--"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." (1 John 2:27.)...

Every member of the body, however humble or obscure, being "anointed to preach," is failing in his mission if he does not preach. Indeed, if he be filled with the spirit he must preach, being impelled to that service by a burning zeal, like him who said, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;" "It is my meat and drink to do thy will, O God." But preaching is not always public declaration. Every influence that we can send out from within the radius of our talents, be they one or many, or be they humble or brilliant, is preaching the gospel. Let us all, therefore, diligently apply ourselves to it, and let it be "in the power of the spirit."

It is very significant that our Lord in quoting this commission, quoted only so much of it as was to be fulfilled by himself, the last phrase being, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,"--the Gospel age, the time wherein the presenting of our bodies as living sacrifices would be acceptable to God. With this he closed the book and sat down, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Had he read the remainder of it he could not have claimed its fulfillment that day; for it was not yet time to preach the day of vengeance, nor yet to begin the great Millennial work foreshown in verse 3. The proclaiming of the day of vengeance belongs specially to this end of

Him His life, and it was the giving of His life in defence of the Truth that constituted the redemption price. Similarly all of the Lord's followers are to bear witness to the Truth--the truth in respect to God's character and plan.... It is such witness to the Truth that is to cost all the true followers of Jesus their lives in presenting themselves living

the age, and the whole commission applies to the Church entire. The message concerning day of vengeance is now due, and consequently is now being proclaimed by the "feet" members of the Christ."

R5497 "It is in vain that any entertain a hope of being accepted of the Lord and of winning His final approval who hides his light under a bushel and shrinks from the reproach of the Cross. "No cross, no crown," is the Lord's inflexible decision. All who have received the Truth in the love of it will be glad to let their light shine to the glory of God and the blessing of others. If the glorious Message of the Lord has filled our own hearts and blessed our lives, we shall rejoice to carry the living water to other thirsty souls ...

If, then, we have this faith, this hope, and are properly confessing it before men, let us "hold fast." Tests of our loyalty will continually come. The flesh will be inclined to rebel strongly at times. The questions will present themselves: Are you willing to confess Christ? Are you ashamed to own His name before the world, or do you esteem this your chiefest honor? There will be temptations to become discouraged. Our weaknesses will rise up before us, and the Adversary will take advantage of these circumstances to further dishearten us. And not only will there come these temptations along the line of our faith and hope, but there will come certain reproaches and persecutions, permitted for the purpose of proving our loyalty. Ours is a marvelous calling, and only heroic souls are wanted to fill the places in this elect class--only those who have the Spirit of the Master.

### DANGER OF WITHHOLDING THE LIGHT

If any are disloyal or weak, and fail to take a firm stand for the Lord and the Truth, for fear that they will be disesteemed amongst their fellow-men, or for any other reason, it will prove that they are not worthy to share with Christ the glories of His Throne as members of His Body...

The flesh needs to be dealt with rigorously, and be brought into subjection and held there. According to the inclinations of the flesh, the Lord's children would wish to refrain from what would bring contumely and adverse criticism. The flesh would prefer to keep quiet, where the speaking forth of the Truth might bring reproach or persecution or ostracism. But the New Creature would feel "a burning fire shut up in his bones" if he were to withhold the Message of Truth when a suitable opportunity was granted, and he would find that he must be faithful and let his light shine. Otherwise, the light would grow feeble and would finally die out altogether, and he would be in utter darkness. And "if the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God which is within us. The Lord gives us a

sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Let each one who hopes to be a joint-heir with the Prince of Life in the Kingdom witness to the Truth--a good confession respecting the Kingdom, its foundation and ultimate superstructure in glory. Z. '99-123 R2471:6

solid basis for our hope, for our faith. It is a hope which He has Himself inspired... We have learned to know our God and to trust His faithful Word. We have proven His gracious promises in many a time of stress and danger, and we know that He will not fail us."

