

PILATE'S QUESTION.

Sunday Discourse by Dr. Chapman, the
Noted Pastor-Evangelist.

Lessons Drawn From His Failure to Secure
Salvation—Refused to Enter the
Kingdom of God.

NEW YORK CITY.—The following sermon is one prepared for publication by the Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, America's best-known evangelist, who is now preaching to overflowing congregations in this city. It is entitled "Pilate's Question," and is founded in the text, Matt. xxvii, 22: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" It would not be possible for us either to understand or appreciate this passage of Scripture without studying that which immediately precedes it, and likewise that which follows. Next to Jesus, the most important character on the scene is Pilate, who asked the above question.

One never thinks of him without a shudder, because he is one of the men who came so very near to entering the kingdom of God, and yet, after all, miserably failed. He came very near taking his place with Joseph of Arimathea and with Nicodemus. If, when he knew that Jesus was the Son of God, he had lavished his own blood to be crucified, there would have been no name in the early history of the church to outshine his. But instead of being in the presence of God to-day, he is undoubtedly in the lost world.

When Jesus passed by the cross and went through the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and made His way to the place of ascension, not far from Bethany, and left His wondering disciples. He took with Him into the sky His hands that had been pierced, His feet, through which the nails had torn their way. His side, thrust through with the spear, and against which the beloved disciple had leaned. In a word, He took with Him His body. But there was one thing He left; that hanging on the cross from His head, His hands, His feet and His broken heart the blood came trickling down, and not only stained the rocks upon Calvary, but left its mark upon the world as well, and leaving His blood there, the world is to-day responsible for it. That same blood is upon both the world and men, either for their condemnation or for redemption.

In a remarkable book which came across the seas some years ago, bearing the title of "Letters From Hell," and having as its introduction by George MacDonald, the celebrated Scotch preacher, there is a story of Pilate in the lost world stooping down to wash his hands in a running stream. He keeps on, it would seem, almost for ages, if time were measured as in this world. Some one touches him and says:

"Pilate, what are you doing?"

Lifting his hands, which become red like crimson as soon as they touch the water, he cries out with a shriek, which echoes and re-echoes throughout the world of the lost.

"Will they never be clean! Will they never be clean!"

Poor Pilate! they never will, for the blood of the Son of God is on them for condemnation forever. He began to wash his hands when he said to the angry mob:

"Take ye Him, and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

He is still washing his hands to-day, but in vain.

There are special ways of treating texts of Scripture, one of the easiest of which is to take certain words in the verse and emphasize them, and make each word define the outline of the sermon. My text can be treated in this way, and the first word to emphasize would be:

"WHAT."

Reading the text with this in mind we find it saying:

"What shall I do then with Jesus?"

The inference is we must do something. We can not be indifferent. The man who says that he will not accept Christ, neither will he reject him, has rejected Him in the very position he takes. There is no middle ground in this matter. We are either for Christ or against Him, and we must decide which position it shall be.

The next words to emphasize would be:

"SHALL I DO."

The particular part of the expression that is emphatic is the personal pronoun "I."

Religion is a very personal matter, and judgment will be, too. There is no one whose eyes shall light upon this printed word but who shall one day be called to an account for his rejection of the Son of God if he fails to acknowledge Him before men. Rich and poor, high and low, wise and ignorant, for all comes the question, "What shall I do?"

The next emphatic word would be:

"THEN."

It might be used in two ways. We have made a choice between two things, and choosing one then it naturally follows that we must do something with the other. It is easy to understand that choosing one implies the rejection of the other. But it might also be taken as a word describing some future time, and I would like to have it mean, "What shall I do in the day of judgment with Jesus Christ?" When the moon shall be turned into blood and the sun shall be black as the sackcloth of hair, when the "elements shall melt with fervent heat"—"What shall I do then?"

In the sixth chapter of Revelation we read that in the last day men shall cry out and say to the rocks and hills: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" But in the closing part of Revelation we are told that there will be no rocks and no hills to fall upon the lost, and shut out the vision of the face of the Son of God, and they must see Him whether they will or not. Him whom they have deliberately turned away.

The next emphatic word is the name Jesus. "What shall I do then WITH JESUS?"

