The Martyrdom of Pilate (Mingana translation)

Syriac and Arabic apocrypha (anonymous) (medieval, from Syriac and Garshuni manus

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Prefatory Note and Translation

I give in the following pages the text and the translation (accompanied by a critical apparatus) of an apocryphal document entitled Martyrdom of Pilate. Like the previous document it is attributed to Cyriacus, bishop of Oxyrhynchus, but the real author of all its historical narrative is, as we learn from the beginning and the end of the story and from some passages found in the middle of it, Gamaliel himself. We may, therefore, consider it as a second Gamaliel apocryphon. I have edited the text from three independent MSS. Two of them belong to my own collection of MSS. and are numbered Mingana Syr. 127 and Mingana Syr. 355 (hereafter M. 127 and M. 355). The third MS. is Paris Arab. 152 (hereafter P.). M. 127 and M. 355 are written in Garshūni (Arabic in Syriac characters) and P. is in Arabic characters. From notes that I have ventured to write at the foot of the following pages, it will be seen that I believe that M. 355 is transcribed from a MS. which was in Arabic characters. The same conclusion may to some extent be reached with regard to M. 127.

I have placed the text of M. 127 in the body of the page and the variants of M. 355 and P. in the footnotes. I have transcribed each MS. in the characters in which it was found, viz. M. 127 and M. 355 in Garshūni, and P. in Arabic. I have given almost all the variants of M. 355, but in order not to render the text of the notes very bulky I have noted only the most important variants of P. In the final section, however, which deals with the Apostle John and his voyage to Rome—a section which is completely missing in M. 127—I registered also nearly all the variants of P. As there were only two MSS. to be dealt with, the footnotes did not appear to me to be abnormally bulky by the adoption of such a method. I have also read Cod. Vat. Syr. 199 which is in Garshūni like my own MSS. I noticed that it follows generally either M. 127 or M. 355, and that only occasionally it agrees with P.

I adopted also the above method for another and a more cogent reason. The variant readings exhibited by the three MSS. are so numerous, so varied in character and so important that I have come to the conclusion that they represent three more or less different recensions of the story, and that P. was executed with an eye on the interest of Egyptian Christians. Now to condense in a single narrative the text of

three different recensions of a story is almost an impossibility. The problem could have been better solved if I had edited separately the text of all M. 127, all M. 355, and all P. as I did in the case of the Apocryphal Jeremiah but the story did not appear to me to be of such importance as to justify this course. M. 127 is dated 1994 of the Greeks (A.D. 1683), and it is the same MS. as that which contains the above documents dealing with the Virgin Mary and the death and resurrection of Christ or the Lament of the Virgin as I have called it. M. 355 has no date, but may be ascribed to about A.D. 1800. P. is assigned by Baron de Slane to the 16th Christian century, which is probable, with the sole reservation that I am tempted to place it towards the end rather than the beginning or the middle of the 16th century.

In the translation I only registered in the footnotes the most important variants which seemed to me likely to throw light on the sources of the author. Further, I did not attempt to correct the numerous lexicographical and grammatical mistakes found in the text of the three MSS. for reasons given in the preface of the previous document. The document appears to me to be, like its predecessors, exclusively Coptic in origin. Among the Christian Churches of the East it is only the Coptic Church that considers Pilate as a saint and holds a feast in his honour. The Syrian Churches while not so hostile to Pilate as the Western Churches, do not certainly go so far as to make a saint of him, in spite of the fact that a West Syrian Patriarch bore the name Pilate. That the document falls within the circle of the Acta Pilati and the 'Αναφορά Πιλάτου goes without saying'. The Anaphora seems to presuppose the Acta, itself later than the παράδοσις Πιλάτου which relates, like the present document, that the Emperor summoned Pilate to Rome to answer for the crucifixion of Jesus, and there condemned him to death. In my opinion all these Greek documents emanate also from Egypt, and Egypt alone. They have nothing to do with Syria and Palestine, and have very little in common with the Churches of the West.

The reader will doubtless notice from my foot-notes that I have compared the present document with the Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic apocrypha so ably edited and translated by Budge, and also with some other parallel documents.

Translation.

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we will begin with the help and assistance of God to write the history of Pilate, the Governor of the City of Jerusalem. May his prayers be with the children of baptism. Amen. A treatise composed by the holy Cyriacus, bishop of the town of Bahnasa, on the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and on the tribulations undergone by Pontius Pilate in the holy city, at the time of the crucifixion. In it he makes mention also of Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, the venerable chiefs, and of the persecution suffered by Pilate at the hand of the Jews for the name of Christ—to whom be glory and worship—and of the torments inflicted on him by Herod before he was sent by the

latter to the Metropolis, the great city of Rome, where his head was cut off and his martyrdom completed. The story is told as found in the copy written by Gamaliel and Horus, the good, pious, and respectable teachers in all things dealing with God. They wrote it, because they were present with Joseph and Nicodemus and witnessed the ordeals of Christ which became the source of our life, and His glorious resurrection. They related that they wrote this martyrdom after the prodigies and miracles that took place in the tomb of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, consequent upon His resurrection from the dead, and at the end of the machinations and intrigues of the wicked Jews. May the peace of God be with us. Amen.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified in the place called Kranion, which being interpreted means a row of stones—and it is the Golgotha—the venerable chiefs Joseph and Nicodemus got possession of His body and placed it in a new tomb. The Virgin Mary began then to weep and to show a keen desire to go to the tomb of her Son, but she could not do so from fear of the Jews, because it was the Sabbath Day, which follows Friday, and in it no one was allowed to proceed anywhere or to undertake any work. When the morning of Sunday arrived Mary took with her other women who carried with them sweet spices and perfumes with which to anoint the tomb of the Saviour. And Mary preceded the other women who followed her to the sepulchre early in the morning. When she reached the sepulchre she found the stone rolled away from it, and while in a state of amazement, she looked into the place in which lay the body of Jesus, but did not find it; she found, however, the linen clothes lying there, and the napkin that was over the head separated from the linen clothes and wrapped together in a place by itself. She saw also two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet.

While she was weeping she turned herself back and saw the Saviour standing, and He said to her: ”Woman, why are you weeping?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener answered Him saying: ”Sir, if you have borne Him hence tell me where you have laid Him, and I will go and take Him away. And the Saviour said to her: O Mary.” And she answered and said ”Rabboni”—which is to say My Master. ”You rose, O my Son and my God, and your resurrection is magnificent, because you rose and granted salvation to the human kind, but O my Son and my God, I am amazed at your having allowed these wicked people to inflict on you all these sufferings.” And the Saviour said to her, ”I have already told you all this before it happened.” And when His mother heard what He said to her and ascertained that it was He, she rejoiced and wished ardently to go near Him and worship Him. She was indeed so overjoyed that she thought she was dreaming. But He said to her: ”Do not come near Me, because I have not gone yet to My Father. This is the reason why no corporeal being is able to approach Me and touch Me. Go you rather to My brethren and announce to them this joy which you have witnessed, and tell them to go to Galilee where they shall see Me. Lo, I have told you.” Then the Virgin Mary began to ask the Saviour, her Son, concerning the events that took place at

the hands of the wicked Jews on the day of the Crucifixion, when He was hanging on the wood of the Cross and she was standing near Him and weeping, and He explained to her all the events that she had witnessed, one by one.

She said to Him: ”O my beloved Son, O Life of my spirit and Master of my soul and body, why did you cry and say on the wood of the Cross, ’Eloi, Eloi, why hast thou forsaken me?’ And also, ’Scripture is fulfilled,’ and also ’Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.’” And He answered and said to her: ”O my beloved mother, I cried to the Father with a sigh, like an only Son to His Father, and asked Him to allow Me to die, in order to redeem with My death the death of Adam whom sin had killed and whom the sentence of death had cast into Hades. Yes, O mother, I cried to the Father and implored Him to look upon My humiliation and have pity on Adam and grant him another grace. And when I remembered his hunger and thirst I said, ’I thirst,’ and asked the Father on his behalf to quench his thirst from the water of the eternal life. When my side was pierced with a spear, and I drank the cup which all men are bound to drink, I asked the Father that on the day of my rising from the dead I might raise Adam from the death of sin, since I was pierced in my side because of him.