R2182 "Paul and Silas were dragged to the public square, where trials were conducted... They were beaten in public, and then put into the inner prison and their feet made fast in the stocks... Instead of bemoaning their lot and wishing they had never enlisted in the Lord's service, or thinking of how they could withdraw from it, these noble men, on the contrary, rejoiced and thanked God that they were accounted worthy to suffer in his name and for his cause...

With seemingly no cause for thankfulness that the worldly could discern, they were filled with love and gratitude to God, and their hearts overflowed in songs of praise. Surely they were actuated by super-human hopes and joys!

Nor were they the only ones upon whom the truth and the holy spirit of the truth has had such an influence. We remember many martyrs who likewise "endured as seeing him who is invisible." We think of Daniel praying in the lion's den and answering the king in a cheerful voice, "The God whom I serve hath sent his angel and shut the lion's mouth... We remember Bunyan, who, while in Bedford jail, England, for faithfulness to the truth, not only prayed to God, but figuratively sang his praises, as represented in his remarkable work-- *Pilgrim's Progress*... Madam Guyon, while imprisoned in the Castle Vincennes (1695), wrote songs and sang them in praise to God. Writing of it subsequently she said, "It sometimes seems to me as if I were a little bird, whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing now to do but to sing. The joy of my heart gave brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked to my eyes like rubies." In prison she wrote:--

"A little bird I am, shut from the fields of air; And in my songs I sit and sing to him who placed me there: Well pleased a prisoner thus to be, because, my God, it pleaseth thee. My cage confines me round,--abroad I cannot flee; But though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty. My prison walls cannot control the flight, the freedom of my soul."

Thank God, the days of beating and imprisonment for Christ's sake are no more; but there are still opportunities for the development and exercise of the spirit of sacrifice by all who are faithful followers in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus; there are social smittings and ostracisms for the truth's sake, which can be borne with rejoicing to such an extent that the smart is scarcely felt. There are times when the Lord permits our financial conditions to become almost a gloomy prison as viewed from the natural

standpoint,--times when responsibilities or sicknesses may shut us in as prisoners; but under such circumstances the faithful are able to realize the Lord's favor and mercy; they find many blessings to recount and their hearts overflow with thankful gratitude and praise, so that all who come in contact with them take knowledge of them, as they did of the Apostles, "that they have been with Jesus and learned of him."

R4061 "How much strength and courage we must have if we would come off more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us! And here is the point necessary to be remembered, viz., that this is not our battle but the Lord's, that we are not fighting at our own charges but with his commission and with his promised assistance and support. "I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." No wonder that the Apostle, gaining a clear view of this situation, exclaimed, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.) And so it is with all the true followers of the Lord: we do not know how much we can accomplish, we do not know if there would be any limitations to our powers within the limits of the Lord's commands and while upheld by his promise. We must remember, however, the limitations, "Without me ye can do nothing," and again, that what we are to do is clearly indicated in the divine Word, and that we are not to look for nor expect divine aid beyond those limitations: just as in the case of Joshua and Natural Israel. Had they gone outside the boundaries of Canaan specified in the Lord's Word they could not have expected the divine assistance. Here again we remember the Master's words, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you"--under these limitations we can do and be and pray anything and everything, but outside these limitations we must expect nothing...

Moral courage is greatly needed amongst the Lord's people; without it they can do nothing, and many of their difficulties in the Christian way are because they fail to appreciate this matter and fail to develop this courage. It requires real courage of the highest order to stand for the Lord's Truth and his people when these are misunderstood, misrepresented, antagonized. It takes real courage to stand for the light when the great Adversary with a worldwide influence brands it as darkness and leads an assault against it. It requires real courage to denounce the darkness, meekly, persistently, when it has on its side wealth, culture, influence and Churchianity.

