

THE  
LYNCHING  
OF  
JESUS

E. T. WELLFORD



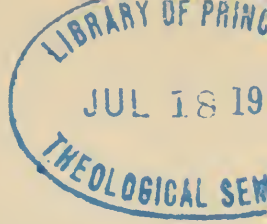
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# THE LYNCHING OF JESUS

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay.”

Acts 2:22-23



# The Lynching of Jesus

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A Review of the Legal Aspects

OF THE

TRIAL OF CHRIST

—BY—

E. T. WELLFORD

PASTOR FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA.

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Copyright, 1906,

BY

EDWIN TALIAFERRO WELLFORD

DEDICATED  
TO  
MY FATHER  
WHO FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES  
GRACED THE  
VIRGINIA JUDICIARY  
AND  
MY MOTHER  
OF WHOM WORDS CANNOT SPEAK

## PREFACE.

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It is not to write a book that I presume to impose upon the public this treatise. With deep conviction, however, of a grave injustice, a broad ignorance of it, and a yet more general apathy towards it, I venture to present the legal aspects of the Trial of Christ.

I have not deemed it necessary to quote more than a single authority for the various positions taken; they exist in such abundance that to chronicle all would be impossible, and one is sufficiently suggestive. My indebtedness to all available sources of information is freely acknowledged, especially to those facts so ably presented in the works of Dr. Joseph Salvador, M. Dupin, and Simon Greenleaf.

My quotations from the word of God are to be found in the Revised Version.



The modern appellation of mob rule and violence seemed eminently appropriate as expressive of the treatment Jesus received in the dawn of the Christian era, and is chosen as none too strong to convey a sense of the injustice He suffered.

E. T. WELLFORD.

Newport News, Va., U. S. A., March, 1905.

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# THE LYNCHING OF JESUS

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## I

### THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

Judge Lynch sat in one hundred and four cases in 1903. His circuit included every Southern state, except Virginia and Maryland, with an even dozen executions at the North. One Chinaman, seventeen whites, and eighty blacks were hurled into eternity by his orders. Two women were among the victims. Mississippi heads the list with eighteen to her discredit.

Chicago  
Tribune

The total number of legal executions during the same year was one hundred

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and twenty-three, about equally divided between the races, with seventy-seven in the South and forty-six in the North. The sword of *justice* one hundred and twenty-three times unsheathed, the sword of *injustice* one hundred and four! And this a land of civil and religious liberty!

Literary  
Digest  
Vol. 27, No. 3,  
p. 67.

The year 1904 has but added to past records a repetition of similar horrors. Before the fourth of July, race riots had been reported from Delaware, Alabama, Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Indiana and Massachusetts. Forty-five lynchings in the first six months of the year. The pen of the statistician was not dry before he was called to chronicle the atrocity at Statesboro, Ga., on August 16th, and in less than a month the attention of the whole

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country was directed to the same crime at Huntsville, Ala., September 8th. Springfield, Ohio; Evansville, Ind., and Danville, Ill., have attained a notoriety in 1904 unenvied by their sister municipalities, not to mention times and places of lesser note.

Such facts presage a serious condition of state and demand a patriot's calm reflection. Mob rule in its inception took cognizance only of those outrages unmentionable in mixed audiences, but by 1903 to the twenty cases of assault were added forty-seven of murder, with thirty-seven of promiscuous charge.<sup>1</sup> Less than one fifth <sup>1</sup>—Chicago Tribune. of the lynchings are thus seen to be for the protection of womanhood. Woman must be safe-guarded but her protector *must be the law*. This slogan of

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chivalrous devotion to the fair, leaves unaccounted for eighty per centum of mob crimes.

The wheels of justice may revolve like "the mills of God"<sup>1</sup> and the cost of legal proceedings may be great; slower may be the former and costlier the latter than is at all necessary, but the execution of a human being any other way makes more criminals than it destroys. Expedition and economy may both aid in abetting the evil, but they will never stop it. The trouble lies deeper.

The populace has tasted blood. They are conscious of their physical power. The savage spirit of barbarity has been revived, men must be broken afresh to law and order as the wild horse to harness. The un-

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bridled spirit of an unmanageable mob has run away with law and justice. The "Reign of Terror" has sprung up in America.

The victim of the fiend may be as sweet as a rose-bud and as fair as a lily, the victim of the mob may be a very imp of Satan, but the real victim of lynch law is the *Government*. The Alabama jury was composed of men who think, and their words are like the voice of a prophet, "We must either make a stand for law and order today, or surrender to the mob and the anarchist for all time."<sup>1</sup> With simple truth has the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* said: "The men who outraged the laws of the State struck a blow at that sovereignty more deadly than any enemy of State sovereignty

<sup>1</sup>—Literary  
Digest  
Vol. 29, No. 15,  
p. 446.

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<sup>1</sup>—Literary  
Digest  
Vol. 29, No. 15,  
P. 373.

ever delivered.”<sup>1</sup> So thinks the President, “Indeed, the very existence of the republic depends upon the spirit of orderly liberty under the law, which is as incompatible with mob violence as with any form of despotism.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>—Letter to  
Gov. Durbin.

To this disastrous condition of affairs is added the humiliating spectacle of governmental participation. The officers of the law, sworn to execute justice to all and favor to none, are found calmly surveying the scene or actively encouraging it! To mob violence is added judicial murder!

Not infrequently the awful realization dawns, when too late to make amends, that the tortured creature was as harmless as a babe. Fury had vented its wrath upon a vicarious



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sacrifice and the innocent had suffered for the guilty!

Justice David J. Brewer did not go one step too far in that carefully prepared oration at Milwaukee, "Every man who takes part in the burning or lynching of a negro is a murderer and should be so considered in the eyes of the law."<sup>1</sup> In the ignorance and apathy of public sentiment lies the mob's opportunity. "The fact is, the cause of crime among us is not defective laws, but a temperament unknown to our forefathers, a new racial tendency to tolerate crime as well as to find excuses for it."<sup>2</sup>

1—Literary Digest  
Vol. 27, No. 4,  
p. 94.

2—Bausman in  
Am. Law  
Review, '04.

When the people are educated to the enormity of these offences and when they grasp the inevitable conse-

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quences, and not until then, will there be reform.

Governor Montague of Virginia, and Governor Vardaman of Mississippi, have won the thanks of their States and the Republic for heroic measures that prevented lynch law. Governor Durbin of Indiana and Governor Terrell of Georgia have made their names ever memorable for a fearless and patriotic and just stand in the face of riot and disorder. The *Detroit Free Press* has recommended to a northern Executive the efficient methods of a Southerner, "Governor Herrick of Ohio should lose no time in beginning to study the Vardaman manual of tactics." The sword of resistance has at last been drawn from its scabbard. Here is the remedy. An open and fearless and

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full exposure of the crime with the complete roster of its participants; blood for blood; and the moral support, both in prevention and cure, of all right thinking people.

Lynch law is usually credited as an American product. The most awful application of it, however, belongs to the first century. There is to be found *par excellence* the unauthorized mob, there the most innocent victim, there the law most flagrantly defied, there the judicial and military branches of government most actively engaged, there the most deliberate anarchy, there the most excruciating agony. The lynching of Jesus excels in brutality, and in the slaughter of the innocent, all succeeding offences. So long as the twentieth century looks on with

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unstirred sympathy and passes by the mobbing of Jesus with unconcern and apathy, so long will similar deeds be repeated, in any land, with impunity. If the public conscience does not resent the greatest it will not take cognizance of the less.