That was His earthly name, and described His earthly life. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," and His earthly life came to its climax in His sacrificial death upon the cross. To pay the penalty of sin His life was given up; and if we fail to accept Him as a personal Saviour, we deliberately take our stand with those who have nailed Him to the cross. When we stand before God we shall be called to an account for the chiefest of sins, "for to reject the Son of God is to crucify Him afresh."

His last word to emphasize would be:

"CHRIST."

As Christ He stands at the right hand of God, our Mediator and Advocate. For fear that some one should say, "If I should become a Christian, I could not hold out," God seems to sweep away every false argument and false hope when He tells us that after we have accepted Him as Jesus, He becomes Christ for us, and takes His stand at God's right hand, pleading for us in our weakness, and ever bringing to our remembrance His atoning death, that our many sins may be washed away and forgotten.

But another outline has also been suggested as being a proper one to grow out of this text. The Rev. R. A. Torrey has made the suggestion that there are certain things that naturally depend upon what we do with Jesus. Of these I make brief mention.

I. Our acceptance before God depends upon what we do with Jesus. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John iii: 18.

If we accept Jesus, God accepts us. If we reject Jesus, God rejects us. These are short sentences, but each one is worth a lifetime of study. The vilest sinner in the world accepting Christ is immediately accepted of God. The most upright man rejecting Christ is instantly rejected of God. The moment we accept we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. The justification is more than pardon, for in pardon there may still be the memory of sin, but when God justifies He "remembers against us our transgressions no more forever."

II. Our becoming sons of God depends upon what we do with Jesus. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John i: 12.

There is a very insidious kind of heresy making its way through the world to-day, which declares there is such a thing as the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man; that God is the father of all His creatures, and that every man is His brother. This is certainly contrary to the Scriptures. We become sons of God not by the lives we live, or by doing good, nor by reading the Bible, nor by praying without ceasing, but we become God's sons by regeneration. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, and it wrought those who were born again by faith in Jesus Christ as a Saviour. It is not possible for us in any other way to come into this world than to be born into it; it is not possible for us ever to enter the kingdom of God except by the new birth. This constitutes us children of God.

III. Our having peace depends upon what we do with Jesus Christ. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans v: 1.

When we remember that peace is the opposite of confusion, of strife, of unrest, we are able to see how great is the blessing which comes to us by the acceptance of God's Son. We do not think of peace as simply an emotion. It is not an experience, but it is that which comes to us with the presence of Christ. He is our peace, and whatever may be a man's position in the world, if he has rejected Christ, or (in other words) if he has failed to accept Him, he must go forever throughout the world crying, "peace, peace," but for him there can be no peace.

IV. Our having joy depends upon what we do with Christ. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter i: 8.

We also remember the words of Jesus when He said: "These words have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Joy is better than happiness. People of the world may have happiness, but only God's children possess joy. Happiness is that which happens to come to us, and those who lay hold upon it are dependent upon their circumstances and surroundings. Joy has nothing to do with circumstance or surroundings, but comes to us because of our faith in Him who ever lives to pour out upon His people His own presence and blessing.

V. Our having eternal life depends upon what we do with Jesus. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not have life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii: 36.

By nature we have the flesh with us, and we shall always have it with us until our redemption bodies are bestowed upon us. It is natural therefore that there should be a constant warring between the life of God which comes in regeneration and the old nature which is at enmity with God and always will be, but it is a great joy to know that we may every one of us surrender ourselves to Him who is our life, that the old nature shall be put down and held in subjection, and we ourselves "be more than conquerors."

Finally, let me say that there are three sentences which ought to be written plainly before every one who is to make this decision, or who fails to make it.

First. We must either accept Him or reject Him.

Second. We must either let Him come into our hearts, or we must shut the door and keep Him out.

Third. Whosoever confesses Him or denies Him, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in heaven." Matt. x: 32, 33.

There is no middle ground. God pity us if to-day we turn away from Him, for:

IT MAY BE THE LAST TIME!

The Need of Tenderness.

