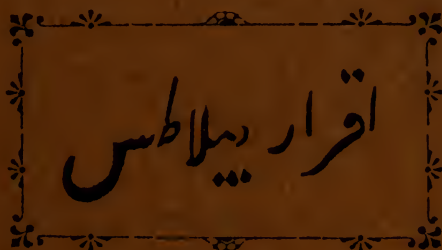


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The Confession....

OF

....Pontius Pilate

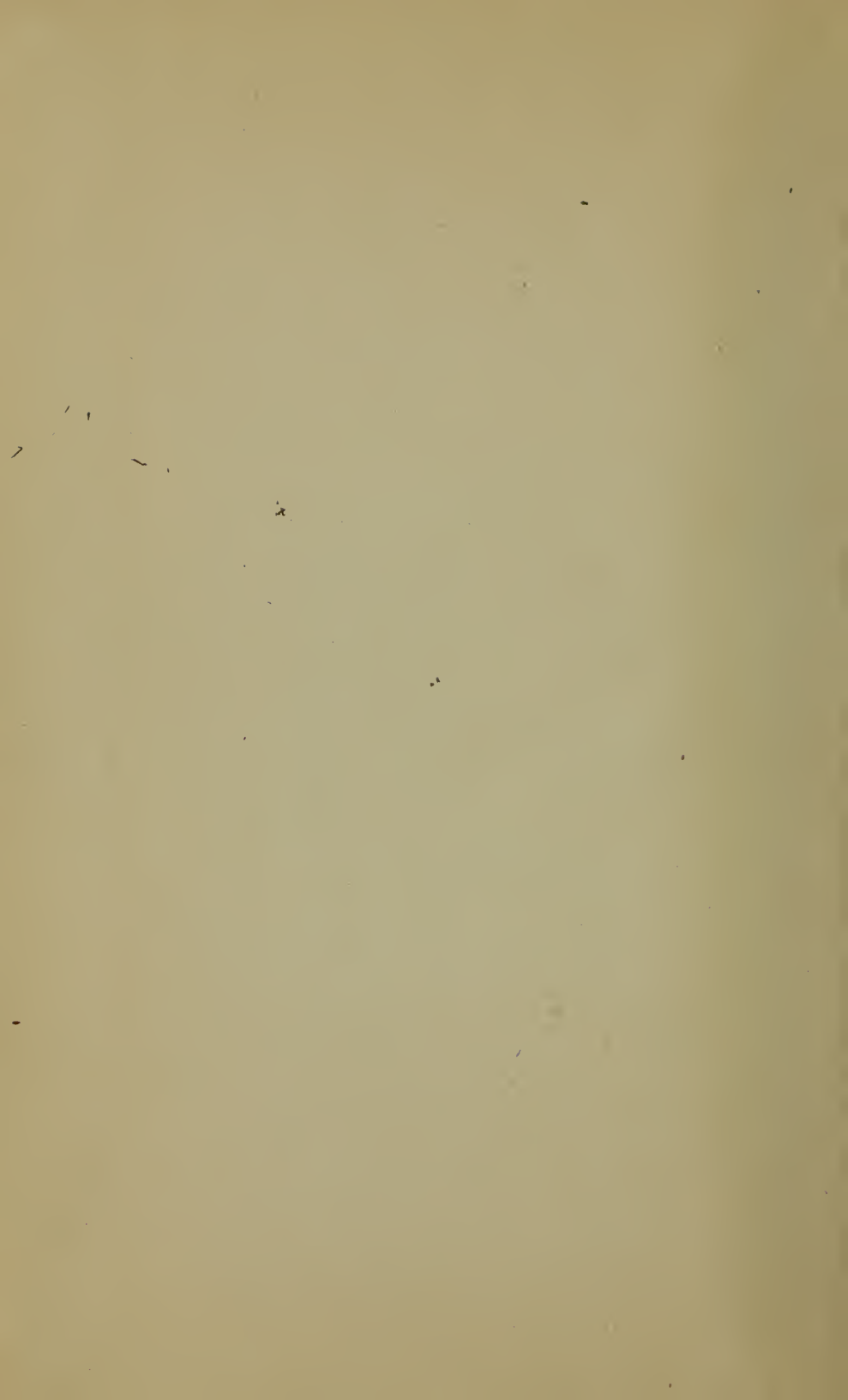
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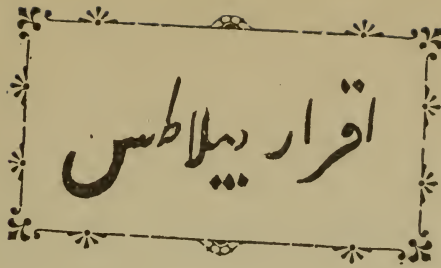
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B. SHEHADI
EAST ORANGE, N. J.
1917



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The Confession....

OF

....Pontius Pilate

First written, as alleged, in Latin, by Fabricius Albinus, a playmate of Pilate; translated into Arabic by Jerasimus Jared, late Bishop of Zahleh, in Lebanon

and rendered from the Arabic into English by

Shehadi
B. SHEHADI

Formerly Interpreter of Arabic for the Government of N. S. W., Australia, where the first English Edition of this book was published in 1893.

SECOND EDITION

Printed by Matthias Plum, Inc., and Published by the Translator
East Orange, N. J., 1917

PR 637
HAC 7
1917

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MAR 16 1917

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PREFACE

THERE is, on the northern side of the Rhone, in the south of France, near the City of Vienne,* a monumental relic very striking in its situation. This monument† is believed to be the sepulchre of Pontius Pilate under whose former government of Judea our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was crucified.

Near this city is a mountain which, in the middle ages, was called by the name of Pilatus. Pilate, as is well known, was deposed from his governorship over Judea and exiled to Vienne, then the chief city in Gaul, one of the provinces of the Roman Empire.

Early in the past century, some workmen, while removing stones out of a cavern, discovered a manuscript written in Latin. This manuscript, though not an old one, tells of the last days of Pilate in his exile, and of his suicide.‡ It also gives a very interesting account, not unlike that recorded in the New Testament, of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

*Vienne was a very ancient city of the Province of Narbonne, famous in ecclesiastical history as the early seat of a bishopric in Gaul.

†Pilate's tomb, a curious monument, 52 ft. high, is still shown at Vienne-Hastings' Dic. of the Bible. Vol. III p. 878.

‡According to Eusebius, Pilate committed suicide in Vienne about A. D. 38.

Introductory Sketch of the Life of Pilate

PONTIUS PILATE was the fifth Governor over Judea after its subjugation by the Romans, having been appointed in the twenty-sixth year A.D., ruling for a period of ten years. His residence at one time was in Caesarea Judea and at another in Jerusalem. He was cruel and oppressive, hating both the Jews and the Samaritans, which, with other reasons, caused the people to make many complaints against him, until at last, through the efforts of Vitellius*, Governor of Syria, he was deposed and sent to Rome to be tried before Tiberius, the Emperor. But the latter having died before the arrival of Pilate at Rome, he, Pilate, was tried before Caligula by whom he was sentenced to perpetual exile in the City of Vienne, situated in the southern part of France, or Roman Gaul. Here Pilate finally ended his life by committing suicide, and it is unanimously recorded by all historians that during his last days he was very irreligious and skeptical though at times practising a strange sort of worship.

*Lucius Vitellius is frequently commended by Josephus for his kindness to the Jews. When Emperor Claudius was absent upon his expedition into Britain, the care of the Empire was committed to him.

Confession of Pilate

IN the reign of Caligula, the Roman Emperor, in the province of Roman Gaul (governed by Catus Marcius), four slaves in Jewish attire, were one day leading an old gentleman of medium height, bent and greyheaded, his face denoting old age, his eyes, almost obscured by his heavy eyebrows, fixed to the ground. The olive-tinted colour of his face, together with his attire indicated that he had lived in Judea. Behind the old man there followed three mounted guards—all arriving at the City in the morning. The old gentleman was Pilate, late Governor of Judea. It happened that many of the citizens of Vienne were aware that Caligula, the Emperor, had, for his many oppressions and misbehaviours in a province under Roman authority, exiled a man of high rank. The citizens of Gaul (France), being a liberty loving people, dislike any despotic ruler who did not protect the rights of his subjects and observe the customs and traditions of the country; and as soon as Pilate in charge of the four slaves and the mounted guard entered the gates of the city, an opportunity was given them to see the exiled Governor of whom they had previously heard; and they assembled in large numbers around him deriding him and crying "Make way for the Jew," "Ye mothers protect your children from *this fox*," "Exile is but too little for the oppressor, for who knows how many he has robbed, and how many he has tormented?" "How many human beings have suffered at the command of this oppressor?" And many other cries of similar nature were heard amongst the crowd. It also occurred that the Governor of the City, with a great retinue, was upon this day making a visit to the grand temple of Mars, and the people who came out to see him pass through one of the main streets of the city also saw the entrance of Pilate. Such an unprecedented and extraordinary meeting of governors presented a great contrast and created much excitement in the city. Pilate was ashamed to lift up his head and look at the crowd, rushing from all directions, through curiosity, to see him. From among the noisy crowd a strange voice was heard to say: "It would have been better had *this man* died on the cross." This coming as it did from a voice Pilate did not expect to hear in Vienne, he covered his eyes, passing along the main street until he saw a narrow lane on his right into which he beckoned to the slaves to turn in order that he might escape observation from the crowd. Along this back lane they proceeded until, exhausted with fatigue, they reached the shop of a whitewasher where the travelling party halted for needed rest. Pilate, upon looking into the shop, observed an elderly woman and a pretty little child. Giving the girl a small golden piece, he accosted the woman asking if he might take a little rest. The master of the shop upon entering and beholding Pilate, cried out in alarm, "Pilate! Pilate!" This terrified the woman and child, who, leaving their work, fled

to the yard, pronouncing this awful name which was mixed with bloodshed and terror. Pilate was much astonished and bewildered to learn how soon his name, after his arrival in the city, had become known. An incident which added to his surprise was the accent of the shopkeeper, whose origin was evidently from the East. Unwarily Pilate exclaimed, "By the gods! Have I also to be annoyed by the Jews here? Were this man a Nazarene what would my condition be?" He afterwards looked at the shopkeeper, and desired to speak a few words to him, but so great was his confusion, that he stammered and could hardly give distinct utterance to the words "*Fabricius Albinus*. The shopkeeper, seeing him in such confusion, had compassion on him and sheltered him till the on-lookers had gone away, and he then showed him the way to the house of his old friend, Fabricius Albinus. Now, this Fabricius Albinus was the playmate of Pilate and was, at this time, in a high position in Vienne. Here Pilate sought refuge and protection. When the two old men met they kissed each other. Both were overcome with sorrow so that not a word was spoken save "Welcome!" Albinus took his guest up to the visitors' hall where they had some wine and, when sitting facing one another, Albinus began the conversation saying: "It is a long, long time since we saw each other. Welcome, dear old friend! Let us drink your health."

In the meantime two slaves entered with a jug of perfumed water and a basin for Pilate to wash his hands, in accord with the Roman custom of the day. Pilate, observing this, his countenance changed and his whole frame trembled.

Pilate: Yes, my friend, it is a long while since we met each other; but alas for the day in which I was appointed Governor over Judea, in the place of Valerius Gratus. It seems to me that the curse has been upon all our house. My grandfather died in disgrace in Rome; my father was massacred during the Parthian war; my brother was also massacred during the same war, in a battle with Armenius; and I! O, I! (and he was visibly affected, sighing deeply).

Albinus: I will swear by the gods, you have no fault whatever. Be of better cheer! And let us have some more of this wine. The Emperor Caligula has, without good reason, exiled you here. I have met your delegate in Rome and understood of him that it was Vitellius, Governor of Syria, who intrigued against you. It was the intrigue of the chief of your enemies, and you have been accused of misrule and misconduct in your dealings with the Jews who trespassed upon the rights of the Samaritans.*

*A Samaritan told his countrymen that he could show them the Sacred vessels at Mount Gerizzim supposed to have been hid there by Moses. The Samaritans came armed and gathered in a village called Tirathaba. Pilate prevented them from going up the Mount and fell upon them with his army, slaying many.

After the tumult was appeased, the Samaritans appealed for redress to Vitellius, Governor of Syria, pleading that no political sedition had been intended. Vitellius then caused Pilate to repair to Rome to answer the accusations of the Jews, and appointed Marcellus to take charge of the affairs of Judea. (Josephus XVIII-IV.)

Pilate: No! No! Albinus, my unhappiness is more than that of which you think. The Emperor's attitude in this matter troubles me but little. It is my conscience that will never cease troubling me.