”O my mother, the hierarchies of Heaven scoffed at Adam and complained about him to the Father saying, ’All this happened to your only Son because of an earthly man on whom you breathed the breath of life.’ The Father, however, rebuked them and said ’This is the creation of my hand and I love Him more than you.’ Hades complained about him to Me and said, ’Let me cast him into the bottom of the pit,’ but I rebuked it and said ’Shut up your mouth, you will no more rise and seize Adam and cast him into the depths. He does not deserve now to be with you for one single hour. I came now to break up and smash your doors and throw you to the lowest depths, and to raise Adam to the heights.’ ”The tormenting angels of Hell whose habit is to turn towards the west began then to vociferate, and they kindled fires which they inflamed with pitch and sulphur and shouted concerning the sin of Adam and said: ’Let us destroy him and throw him to the great sufferings of the fire of Hell.’ Further, when they heard my conversation with him at the time I was lifted on the wood of the Cross and my saying to him: ’O Adam, it is for your sake that all this has happened to me’ they cried and said, ’Deliver him into our hands, sir, and we will do to him what he rightly deserves, and we will destroy him as if he had never existed.’ I rebuked them, however, and sternly reproved them, and I disclosed to them the fact that I have shed My precious blood for him so that I might save him and give him a share in My Kingdom.

”O my mother, I remembered the sadness and sorrowfulness that fell to the lot of Paradise. I recalled, O my mother, the mournfulness of Paradise and the fact that it was empty from the time in which Adam was driven out of it. Through My Passion and My Crucifixion I meant to restore Adam to Paradise. Did you not know, then, O

my mother, why I remained nine months in your womb, and do you not understand the cause of my coming into this world? Did you not know that the events about which the ancient prophets have prophesied had to take place? Did you not realise that all this had to happen and that I had to deliver the rest of the captives from the hands of the enemy, and bring them out of the prison of Hades?

"I suffered all what I did suffer in order to elevate the elect to the heights of Heaven. I interceded with the Father on their behalf, not only by words but by the shedding of My blood on the Cross before you, in order to deliver them and Adam their father from the evil consequences of his transgression. I do not hold him, therefore, responsible for the blasphemies uttered against Me for his sins, nor answerable for My thirst, for the crown of thorns which was placed on my head, for the hanging of my body on the wood of the Cross, and for the death which I accepted for him. On the contrary I asked the Father to forgive him all his sins. Have patience, O my mother, and I will ask the Father to tear up the written document of the slavery of Adam. O my mother, what would be the utility of this shedding of My blood on the earth if I did not raise this body to Heaven? In this day the heavenly beings will be reconciled with the terrestrial ones. Go now, in joy, O my mother, because I rose from the dead. I have demolished the wall of partitions of Hades, and I have opened the door of Paradise for the thief at My right. I have also opened the door of Heaven before the angels and they flapped their wings, the archangels girded their loins with their shining and majestic girdles, the heavenly powers danced with hymns and canticles, the Cherubim and Seraphim began their glorifications, the Dominions desired to contemplate intensely the glory of My divinity, and the Thrones stood before the Throne."

This is what the Saviour told His mother near the door of the tomb by way of consolation. He further said to her: "No corporeal man can touch Me because I am clad in an imperishable garment and immortal robe, till the time in which I shall ascend to My Father." When He uttered these words He disappeared from her sight and recommended her to tell His disciples to go to Galilee where they would see Him. When the women returned and narrated to the disciples the words which they had heard from the Saviour, they did not believe them, but fear did not allow them to show themselves to anyone until they repaired to Galilee. When Pilate noticed all the miracles and prodigies that emanated from the tomb of the Saviour, he went to his house and prepared a great banquet for the poor and the needy on account of the joy that he experienced at the resurrection of the Saviour; this was even more so in the case of Procula, his wife, because she loved the Saviour intensely on account of what she had seen in her dream concerning Him. She had already made preparations to go and see the tomb in which the Saviour was placed in order to worship Him and know the precise spot in which His body was laid. A company of Jews, however, became cognisant of her plan and went and apprised their chiefs and told them that the wife of Pilate was in that very night proceeding

to the tomb. These wicked people circulated the news among themselves, and after a conference, decided to lie in wait for her in order to seize her and kill Pilate.

They, therefore, summoned Barnābān, the robber, and said to him: "We do not need to remind you of all the benefactions which we have showered on you. We set you free and delivered you from prison against the wish of the Governor, and we crucified Jesus of Nazareth in your place. We want you now to accompany us to-night to the tomb of Jesus and to do your best for us. It has come to our knowledge that that wicked foreigner, called Pilate, wishes to go with his wife and his children to the tomb of Jesus in order to worship Him. We will lie in wait for them and you will help us to kill them, destroy Pilate and plunder their possessions." The affair appealed to Barnābān and pleased him exceedingly. He desired to possess something as he had come out of prison a pauper and a mendicant. When he heard, therefore, of possessions to plunder he was glad because he loved gold and silver. He was the brother of the wife of Judas who is from the wicked and perverse stock. The wife of Barnābān, the sister of Judas, used to urge her husband to ask his Master to intervene and deliver her brother from prison. Judas asked this several times of the Saviour, who, however, did not pay any heed to his saying and neglected it, because He was aware of what the man was going to be. When the sister noticed that He did not speak on behalf of her brother, she forsook Him completely. This was also on account of what her husband used to steal from the bag. She began then to pay visits to the wives of the priests and incite them to crucify the Saviour.

After this the wicked company of the Jews resolved to kill Pilate with his wife and his children and to plunder his possessions. When I Gamaliel learned the conspiracy of these wicked people I did not neglect the matter, but I hastened to Joseph of Arimathæa, who had shrouded the body of the Saviour, and I disclosed to him the conspiracy of the Jews and their evil plot. When he heard it he hastened to the court and informed Pilate, the Governor, of what the Jews had plotted and were about to do to him. Whereupon Pilate summoned a company of his troops and revealed to them what had taken place; and he informed also the sentinels of the town and told them to be on their guard. Then the God-loving Procula, wife of Pilate, arose in the night, took with her her maid-servants, her ladies-in-waiting and a number of private attendants and proceeded to the tomb of the Saviour. She worshipped in the tomb and spread on it and also on the wood of the holy Cross perfumes of high value and sweet spices of exquisite scent. She then lit up many lamps in the tomb and burned much incense therein. While they were standing near the tomb the servants of the Jewish priests and a band of men and officers with attendants, and a great company from the party of the elders arose and proceeded with the robber Barnābān to the tomb of the Saviour and to the spot where the womenfolk of Pilate were praying. Then the soldiers of Pilate sprang on them with swords,

spears and stones, put them to the sword, seized the robber Barnābān, bound him with fetters and brought him to Pilate.

When Pilate saw him he asked him: ”Are you the robber Barnābān whom I released from prison, and instead of whose blood we shed innocent blood? That innocent blood which we have unjustly shed will not fail to wreak vengeance on the one who acted towards him in an iniquitous way. To-day will redound on you all the evil, theft, robbery by violence, and homicide which you have perpetrated in this town, the inhabitants of which chose to release you and ransom you with the blood of Jesus. Now, O wretched and miserable one, God will show His justice towards you to-day. O robber, the shedding of the blood of Jesus with which they ransomed your own blood will not be slow in avenging itself on you.” Then Pilate ordered that they should take Barnābān to the place where the Saviour was crucified, that they should crucify him there head downwards, that they should pierce him with a spear before he expired, that they should break the bones of his legs in order that he might die quickly, on account of all the untruthfulness told by his people. The soldiers of Pilate took him, did with him what Pilate had ordered, and killed him, five days after the resurrection of the Saviour.

When this took place the Jewish people became incensed against Pilate and began to say to one another: ”Comrades, Barnābān has gone from us and Pilate is left. Come, let us write a report about Pilate from King Herod to the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and ask him to kill him for us; we will give three talents of gold to Herod in order that he may help us to murder him.” Many Jews, then, men and women, tore up their clothings, threw ashes on their heads, and repaired to King Herod in Galilee. They began to vociferate, and their clamour reached such a pitch that the town was in a state of commotion. They shouted and said: ”How is it that we have no king to-day except Pilate the foreigner, who is from the land of Egypt? And they clamoured and said: ’He has thwarted and despised the injunctions of the King, changed our habits and customs, and destroyed the laws of our fathers in conjunction with Joseph and Nicodemus. How is it that all power has gone from Herod? We ask your Majesty as our King, to deliver us from him. He has killed Barnābān whom you had ordered to be released from prison on account of his courage and valour in his fight for the King and in his endeavour to defeat the King’s enemies. He did all this without consulting the King and on the advice of Joseph and Nicodemus. Now you are competent to judge between us and him and to write and inform the Emperor Cæsar of his affair and of all that he did to us for the sake of Jesus of Nazareth.”

