

was a loyal disciple, and only wanted to lead Jesus to show his power. Christ's words are conclusive on this point: "One of you is a devil." "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

After their own decision was reached, the Jews delivered Jesus to Pilate. And it is significant that the word Matthew uses in verse 2nd of this chapter to express the Jews' surrender of Christ to Pilate is the same in the original as that which he uses in verse 3rd to describe Judas' betrayal of Christ to the Jews. They literally betrayed their Messiah into the hands of the Gentiles, and with him their own nation's religious life.

We know very little about Pilate's antecedents. He became Procurator of Judæa in A. D. 26. From the very beginning of his rule, there was the bitterest hostility between him and the Jews. One of his earliest acts was to allow his legions to bring their silver eagles and other insignia into Jerusalem.

The Jews deemed this a gross profanation of their holy city, and were so incensed thereat that a great multitude of them went down to Cæsarea, and surrounded his house pleading for their removal with great tumult.

He surrounded them with his soldiers and threatened a wholesale massacre, but they replied that they preferred death to this sacrilege, and continued their entreaties for five days, when he granted their request.

On another occasion he hung some gilt shields, dedicated to Tiberius, in the Herodian palace in Jerusalem; and the Jews took this too as an offence to their religion. When he would not yield, their chief men complained to the Emperor, and he, despising the childishness, which, as Farrar says, "would risk an insurrection rather than sacrifice a whim," ordered their removal.

These diplomatic defeats Pilate avenged with wanton cruelty. Once when the mob would not disperse quietly he sent his soldiers, disguised as Jews, among them and at a given signal they assassinated a great number of both innocent and guilty. And on another occasion and for some unknown crime, he mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices.

These incidents show the relations between the governor and the governed; the one cruel and unprincipled, the other fanatical and stub-

born, and both, blood-thirsty and ready to descend to any crime to further their own designs.

But all their dealings proved that Pilate was no match for the Jews, when once their passions were aroused, and now they are determined to force him to be the instrument of their deadly hate.

Their reason for coming to Pilate at this juncture was that their Roman conquerors had taken from them the power of inflicting the punishment of death. They were allowed to try and punish smaller offences, but the Roman authorities reserved capital crimes for themselves. So, as nothing but the death of Jesus would satisfy them, they brought him to Pilate in the early morning. (John 18: 28-32.)

Evidently they expected him to pronounce the death sentence on the ground of their verdict, as was too often done in those days. But for some reason Pilate would not yield to them, and his sharp demand: "What accusation bring ye against this man?" rather astounded them. They sullenly replied: "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee," implying that he had no need to investigate further, and insinuating their wish to have their sentence acted upon.

But to this Pilate retorted: "Take ye him and judge him according to your law." If he was not to conduct the trial he would not inflict the penalty. This compelled them to acknowledge their inability to put any man to death.

Forced to specify their charges, they poured forth a perfect torrent of accusations, saying, among other things, that he was perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and, saying that he himself was Christ, a king (Luke 23: 2.) The first of these was vague and, in their sense, untrue; the second was an absolute falsehood; the third was a gross misrepresentation.

Pilate then took Jesus apart to investigate these charges. The Jews, though they feared not the guilt of innocent blood, dreaded ceremonial defilement, and so would not enter the judgment hall. But Jesus unhesitatingly followed Pilate.

2.—Pilate asked Christ if he were the King of the Jews. He therefore noticed only the