## II

### THE ARBITRAMENT OF REASON.

“We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good, and of all comfort.”<sup>1</sup> The religious man is the Christian. He believes in God, the immortality of the soul, and in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour from sin. His Bible takes the two former for granted and exists to reveal the latter. For him to live is Christ, to die is gain.<sup>2</sup> An essential part of his religion is to have a reason for the hope that is in him,<sup>3</sup> and he covets for his principles a candid investiga-

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tion. Christianity has always been ready to submit to the arbitrament of reason. "If the Lord be God follow Him, if Baal follow Him"<sup>1</sup> has been the attitude of her prophets both before and since the days of Elijah. Show that Jesus Christ is unworthy and Christendom is ready to reject Him. She asks for sympathy only because she has demonstrated His divinity. This is the mind of her master and this the stand of her God, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"<sup>2</sup>

Crises are the seeds of destiny. The kernel of Christianity is in the cross. If three thieves were crucified upon Calvary, then all are without God and without hope in the world.<sup>3</sup> But if a thief, a sinner saved by grace, and a

Saviour were there, each Christian is a son of God though it doth not yet appear what he shall be.<sup>1</sup> If Jesus of Nazareth was a criminal, justly convicted and legally executed, then His followers have no apology for their existence, and their worship is blasphemy. Equally is it true if by wicked hands He was crucified and slain, illogically and illegally put to death, then His rejection is a capital offence—a sin against justice, reason and God. If He was innocent, or even though guilty when illegally executed, he who delays to rise to His defense is twenty centuries behind the times. Upon the legal aspects of the trial of Jesus thus hinges the dream of Paradise and the hope of Glory. Was He convicted and must man eat and drink for

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1—1 Cor. 15:32. tomorrow he dies?<sup>1</sup> Or was He lynched, suffering the innocent for the guilty, the lamb of God slain for the salvation of the world?



### III

#### THE LAW OF THE LAND.

Guilty or not guilty is a state. Acquitted or convicted is a condition. An estate of innocency is pre-supposed for all, one of guilt must in each case be proven. Innocency may be defended and maintained, guilt must be brought forward and established. It is the province of law alike to shield the inoffensive and to punish the evil doer. There are maxims in law as there are axioms in Mathematics, and these constitute International statutes. To this ground work of justice is added by authorized legislation the law of its own land. To

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judge and to be judged is the inalienable right of every individual, and the universal together with the provincial law the essential rule of procedure. Each man has a right to his personal opinion on the trial of Jesus Christ, but that opinion has neither weight nor credence unless based upon His guilt or innocence in the light of the law of the land.

One must remember that the life of Jesus was passed in a unique time. The glory had departed from Israel, and the sceptre from Judah, the tyrant's heel was on the royal head. The Roman eagle had supplanted the shield of David. Israel's law was now bound in Roman Enactments. Certain prerogatives of justice still remained with the conquered people, but

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sovereignty was with the Cæsars. In what and how far did the Hebrews' authority remain? What attributes of government did their conquerors reserve to themselves? All students of ancient history will admit two facts. The first, that the policy of Rome was to leave her subjugated territory with every manner and custom that did not clash with her own conceptions of a world-wide empire. The people thus left to their national associations would be less restive under the foreign yoke. And in the second place, to reserve for herself in every instance the arbitrament of life and death. This Rome always maintained as an exclusive attribute of sovereignty. It thus occurs that the Hebrew people had the full and free exercise of their religion and

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practice of their law, whilst at the same time it was not lawful for them to put any man to death.<sup>1</sup> Pilate could say, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law,"<sup>2</sup> but Israel could not execute Christ until Cæsar's representative had also "delivered Him to be crucified."<sup>3</sup> Jesus, therefore, must be found guilty by the Jew, that verdict approved by the Roman, be executed with every humanitarian consideration for a victim, and with the impressive dignity of the law. This was the necessary process of any case originating with Israel.

The Sanhedrin was the Hebrew Court. The great Council consisted of seventy-one members, the lesser, or provincial Sanhedrin, was composed of twenty-three which was subject, how-

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ever, to enlargement. It was the function of the great Sanhedrin to appoint the Provincial, and to delegate to this latter, when so constituted, the supervision of local affairs. Capital punishment was inflicted by this smaller body until the authority was taken entirely from the Hebrews forty years before the destruction of the Temple.<sup>1</sup> The <sup>1—Sanhedrin,</sup>  
<sup>folio 24, col. 2</sup> great Sanhedrin was not an appellate court but held concurrent jurisdiction only; the decision of either was final. Before this Provincial Council Jesus must be arraigned. What were its laws?

It is providential that a question of such magnitude should be so easily answered. The ordinary reader may find in most all approved commentaries a resume of the code. The more dili-

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gent and painstaking student may follow the Rabbins not only in the Law but its Traditions. The late Dr. Joseph Salvador published at Paris, in the early part of the last century, a work entitled "*Histoire des Institutions de Moise et du Peuple Hebreu.*" A Jew of noble descent and innate capacity, a student of broad culture and deep learning, his work has been a recognized authority. He wrote to justify his people in their crucifixion of the Nazarene. The searcher after truth may therefore take his chapter on "The Administration of Justice" as an epitome of the law void of all Christian tendency. To the learned Isrælite's credit be it said, that however far fetched his applications may be, he does not shirk to tell the truth regard-

ing the law of the land, no matter how flagrant has been its violation by his people. Waiving, for the time, the great bulk of extant authority that parallels his statements, let the candid judge consider only those points of law admitted by both friend and foe.

There were three stars around which revolved Hebrew jurisprudence—an open trial, an untrammelled defense, and unimpeachable testimony. The first necessitated a Court that sat only by day, the second insured to the accused a thoughtful hearing and assured against all interference and violence, whilst the third credited the prisoner at the bar with the benefit of every doubt and required the Commonwealth to present a *company* of creditable witnesses.

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Their conceptions of justice may well be understood from the attitude of their Doctors. Tryphon and Akiba are recorded as saying, "If we had been members of the high court, we should never have condemned a man to death." Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, answers, "Would not that be an abuse? Would you not have been afraid of multiplying crimes in Israel?" The people who quibble about the morale of capital punishment cannot be insusceptible to the genius of law.

If Jesus Christ was rationally supposed guilty of blasphemy it was incumbent upon the Sanhedrin to take cognizance of it. A warrant for His arrest must be issued by the legal authority and placed in the hands of an executive officer before His liberty



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could be infringed. Even then, after His arrest, judgment must be arrested until His guilt was established. Jesus must be brought into Court by day, and that not a *feast day*. The indictment must be read and an opportunity given the prisoner to plead. And let it be noted that a plea of guilty did not throw the accused upon the mercy of the court, nor establish his offence. "We hold it as fundamental, that no one shall prejudice himself." "If a man accuses himself before a tribunal we must not believe him, *unless the fact is attested by two other witnesses.*" Again their scribes must be reported, "For our law does not condemn upon the *simple confession* of the accused, nor upon the declaration of *one prophet* alone."