Herod became then incensed against Pilate and wrote about him many lying things which he sent to Tiberius Cæsar, and despatched with his report men of high standing among the Jews in order to render his report more effective. It happened that the letters of Herod preceded those of Pilate by one day. The Jews read them to

the Emperor with all the slanders and iniquitous testimonies which they contained, and asked him to kill Pilate and his confederates. In the morning the letters of Pilate reached the Emperor, and in them was an account of all the deeds of Jesus, His crucifixion, His death, His resurrection from the dead, the quaking of the earth, the eclipse of the sun, and the destruction of the idols and their falling from their thrones on the day of His crucifixion. When the Emperor Tiberius read and heard what the Jews had done to the Saviour at His crucifixion, he wept on account of the deep sorrow that he felt; and when he reached the place in which were the names of the heads of the Jews who were the cause of the crucifixion of Jesus, he found that some of them were among those who had come to him in order to vent their grievances about Pilate. He,

Pilatos Mašarī (B.M. 690, fol. 99a), "Pilate the Magician," which would simply be a mistranscription of the Arabic masrī "the Egyptian." The Melchite Eutychius (in C.S.C.O., i., 91) contends that Pilate was of Italian origin, from an island named Pontah and situated near Rome. therefore, summoned them before him and said to them: "O chiefs of iniquity, here is the letter of Pilate, and he is testifying against you that it was you who crucified Jesus of Nazareth. I will order now that none of you be left alive in the world on account of your cruel deeds to Jesus. He ordered, therefore, that they should be killed and their bodies be hung on the heights that surmounted the gates of the city. Then he sent a messenger after Pilate and summoned him before him in order that he might tell him the truth concerning the miracles that emanated from the tomb of the Saviour.

When the messenger of the Emperor reached Jerusalem, the chiefs of the Jews assembled and went to Herod, and apprised him of the arrival of the messenger of the Emperor for the purpose of summoning Pilate, Joseph and Nicodemus. They spoke to him out of their spite and jealousy and told him that they would bribe the messenger if he would kill Pilate, but he said to them that he was unable to do so without the sanction of the Emperor. In the morning Herod came to Jerusalem to have a word with Pilate on the affair. When Pilate heard this he went to his wife and said to her: "O my sister Procula, arise and hide in a place on account of what Herod is going to do to me. The mob, the heads of the Jewish people and the messenger of the Emperor have come. I do not know if they have come to take off my head or to torment me for the sake of the Saviour. Arise you, take your children and go out of this town. Watch, however, over my body if they are bent on taking off my head. Give silver to the soldiers and redeem my body from them, shroud it, and place it near the tomb of my Lord Jesus in order that His grace may overtake me. Do this even if you have to give all my possessions for the purpose."

When his wife heard these words she tore up her garments, and began to pluck the hair of her head, saying, "What are these words you are uttering to me, my lord Pilate. Have I not sufficient pain in my heart on account of what you did with Jesus

in crucifying Him? To tell you the truth, O brother, you have comforted my heart to-day in apprising me of your possible death. If God did not spare His only Son but delivered Him up for us, neither I nor you will flee from death for Him. What utility shall we have from our nation? O brother, if you love me more than you love Him, it is blameworthy. God knows that we are both of us one body, and as we did not separate from each other in this world, neither we nor our children should be separated the one from the other in the Kingdom of Heaven."

While Procula, the wife of Pilate, was saying this, the troops came and surrounded him and took him to the court of Herod, in the presence of the messenger of the Emperor, who said: "Are you Pilate who said 'There is no hand over my hand?' How did you kill this Jesus without consulting the Emperor?" Pilate did not give him any answer to this question but only said: "My lord, if these have had so little fear of God as to crucify His beloved Son, I am prepared to die for His holy name, I have faith that if I die for His name I shall possess the eternal life, and you will not impede me from His glory." The Jewish people said then to the messenger of the Emperor: "What is the utility of speaking to him while he insults you in the Coptic language?" Immediately after (the envoy of the Emperor) gave orders that he should be stripped of his clothes, that a napkin should be tied round his loins, and that he should be flagellated with a rough whip. Herod incited them to flog him well, and the Jewish people said: "O Pilate all the sufferings you inflicted on Barnābān have now come back on your own head. You prided yourself and said that you were the Governor, and the Emperor. Now no power of any kind remains to you in the city of Jerusalem." Pilate bore with patience this taunt while he was being flogged with the whip, and his innocent blood flowed profusely on the ground before them like flowing water.

Then his wife Procula hastened and came to him and began to urge and encourage him, saying, "O martyr, O my brother Pilate, how I wish to die with the death with which you will die!" The Jews seized her immediately with her hair and threw her before her husband in order to intensify his affront and indignity. The holy Procula, however, was jubilant in her heart and began to say : "O my brother Pilate, the beginning of this first honour that came to me I offer to Christ and to His holy name." The Jews then said to Pilate : "Know that this punishment which is inflicted on you is not for what you have done to Jesus of Nazareth, but for your murdering of Barnābān." And he replied to them : "Would that I could be found worthy to be crucified with my wife and children for the name of Jesus, and that He could be left alive to me ; but I believe, rather I am sure of the fact, that He is alive and that He has eternal life, which He imparts to all believers in Him." The Jews answered Him and said : "O Pilate, your life is like His life and your lot is similar to His lot." And he said : "Amen. My life is with Him, and His judgment will be on you and your children." The Jews then sprang upon him, and some of them slapped him,

some others struck him on the face, and some others insulted him and reviled him saying : ”We will not release you until you die on the wood like your God Jesus.”

When the messenger of the Emperor noticed the intensity of their hatred against him he took him from their hands and said to them : ”The Emperor has not permitted me to do this, nor has he ordered me to torture him and to kill him, until I have brought him before him.” The Jews, however, satisfied him with much money and said to him : ”Kill him and his affair will not reach the ears of the Emperor.” And they asked him to give them permission to drag him in the streets of the town bound with fetters and accompanied by his bare-headed wife ; and this was granted to them. How bitter was the weeping in Jerusalem, when people saw Pilate and his wife with their hands bound with fetters behind their back and dragged in the streets, while the Jews were applauding and saying : ”This is like the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth !” When the hirelings were tired of the work of dragging they threw them in prison while still bound with iron fetters, but beaming with joy.

Then the false witnesses and teachers of error sat and wrote many lies about Pilate, saying: ”This is Pilate who said, ’There is no hand over my hand and no other king beside me.’ This is Pilate who abrogated our prescriptions. This is the one who demolished our synagogues, in which people read the law and the commandments. This is the one who killed the indomitable Barnābān.” When they wrote this they began to bring accusations against Joseph and Nicodemus, and they brought them bound with fetters before Herod, as they had done with Pilate. He ordered them to be flogged and their possessions plundered, like Pilate’s, and they were so much weakened by scourging and so impoverished that they resembled Job at the time of his poverty. Then the iniquitous Jews sat and conspired together to burn the tomb of the Saviour on account of the prodigies and miracles that they saw emanating from it, and they asked for the wood of the cross to be burnt likewise. Joseph, however, had taken it and placed it in a hidden place in the sepulchre. The Jews, therefore, brought fire which they kindled round the sepulchre, but it did no harm of any kind to it, nor did it reach it; and to hide their shame, they hid the entrance of the sepulchre and placed a stone over it in order that no one might penetrate into it. The Jews did all this.

When Pilate and his wife, and Joseph and Nicodemus, were in prison, Herod asked the messenger of the Emperor to empower him to send Joseph and Nicodemus to their own town and to kill them therein, but the messenger of the Emperor did not allow him to do so. Then the Jews asked Herod to secure for them from the messenger of the Emperor a permit which would allow them to crucify Pilate like his Master, and when they bribed him with much money he delivered Pilate to them in order that they might crucify him and kill him. While they had conspired thus to kill Pilate with his wife and his children, lo, the keepers of the prison came to Pilate shaking and trembling. They began to implore the messenger of the Emperor,

saying: ”O our lord the Vizier, either do with Pilate what you have intended to do with him, or take him away from us. From the time you have ordered him to be imprisoned with his wife, they have not been left alone, but a spiritual man is constantly with them, whose light is more dazzling even than that of the sun. We saw him coming down from Heaven and embracing them, after which the fetters and shackles with which they were bound were torn up, and their iron melted like water from their feet; further, the column to which they were tied bent down and worshipped that spiritual being, and it is even now in that bent state, inclining to the ground.”