The story was recently told of a general in the United States army, returned from the Philippine war, who received the Truth into a good and honest heart. Anxious to serve the good tidings to others, anxious to honor

the great Captain of our salvation, the general inquired respecting opportunities for serving the Truth.... He was not so situated that he could take hold of the Colporteur work, and hence he concluded that he must be a sharpshooter and a volunteer tract distributor under the banner of his King. The Bible class of which he is a member elected him the captain of the Volunteer work for this year, and thus the duty of districting the city and assigning the various quarters for tract distribution fell into his hands. What portion did he assign to himself, a brigadier-general in the army, and widely known throughout the city? Instead of choosing some out-of-the-way place, where few would recognize him, he assigned as his district the very one in which he lived and in which he would be most widely known and recognized, his argument being, "I am not ashamed of the Lord, and if I have any influence amongst my fellow men, I want that influence to tell for the Lord and for his Truth." Surely this dear brother was strong and of good courage, and just as surely his faithfulness to the Lord and to the Truth must have brought him rich spiritual blessing and help to crystallize his character as a New Creature in Christ. Doubtless it requires courage in the field of battle, facing enemies and dangers of every kind; but surely it requires still greater, still more honorable courage to thus take one's stand for the Lord and for an unpopular Truth and to be seen and known as a tract distributor of the same.

Other cases somewhat similar might be mentioned, illustrating the same principle. We believe that the Lord has so ordered his work that it will always cost something to be soldiers of the cross and always serve to test the loyalty, the strength, the moral courage, of every member of the Body of Christ. This Volunteer tract distribution is certainly serving a valuable purpose in connection with the Lord's people, however much or little it may be accomplishing for those who receive the tracts.

#### VERY COURAGEOUS TO OBSERVE THE LAW

There is a peculiar force in the language of the seventh verse of our lesson--"Only be strong and very courageous to observe and to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee." Whatever of strength and courage may be implied in the sixth verse as necessary to the conquering of the land of promise, this seventh verse evidently refers to moral courage--strong and very courageous in obedience to the divine commands. The injunction implied that Joshua would find obstacles and difficulties before him, and discouragements in respect to the observance of holy things. It is so with the Spiritual Israelites, the Body of Christ today: while

some are lacking in courage as respects the outward things, a still larger number lack these qualities in their own hearts, in their own lives. They see and to some extent appreciate the divine will as being righteous altogether, but the self-denial necessary to a full obedience they are not willing to render. Perhaps the greatest battles any of us have to fight are those of which none may know except ourselves--our mental battles. As a Methodist brother once put the matter, "My greatest battle is to gain the consent of my own will." However, no Christian should be in this attitude. This should be our first battle--to gain the consent and full cooperation of our wills with the divine Word. Then let us go on to victory after victory, battling against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Once our hearts are fully surrendered to his law it should never again be necessary to have a battle there; the victory should be so thorough, so complete, so far-reaching.

#### MEDITATING DAY AND NIGHT ON GOD'S LAW

The Lord explained to Joshua what would lie at the foundation of his success, and that neglect would mean his failure--"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and thou shalt make good success"--v. 8.

No clearer expression of the divine will could be made to the antitypical Joshua and the members of his Body than is given in this Scripture. Its teaching is that there is no safety, no real success for those addressed, except in obedience to the divine will, as recorded in the divine Word. Thus also the Lord Jesus is represented as saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is written in my heart"; and again prophetically--"O, how I love thy Law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psa. 40:8; 119:97.)...

In other words, as elsewhere expressed, whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the Lord's glory; and this implies not merely a haphazard wish to do the Lord's will, but a studying of the divine Word that we may know what that will is -- not merely a studying of the creeds and traditions of the past, however we may honor those who made them and believe in their sincerity. It is for us rather to prove all things that we accept, and then to hold fast that which we have proven to be the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God. As Joshua was told that his good success would be in proportion to his attention to the divine Law, so Spiritual Israelites similarly are informed that their success in making their calling and election sure will be proportionate to their loving, zealous obedience to the divine message."

R2470 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

### THE "GOOD CONFESSION" BEFORE PILATE

--MAY 28.--JOHN 18:28-40; 1 TIM. 6:13.--

"I find no fault in him."--John 19:4.

