

large measure of self-government and so the Sanhedrin retained many judicial functions, only death sentences must be confirmed by the governor. Other commanders when in Judea removed the figure of the god-emperor from the standards which bore it, but Pilate retained them, and the whole population rose against him and he had to give way. His whole administration proved to be a losing battle with Jewish prejudice; obstinacy and 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 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 him.

THE LESSON APPLIED

Pilate was the governor. He was supreme, and had it in his power to do right though everybody else concerned wanted to do wrong. That is what makes his guilt so dark. Strange that responsibility sits so lightly upon some people. Louis XIV. made one of his sons the Marshal in command of the French forces fighting against Marlborough in the Netherlands. This son was the Duke of Vendome, the darling of his father's old age, but an utterly irresponsible character. Though possessed of a superior force, and in a stronger position, he indolently allowed the British to outmarch, outmanoeuvre and surprise him, so that he lost the battle of Oudenarde and a fearful slaughter took place among his troops. These brave men had been committed to his charge, and he failed to protect them. Now, everybody carries some sort of responsibility, and if it is undischarged there is sure to be suffering. The older we grow, up to old age, the heavier grows the weight of our obligations to our fellows. Are we taking the road Pilate took? or, are we taking the path of Christ? None that trusted in Him have ever been put to shame.

In one form or another we are all given the choice between Christ and Barabbas. No doubt that ruffian was an ugly fellow, and so is every rival of our Lord when brought into contrast with him. A wealthy old gentleman once invited all his servants into his library to receive presents. "What will you have," said he, addressing the groom, "this Bible or a twenty dollar note?" "I would take the book, sir, but I cannot read. I think the money will do me more good." "And you?" he asked the gardener. "My poor wife is so

ill," he replied with a bow, "that I need the money badly." "Mary, you can read," he said to the cook, "will you have this Bible?" "Oh, yes, I can read," said Mary, with a toss of her head, "but I would rather have a new dress." Next came the chambermaid who said she had a Bible already. Then came the errand boy, who said, "My mother always said that the law of the Lord was better than silver and gold. I will take the Bible, please." He took the book, unclasped it and opened it, when a bright gold piece fell to the floor. Its leaves were interlined with bank notes. He found that he had more than all the other servants together. So is the Christian choice. With Christ we have everything worth having, and more than all the world gives its votaries.

Think of these priests and elders running about among them suggesting to them, "Say Barabbas! Say Barabbas!" You can persuade people of anything if you suggest it often enough and with sufficient force. If enough mud is thrown some of it is sure to stick. Mobs are dangerous, and have been fitly compared to wild beasts. They represent mankind in a molten state, as it were, which can be run into any mould provided for it. They thus become the prey of designing men. We should beware of the mob enthusiasm, and keep cool when all around us are seething with excitement and passion. There is no place like a playground for practising such self-control. If a boy can keep his head cool and his judgment unbiased there he need not fear the influence which crowds may have upon him when he becomes a man.

Pilate thought he could roll off his guilt upon the people, and the people thought they