

Sunday Reading.

What Then?

What then? Why, then another pilgrim's song, And then a hush of rest, divinely granted; And then a thirsty stage (ah me, so long!) And then a brook, just where it is most wanted.

-N. Y. Evangelist.

The Trial of Jesus.

A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. DR. LOHMER, ON SUNDAY, APRIL 30TH, AT CHICAGO

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I then do with Jesus, which is called Christ? They said unto him, We have no law here, but we will do as thou shalt say unto us."

no fault. The trial was a judicial murder, as undeserved as it was unmerciful.

The most conspicuous figure next to that of the victim which appears in this sad history is that of Pilate. He had come to Jerusalem as the feast of the Passover was approaching, and as it might be necessary to prevent outbreaks and preserve order among a hostile population greatly augmented by the throngs who came from the provinces to participate in the solemnities.

Jesus yet stands before the bar of earthly judgment. Providence has indeed reversed the decision of the courts at Jerusalem; but just as the insulting proceeding so continued even after innocence had been made perfectly manifest, so the claims of our Lord are still being sifted and scrutinized as though they had never been passed upon and allowed.

The trial-scene at Jerusalem, taken in connection with the review of its decisions by the Court of Heaven, will assist us in forming a very definite idea of the answers that should be given. It shows us what corrupt humanity did with Him, what Jesus did with Himself, and what was ultimately done with Him and for Him by Providence, and so teaches us, both by light and shadow, how we also should deal with Him.

The rulers of Israel sacrificed Him to their religious prejudices and preconceived ideas. He antagonized with their conceptions of the Messiah, and with their estimate of their own standing before God. As they could not answer His teachings they determined to crucify Him. They did not examine, test, and weigh them; they preferred the more sanguinary method of terminating debate.

cherished theory which His character or doctrine apparently jeopardizes, insult His memory, slander the good name of His mother, and make Him out either an arrogant impostor or a weak enthusiast. Like Shelley, we may crucify Him afresh in our poetic frenzy; like Renan, we may deck Him out in the mockery of kingly garments; and like Voltaire, we may take up the insane cry of sans culotte, "crush the wretch."

Pilate seems desirous of acting with greater fairness; but in the end he succumbs to motives of self-interest and political policy, what the rulers demanded, infatuated as they were by prejudice. Pilate tried to do several things with Jesus before he finally surrendered Him to the voracious mania of His enemies.

That is, Pilate thinks he can abandon Jesus to scorn and suffering without personal guilt by merely washing his hands that should and could have protected Him. Possibly he imagined that this parade and display of horror would overawe the enemies of Jesus, and constrain them to let Him go.

Neither could He be exchanged, and a little hand washing could not in any wise avail to cleanse the soul that rejected Him. Humanity to a great extent falls into the errors of Pilate. There are those who think that they settle the question of religion, especially as it is pressed on their attention by Jesus, when they determine to have nothing to do with it.

This impression deepens into conviction when we consider what Jesus did with Himself. His bearing during the trial was marked by a calm dignity and self-respect which reveal a deliberate purpose to leave no doubt in the minds of those about Him as to whence He came, and who He is.

the soldier's scarlet sash, in imitation of royalty, and in derision of His assumptions. He is just as majestic as commanding, and as Godlike when the enmity of man attempts to shame Him as when He was calmly teaching on the Mount or subduing the tempest. In every way Jesus is their superior. He seems to be more the judge than they, and they seem more like the criminal than He.

But let us inquire what Heaven has done with Him and for Him? Has Heaven justified His dealings with Himself, and has it given us reason to believe that His expectations and longings have been realized? When the angels came to perform their humble part in the resurrection, and Heaven broke the seal of the tomb, it was practically declared that the appeal which the murdered man had taken to the highest tribunal had been heard, and the unjust sentence forever revoked and cancelled.

It has exalted Him to dominion over the thoughts and lives of millions, and to greater power over the human conscience than the mightiest monarch ever swayed over the body. It has given Him conquests in every corner of the world, and enabled Him to subdue the vicious and reduce the lost. Equally significant has been His dealings with the men who accomplished His violent death.

Another lady the wife of an avowed infidel of strong, cultivated mind, and full of self-complacency, and an inveterate hater of Christianity. The lady—and she was such in every good sense of the word—attended some revival meetings that were being held near her residence, and experienced a radical change, which led to a consecration of her superior nature and abilities to Christ and His cause; and only the ordinance that symbolized entire consecration could satisfy her spiritually enlightened mind.

In view of its decision, "What," let me ask, "should we do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" Why, do with Him what Providence itself has done. Defend Him from His adversaries, and what is of more importance, exalt Him to his true place in your affections and life. Trust Him, for He is worthy; love Him, for He is deserving; follow Him, for He is all-sufficient. This is His right, this is your duty.

Three Illustrations.

NUMBER ONE.

The wisdom and safety of prompt, implicit obedience to divine commands. Miss A. was a somewhat advanced maiden lady, who made her home with a married sister, Mrs. B., whose husband was decidedly irreligious, and consequently specially opposed to the teachings and practices of the Baptist church, of which his wife was a member.

Miss A. had been some years a member of a Congregational church, but taught by the Word and Spirit of God, became fully convinced that she had not been baptized, and hence applied for admission to the Baptist church.

Mr. B. was much disturbed by her action, and said and did foolish things.

The sisters treated him kindly, heard what he had to say, prayed much for him, and moved right forward in the line of duty. When the hour for baptism arrived judge of their surprise in seeing Mr. B. with his horse and cutter at the door, ready to take them to the place for baptizing.

