

5. It will fill us with profound concern for social evils and abuses, lest through positive sin against society, or negative unconcern for their presence, the blood of men should lie at our door.

6. It will deepen our own personal character. We will ask, Who are the men that count? What are the lives that tell? and we will see that it is none other than the life that constitutes itself, by the grace of God, a keeper of others.

7. It will become a call to a holier and more absolute dedication of ourselves.

Thomas à Kempis once wrote: "Love feels no burden, regards no labor, is willing to do more than it is able, pleads not the impossible, because it feels that it can and may do all things."

But it must first absorb God's love. No one can through contact bring good to his fellows, or add grace to life, or kindly thought, or a deepening courage for darkening skies, or a glimpse of brighter skies beyond the gathering mists, who has not first sought the heavenly afflatus for his own life. There is no true outward reach which has not been born of the upward look.

Vancouver, B.C.

Are We Pilates ?

Pilate, Roman governor of Judea, may be summed up in one word,—*shifty*. That is the last adjective for a governor. It is the last adjective for a Roman. It is almost the last adjective for any man who aims at manliness.

Pilate's conduct, throughout the central crisis in the history of this world, was a series of attempted shifts.

He tried to shift action. First, he tried to shift it upon the Jews. "Take Him yourselves", he urged, "and judge Him according to your law." But the Jews would not. Second, he tried to shift it upon Herod, desperately breaking through a quarrel in order to do so. "He is of your jurisdiction", he insisted, "and not of mine." But Herod sent Him back, with his compliments.

He tried to shift the sin. "I find no fault in Him", he pleads; "Herod finds no

fault in Him. He has done no wrong, and does not deserve death. Let me therefore flog Him, and let Him go." As if, when a man had done no wrong, it was right to punish him, even though the punishment was shifted from the cross to the whip! But the Jews would not agree.

Then Pilate tried to shift attention to another prisoner. "Shall I release Jesus, or Barabbas?" he asked. But the animosity of the Jews was not to be shifted. "Barabbas!" they shouted.

Pilate attempted to shift conviction. "Why prate of truth?" he sneered. "What is truth? There is no truth. All men are liars. The world is false. Life is hollow. God is a sham. There is no right, and so there is no wrong." But, all the time, he had a conscience, and he knew that truth existed, and God, and penalty.

Finally, at the end of his rope, Pilate tried to shift responsibility. He took a basin—pitiable ceremony!—and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous Man: see ye to it." And all the people agreed, "His blood be on us."

Christ knew Pilate's weakness. "Sayest thou this of thyself?" he asked, implying that words could easily be put in the governor's mouth.

Pilate's wife knew his weakness, and sent him a command: "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous Man."

And the worst of it, of all this open shame, was that it was utterly useless. For action cannot be shifted. Even not to act, when action is duty, is equivalent to action. Conviction cannot be shifted. The heart knows. And responsibility cannot be shifted. The Jews were responsible; but Pilate also, none the less. No man can assume another man's responsibility.

Are we Pilates? There is no Christ before us.

Ah, but there is! He is before us in His poor, His prisoners, His oppressed! Are you trying to shift your responsibility for these on some one else? Are you yielding to sloth and cowardice? Then you are a Pilate, and you are crucifying the Son of God afresh.—Amos R. Wells, in Bible Miniatures