PILATE, the Roman governor of Judea, had in his hands the power of life and death. The Jewish Sanhedrin was permitted to govern the country in a religious way, according to Jewish law and custom, but had no power to order public execution. Apparently they did have the power to stone to death for blasphemy (the charge on which they condemned Jesus) as in the case of Stephen (Acts 7:58); and hence we may suppose that they had such a power in respect to Jesus, but failed to exercise it lest the people should resent

the injustice. Moreover, quite possibly they realized the wide influence already attained by his teachings, and desired to make his execution as public and as disgraceful as possible--to the intent that his followers might be chagrined and humiliated, as well as himself, because few would care to confess themselves disciples of one who had been publicly executed as a criminal,--condemned by both civil and ecclesiastical judges. Thus they hoped to nip in the bud the new system of religious teaching, which, if it continued, would evidently

entirely subvert their own influence with the people. Thus unwittingly these evil-doers were carrying out the very arrangements foreordained of God--and doing so in the full exercise of their own evil volition.

As already noted, the formal condemnation of our Lord before the Jewish Sanhedrin occurred at dawn, five to six o'clock, and immediately they hurried him to Pilate's judgment hall, intent on getting him into the hands of the Roman soldiers for execution at the earliest possible moment, so that the multitudes might realize his case as beyond the power of their intervention. Nor had the Jewish rulers any particular reason to suspect that Pilate would hesitate at all to order an execution. Pilate seems to have had a reputation for cruelty. Philo speaks of "his corruption, his acts of insolence, his habit of insulting the people, his cruelty, his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never-ending and most grievous inhumanity at all times--a man of most ferocious passions, very merciless as well as very obstinate." Apparently the rulers of the Jews had frequent cause to appeal to Pilate to be merciful, and generally without effect; they seem to have taken for granted that if any prisoner were brought to him with a request for execution he would take pleasure in complying.

We are reminded of our Lord's words to the Pharisees, "Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity," when we read that these very persons who murderously were scheming for the destruction of the Just One would not enter into Pilate's judgment hall, "lest they should be defiled," and thus be hindered from celebrating the Passover. How wretchedly inconsistent and hypocritical they were! They feared that Pilate's judgment hall, being under jurisdiction of the Gentiles, might have in it some *leaven* (a symbol of sin), and realized not that the real leaven of sin had permeated and thoroughly saturated their own hearts--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife.

What a lesson the Lord's people have here: for we are to remember that these heart-corrupted conspirators were the professed holiness people of their day and church. While it is not in the power of any to-day to crucify the Lord and put him to an open shame, it is within our power to put to shame, to crucify, his "brethren" --the members of his body. And we fear that some to-day are doing this with as much self-deception as was exercised by these chief priests and Pharisees who secured our Lord's crucifixion. True, the Pharisees knew not what they did, as Peter says, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3:17.) And so likewise to-day any who put to shame the members of "the body of Christ" probably are ignorant of what they do. Nevertheless they put themselves under the Lord's sentence, "It were better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea." (Luke 17:2.) Let us each therefore beware, and keep the heart, out of which are the issues of life.

Had the hearts of those Pharisees been in proper condition, full of love of righteousness and truth, and appreciative of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, they could not have made the mistake of rejecting and crucifying the Lamb of God. Similarly, those who have the spirit of love for the brethren will be hindered from becoming in any manner their persecutors. Only such can properly eat of the antitypical Passover.

The Roman governor, knowing of the peculiar custom of the Jews in respect to their Passover time, accommodated himself to their theory and had his chair of state brought outside the judgment hall to what was known as the Place of the Pavement, an elevated platform. Jesus was called up on this platform for examination, while the Jews standing outside of the unhallowed ground made known to Pilate their accusations. They evidently expected that the mere presentation of Jesus as a prisoner for crucifixion would be sufficient. Apparently they had not even expected to be required to make an accusation; hence their answer, "If he were not a malefactor [evil-doer] we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Some have suggested, in harmony with the character of Pilate and his probable disrespect for the Pharisees, that his question rather was, "What accusation do you bring against him?" as tho he would give the implication that Jesus rather had ground for making accusation against the Pharisees--which of course was the case. The hardened Roman no doubt had become an expert reader of human character, and could readily see that there were no criminal features in our Lord's countenance, and many in those of his accusers.