Albinus: But you have committed no horrible crimes in Judea! !

Pilate: Ah! you do not know the Jews.

Albinus: Did you carry away Jewish women, as the charge was laid against you?

Pilate: No; not one.

Albinus: Did you execute any Roman citizen, as Verus did in Sicily?

Pilate: Of the Romans? No.

Albinus: I consider you to be wise and prudent. In Rome I defended you publicly; but your deposition came about through the intrigues of the Governor of Syria, without the decision of the tribunal.

Pilate (sobbing): Albinus, let us leave this talk aside and postpone our discourse till the morrow, for men of consideration say, "Do your important work in the morning," and besides, I am at present fatigued, having encountered great hardships on the way from Rome. This wine is excellent.

Albinus: Be careful, lest it work within you and affect your head. Do not drink much of it.

Pilate: Be not afraid. What would you say if you had but tasted the wine we used to make from the grapes of En-gedi?* But now, please, tell me, are there many Jews in this city?

Albinus: Yes. Why do you ask this question?

Pilate: I want to know if there are to be found amongst them any followers of Jesus, the Nazarene, for I thought I would not see any of them here. But listen. The first place I entered to take a little rest, to my surprise, I found the occupant of the house a follower of this man. I ask you, by the right of the covenant that is between us (perhaps you might still remember when we were but little lads and used to play on the banks of the river Tiber, and there bound ourselves with an oath to be friends always) to receive me under the protection of the gods of your house.

Albinus: What is the matter with you, my old friend? Of whom are you afraid?

Pilate: I am afraid of everybody and of everything. I detest the Romans, the Jews and the Nazarenes, and, in fact, the whole world. The Romans are angry with me and regard me as a great criminal. The Jews detest me and count me a tyrant and an oppressor; and the Nazarenes look upon me as the executioner of their Messiah whom they regard as a god.

*En-gedi is a village situated on the western side of the Dead Sea, and in a south-easterly direction from Jerusalem. It is celebrated for the fertility of its vineyards. (Song of Solomon i. 14).

Albinus: A god! Death to the Nazarenes!

Pilate: Silently, I pray you, O Albinus. Do not raise your voice so high lest some may hear you!

Albinus: I have been told that they worship a man called Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in an animal's cave and who died upon a cross.

Pilate: Yes. And I think were he born in the loftiest palaces they would not have worshipped him. . . . And of him I am afraid. . . . (saying this, Pilate looked downward, his countenance changed and his face grew pale). Yes. I am afraid but tomorrow I will disclose to you the whole story, and submit myself and all of my actions as Governor in Palestine to your upright judgment. You, I know, will judge whether I am right or not in soliciting your protection.

Upon this Albinus remained silent and the two old friends parted without a single word, Pilate entering a chamber which had been made ready to receive him, to take rest from the fatigue of travel. On meeting again the next morning, after requesting that the door be shut, and that one of the slaves should guard it, Pilate resumed the discourse and said:—Tiberius has deposed me, Caligula has exiled me: and here am I in a most lamentable state, all through the execution of that Nazarene of whom we were talking yesterday; for his teachings have drawn many to his side, and yet had he not died on Golgotha, they would not have spread outside Judea and Palestine. O that I had not been Governor over Judea, and that this scene had never taken place!

Albinus: What has happened? Speak freely.

Albinus, calling from the window to a slave, ordered him to watch at the door lest anyone should unexpectedly enter.

Pilate: When I was appointed Governor over Judea, I was summoned to the Senate House, and was there told that Judea was a fine country; and, knowing the Roman Politics, that I ought to be wise and prudent lest the people feel the weight of the Roman yoke, and that there the soft paws would do more than the canine teeth of ferocious bears. We left the Jews their king, assured them the safety of their temple and their synagogues, did not interfere with their customs and their religious traditions, and forbore their misdemeanours. The Jews, however, did not forget that they, until recently, had a kingdom of their own, a fact upon which they still prided themselves. For this reason the representative of the Roman Emperor, in the administration of the affairs of the country, should take all these things into his consideration and govern with prudence, wisdom and patience. I obeyed willingly and left Rome, accompanied by my wife, (who, as you know is a native of Gaul,) my family and my slaves. On his way home from Pannonia I met Tiberius who confirmed my appointment and I saluted his hand. He said kindly: "Pilate, I am glad to hear of your appointment as Governor over Judea, for I am aware of your experience and skill. I have full faith that

by your wise administration we will be firmly established in that country. The political principles which the Roman nation follow are known to you, viz: to have compassion upon the obedient, and to punish the disobedient." I entered Jerusalem in a grand procession, with the intention of acting in accordance with the Emperor's commands. I was kind to everybody, and dealt leniently with everybody. I paid the greatest reverence to the chief priests and to the grandees of the city. A few days after my arrival, I prepared a banquet, to which were invited the Tetrarch, the chief priests and some of the city magnates. All refused the invitation, and did not attend, which disappointed me greatly. I became surrounded with malice, anger and contempt. I passed all that night thinking of the insult and ingratitude which the Jews had shown against me, without the slightest cause therefor, till I understood that the chief priests do not permit their people to receive food in the houses of pagans. This being the first action of the conquered against the representative of the conquerors I had to receive it with silence. I received many other blows in Judea, especially in Jerusalem, though my residence was not permanently there. My chief residence was at Caesarea in Palestine, where Jewish faction is not very strong. Judea is one of the most bigoted countries under Roman rule, and hard to make peace with. The people of Jerusalem are very audacious, lofty to the extreme, although it has been rightly said "They are mean and cowardly." Not one night did I sleep in peace. We were ever in danger of rebellion against the Roman Power. Intrigues took place daily in the highways and in the public streets. I had then a very small army under a Centurion, and when I would solicit military assistance from the Governor of Syria, I received empty promises. I feared especially the Herodians, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. After some time the appearance of a young man was reported to me, travelling in the cities and villages of Galilee, and in the direction of Lake Tiberias, teaching a novelty in the name of a new god whom we do not know; and in Jerusalem he taught and reproved as a man having authority. He walked on the waters, and quieted the storm and whirlwinds. He healed the sick by a look or by a word, raised the dead to life, and did many other deeds of which I did not take much notice, for, as you know, I am heedless in things not touching politics and personal interest. However, his interference with the masses concerned me very much and I thought that should this young man prosper, the weakening of our influence over Judea was inevitable; especially, when he had taken for himself disciples to instruct, and who were attached to him. Upon this, I appointed some men to carefully examine, secretly, all the circumstances of this young man and the nature of his teachings. It was then ascertained for me that with all the honour and reputation he obtained, he was poor and blameless, that he never interfered in politics, and that his attractive teachings were not directed against us or our policy, but that they were in keeping

with the interests of the Roman Government more than with the Jewish aristocracy and their chief priests and learned men. Once as I was passing through the city square I saw a crowd assembled near a tree, listening to a man speaking, and upon asking the meaning was told that Jesus of Nazareth was teaching; and, lest I should prevent him from addressing the crowd, I passed by, though I was very anxious to see with my own eyes that wonderful man. On another occasion I sent my secretary, Manlius, (who was a man of great intelligence, polite and loyal, and conversant with the Hebrew language) to another place where the young man was teaching, that he might hear him and report to me. On his return, he said, "What I have heard this day, my Sire, never have I heard in any of the books of the philosophers and sages nor in the orations of the learned orators. His sayings are simple, but contain sublime moral facts; and I think that nobody else ever reached so far." I was also told that one of the Jewish aristocrats, who liked to scheme out plots, asked him on one occasion whether it was right to pay tribute to Caesar or not. He (Jesus) showed to those present the picture of Caesar on the piece of money produced, and said, "Give Caesar what is Caesar's. This man taught publicly in the Synagogues, and in the houses; in the wilderness and on the mountains; in the squares of the cities and in the villages. He was greatly respected, because he gave comfort to the poor and the afflicted, doing good to everybody. He did not dislike to converse with the rejected and the cast down of humanity; but, on the other hand, he used all means for their reform and elevation in the scale of civilization, for which reason, the Jewish magnates envied him, and through his straightforwardness as compared to their hypocrisy, pride and despotism, he became in their estimation a thorn in the eye. I was also greatly surprised that he did not interfere with our politics in not condemning our errors, and the many encroachments executed by the Governors at that time. For I am sure, had he wished to do so, he would have found an ample field for reproach. It was evident to me, as also to my secretary, Manlius, that Jesus did not do so through fear of arousing the people to revolt against us. Instead, he taught patience, purity of heart, and the sincerity of purpose, love of peace, and the bearing of calamities and of persecutions—making all these characteristics means for attaining to the moral perfection. But it was as if he spoke to the dead, for in this your friend, O Albinus, was chiefly deserving of reproach among the Romans. The Jewish magnates have no equals in intrigues. Their priests are worse than their learned men, and these even worse than the plebeians. This latter class was in a state worthy of compassion, and naturally I had no cause whatever to oppose or stop this man in his mission; but on the contrary, considered it my duty to protect him. Nevertheless, I did not abide in the performance of such a duty, and made myself ignorant of the facts when news of the man and of his teachings was carried to me by the Jews.

Albinus: I heard you say that you feared the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Can you explain to me anything about them? Are they political societies, or are they religious sects among the Jews, and why did you fear them more than any others?

Pilate: I was afraid of the consequences of their deceit and evil doings. They had a strong command over the people, not failing to use means of enfeebling me, and encountering me with difficulties in every endeavour I projected to execute in Judea. Their hatred to the Roman name was so great that they strongly refused to accept any offer in the civil service, especially in the Customs Department, as Publicans, in collecting the taxes from the Jews. For woe unto such men whose circumstances oblige them to enter such a department and collect the tithes, or tribute, or anything levied upon the people. Such men are considered traitors to their nation, and you know what respect is conferred upon a traitor. I confess to you, friend Albinus, that I used to avail myself in seizing every opportunity of afflicting all those who had fallen into the clutches of the Government from these societies, especially the Herodians and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were less harmful to us than the others; they cared mostly for their own comfort, regardless of the traditions of the Mosaic law and of the elders which the Pharisees kept and practised, and which was the cause of much misunderstanding between the citizens and the Government. In this respect they were enemies to the Pharisees. They were followers of the Epicurean principles, and were very riotous. I was also told that, unlike the Jews, they denied the "Resurrection of the dead," However, they were righteous and truthful in their transactions with their fellow men, whereby they call themselves Sadducees,* claiming that all those who stick to truth need fear no consequences. As these did not come into collision with the Government, I took no notice of their many errors.

And what shall I say to you of the Herodians? These formed the wickedest society, and were the greatest enemies to the Romans. They exterminated many of them and of our army, by means of lying in wait. It was seldom that a Roman passer-by was saved from their hands, especially in Perea, on the other side of the Jordan. They had secret signs by which they would know each other. They reigned supreme in Galilee where their number was great. This faction could not tolerate the Roman Government, and were in favour of the restoration of the Jewish rule in Judea and Jerusalem, even in an indirect way, under the Romans, transferred to the line of Herod, who was eaten by worms. Their opposition to me arose from entering their city in a grand procession, hoisting the Standards of the Roman Legions, and from my using some of the Temple's money to build aqueducts to Jerusalem. This latter cause also annoyed the Pharisees. These Pharisees claim to have given themselves

*Truthful in Hebrew.

to the service of their nation, and to the observance of the laws and traditions of their fathers, lest foreign influence annul or corrupt them. This Pharisaic Society was of old standing in Judea, and its original purpose was of a highly commendable nature. When foreign powers, since the time of Alexander of Macedon, began to take possession of Palestine, successively, they introduced with them their philosophy which caused a revolutionary spirit to arise among many enthusiasts and led them to oppose foreign influences in defence of their religion and their traditions. It was only recently that this class of people became corrupt. They were hypocrites, malignants and liars, caring for nothing else than hoarding money and obtaining respect from men. They were, in a degree, very skillful in the art of fraud and money making; howbeit, they obtained most wonderfully the control over the people whom they robbed. This influence, I believe, was the result of the zeal of their ancestors for the Jewish religion, and the publicity of their hatred to us. They innovated many traditions and impressed them upon the fancy of the plebeians and did not fail to invent ways for strengthening their power over the people. They were very numerous in Judea and in Galilee.

