

If we read the 53rd chapter of the Prophet Isaiah attentively and prayerfully, we will find that the cross of X on Calvary is pictured to us in a two-fold manner. It appears to us as a scene of sadness, but also as a wonderful scene of glory. On first glance it appears to us as a cross of agony, for on it the sinless son of God was wounded for us, and finally closed his eyes in death in order that we might be reconciled with God. And beholding this cross of agony, we must say with the Prophet, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not." But the same cross of J also appears to us as an altar of love, which we can approach believingly and exclaim, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." And this cross of J also appears to us as a throne of glory, for on it the King of glory finished his glorious work of redemption, for he called out victoriously, "It is finished." And beholding this throne of glory, we must exclaim, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief; he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

In this three-fold manner, as the patient Lamb of G, as the gracious and loving Savior, and as the King of Glory, the L J appears to us thruout the entire passion history. It is for this reason that the story of the suffering and death of our Savior does not become uninteresting for us. Altho we hear it and study it each year, it always awakens thots of sorrow and grief, joy, and thankfulness within our heart. And whenever we consider the sad story of J suffering and death, we must always picture J to ourselves as the patient Lamb of G, as the loving Savior, and as the King of Glory. And thus he also manifests himself in the trial before Pontius Pilate. Our today's text brings us to that portion of the passion history, where J has been taken to P P and is there being questioned by him concerning his person and work. Here too, J appears to us in that three-fold manner. Let us then direct our prayerful attention to our text, and.. consider,

JESUS BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE.

- We shall see him
1. As the patient Lamb of G
  2. As the gracious Savior ~~from~~ sinners.
  3. As the King of Glory.

According to the passion history, Judas had just brot the thirty pieces of silver, which he had received for betraying J, to the temple, and had exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.", thereby affirming, that J was innocent. But how different is the testimony which is being given by the enemies of J in the judgment hall of Pilate. We hear them accusing ~~then~~ and saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is X a King." But in fir, we know that these accusations were false. To prove this I need only to remind you of the fact, that when the multitudes came to J and wanted to crown him king, he departed from their midst. And he had also answered the people upon the question, whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, "Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto G the things which are God's." So we see, that the accusations brot against J were nothing more than abominable lies, which flowed out of a heart which was filled with hatred against X. Oh how it must have grieved the Savior to be accused falsely by his enemies. But as the Lamb of G he stands patiently in their midst, for he knew, that according to the words of the Prophets, he would be spitefully entreated. And in order that the Scr might be fulfilled, he permits his enemies to accuse him falsely, and does not open his mouth to refute the false accusations. He does not curse those that cursed him, and does not return evil for evil. He knew that all these things must be endured, in order that he might carry out the work of redemption, which his heavenly Father had given him to do. He truly proved himself to be the Lamb of G, that taketh away the sins of the whole world. Instead of cursing his enemies, who were attempting to find cause against him that they might kill him, we hear him pray for them, "on the cross on Calvary," "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

On what great comfort we xtians find in this act of J for our weary soul. We too have many accusers, who accuse us, not before an earthly judge, but before the heavenly judge. And these accusations brot against us are not false, as were those that were brot against J, but they are true. We are accused by the Law of G which we have transgressed in thots, words and deeds. We are also ~~by~~ accused, so to speak, by hours, days, weeks, and years, which we have spent lazily or have made unholy by some grievous sin. We are also being accused by many of our fellow-men, whom we have probably grieved by word or deed, or whom we have done some injustice. And finally there is also Satan, who is also accusing us before G, because of our sins and shortcomings. And, sad to say, these accusations which are brot against us are true, and if the Lord would go into judgment with us on account of our many sins, we would be eternally lost. But thanks be unto G who has given his only Son into death for us, in order that we might live. The patient Lamb of G has redeemed us from the curse of them all. Now thru the blood of J, G looks upon us as being holy, for the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Now we can joyfully exclaim, "Who is he that condemneth/ it is he that died, ye rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of G, who also maketh intercession for us." Thus J appears to us as the patient Lamb of G during the trial before P P. But he also shows himself as the gracious Savior of sinners. And of this secondly. *\*Who shall lay a charge against the charges of your sins?*