To the surprise of the priests and Pharisees, Pilate turned Jesus over again to them, saying in substance, This is some petty religious quarrel with which I care to have nothing to do; take the prisoner and do with him according to your own laws and customs--

imprisoning him, or causing him to be beaten, or whatever you may think proper, according to your law. But, thirsting for our Lord's death, his persecutors revealed their real condition of heart, saying, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Hard, cruel, unmerciful tho he was, Pilate realized the true situation--that the guilty were pursuing the innocent to death. That he might have the better opportunity for thinking quietly, and also for hearing what Jesus would say in self-defence, Pilate left the Jews and called Jesus unto him into the judgment hall, where they conversed. There must have been something very striking in our Lord's personal appearance to have caused Pilate to consider for a moment the rejection of the demands of the Jewish Court or Sanhedrin, for altho he had full power of life and death it was incumbent upon him, as his first duty, to preserve the peace and tranquility of his dominion; and this implied that in a general way at least he must keep on the popular side, especially when the popular side embraced the chief men of the province, and particularly when those chief men desired the execution of one whom they denounced as a disturber of the peace. Pilate's position was in many respects a delicate one: he must please the government at Rome, and he must avoid unnecessary disputes with the local authorities, who in the present instance were evidently so determined that they would have created a general disturbance rather than that their evil scheme should come to naught. The fact is that six years later these people did send to the Roman Emperor such complaints against Pilate as secured his removal.

Alone with Jesus, Pilate's question was, "Art thou King of the Jews?" The Jews had not made such a charge against Jesus; indeed, they were far from wishing to acknowledge the Galilean as King of the Jews, or as being thus recognized by any number; they had thus far merely charged that Jesus was an evil-doer, an insurrectionist, whose death was necessary to the peace of the nation. It would seem therefore that Pilate had previously heard from some quarter about the riding of Jesus on the ass, and as being hailed by the people as the Son of David a few days previously. That this was not part of the accusation of the Jews seems evident from our Lord's reply to Pilate, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Are you an interested inquirer after the truth on this subject, or are you merely calling up a matter of which you have heard? Pilate's reply, "Am I a Jew?" was tantamount to saying, What do I know about your Jewish hopes and expectations? I am the Roman governor, and if you are a king it is your own nation and its chief representatives that have delivered you to me. What have you done, if you are their king, that makes your subjects thus disloyal to you? Apparently there is no great danger of your exercising any power against the Roman empire; you are meek, gentle, lowly, unresisting yourself, and your people are crying out against you. King of the Jews, explain this peculiar situation!

Then Jesus explained that his Kingdom is not of this order of things, otherwise he would have servants to fight and to defend him, and would not be as at present, at the mercy of his enemies; and that his kingdom had not yet commenced. Astonished, and perhaps with some degree of sympathy for a great ruler under such humiliating conditions, Pilate asks, Do you then claim that you are a king? Our Lord answers, "Thou sayest," that is, Your statement is correct; I am a King. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."

This was the good confession which our Lord witnessed before Pontius Pilate, to which the Apostle refers. (1 Tim. 6:13.) He confessed his kingship and its divine authority. We are not to wonder that Pilate was incredulous of our Lord's claims to kingship, and that he probably thought him a fanatic. We are rather to remember that remarkably few of those who have heard of Jesus have recognized the truth of this statement that he is a *King*. How few, even amongst professed Christians, recognize the kingly office of our Lord! Many who realize that Jesus was indeed the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, and some who realize that he died for our sins, have never yet seen that he purchased not only man but the empire originally given to the first Adam. Many can realize our Lord in the attitude of Priest who fail to realize that he is also to be a King, and that throughout the Millennial age he will be a Priest upon his *throne*, "after the order of Melchizedec," his Church and Bride being associated with him and sharing in both his priestly and his kingly offices.

