

Matthew 27 Commentary-C H Spurgeon

PREVIOUS

NEXT

MATTHEW 27:1, THE KING TAKEN TO PILATE

Matthew 27:1. WHEN the morning was come, all the chief the morning was come, all chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

They were so full of enmity against Jesus that they were eager to seize the first opportunity to take counsel to put him to death. They had spent the latter part of the night, and the earliest moments of the morning, in examining, condemning, and abusing their illustrious prisoner. Jesus had foretold that he would be delivered to the Gentiles, so the next act in the terrible tragedy was his appearance before the Roman governor.

Matthew 27:2. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Those who had arrested Jesus had bound him before they took him to Annas (John 18:12,13). Annas sent him bound, unto Caiaphas (John 18:24). Now the Sanhedrin officially bound him, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. As Isaac was bound before he was laid upon the altar, so was the great Anti-type bound before he was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter", and delivered up to the Roman governor.

MATTHEW 27:3-10 THE TRAITOR'S REMORSE AND SUICIDE

Matthew 27:3, 4. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to use see thou to that.

Perhaps Judas expected that Jesus would miraculously deliver himself from his captors; and when he saw that he was condemned, remorse seized him, and he carried back to his fellow criminals the reward of his infamy. There was one good result of his despairing confession: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. " Judas had been with our Lord in public and in private; and if he could have found a flaw in Christ's character, this would have been the time to mention it; but even the traitor, in his dying speech, declared that Jesus was "innocent." The chief priests and elders had no more pity for Judas than they had for Jesus; no remorse troubled them, they had secured the Savior, and they cared nothing for any of the consequences of their action. As for the traitor, he had made his bargain, and he must abide by it.

Matthew 27:5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Those terrible words, and went and hanged himself, reveal the real character of the repentance of Judas. His was a repentance that needed to be repented of; not that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation. In the history of the Church of Christ, there have been a few instances of remorse like that of Judas, driving men to despair, if not to actual suicide. May God in mercy preserve us from any more repetitions of such an awful experience!

Matthew 27:6-8. And the chief priest took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Whether Judas bought the field in which he committed suicide (Acts 1:18), or whether the chief priests, hearing how he meant to spend the pieces of silver, carried out his intention, makes no real difference in the result. The field of blood became the perpetual memorial of the infamy of Judas. When he sold his Lord, he little thought what would be done with the money received as the price of the betrayal. In the fullest sense possible, he was guilty of the blood of the Lord; that blood was upon him, not to seal his pardon, but to confirm his condemnation.

Matthew 27:9, 10. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potters field, as the lord appointed me.

Even the disposal of the thirty pieces of silver fulfilled an ancient prophecy.

The dark sayings of the prophets as well as their brighter utterances shall all be proved to be true as, one by one, they come to maturity.

The fate of Judas should be a solemn warning to all professing Christians, and especially to all ministers. He was one of the twelve apostles, yet he was a son of perdition, and in the end he went to his own place. Each of us has his own place, heaven or hell; which is it? "Lord! when I read the traitor's doom, To his own place consign'd, What holy fear, and humble hope, Alternate fill my mind!

Traitor to thee I too have been, But saved by matchless grace, Or else the lowest, hottest hell Had surely been my place."

MATTHEW 27:11-26 JESUS: PILATE: BARABBAS

Matthew 27:11. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

Jesus did not look much like a king as he stood before Pilate; there was little enough of the robes of royalty about his simple apparel. Yet even in his humiliation there must have been so much of majesty that even the governor was prompted to ask, "art thou the King of the Jews?" There was no longer any reason why the King should conceal his true position, so he answered, "Thou sayest." "It is even as thou sayest, I am the King of the Jews." The Jews rejected their King: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Yet was he their King although they refused to bow before his scepter of grace and mercy.

Matthew 27:12-14. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly.

This was the time for Jesus to be dumb, "like a sheep before her shearers."

His silence astonished Pilate, as his speech had before overawed the officers sent to arrest him (John 7:45,46). Jesus answered nothing, for he was there as his people's representative; and though he had not sinned, they were guilty of all that was falsely laid to his charge. He might have cleared himself of every accusation that was brought against him, but that would have left the load of guilt upon those whose place he came to take; so he answered never a word. Such silence was sublime.