Let us now return to Jesus of Nazareth. (Pilate said this, and heaved a deep sigh.) The straightforwardness of this man and the publicity of his teachings and the reprovings of the faults and bad deeds of many, aroused jealousy in the hearts of the chief priests, the learned men, and the wealthy people, the aforementioned sects especially. (There was another sect known by the name of Essenes. These were an independent, moral society, which did not mix with the rest of the people, and it was said that Jesus of Nazareth belonged to it. But this is untrue. The Essenes lived in private convents, far from cities and villages, while Jesus was always travelling up and down the country, and in the cities and, unlike the Essenes, mixing with all sorts of people.) My pretence in not knowing Jesus, or rather my non-interference with him and the non-opposition of the Government excited many of the Jews against me. As I said before, there were many reasons why I did not oppose him: one being his reproving the Jews who possessed the power over the people which act suited the interest of the Romans in that country; and it was my duty to obey the commands of my Emperor, Tiberius. These reprovings were so extreme that Jesus likened the learned men (Scribes and Pharisees) unto whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones. He also said that the alms of a poor widow in giving a mite were more munificent than the rich donations of the wealthy, and so on.

In the process of time, the accusations against Jesus increased, and many, warning me of calamities, assured me that Jerusalem at sundry times, had stoned many of such masters. Some threatened to accuse me to the Emperor. Thereupon, foreseeing the coming conflict, I reported* the whole affair to the Council in

*That Pilate made a report to Tiberius concerning Jesus is affirmed by Justin and Tertullian.—*Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*.

Rome, and asked for military assistance, in case of an uprising taking place among the people, so I would be able to easily quell it. My request was not taken notice of. And when the Passover was nigh, and Jerusalem was full of pilgrims, (for the Jews, on this feast, come from all parts of Palestine, to worship in Jerusalem), there was always fear, on such occasions like this, of plots and intrigues. I had then 450 soldiers under a centurion who was very inactive, though upright. Then commenced to be reported to me news of meetings and of secret conferences incessantly which troubled me very much and left me in a very critical position. My army was very small indeed to quell an uprising. Finally, it was reported to me that the chief priests and the members of the Sanhedrim robbed the treasury of the Temple to bribe the mob to incite an insurrection against Jesus of Nazareth. Two days before the Passover, began the terrible insurrection which ended in the death of the innocent Jesus, and marked the beginning of my misery. O my friend Albinus, have patience with me and listen to my story; perhaps you might be able to find an excuse for me in the death of this man whose image is ever before my eyes.

Albinus: I am ready to listen to you, Pilate, for I see you have inclined me to hear of your hero—this wonderful man! Tell me what did you do, and what took place?

Pilate: In the Hall of Judgment, the day before the feast of the Passover, after the Jewish Council had condemned him to death they brought to me Jesus, bound. How they had tried him* I do not know, save that Caiaphas, the cunning, their chief priest and the president of their Council in order to free himself of the responsibility sent unto me the verdict for execution, claiming that the execution by death was vested in me, being the Representative of the Roman Emperor, and Governor of Judea. This contention of Caiaphas was a proper one, for punishment by death was not to be executed by any save the Governor of Judea and the Tetrarch of Samaria and Galilee. But the cunning one

*It is interesting to here refer to the details of the trial of Jesus Christ, by the Jewish Council or Sanhedrim, as given in the Gospels.

After the raising of Lazarus from the dead; and the spread of the news of the miracle in Jerusalem and thereabouts, causing many to believe that Jesus was the expected *Messiah*, the chief priests and the Pharisees became troubled in their hearts and called a meeting and took counsel together against Him. In manifesting their zeal for their nation, the Pharisees began their argument thus:—"What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (John xi. 47, 48), *i.e.*—we see that the people are ready to receive Jesus as the promised *Messiah*. But *Messiah*, according to our belief and understanding shall come as a powerful king, and save his people from the hands of the Romans. This Jesus, who draws the people to his side by performing miracles which he alone doeth, cannot be the real *Messiah*, for he is not a powerful king; and were he *the Christ* he would have expelled the Romans and sat on the Jewish throne with ease and splendour. Now, therefore, he being not the expected *Messiah*, his being received by the people in this manner arouses the Romans against us, and causes them to take away the little rights we now enjoy—

It was very likely that some of the Sanhedrim, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, objected to the Pharisees, that their fear of the Romans was only

failed to know that such a punishment could not be inflicted without trial before the Governor and *not* before the Jewish Council! What impudence! Caiaphas inflamed me with hot displeasure, and for fear of a bad result, I had to conceal it. I did my best to appease the Jews, but failed in my object. O that I had acted as a valiant warrior with those cowards, and not as a wavering and cunning Governor! Albinus, I am the son of Spain, surnamed Pontius for conquering the Parthians; and the sons of the Pont have been vanquished by the chief priests of the Jews which has brought disgrace upon me! I, the Pontius, have been beaten by the cowards!

Albinus: But how was that?

Pilate: I have told you how the Jewish grandes bribed the mob out of the money of the temple; but I forgot to tell you by what pretext they excited their people against the Nazarene. The people liked Jesus and listened to his sayings and preferred them to those of the Pharisees, and also to the sayings of all their learned men, as my secretary, Manlius, who mixed with the Jews as one of them and spoke their language fluently, assured me. The Roman Empire was the pretence they used, but that I did not know until too late.

Albinus: And how did that take place? Make me understand plainly.

Pilate: The plebeians loved Jesus and delighted themselves in listening to his teachings. His enemies, to attain their ends,

imaginary, and that nothing would count to the conviction and injury of Jesus; and that there must be lodged valid proofs to convince the believers on Jesus that they were wrong in receiving him as the *Messiah*. On this supposed speech depends the answer of Caiaphas, who seemed to have sharpened his sword for a controversy, in saying unto them:—"Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 49, 50)—I, Caiaphas, believe that the nation will be in danger should the people follow the teachings of Jesus; and that the death of this man would save it from danger. Subsequently, the same Council agreed to use all means to put Jesus to death. But Jesus, after the raising of Lazarus, left Bethany for the city of Ephraim to the north of Jerusalem, and stayed there for a time not defined in the Gospel narratives. Before the Passover was come, he left Ephraim for Jericho and thence to Jerusalem with the pilgrims, and entered the Holy City as a king of peace, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. "Here Jesus was arrested through one of his disciples, a traitor, Judas Iscariot, by a squad of Roman soldiers, whose services were secured by Caiaphas, and a multitude—we know not how many—of the mob who were ready to undertake any enterprise that promised them a small reward." The armed ruffians brought Jesus first before Annas who was the chief among the chief priests before the appointment of Caiaphas, his son-in-law, and who had the greatest esteem in Jerusalem before Caiaphas. Annas then sent Jesus bound unto Caiaphas in whose house the Sanhedrists assembled. Then the high priest began to ask Jesus about his disciples, who they were; and about his teachings with the object of procuring from the answers of Jesus, causes to incriminate him. But Jesus, knowing the object of these questions, did not remain silent, but spoke boldly, proving that the questions were exceedingly superfluous, and that the satisfactory answer he (the high priest) would find amongst those who listened to his sayings:—"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the Synagogues and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." On saying this, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the

frightened the people by claiming that his teachings of patience, meekness, and the lawfulness of paying tribute to the Government would work and lead towards the strengthening of the Roman Power over them, whereas, it was the duty of every Jew to be ready to carry arms against the Romans. Upon this the people rose in insurrection when Caiaphas, the cunning, convinced them that before anything else was done it was very expedient to test the Government to see what force it had; and the best way to arrive at that was to prosecute Jesus on the count that he excites the people and arouses insurrections and teaches the disloyalty of paying tribute unto Caesar, and then to give a verdict that he was guilty and that his crime deserved death. If, therefore, Pilate concur with our verdict, it will be an indication of his weakness, and then it will be easy to depose him. If, on the other hand, he do not, we will resort to other measures, which would guarantee us success. But for the time being it is better for us to seek the death of this man and not revolt against the Roman Empire, while we are not ready for that event, which will only cause much bloodshed and the utter extermination of the Jewish nation.

Caiaphas' speech soon spread amongst the people as if it were the oracle of the gods of the heavens. The result being that the rioters charged the obedient one and ascribed to him what was in them, and succeeded through my not paying attention to their subtilty. Unfortunately for me I was not aware of all that till after the deed was done.

Albinus: You make me now believe that the Jewish priests and their sages are more cunning than our priests and magicians. May the gods be avenged upon them! Finish your discourse, please, and tell me what has become of Jesus.

Pilate: When they brought Jesus unto me to the Hall of Judgment I asked them sternly, "What do ye want of me?" They

palm of his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken *evil*, bear witness of the *evil*: but if *well*, why smitest thou me?" (John xviii. 20-24). Then the chief priests and the Sanhedrists sought for witness against Jesus, and they found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose two and bare false witness against him, saying, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple," *i.e.*, the abolition of the Jewish religion. Now, the endeavour to abolish the Jewish religion was counted as a great crime amongst them; but Jesus gave no answer to the false witnesses, and they desisted from this point. Then Caiaphas asked him a premeditated question, *viz.*, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. xxvi. 63). Jesus answered, "Thou hast said" (*i.e.*, yes, I am); "Nevertheless I say unto you" (as Daniel said) "hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest flew into such a passion that he rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." Then he and the Sanhedrim condemned him unto death. But as the execution of their condemnation was not in their power, they sent him unto Pilate, after they had insulted him. "Then some began to spit in his face, and buffet him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'prophecy unto us, thou, O Christ, who is he that smote thee?'"

This being the trial and condemnation of Jesus by the Council of Caiaphas, to fulfil the wonderful prophecy of Isaiah chapter liii.

answered and said, "We found this man perverting our nation, and he says that he will throw down our temple and abolish our religion, and many a time he has spoken blasphemy, saying, that he himself is the Messiah, a king." Now, the charge of perverting the nation was utterly false; and the charge of throwing down their temple and abolishing their religion did not trouble me much. Let all the Jews be exterminated, they, and their religion, and their temple! What do I care for them. I dwelt mostly upon the third charge. I entered my palace and ordered Jesus to come before me, and he entered the large hall. I cannot describe to you my state when this man entered the hall. It was as if my bones were withered; my hands became as hard as steel, my feet fixed to the floor; and I felt as if the hall itself shook and its pillars moved! And no wonder that now my whole frame is trembling. But the most surprising feature was that this man was very quiet and sober, of pleasant appearance and had a sympathetic countenance; and never in all my lifetime saw I a man handsomer than he. When I gazed at him well, he looked to be about 30 or 35 years old. His face shone in brightness, and I cannot describe to you his attitude and his grace, for I don't think any painter could draw all his features as they were, though many sculptors and painters have modelled unto us many gods and heroes in a most exquisite manner, (but what of that). This man stood before me so firmly and so gracefully, trusting in his uprightness and innocence, and looked at me in a look full of love. This look removed from my heart all confusion and doubt, and created within me a most wonderful confidence, and I said:—"Jesus, I am happy to see you. I have watched you during the past three years and examined your teachings and doings. You were liberal, I am not sorry for that, for your uprightness is well known. I don't know whether you studied Socrates or Plato, for I see, as it has been reported to me by trustworthy source that your perfect simplicity is united with majesty in both your teachings and your sayings, which drop a holy love to men. In my opinion you deserve to occupy the first position among the learned, the wise, and the philosophers. But you know very well that your uprightness moves many to rise against you,—and no wonder. For in Socrates' case the mob rose against him and he was persecuted and put to death by poison for dissenting from the polytheism of the Greeks. But Socrates* was an old man then, and you are but in the prime of your youth; moreover, you see the people rise against me, and charge me with taking your part and with bereaving them of their privileges and that little liberty which in their opinion they still enjoy under the protection of the Roman Empire. Yes, I do not intend to fulfill their hearts' desires in your case, but I should like to ask you some questions to enable me to defend you against your enemies."

But Jesus said, "O earthly Governor, you are not capable of stopping the rivers from their courses. If you command a river

*Born, about the year 470 B.C.; died by poison at Athens when he was about seventy years old.

running down the mountain to stop and turn backward, it would say to you I do not understand what you say, I obey the laws of the Divine Power only. Verily I say unto you, the blood of the innocent must be shed before the fruits ripen on the trees."

I said to him, "I do not want your blood to be shed, for you are dearer to me than all those liars, the Pharisees. O the wickedness of those people, for they consider the condescension of the Roman Power and her patience weakness, and do not understand that the bear is sometimes clad in sheep's skin! Be sure (to Jesus), I am your refuge. The place wherein you are the Jews shall not enter."

Then Jesus looked at me kindly and said, "When the hour foretold by the prophets is come, there is no shelter for the Son of Man, neither on the earth, nor under the earth! The abode of the innocent is above, there, in the heavens; and the prophecies of the prophets must be fulfilled. But woe unto them who do not know the day of their calling!"

After this, I asked him saying, "I wish you would answer me this question, viz., Are you really king?" Jesus answered and said, "O temporal Governor, you ask me whether I am king in the sense you would understand, while my present condition answers you plainly. Were I king in this respect the Jews would not have been able to bring me before you in such a state.

