

proclaims Him guilty, justly condemned to capital punishment, He would ever after have borne on His forehead the indelible mark of a notorious malefactor. Such proceeding is criminal in a judge who is acting with full knowledge of the case. Pilate knows that the Jews have delivered Jesus to him through jealousy. What need, then, to fall back on the custom and the will of the people to release his august Prisoner? Can he without crime expose Him to inevitable condemnation? The custom which authorizes the freeing of guilty man, does not permit the demanding of the life of an innocent one, to whom life belongs by all laws, human and divine. Pilate's intention may be good, but the best intentions cannot excuse wrong acts.

How humiliating for Jesus to be placed on a par with Barabbas! The Saviour of the world side by side with Barabbas and exhibited to the people! "*Which of the two?*" Pilate, to whom do you compare God? It would have been a great insult to compare Jesus with the highest of the angels, for to none of these celestial spirits has God ever said: "Thou art My Son. Sit Thou at My right hand." The descendant of David is placed beside a plebeian, the Saviour of the world is put on the same level as one of His redeemed. Still more, He is compared with a robber, a revolutionist, a murderer. The Just, *par excellence*, is compared with a villain, the Holy of holies with the greatest criminal that could be found in the prisons of Jerusalem! Could it be possible to inflict a greater dishonor on the infinite sanctity of Jesus? How His Heart must have suffered!

But this was not all. Jesus felt at that moment all the affronts that men have offered Him from age to age, above all, in His Sacrament of Love. Sin is really only this, Jesus weighed in the balance with our interests, our passions, our idols—and what idols!

Yes, Barabbas stands for every evil passion, every pleasure contrary to divine will, every creature that resists the Creator. How often have I weighed His law with libertinism, good with evil, virtue with vice! Whenever the demon proposed to me some sensual satisfaction, whenever the world tempted me to its pleasures and that, slow and slothful, in repulsing the temptation, I voluntarily examined whether it would be better to please God by observing His holy law or to satisfy my passions like Pilate. I compared Jesus with Barabbas, the Saviour with Satan! I weighed the Sovereign Good with a vile pleasure, with a miserable gratification of the moment! "*Which of the two?*"

How often, O Jesus, through human respect have I refused Thee in Thy Divine Sacrament the honor to which Thou hast a right! How often through human respect have I hesitated to make the double genuflection before Thy Host! Have I not omitted Communions that I had permission to make every eight days, per-