Matthew 27:15-18. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Pilate was really anxious to deliver Christ from his cruel enemies; but; like most wicked men, he was a great coward, so he attempted to gain his end by a crafty artifice. He knew that for envy they had delivered him; and he may have hoped that Jesus was so popular among the people that an appeal to the masses would result in a verdict in Christ's favor, especially as the choice of one to be released lay between "the King of the Jews "and a notoriously wicked man, Barabbas. Surely they would ask for their King to be set at liberty! Pilate little knew the sway the chief priests had over the populace, nor the fickleness of the crowds, whose jubilant cry of "Hosanna! "would so soon be changed to hoarse shouts of "Away with him! Crucify him!"

Matthew 27:19. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Here was an unlooked-for witness to the innocence of Christ. Whether the dream of Pilate's wife was a divine revelation of Christ's glory or not, we cannot tell; but the message sent by her to the governor must have made him even more anxious than before to release Jesus.

Matthew 27:20-22. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called. Christ? They all say unto him, let him be crucified.

Now the die is cast, the choice of the multitude is made; Barabbas is preferred before Jesus. The Lord of glory had been sold by Judas for the price of a slave; and now a robber, a murderer, and a leader in sedition, is a greater favorite with the people than the Prince of life. Were there no voices raised in Christ's favor? Were there none out of all that multitude whose sick he had healed, whose hunger he had satisfied, who would remember him in that day, and ask that he might be spared? No, not one; there were none in the crowd silently sympathizing with the Savior; they all said, "Let him be crucified. "

Matthew 27:23. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

A blind, unreasoning hate had taken possession of the people. They gave no answer to Pilate's wondering enquiry, "Why, what evil hath he done? " for he had done nothing amiss; they only repeated the brutal demand, "Let him be crucified. " The world's hatred of Christ is shown in similar fashion today. He has done no evil, no one has suffered harm at his hands, all unite to pronounce him innocent; and yet they practically cry, "Away with him! Crucify him!"

Matthew 27:24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Ah! Pilate, you need something stronger than water to wash the blood of that just person off your hands. You cannot rid yourself of responsibility by that farce. He who has power to prevent a wrong is guilty of the act if he permits others to do it, even though he does not actually commit it himself.

Pilate joined with all the other witnesses in declaring that Jesus was "just "or "righteous." He even went so far as to declare, "I find in him no fault at all" (John 8:38).

Matthew 27:25. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

All the people willingly took upon themselves the guilt of the murder of our dear Lord: "His blood be on us, and on our children. " This fearful imprecation must have been remembered by many when the soldiers of Titus spared neither age nor sex, and the Jewish capital became the veritable Aceldama, the field of blood. That self-imposed curse still rests upon unbelieving Israel; and

till she accepts the Messiah whom she then rejected, the brand will remain upon the besotted nation's brow.

Matthew 27:26. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had encouraged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified.

The Roman scourging was one of the most terrible punishments to which anyone could be subjected. The Jewish beating with rods was a mild chastisement compared with the brutal flagellation by the imperial lictors; yet even this our Lord endured for our sakes. These were the stripes by which we were healed (1 Peter 2:24). Yet the scourging was but the beginning of the awful end: When he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Knowing him to be innocent, Pilate first scourged him, and then gave him up to the fury of his fanatical foes.

MATTHEW 27:27-31 THE KING MOCKED BY THE SOLDIERS

Matthew 27:27-30 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

Ridicule is very painful to bear. In our Savior's case, there was great cruelty mixed with mockery. These Roman soldiers were men to whom bloodshed was amusement; and now that there was given up into their hands one who was charged with making himself a king, we can conceive what a subject for jest the gentle Jesus was in their esteem. They were not touched by the gentleness of his manner, nor by his sorrowful countenance; but they sought to invent all manner of scorn, to pour on his devoted head.

Surely the world never saw a more marvelous scene than the King of kings thus derided as a mimic monarch by the meanest of men. The whole band of soldiers was gathered unto him , for seldom was such sport provided in the common hall. Jesus is a king, so he must wear the garb of royalty: they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe, some old soldier's scarlet or purple coat. The king must be crowned: when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head. He must sway a scepter: a reed in his right hand. Homage must be paid to him: and they bowed the knee before him. Cruel men! Yet probably they knew no better.

Oh, that we were half as inventive in devising honor for our King as these soldiers were in planning his dishonor! Let us render to Christ the real homage that these men pretended to offer him. Let us crown him Lord of all, and in truest loyalty bow the knee, and hail him, "King ."