Then they asked them and said: ”What is the description of that man?” And they answered: ”He is a Galilean by appearance, and his hair is beautiful and flowing in curls round him. He spoke at a great length with Pilate and his wife, and said to him, ’O Pilate, you shall be crucified on the wood of the Cross like me, and they shall place a crown of thorns on your head like me, but they will not be able to kill you here: they will take you to the Emperor Tiberius, before whom you will stand and who will order you to be crucified a second time.’ They were also having much intimate conversation with each other.” When the Jews heard these words from the gaolers an intense fear seized them and their hearts palpitated. They began to say to one another: ”Even if they kill us and kill our children we will kill and crucify Pilate.” Then Herod enjoined the gaolers not to repeat these words before anybody else until Pilate was killed. When Pilate heard these words he was greatly pleased.

Meanwhile the Jews advanced much silver to the messenger of the Emperor—and it amounted to such a quantity that it carried conviction, and he allowed them to crucify him. Then they rushed like mad dogs to the gaol in order to take him out and crucify him. When they entered the gaol they found him smiling and joyful, while the fetters were loosed from him and from his wife, and the column was leaning towards the ground like a tree bent by the force of the wind. The Jews took then Pilate and his wife and brought them to the open court. They stripped him of his garments, tied a napkin round his waist to cover his nudity, and began to march them through all the city until they reached the spot where they had crucified the two malefactors, and they crucified him there. God, however, who is full of mercy, inculcated forgetfulness into the mind of the Jews so that none of them stretched an evil hand towards the wife of Pilate. Indeed, she was standing near him urging and encouraging him, saying: ”O my brother Pilate, remember the One who comforted you and came to you in this very night. Endure and bear your tribulations for His name.” And when they were intending to lift him on the cross, they remembered the Cross of the Saviour, and for this they immediately opened the sepulchre and took the wood of the cross and crucified Pilate on it. They fastened him tightly on it with nails, placed on his head a crown of thorns, arrayed him in a purple garment, and began to pierce his side with a spear while shouting and saying: ”O Pilate,

disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, if your Master has risen from the dead come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him."

The blessed Pilate began to pray while hanging on the cross, and said: "O my Lord, I have polluted your holy cross by the hanging of my body on it, because it is a pure wood and my body is an impure body; your blood is an innocent blood, and my blood is carnal. I do not weep now, O my Lord, because I have been crucified for your name, but I weep because I have defiled and polluted your holy cross. I do not sigh, O my Lord, for help, but I shed tears because you have borne all these sufferings for us sinners. I do not weep, O my Lord, because they have crucified me. Have pity on me, your sinning servant, who has been lifted up on your holy cross, as I am not worthy of all these benefits. I do not sigh because of my nudity, but I weep for your deep humility and self-effacement. Now I ask you, O my Lord Jesus Christ, not in my own name, but for the glory of your Majesty and the honour of your Cross, to grant rest and a happy lot to my poor soul. Grant rest to me, your servant Pilate, to your maidservant Procula, and to my children, in the day in which you will come to judge the world."

This is what Pilate said, and his God-loving wife Procula approached him, kissed his legs while he was hanging on the wood of the cross, and said : " Why are you weeping on the wood of the Cross ? You are ahead of us in sitting before the throne of the Judge. You are ahead of us in lighting your lamp at the wedding of your Lord Jesus Christ. You are ahead of us, O my brother Pilate, in lying in the banquet of a thousand years. You are ahead of us in wearing the diadem of the king in the dignified law court of Judgment. Blessed are you, O Pilate, for having been lifted up on the wood of the cross, and this lifting will make you worthy of sitting in the Kingdom of Heaven." This is what the blessed Procula said under the cross, while all eyes were gazing at her. She further said : " You have preceded us and sat before the throne of judgment. Now you have lit your lamps in the wedding of your Master." And the Jews began to rail and scoff at her and at Pilate. Then two crowns came down from Heaven, equal to each other in glory and majesty, and a voice from Heaven was heard saying : " Know, O Pilate and Procula, that you will be crowned with these two crowns that came down to you from Heaven, because of the sufferings you have borne for your God and your great faith in Him." Then the two crowns disappeared and went up to Heaven.

When the multitudes noticed this miracle, they hastened and brought down Pilate from the cross alive, then they heated water for him and washed his body with it, after which they put on him his garments, and brought him and his wife Procula to the messenger of the Emperor and said : " If the Emperor has sent you to destroy this city, listen to the cruel Herod. You do not know his great cunning and machinations. He became jealous of his brother, took his wife Herodia from him and killed him with hunger and thirst, through the hatred and cruelty that are in him. Do

you not see what he did in the city in these days? He killed a just man because of his own sympathy with the Jews and God wishes to destroy us all because of him. What advantage will ever come to Jerusalem if you allowed Pilate, its Governor, to be murdered in it. Truth to tell it is Herod that deserves death instead of Pilate. If the Emperor was aware of the deeds of Herod he would not have empowered him to rule over this city and torment Pilate and his wife. After all the affairs of the city are in the hands of the Emperor, and Herod has neither a word to say in the matter, nor power and jurisdiction of any kind over us."

When the Vizier heard these words from the multitude he was pleased with them, and he released Pilate until he had brought his case before the Emperor. Now the Emperor had an only son whom he loved tenderly more than all his kingdom. It happened that the boy went into a bath to wash, and an evil spirit entered there into him, strangled him and threw him to the ground dead. His father and mother came then to him with intense grief, in order to take him and bury him, and they buried him near them and wailed and wept over him night and day for three complete months. One day when the Emperor was sitting wailing and weeping over the loss of his son, his wife came down to him, bowed before him and said to him: "O my lord, we have had much sorrow and our bereavement has affected our brain." And the Emperor said to her: "And how has our brain been affected?" And she replied to him and said: "O my lord, I recalled that some time ago the inhabitants of Jerusalem sent to you a letter concerning a certain Jesus of Nazareth whom the Jews had crucified, and they reported that He had raised dead men while He was alive. And Pilate also, the Governor of the town, wrote to you a letter in which he registered the miracles and prodigies which

Herod with Herod Agrippa i. In the "New Life of John the Baptist" which I edited and translated in vol. i. of the Woodbrooke Studies (p. 251), Herod Antipas is said to have died of a sudden stroke. He had wrought. He told us that He had raised up the dead, healed the cripples and the sick, opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. He further added that many miracles and prodigies were taking place even now at His tomb. This is the reason why I said that we have been stupid, that we have been struck with forgetfulness and our brain has been affected. Indeed, if we had sent our son, when he died, to His tomb, he would have been alive now." When the Emperor heard these words he rose from his forgetfulness and remained for a long time in a state of confusion, meditating over the words of his wife. Then he immediately summoned his faithful servants and enjoined them to fill vessels with gifts to be sent to Jerusalem. He also despatched brave and courageous men to the tomb of his son, which they opened and from which they took the coffin that contained the body and brought it to the father. When he saw that all the flesh of his limbs had suffered putrefaction and disappeared and that nothing was left from his body but the bones, he and his wife wept bitterly for a long time. Then he took ink, pen and papyrus, and wrote as follows :—

”Tiberius the Emperor of the earth and the servant of the King of Heaven asks you and implores your love, O my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I do not know at all, whom I did not perceive, and to whom I have never had the honour and the worth to speak. A man named Pilate bore witness to the miracles which you wrought, and reported that you rose from the dead, and I believed his words; he told me that you gave sight to the blind, and I believed this about you; he mentioned to me that you made wine out of water, and I did not doubt it from you; he wrote also to me that you raised from the dead a man called Lazarus four days after he had died, and I became convinced in my mind that you had done it. He also testified and said that the miracles which you wrought, the tomb in which your body is laid was also working them. I believed in you and was convinced that you are the Son of God. As you are in heaven so also you are on the earth and in the tomb. Now, O my Lord, have pity on the weakness of your servant Tiberius; remember him with your grace, and have mercy on the wretchedness of Cæsar, my son and your servant, whom I have sent to your tomb. Grant him life, O my Lord and my God. I heard that you were the resurrection and the life to all the dead from Adam till now. I believed that you have suffered pains in order to deliver the sons of men from the hands of the enemy. If you will, let your grace overtake me. Amen.”

