

Cesarea, but at the feasts he went up to Jerusalem to preserve order. His administration was one long battle with the religious prejudices of the Jews, in which his unscrupulous cruelty and obstinacy combined with weakness, often put him in the wrong and finally lost him his position. A Samaritan impostor summoned his countrymen to Mount Gerizim, promising to show them the sacred vessels which Moses had hidden

there. As they came armed, Pilate's soldiers fell upon them and killed many of them. They complained to the Governor of Syria, who ordered Pilate to Rome to answer the charges against him. Before he reached the capital the Emperor Tiberius died, and it is not known what became of the procurator. The stories about his banishment to Gaul and his suicide there are legends. But his name is forever infamous.

APPLICATION

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Held a consultation, v. 1. It was a conspiracy of guilt; and the guilt became the blacker thereby, for each added to his own sin and crime the further aggravation, that he was inciting others also to do wrong. It is surely enough that we should have to answer for our own transgressions. Woe indeed be to us, if we bring upon our heads the guilt also of causing our brother to transgress. The most execrated name in all the story of erring Israel was that of the king who caused Israel to sin. Shame upon us, if we use our superior strength or influence in leading those weaker than ourselves astray.

Delivered Him to Pilate, v. 1. And with Him they delivered up their own honor and truth and all claim upon the respect of honest men. More, they delivered up their nation to destruction. Just as surely, if we cast Christ out of our hearts, do we rob ourselves of all that is best and noblest in life.

Answerest thou nothing? v. 4. Silence in times of criticism and calumny is a mark of the strong man. Of Von Moltke, the great strategist of the German armies, it was remarked that he could be silent in seven languages. He was content to let his deeds speak for themselves. If people are wilfully blind to generous and noble actions, mere verbal explanations will only be doubted or misconstrued. The young girl was right, who, when subjected to ridicule and taunts for her religion, followed her Master's example of silence, and among whose clothing after her death were found these words, "He opened not His mouth," Isa. 53: 7.

Pilate marvelled, v. 5. A few years ago a foolish story was circulated in the press, of a Nova Scotian who stood at the doorstep of a church and deliberately cursed God, when lo, an icicle was loosened overhead, whirled through the air and struck the blasphemer dead upon the spot. It seemed so natural that people felt inclined to believe it. Those, however, who had deeper insight into God's ways, and remembered His wonderful patience, were not surprised to find it immediately contradicted. The Son of God, who endured the accusations of His envious foes, when He could have smitten to the ground those who uttered them, shows a like patience towards those who now defy His authority. Alas, that such patience should so often harden human hearts in their indifference and opposition instead of melting them into penitence and faith. It is in contrast with the Saviour's long-suffering, that sin appears in its true hatefulness.

One named Barabbas, v. 7. The Jewish people were really choosing between a man after their own wicked heart and the holy Messiah, whom God had sent. When a man changes his religion for worldly motives, when, like one who felt his faith interfere with his success, he says: "I'll put Jesus Christ by for a while, till I've made my fortune, and then bring Him out again;" every time one selects a church that offers social advantages, rather than one that imposes conditions of service; he is saying with the Jewish mob, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

For envy, v. 10. Envy is one of the deepest and darkest sins among those that lie hid

Black and
Blacker

The Patience
of Christ

Our Greatest
Loss

When Silence
is Golden

Putting Jesus
Christ By