The priestly office speaks mercy, forgiveness and grace to help; but the kingly office is no less essential to the world's salvation--men must be *delivered* from the bondage of sin and death--and must be *ruled* with the iron rod in order to develop them and fit them for life everlasting; and all of this work belongs to him who redeemed us with his own precious blood. It is well that we remember, too, that a very large proportion of our Lord's parables related to the

Kingdom in its various stages--now embryotic, by and by to be set up with full power and authority to overthrow evil and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

This Kingdom is to be a Kingdom of truth, of righteousness and of love, working well for its subjects, and our Lord's mission at the first advent was to lay the foundation for that Kingdom by witnessing to the truth--the truth that God is both just and loving, and is willing to receive back into harmony with himself all who love truth and righteousness. <sup>(1)</sup>It was our Lord's faithfulness to the truth that brought upon him the opposition of those who were blinded by the Adversary, hence his statement that he came to bear witness to the truth is a brief statement of his mission. It was his witness to the truth that cost him his life, and it was the giving of his life in defence of the truth that constituted the redemption price. Similarly all of the Lord's followers are to bear witness to the truth--the truth in respect to God's character and plan--the features of that plan accomplished at the first advent in the redemption of the world, and the features of that plan yet to be accomplished in the second advent, in the deliverance of the world from the bondage of sin and corruption. It is such witness to the truth that is to cost all the true followers of Jesus their lives in presenting themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Let each one who hopes to be a joint-heir with the Prince of Life in the Kingdom witness to the truth--a good confession respecting the Kingdom, its foundation and ultimate superstructure in glory.

A very short discourse on such a text was quite sufficient for Pilate. He had no desire to enter into a theological discussion, which could only reflect unfavorably upon his own past record. He broke off the conversation suddenly, saying, "What is truth?"--as tho he would say, Who is truthful? Where is absolute justice to be found, absolute truth, absolute probity? And without waiting for an answer he left Jesus in the judgment hall, went forth to the Place of the Pavement, and addressed the waiting Sanhedrin and their multitude of servants and hangers-on, brought with them to give evidence of popular clamor.

Pilate announced his decision, "I find in him no fault at all." Then the Jews, fearing that their prey was about to escape, began to bethink themselves of charges to be formulated. They did not mention the charge on which they themselves had convicted Jesus, falsely, namely, blasphemy; for this would have been no crime whatever in the eyes of the Roman governor. Instead, they made three charges, viz., (1) sedition-- agitation of the people against the existing order of things; (2) that he interfered with the collection of taxes, teaching the people that it was improper to pay tribute-money to a foreign power; and (3) that he made claims of being a king.--Luke 23:2.

But now learning that Jesus' home and principal ministry was in Galilee, Pilate thought to relieve himself by referring the entire matter to Herod, who had charge of the province of Galilee, and who was then at Jerusalem, at a palace not far distant. This was the Herod who had caused the death of John the Baptist. Luke tells us (23:8) that Herod was very glad to see Jesus, for having heard much respecting him he hoped also to see some miracle performed by him. Herod questioned our Lord with many words, but received no response whatever, while the chief priests and scribes grew the more vehement in their accusations, seeing that Jesus denied nothing that they said, and that thus they were not called upon for proofs.

Herod no doubt was piqued as well as disappointed by our Lord's conduct, and unable to gain entertainment from him as expected, he and his guard took sport in mocking the Redeemer's claims of dignity and kingship.

