

“MY KINGDOM COMETH NOT OUT OF THIS WORLD.”

By Robert Govett

‘They led, therefore, Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. Now it was early morning; and they did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.’ John 18: 28.

They must deliver Jesus over to the Romans – the Gentiles. (1) On their side the reason was, because to put Him to death would have drawn down on themselves punishment. (2) On God’s part the reason was, that Jew and Gentile were to prove themselves both sinners, the Jews being deepest in transgression; that Jesus’ death might avail for both.

The Praetorium was originally the Palace of Herod the Great. It had now become the residence of the Roman Governor, who, though living at Caesarea, ordinarily dwelt during the feasts at Jerusalem. They would not go into this Gentile house, lest they should be defiled. Where does Moses say that? Nowhere! It was a tradition of the elders. How careful were they to obey the ceremonial law! They would not go into a house which had literal leaven; they were afraid of defilement. But they were eating what the leaven signified – malice, falsehood, and wickedness. ‘Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven,’ said God (Ex. 34: 25). Now Jesus was the true sacrifice, and they were presenting Him with hearts full of envy, malice, falsehood, murder, and all the sins of the old man. So Jesus testifies that, with all their ceremonial zeal, they trampled underfoot the greater things of the Law – justice, mercy, and faith (Matt. 23: 23). They strained out the gnat from what they drank, but they swallowed down the camel. This tendency is one common to human nature, to set up the outward form against the inward reality. So John Baptist bids those who came to him for immersion not to imagine, that it was only the observance of a new rite, and that when it was over, all was done with! He demanded, in the name of God, a new life in accordance therewith. Better not to be baptised than to observe that rite, and go on in wickedness.

‘That they might eat the Passover.’ Those unclean could not celebrate the Passover. And as this was their chief feast, they desired not to be shut out therefrom. But this brings up anew the question – Which was the true day of the Passover? Jesus had already celebrated the Passover on the evening before with the twelve. How then should there be any second eating of it? This is a vexed question, on which learned men have not been able to come to any settled conclusion. Nor is it necessary to the faith, though it carries with it not a few perplexities. The most probable idea, I think, is that there were two times of celebrating it among the Jews, arising out of two different modes of reckoning the time of new moon: that Jesus and His disciples kept the

Passover on one of these times, and the other party on another day, according to a different reckoning.

29 - 32. 'Pilate therefore went out to them, and said – "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They answered and said unto him – "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee." Pilate said therefore unto them – "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your Law." The Jews therefore said unto him – "It is not lawful for us to slay any man." In order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spake, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.'

Pilate humours their religiousness. Since they would not come in to him, he would go out to them. What was their charge against the prisoner? They will not tell Him; for they knew well enough that the charge of blasphemy in making Himself 'Son of God,' which was the ground on which they had condemned Jesus in their council, was no offence against Roman law. They wish, therefore, Pilate to pass sentence on Christ without further inquiry, assuming that so venerable a body would not be guilty of any injustice, and had declined all according to their Law. Hence they do not even state the ground of their condemnation, only generally that He was a 'malefactor,' or 'evil-doer,' while they had condemned Him for evil-speaking.

Pilate refuses to be made a tool of theirs. 'If you pronounce sentence, carry it out in execution according to your Law.' This draws out the confession that their sentence was of death; so that while they would gladly execute Jesus, the law of Rome forbade.

Now, this hindrance was in accordance with God's mind about His Son's death. For had they been able to put our Lord to death on their occasion, and according to Mosaic Law, He must have been stoned. But the Scripture and the word of Christ had decided, that His death was to be in another manner – by nailing to the tree. Thus alone, according to the word in Eden, could His heel be bruised; so alone could the curse alight on Jesus, according to the Mosaic Law – 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' And the saviour had more than once in this Gospel hinted at the mode of His death as being a 'lifting up' from the earth – quite a contrast to stoning, which was a beating down upon the earth* (3: 14; 8: 28; 12: 32). Moreover, in the other Gospels, Jesus had spoken to His disciples of taking up the cross, and bearing it after Him (Matt. 10: 38). This was clear intimation of crucifixion. But Jesus definitely said so (Matt. 20: 19; 26: 2). Thus the Word of God is fulfilled by the Providence of God, watching over, and guiding at His will men's choice.