After the Emperor had written this letter he sealed and sent it to his messenger in Jerusalem. He also said to his faithful servants: ”Inform yourselves about the tomb of Jesus whom the Jews have crucified, in which they placed His body and from which He rose the third day, and lay the body of my son in it. I have faith that my son whom I am sending dead in a coffin to Jerusalem will come back to me alive.” And they departed and reached Jerusalem with the letter of the Emperor and the dead body of his son, accompanied by thousands of attendants, female servants and male servants; and they went to Herod and to the messenger of the Emperor.

At that time Pilate and his wife were in prison. In the night the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them a second time and said to Pilate: ”Peace be with you, O Pilate! Peace be with you, you whose name was the first to be pronounced by the Father’s mouth of life. It is inevitable that you should be judged in the court of the Emperor Tiberius. Now is the word of the Father fulfilled, because I stood before you and you sat and judged me. Be not grieved, O Pilate, because they have crucified you for me, since this has saved you from your sin and from the act of your scoffing at me. You have been flagellated, O Pilate, in order that you might be redeemed of the sin of my flagellation, which you ordered. Your blood has been shed, O Pilate, in order that you might be purified from the sin of the shedding of my blood. You have been lifted up on the wood of the cross, O Pilate, in order that you might be saved from the sin of your saying to (the Jews) ’Take ye Him and crucify Him.’ They have stripped you of your garments, O Pilate, in order that you might be absolved from the sin of the stripping of my garments. They have placed a crown of thorns

on your head, O Pilate, in order that you might be saved from the punishment of the crown of thorns that your soldiers placed on my head. You have been dragged in the streets of the town, O Pilate, in order that you might be saved from the sin of my carrying of the cross which you ordered while in the seat of judgment. Everything that has happened to you is for the sole reason that you may be saved from the sin of my death.

"As to your God-loving wife Procula, tell her not to grieve at the fact that they took her bare-headed, as my own mother Mary was rendered bare-headed in the town of Jerusalem on the day of my death. All the inhabitants of the earth with their offerings and sacrifices are not worth to me a single hair of my mother's head. O Pilate, tell your wife Procula not to grieve at the fact that they took her out of her palace and the inhabitants of the town saw her bare-headed, as Mary, my mother, took me also from country to country and from town to town and experienced the pains of expatriation." "O Pilate, as your wife Procula comforted you with her words at the time of your crucifixion, so my beloved mother comforted me with her words while I was hanging on the wood of the cross and said to me: 'I convey you peace, O my beloved Son, and light of my eyes.' Now, O Pilate, do not be afraid because it is inevitable that you should enter into another fight for me near Tiberius Cæsar, and here is a sign for you to this effect : Cæsar, the son of the Emperor, has arrived here. His father sent him here dead, out of his great faith. They will soon summon you and deliver you from prison, take him to the tomb in which my body was laid, and as I gave life to Lazarus and to the son of the widow in the town of Nain, so I will give life to this boy because of his father's faith. Grow cheerful, O Pilate, and fight for my resurrection."

The Saviour spoke these words to Pilate and disappeared from his sight. When they brought the son of the Emperor, and the vizier saw that he was dead and that he was accompanied by a considerable army of soldiers, he and all the town of Jerusalem were frightened, because they believed that he had died on the way. They were terrified lest the Emperor should order the town to be burnt and its inhabitants destroyed, but when they perused the letter of the Emperor they were struck by the depth of his humility and the greatness of his faith and were much astonished. When Herod and the Jewish community heard this news they feared that the son of the Emperor should rise and live again, and they conspired with the guards who were keeping watch over the body of the son of the Emperor, and gave them much gold and silver in order that they might allow them to take his body stealthily and hide it ; and the wicked community accomplished what they had conceived.

When Pilate was freed from prison for the sake of placing the body of the son of the Emperor in the tomb of the Saviour, in company with Joseph and Nicodemus, a Jew came by stealth in the darkness of the night and stole the body of the son of

the Emperor from the coffin, at the command of Herod and of the priests. In the morning when they sought the body of the son of the Emperor and did not find it, all the city was thrown into confusion, and the heads of the Jews assembled and went to the messenger of the Emperor and told him that no one could have done this but Pilate, Joseph and Nicodemus.

When the vizier heard these words he took Joseph and Nicodemus and scourged them, but no one laid harmful hands on Pilate, because, the people who had witnessed his crucifixion had noticed the crowns that had come down from heaven for him and his wife. While Joseph and Nicodemus were bound with fetters and in the power of Herod, Gabriel the head of the angels, came down from heaven and extended his wings over them, and all the place shone with light, and he began to speak to them saying: "I am the angel Gabriel who took the head of John away from the wicked Herod, the father of the present iniquitous king, and proclaimed his sin in all the world; I will now destroy this wicked Herod, and he will die of the pains and hunger which he will experience, and vermin will breed in his body like his father. As to you, O Joseph and Nicodemus, here is what the Lord says: 'Your sufferings resemble my sufferings; you became martyrs, and I, too, was a martyr.' It is I who delivered you from destruction at the hands of the wicked ones, and it is I who enjoined the cloud to remove you, and delivered you from their hands. It is, however, imperative, that you should stand before the Emperor. As to the body of the son of the Emperor which the heads of the Jews have concealed in order that the glory of the Christ might not be made manifest, I shall disclose its hiding-place and bring it before the people."

This is what the angel Gabriel told the venerable chiefs Joseph and Nicodemus. And these two blessed ones sent for me, in secret, me Gamaliel, and narrated to me what the angel had spoken to them, because, I the weak Gamaliel, was the disciple of these blessed ones. When I left them I noticed a great commotion in the town where people were saying to one another that the coffin containing the body of the son of the Emperor had been discovered in a Jewish house, and that the reason for stealing the body was to inculpate Pilate and discredit the resurrection of our Lord. The news spread in all the town that Herod and the High Priests of the Jews had connived and stolen the body of the son of the Emperor. In the meantime the archangel Gabriel removed the body of the son of the Emperor from the place in which it was hidden, and brought it and placed it before the vizier, and disappeared. At that very moment the vizier was incensed against Herod, and he threw an arrow at him, which caused him much pain. His body bred worms, and he died from the intensity of his pain. As to the Jews who had hidden the body of the son of the Emperor, their houses were burnt together with their sons and daughters, and in this way they died an ignominious death, more ignominious than that of all men.

The vizier took then Joseph and Nicodemus from prison and handed to them the body of the son of the Emperor and his coffin; he handed also to them the letter of the Emperor, and they read it and were amazed at his wisdom, his deep humility and great faith. Then they lifted their eyes to heaven and said: ”O Lord our God, O resurrection of the living and the dead, make manifest your power in the son of the Emperor Tiberius and accept the supplications of his father and have pity on him as you had pity on the son of the widow in the town of Nain. With your great power raise his son alive in order that he may glorify your holy name. Accept, O Lord, the strong faith of his father as you accepted the strong faith of Mary and Martha and raised for them their brother Lazarus. Have pity on him, O Lord Jesus Christ, and comfort the heart of the father by the resurrection of the son; give him life, and let your holy sepulchre make him live again, in order that his faith in you may be strengthened like the rest, and in order that he may ascertain your resurrection from the dead.”