## II.

We read in our text, "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called J and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? J answered him, sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" P P had heard the false accusations of the enemies of J, but he did not believe their accusations and could not find fault in J. But in order to fulfill the duty of his office, he goes to J and asks him again, is it true what your enemies say? "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Undoubtedly P is expecting the answer from J, No I am not. If J would have answered him thus, P would have been able to free himself and dismiss the case. But J had another purpose in view. Before him stood a heathen and unbeliever, who was still in spiritual darkness. Before him stood a poor sinner who would be eternally lost. Before him was an immortal soul that was worth more than all earthly possessions. And since X had come to seek and to save that which was lost, he advances the question to P, sayest thou this of thyself? or did others tell it thee of me? He means to say, P are you asking this question for your own soul's eternal welfare, or are you asking it merely as a judge? since my enemies have accused me before you. With this question J is knocking at the door of P heart, asking him for admittance. It should awaken his conscience to the fact, that J is also his Savior and Red. Pilate should examine himself earnestly, to see whether the question put to J is asked as the judge or whether he is asking enlightenment for his weary soul.

Here again, in J manifests himself as the Sav ~~er~~ of sinners. He had come into the world in order to save sinners, and it matters not whether he is before the judge or before the common citizen, before the rich or poor, the learned or unlearned, he is continually about his heavenly Father's business, trying to win immortal souls for the kingdom of G. And it was the same love which J manifests to Pilate, as he had shown Peter after his severe fall, and which he shows unto the malefactor on the cross who had repented of his sins.

And thus your Savior also extends his gracious love to you, dear Christian. He also wishes to draw you unto himself. This is done thru his means of grace, the Word of G and the Holy Sacraments. And he is inviting you again during this season of lent, for he is telling you thru his Gospel, the real cause of his suffering and death, namely, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquity, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." In short, X has suffered and died for you and for me. Now we can be of good cheer, for our sins have been forgiven us. And how can we acquire the peace of a good conscience toward G which X has merited for us? By accepting his work of redemption in true faith, - by believing that the blood of J X, the Lamb of G cleanseth us from all sin. But before P J also shows himself as the King of Glory.

*Who shall lay a charge against the charges of your sins?  
A thorn, at whom had taken nothing*



Pilate felt the meaning of the question which J had addressed to him. but he closes his heart against X and answers him very haughtily, "Am I a Jew?" Do you think that I, who am a Roman Judge, would, of myself ask about you?" Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me." I am speaking to you only as a judge, therefore answer me at once, "what hast thou done." On how much could the Savior have answered on this question? there were so many miracles and wonders which J had performed, which might prove his divinity. The Ev John says concerning the miracles of J, that "if they all would be recorded, the world would not contain the books that should be written." But the Sav does not resort to his miracles at this time. He answers Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from hence." How simple and yet how wonderful are these words of J. He affirms that he is not an earthly king or ruler, but that he is a heavenly king, or king of glory.

"My kingdom is not of this world." His kingdom did not have an earthly origin, but a heavenly origin. His kingdom was not dependant upon human strength but upon the power of G. His kingdom did not bring wealth or riches, but brot heavenly gifts, peace of soul, and joy in the HG., forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. His kingdom does not come by outward means, but dwells within us thru faith. His kingdom is the Holy Xtian church, the Communion of saints. And because it is of G, it will never be overthrown, but will remain forever.

Thru this answer, J is again seeking admittance to Pilate's closed heart. And Pilate would have been saved, if he would have admitted this Savior into his heart. But he only closed his heart against X. How m xtian fr, let us not do as Pilate, and close our heart against him. Let us gladly and willingly accept X as our Savior, and look to the cross on Calvary and behold there, the Lamb of G that taketh away the sins of the world. And if we accept X ~~as~~ as our Redeemer in true faith, then we will also be translated into that everlasting kingdom of glory, where we shall meet our G and see him face to face. There we will then hear the words of our Savior, "Oh come, ye blessed of my ~~X~~ Father, inherit that kingdom which has been prepared for you." Let our prayer therefore be

In death's dark hour with me abide  
And place me, Sav, at thy side,  
Where with thy saints I shall adore,  
And praise thee Lord, forevermore.

AMEN.