Then I said to him, "I believe you are right; but the Jews allege this charge against you, as for me I confidently believe you are obedient in word and in deed. How this charge originated I do not know!"

Jesus said, "There are moral concerns which surpass human understanding; and mysteries which only those that are led by the Spirit could comprehend. My kingdom is not of this world."

Upon this I said to him "then you are king." He said "you said so; but you ought to understand that my kingdom is a spiritual one which purifies the souls and reforms the characters and brings men nearer to the Heavenly Father. The Jewish priests and their learned men ought to have understood that which God had revealed unto them through the prophets, the things concerning this kingdom and its king. The truth I say unto you, 'It is for this that I came into the world to bear witness to truth.'"

When he had thus spoken my heart began to palpitate and I felt as if a sword had pierced me through, and said to myself, "What is truth, and who knows it, and who seeks to know it?" Is it we, the Governors, whose hands are full with bribes; and whose swords are dyed with the blood of the oppressed—Governors, who look to their offices or to their country as to a field to reap its products without sowing it themselves; or to a vineyard to collect its grapes without painstaking; or to a land to tread upon and not to plough! And who knows the truth? Is it the aristocrats, the wealthy, who tread upon the rights and privileges of their people, hoarding all the products of their labour by oppression and by craft? Or is it the priests and the chief priests, the hypocrites,

who gain supremacy over the people, by their cunning, and consume their produce? who employ religion as a means for effecting such ends, for their own selfish interests? Albinus! I will hide nothing from you. You know that I do not take any interest in religion. I anathematise what politics anathematise; and approve what my personal interests require of me, and do both in order to please Rome. However, I was in fear when Jesus said he was king in a manner which the Jewish world would understand, and which we Romans would not (who have deities and heroes more than sufficient). I said to myself as long as Jesus of Nazareth claims to be a spiritual king, and not a temporal one, that it would not interfere with me. But who of the Romans would be able to understand or distinguish the essential difference. And should the Jews make accusation to Rome that I was defending a man who claims to be king in spite of the intention of his people, what would my case be; and who would be there, able to explain to the Emperor the difference between the spiritual and the temporal king, that he might not consider me traitor to his Empire? All these thoughts flashed through my mind at once, and signs of fear appeared in me. Nevertheless his sayings about *truth* impressed me very deeply, and made me dislike myself. I looked backward and reviewed my life as a private man, and as a civil servant under the Roman Empire, and said again unto him, "By the gods, tell me, O Nazarene, 'what truth is,' and who heralds it? Do you not see what is in us and what around? Do you not see how the chiefs of your nation sacrifice, for their objects, justice and righteousness? You are right, son of the gracious; but your teachings surpass our understanding. Perhaps some other world than this, and other men than the sons of this century would be able to understand your sayings!

On saying this, I left Jesus alone and went out to the Pavement where the crowd was waiting to hear the result. And after I sat on the throne before them I said unto them, "Ye people, I have examined *the man*, according to my duties, and feel obliged to proclaim unto you that I find no fault in him. Cease ye therefore this your doing, and do not ask for what the laws of the Empire do not allow."

O Albinus, I would to the gods that either Tiberius who deposed me, or Caligula who exiled me had themselves witnessed the brutality of those people and their audacity. For as soon as they heard that I found no fault in the Nazarene they cried out all in one voice, "This is injustice! What sayest thou, O Governor, is the guilty innocent in your eyes? This man corrupts our nation, and wishes to pull down our temple, excites commotion, and claims to be king. What sayest thou, is he innocent?" I have seen and beheld many of the Aristocrats and of the Pharisees and the servants of the chief priests arouse the people by saying unto them, "Do not fear, make loud your cry! Make more commotion!" Really, when they cried out, "Crucify him, Crucify him!" I fancied the Hall of Judgment shivered and tottered from their

outcry. With all that I said unto them in anger, "Cry as much as you can. The laws of the Empire are just and wise, and by them I find no fault in Jesus, and by no other laws will I act. If you find him guilty according to your law punish him according to that law, and be yourselves responsible for the act thereof." This speech did not quiet them, but on the contrary increased their cry in a brutal manner, until a member of the *Sanhedrim* gave sign of silence and then addressed me saying, "O Governor, listen to my few words. Thou hast no right to tread upon the privileges of our nation. We have a Council composed of seventy-two members chosen from the elders and the grandees of our nation, under the presidency of the head of our religion. This Council deals with the affairs of the interior; and the Roman Empire recognises it. This very Council has found *this man* deserving death, according to our law. And I think the Council understands all things concerning religion and the welfare of the nation better than anybody else. Is it then right for thee to disbelieve the Council which represents the nation, and believe a man who bewitches his hearers with his words? We therefore say unto thee that *this man* is deserving of death, and thou hast but to execute the verdict of the Council, else we would take action against thee before Caesar."

I rebuked the man severely, and said unto him, "Mind what you say, Pharisee, and keep watch over your tongue. Judge what you like; but the Governor cannot deliver anyone unto death, unless he is adjudged according to the Imperial Code. You and your people ought to understand that no one else would favour you as much as I do; but favour has a limit. Hear me therefore and induce your people to cease from pursuing this hateful request. To assure you of my respect and acknowledgment of your legal rights, behold, I will chastise him as a trespasser upon your laws, and then let him go, on the occasion of your coming feast. Is it not at this feast that I am wont to release unto you a criminal? Behold, I will release him as a criminal according to your verdict."

After saying this, a messenger from my wife came and said to me, "My Lady tells you to beware of the intrigues of the Jews, and to have nothing to do with that innocent man, for she has suffered much in a dream because of him."

You know very well, Albinus, that the women of Gaul excel in the compassion of the heart, and some of them are endowed with characters surpassing mortal nature. My wife, Claudia Procula, is one of them, and she sent warning to me to beware of the intrigues of the Jews, as if her heart indicated unto her that I would have less courage in the case of Jesus.

Albinus: You are right in saying that my country-women are kind in heart and noble in character. But tell me whether Lady Procula had any acquaintance with Jesus of Nazareth?

Pilate: No, but she used to hear about him, and many a time desired to see him. She forsook me after the occurrence, and became one of his followers. She died three years afterwards, and

had, previous to her death, distributed all her wealth to the poor.*

Albinus: I asked you whether she had any former knowledge of Jesus, because I see her warning to you must have necessarily resulted either from personal acquaintance with him, or from her non-confidence in the justice of her husband. It seems to me, that you had, previous to this Nazarene, done some injustice, and that she had certain knowledge of it.

Pilate: In your latter supposition you are right. I have intimated before that the Jews are hard to deal with, and it was no wonder that I was unjust to some of them. But the injustice done to Jesus was the result of my infirmness, and not through antipathy or bad intention, which you could see from the nature of my discourse. The Pharisee did not yield to my admonition, and the audacity of the crowd increased. Then a Sadducee stepped forward and said to me: "O Governor, don't believe that this man will relinquish his purpose in warning him to observe the interests of our nation; and if you keep him alive, he will increase in his audacity, for he has a great many followers in Judea, and in Galilee, especially, where he began his work. Once his countrymen tried to cast him down the hill of their city, but he escaped in an astonishing manner. Others wanted to make him king over them, but he did not consent, for his intention is to reign over the Universe. If you do not believe it ask the Galileans and they would tell you. It is therefore very expedient that he should die on the cross; for his doings exceed those which deserve stoning to death, or throwing down the hill. His punishment is the cross."

Upon this the people cried out "Crucify him! Crucify him!" When I heard them mention Galilee, I thanked the gods, and said unto the crowd "As long as his doings are known in Galilee, and he is a Galilean, in Galilee ought he to be tried. And, as the Tetrarch is now in Jerusalem, I will send him unto Herod and he will do what he thinks best; for it is my duty to observe the laws and rights of Governors." But the people continued crying out "Crucify him yourself," of which I did not take heed, but commanded Manlius, my secretary, to take Jesus unto Herod, with a message to consider his case according to justice and the laws of the Roman Empire. On their way to Herod, the people were crying thus, "The sun of this day will not set but this man is on the cross."

The Jews went to Herod, and I came to my wife who told me of her dream, saying:—"O Pilate, I have dreamt and, behold, the ravens gathered together on a tree under whose shade a man took shelter. In the meantime, behold, the sun was darkened, and a great storm seemed to pluck out the tree, and, behold, the voice of one crying 'An innocent blood is shed in the valley of Kedron.' The face of Caesar was blotted with mud, for the Authorities have

*"Pilate's wife is represented as having been a proselyte of the gate and a secret disciple of Jesus. She is commemorated as a saint in the Greek Church Oct. 27."
—*Encyc. Brit.*

acted unjustly against the innocent and did not justify him who is sent from heaven. A babe spoke in his cradle; a boy put the learned men to silence; a youth subdued, by his word, the elements of nature; he walked on the sea, he flew in the clouds, and the trees bowed down to him. When I awoke, I heard the cries of the barbarian Jews, 'He deserves death! He deserves death!' Again I slept, and behold, a great crowd were being tried before a just and an awful king; and, behold, I found you there among the perished, lamenting. I became, therefore, afraid that something fearful would take place, and I became troubled in my thoughts. For this very reason I beseech thee to consider these things and weigh them in your wisdom, lest the curse of the *Senate* should fall upon thee, and be thou subjected to the wrath of Caesar, and be thyself that tree which did not profit him who sought refuge beneath its shade, and which the storm seemed to pluck out. Or be that oppressive Governor who did not justify him who is sent from heaven, and be thyself the condemned by the just king who tries the kings and the governors, the great and the small, and who rewards everyone according to his deeds."

Albinus: It seemed that I did not pay attention to what you previously said that Lady Procula had a dream. Now I see that her warning you was subservient to this dream. It is in reality a wonderful dream.

Pilate: While we were yet at table, one of the attendants came and said to me that the Jews had returned with Jesus, and were near the Judgment Hall. Then Manlius delivered unto me a note from Herod, saying, "that Jesus, the accused by the Jews, and the condemned by their Council, was born at Bethlehem of Judea, and, as his prosecution took place in Judea, the Governor of Judea must see to his trial—the Tetrarch of Galilee has no jurisdiction over the case. The chief priests allege that this Jesus says of himself that he is king. It is therefore the duty of the Governor of Judea to see to that; and, behold, I have arrayed him in the apparel of the kings."

Now, Herod considered my sending Jesus unto him a reconciliation offered to him in consequence of some previous action executed by me, which brought enmity between us. For I had punished by death certain Galileans who roused an insurrection in the temple at Jerusalem. (The truth I say to you, that many of the Galileans were highwaymen between Jerusalem and Jericho, and on the other side of the Jordan. And also between Samaria and Judea; on the mounts of Gilead and Ammon, and in many other places). And because the Government officers did not succeed in capturing those rebels in the very city, I gave orders to arrest them inside the temple. It so happened on the incident taking place, that it was the time of offering sacrifices: hence the saying,—"That Pilate had mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices." This action made a deep impression in Herod's heart, and did not become reconciled to me till after this event—(sending Jesus to him).

Herod was a man of bad disposition and character, addicted to strong drink, indulging, lustful, and licentious. He was very fond of music and dancing. He belonged to the Sadducees' sect; for he had shown his truthfulness, that, to please a harlot whose daughter was dancing in his presence on the occasion of his birthday, in commanding, while in an intoxicated condition, the beheading of a master, an abstinent, beloved of the people, John Baptist by name. I was also told that he was glad in sending Jesus unto him, for he was longing to see him. But instead of considering his case, he began to ask him to execute a miracle before him, to amuse him and those present. Jesus refused him, for he could not bear to have anybody to look upon a miracle as upon a play; and he answered nothing to the charges laid against him by the chief priests (before Herod), fully knowing that the murderer of the prophets would not save one innocent man; and that the jealousy of the chief priests would not be cured by mere words. So Herod set Jesus at nought and arrayed him in white dress in the fashion of the apparel of the kings of Judea, as a mockery of Jesus and sent him back to me.

(During this speech, the servants brought in dishes of meat, and Albinus said to Pilate, "Postpone your discourse while we take a little food: you are worrying and aggrieved, drink a little of this wine to disperse your grief, and be of better cheer.")