The grace of tenderness, for it is a grace, should be cultivated for its own sake as well as its invaluable aid in our service for the Master. True tenderness modulates the voice, illuminates the face and presents the word of life in a spirit of gentleness, which wins a hearing for even unwelcome truths. The world is in need of just such tenderness as was manifested by our Lord, and we as His disciples can render no better service to Him than reflecting His tender sympathy as we pass along life's journey.

People long for tenderness. Harsh measures never won a soul to higher things. Sympathy is the magic key by which we may gain access to hungry, aching hearts. Tenderness may be developed by studying the character of our Master. He recognized the innermost longings of wearied mankind, and met this yearning with infinite tenderness and pity. Surely we as His followers should imitate Him to the best of our ability along this line. Let us determine by the help of the Holy Spirit never to be betrayed into harshness. The world is hard and cold enough without you and I adding to its burden. Rather let us seek by tenderness and sympathy to aid some soul to reach a firmer foundation, and bring joy and peace to some little corner of earth.—George D. Gelwick.

Good Cheer in Religion.

It is a happy thing to live. It is a happy thing to die. Our religion has the promise of the life that now is and also of that which is to come. It makes the world ours and all things in it. We rejoice in its beauty and its joys, the laughter of little children, the love of young men and maidens, the grave friendship of the old, the confidence of life, and the calm and trust which belong to all. Our religion now tells us to look upon these and all the beautiful things of life, and to take them, holding them in holiness as the happy gifts of our glad God. And, above all these, and in all these, Christ is now revealed to us. He was and He will be. Yes, and He is. No other day ever set Him so high or loved Him so dearly. To be sure, there is enough that is dark still, and the shadows could be drawn heavily, sadly, but this hour let us see the sunshine and play in it. The Lord Christ! He is the good cheer of religion to-day, as He has been in all days. If our good cheer is better and cheerier than any of old, it is because we see Him more clearly and love Him more dearly because we have gone a little further in making our life His and Him our life.—Congregationalist.

Rewards of Life.

The man who sees in life the opportunity to express himself in the largest terms who after ascertaining what facilities he has determines to develop them to the highest possible efficiency, who is capable of seeing the sweetness and joy that lie all about him, who, being proud, does not allow his pride to make him deaf, he is the one who obtains the big rewards, the big successes.—Mental Growth and Control.

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PATENTS AND PENSIONS GRANTED.

Lost His Life in a Burning Stable—Sixty Head of Cattle Perish in a Fire—Minister Sees for Showmen—Wanted to End Her Life—Six Showmen Injured—K. G. E. to Go to Johnston—Other News.

New pensioners: Hugh Beatty, Pittsburg, \$12; Albert Ackerman, Sayre, \$10; Frederick Carson, Moshannon, \$12; Geo. Wolfert, Rebersburg, \$10; William W. Miles, Tyrone, \$10; Harrison B. Wilson, Strattonville, \$12; Reuben H. Baker, Washington, \$10; John Tyler, Kames Creek, \$10; John W. Hoke, Laurelville, \$10; Winfield S. Kidd, Huntingdon, \$12; Chester A. Olds, State College, \$12; Samuel P. Marshall, Allegheny, \$8; John Stoup, Allegheny, \$10; John W. Stuart, State College, \$10; Gottfried Rindholz, Saxenburg, \$12; William Hardy, Mappleton Depot, \$12; Walker M. Yingling, Emonton, \$12; William D. Calkins, Kendall Creek, \$72; William H. Balmer, Grafton, \$8; Dewitt C. McCoy, Meadville, \$30; Sarah Jane Prescott, Banksville, \$8; Peter W. Swope, Julian, \$10; Edward D. Williams, Athens, \$24; Joseph White, Grove, \$7; John W. Renoff, Etna, \$12; Alfred M. Rincell, Wheeler, \$12; William A. Jewart, Sheltzer, \$7; Mary J. Wilson, Linden Hall, \$8; Juda McDonald, Towanda, \$8; Elizabeth B. Stussy, Pittsburg, \$8; Rachel Phillips, Coraopolis, \$8; Eliza M. Matheson, Sugar Grove, \$12.