[* By stoning, too, most of the bones would be broken, while of the Passover lamb it was forbidden. 'Not a bone of it shall be broken.']

33, 34. 'Pilate entered in therefore again, into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto Him – "Thou art the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him – "Of thyself sayest thou this; or did others say it to thee about Me?"'

Pilate's words should be read as an interrogation put in the form of affirmation, as when we say – 'You are going to London next week?' Jesus would know, in what sense the question was put on Pilate's part. And here I am somewhat in doubt in regard of the Saviour's first question to Pilate. It may mean, I think, either (1) 'Have you, as governor, felt any jealousy against Me and My pretensions and proceedings, as if I were a seditious man, setting Myself up as a rival to Caesar's rule over Palestine?' Or (2) 'Do you say this, as your own belief, founded on testimonies of the Law and prophets – that a king of Israel shall arise, who shall rule over all; and that I am that king?' Both these are very reasonable, and both in contrast with the next question. 'Or is it merely an accusation against Me put into your mouth by My foes?' (1) Is it a question of faith, or of unbelief on your part? (2) Or, Is it a question which has arisen out of fear of My designs? or merely a pretext suggested to you, of which there was previously no trace on your mind?'

We may state it thus – 'Dost thou put the question of thy own proper motion?' Then that may arise (1) from faith, accepting the Scriptures of the Jews, as foretelling a universal king of David's line; or (2) from Roman and political unbelief; through jealousy of Jesus' pretensions, as hostile to the Emperor.

The Roman's reply seems to be especially directed primarily to negative the first of these points. And the second part of the reply removes the other. Thus He leaves the Jews as the sole authors of this accusation.

35, 36. 'Pilate answered – "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me: what hast Thou done?" Jesus answered – 'My kingdom cometh not out of this world; if it were out of this world, then would My servants have fought, in order that I should not be delivered up to the Jews, but now My kingdom is not from thence.'

The first part of Pilate's reply is a proud denial of his having any sympathy with Jewish fables and superstitions. He neither knew nor cared anything about Moses and the prophets. He was a servant of the fourth great empire of Daniel, and believed nought about any greater empire of God, that should dash to earth that of Rome .

He tells Jesus, that the accusation was put into His mouth by the nation and rulers of Israel , who had led Him thither to be judged. Thus tacitly He answers the other question which we supposed – 'That He had not had His eye on our Lord as if He were a seditious man, harbouring the thought of setting up Himself as a king against Caesar. No such ideas had been suggested to Him by any of the Roman subordinate officers. The cry against Him as making Himself King, came wholly from His own nation, and from

the chief authorities of it.' Yet Pilate knew also, that the Jews would have been delighted had Jesus lifted up a warlike banner against Rome , and would have been willing to follow Him to battle and to death in pursuance of such a project. Their choice of the rebel Barabbas was proof positive of that. He saw, therefore, that it was a mere pretext on their part, because they thus would make our Lord odious in His eyes, and obnoxious to death by Roman Law. But how little the Roman Emperor and his Governor need fear a King, who was accused to him by His own nation of treason against the Emperor! How should He be feared, when His own people took part against him?

The Saviour's reply is one which is much quoted by anti-millenarians. To their eyes it demolishes all ideas of any reign of Christ in person over Israel and the earth. 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Thereby they understand, that the sphere of the Lord's reign is never to be on earth. But that is a sense derivable solely from the ambiguous character of the English translation. A glance at the Greek dissipates the argument. Then it is seen that our Lord's reply is, 'The source of My kingdom is not out of this world. If it were, I should call on My subjects to erect the kingdom by the usual means open to men – the sword of earth. Had it been so, I should have called on all My disciples to fight for me, against any arrest by the Jews, with design to deliver Me to death.'

There words refer not only to the twelve and our Lord's prohibition of the sword in the Garden to them; but also to His refusal to attempt to set up the kingdom of God by human might, when the multitudes led Him in triumph into Jerusalem .

How shall we take the 'now' in our Lord's closing words?

1. Is it a particle of time? 'For the present My kingdom of not from the world.' No! For the source of the Lord's kingdom would always abide the same; always would its source be heavenly. The Father's will is to bestow it on the Son, and His decree is that it should be established, not by the armies of men, but by the host of angels from on high.
2. The last clause, 'not from hence,' establishes the rendering here given; and the sense – 'Heaven, not earth, is the source of our Lord's future kingdom.'