Thus the two old men sat at table, and conversed on the situation of Judea, its climate, products, the customs of its people, and its chief cities—Pilate praising its wine, the wine of Hebron and of En-gedi especially. He also praised Caesarea Judea which Herod the Great built to the honour of Augustus Caesar, and also the palace of Herod in Jerusalem. Pilate also entered into details in speaking of the Jewish Synagogues and chapels, saying, that Jerusalem contained 365 synagogues wherein the Jews gathered themselves together for worship and the reading of the Law and for the explanation thereof. There were chiefs and servants in these synagogues, and they did the work of the chief priests, the priests and the Levites in the temple where the Jews offered their sacrifices. And in answer to a question of Albinus on the condition of the chief priests, Pilate said that the greatest amongst them were appointed by the consent of the Roman Empire, like Caiaphas who was appointed in lieu of Annas after his dismissal by the Roman Government for political reasons. But the Jews were not satisfied with the action of the Government, and this deposed Annas was in fact the central focus in all important matters, and Caiaphas his son-in-law was but a tool in his hands. So, in the trial of Jesus, the chief mover was Annas and not Caiaphas.

Pilate, having taken his food without appetite, drank a good quantity of wine. Each of the two old men took a little rest after dinner and then resumed their original conversation, Pilate commencing said:—After reading Herod's reply, and Manlius informing me of what took place before him (Herod) whom the Jews

called *fox*, on account of his cunning, I came out to the Judgment Hall, and behold, the crowd began to move before me, like the waves of a roaring sea. (Here, do not fail to remember that the days were those of a great feast, and Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from Judea, Galilee, the other side of Jordan, the plain of Azdarun, and from many other provinces). Jesus was standing amongst them in the white royal apparel, like an image of purity in the shrine of the gods. I said to the crowd, Behold, the white dress is an indication of the innocence of Jesus: and Herod himself, I believe, did not find any fault in him. Upon my saying this, they roared like beasts and began to threaten me with accusations to Caesar, and to charge me with treason to him, saying that Herod did not interfere in this matter only out of respect to the Governor's rights, and he did sanction the Council in the prosecution. I was anxious to get the favour of the chief priests and the grandees of the Jews towards Jesus, and said unto them, "Behold, I will chastise him in deference to the decision of your Council, but will not deliver him to death, and then let him go on the occasion of the feast." But they did not consent, and asked me to release unto them another man who was a notorious criminal, and a chief rebel, Barabbas by name.

The first error I committed in the case of Jesus was that I permitted them to scourge him; but the object was to save him from death, methinks, the greatest charge the Jewish people preferred against him was his alleged claim to be their king; it being the only charge which touched upon the interests of the Roman occupation in Judea.

Howbeit, this allegation was not valid, for Jesus used to pay tribute to Caesar, and urged the people to do the same, and explained to me more expressively that his kingdom was not a temporal one, but one of peace, righteousness and justice. But the word *king* in itself would evidently interfere with the sentiments of the Emperor, who would not bear to know of any other king but he, though it be in a different sense from what we Romans would understand.

Secondly. Jesus himself taught patience, the endurance of persecutions, and the forgiveness of trespassers: This teaching he performed by deeds; and besides his patience over his people, and doing good to them, he did not utter a single word against his persecutors who sought his execution. I also seemed to sanction the charge against Jesus, by calling him *king*; and in ordering his scourging he will, *in the first place*, excuse me himself, for his meekness, and his knowledge of my object to release him from the evil of his enemies, and, *in the second*, I myself will be relieved from the evils of the Jews who would then have no more reason to complain and intrigue against me; and moreover they would not be able to say that I defended a man who was charged with claiming himself to be king, when the king of Judea is the Roman Emperor himself.

Thirdly. Should reports reach Caesar differing from what I reported to the Senate concerning Jesus, it will be evident on investigation that I exhibited certain zeal toward the Power of Caesar more than was required in the way in which I did not tolerate the title of *king* to be attributed to any in Judea save unto him, even though it be in the spiritual meaning which has no connection whatever with the Government. Then I ordered the scourging of Jesus, and used all sorts of punishments which told plainly the guilt ascribed to him; and so it happened, for our soldiers arrayed Jesus in purple garments, and placed on his head a crown of thorns, and put in his hand a reed instead of a sceptre, and they mocked and ridiculed him by calling him king of the Jews. But I say to you that the ridicule of the army was not done by my permission. You should know that our soldiers and my servants bore a great many insults from the Jews for which reasons they avenge themselves on everybody who falls under their hands. Nevertheless, I plead guilty in not warning them severely not to go outside the circle of modesty in the case of this oppressed one. But in fact I was the cause of the abominable conduct of the soldiers, for on delivering him to be scourged I called him "king of the Jews." This title was of itself enough to arouse the Romans to ridicule and contempt. For this very reason they (as it was told me) struck him, with a reed on his head, and said to him "Hail, King of the Jews," and so forth.

Albinus: Is it in this alone that you consider yourself guilty concerning Jesus of Nazareth? But how did you order his scourging when you did not find any fault in him?

Pilate: I have explained to you the reasons for that. I had pure objects in so doing; and moreover, I desired to vex the Jews by calling Jesus their king.

Albinus: I did not know you to be so cunning, Pilate! Did the air of Judea teach you these intrigues which we Romans call "childish?" Leaving the teachings of Jesus—of patience, meekness and compassion, aside, did you not know that the duty of the Governor was to execute justice and fulfill the laws which had been made for the welfare and not for the injury of the people? Why did you scourge a man whom you regarded as innocent, before a people you knew to be liars, evil-doers and barbarians? I know that we Romans, before anything else, pay a great deal of attention to our political interests; but these interests fitly require us to protect a man, submissive to the Empire, innocent of all the charges laid against him by his enemies who are also the enemies of the Roman Empire itself, as you yourself state. And the denial of Jesus that he was king except in a sense other than the political terminology does not at all interfere with the rights of Caesar. For men of common sense consider the meaning and not the word. And as long as Jesus of Nazareth says that his kingdom was of another style and had nothing whatever to do with politics, then the charge of the plaintiffs is not valid though the plaintiff be the Roman Emperor himself. But I see that in guarding your

personal interests it led you to a state in which you could not distinguish justice from oppression; and you became afraid of the appellation of "king," and this fear blinded your prudence. I ask you, Pilate, to pardon me, for I speak freely as a Roman having no knowledge of Jewish tricks and those who came to live amongst the Jews. However, finish your discourse for my heart is inclined towards this Nazarene, the oppressed. Did you release Barabbas, the rebel, as the chief priests requested of you to do, and deliver the righteous one unto death?

Pilate: Deal lightly with me O my friend, for I had enough of the like reproaches from my wife. But as I told you before, my object in scourging Jesus was only to elicit the compassion of the chief priests in the hope of saving him and myself out of their evils. I swear by the gods that I had no other intention whatever; and I do not deny that I was afraid of the intrigues of the Jews; and the word *king* did disturb me especially. However my purpose was of good intent.

Albinus: Did you attain your desired object?

Pilate: No! But I was obliged to release Barabbas, the rebel, and deliver Jesus to be crucified; and, behold, the details of the event:—

When Jesus came out of the place where he was scourged, I said to the crowd *Ecce Homo*.^{*} Is it possible that he has done anything of what you charge him with? (I thought that his appearance would move their hearts to compassion—but in this my thoughts failed me). The only answer was a loud cry of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" No doubt one mistake leads to another, and I became completely overwhelmed in the cause of Jesus to bring about the wishes of his and my enemies. I had told them more than once to take him themselves and crucify him according to their law, that I might not be an accomplice in their evil. They refused and cried out with greater impudence, "He must be crucified by order of the Government." One aristocrat addressed me saying, "Thou, thyself, O Governor proved that Jesus of Nazareth deserves death, for thou hast dealt to him what the Government deals to criminals before their execution, *i.e.*, scourging him. If therefore thou wast not satisfied that he was deserving death, thou wouldest not have scourged him. As thou began it, so likewise must thou finish it." In my anger I turned to the chief priests and said unto them, "Is this the result of favouring you? May the gods be avenged on you, ye oppressors!" They only sneered at me and said, "We do know but one God, the only God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and Him alone do we fear. But this Jesus for whom you plead, has blasphemed Him by calling himself the Son of God."

This saying of theirs troubled me, and I did not know what to do. I did, and still do, regard Jesus to be an extraordinary man, characterised by the noblest virtues and the most perfect manners. My secretary, Manlius, and the Centurion, Longinus, were right in saying, that when I said unto the Jews *Ecce Homo*^{*}, I said

^{*}Behold the man!

the truth. As a matter of fact, though I did not mean it from the beginning, I must confess that among that crowd of Governors (Pilate the chief of them) and chiefs and princes; of learned men, of priests and chief priests—great and small, there was but *one man* who was Jesus of Nazareth, the oppressed. The rest were not deserving the appellation of men, for they did not actually comprehend what *humanity* was, in not being able to esteem the position of *the man* Jesus, by liberating the murderer, Barabbas, and seeking the death of the *deliverer* of men, their instructor and wellwisher. But the thought that Jesus was a god had never before entered my mind. And when the Jews said that he called himself the Son of God, confusion reigned in my mind; and I desired to ask him about these allegations, saying to myself, who knows but that this Jesus might have some connection with the gods; for the Greeks and Romans say that Jupiter is the father of the gods and of the heroes. And Jesus, with all that had befallen him, still had signs of grace characterised in him. It is true that Jupiter has nothing to do in Judea where he is not known; and I myself have little faith in our gods, (I ask pardon, ye gods!) however I thought that there must be something extraordinary in Jesus, and found it worth my while to meet him privately and inquire of him about this question, so that I should be able to understand it.

Albinus: Who are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Pilate: They are the ancient chiefs of whom came the Jews. Abraham is to them what Romulus or Janus are to the Romans, or Olenus to the Greeks. Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac Jacob from whom came the Jews, who are in my esteem the worst and wickedest creatures on earth.

The Roman poets satirise the Greeks and ascribe to them deception and fraud in their dealings with men. You know the current and popular Roman adage, "Fear the Greeks, though they offer thee presents," but I prefer them to this cunning and seditious race.

Albinus: Fair and softly, Pilate, do not condemn a nation in general. For every people have their own bad qualities as well as their good ones to characterise them. And we Romans are not free from demoralising characteristics—you know that yourself. Continue your discourse.

Pilate: When Jesus was brought before me in the Palace, I said to him, "You know very well, Jesus, that often, circumstances oblige the Governor to act against his will, especially a Governor of a people like your nation. Their barbarity and cruelty astonish me greatly. It seemed to me that Fate had decreed that I would be Governor over Judea for my punishment. I trust, therefore, that you will excuse the misdemeanour and insult shown towards you. I only allowed it, having knowledge of your patience and your modesty, in the hope of saving you from the teeth of these bears. Answer my only question to you, for the sake of the gods, and for my conscience's satisfaction, "From where

do you come? I know you are of Nazareth; but my desire is to ascertain whether you are a man of this earth or a spiritual hero. Are you human or are you spiritual?" But he did not answer me a word. He looked at me, (not to say making little of me) in a compassionate look, as if sorry for his addresser, and I said to him, "I think you surpass both. Are you from the world of the the gods? I ask you by the name of the gods, do not deny me the answer! Did you come from above?" But Jesus did not answer. Upon this I said to him, "I am rather surprised that you do not avail yourself of this opportunity of revealing yourself to me, and so be saved from the evils of your enemies: And at all hazards, you know that I am the Governor, and that I have power to crucify you, according to the demand of your nation, and have power to release you. But as my office requires of me I permit myself to ask you for an answer, even in a manner of command." He said, "O temporal Governor, thou art introducing questions whilst thou art not prepared to understand the meaning of their answers; and in case thou art able to do so, thou canst not dispose of them accordingly. Be satisfied, therefore, to accomplish thy duty as Governor, and do not add more sins to thine, for I pity thee. And do not exaggerate the strength of thy power, for it has a limit; and thou hast no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. But this I say unto thee, for thy consolation, that the sin of those who delivered me unto thee is greater than thine!" O Albinus! Were an artist there to draw me and him during this conversation he would draw Jesus a Governor, and Pilate as the condemned: For I myself fancied Jesus governing me with these words, and a frank Governor too; but I did not know what to do, for fear of the Jews! I took it then into my head to ask the counsel of my ministers, those on whom I rely; and they came to me in great haste. One of them said that it did not concern us to come between the Jews and Jesus of Nazareth. Another said that we ought to look after the interests of the Jews, for fear of an insurrection. A third suggested the delay of the decision till after the feast. But Manlius advocated his acquittal, saying, that "Jesus is an honorable man, of high esteem, and beloved of the people who met him as they would a king, when he entered Jerusalem the last time, riding on a donkey and not on a horse which gave token that Jesus was the king of peace. For the donkey is the emblem of fatigue, hard labour, effort and industry; while the horse is that of war and invasion. Therefore it does not behove us to condemn to death a man whose banner is that of perfect peace, even though the chief priests and the grandees of the city rise against him. As to the people taking part with them I think it is a temporary matter, and is but the result of the opinion of the higher classes and their simplicity. These plebeians received him, a few days ago, with exceeding welcome." But the majority agreed in favour of the Jews, *i.e.*, in crucifying Jesus. I came out to the Judgment Hall, and, behold, the Jews were crying out that if I did not crucify him I would be a traitor to Caesar.