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In the natural process of the cause the witnesses would now be introduced. Many are ruled out of court. No woman, child, slave, irresponsible party, or bad character can be allowed to testify. No woman, because the witness upon whose testimony the guilt of the accused is established must strike the first blow at the execution in further attestation of veracity. No child, because of immature judgment; no slave, because he is under orders; no irresponsible party, for the witness is liable to the punishment that he would inflict upon the accused, if he has sworn falsely; no bad character, for truth is indispensable to justice. Before proceeding to their examination each witness must be charged by the Court. "It is not conjecture, or what-

ever public rumor has brought to thee, that we ask of thee; consider that a great responsibility rests on thee; that we are not occupied by an affair, like a case of pecuniary interest, in which the injury may be repaired. If thou causest the condemnation of a person unjustly accused, his blood, and the blood of all the posterity of him, of whom thou wilt have deprived the earth, will fall on thee. God will demand of thee an account, as He demanded of Cain an account of the blood of Abel. Speak."

To avoid a "Comedy of Errors" in the Tragedy of Life each witness must depose, first, to the identity of the party. There must be more than vague rumor or undercurrent of superstition; the witness must establish "the month,

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day, hour, and circumstances of the crime.”

The personnel of the Court consisted of twenty-three judges. When, for any reason, one was incapacitated two Elders were added, similar circumstances again arising two others appeared until the number of Judges had increased to sixty-two. At their feet sat a body of auditors, somewhat analogous to a modern jury. One of these might be entrusted with the defense, or one might volunteer to aid the accused.

When the evidence was all in the *youngest* judge who *avored acquittal* so expressed his opinion, together with his reasons. An older officer might have unduly influenced, by the weight of his years, the judgment of his col-

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leagues. When all in favor of acquittal had, in the order of their juniority, expressed their convictions, the opposing judges were heard in like manner, speaking with the "*greatest moderation.*" Next was heard any auditor who desired to defend the accused, to press any argument not fully developed, or to introduce any new considerations. This privilege of the floor *was not granted to any who favored conviction.* The prisoner was entitled to every opportunity, the Commonwealth to but one. Lastly the accused had the privilege of making his own defense, to which the profoundest attention was demanded.

The case now went to the judges for their decree. All *spectators* were removed and two stenographers<sup>1</sup> recorded

<sup>1</sup>—Shorthand was then known.

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the judgment, one the names of those who acquitted, the other the contrary. Eleven votes out of twenty-three acquitted and the prisoner was *immediately* released. Thirteen voices were necessary to conviction. One-half vote less than a majority set at liberty, one and one-half vote more was necessary to withhold it. No motion was required to arrest judgment. It could not be *pronounced* until the *third* day. The interim must be devoted exclusively to the review of the case. To this end a semi-fast was ordained, meats and drinks were both curtailed, and nothing left undone that would contribute a "*sana mens in sano corpore.*"

The tribunal reconvened on the morning of the third day. Any voice

might be changed from condemnation to acquittal, *but not a single vote from acquittal* to condemnation. The spirit of the law being that no man could be put in jeopardy twice for his life either before a Court, or even any integral part of it.

The execution was as solemn and dignified as it was serious. It was immediate, and the Court remained in session until its orders were carried out. Every precaution was taken, not only to prevent any mistake but to redeem any error. The judges were still on the bench and a sheriff stood at the door with a flag of truce. Another similar official preceded the executioners, whilst a third, a mounted courier, was present to communicate between the two. If any individual approached

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the judges with new evidence, or other extenuating circumstance, the magistrate at the door waved his flag, the courier conveyed the tidings and the prisoner was returned for another hearing. The preceding magistrate was a herald and in a loud voice proclaimed, "A. B. is led to punishment for Blasphemy (or whatever charged). The witnesses who have sworn against him are C. D. and E. F.; if any one has evidence to give in his favor let him come forth quickly.'" The courier reported all responses proffered and the flag of truce recalled the parties. The prisoner was allowed to secure his return by a profession of new considerations from his own lips, no less than five times. The Chemists of that age had prepared their best



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anæsthetic and it was required to be given the condemned before reaching the place of execution, to deaden his mental and physical agony. Death, in only the most flagrant offences and heinous characters, was on the cross. Such was the law of the land. To what extent was it recognized and followed in the most important case on record?

## IV

### SPRINGS OF ACTION.

A stream can rise no higher than its source. Inevitably it will issue far below its mouth. The execution of Jesus could not be more just than the inception of the charges against Him. The whole course of His trial must be colored by the soil from which it springs, and ultimately terminate upon a lower plain than that upon which it originated. An *illegal charge* can never be *legally established*, nor any penalty therefor legally exacted. The rational mind is sure to find the motives that led to Christ's apprehension

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in the analysis of His trial and conviction. Indeed, a knowledge of all such is essential to a complete and trustworthy opinion.

Jesus was born of royal, though humble, parentage, in the City of Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth in Galilee and accustomed to attend regularly the religious functions of His race at Jerusalem. He was a Jew, and by training and observation, acquainted with the religious and political conditions of Israel, with their respective laws and the manner of their execution. To every requirement He was prompt to respond,<sup>1</sup> meeting civil as 1—Matt. 5:15. quickly as sacred obligations.<sup>2</sup> At 2—Matt. 17:27. thirty years of age He began His public career with a seal of attestation from God.<sup>3</sup> For twelve months He was 3—Luke 3:22.

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forging to the front. During the next year he was no less than “the day  
1—Luke 1:78. spring from on high.”<sup>1</sup> and the “glory  
2—Luke 2:32. of His people, Israel.”<sup>2</sup> And then, it is the inevitable course of greatness, He was at once the idol of the multitude and the envy of their rulers, whom He had outstripped. He defended the rights of the masses and healed every kind of sickness and disease, both mental and physical, amongst the people. His word was with authority, His  
3—Mark 1:22,27 works with power.<sup>3</sup> He proved that inestimable boon to a downtrodden people, of one who discovers the whitened sepulchers to which they have bowed allegiance; and in the room of the deposed enthrones a pure God. Said one of their own number, “No man can do these miracles that Thou doest except

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God be with Him.”<sup>1</sup> The consciousness that as He increased they must decrease became a deep conviction with the Jewish rulers. From this time on their every breath was charged with “the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”<sup>2</sup> One or the other must die; they were afraid, He was not.

Into the home of Bethany came the unwelcome guest. Two went out—Lazarus and the Angel-reaper—and two, Mary and Martha, were left. To comfort their broken hearts came the “The Resurrection and the Life.”<sup>3</sup> Four returned to the fire side at Bethany—the Sisters, the Traveller from that mysterious bourn whither all depart to come no more, and Jesus. All the world went after Him, because all the

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world has its dead, and His voice was above the sound of many waters, soft and sweet, a reviving cordial to "the loved and lost."

They, the erstwhile rulers of the people, were not able to go and do likewise. "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let Him thus alone all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and

<sup>1</sup>—John 11:  
47-50.

that the whole nation perish not."<sup>1</sup>

"So from that day forth they took

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counsel that they might put Him to death.”<sup>1</sup> “Jesus therefore walked no<sup>1</sup>—John 11: 53. more openly among the Jews.”<sup>2</sup> The<sup>2</sup>—John 11: 54. chief priests and Pharisees gave a commandment, “If any man knew where He was he should show it, that they might take Him.”<sup>3</sup> The path of<sup>3</sup>—John 11: 57. duty had no fears for the Nazarene, and six days before the Passover He stopped at Bethany on His way to Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Then it was the “chief priests<sup>4</sup>—John 12: 1. took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death: because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.”<sup>5</sup> So deep<sup>5</sup>—John 12: 11. had thirst for blood buried itself in their hearts that Lazarus also was drawn into its murderous vortex!

There was one insurmountable difficulty in the way—the means to ac-

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comply with their foul design and execute an innocent man. No deed that He had ever done was reprehensible, no word He had ever spoken was impeachable. Might He not be entrapped? At any rate His enemies considered it worth trying.

