

"That Fox."

Luke 13: 32.

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from **Miscellaneous Papers**

(R. L. Allan)

The Herodians sought to entangle Jesus, leading Him to commit Himself to the power of the state, then in the hand of the Romans, whose creature Herod, the patron of their party, was. They did this stealthily. They affected to know Him as One that regarded not the person of man, and they put a question to Him about which conscience might be uneasy, the conscience of a Jew, as though they craved instruction and guidance. (See Matt. 22)

This was hypocrisy; and so the Lord calls it.

The question was such as might easily lead to a perplexity. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?"

There was great confusion in the land at that, time; Caesar's power was in the place and among the people that belonged to God. The question intimated that, and that was confusion. That was not as it ought to have been, or as it would have been, had God's people been true to Him.

Jesus, however, did not reason upon this confusion, or contend with it; He taught, rather, that it was to be yielded to by the people; for Israel's duty, taught them of old by His Spirit in their prophets, and now by His lips in the midst of them, in a day of bondage or captivity, is to *accept the punishment of their sins*; and if this present confusion in the land, Caesar's power in God's place, was, as it must have been, the fruit of their sin, they must now accept that state as their punishment, bow to it, and not resist it, or struggle with it. He only guards the application of this principle by a rehearsing of God's claims also. "Render unto Caesar," says the Lord, "the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

This reminds me of Num. 14. If Israel have brought forty years' pilgrimage upon themselves, it is not for them to seek to have it otherwise by a desperate effort on their own behalf, or a struggle to, free themselves, of the wages or penalty of their transgression. Let them rather bow their heads, and begin their pilgrimage humbled, and not go up the hill and seek to force the enemy.

Thus, on this occasion of the Herodians in Matt. 22, the Lord answers them, and the words of His lips now are in beautiful concord with the words of His Spirit in His prophets of old.

But here let me add, Jesus did not fear Herod. His enemies thought that He must either speak or act unworthy of Himself, by fearing Herod, or else commit Himself to Herod's power by defying him. But He does neither the one nor the other. The snare is broken, as it had been in John 8. There, Jesus neither impugned the Law nor condemned the guilty. The snare was broken.

But Jesus, again I say, did not fear Herod. His words in Luke 13 let us know this, if we need a witness. Then He calls him "a fox." a fitting title for him, as we read in Lam. 5: 18. "Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." Herod was one who had taken advantage of Zion's sorrow. Israel was dethroned. Her enemies had got the upper hand; and Herod, the creature of the enemy, the ally and flatterer of Caesar, had made his gains by her misery. He was walking upon the mountain, or in the high places, of Zion, because of her desolations. He had played the fox, instead of

mourning over the wastes of Israel: he had made his own gain out of their poverty.

The Lord did not fear him. He exposes him in the due time and place. But all with Him was beautiful in its season. He will own Caesar's Place in the land, and Herod's as under Caesar, in the day of Matt. 22; but if threatened, as by Herod's name or power in Luke 13, He can and will let it be known, that He did not fear him.

But further as to Herod. He was at that *moment* also playing the fox; for, according to this same scripture, Luke 8, Jesus as the Heir would have gathered Israel; and Herod, seeking the death of such an One, may surely and rightly be named a fox.

Jesus was the *feeder* of the flock of slaughter; Herod a *possessor*, a *slayer*, a *salesmaster*, a *shepherd* that did not pity — in the language of another prophet, who thus strikingly, under the Holy Ghost, anticipated these days of Jesus and of Herod. (See Zech. 11: 4, 5)