Monday forenoon he called on the pastor of the church under deep, pungent conviction of sin, and inquired "if such a wicked creature could be saved, and if so, how?" Results: conversion, baptism, and over forty years of Christian living. He still lives; together the sisters, I doubt not, walk together on the banks of the river of life, drink from its exhilarating waters, and feast upon the fruit of those evergreen trees. He will soon be with them.

NUMBER TWO.

Mrs. C. was a lovely, much beloved lady; especially beloved by her husband and family. Mr. C. was an upright, honorable merchant; but somewhat strangely, although the son of a worthy Baptist deacon, he had imbibed a strong prejudice against gospel baptism.

Mrs. C. felt it her duty to follow Christ in the ordinance. He was much excited, a d d talked and conducted quite unlike himself; but the gentle, affectionate wife turned her eyes from him, nor the wife. Constrained by the love of Christ, she moved straight on toward the baptismal font.

He was amazed, confounded, convicted, converted, and her baptism having been providentially delayed, the same hour witnessed their united, joyous assent to the baptismal oath of allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

NUMBER THREE.

Another lady the wife of an avowed infidel of strong, cultivated mind, and full of self-complacency, and an inveterate hater of Christianity.

The lady—and she was such in every good sense of the word—attended some revival meetings that were being held near her residence, and experienced a radical change, which led to a consecration of her superior nature and abilities to Christ and His cause; and only the ordinance that symbolized entire consecration could satisfy her spiritually enlightened mind. When she informed her husband of her purpose to be baptized he was fairly enraged, and when his efforts to change her purpose availed nothing, as a last resort he told her, with a fearful oath, "If that preacher takes you into the river, I will shoot him." He was a noted marksman, and the place of baptizing was within easy rifle distance from his residence. But she moved right on in obedience to her new Lord and Master. Knowing well the man and the threat he had made, some of us watched the house somewhat closely as the man of God led her into the water, but he was not to be seen.

Three weeks from that time that man related his Christian experience to the church, and now mark well what he said; "I have been an infidel. I believed all religion to be fanaticism or hypocrisy. I occasionally heard a sermon, held many arguments with Christians, but they did not change my views in the least. Why, then, am I here to-day? My wife, my noble wife, under God, has brought me here. Eleven years we have lived together, and in all that time she has never, until three weeks since, deliberately crossed my wishes; and when, with the meekness

and gentleness of a dove, she moved forward in what she believed to be the path of duty, despite my anger and oaths and threatenings, the conviction was forced upon me that she was influenced by something to which I was an entire stranger."

Now suppose that in either of these cases there had been a yielding to fear, or an attempt to please by compromise, how different would have been the results. These three strong men were won to Christ and heaven by the consistent course of those they strongly opposed. Surely prompt and implicit obedience is not only wise and safe, but largely influential for good.—C. W. in Watchman.

Waiting.

Many are to be found in our churches who know the truth and approve it. They mean one day to be decided followers of Christ; but at present something hinders them. Is this your state of soul?

Listen to me while I press upon your conscience a simple question. Do not turn away from it; sit down and answer it if you can. What are you waiting for?

Are you waiting till you are sick and unwell? Surely you will not tell me that is a convenient season. When your body is racked with pain, when your mind is distracted with all kinds of anxious thoughts, is this a time to begin the mighty work of acquaintance with God?

Are you waiting till you have leisure? And when do you expect to have more time than you have now? Every year you live seems shorter than the last; you find more to think of and to do, and less power and opportunity to do it. And, after all you know not whether you may live to see another year. Boast not yourself of to-morrow—now is the time.

Are you waiting till your heart is perfectly fit and ready? That will never be. It will always be corrupt and sinful—a bubbling fountain, full of evil. Delay not. Better begin as you are.

Are you waiting till the devil will let you come to Christ without trouble? That will never be. If you would be saved, you must fight for it?

Are you waiting till the gate is wide? That will never be. It will not alter. It is wide enough for the chief of sinners, if he comes in a humble and self-abased spirit. But it there is any little sin you are resolved to give up, you will never, with all your struggling, get in.

And are you waiting because some few Christians are inconsistent, and some few professors fall away? Hear the word of the Lord Jesus, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

Oh, lingering friend, are not your excuses broken reeds? Are not your reasonings and defences unprofitable and vain? Be honest; confess the truth. You have no good reason for waiting. This day I charge you to throw away indecision; wait no longer; be decided for Christ, lest waiting your soul should be lost—forever lost.—Rev. J. C. Ryle.

Good Enough Weather.

"If a long season of inclement weather is not sufficient excuse for my failing to plant more than four Sunday-schools during the past month, then I can offer no other," writes a Southern missionary. "No complaints, however, about the weather," he adds, "for I shall not soon forget a little rebuke I received a short time ago while stopping to warm and take shelter from a storm in a freedman's humble home."

"What a dreadful day this is!" escaped my lips as I greeted old Aunt Judy on entering her cabin-door. "Bras de Lord, honey," said she; "don't ebery ting come from de Lord? Den it ye is a Christon de wedder is good 'nuff for ye; and if ye ain't no Christon de wedder is more'n too good for ye."

"The harder it rained the louder did Aunt Judy sing, 'Tank de Lord for ebery ting?' "After a while the storm ceased, and, with thanks for her kindness, I put a few dimes in the hand of the pious old woman to help her get a pair of winter shoes. 'Good-bye, Aunt Judy; your short sermon is well worth a collection. Soon the cabin-door was out of sight but my pathway seemed to grow brighter, and 'de wedder has been good 'nuff' ever since."—S. S. Union Records.