The chief priests together with the scribes and elders were the first to assay the impossible. Tell us, said they, "By what authority doest Thou these things? or who is he that gave Thee this authority?"<sup>1</sup> "And He answered and said unto them, I also will ask you a question; and tell me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves saying, If we shall say from heaven, He will say, Why did ye not believe him? But if we shall say



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from men, all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered that they knew not whence it was. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”<sup>1</sup> While they were suspended <sup>1—Luke 20: 3-8</sup> upon the horns of this dilemma Christ riddled them with the hot bullets of His logic. ‘You have been loud in your professions, but let Me assure you that the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. You have been like unto the worthless son that answered, “I go, sir,” and went not: they like unto him, who though at first he refused, “afterwards repented and went.”’<sup>2</sup> ‘You are as the wicked <sup>2—Matt. 28: 32</sup> husbandmen who, beating some and killing some, sent all their master’s

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servants away empty. The heir they slew that the inheritance might be theirs. "Did you never read in the Scriptures the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner?"<sup>1</sup> They writhed under this discomfiture, but He had one word more. 'Remember the marriage feast of the King. Many were called, few chosen. Those that were first bidden were not worthy.'<sup>2</sup> One thing only prevented their taking Him by force—they feared the people.

Woefully crestfallen, they resign the charge to hired bandits, and now "sent forth spies, which feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of His speech, so as to deliver Him to the rule and to the authority of

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the governor."<sup>1</sup> Pharisees and He-  
rodians hand in hand!<sup>2</sup>

1—Luke 20: 20.  
2—Mark 12: 12.

With a flattering introduction these lewd fellows of the baser sort inquire, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? But He perceived their craftiness and said, Shew Me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said Caesar's. And He said unto them, Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."<sup>3</sup>

3—Luke 20: 20-26.

The subtleties of logic had failed, the intrigues of politics proved futile; what next? An appeal to the fanaticism of religion. Can any man answer a question concerning the resurrection of the dead and not incur the displeasure of the Pharisees or the Sadducees? "Master," said the latter, "there were

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seven brethren: and the first took a wife and dying left no seed; and the second took her and died leaving no seed behind him, and the third likewise; and the seven left no seed. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of

1—Mark 12: 20-23. them? for the seven had her to wife.”<sup>1</sup>

He, exposing their ignorance, declared that the resurrection, “Even Moses shewed in the place concerning the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”<sup>2</sup>

2—Luke 20: 37-40.

Certain of the scribes could no longer restrain their emotion, and giving vent to their feelings cried out, “Master,

3—Luke 20: 39, 40. Thou hast well said.”<sup>3</sup>

They were now driven to the last of

## SPRINGS OF ACTION.

resorts and appealed to the technicalities of law! An attorney appears with the question, "What commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."<sup>1</sup> The scribe, ac-<sup>1—Mark 12: 28-31.</sup>knowledging that this exceeded all burnt offering and sacrifice, departed, thinking how Jesus had said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." "No man after that durst ask Him any questions."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2—Mark 12: 34.</sup>

In vain had the leaders appealed to philosophy, politics, religion, and law. He had been tempted in all, but re-

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mained still without sin. There is one other expedient left and they are resolved, at all hazards, to try it. The illegality of the case is already *res adjudicata*. Even the heathen Seneca admits, "No action will be considered as blameless, unless the will was so; for by this will the act was indicated."

## V

### ARREST OR SEIZURE?

The embers of Jewish passion had now burst into a roaring flame. What the law could not do, for it was just, the unconquered spirit of animosity determined should be wrought by force. A conference was held. Caiaphas was there, and with him those of kindred mind. They "sought how they might take Him with subtlety and kill Him."<sup>1</sup> It was decided to mob whom they could not convict!

<sup>1</sup>—Mark 14: 1.

Had the masses fathomed their plot and its motives? One, at least, was sufficiently sure of it to act upon his

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

information. "Judas Iscariot went unto the chief priests and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will  
1—Matt. 26: 15. deliver Him unto you?"<sup>1</sup> This he could easily do, for he was one of the twelve and knew his Master's movements,  
2—John 18: 2. even to the secret places of prayer.<sup>2</sup> With unconscious revelation of their own personality, they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver—the legal  
3—Ex. 21: 32. value of a slave destroyed by a *beast!*<sup>3</sup> "And from that time Judas sought opportunity to deliver Him."<sup>4</sup> Jesus was soon cognizant of this barter and treachery. He spoke of it to His disciples, and John must have heard the  
4—Matt. 26: 16. name of the traitor.<sup>5</sup>  
5—John 23: 26.

Christ was daily with them in the Temple, but, doubtless, for fear of the many hundred who would rise to His



## ARREST OR SEIZURE ?

defense, they dared not lay hands upon Him in public.

“Safety and innocence fly with the light,  
Temptations and dangers walk forth with the  
night.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>—Selina  
Shirley.

True, it was not according to their law to proceed under cover of darkness, but law with its devotees had been ordered to the rear. Anarchy rode in the saddle followed by his frenzied train. Under the safeguard of a sleeping city, Judas led them to arrest a man on His knees! With the traitor went a great multitude armed with swords and staves, emissaries of the chief priests, the scribes and the elders.<sup>2</sup> As they passed the tower of Antonia a band of Roman soldiers of varying rank, off duty for the night, swelled the motley aggregation. The flickering torch and earthen lamp ad-

<sup>2</sup>—Mark 14: 43.

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

vanced to obscure the light of the world! Out through the gate of the city, down into the valley of Jehosaphat, and up the rugged slopes of Olivet they went—ah, how little they knew it—to

1—Perronet.

“Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”<sup>1</sup>

They found Him, as Judas expected, where He oft resorted with His disciples. “God Almighty writes a legible hand.” Innocency was inscribed on His face. When they saw Him, and as the sweet cadence of His voice dropped upon their ears, “they went backward and fell to the ground.”<sup>2</sup> Their better self recoiled from so foul a deed. Judas kissed Him.<sup>3</sup> To seize and bind was a lesser wrong; stifling conscience, they took the weak because they were

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strong! The traitor had led, they followed. Peter drew his sword. The right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest, fell to the ground, and Jesus stooped to pick it up!<sup>1</sup> This was 1—John 18:10,11 no time for war, else legions of angels had been present. It was their hour and the power of darkness.<sup>2</sup> “Then all 2—Luke 22: 53. the disciples left Him and fled.”<sup>3</sup> 3—Matt. 26: 56.

There was no cause of offence in Him, not even could any charge be imputed; they laid hold of an innocent man. There was no warrant for His arrest; the Jewish Court had issued none; Pilate knew not of it; they were a law unto themselves. Nothing, therefore, was ever said of Peter's resistance; he had more right of defense than they had of aggression. Judas went because he was paid, the Jewish mob because

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they were frenzied, the Roman soldiery because they were curious. Might accomplished what right would not assay. Jesus was seized; He could not be arrested. If officials of either Israel or Rome were there in executive capacities, then to anarchy was added judicial complicity; the ermine of office was stained with the yellow of bribery, and annihilated in the whirlwind of duplicity.

Should further evidence be asked the most dubious will be satisfied as they behold the prisoner conducted, not to any court or legal judicatory, but to the house of Annas—a private citizen.

## VI

### COURTS OF INJUSTICE.

Jesus was taken successively before Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate, then Herod, and again returned to Pontius Pilate. What jurisdiction had Annas or Herod? What right to sit in the case had Caiaphas? What ability had Pilate? These are vital interrogations.