For the Saviour could not deny that His kingdom was one day to rule over the land of Palestine , and over the earth in general as its sphere. For the Scripture had in places not a few declared, that the earth, and all lands, and kings, shall be subjected to Him. Thus it is written, that at the seventh trump the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdom of God and of His Christ (Rev. 11: 15). So the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse speaks of the reign of Christ as 'the Prince of the Kings of the earth,' and as ruling over the whole world. So the eighth and seventy-second Psalms affirm. The interpretation here given accords with the reason assigned by our Lord; and it was as fitted as the usual one, to quiet Pilate's mind concerning our Lord. Jesus' kingdom refused the might of men to set it up. O, then, Pilate and the Emperor might rest on

their oars in full security. Neither of the two feared any battalions of the heaven. They were the dreams of enthusiasts alone!

Our Lord does not answer the question, 'What He had done?' till the next reply. What is the Saviour's kingdom? 'A kingdom,' most reply, 'in the hearts of His people.' Nay, the kingdom is to be seen when He is beheld coming in the clouds, with power of His angels, casting His foes into the furnace of fire, and rewarding His well-behaved and faithful servants (Matt. 24, & 25.) Says Pilate, 'Thy people, O king, have themselves delivered Thee up to me, as an offender to be slain!' And Jesus, while owning Himself 'King of the Jews,' as the Prophet had declared, must yet say, that on worldly grounds His servants would have fought against the Jews, as against enemies. 'All the foundations are out of course.' That 'Jesus is King of Israel' had been declared at His birth (Matt. 2: 2). He had owned it in the mouth of Nathaniel (John 1: 49, 50). He had presented Himself purposely as their King, in His entry into Jerusalem on the ass. He describes Himself as judging all the nations of earth as King (Matt. 25: 31, 34). In Rev. 20. He is seen reigning.

37. 'Pilate saith therefore unto Him, "Thou art a King then." Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. I was for this purpose born, and for this purpose came into the world, in order that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."'

Jesus had thrice spoken of 'His kingdom.' But if so, He owned Himself to be a King.

Jesus admits it. In what sense? Some pervert His words, as if the following sentiments of our Lord were descriptive of the nature of His kingdom. As though He had said, 'I am King in a figurative sense. I reign spiritually in the hearts of My people. I am King: but My realm is that of grace and truth.' Now if this were the only passage, there might be some appearance of truth in such a view. But when we bring in other passages, it is apparent that this is a mistake. The only shelter which the sentiment can find lies in this, that the present time is the time of the kingdom in mystery, and the present day is that of 'the word of the kingdom.'

But it must never be forgot, that both in the other Gospels and in this, Jesus was asked whether He were 'the King of the Jews.' To that question Jesus answered in the affirmative. Therefore it is certain, that Jesus' kingdom is not only or chiefly a figurative one, but a real and literal one, (1) over the nation of Israel, and (2) over Jerusalem. It was the foretold manner of the King of Mount Zion, that Jesus entered it, according to the prophet's word (Zech. 9: 9). He spoke, too, of Jerusalem being (one day) 'the city of the Great King' (Matt. 5: 35). He was born in David's city, as heir to His throne, according to the word of the angel to Mary (Luke 1: 32, 33). Lastly, our Lord in the messages to the churches speaks of His future reign over the nations of the earth, and invites His people to seek a place with Him therein (Rev. 2: 26, 27; 3: 21).

The nature of the kingdom, then, is wholly misapprehended by those who make it something figurative and present. This is not truly the time of the Saviour's kingdom. We are to pray for its coming; not for its extension. The kingdom, generally, means the kingdom in manifestation, not 'the word of the kingdom' only. It is to overthrow the kingdoms of the earth when it comes; not as now, while in mystery: its adherents lying passive in the hands of the kings of the earth, and refusing to take power in, and over, the world.

Jesus was offered all the kingdoms over Israel by the impressments of the Jews. But both the sources were impure. He will receive neither from man; both from the hand of His Father.

This was 'the good confession' before Pilate, which cost our Lord His life' (1 Tim. 6: 13).

(1) In Daniel 7: 14-27, 'the Son of Man' as 'Ancient of Days,' puts down by force and justice the fourth empire, and its blaspheming King; while He gives the kingdom which He has taken away from the Blasphemer, to His fellow-kings.