Having had many enemies, I became afraid of this charge, especially when Tiberius, as you know, was very suspicious, giving a listening ear to all sorts of accusations, and saw that it would not avail to protect Jesus any longer, and I said unto them "Behold your king." They answered, saying "Be it far from us, our only king is Caesar." Upon this I consented to their demand; but before doing anything else, I washed my hands before them, and said "I am innocent of the blood of this just man." They said "Let his blood be on us and on our children." I said to them "I do not believe your children will be happy in such an inheritance." They said that it was their affair.

Upon this, I wrote a title—his accusation, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, thus, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS," and gave him over to be crucified. As soon as the permission was given, the crowd rushed from the Judgment Hall, like beasts, and caused a great confusion, the like of which I had never before witnessed, neither in the battle of Pannonia, nor during our civil wars, nor in the Forum of Rome. They went to the Mount of Golgotha, and Jesus, carrying his cross on his shoulders, as criminals had to do, walked like a meek lamb. Here I will have to mention an incident which bears witness to the sweetness of the nature of our soldiers as compared to that of the Jews. The pains which Jesus unjustly suffered fatigued his body, and his strength was gone, and he fell under the burden of the cross. The guards and the soldiers who led him to the place of crucifixion, and who had before scourged and ridiculed him, could not now keep themselves from pitying him. They relieved him of carrying his cross, and compelled a foreign Jew* to carry it to Golgotha. Then the Jews began to shout their revilings against Jesus and rejoice in his distress and disgrace. I sat in one of the halls facing a window which overlooked the road to Golgotha, and saw the people spitting, raging, and cursing. I saw them all pass the wall of the city. The city was emptied of its inhabitants, for everyone had gone out to see the Crucifixion. And in the midst of this tranquility and silence it seemed to me as if I heard the moaning of that righteous man! His tongue seemed to be saying to me "Is this your justice, Pilate? Is this your loyalty and fidelity towards the Empire which made you Governor over Judea to execute justice and do right? Do you thus perform the mandate of your king, Tiberius?" Then I began to find out that I had made myself a fool in the eyes of the Jews and had acted like a shallow-minded Governor. My throbbing heart told me that the death of this innocent man must necessarily bring about many serious events. And while I was thinking of my insult, and of the strangeness of this event which I cannot now account for (for candidly speaking, I had no intention whatever to deliver Jesus unto death) behold, the sun was darkened, as he was on the day of the death of Julius, that illustrious Caesar; and it seemed to me that clouds as of lead covered

*Simon, from Cyrene, in Africa, now called Tunis.

Jerusalem; and that numberless peals of thunder and flashes of lightning were directed upon the Temple and the Palace of Herod and the Judgment Hall. In the same evening there happened a terrible earthquake which moved the rocks from their foundations, and the followers of Jesus said that this proved that nature itself could not bear to witness such an injustice. But Fate had decreed that Jesus should die on the cross.

You ought to know, Albinus, that gravity and dignity did not depart from Jesus a single moment; and the weakness of his body did not decrease one atom of his manliness and the virtue of his soul.

Firstly. While he was walking towards Golgotha, there followed him women related unto him, weeping. He turned and said unto them, "Weep not for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep for yourselves and for your children; if thus they do in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" *i.e.*, If the righteous is delivered unto death and was counted with the criminals, what shall be done with the criminals themselves!

Secondly. You know that the condemned to crucifixion are given wine mixed with gall that their sensations may become benumbed, and they would not feel their sufferings much. So, according to the custom, they brought this stuff for Jesus to drink, but as soon as he tasted it he refused to accept it, for he was willing to bear his suffering in his perfect senses. How noble is this man!

Thirdly. The cross did not prevent him from paying attention to his mother, for he gave her to the care of his own disciple, and gave the disciple over to her care.

Fourthly. The most astonishing and important thing was his prayer on the cross for his persecutors in saying, "My God, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The truth I say unto you, Albinus, that should the teachings of Jesus predominate over our Roman Religion (the gods forbid!) it would be the result of his love to men, and his condescension towards their faults, and of the purity of his teachings.

Fifthly. Two thieves were crucified along with him; the one on his right and the other on his left. The one seeing on the face of Jesus, the marks of majesty and dignity with indications of purity and innocence said unto him, "Lord, remember me in thy kingdom." Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, this day you shall be with me in Paradise."

Sixthly. The many afflictions which Jesus suffered knowing that he was innocent of all the charges laid against him, made him pronounce the words of the oppressed and the forsaken by all—"My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"* and followed by these words—"It is finished," and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Jesus said this and the decree was finished.

Thus the sacrifice of Golgotha was finished because of the wickedness of men, by the command of a Governor having no moral

*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

principle, by the hands of the Romans to the satisfaction of the Jewish chief priests; the Romans as well as the Jews, notwithstanding their natural enmity to each other, united in perfect union to murder the righteous man.

And Herod, the Jew, the drunkard, and Pilate, the Roman, the coward, became, at last, reconciled, after an important enmity, through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Nazarene.

Now, after that fearful earthquake, which was felt by many outside Jerusalem and Judea (I was told that a certain Greek Philosopher, Dionysius* by name, member of the Council of Areopagus, said on that occasion, that either the God was suffering, or the end of the world was approaching) I wanted to go in disguise to Golgotha to see what took place there. (For what I told you before, I was informed of by Longinus, the Centurion, and Manlius, my secretary, and others). I saw, on my way, an old man standing near and gazing at a drop of blood—it being the blood of the righteous Jesus. On seeing me, the old man fell at my feet and wept. I lifted him up and said to him, "What is the matter with you, old man?" He said, "I am Joseph who is of Ramah, a member of the Council of your Excellency; I ask thee to allow me to bury the dead body of Jesus who was unjustly put to death." And there were standing behind him women, weeping, but I did not see their faces, for they were veiled. I said to him, "You shall have what you request, old man," and I sent a guard with him to Golgotha to deliver my order to Manlius and the Centurion, to bring down from the cross the body of Jesus, and bury it with reverence. And it was done. For our soldiers have awarded Jesus the due reverence in the noble burial. Joseph was one of the Jewish Aristocrats, and a wealthy man. He was good in purpose, noble in spirit, and sweet of temper. Another man joined him in the burial of Jesus. This was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrim, but he distinguished himself from the Pharisees in his uprightness. Both Joseph and Nicodemus were followers of Jesus, but for fear of being excluded from the congregation they did not make it public. The excommunication among the Jews means the annihilation of a man's rights, which is done by cutting off all intercourse with the excommunicated. The man will be no more received or acknowledged in homes, societies, and in the synagogue. People are not allowed to speak to him, eat with him, or drink with him, to accost him or to render him salutation; sell to him or buy of him anything. The father leaves his son, and the son his father, if excommunicated and the brother removes far away from his brother. (The gods defend us from such circumstances!) But this punishment is rarely carried to such extremes. They do generally make it in two degrees. The first is for a short period. The second is for a longer one. If then the excommunicated admits his error he is forgiven, else the third degree is adopted.

*Mentioned in Acts xvii. 34.

Now Jesus was buried in a new sepulchre, in an orchard, near Golgotha, belonging to Joseph, on or near which many tears were shed by his mother, relatives and disciples, and by many men and women whose spark of justice had not departed from their hearts. Our soldiers said that certainly this man was a righteous man, and put to death unjustly. Longinus, the Centurion and those who were with him and Manlius, my secretary said, "Truly this man was sent from Heaven and is the son of God!"

The Jews became afraid and ashamed, and on their return from Golgotha they were, every other step looking backward for fear of another miracle taking place, or the occurrence of a greater earthquake. I, myself, have seen those people in such a state when after sunset I went, in disguise, towards Golgotha. But so great was the fear and the confusion which reigned in my mind that I was obliged to soon return to my Palace, after proceeding more than three-fourths of the way there.

Jesus at last found rest in his tomb, after experiencing many horrors, and bearing many sufferings. But the chief priests continued in their wickedness; and I, Pilate, was not quieted, for fear and anger of the Jews. How I passed that night I am unable to explain to you the state of a Governor of a province ready to hoist the banner of insurrection; a Governor mocked and ridiculed by a people whom he detests; a Governor committing the most horrible crimes without considering his action, and balancing his words, and accounting for the consequences thereof! What would the state of such a Governor be! It was a gloomy night, darker than the darkest nights which I spent without sleep and without rest. To add to such an unhappiness were my wife's reproaches, and I became greatly ashamed to see her—she having spoken some words to me which have impressed very seriously on me, and I can never forget her and them till death cuts short this miserable life. In apologising to her that necessity knows no law, and that it was not in my power to save the righteous as she desired me to do, and that it was difficult for me to contradict the Jewish decrees, she said to me, "Woe to the country whose Governors do not look to the execution of justice, and do not justify the oppressed: But woe unto the Governors and the city magnates who seek the preference of their personal, selfish interests to their civil and moral duties! Woe unto all peoples and all sects whose chiefs labour in their deterioration: But woe unto the chieftains who employ the people and expose them to corruption and undesirable profits." And when I told her that I washed my hands in the presence of all the Jews, and declared to them that I was innocent of the blood of the righteous man, she exclaimed—"Woe unto thee, Pilate, for the waters of all the seas and the rivers cannot cleanse thee from the horrible crime thou hast committed. I ask God to deal mercifully with thee and with thy associates, the oppressors, and help the Caesars and the Potentates against their ministers, the unjust and the corrupt!"

Peace be upon thee, O Claudia Procula! Had I listened to thee I would now be happy!

As I said before, the chief priests did not cease from their wicked doings. That was evident, for they wished to avenge themselves upon the disciples of Jesus also who were, after the death of their master, in a state worthy of compassion. To create a pretext for their persecution, the chief priests sent unto me on the morning of the following day some of their priests representing them, saying—"Sire, we remember that that deceiver (which there is no occasion to mention his name any more) had said, while he was yet alive that he will rise again on the third day. We guarantee that he will not rise again, but he left some disciples who were attached to him and imbibed his teachings, and very likely they will steal away his body and report unto the world that their master rose from the dead; so the consequences will be extremely dangerous; and most likely some of the mob would believe them, and cause an insurrection, of which the bad results cannot be calculated. To prevent all that, we ask thee to command the appointment of a guard over his tomb." This seemed to be a strange request, for the guards were at the sepulchre of Jesus already by my order, lest the Jews defile it. But to get rid of them I said unto them "Why do you ask me? You have the guards who were by the cross of Jesus; go ye therefore, and do what ye like." And they went and sealed the sepulchre; and the guards remained there.

That same night I sat to write the particulars of the event* to the Emperor, and while writing, I heard, about midnight, the sound of the bugle near the Judgment Hall. I looked from the window, and, behold, the Roman soldiers were within the walls of the city. These soldiers, numbering two thousand, were sent to Caesarea Palestine, as a military assistance for me, according to my request; and they proceeded from Caesarea walking day and night, till they reached Jerusalem. But alas! the horrible act was done! They were of no use then. Had these soldiers arrived three days before, Pilate would not have become a tool in the hands of the Jews. But there is no ruling over Fate!

Now, the tomb in which Jesus was buried was found, two or three days afterwards, empty. His disciples reported that he rose from the dead in accordance with what has come down in the Jewish Books, and appeared to many. There was no doubt that the tomb was found to be empty, for the guards gave evidence to the fact, saying, "that an earthquake took place while asleep and we awoke terrified and found the stone rolled and the tomb open and empty." But the question of his resurrection was not of my duty to investigate. Besides, I was busily engaged with the Roman soldiers, for I had to divide them into companies, and place each detachment in certain quarters of the city. Then I began to scheme how to be avenged upon the Jews. O Albinus!

*Lardner says, Pilate must have sent a report to Rome concerning Christ. A translation of Pilate's Report, published in 1913, contains some of the facts mentioned in this Confession, as published in 1893.