They led Him first to the palace of Annas and He was examined by the father-in-law of the high priest.<sup>1</sup> This Jew was a well known character. He had occupied the highest office of the sons of Aaron, but had been deposed by Valerius Gratus.<sup>2</sup> He was a suc-

<sup>1</sup>—John 18: 13; 19: 24.

<sup>2</sup>—Josephus An. II, Ch. II, p. 42.

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

cessful demagogue. By his intrigue  
five of his sons, his son-in-law and his  
grand-son, were made high priest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1—Josephus</sup>  
An. II, Ch. IX,  
p. 121.

Jesus was arraigned before him first  
of all for his influence. Then too, he  
was a man of enormous wealth. Had  
he offered the bribe with which Judas  
and the false witnesses were paid? Did  
the traitor lead the captive to him to  
deliver his goods? This is probable.

A third consideration is sure. Like  
every Jew, who has accumulated wealth,  
he was a money lender. The Romans,  
high and low alike, were under many  
financial obligations to him and banked  
on more. This power would be a val-  
uable asset before Jesus could be  
slaughtered, and they would make sure  
of its possession in time. It is a striking  
fact that the charge against Annas and

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his house remembered in Jewry is “a private influence on the judges in their administration of justice, whereby ‘morals were corrupted, judgment perverted, and the Shekhinah withdrawn from Israel.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>—Edersheim  
Vol. I, p. 463.

A fourth reason insured the outcome. Annas was certain to use all his power, both with Jew and Roman, to put Jesus out of the way, for *commercial* considerations. Gold was the foundation of his opinion. Christ had on two occasions<sup>2</sup> thrust the money changers out of the Temple that God’s house might not remain a den of thieves. Whose were the booths within those sacred precincts? They belonged to Annas and his family and were the source of their enormous wealth!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>—John 2: 13-19  
Mark 11: 15, 16.

<sup>3</sup>—Edersheim  
Vol. I, p. 371.

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With safety Jesus might be committed to his judgment, and this expectation was not disappointed. However great may be the scorn with which the twentieth century looks back upon such a judge, it can be no greater than the execration in which he was held by his contemporaries, though, for many reasons, they bowed to his will. Annas had no jurisdiction. If it be contended, as some suggest, that he was president of the Sanhedrin, it is enough to reply that his house was not a spot where that great court could convene, whilst his personal interest in the case would incapacitate him under any circumstances.

Caiaphas next sat in judgment. Known to history as one who in character "was hard, coarse, brutal, yet



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adroit and crafty.”<sup>1</sup> He was at once 1—Schultz in  
Schaff-Herzog. the inspiration and the genius of the movement against Christ, had publicly declared that He was worthy of death,<sup>2</sup> 2—John 11:49,50 and having exhausted every means of law, now resorted to any lawlessness to accomplish his fiendish design. And yet Caiaphas held the scales of justice! It was night; no Jewish *Court* could be in session, no law-abiding Israelite would be present, for it was the feast; outside the hall of justice the Sanhedrin could not meet. As illegal in its constitution as its conduct! An unjust judge and a mock tribunal!

Pontius Pilate was a soldier and not a jurist. His sword is stained with the blood of many an Israelite. The temple court and holy city he profaned. The sacred revenues he diverted to the

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1—Josephus  
An. Vol. II, Ch.  
III, p. 44, 45.  
Do. Ch. IV,  
p. 47.

construction of a Roman aqueduct; was subsequently recalled to Rome,<sup>1</sup> and eventually took his own life.

A man with whom the *vox populi* was the only *vox Dei*; and whose opinions and actions shifted with the tides of human passion. He judged the Nazarene unworthy of bonds or of death, yet lacked the stamina to set

2—Luke 23:  
20-22. Him free.<sup>2</sup>

And lastly there was Herod—the tetrarch of Galilee, and the husband of

3—Matt. 14: 34. Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.<sup>3</sup>

4—Matt. 14: 10. He murdered John the Baptist,<sup>4</sup> and

5—Luke 13: 31. had threatened to kill Jesus.<sup>5</sup> “The

inherent weakness of his character left him in the absolute control of his wife, to the final ruin of his fortunes. He was covetous, avaricious, luxurious, and utterly dissipated; suspicious, and

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with a good deal of that fox cunning which, especially in the East, often forms the sum-total of statecraft.”<sup>1</sup> He <sup>1—Edersheim Vol. I, p. 261.</sup> had no more jurisdiction in Judea than Spain in the Philippines, and only heard the case to satisfy his curiosity<sup>2</sup> <sup>2—Luke 23: 8.</sup> and to heal an old grudge.<sup>3</sup> <sup>3—Luke 23: 12.</sup>

These were the shearers before whom the Lamb of God was dumb.<sup>4</sup> Two, if <sup>4—Isa. 53: 7.</sup> not three, without jurisdiction; three, if not four, debarred by personal interest and pre-judgment; and all without *character!* “Judges ought to be more learned than witty; more reverent than plausible; and more advised than confident; above all things integrity is their portion and proper virtue.”<sup>5</sup> <sup>5—Bacon.</sup>

Jesus Christ was not accorded a hearing by a single unbiased tribunal,

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nor before one unprejudiced judge, nor any competent authority. If Courts at all, they were all Courts of *Injustice*.

## VII

### QUASI-INDICTMENTS.

One of the astounding facts in this remarkable case is the complete absence of a legal indictment. Before Annas one was not even presumed; before Caiaphas it was an afterthought; before Pilate, on each occasion, and before Herod, it was a civil rather than a religious charge; whilst in no Court was a *paper*, the necessary mould of an indictment, presented.

It was about one hour after midnight when they arraigned Him before Annas. The father-in-law of the high priest asked Him of His disciples and

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1—John 18: 19. His teaching.<sup>1</sup> These were broad generalities and might have been put with more propriety to a witness than to a prisoner. This Jesus recognized, and bade Annas call for such information

2—John 18: 21. from the many present who knew.<sup>2</sup> Christ now insisted upon some specific

3—John 18: 24. charge,<sup>3</sup> whereupon the judge, because he had no indictment to present, sends Him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest! Was it ever known in the criminal jurisprudence of any land or age to arraign a prisoner without a charge? Festus, when Paul went to Agrippa, sent this message to accompany him: "It seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against

4—Acts 25: 27. him."<sup>4</sup> Paul had appealed to Caesar, but Festus was loath to allow him this

## QUASI-INDICTMENTS.

privilege, even upon request, without some specific indictment, and urged Agrippa to assist in such a draft. Anas had none, asked none, and sent Christ up without one!

Then Caiaphas heard the case. It was *before dawn*, and many of the Sanhedrists were assembled in his palace. At this conference Jesus was tried. A subsequent meeting was held in the same place after day-break, with a somewhat fuller representation, but this was only to devise means to carry out the night sentence.<sup>1</sup> It is with the first that the trial has to do. No indictment was read, but the witnesses were immediately put upon the stand, and the prisoner called upon to reply.<sup>2</sup> His answers suggested a ground, and He was for the first time charged with

<sup>1</sup>—Matt. 27:1,2,  
see also  
pp. 82, 83.

<sup>2</sup>—Matt. 26:  
59-63.

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1—Matt. 26: 65. any offence.<sup>1</sup> Their law forbade self-incrimination, even upon confession, unless supported by two creditable witnesses. He is, nevertheless, now held for *blasphemy*, and upon this fortuitous charge condemned to death! A quasi-indictment indeed—exacted in the course of testimony, and from the prisoner at the bar!