(2) So in the parable of the Pounds (Luke 19.) The nobleman is gone to heaven to obtain His kingdom. He does not exercise it while in heaven: it is only at His return, after the reception of His kingdom, that He exercises it. And how does He manifest it? By exalting His friends and faithful servants; and by destroying His foes. That is, His kingdom never means an inward and invisible kingdom in the hearts of believers.

(3) While the Writer of Hebrews proclaims Jesus as being now the 'Priest after the order of Melchizedek,' He speaks also of the day when the Kingly side of that title shall appear. For Melchizedek was both Priest and King, of which the history of Abraham gives us a typical glimpse. He brings blessings to Abraham and his sons, after their Gentile foes are cut off (Heb. 7: 1).

(4) His kingdom is to manifest itself in resurrection, at His coming with the trumpet of heaven. It is to be based on the principle of righteousness; in opposition to that of mercy, now in force. Christ is to reign, not only spiritually over friends, but specially in the putting down by power and righteousness, all enemies. So says Paul, 1 Cor. 15: 24-28 – 'Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He (God) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.' (5) The same thing appears in Rev. 11: 15-18, when the seventh trumpet sounds; then the kingdoms of earth become, by the putting forth of God's might, and the recalling of the power lent in Noah's day to the sons of men – 'the

kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ.’ At that time the nations were not converted and obedient, but are angry with God, and God is angry with them, even to the cutting off of their armies by battle (Rev. 19: 11-21; Isa. 34.) Then appears the other side of the matter – the kingdom comes, as the time of the reward for God’s saints of previous dispensations. (6) Accordingly, the thing is shown in the Apocalypse in detail by Christ coming with the armies out of the sky; when, finding the hosts of earth arrayed against Him under two leaders of especial wickedness, He casts the two into the lake of fire, and slays the rest; his title then becoming openly ‘King OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS’ (Rev. 19: 16). (7) After that, and the imprisonment of Satan, the kingdom is fully manifested. Christ reigns, and His martyrs who suffered for, and served, Him, sit on thrones, and reign with Christ (20: 4-6). They then exercise justice:- not, as now, suffer oppression patiently.

‘The kingdom,’ therefore is to be taken in its usual and literal sense.

(1) The future kingdom of Christ’s glory is to be local – that is, it is to have its place on earth and over heaven. Of this Psalm 8 is a witness.

(2) It is to be exercised on the principle of righteousness:- the contrast to the present dispensation (Heb. 1: 8, 9) – ‘But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.’ (Greek.)

(3) It is to be personal. Christ as King of the kings of the earth and of the twelve tribes of Israel, is to reign over Jew and Gentile. His kingdom will rule over all, whether friends or foes (Phil. 2: 10, 11; Matt. 19: 28). It will be both material, and spiritual.

(4) The earth is to be beautiful, as never since the fall; the creatures are to experience a change; human life is to be prolonged; the fields are to give their increase, as never before.

(5) But it has also its spiritual side. Men are to know the Lord, and go up to worship Jehovah in Jerusalem (Zech. 14.). Peace is to be established in all the earth (Psa. 72: 3; Isa. 9: 6, 7); the idols are to be destroyed. Israel is to be a nation of priests to God and all righteous (Isa. 61: 6; 60: 21).

But to return to our Lord’s words. Lest Pilate and others should imagine that His kingly aspect was the only one attaching to Him, He proceeds to assert at greater length that side of His mission, which John’s Gospel especially unfolds – His being a witness to the truth of God as the Only-begotten Son. This feature can only belong to His kingdom during the time of mystery. The receivers of the witness of Christ in this day are preparing to be fellow-kings (not merely ‘subjects,’ as is generally said) with Christ.

'They lived and reigned with the Christ,' who suffered with Him in the day of mystery (2 Tim. 2: 12; Rev. 20: 4-6).

Jesus, then, sets Himself forth in a new light, and that in a way adapted to lead to the salvation of Pilate as the man.

Jesus is The Witness. So Isaiah said He should be (Isa. 55: 4), '*Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.*' This is a passage taken from the general call of the prophet to the sons of men, to seek in the Son of God the satisfaction that can be found alone in Him. There also is, first, a reference to the millennium in the expression 'the sure mercies of David' – that is, the restoration of His kingdom for ever as God promised. Then comes the notice of the Lord's establishing Christ as a witness to the nations (Rev. 1: 5, 6).