The wolf of the Tiber took off the sheep's clothing, and so I began to reap out the Jews by the right and by the left. True, I was dealing out wrath and revenge on this treacherous people, for the insult which terminated in the death of Jesus, the Nazarene. In a very short time I created terror in the hearts of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I did away with the punishment by crucifixion, for the death of Jesus made me detest this kind of punishment entirely. Instead of that, the Roman sword played in their necks, and the blood of the Jews flowed like streams in the streets; and Pilate made himself master of his rights, and removed the insult of the past. For tens and hundreds of those rogues died by the sword. And what gave me courage to carry my avenging spirit to such extremes was the information which reached me from Rome to the effect that the Emperor was not satisfied with my complete condescension to the Jews. However this affliction aroused my enemies against me in Rome as well as in Damascus. The officials at the Palace began the accusations, and Vitellius, the legate of Syria, intrigued pitilessly against me in his letters to Rome. But my friends in Rome stood up for me as much as they could, and many a time turned aside from me the wrath of Tiberius. At last they left me alone, for Vitellius was accusing me continually, and attributed to me actions which make gray the hair of the young children.

Besides, Mary Magdalene accused me to the Emperor. This woman was one of the most wonderful women of her age. She possessed the mind of a philosopher, the bravery of a soldier, and the genius which fails any statesman among the Romans. She led many to the faith in Jesus, my wife included.

This Mary appeared before Tiberius, and presented him with a boiled egg, dyed in red, and said unto him, "Christ is risen," and "Long live Tiberius Caesar." Tiberius was thereby astonished and he asked her for the meaning thereof. Mary answered that it was "Good Tidings." "The egg answers to our life on earth, and to our resurrection and ascension into heaven. The life of man on earth is as that of the chicken inside the egg; the warmth of the hen sitting on the egg enables the chicken to throw away the shell and to come thence into life. So, for a man to escape from the narrow prison of this departing life and to attain the everlasting and joyous life to come, he must have warmth of faith, and no faith but the faith in the Redeemer, whose blood flowed on the cross. This precious and innocent blood, indicated by the red dye, gave us, his followers, the future life. "Christ is risen," although he died on the cross, unjustly, by the sanction of Pilate, and by the wickedness of the Jews, my countrymen." She then told Tiberius the whole story of the crucifixion, and informed him also that I was aware of the innocence of Jesus, of the purity of his character and of the sublimity of his teachings; howbeit, I sanctioned his crucifixion, not out of zeal for the interests of the Roman Empire, nor on account of the accusations of his enemies that he had called himself king of the Jews having any weight with

the Emperor, but merely for guarding my own personal interests. She said unto him that I was afraid the Jews would charge me with being traitor to Caesar in the case of Jesus, and that the wretched man (Pilate) did not comprehend that the tyrant Governor is the chief of traitors unto his master, who was given power from God: She then said—"Pilate knew his error and confessed it, but he desired not to reform himself by repentance, and become stable in character; but by wantonness and bloodshed. He thought that by shedding the blood of the Jews he would avenge the death of Jesus, while, as a matter of fact, Pilate never heard a single word from Jesus against his bitterest enemies. He was also informed that he (Jesus) forgave them and prayed for them, while on the cross. We, the followers of Jesus, tried to dissuade him, through his wife, and urged upon him to be kind towards all men, and to believe on the crucified one who rose from the dead; nevertheless, he did not withhold himself. What I desire of thee, gracious Lord, is, not to avenge thyself upon Pilate, but to warn him to cease from oppression and learn to pity the human creatures under him. For we, the party who follow Jesus, abhor bloodshed and oppression and love justice, peace and charity towards everybody, for our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to do so, and commanded us to love even our enemies and do good to those who trespass against us."

The boldness of Mary Magdalene was continued without interruption, till at last she said to Tiberius, "As we preach the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and invite both great and small to believe in him, I, the humblest of all creatures, consider myself honoured to stand upright before thee, and draw thy attention to the teachings of our Lord, to the purity of the character of his followers, it may be that thou mightest realise that the teachings of Jesus confer upon the nations, the peoples and the kingdoms of the earth the happiness of the two worlds; and thou wilt thus become a good example to the different nations, subjects of the Roman Emperor."

This is what Mary said to Tiberius as it was told me when I was in Rome the last time. The speech made a deep impression upon the heart of Caesar, and who knows what Tiberius would have done had he not been strangled in his Palace at Capreae.*

This, with what the Governor of Damascus wrote against me, caused my dismissal, and I was recalled to Rome. When I reached Rome, Tiberius was dead; but Caligula, after insulting me in various ways, exiled me to this city of Vienne.

Behold, friend Albinus, I have disclosed to you everything and hid nothing from you, with the belief that, at least, you will not blame me with violence. For now you see that Pilate was in a strait, confronted by difficult circumstances and many

*Capreae, the luxurious retreat of the Roman Emperors, is an island off the southern point of the Bay of Naples, about twelve miles in circumference.—*Suetonius*.

reproaches. I presume therefore that you will not place much blame on me in committing that hideous crime the details of which I have narrated to you, as they were preserved in my memory.

(When Pilate ended his speech, tears began to run down his cheeks in abundance, for his previous actions stood before him in a terrible form.)

Upon this, Albinus looked down upon the floor of the Hall and remained silent. But the story of the sufferings of Jesus stirred up his tranquility to motion, and he did not regard the tears of Pilate. Indeed, if there had been a third person present with those two men, he would at once have understood (from the look of Albinus) that poor Pilate had completely lost the esteem of his friend. At last, Albinus, having hardened himself against Pilate, treated him with haughtiness and said:

"Pilate, you said that you would submit yourself to my judgment. Do you wish to hear a just decision given upon your confession?"

Pilate: What was preserved in my memory concerning Jesus I have confessed to you, and nothing remains for me than to hear your judgment, which, I trust, will not be severe, since the circumstances by which I was surrounded, along with the condition of Judea and the Jews, and many other things which of their nature were disposed to mitigate my crime.

Albinus: Hear O Pilate!

First. The Jews brought to you a man for whom you had respect and reverence in your heart, even before you saw him; and you had heard that he was the best of men, that he did not interfere in political affairs, and that his teachings were suitable to the welfare of the Empire, which was represented by you in Judea to preserve the relations between yourself and the people amongst whom this man lived.

Second. You were aware that the Jewish Council condemned him unjustly, and delivered him to you enviously, and that the charges laid against him were not valid, but supported by perjury and calumny.

Third. On beholding this man, you were sure that all that you had heard of him, and of his laudable character was less than a reality, *i.e.*, that this man was perfect in a degree which far surpassed any tale told you from the sayings of others.

Fourth. You, yourself, were certain, by investigation, that what the enemies had ascribed to Jesus, in saying he was the "Messiah," Christ, and "King" was in his favour, and not against him; while you, yourself, declared unto the Jews and to their chief priests that you found no fault in him. Nevertheless, all this did not prevent you from delivering him unto death. And what manner of death! What shall I say then?

(a.) You have violated the laws of justice, because you sentenced a righteous man to death.

(b.) You have degraded the dignity of your sublime office in accepting the verdict of the wicked, and closed with them, so that it was assigned to you!

(c.) You have shamed your personal dignity because you acted in contradiction to what you said before. For you had said that Jesus was innocent, and then you scourged him, and washed your hands saying to the Jews that you were innocent of the blood of this righteous man, but wrote his fault by your own hand, and delivered him to be crucified.

Therefore, you have committed the greatest crime imaginable, against Roman Justice, against your position and against your personal dignity. What was it that thus instigated you to tread upon these rights? Was it a political question? No! The Roman power was in no danger in Judea, and not at all weak; and suppose it were in danger and in weakness, the unjust crucifixion of Jesus was not of its nature disposed to remove danger and suppress fear. Was it zeal for the interests of your Emperor or the Government? If so, these interests seek earnestly to defend the cause of Jesus, as you, yourself, confessed. And, as I said to you before, it was not for the regard of his enemies and the enemies of the Government; the only cause of perpetrating this injustice being your personal interests. O Pilate! You were afraid of the mere threatenings of accusations and have practised treason which caused trouble for you. It has been truly said that the oppressive Governor is the chief of traitors to his Empire; and you have appeared a coward to such a measure that you dared not, at least, delay the judgment of Jesus to another time, to enable you to consider his case patiently and with sedateness.

This I say unto thee *ad hominem* on the consideration of human analogies. But there is another thing to which you did not give attention, as you should.

Pilate: What is that thing?

Albinus: Hear! *First.* Your wife cautioned you to beware of the intrigues of the Jews, and not to oppress the righteous man. She also told you of her wonderful dream, to the effect that Jesus was a messenger of heaven. It might be that that dream would not have been taken notice of had not extraordinary and supernatural acts of Jesus been publicly known. And you, yourself, have said that many reports reached you of actions above the power of mortal beings, being performed by Jesus, viz., healing the sick by a look or by a word, and raising the dead to life.

Second. The signs of grace and of majesty which you saw in Jesus, the chief priests have confirmed in saying: "he calls himself Messiah, and the Son of God," all of which was disposed to give you sufficient warning (and draw your attention to many important things) of the consequences thereof. As for you, you have executed everything in this matter with a levity not becoming in a Roman Governor, and with a laxity not becoming a steady man. You have asked Jesus from whence he came and wanted to know

whether he really came from on high, not considering that your question was not in its proper place. Were you of opinion that Jesus, on the supposition that he came from above, would answer you in the negative or in the affirmative when he was undergoing a trial and being scourged and mocked and suffering insults, and all by your command? Nevertheless, you did not seem to understand that his not answering you was the best answer to such a question. For what oral answer would have convinced you and his enemies as long as his extraordinary and supernatural doings did not impress both you and them.

Again, you were not influenced by what he said to you concerning the fulfilling of your duties in your capacity as temporal Governor. And you did not appreciate all he said to you in these words: "Thou hast no power at all against me except it were given thee from above," but feigned blindness in a striking manner, and committed a crime against a man of whom you were told and events assured you, that he was from above. For who knows that this Jesus of Nazareth was not a god, therefore, your guilt is very great, Pilate; and judging you from all these points, the cause was your levity and irreligion, and in not considering the extraordinary evidences that were put before you, you erred even to your personal detriment.

While Albinus was speaking, Pilate's face grew gloomy, but not a tear fell from his eyes, and after a little while he said, "It seems that Fate has thus decreed it, Albinus!"

Albinus: That might be so, but surely it does not remove from you the responsibility. Fate, we do not know! Our duties are known to us, and we ought to perform them. But you did not do so in the case of Jesus. You committed things which will offend the gods and men.

Pilate: I see now, friend Albinus, that my heart is wounded and there is none to heal it. I am grieved and none can console me. My calamity is the greatest of calamities!

Albinus: Yes, your calamity is the greatest of calamities and your unhappiness exceeds all unhappiness. I do not know of any remedy to relieve you and cure the wounds of your heart other than that of prayer; perhaps by prayer you might solicit the gods to sympathise with you and take away their anger against you. (Pilate then smiled as one hiding his pain.)

Albinus, continuing, said: There are more observations in connection with this tragedy which you ought to have learned. You said that the tomb in which Jesus was buried, was afterwards found empty and that you did not consider it your duty to examine into the question of his resurrection. What is that hard heart of yours! What are those vile and sordid thoughts of yours in saying it was not the duty of your office to examine the question thereof? Are you not a man? How then did you not judge such a thing as this worthy of consideration, for say Jesus truly rose from the dead, we will then be obliged to confess that he is a god.

Pilate: The followers of Jesus say that after his resurrection he appeared to his disciples, and that after forty days he ascended into the heavens from the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. But during all that time I used to send many of the Jews to Lake Charon.*

Albinus: Who knows that this Jesus was not of the Olympian gods and appeared in the likeness of man to guide the Jews to our faith, and they rejected him and employed you as a means for his murder? O, I should like a learned man of the followers of Jesus to expound to me his teachings.

Pilate: Your supposition concerning the teachings of Jesus and the opinion of his followers is very remote. For Jesus believed in one God whom he calls the Heavenly Father and his followers believed, like the Jews, in one God only. But this God is, according to their opinion, in three, and the three are in one; and I do not understand their teachings. For one is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one. How that may be I cannot tell.

Albinus: This might be a philosophy!

Pilate: A philosophy or not, I do not know. One thing I do know, and that is they reject our gods and the gods of all Gentiles. Is it then possible to yield to them in that, and you want to inquire after their teachings! Take heed that you do not do so, for they delude men by their sayings, and have already drawn many to their side!

Albinus: There is no fear for us Romans. For we would not leave our gods and our gods would not leave us. But the question of the resurrection of Jesus remains a knot for me to untie. How could that come about? I should like to rely upon a correct authority concerning this matter.

Pilate: The truth is that his teachings have become very prominent, and his followers at present count by the tens and, I might well say, the hundreds of thousands!

Albinus: I have been told that they have increased in Judea, Damascus (Syria), and in Asia Minor, and in some of the islands, and a few also in Rome (the majority of these are women, slaves and plebeians) which troubles us but little.