The case now passes to the Roman Courts. A blasphemer is condemned to death and the authority of their sovereign is sought for His execution. Pilate calls for the indictment: “What

2—John 18: 29. accusation bring ye against this man?”<sup>2</sup>

There was but one answer to give—He had been condemned for blasphemy. This, however, would not appeal to Pi-

3—John 18: 30. late, and the Jews evade the question.<sup>3</sup>

The Roman renews it; he was more



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just than the Sanhedrists and would not hear a cause without an indictment.

The jews answer *treason!*<sup>1</sup> A double 1—Luke 23: 2. falsehood and a new charge! It was not their case. Furthermore He had taught<sup>2</sup> and paid<sup>3</sup> tribute to Caesar. 2—Matt. 22: 21.  
3—Matt. 17: 27. But this phase would elicit Pilate's sympathies!

The cause is examined and the charge *not proven*. Immediately another allegation is sprung and for "*treason*" is substituted "*sedition!*"<sup>4</sup> 4—Luke 23: 5. The hearing of this indictment is referred to Herod. The adjudicated cause of treason as well as this new charge of sedition were probably considered by the tetrarch,<sup>5</sup> and the case is remanded 5—Luke 23: 11, 15. to Pilate. He rehears the former, gives due thought to the new features intro-

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duced, and passes a vindicating judgment upon both.<sup>1</sup>

1—Luke 23: 14.

Pilate's wife has a dream. Superstition takes hold of the Roman soldier, and the Jews, ever quick to seize an opportunity, bring up the abandoned charge of blasphemy.<sup>2</sup> It had

2—John 19: 7, 8.

its effect; different,<sup>3</sup> however, from what they expected. To Pilate there was far more truth in Christ's *claim* than Is-

3—Matt. 27: 24.

rael's *charge*.<sup>4</sup>

4—Matt. 27: 18.

The last indictment was the most foreign of them all. It was not drawn against the prisoner, but the judge! "If thou release this man thou art not

5—John 19: 12.

Caesar's friend."<sup>5</sup> This settled the case! Upon the relationship between Pilate and Tiberius, Jesus was committed to the cross!

Nothing, or Blasphemy, or Treason,

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or Sedition, or Blasphemy again, or a Foreigner's attitude to a Conqueror, or *any thing* that would, appeal to the judge and jury, regardless of their application to the prisoner at the bar, constituted the quasi-indictments of this extraordinary cause. All were introduced *pending* the trial and none *legally* drawn.

## VIII

### THE PASSION OF THE CAUSE.

This case "was not so much a *trial* environed with legal forms, as a real *passion* or prolonged suffering, in which the imperturbable gentleness of the victim displays more strongly the unrelenting ferocity of his persecutors."<sup>1</sup> All legal requirements having been ignored in Christ's arrest, the judicatories before which he was arraigned, and the shifting indictments presented; one is not surprised to find the same policy in the process of the cause.

Testimony was only introduced before Caiaphas; not a single witness ap-

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peared in any other court. These were not sworn and charged. They did not depose to the identity of the accused. They were not explicit as to the time nor the circumstances. No two of them agreed together. And yet such were the *sine qua non* of Jewish jurisprudence. Had each of these several requirements been present, the testimony would, nevertheless, have been null and void for their characters debarred. They were lewd fellows to begin with and bribed for their evidence.<sup>1</sup> 1—Matt. 26: 59. Still, with all their cunning, they could not harmonize.<sup>2</sup> The absolute failure 2—Mark 14: 56. of testimony is practically conceded by the judge in his appeal to the masses: "He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses?"<sup>3</sup> 3—Matt. 26: 65. whilst at the same time he rests the case upon

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the prisoner's testimony *alone*, which was positively *prohibited* by their law.

With equal disregard are the rules of argument ignored. The attorneys were not heard according to their years, but the dominant spirit spoke first and last. His accusers so far from preserving the "*greatest moderation*," spoke with the most intense passion. No auditor was heard in Christ's behalf, but the whole multitude in His prosecution, whilst the law forbade *one* of the latter, and granted this prerogative to *all* of the former. Even the judge, in rendering his verdict of acquittal, had his reasons assailed and his motives impugned.<sup>1</sup> Annas and an

<sup>1</sup>—John 19: 7.

<sup>2</sup>—John 18:19-22 first tribunal.<sup>2</sup> Caiaphas and the mul-

<sup>3</sup>—Mark 14: 63, 64. titude accused Him before the second.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PASSION OF THE CAUSE.

Many had a voice in it before Pilate.<sup>1</sup> 1—Mark 15: 8.  
The chief priests and the scribes “vehemently accused Him” before Herod.<sup>2</sup> 2—Luke 23: 10.  
Jesus was granted a hearing by Caiaphas in a passion.<sup>3</sup> Pilate, although 3—Matt. 26: 63-65.  
he listened with much more justice, would not allow Him to finish.<sup>4</sup> 4—John 18: 38.  
The whole argument resolves itself into the clamor of a mob.

“Order in the Court,” the sheriff demands for the dignity of law and as an essential of justice. A magistrate could strike the Nazarene in the face,<sup>5</sup> 5—John 18: 22.  
whilst on trial before Annas, with perfect impunity! Caiaphas could lose his head and rend his very garments, and abide a righteous judge!<sup>6</sup> They 6—Matt. 26: 65.  
could mock Him as a prophet;<sup>7</sup> revile 7—Matt. 26: 68.  
Him as a King;<sup>8</sup> chastise Him as a 8—Mark 15: 19.  
criminal;<sup>9</sup> spit upon Him as a dog, 10 9—Matt. 27: 26.  
10—Matt, 26:67.

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and crown Him with thorns as an im-  
1—Matt. 27: 29. mune to suffering;<sup>1</sup> and do it all, and  
*much more*, in the presence of their  
mock tribunals and in the name of law  
and justice! Was there ever a greater  
prostitution of order?

Could it be granted, for the sake of  
argument, that Christ was legally ar-  
rested and fairly tried, His conviction  
would have been inoperative, either be-  
cause the case was conducted in the  
*night*, or during the *feast*. As a mat-  
ter of law, had Jesus been guilty of  
every charge, He could not have been  
executed before *Tuesday* under any  
circumstances. Supposing Him to  
have been arrested even *Thursday af-  
ternoon*, Friday was a feast day, Satur-  
day was the Sabbath; Sunday would  
thus have been the first day on which



## THE PASSION OF THE CAUSE.

He could have been tried. If such a momentous case might have been conducted in twelve hours, which is almost incredible, the third day after would have been Tuesday, and earlier than this their law forbade a conviction. It thus appears that Jesus was crucified, dead and buried, and that He had risen again from the dead, before they would have had any *legal* right to bring Him into Court! The pace of the law was too slow for their passion, and they did what others have done—took the law into their own hands.

## IX

### ACQUITTED.

At least two maxims of law are settled with the rigidity of an axiom. The first demands an assumption of innocence until proven guilty, and the second forbids putting any individual in jeopardy twice for his life.

Annas, in the case before him, could have taken but one justifiable course. The circumstances demanded a *nolle prosequi*. Jesus was as innocent in law as in fact, and entitled to His full liberty immediately. The first trial thus resulted in a legal acquittal, although it was never pronounced.