Jesus was 'born' a king, and with an object before His own mind, as well as before His Father's. He existed before He was 'born.' He came into the world, in pursuance of an object given Him of the Father.

The then present work of our Lord was that of the peaceful, suffering witness, testifying to unpopular truth. This testimony is carried on still in Christ's members; by the Spirit given to testify to salvation now, and to the kingdom to come. This attitude is something quite different from kingly rule and power. It is 'the word of the kingdom' now; the power of it comes only when Christ returns (Matt. 13: 19).

Jesus, then, in verse 37 is stating to Pilate, not the aim of His kingdom; but His coming the first time in the flesh. It will be another thing by and bye, when He comes 'the second time' in His kingdom, of which the Transfiguration was a type (Matt. 16: 13; 17: 9).

'To bear witness to the truth.' Many in our days profess to be fond of the truth, and to be seeking it, but to be skeptical of finding it. Jesus came not to seek it; but, as having full possession of it before He was born, He came to dispense it to others by His testimony. 'The Truth' – means that it is a great body and one system; religious truth concerning God and man. Here was the answer to Pilate – 'What hast thou done?'

'Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.'

Here was the appeal to Pilate that He might be saved. Jesus' witness was delivered not to Israel alone; as, indeed, 'the truth' must take in a far wider sweep than any one nation. And since the one nation, that seemed especially God's, was rejecting the truth, Pilate was as welcome to the truth as John. The new name of God – 'Father' – embraces all those as sons who 'honour the Son even as they honour the Father,' and worship God in spirit and truth.

'Every one that is of the truth.'

This takes up the figure frequently found in John, of the truth being to us as a father. 'Begotten of God.' The men of the world are born 'flesh of the flesh' in enmity against God, living in falsehood, and by it turned away from God and His Son.

'The truth' is (1) a system of religion not to be discovered by the reason of fallen man; it must be brought to him from heaven as a testimony complete. (2) It must be sent from God through the Son of God, who is, as well as testifies, 'the Truth.' (3) For 'the truth' turns on the person, work, and witness of the Son. Thus John is carrying out the proof of Jesus' first coming as the Only-begotten Son of God, 'full of grace and truth;' in opposition to Moses, the man of shadows and of Law.

If any, then, refuse Christ, it is because they belong to the old error, falsity, and enmity of fallen Adam. Hearts of unbelief cannot know, or by searching find out God. The un-renewed hate of God, and the account of Him which is given by Christ. Nature cannot, however deeply studied, reveal God, as it is necessary for a sinner to know Him. If any, then, after hearing Christ and His testimony, refuse it, it is because they are still in darkness, and prefer it to the light.

37. 'Pilate saith unto Him, "What is truth?" And having said this, he again went out to the Jews, and saith to them – "I find no fault in Him."'

It is evident, that to Pilate 'truth' was only a dream, the philosopher's everlasting wrangle, leading to no serious useful result. 'He was a practical man, that had to deal with life and its realities; a man of action, to preside in power over a province of the chief of earth's kingdoms. These philosophers who pretend to truth are all at variance with one another! Nothing settled, nothing demonstrated!' Now, it is true that the evidence of religious truth is not the same as the evidence, that – 'this is a house' – 'yonder is a tree.' Yet to those willing to learn, the assurance is as great as the perceptions of sense.

Truth as presented to us now is no dream of men, but the revelation of God; it is authoritative, marking out the course which is to be pursued and that to be avoided, as we would attain to His kingdom and glory, and avoid His displeasure. The acceptance of the truth of His testimony now is the way to His kingdom of power hereafter. Present and future happiness are bound up therewith.

Now, as Pilate possessed power, but not principle, he went ever dismally astray; led only by his instincts and his apparent worldly interests; ignorant of the God who would call him to account. Hence he vacillates; staggers to and fro. He will not accept Christ; he will not deny Him. Without principle firmly held, there can be no firmness of conduct.

To him, therefore, Christ is a singular spectacle. 'To be resting on a kingdom in the clouds, and talking about that will-o'-the-wisp, "truth," that no man has ever seized! I can now understand how Thou art rejected by Thine own people!' And so Pilate despises Christ, and despises His haters also. For him Christ is too high, and His enemies too low. Not all will accept a Christ offered.