The blessed ones spoke these words over the coffin of the son of the Emperor while dead; then they took him and placed him in the tomb of the Saviour, and adjusted the stone to the door of the tomb. And the son of the Emperor remained four days in the tomb with a closed door, and they experienced deep sorrow at his long stay in the tomb and at his not having risen quickly. On the fourth day, however, he rose from the dead, the stone that was at the door of the tomb rolled away backwards, and the guards, terrified at the sight, went in haste to Pilate and began shouting and saying: ”Come, our lord Pilate, and see how the son of the Emperor, who was in the tomb of Jesus, has risen, and how the stone rolled away without the help of a human hand.” Pilate then bowed himself to the ground, together with Joseph and Nicodemus, and worshipped in great joy; then they all of them with the vizier of the Emperor and all the army repaired to the tomb of the Saviour, and they observed that Cæsar, the son of the Emperor, had risen and was sitting over the coffin in which his body lay. He appeared bewildered with eyes fixed on the royal garment which he was wearing. They cried to him, saying: ”O Cæsar, come out with the power of the One who raised you. Let our joy be perfect in this day as in the day in which our Saviour rose from the dead.” At that very moment he jumped and came out of the tomb and sat on the stone. Then the vizier of his father approached him, bowed down and worshipped before him and said to him: ”O my lord, what happened to you and why are you in a state of stupefaction?” And he answered saying:—

”I am bewildered at the greatness of the glory, kingdom and power of my Lord Jesus who raised me from the dead, and I do not see the like of Him in any one of the men that are standing here, nor do I see in them anything like His Majesty. His glory and His Majesty are indeed great. What is the honour of my father in comparison with this King? This is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. What is the diadem of my father in comparison with His glory and the light of His Cross? What are the

sweet scents of my father in comparison with the sublime perfume that exhales from this Jesus? All the rulers of the earth cannot live after their death, but this powerful ruler, Jesus, has the power to do it. No one fears any king after he dies, but this Jesus, King of Kings, all angels, human beings and demons fear His name, and the doors of hell tremble from their dread of Him. All the tormenting spirits who take the souls of the wicked ones, and who are more wicked than the beasts of prey, dragons and vipers, I saw that they were terrified when a voice came to them, saying: 'Jesus orders you to take up this soul from amongst you, because He wants it.' They did not see Him, but only heard the one who pronounced His name.

"I was then taken forthwith out of the torments in which I was lying, and He called me by my name saying: O Cæsar, rise up; I have given you to your parents on account of their faith in Me, and in order that they might fight for My resurrection." Then He placed His cross on the coffin in which I was lying, and my bones adhered to one another, and my soul recognised its body. When my soul was united to my body I experienced a great joy, but fear overtook me after that lest He should deliver me again to them." This is what the son of the Emperor said while sitting on the stone that was placed on the tomb of the Saviour. Then he asked those who were standing near him, saying: "What is the name of this town?" And they answered him: "Jerusalem." Then he inquired about his father and mother, and they informed him that they were alive and that they were in the Capital of the Empire. After this Pilate, Joseph and Nicodemus cried and said: Honour and glory be to you, O our Lord Jesus Christ, You who have revived dead bones and given life to those who love You!"

When the vizier noticed what had taken place, he went to a dung-heap and began to throw earth and ashes on his head in sign of the deep sorrow that he felt at his treatment of Pilate and his wife. Then he kissed the head of Pilate and asked forgiveness from him and his companions, and wept bitterly on the tomb of the Saviour on account of the magnitude of the miracle that had taken place in the person of the dead man who was now standing alive. Immediately after the vizier began to write a report to the Emperor, and informed him that his son who was dead was now speaking to him, and announced to him the great joy of the resuscitation of his son Cæsar, and his resurrection from the dead. Then the vizier handed also papyrus to his master, the son of the Emperor, and asked him to write himself to his father, in his own handwriting. And he wrote as follows:

"I Cæsar, son of the Emperor Tiberius, was dead like the rest of mankind, and my body was decomposed and became earth in the grave, in which it lay for three months. The greatness of your faith sent me to Jerusalem hoping that I will rise from the dead by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have now risen from the dead. My eyes saw the Lord Jesus in the flesh which He took from the Virgin Mary, and He is in an ineffable and indescribable glory. He called me by my name,

saying, 'O Cæsar, arise now and stand up alive, and become the beginning of the resurrection of the dead.' He then took me out of the hand of death, and His voice gave life to my body. He bestowed on you this great gift of my life, O my father, because of your great confidence and faith in Him, and He has raised me in order that you might increase in the glorification of His Majesty. I greet you, O Emperor, my father. My hand which had suffered putrefaction in the grave and the fingers of which had dissolved into earth, is writing to you this greeting.'

The letter was handed to a courier who preceded Cæsar to his father, and announced the great joy to him. When the missive reached the Emperor he read it, and when he reached in it the passage in which it was said, "your son who was dead is writing this to you with his own hand, and the Omnipotent Lord raised me from the dead in Jerusalem," he was immediately bewildered and confused, like Jacob when he received the intelligence that his son was alive; and he began to say to himself, "Is it possible that my son is alive? Is this news true?" Then he went to his wife and read to her the letter of her son Cæsar in which it was written that Jesus raised him from the dead. The Queen threw then from her the dignity of the wives of the kings, when she heard that her son was alive, and became like a lioness. They called the courier who carried the letter and they said to him: "Be careful to speak the truth, and to tell us the story of our son exactly as it happened. Life or death are placed before you as the result of your words. If we see the face of our son another time, we will crown you with the crown of the kingdom and give you much money, but if we do not see the face of our son, your only reward with us will be sword and death. Go now to prison until we see the outcome of your words."

The Emperor did not neglect the affair of his son, but despatched immediately other couriers to ascertain whether what had been said concerning his son was true or not. The couriers of the Emperor took the way to Jerusalem and found out that the son of the Emperor and his army were coming to the Emperor. The couriers of the Emperor delivered then to Cæsar the letter of his father Tiberius. Astonished at what they saw they proceeded to the Capital which they reached one day before the entry of the son of the Emperor, and early next morning the son of the Emperor arrived. Who would describe the great joy and the sublime spectacle of that day! When the Emperor heard of the presence of his son he went out to meet him with so much haste that all the town was in a state of commotion, especially when its inhabitants noticed the Emperor walking on his feet to go to his son, and exultant with joy because he was going to meet him. When he saw his face he began to cry, and weep from joy, saying: "Glory be to you, O Jesus of Nazareth, O God of earth and heaven, who vivified the bones that had suffered dissolution. Your grace overtook me to-day, because you raised my son from the dead. I am to-day as if I had seen the Lord Jesus, and although I shall confess and believe every day in you and in your great power, to-day the belief of my heart is more intense.

”The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, four days after his death, was not so wonderful, O my Lord, because you were with him on the earth; the great wonder is that you raised my son, Cæsar, three months after his death. This miracle is also greater than that you wrought for the son of the widow in the town of Nain, because you were before the bier and you raised him before his descent into the grave. The grace that you have granted me, O my Lord, is greater than that which you granted to Jacob when he was told that his son Joseph was alive, and he went to him and saw him. My son remained three months in the grave and by your power you raised him from the dead.” This is what the Emperor said with a heart brimming with joy, while embracing his risen son. Then he said to his son: ”O Cæsar, my son, I am as joyful to-day as if I had seen the Saviour rising from the dead and raising my son for me. The miracles which I heard He was working, I see them to-day with my own eyes.” Then the father ordered that his son should ride in a litter, and he cried saying: ”O our Lord Jesus Christ Who was crucified, Who rose from the dead and raised my son for me!” How great was the joy of the town when they saw that the one who was dead had risen from the dead after a death of three months! There was also much singing and jubilation before and after him while he was riding.

Then Cæsar began to narrate to his father and mother all what he had seen and all that Jesus—to Whom be glory—had done to him. He told them about Hell and the torments he saw in it. Then his father asked him and said: ”Tell me about the physical characteristics, features and image of this man.” And he said to him: ”Father, what is your glory in comparison with that of this great King. There is no likeness of His glory in all the world, and nothing like the resplendence of the diadem of His Kingdom. His speech is life and His rancour is wrath. The light of the sun cannot reach the brightness of His splendour, and the dignity of His garment is not to be found with any other king of the earth. His throne is a burning fire, and His cross is the light and the brightness of His majesty, which transcends the majesty of all the terrestrial beings. I, O father, did not see Him before His crucifixion to know His portraiture and His features, but summon Pilate, the Governor of Jerusalem, and he will inform you of His physical characteristics, features and image.”

