

JESUS BEFORE PILATE SUNDAY'S LESSON

"Let Us Stone Him; He Deserves No Mercy; Crooked Judge"—Ellis

MOST INFAMOUS POLTROON

Are You a Lesser Pilate? Craven Instead of Courageous? Politic Rather Than Outright?

A JUDGE FOUND GUILTY

The International Sunday School Lesson For November 22 is "Jesus and Pilate."—Matt. 27:11-31; Luke 23:1-25

There sits on Pilate, the crooked judge and politician. Let us stone him. He deserves no mercy. For he is a petty-souled tyrant, an obstinate martinet, a shifty, evasive creature. At him now, and let the stones fly. He failed the noble Roman name and law in a crisis. He played false to the human race. He sacrificed the greatest Master because of his own selfishness. Gather more stones and bigger; for this is the most infamous poltroon of history. The sneak, the shirk, the coward! Bury him beneath the mistle-leaf justice; for Pilate, with Judas, has earned an immortality of shame.

Stay! what is this word that holds back our hands? "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." What, Master, would you have us turn to examining ourselves when we have so clear and easy a mark of obloquy before us? May we not have the joy of denouncing the false judge whom the centuries have found guilty?

We confess ourselves lesser Pilates, for we too, have been supine when truth needed testifiers; we have been craven when we should have been courageous; we have been politic when we should have been outright; we have put self-interest above holy truth; we have squandered a candidate for high office who received many letters from ministers of the gospel (to their shame be the story told), asking him to contribute to various church enterprises, and to influence voters for him if he did so. All this was immediately before election, and my friend had been a mere politician, would either have made the safe or some conciliatory, evasive reply. Because he is first of all a fearless Christian man, my friend straightway wrote to every such correspondent a clear-cut rebuke, pointing out that the proposal was a violation of the corrupt practices act. Perhaps he lost some votes thereby; but he retained his manhood.

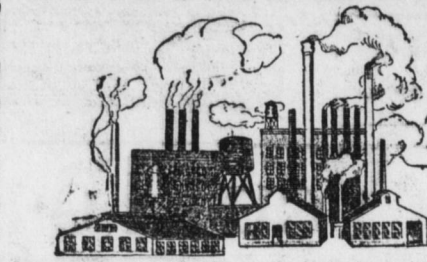
That instance occurs to me in contrast with the conduct of Pilate, who was essentially a politician, caring more for his place than for his honor. If it had been convenient and politic, he would have freed Jesus, in accordance with the failure of the Jews to make out a legal case against the prisoner. But he was ruled by the mob spirit; he always chose the majority side. He wanted to be popular with the Jews—though all the while he was offending them—and most of all he craved the favor of Caesar.

Ah, Pilate, you may ostentatiously wash your hands of responsibility for your own treason to your trust and your manhood, but the stain still remains, red and glaring, for all the world to see. Your character was not up to the level of your office. Time has judged you as a judge, and found you blackly guilty.

The Strong Man Stands Forth It has not been uncommon, throughout history, for the real culprit to be sitting on the bench, while the judge is in the prisoner's dock. With all Pilate it remains true that the judgments they render judge the judge. Really, Pilate was on trial before Jesus; even as all of us who, called to sit in inevitable judgment upon the Christ, find ourselves being judged by our verdict.

In shining contrast to the shifty, timorous Roman potentate, a weakling in character, stands the strong, serene and silent Saviour. What a man was there! Daring to treat with silent contempt both Herod and Pilate on their thrones. Anybody who looks with discriminating eye upon this scene in the Roman pretorium in Jerusalem must say of Jesus, "There was a man." In a sense that Pilate did not intend, he may repeat "Ecce Homo!"

In an unconventional but rugged bit of verse Ezra Pound has drawn a picture of the Master as "The



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Goody Fere," Fere" meaning mate, or comrade. The lines are put into the mouth of rough Simon Zelotes, after the crucifixion.

"Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all For the priests and the gallowes tree? Aye lover he was of braveny men, O' ships and the open sea.

"Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears And they scorn of his laugh rang free, 'Why took ye not me when I walked about Alone in the town?' says he.

"Oh we drank his 'Hale' in the good red wine When we last made company, No capon priest was the Goody Fere, But a man o' men was he.

"I ha' seen him drive a hundred men WI' a bundle o' cords swung free, That they took the high and holy house For their pawn and treasury.

"They'll no' get 'n' in a book, I think, Though they write it cunningly; No mouse of the scrolls was the Goody Fere, But aye loved the open sea.

"If they think they ha' snared our Goody Fere They are fools to the last degree, 'I'll go to the feast,' qu' our Goody Fere, 'Though I go to the gallows tree.'

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind, And wake the dead,' says he, 'Ye shall see one thing to master all: 'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree.'

"A son of God was the Goody Fere That bade us his brothers be, I ha' seen him cow a thousand men, I ha' seen him upon the tree.

"He cried no cry when they drove the nails And the blood gushed hot and free, The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue But never a cry cried he.

"I ha' seen him cow a thousand men On the hills o' Galilee, They whined as he walked out calm WI' his eyes like the grey o' the sea.

"Like the sea that brooks no voyaging With the winds unleashed and free, Like the sea that he covered Generet WI' t'wey words spoke' suddenly.

"A master on men was the Goody Fere.

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Fere, A mate of the wind and sea, If they think they ha' slain our Goody Fere They are fools eternally.

"I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb Sin' they nailed him to the tree."

The Politicians And The Rabble "Look for the motive," is a good rule to follow in judging actions. Back of this whole procedure at Pilate's judgment seat lay the scheming of adroit ecclesiastical politicians, who were using the time-serving judge to satisfy their own envy and revenge. These men who so coolly forewore a man's life were exceedingly solicitous to keep ceremonially clean, because of the Passover. They sedulously conserved their church standing while at the same time they sought to slay the man who spoke the truth.

Adroitly, skillfully, they played their deadly politics, alternately working upon the unsuspecting rabble and upon the job-holding judge. The voice that cried "Away with him! Crucify him!" was the voice of the multitude; but the words were the words of the priests and Pharisees. Obviously, the strong man who uses weaker men to accomplish reprehensible ends is more guilty than the one who dares to do his evil work alone.

Pilate, the lever that was used was his overmastering solicitude to favorite devices of the devil. If men were as much afraid of offending God as they are of losing their jobs, there would be more out-and-out manhood in public life and in private business. These crafty old villains from the temple precincts had only to whisper, "If thou release this man thou art not Caesar's friend," to bring Pilate to heel like a whimpering dog. He saw through their plot, but, being a coward, he was helpless.

For the charge that caused Jesus to be convicted was not one against himself, but an implied charge against Pilate. Before the Jewish tribunal Jesus had been charged with blasphemy. That was no offense against Roman law, so before Pilate He was charged with treason. That was a capital crime, and he took a hint of a charge against Pilate's own loyalty to bring Jesus to the cross.

The Best a Man Can Do With a procedure more oriental than Roman, Pilate, after declaring he found no fault with the prisoner, permitted him to be scourged and mocked, and ultimately crucified. Craftily, at one stage in the trial he sought to evade responsibility by sending Jesus to Herod, whose court made sport of him, without provoking a word of response.

Driven to desperation by the rabble's choice of a robber to be set free, instead of Jesus (for Pilate had weakly put the matter up to the crowd), Pilate cried out in his perplexity, "What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" That is the question of questions. It is the most important interrogation that has ever been asked of a human being; and every one of us must face it. Upon our answer to that depends our life-philosophy and our life-conduct; and our weal for two worlds.

Place alongside of Pilate's fearful question the bold affirmation of Jesus: "To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. That is the immortal spirit of man asserting its highest prerogative. No higher function is possible to mortal or immortal than to bear witness to the truth. By word, by pen, by vote, by life, by suffering, by death, if need be, man must, by a divine compulsion, bear witness to the highest truth he knows. In this exercise he may die, but he will not die crowned. This passion of loyalty to the truth needs cultivation, especially among youth, in these sophisticated, material days. The glory of suffering

for truth's sake is a heritage which Christ hands on to the world from the judgment hall of Pilate, who loved place more than he loved truth.