Pilate: But these inferior ones think they will convert the whole world to their teachings. I am afraid that what has occurred in the person of Jesus would also happen in his teachings. Jesus was born in a cave but died on the top of a mountain, and has put fear in many hearts; and, if we believe his followers, he was raised from the earth and ascended into heaven. My wife used to say that one day his teachings (which women, slaves, and the poor and the despised, and the persecuted long to receive) will be raised to the benches of the Governors and mount the thrones

*According to the Greek Mythology, Charon was a god of the infernal regions who conducted the souls of the dead in his boat over the rivers Styx and Acheron, bringing them to Hades—the world of the Spirits.

of the Emperors themselves and lead the people to heaven. I have also said to you who knows what Tiberius would have done had he not been strangled to death.

Albinus became greatly astonished at these words and increased in the desire of obtaining further knowledge of the teachings of Jesus from his followers themselves, and said: To that time, *i.e.*, to the subjugation of the Roman Throne to the teachings of Jesus, many waters will flow! But tell me, it may be that you will remain in this city. Here, you cannot find rest; and the natural disposition of the people does not agree with you, and perhaps you will hear words which will displease you. Therefore I advise you to live in one of the villas far from the city, for I am sure our Governor will not object to it. There, the temperate climate, and the beautiful scenery will confer upon you the rest and the peace of mind you are in need of and make you forget the past and tend to remove the trouble out of your heart. ‘

Pilate: Do I, Albinus, understand you that, in this case, you drive me out from here and close the gates of your house to me?

Albinus: I call upon the gods to testify that hospitality is of my nature, but . . . circumstances . . . and your position . . . and what I have heard.

Pilate: I see, Albinus, that you consider Pilate to be a criminal, who does not deserve the welcome of an host. Pilate is rejected, and does not deserve compassion! And no habitation for him among the generous! There is no harm, I will leave. Bid my servants come to me!

Albinus: Your servants have all gone away and none except the old soldier remain.

Pilate: None except the old soldier remain! Bring him to me! The gods defend thee, faithful Lucius! Dost thou know, Albinus? This man was one of those who led Jesus to Golgotha, and I believe that he will die a Nazarene,* (Christian) for the conversion of Longinus, the Centurion, and that of my wife, left a deep impression on his mind. Gird on thy sword, faithful servant, and let us go from here to wherever Destiny will direct us! The days of glory and pomp are gone and we are now in exile, rejected and despised. Gird on thy sword while I go and say good-bye to the gods of this long-living house. Come here, Albinus, and take me to your gods to offer my valedictory worship to them.

Albinus: Excuse me, Pilate, perhaps your farewell will displease them. You have to appear before the Governor and here is a letter to introduce you to his Excellency.

Pilate: Alas! Is it to this extreme, Albinus? But I will not blame you, for the blood of Romans has become so cold, that fear impresses them and we have no hope to be converted unless a Galilean would convert us. There is no harm in that. Accept the farewell compliment of your old friend.”

*It was at Antioch that the followers of Christ were first called Christians, they being first called Nazarenes.

Catius Marcius received Pilate with welcome and showed kindness and hospitality towards him. He then told him that a place in the Barracks had been prepared to receive him. On seeing the lodgings, Pilate was quick to shed tears, and he said to himself "Is this our residence, after the lofty Palaces of Herod, where the soldiers found themselves happy to serve us and now we are not even like unto one of them! The meanest servant of ours had, in both Judgment Halls in Caesarea and in Jerusalem, better lodgings than these. O the vicissitudes of life!"

Lucius was the sole comforter to Pilate in his exile. He had believed in Jesus, after beholding the miracles of the Crucifixion but he did not show his faith for fear of persecution and he had not yet received the baptismal sacrament.

One day Pilate walked towards the mountain which is near the city of Vienne to breathe the fresh air (He having been accustomed during his stay in Vienne to frequent this mountain and spend there a few hours daily). He met on his way the aforementioned white-washer whose name was Jephthah, and who came from a village in Judea, called Kerioth.* Ten years previous he had emigrated, with many of his countrymen, to Pontus, from which latter place he found his way to Vienne.

Jephthah had witnessed, while a pilgrim in Jerusalem, the crucifixion of Jesus, and was baptised with others on the day of the descent of the Holy Ghost in the upper room at Zion. Pilate asked him whether there were others in the city, besides him, of the followers of Jesus.

Jephthah: I do not know if there are others than my family and this Lucius.

Pilate: Do you see this chance? Your name is Jephthah, † and I believe you have already opened the way for the teachings of Jesus in this country.

Jephthah: May God render me capable of so doing! He is the Hearer and the Answerer.

Pilate: Jephthah, Pilate was very much feared in Judea; but now he is, as you see him, rejected and exiled. The friends of my youth do not now wish to recognise me. Even Albinus whose house you pointed to me and who was one of my dearest friends, drove me from his dwelling and even avoids seeing me. Verily, there is no life for me in this land!

Jephthah: How strange (addressing the Almighty) Who changes and never is Himself changed! But God smiteth and God healeth; He humbleth and He elevateth. Praised be His Name!

Pilate: Would that I had died and escaped this life which is worse than death! My only son died in Judea; my wife deserted me—she is dead now, and I, oh I! am in the most unhappy

*Josh. xv. 25. It is also believed to be the birthplace of Judas Iscariot. (Heb. Aser and Kerioth, *i.e.*, man of Kerioth).

†(Heb. and Ar. to open.)

circumstances, and my life is too much a burden for me to bear. Would that death had freed me from it!

Jephthah: Never despair, old man. I have a cure which will remedy your illness.

Pilate: How good is that remedy! But I do not think it would effect in me a cure. My case is chronic, not capable of being cured.

Jephthah: Jesus will cure you and he calls you to Him. You know very well that he prayed, on the cross, for his oppressors. Repent, therefore, unto God and ask forgiveness of the Crucified, and be baptised; then your conscience will be cleared and you will be consoled by his blessedness. Your soul will be converted. Your hardness will be changed to softness and your oppressions to mercifulness and charitable actions—that you may become happy in your exile, and obtain the everlasting life.

Pilate: Leave this talk aside! For those who grow upon a thing become hoary on it; and Pilate is not fit for conversion. Nothing except fire will reduce the dry wood and the black stone will not be bleached though you pour over it the water. The only relief for me is that which that disciple, who betrayed Jesus, used.

Jephthah: God's curse fall upon Judas, who is of Kerioth, the Iscariot! Would that I were not his countryman! Truly the son of perdition to perdition is doomed.

Pilate: Come on, Lucius, your friend wants to reform a man whom the Heroes of the Heavens and the wise men of the earth, failed to reform! Let us be going! Fare thee well, Jephthah! Call upon Jesus, the father and patriot of humanity and bravery, not on those whose blood is cold. Pilate has played his part. Pilate is corrupt and has no confidence in and hope for reform. The sea of this country is vast and the river of this city is great and from both sea and river the Galileans can take great fishes. Good-bye!

Jephthah walked his way saying—"The son of perdition to perdition is doomed." Howbeit, he prayed for Pilate for guidance and success in his searching for rest.

Pilate and Lucius walked slowly towards the mountain and when Pilate reached the middle of the mountain, he took a little rest (it being about sunset). The view of the city beyond the river was exceedingly beautiful; the noise of the running waters beneath the mountain, the rustling of the leaves of the trees, moved by a soft and gentle breeze, and the melodies of the birds, were of a nature to cheer the heart and wash away its trouble. But they did not do so to Pilate. He looked, instead, the look of one confused and the mount of Golgotha was pictured before his eyes. After a while, he said to his companion: "Follow me to the summit of this mountain," and they walked together. Pilate was silent, thinking of a very serious matter and when they reached the top of the mountain, Pilate turned to Lucius and said to him: "Do you see how great is this chasm? Do you remember Mount Golgotha?" On saying this, he laughed in a strange manner;

then he began to speak confusedly, and said—"Thus the blood will flow, Lucius! But put up thy sword into its sheath and do not stain thy hands in shedding my blood. My hands and thine are stained with the blood of one innocent man and nothing will cleanse them. Jesus, in whom you believe, was an honourable man! Jesus was sent from heaven and the curse has clothed his oppressors. The sword of vengeance shall come upon Annas, Caiaphas, and all their followers—the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Sadducees. The man addressing you, the minutes of his life are few—Satis! Satis!"* Saying this, Pilate threw himself down the mountain. Lucius stood aghast for a time, and then looked down the precipice, and behold, he saw the cloak of Pilate amongst the rocks in the bottom of the precipice. He also saw, from his place, a mangled corpse, denoted by the white garment (it being the time of sunset) and the corpse covered by it was that of Pontius Pilate, the late Roman Governor over Judea, under whom our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered.

*Enough! Enough!

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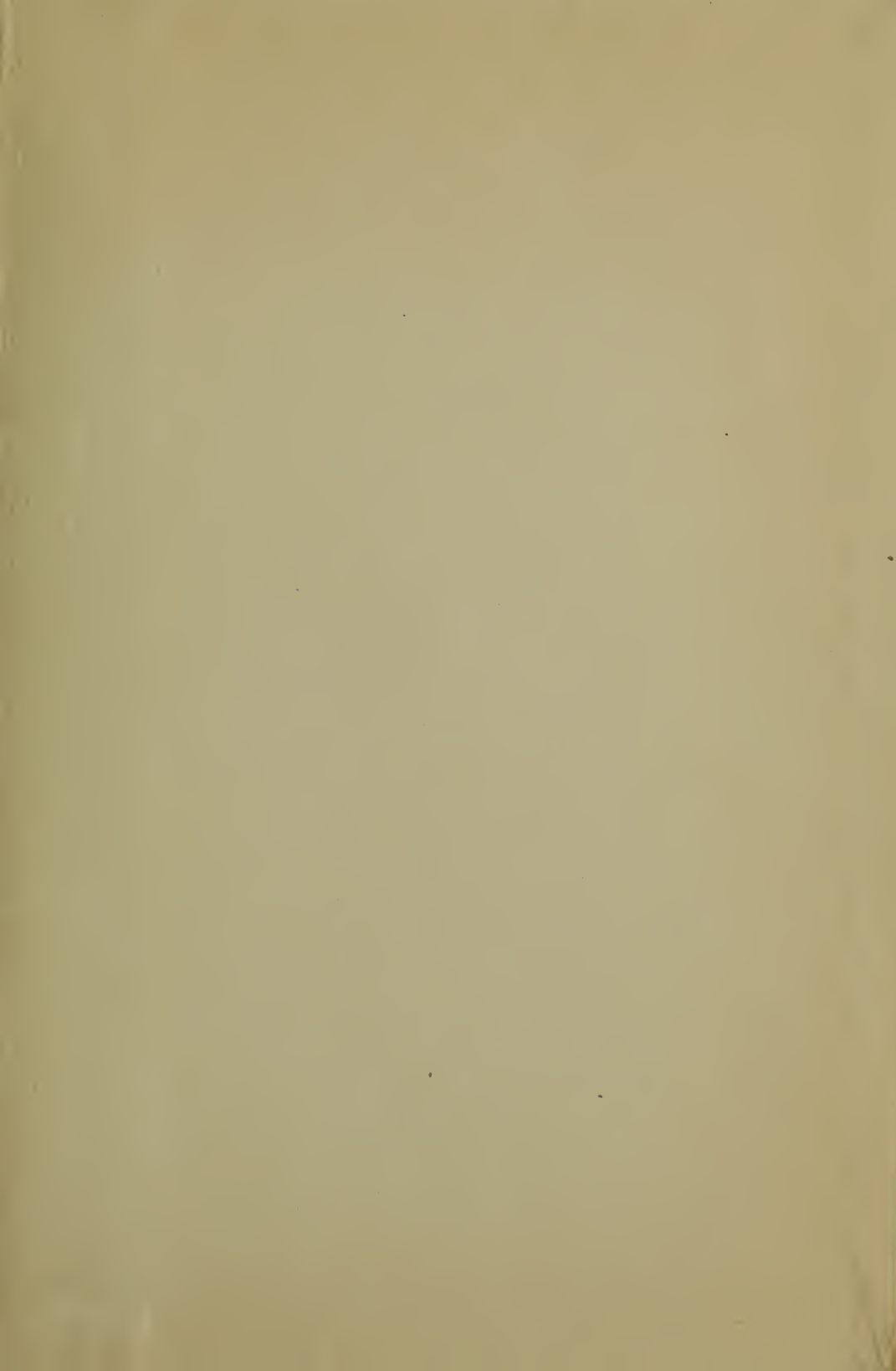
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