To be a Christian, however, is to have found the truth incarnate in Christ; to have the Spirit of Truth as our Teacher, and to read the Word of God as our store of truth.

'What is truth?' A good question! But it was uttered to Pilate's condemnation, for he did not care to wait for an answer; deeply, eternally, has it affected him. That showed His unbelief in Jesus, and of religious truth in general. It was just the attitude of most cultivated Roman and Greek minds of that day. They saw enough to reject the foolish and wicked fables of their own religion of idolatry. But in casting away these, they had nothing better to supply in their place. The philosophers of Greece professed by searching to have found out truth; but one school argued down the teaching of another, till the only thing considered certain was that truth could not be known. So is it in India at this day. Many have by the entrance of human knowledge, perceived the folly of idolatry, and the absurdity and wickedness of their religious books; while yet they refuse Christ and the Scripture.

Wherever this is the case, the cry goes up – 'Truth indeed! There is no such thing! What one calls truth, another says is falsehood! Nothing is certain, but that no certainty is to be had! It is all illusion of the human mind. There is no stable external reality of truth. Man is the measure of all things.' *

[* 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul,' was the final expression of doubt.]

Such persons can have no settled principles to control or guide them. They drift, as did Pilate, with circumstances.

But what says God? What says the Gospel?

1. It speaks of truth as being in its essence lodged in God. It is discovered to us here as abiding in two Divine Persons, and testified by them. 1. The first of these is the Son of God, who came, bringing from above the wondrous revelation of God and man, Himself being the Light, who by His life, death, resurrection, and word, makes known to us the Father; and, by contrast, man the fallen (John 1: 14; 14: 6).

2. The Second Person in this case is 'THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH' (14: 17; 15: 26; 16: 13). He searches all the truth of God, and possesses it. He testifies to the Son of God, who is 'The Truth' embodied. He turns men from the falsehood of the devil, and from enmity against God, into love and light.

3. THE SCRIPTURE is the written truth, put into our hands, specially the New Testament (John 1: 17, 18). In that is treasured the testimony concerning Christ, as our only way to the truth of God, indicted by the wisdom of the Spirit of God. These three agree in one. They are the sinner's way to the truth (1) about himself; his utter loss, his deep-seated evil, his blindness, his condemnation, his constant hatred of God, and eternal suffering of the wrath and justice of God, as being God's eternal sentence against the everlasting sinner against the Most High.! The Scriptures are the sinner's way to the truth, (2) concerning God. How alone infinite justice can be reconciled to the unrighteous, how pardon can be dispensed to the guilty, and benefits heaped upon the unworthy, through Christ.

Hereupon Pilate declares to the Jews, that their accusation was a false one. He had tested our Lord on the one point on which alone he had a right to be jealous. 'Was He one, who would by His seditious principles and practices as a man on earth give trouble, if He had the opportunity, to Caesar's government?' Hereupon he was quite satisfied, that Jesus, if left at liberty, would no more disturb the government of Rome over Israel than He had already done. He had declared, that the source of the kingdom He expected was not human swords. Had it been so, the occasion which brought Him before Pilate would have been sure to have manifested His intention to fight. And as for any kingdom established by armies from heaven, Pilate had no fear about that!

Moreover, in the Saviour's testimony concerning truth, as the especial subject engaging His sojourn on earth, he beheld in Jesus the harmless dreaming enthusiast, who might safely be left alone to tread as He pleased the ways of Palestine . None would ever be found arraying armies against Caesar, who was so the teacher of religious truth, as to be hated and persecuted by His own nation and its leaders.

Thus 'the Lamb of God,' who was to bear the sin of the world, is examined by the Gentile, as well as the Jew; and both are constrained to own that it has no blemish. The 'I' is emphatic. It sets His testimony in designed contrast to theirs. 'You accuse Him as the guilty conspirator against Caesar. I find no such fault in Him.' But neither Pilate's witness, nor that of Judas, checks the men of unbelief. 'I find in Him no fault at all!' Dismiss the charges against Him then! Put Him within the castle in safety from His foes, as did the Governor on Paul's behalf. But no! The man who knows not what truth is, has no certain footing. He scourges the innocent!