Patents granted: Edwin J. Armstrong, Erie, governor; Gottfried Aye, Kittanning, trolley head or wheel; James H. Baker, Allegheny, metal wagon gear; Carl G. Carlson, DuBois, mechanism for securing logs to carrier chains; Francis L. Clark, Pittsburg, binding case for pamphlets, etc.; also temporary binder; William C. Clarke, Pittsburg, apparatus for purifying water; Rudolph Conrad, Erie, governor; Michael F. Crehan, Pittsburg, trolley; Edward Dithridge, Ellwood City, enameling for bath tubs; Charles W. Dixon, Pittsburg, ceiling block; John H. Felmelec, Pittsburg, wrapping machine; James L. Graham, Allegheny, valve for automatic water heater; Frank E. Grove, Franklin, typewriter copy-holder; Eugene H. King, Pittsburg, overshoe fastener; Harry W. Pennypacker, Allegheny, feather cleaning machine; George Poschman, Pittsburg, curtain pole; Henry E. Renner, Erie, pipe wrench; James J. Rylands, Millvale, valve; Samuel S. Wales, Munhall, hoisting apparatus; Frederick W. Weber, Boalsburg, stairway.

The Grand Castle of the Knights of the Golden Eagle at the recent session, selection of officers, and a place of meeting for 1903, with the following result: Johnston, 228; Easton, 41; Philadelphia, 17; Harrisburg, 10; Reading, 6. The Castle expressed its sympathy with the anthracite coal miners in the present contentions between operators and employees. The Grand Temple reported as follows: Fifteen temples were instituted during the year, making 128 in the State; the membership is 7,429. The following officers were elected: Grand Templar, Mrs. Alice Moyer, Harrisburg; grand vice-templar, Mrs. Belle Stenner, Pittston; grand marshal of ceremonies, Mrs. Ella Fox, Lancaster; grand trustees, Mrs. Nellie Hunsicker, Allentown; grand guardian of records, Mrs. Josie G. Walter, Philadelphia; grand guardian of exchequer, Mrs. Annie Rhummel, Reading.

A fire the other morning destroyed the large stable of John D. Cooper, in the rear of Hotel Wyndham, in the center of the borough, and Barney Kiley, a laborer, aged about 30 years, who slept in the second-story, was burned to death. It is supposed he accidentally caused the blaze. William Glancy, a stable man, who slept in the office, was aroused just in time to escape with his life, losing all his clothes and other possessions. Three fine horses, one cow, one buckboard, six sleighs and all the harness and other contents were consumed. The fire was burning some time before the alarm was sounded, and when the Wissahickon Fire Company, of Ambley, responded the flames were threatening the large hotel filled with guests. By prompt action, however, this property was saved, but several plate glass windows were cracked by the heat.

The large barn on the farm of I. P. Thomas, of Cheyney, was destroyed by fire, fifty-eight cows and two calves perished in the flames. The fire was discovered shortly after midnight, but the flames had gained such headway that all efforts to get out the stock or save any part of the structure were futile. The loss will reach \$18,000. The barn was one of the finest in this part of the State, and alone was worth fully \$10,000, the remainder of the loss being made up in the live stock and other stock and farming utensils.

Six canvassers were injured, three of them seriously, in a wreck of the canyass and wagon train of Forepaugh and Sells Brothers' circus at Marysville. The accident was caused by the breaking of a truck of a car carrying a large canvass wagon on which the injured men were sleeping.

The visit of Secretary Easley, of the Civic Federation, to Hazelton, and his conference with President Mitchell resulted in rumors among the miners that the anthracite strike will soon be settled by arbitration.

As a result of domestic troubles, Mrs. Eliza Ewing, of North Sewickley township, Beaver county, plunged into the Conoquesing river and was rescued with difficulty.

Rev. Edward L. McKeever has started suit against the First Baptist Church of Wayne to recover \$148.72, which he says is due him as salary. The church officials say that but \$20 is due.

Wholesale dealers in the anthracite region refused to give credit to retailers, and the latter in turn require their patrons to pay cash.

Four thousand members of a church in Hazelton took the pledge to abstain from intoxicants during the strike.

Forty thousand persons attended the services at the conference of the Church of the Brethren at Paxtong Park, near Harrisburg.

Figures from Auditor General Harndenbergh's annual report just made public show the receipts and expenditures of the State Treasury during 1901.

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