## ACQUITTED.

A similar motion would have been made by any conscientious official in the case before Caiaphas. Acquitted at the bar of Annas, all jurisdiction was forever taken, from every court, to try Him again on this charge. Furthermore, any impartial judge would have felt impelled to set aside the verdict of guilty rendered in this tribunal as "contrary to all law and evidence." A second time, unlawfully put in jeopardy for His life, Jesus became legally acquitted.

These may be considered technicalities but they were, for that reason, no less operative in law. The merits of Christ's acquittal rest also upon higher grounds. Pilate, having adjudicated the case, entered his order, "I find no fault in this man."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>—Luke 23: 4.

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Herod, before whom Jesus was next  
1—Luke 23: 15. arraigned, reached the same verdict.<sup>1</sup>

Pilate, after a rehearing of the charge of treason, and an examination of all the evidence in the later one of sedition, confirms his former opinion and enters a second order of acquittal: "I, having examined Him before you, found no fault in this man touching  
2—Luke 23: 14. those things whereof you accuse Him."<sup>2</sup>

That in the eyes of the Roman Court He was not only legally but morally innocent, is apparent from the pointed question of Pilate in response to the Jews' wild clamor for His blood, "Why,  
3—Matt. 27: 23. what evil hath He done?"<sup>3</sup>

There was no verdict upon the merits of the case from the court that sat at dawn. His death was finally determined upon during the *night*; the only

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issue engaging this tribunal was one of procedure. Capital punishment having been taken away from them, it was necessary to concoct means for its execution.<sup>1</sup> The case must go before Pilate; they were convened to determine how, and upon what grounds.

“It was this, and not the question of Christ’s guilt, which formed the subject of deliberation on that early morning.”<sup>2</sup>

2—Edersheim  
Vol. II, p. 565.

To the eternal credit of one, Joseph of Arimathea, it is written, “The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them.”<sup>3</sup>

3—Luke 23: 51.

The Jews arrested Jesus and tried Him twice *before the dawn*; the Romans thrice arraigned Him, in as many hours, immediately thereafter. In each of the five instances He vindicated His

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right to life and liberty. The judges, the jury, and the people all knew Him to be an innocent man, and one who had been acquitted of every charge as often as there were digits on their right hand; notwithstanding, they rose, *en masse*, and hurled Him to doom and death.

## X

### THE CLIMAX.

The interesting question concerning the nationality of Christ's executioners is not one of paramount importance. The *burden* of guilt rests upon the instigators of the riot and not upon the officials, except in so far as they contaminate themselves either in neglect of duty or transgression of authority.<sup>1</sup> 1—John 19: 11.

Could it be shown from this point on that the execution was conducted by the Romans in full accord with their statutory requirements, it would in no measure reduce the guilt already incurred by the illegal conduct of the

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case. On the other hand, if the infliction of the death sentence was committed to the Jews, the subsequent acts in this awful tragedy must be judged in the light of Israelitish law.

This is found to be the status of the cause. The record is complete. "Then therefore he (Pilate) delivered Him (Jesus) unto them (the chief priests)

<sup>1</sup>—John 19: 16.  
Ryle, in loco.

*to be crucified.*"<sup>1</sup> In testimony of immediate withdrawal from the case Pilate resorts to the well known symbol

<sup>2</sup>—Matt. 27: 24.

of washing his hands.<sup>2</sup> The Jews assume all the responsibility of His

<sup>3</sup>—Matt. 27: 25.

blood for them and their children.<sup>3</sup> The Roman law would have crucified only a *slave*, or one convicted of the most heinous crimes; Jesus was neither the former nor guilty of the latter. It was now the custom amongst the Phari-



## THE CLIMAX.

sees, however, to *crucify their enemies*.<sup>1</sup> 1---Josephus War. I. V. 3.

In His very execution, therefore, the Jews revealed their motives. Had their zeal been for God, and had they truly believed Him a blasphemer, Jesus would have been stoned.<sup>2</sup> On the con- 2---Lev. 24: 16. trary, they inflicted upon Him the penalty then meted out to their foes. Unquestionably Roman soldiers aided and abetted, but they were the accomplices of the Jewish rulers.

The Israelitish tribunal, instead of remaining in the hall of justice (where it had never been) was present to read the superscription on the cross.<sup>3</sup> No 3---John 19:20,21  
Matt. 27: 41. flag of truce remained at the door; no courier accompanied the party; no herald signified the charges, named the witnesses, and called for extenuating circumstances; no opportunity was

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given the prisoner to secure a rehearing. He refused the stupefying beverage.<sup>1</sup> The torturing agony of His sufferings moved one heart in that vast assemblage to pity,<sup>2</sup> whilst the rest danced about His cross as the cannibal around his human sacrifice, and lashed Him with their tongues as the frenzied mob goads its smoking victim!<sup>3</sup> Law was never so debauched, nor "man's inhumanity to man"<sup>4</sup> so apparent.

## XI

### LYNCHED.

“Take this at least, this last advice, my son:  
Keep a stiff rein, and move but gently on;  
The coursers of themselves will run too fast,  
Your art must be to moderate their haste.”<sup>1</sup>

1---Addison.

This lesson the first and twentieth centuries have alike to learn. Jesus Christ was an innocent man. The embers of hatred kindled in the breast of His competitors. The drafts of clandestine conclaves stirred them to white heat. The smoke of calumny rose to impregnate the atmosphere of Jerusalem, and was inhaled by the multitudes who had come up to the feast. At midnight a lurid flash stole through the

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

walls of secrecy. Few saw it. While the city slept, the fire burned. The flames leaped beyond their bounds and swept down past the tower of Antonia. The roar of the conflagration gathered a curious multitude. The olives in the garden of Gethsemane were ablaze. The wind changes and the house of Annas is the centre of concern. The fire is now beyond control and sweeps past the palace of Caiaphas with a deafening crash of falling stones, amid impenetrable clouds of dust. The judgment hall of Pilate, the transitory abode of Herod, and the private dwelling of the procurator all yield in quick succession to the uncontrollable monster. Well-nigh the entire city presses beyond its gates and stands upon Golgotha. There they witness the whole

## LYNCHED.

scene. It was Jesus at the stake!  
Lynched by the insatiate passion of a  
misguided multitude! Instigated, led,  
and consummated by their judiciary!  
Innocent, and it was known! Truth,  
no matter how long it has been "crush-  
ed to earth,"<sup>1</sup> shall rise again. **THEY** 1--Bryant.  
**LYNCHED HIM THERE.**<sup>2</sup>

2--Luke 23: 53

## XII

### JUSTICE.

The centuries have shifted since then like the sands upon the seaside. With the irresistible incoming of the great ocean's billows the truth has broken upon every shore. Jesus is now worshiped the world over. The Roman Empire has so long lain in its grave that the very language upon its disheveled head-stone is a forgotten tongue. The Forum has been buried for a millenium under the debris of the "Eternal City." Caesar lives only in the task of the school boy or upon the dusty shelves of the student. Where

## JUSTICE.

Nero's human torches burned stands the great St. Peter's, dedicated to the *crucified Jesus of Nazareth*.