And the Emperor immediately summoned Pilate who was presented to him, and he asked him: ”Are you the Governor Pilate who crucified Jesus?” And he replied: ”Yes, it is I your servant who stands before you. As to the crucifixion of Jesus, our living God, the Jews did not listen to my words on the matter, and it is Annas and Caiaphas who decided judicially on His crucifixion.” And the Emperor Tiberius said: ”You saw all the miracles and prodigies which He wrought, and I have been informed that at the time of His crucifixion you were sitting and judging His case. Now describe to me His image, His portraiture, His picture, His majesty, and His beauty.” And Pilate said to him: ”I bear witness before you, O Emperor, my lord, that He has been three times, in my court, and I did not ascertain His portraiture

and His characteristics: once I saw that He was of the colour of fire, and once I saw Him like a bird flying to the heights of Heaven and the angels speaking to Him; but your maidservant, my wife, and my children saw Him in their dream, and warned me against stretching a harmful hand towards Him. O my lord, by your life, I gave my two children to the Jews on His behalf in order that they might not crucify Him, and in order that they might release Him until I had brought His case before my lord the Emperor, but they did not listen to my words; they released a robber from prison and murder, and they took and crucified Jesus. Let it be known, however, to you, O my lord, that He did this out of His own freewill."

And the Emperor Tiberius said to him: "Tell me from where He is and from what place He comes, and how and when He came down from Heaven so that the Jews found Him, seized Him, crucified Him, and murdered Him." And Pilate said to him: "They testified to me that His mother is a virgin, chaste and pure, that He was born of her without breaking her virginal seals, and that her name is Mary. The angel of the Lord came down from heaven and announced to her that she will conceive from the Holy Spirit and bring forth a Son whose name shall be called Emmanuel." And the Emperor said to him: "And how long did He remain on the earth?" And Pilate answered: "Thirty years." And the Emperor said to him: "And in all this length of time you saw this man, noticed the miracles and the prodigies that He was performing, and you did not inform me of His affair." And Pilate replied to him: "By your life, O my lord the Emperor, in all this length of time I did not see Him nor did I perceive His face except on the day of the crucifixion, when the Jews brought Him to me and crucified Him." And Tiberius said to him: "You have acted high-handedly, and have not informed me of His affair. They

M. 127 "three days." M. 127 omits this sentence. delivered Him to you, and you did not remember His miracles and prodigies, and you did not feel awestruck in His presence, and the glory of His divinity did not frighten you. I will now kill you and do to you what you did to Him." The Emperor Tiberius spoke thus and immediately after the soldiers seized Pilate and took him out in order to cut off his head, but the Emperor ordered that he should be crucified another time before he was beheaded. And they crucified him outside the city, struck him on the head with a reed-stick, and nailed him to the wood, pierced his side with a spear, tormented him with grievous torments and after that proceeded to cut off his head. And the blessed Pilate asked the soldiers to give him a little respite so that he might pray. And he immediately knelt down and began to pray, saying:

"O my Lord Jesus Christ who took away all the sins of the world, have pity on your servant Pilate and forgive all my stumblings, omissions and sins. Guard my poor soul and deliver it from torments. I beseech you, O my Lord and my God, do not separate my soul from that of your maidservant Procula, but make her worthy to be with me in the place of rest. Do not forget your servants, my children, because

while I was in the world, O Lord, I delivered them to death for your sake as a ransom for your crucifixion, but the Jews refused them. Do not let the tribulations of Pilate be in vain. I have indeed dared to judge you, O just Judge, but do not rebuke me for this sin which I have committed, because you are a merciful and compassionate God, and I am a created being, and I dared to say to you 'Who are You?' I implore you, O my Lord, not to put me to shame and not to rebuke me because I caused you to bear your cross and said to the Jews: 'Take ye Him and crucify Him.' And they did all this while I was in the seat of judgment. O my Lord, my God, and my Saviour, I beseech you not to remove me from your glory but to grant me your mercy. To you be glory and honour for ever. Amen."

Pilate uttered these words while kneeling on the ground. And I, Gamaliel was not able to restrain my tears when I saw the weeping of the blessed Pilate when he began to implore the soldiers to deliver his body to his servants after they had cut off his head. Then he turned and noticed one of his servants, Basilius with a number of friends, all weeping, and he said to them: "Do not weep over my death, because my Lord has tasted death for us. When you see that they have cut off my head, I want you to shroud my body well, to bring it to Jerusalem and there dig a grave for me near the tomb of Jesus, my Lord and my Saviour, in order that He may have pity on me." After Pilate had said this they cut off his head on the fifteenth of the month of June. Then we got hold of his body, shrouded it and took it to Jerusalem, as he had wished. When we reached the town we found that his wife Procula and her two children had died on the very day of our arrival, and we placed them all in one grave near the sepulchre of the Redeemer.

As to the Jews, the Emperor Tiberius sent orders to Jerusalem and had them all killed. He also sought Herod to slay him, but he was informed that he had died before Pilate. After this the wife of the Emperor Tiberius spoke to her husband and said to him: "O my lord Emperor, you knew and saw what the Saviour Jesus did in resuscitating to us our son from the dead, and we, O my lord Emperor, feel much sorrow because we did not see Him, and because we were unworthy of perceiving Him. The Jews killed Him unjustly and you killed the Governor who empowered them to kill Him. If it pleases you, O my lord Emperor, we will send for His mother in order that we may see her, because it has come to our knowledge that she is living at this moment in Jerusalem, the city of the Jews. We will take her before us and crown her with the crown of the kingdom and send her back to her country in order that all may honour her, and in order that no wicked Jew may stretch a harmful hand towards her, as they did with her son." When the Emperor heard these words from his wife they pleased him, and he despatched many soldiers, female attendants, and palace officials to Jerusalem in order to bring the Virgin Mary to them so that they might crown her with the crown of the kingdom.

Before this, our Saviour, King of Kings, appeared to His mother and to the Apostles, His elect, and He disclosed to them many secrets, and informed them that the Emperor Tiberius had sent for the Virgin Mary. Then after having laid upon John to repair to the Emperor Tiberius, He turned to Mary, His mother, and said to her: ”O my beloved mother, I shall take you to My kingdom and show you a great glory, greater than all the perishable glory and kingdom of this world. I am aware, O mother, of the fact that you were for many days in pains for Me, and that you endured tribulations for My sake, in travelling from country to country and from town to town; now I have come to take you in order that you might travel with Me to the city of the living God. You have toiled enough, O mother, come to the abode of joy and eternal rest. You have toiled with Me, O mother, in the sorrow that overtook you on the day of the Crucifixion, come now and I will take you to the comfort of My kingdom.

”You have toiled, O mother, and your heart has suffered for Me, make haste and accompany Me to the eternal hymn of joy and to a repose that has no end. You have toiled, O mother, in your weeping at the door of the sepulchre, come now and see My glory and the majesty of My throne, sitting as I am in the middle of thousands and myriads of angels. You have wept for Me, O mother, on the Kranion and Golgotha, make haste and come to the eternal heithgs. O mother, your feet were tired in the streets of the earthly Jerusalem, come now and see the beauty of the heavenly Jerusalem. O mother, you were hungry and thirsty for My sake, come now and have your satisfaction in the pleasures of heaven in My kingdom. O mother, you wept in the house of John for My sake, come now and hear the melodies of the exultations of the Cherubim and Seraphim who glorify Me, My Father and the Holy Spirit.”

This is what the Saviour said to His mother to comfort her. Then she passed away and He sent her before Him on the wings of the Cherubim. As to the Apostles, they sorrowed greatly, bowed down, worshipped Him and asked Him saying: ”O Lord, what is this sorrow that you have prepared for us, in taking away your mother, and in separating her from us? She used to comfort us, your disciples, since the day you left us and ascended to heaven. To-day great sorrow has filled our heart, and we became bereft of your sight and the sight of your virgin mother, and deprived of her salutary teaching.” And the Saviour replied saying: ”O my beloved and O my members, do not be sad on account of the passing away of My mother from you. She has not died, but she has gone to the dwellings of rest, joy and eternal life. She toiled much with Me in this world, and now I have taken her up to heaven, and you will soon see her and she will see you, because you are bound to face the death imposed on mankind. I shall take her and travel with her in the dwellings of the pious, and she shall see the Kingdom of Heaven and know My great love for her.