But with a desire to return Pilate's compliment, and perhaps with some little touch of remorse of conscience in respect to the beheading of John the Baptist, Herod disposed of his responsibilities in the case by returning our Lord to Pilate. It was after our Lord's return to Pilate's judgment hall that the latter, apparently as a final effort to appease the Jews, to preserve the peace of the country, and yet to let go one whom he clearly discerned to be innocent, announced that in view of the clamor against Jesus he would cause him to be scourged, altho he found no fault in him. He evidently hoped that by the infliction of the scourging (whipping) and incidental humiliation, that the spirit of malice on the part of the accusers would be satisfied, and that they would peaceably agree to his

release. Apparently the scourging was done in some interior apartment by the Roman soldiers; and probably with the full consent of Pilate a cast-off royal robe and a crown of thorns were put upon our Lord. Evidently this proceeding would furnish amusement to the unsympathetic soldiery, and so much shame and contempt cast upon our Lord might at least satisfy his persecutors, if it did not awaken sympathy.

Acting in harmony with this thought, Pilate came again before the Jews, and caused our Lord to be led forth, weak, exhausted and miserable-looking, from the trying experiences of the night, supplemented by the painful and weakening influence of the scourging just received. With his crown of thorns and soiled purple robe he must have been a pitiable sight indeed, and yet the noble outlines of his perfect manhood must still have been striking, and no doubt suggested the words of Pilate which have echoed down the centuries since, "Behold the man!" (John 19:5.) Pilate evidently was impressed with our Lord's personality; never before had he seen so splendid a specimen of the human race. He was such an one as any people might have been glad to honor as their king. He evidently hoped that some impression would be made upon the clamoring throng which accused Jesus. But he was mistaken; they clamored so much the more, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Meantime Pilate's wife had heard of the trial and had sent Pilate word respecting her dream, and advice that he have no part in doing injury to this just person.--Matt. 27:19.

Pilate immediately said to the Jews, Take him and crucify him, if that is your law. But altho thus assured that the Roman governor would not interfere in the matter, the Pharisees hesitated about accepting the proposition; they much preferred that the crucifixion should be in the hands of the Roman governor and his soldiers, lest the friends of Jesus and the multitudes who had been healed and taught by him should come to his assistance and overpower them; hence they answered Pilate that according to their law Jesus should die, because he made himself the Son of God. They perverted the truth in their endeavor to uphold their course, for the Law did not prescribe death as a penalty for the claim of being the Son of God. Had our Lord claimed to be the Father he would have come under the terms of the death penalty for blasphemy, but there was no such penalty, nor was it blasphemy, to call himself, as he did, the Son of God.

When Pilate heard of this he was the more alarmed. The features of Jesus were impressive of themselves, but if one possessing such features made the claim of relationship to God there certainly was some ground for fear. Pilate still withstood the Jewish clamor, and sought to release our Lord. Then the Jews, as a last resort, threatened Pilate by implication, crying out, "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." They thus intimated that if Pilate frustrated their designs, and refused to crucify Jesus as they demanded, they would report him to Caesar as an enemy of his empire, a succorer of seditious persons, a fosterer of rival kings in the empire. Pilate could not stand against this argument, and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying by this act, as well as in words, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." And when the Jews cried out, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," Pilate delivered him to be crucified.--Matt. 27:24,25.

We are not of those who condemn Pilate; he was a servant of the empire, charged with doing everything reasonable to preserve peace in his dominions, and only a clearly enlightened and fully consecrated saint could have been expected to do more than Pilate did for the release of Jesus. Our Lord in no sense intimated guilt on the part of Pilate. The responsibility was assumed by the Jews, and surely its penalty has rested heavily upon them and upon their children for the past eighteen centuries, and even yet their cup of anguish is not filled to the full. "Jacob's trouble" will be no unimportant one in the great time of trouble that is just approaching; but we thank God on their behalf that deliverance is nigh for them, as well as for all others of the groaning creation. How blessed the thought that when they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and wail because of him, it will not be with tears of hopeless sorrow; for the Lord "shall pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his first-born."--Zech. 12:10.

<sup>(1)</sup> Jul 21 Manna, John 18:37