Israel, the more active participant in this awful tragedy, presents a most pathetic spectacle. Clinging, like the aged and infirm, to all the memories and traditions of her youth, she is conscious of being merely a "wandering Jew." Found amongst every kindred and people, in all climes and countries, but everywhere an alien and a stranger. Always preserving their distinct nationality, their manners and customs, but, nevertheless, kingdomless and throneless, houseless and homeless, and, with but notable exceptions, friendless. Preserved, as no one can doubt, for some unrevealed destiny—

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1--Watts. "Their lives through various scenes are drawn  
And vexed with trifling cares." 1

But the name of Jesus rises like Dumbarton from the Clyde, like the Acro-Corinthus from the plains of Attica, like Gibraltar from the sea. The purity of His character and the loftiness of His ideals remind one of the Jungfrau as it towers above the Jura range, or the immaculate snow of Mont Blanc as seen from the vale of Chamoix. His words were with thoughts, like the tongue of Athens with phraseology, clear cut and perspicuous, and susceptible of the thinnest shades of distinction. They are to other words what the glories of the Acropolis are to art. His conceptions of truth, virtue, and inherent beauty antedate the prehistoric records of



## JUSTICE.

Egypt and blaze a path for the twentieth century. No mortal ever yet was satisfied around whom had not entwined His love as the mountains gather about Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

1—Ps. 125: 2

“His name yields the richest perfume,  
And sweeter than music His voice;  
His presence disperses my gloom,  
And makes all within me rejoice.”<sup>2</sup>

2—Newton.

So indisputably is the innocent victim of Jewish wrath the pivot of the ages, that hoary Time is only known by its distance from His *youth!*

To none other has the world rendered such testimony. Shakespeare and literature have drawn upon the majesty of His character, and told their sublimest facts in the regal simplicity of His words. To the great Spinoza He was the “symbol of wisdom,” to Hegel “of the union of the Divine and Hu-

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

man." He was Herder's "realized ideal of humanity." Matthias Claudias felt "no one ever thus loved," and the immortal Carlyle bowed before Him as "a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest." The godly Richter adored Him as "the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy, who lifted with His pierced hands Empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." The base Rousseau is honest enough to express the verdict of clear justice: "What sweetness, what purity in His ways, what touching grace in His teachings! What a loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in

## JUSTICE.

His words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in His replies! What an empire over His passions!" All the world remembers how he said of Him, "If the death of Socrates be that of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." DeVette wrote in the preface to his commentary on the wonderful book of Revelation, "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the Crucified, and that nothing loftier offers itself to humanity than the God-manhood realized in Him." Napoleon, with all his faults, was a master of men. He understood them, and they bowed to his indomitable will. Above all others, even above himself, he placed the great Nazarene. "The prudence of His con-

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

duct," said he, "compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness, alike in speech and action. He is enlightened, consistent and calm. Sublimity is said to be an attribute of Divinity; what name, then, shall we give Him in whose character were united every element of the sublime? I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is not a man. Everything in Him amazes me. His spirit outreaches mine and His will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between Him and any other being in the world. I defy you to cite another life like that of Christ."<sup>1</sup> When Napoleon challenged, the world surrendered.

<sup>1</sup>—See Introduction in Geikie's Life of Christ.

An introspective glance, not a telescopic vision, reveals the secret of the unbelievers' attitude. The followers of

## JUSTICE.

Jesus Christ are estimated at 477,080,158. The devotees of the next largest cult, Confucianism, are only 256,000,000. Whilst, therefore, the bulk of heathendom far outstrips Christianity in the number of its adherents, the followers of Jesus are nearly *twice as many* as of any other religious teacher!<sup>1</sup> World Almanac.

Millions upon millions of dollars are being freely given and judiciously expended annually, over \$20,000,000 in foreign countries alone, to maintain and extend this gospel, until it shall have permeated every land and supplanted every faith! Civilization and Christianity go hand in hand. Where there is civilization one finds the religion of Jesus, and wherever the nation worships any other God civilization is unknown. The miraculous develop-

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

ment and present balance of power held by Christianity presuppose a benediction to the world. He who rejects the proffered peace and pardon of the Gospel finds the root of bitterness in his own *heart* and never in the *Head* of the Church.

Every excuse, therefore, which has been advanced for unbelief is, as the thoughtful expect to find it, spun out of the fertile imagination of a prejudiced brain—an allegation grounded neither in His words nor works, but born of their hostile minds.

The Church of Jesus has met the issues. Although conscious of the source of each criticism, she has ignored all technicalities, and given a calm, full, and public hearing to any

## JUSTICE.

charge. Justice and truth have quashed every indictment.

Christendom has waived her rights of sole and original jurisdiction, and joined in appealing her cases to the bar of reason. Law, and logic, and facts have concurred in a world-approved opinion, "That there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."<sup>1</sup>

1—Acts 4: 12.

There is a passion in the human heart for sin. The bitterest enmity towards the great still abides, and a wild infatuation in following the misguided mob. Thousands have taken their stand today where Israel stood nineteen centuries ago, clamoring for His crucifixion, because it is the fashion of the hour, blindly following their

## THE LYNCHING OF JESUS.

yet more sightless guides. Justice stands at the parting of the ways. To the left surge the frenzied rabble to crucify Him afresh upon their "cross  
1--Bryan. of gold,"<sup>1</sup> or some other vanquished delusion, impelled to deeds they know not of by the impetus of passion. They repeat the Tragedy of Calvary!

To the right pass those who are adored—the tried, the trusted, the true. Here are to be found men and women whose memory lies upon the sea of time, like the sheen of the moon on the bosom of the great deep. Here stand the youth who are the hope of the world.

2--Pope. "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."<sup>2</sup>

All who would be lovers of law and order must be lovers of Jesus.



## JUSTICE.

There are higher courts than earthly judicatories. The Nazarene is himself a Judge.<sup>1</sup> Before His august tribunal <sup>1—Acts 20: 42.</sup> all must stand.<sup>2</sup> <sup>2—Matt. 25: 32.</sup> Annas, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, and Herod each sat in judgment upon Him. Before Him each have in turn appeared. He stands at the bar of the world's choice *today*, the world will stand at the bar of His justice *tomorrow!* Innocence has often been victimized by personal interest, political pull, sordid bribery, or frenzied passion. In the distributive justice of time that innocence shall be openly vindicated, that infamy publicly proclaimed. The judge of all the earth will do what is right.<sup>3</sup> <sup>3—Gen. 18: 25.</sup> Every man shall receive the just recompense of his deeds.<sup>4</sup> <sup>4—Matt. 16: 27.</sup> He who sits in eternal

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judgment knows the merit of right, and has felt the oppression of wrong.

The sublime fact of Calvary is its personal equation. It is said that where sleep "the deathless dead" of Chickamauga, a stranger stood beside a broken-hearted man who bathed a soldier's grave with a river of tears. "Your brother, I suppose," said the spectator. "No," was the quick response, with a gentle toss of that sorrow-furrowed brow. Grief levels all barriers and the stranger drew a little closer to him. "Perhaps," said he, "he was your father." "No." "Certainly some one near of kin," insisted the interested visitor. The mourner rose to his feet; something in the spectator's voice had told him of a tender heart that banished all suspicion of curiosity.

## JUSTICE.

“Sir, I will tell you who lies in that grave and why I cannot hide my tears. My home was in Chicago. I had a wife and growing family dependent upon my daily toil. You remember the war, sir? Well, I was drafted. I could not sleep for wondering how my wife and babies would secure their bread and meat. John came and said, “Robert, no one is dependent upon me; *I’ll go, but you must stay.*” All of us saw him pass out with the regiment and, they say, he was ever in the front. He was at the battle of Chickamauga—the story paused, the mourner could not speak. The stranger, turning to wipe away the falling tear, saw upon the simple headstone,

“HE DIED FOR ME.”

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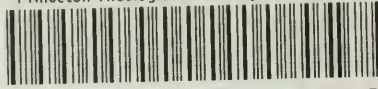
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