

haps every day, for fear of appearing too much attached to Thy service? Or have I neglected them in order not to deprive myself of worldly pleasure and satisfaction?

## II. — Thanksgiving.

"Which of the two? Barabbas or Jesus?" If this comparison was an abominable injustice on the part of Pilate, a gross outrage to Jesus, on the part of God it was a profound mystery. After all, Pilate was only a blind instrument in God's hands for the salvation of the world. Barabbas was one of those audacious robbers, notorious for his brigandage, and the terror of the country. Everyone in Jerusalem knew him, and it was not without special providence that he was just then in prison.

What is the meaning of this mystery? The character of notorious malefactor given by the Gospel to Barabbas applies perfectly to the first and notorious sinner, Adam, who was likewise guilty of the three crimes of Barabbas, namely, robbery, murder, and sedition. He was guilty of *robbery*, having yielded to the temptation of stealing from God His knowledge and unity, by aiming at becoming equal to Him: "*Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum*—You shall be as gods knowing good and evil." He was guilty of *murder*, having dealt to his posterity a double death, that of the body and that of the soul: "*In Adam omnes moriuntur*—In Adam all die." He was guilty of *sedition*, having revolted, having constituted himself the leader of rebels against the most sacred and legitimate authority, that of God. "*In quo omnes peccaverunt*—in whom all have sinned."

Again, this notorious sinner represented all the children of Adam, become sinners by the fall of their first parent and burdened, besides, with their own personal crimes.

While Pilate was placing the only Son of God and the villain Barabbas side by side, the Eternal Father from the height of His throne was regarding His well-beloved Son in chains. At the same time He cast a glance at the whole human race become the slave of hell, and represented by Barabbas. Turning His eyes upon the Son of His complacency and then upon the human race groaning in bondage, He said to Himself: "*Quem dimittam?*—Which of the two shall I deliver? This sinner or My innocent Son?" Then in an excess of love and mercy for mankind, placing on the shoulders of His Son the iniquities of us all, He condemned the Just and freed the guilty. How bright the light cast by this mystery on God's love for man!

The Heart of the Divine Master is rejoiced at undergoing this humiliation, which was to contribute in so large a measure to the salvation of the world.