THE TERRIBLE FURIES OF WAR Europe to-day is a colossal, blood-soaked battlefield—a scene of universal carnage and waste. The flowers of Europe's manhood is being mowed down by awful engines of destruction. Whole regions will be left decimated and bloody. Tens of thousands of unmarked graves will shelter the corpses of husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, whose smiles and affection and support will never be known again. In every hamlet and town homes will be shattered and left desolate, with widows and wondering orphans weeping by their bereaved firesides.

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WARRIOR EAGLE POWWOW The annual powwow of Warrior Eagle tribe, No. 240, Improved Order of Red Men, will be a Thanksgiving eve feature. A banquet will be served to all members at the wigwam, Veterans and Fulton streets. Toasts and talks by the following officers will make up the evening's entertainment: H. O. Burnett, past great sachem; Charles Willets, past great sachem; and Charles Pass, great sachem of the State.

HIGHEST ART One of the most satisfactory statues of Christ is the famous one in the "Lady Church" of Copenhagen by Thorwaldsen. At first the sculptor modeled the figure with the hands clasped as in benediction, but a last he depressed the arms, stretching them out in an attitude of yearning eloquence. This is certainly the favorite

posture of Christ: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." That is one reason why he seemed to hesitate when Pilate pressed him for a declaration of his kingship; he was King, but he preferred to be known as Brother.—The Christian Herald.

NEW PETTICOAT MODELS The Dry Goods Economist says that the fact that many dress skirts are made from two to three and one-half yards in width is having a good effect on the petticoat market generally.

Although the newest petticoats are somewhat wider at the edge, the most radical change is in the increased depth of the flounces, which in some cases reach to the knees, although the more extreme styles are attached to a skirt yoke about ten inches below the waist.

Dark colors are largely represented in late Fall lines, as the majority of suits and dresses are made of dark-colored fabrics, such as tete de negre, mystery green, navy and the dark shades of wistaria and slate.

A pair showing of bright colors, including Roman stripes, checks and plaids, are shown in soft finish taffetas, in satins and pean de cygne. They have been bought out to wear with black dresses and suits, as a dark-colored skirt does not look well with the black outer garment. The petticoats must be in bright colors or in black.

OVERLOOKED King Edward of England was once passing in review of a great throng of school children when a little girl was seen by her teacher to be crying.

"Why are you crying?" asked the teacher. "Didn't you see the king?" "Yes," sobbed the little girl, "but he didn't see me." Here is the pre-emptory royalty of Christ, if Pilate could have understood it that while the crowds see and acclaim the Kings of earth, Christ alone, the infinite King, sees every one of the crowd, and makes his presence and power felt. Pilate was conscious of those eyes upon him, and testified of the "just person" whom he delivered to death. By this reluctant witness he gave all the acknowledgement of Christ's kingship his little soul was capable of giving.—The Christian Herald.

GOLD GLOVE BUTTONS

A fad for Tuxedo dress which is in the bud, rather in the flower, is glove buttons in gold, says the Dry Goods Economist. A celebrated New York jewelry house is just introducing it. One's monogram is engraved upon small gold buttons which may be detached from one pair of gloves and attached to another. It is an extreme idea, of course, which will not be adopted by the generality of men, but it is very smart and thus worthy of a note by a commentator upon advanced fashions.

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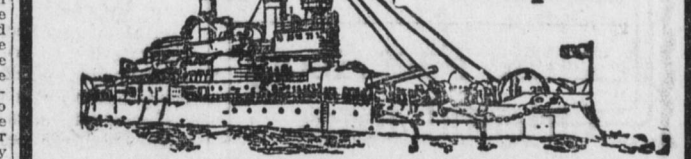
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