

hands the power to crucify Him or to set Him free : "*Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and power to release Thee ?*" Illusion ! In the exercise of his authority, Pilate is only the instrument of a higher Hand which directs human wills, and more especially that of the Man-God. Pilate's sentence will draw its executory value from the Eternal Father's will which has itself condemned His Divine Son to death for the expiation of man's sins.

Our Lord, also, that we may know it is neither through necessity nor by force that He is going to suffer and die, says to Pilate : "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from On High." It is as if He said : I am going to die, but know that it is because I will it, and that no one has any authority over Me but what My Father and I will to grant him.

I thank Thee, O Jesus, for so much love ! May I always show myself grateful for it ! I love Thee, O my amiable Saviour, and my desire, my firm and unshaken will, is daily to increase in Thy love !

III. — Reparation.

At last, Jesus wills to reply, but it is in order to establish clearly the responsibility resting on Pilate and the Jews. "*Therefore,*" He says, "*he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin.*" Pilate need suffer no illusion. If the crime perpetrated by those that have placed Jesus in his hands is more abominable than is own, yet his own is very great, for he abuses his authority instead of using it to deliver the innocent.

Pilate was, indeed, less guilty than the Jews. Like them, he had not been reared in the study of the Prophecies. "Doubtless, he knew Jesus well by reputation. He was not ignorant of the title He assumed and of the opinion held of Him. On his journeys, he had often heard of the numerous prodigies He performed. But all came to him through the fog that distance throws around the most luminous facts. At Cæsarea, he was too far away ; at Jerusalem, he was too near." Again, he has not willingly mixed himself up in this trial. He submits to it ; whereas the Jews have begun it and are carrying it on contrary to all justice." This being said to his credit it still remains true that Pilate is responsible ; for, if the pagan