”Did I not send you another time to the third heaven and you saw the heavenly Jerusalem in which your names are inscribed? Did not the Father call you children because you became My beloved disciples? How could I not give heaven to My virgin mother in whose womb I remained nine months, from whose breasts I sucked milk like other children, and on whose lap I sat like other babes? How could I not comfort her heart and remove from it the sadness and sorrow which she experienced in this world for My sake? Lo the kings of the earth wish to summon her in order to bestow their honours upon her, but which earthly king is able to bestow upon her honours on earth as she deserves? Lo, the seven doors are open before her and the twelve doors of the heavenly Jerusalem are also thrown open before her. The greeting of the Father has reached her, saying, ’Be welcome, O Mary; the habitations of Heaven will submit to you, and the seven trumpets will sing before you. The sea of fire will serve before you, and the sun and the moon will be at your feet. All the choirs of heaven will sing before you, and heaven and earth will dance with canticles on the day of your Assumption.’”

This is what the Lord said to His disciples concerning His holy mother. Then He turned to John, His beloved, and said to him: ”You shall have to stand before Tiberius Caesar, and bear witness to him about what you saw the Jews doing to Me on the wood of the cross.” The Saviour said these words to His holy disciples and disappeared from their sight. Some days later the troops which the Emperor Tiberius had sent to Jerusalem arrived, accompanied by Palace officials and female attendants from the Queen. They carried also with them the crown of the kingdom, royal garments, glorious dresses, and precious and princely robes. They scoured all the land of Judæa in search of the Virgin, but they did not find her because she had left this world and ascended to heaven. They took, however, the blessed John and brought him to the Emperor Tiberius. When the Emperor saw him he said to him: ”Are you John, the beloved of the Lord and the friend of Jesus?” And John answered and said: ”By the will of God and His grace, I am, O my lord Emperor, the one who is called by this name. And now, O my lord, who is worthy to unloose his shoe’s latchet? Who is able to grasp the rays of the sun or to embrace lightning? The judgments of God are light and truth, O Emperor, and the light of truth condescended to come to us from the essence of God, and humbling Himself, He called us His brothers, friends, and Apostles. By your life, O my lord Emperor, He never called us slaves, but always brothers and friends.”

Then the Emperor said to him: ”Having performed all these miracles and prodigies, how could the Jews pierce His heart with a spear?” And the blessed John replied: ”The life of all of us consists of water and blood, and both of them sprang from His holy side. Before His crucifixion His virgin mother nudged Him at His side in Cana of Galilee, because people were in need of wine, and said to Him: ’O my beloved Son, they have no wine to drink at the wedding.’ And our Lord turned and said to her: ’O woman, you have placed in advance your finger on the spot at which they

will pierce My side. You have asked Me, O mother, to make wine mixed with water in order that the guests of the wedding might drink of it; in this you have placed in advance your hand in the spring of water and blood which will jet forth from my side, and from which I shall give the faithful to drink.' It is not good, O Emperor, that you should study too deeply the greatness of His divinity, that is to say of God and His works which the intelligence of men is unable to comprehend."

And the Emperor said to him: "Are you the disciple who was standing near Him at the time of His Crucifixion?" And John replied: "Yes, I was present there and saw all that the Jews did to our Lord Jesus Christ on the wood of the cross." And the Emperor said to him: "You will then know how to paint His image for me in the figure which He had on the cross, exactly as He was crucified for us." And John replied: "Yes, I will paint Him." And the Emperor ordered a slab of good stone, and the blessed John painted the figure of the Saviour on it according to the order of the Emperor. When it was finished the blessed John bent his head over it in order to kiss it with his mouth, and immediately after the lips of the Saviour turned to the lips of the blessed John, and they kissed each other.

The Emperor Tiberius witnessed all this, and he was greatly amazed and bewildered. Then the icon which represented the image of our Lord cried and said: "It is enough, O John, that you painted my image and the figure of my crucifixion, as you witnessed it on the day of the crucifixion. It was not fair on your part, you my beloved, to crucify me after my resurrection from the dead; it would have been better if you had painted my figure according to the image you saw of me after my resurrection. The Jews crucified me once at the hand of Herod, why do you crucify me again at the hand of Tiberius? The soldiers divided my garments among themselves in Jerusalem once, do not allow the inhabitants of Rome also to see my nudity. My side was pierced with a spear on Friday, do not pierce me, O John, my beloved, another time after my resurrection. I called Judas my friend, and he delivered me to death; but I love you, O John, more than all the world, do not leave me, therefore, in the sufferings of the crucifixion, because I rose from the dead. You know, O John, the joy that you experienced, you and my virgin mother, on the day of my resurrection, since, therefore, I rose from the dead, do not leave me in the passion of the cross. Know, O John, that my resurrection was joy and gladness to all the earth."

After the image said this to John, the voice was heard no more. When the Emperor heard these wonderful words, his mind came back to him and he rose on his feet, kissed the head of John and said: "You are truly the disciple of Jesus Christ whom He loved, and you are His friend." And the Emperor took the image and embraced it, then he placed it on a high pedestal at that place, like the image of the Son of God in the country of the Byzantines. Then the Emperor gave much money to John and bestowed many benefits on him, but he refused to take anything. Then

he went out of the city, and a column of light carried him away and brought him to the Mount of Olives. He greeted the Apostles, his brethren, and narrated to them what he did in Rome, and all what happened to him with the Emperor Tiberius.

After this the Apostles desired to see the Virgin Mary and said: ”We have seen our brother John, perchance we shall not be unworthy to see our lady, the Virgin Mary, before our death.” While the Apostles were saying this, lo the pure Virgin appeared to them in great glory. They fell on their faces before the majesty of the precious robe which she was wearing. She came to James and John and raised them first, then she raised the rest of the Apostles, and began to tell them about a part only of the heavenly glory found in the abode of rest, and informed them that she saw Pilate, his wife and his children in a great glory while the cross of Her Son was shining on them. After having told them this she disappeared from their sight. And I Gamaliel had learnt the art of writing, the science of Judaism and that of the Apostles our Fathers, and had also stepped in the science of the philosophers until I had acquired the knowledge of the right answer, and learnt the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord Christ, and the miracles which He performed, and what happened to the vizier of the Emperor, and to Galilus and the Emperor Tiberius, and I put all to writing and composed it as a memorial of the holy resurrection.

(The final words of the story in M. 127 which should have stood above on p. 274 are): I beseech you, O brethren, I the weak Cyriacus, to pray for me in order that God may forgive my mistakes (through) His Son Jesus Christ who suffered for us by His will, and release all those who are bound with the fetters of sin. We ask Him to forgive us our sins and all the bad deeds of our past life, which we have committed with knowledge or without knowledge. As He has rendered us here worthy of His knowledge, may He assemble us all in His heavenly Kingdom, through the grace and mercy of our Saviour Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (The final words of the story in M. 355 are):

And I beseech you to pray for me and to forgive me, me the weak Hyriacus. Pray for me so that the Lord may forgive me my mistakes, He who is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for us by His will. May He release all those who are bound with the fetters of sin, He who is the Christ of the worlds and the Saviour of all! We ask Him to forgive us our sins and all the bad deeds of our past lives, which we committed with knowledge or which we committed without knowledge. May He forgive them all in the greatness of His mercy! And as He has assembled us here may He render us worthy to assemble in His kingdom, in the heavenly Jerusalem! May the Grace and mercy of our Saviour Jesus Christ be with us. To Him be glory in conjunction with His good Father and the Holy Spirit, now, always and for ever and ever, Amen. Praise be to God the Lord of the worlds. It has ended by the help of God.

(The final words and the colophon of P. are):— . . . Because He, the men-loving God, who saved us by His cross, will also save us and forgive us in His divinity. As He has rendered us worthy of the joy of His resurrection may He render us also worthy to assemble in His eternal kingdom, in order that we may bless and glorify His holy name. To Him are due glory, honour, and worship in conjunction with His good Father and the Holy Spirit, now, always and for ever and ever, Amen. Here ends by the help of God the Martyrdom of Pilate, of his wife and children. May their intercession be with all the children of baptism. Amen. And the weak copyist, who is a sinner, implores all those who come across this life, and all those who read it and hear it to ask for the forgiveness of his sins. He who says a bad word shall be met with its equal, but he who finds a mistake and corrects it, the Lord will improve for him this world and the world to come with His peace. Amen.

Source. English translation by Alphonse Mingana, from *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian documents in Syriac, Arabic and Garshūni*, edited and translated by A. Mingana, with introductions by Rendel Harris, volume 2 (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1928); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1928 volume at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Footnotes and the editor’s introduction are left out. Rendel Harris’s introduction and the Garshūni text are also left out. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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