Matthew 27:31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

It was divinely overruled that Jesus should go forth with his own raiment on him, that nobody might say that another person had been substituted for the Savior. As they led him away, robed in that well-known seamless garment, woven from the top throughout, all who looked upon him would say, "It is the Nazarene going forth to execution; we recognize his dress as well as his person."

MATTHEW 27:32-38 THE KING CRUCIFIED

Matthew 27:32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross.

Perhaps they were afraid that Christ would die from exhaustion; so they compelled Simon to bear his cross, Any one of Christ's followers might have wished to have been this man of Cyrene; but we need not envy him, for there is a cross for each of us to carry. Oh, that we were as willing to bear Christ's cross as Christ was to bear our sins on his cross! If anything happens to us by way of

persecution or ridicule for our Lord's sake, and the gospel's, let us cheerfully endure it. As knights are made by a stroke from the sovereign's sword, so shall we become princes in Christ's realm as he lays his cross on our shoulders.

Matthew 27:33, 34. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

Golgotha was the common place of execution for malefactors, the Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalem, outside the gate of the city. There was a special symbolical reason for Christ's suffering without the gate, and his followers are bidden to "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:11-13).

A stupefying draught was given to the condemned, to take away something of the agony of crucifixion; but our Lord came to suffer, and he would not take anything that would at all impair his faculties. He did not forbid his fellow-sufferers drinking the vinegar mingled with gall ("wine mingled with myrrh," Mark 15:23), but he would not drink thereof. Jesus did not refuse this draught because of its bitterness, for he was prepared to drink even to the last dreadful dregs the bitter cup of wrath which was his people's due.

Matthew 27:35. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

There is a world of meaning in that short sentence, and they crucified him, driving their bolts of iron through his blessed hands and feet, fastening him to the cross, and lifting him up to hang there upon a gibbet reserved for felons. We can scarcely realize all that the crucifixion meant to our dear Lord; but we can join in Father's prayer,— "Lord Jesus! may we love and weep, Since thou for us art crucified." Then was fulfilled all that our Lord had foretold in Chapter 20:17-19, except his resurrection, the time for which had not arrived.

The criminals' clothes were the executioners' perquisite. The Roman soldiers who crucified Christ had no thought of fulfilling the Scriptures when they parted his garments, casting lots; yet their action was exactly that which had been foretold in Psalm 22:18. The seamless robe would have been spoiled if it had been rent, so the soldiers raffled for the vesture while they shared the other garments of our Lord. The dice would be almost stained with the blood of Christ, yet the gamblers played on beneath the shadow of his cross. Gambling is the most hardening of all vices.

Beware of it in any form! No games of chance should be played by Christians, for the blood of Christ seems to have bespattered them all.

Matthew 27:36. And sitting down they watched him there;

Some watched him from curiosity, some to make sure that he really did die, some even delighted their cruel eyes with his sufferings; and there were some, hard by the cross, who wept and bewailed, a sword passing through their own hearts while the Son of man was agonizing even unto death

Matthew 27:37. And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

What a marvelous providence it was that moved Pilate's pen! The representative of the Roman emperor was little likely to concede kingship to any man; yet he deliberately wrote, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS, and nothing would induce him to alter what he had written. Even on his cross, Christ was proclaimed King, in the sacerdotal Hebrew, the classical Greek, and the common Latin, so that everybody in the crowd could read the inscription.

When will the Jews own Jesus as their King? They will do so one day, looking on him whom they pierced. Perhaps they will think more of Christ when Christians think more of them; when our hardness of heart towards them has gone, possibly their hardness of heart towards Christ may also disappear.

Matthew 27:38. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

As if to show that they regarded Christ as the worst of the three criminals, they put him between the two thieves, giving him the place of dishonor.

Thus was the prophecy fulfilled, "He was numbered with the transgressors." The two malefactors deserved to die, as one of them admitted (Luke 23:40,41); but a greater load of guilt rested upon Christ, for "He bare the sin of many," and therefore he was rightly distinguished as the King of sufferers, who could truly ask,— "Was ever grief like mine?"

MATTHEW 27:39- MOCKING THE CRUCIFIED KING

Matthew 27:39, 40. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Nothing torments a man when in pain more than mockery. When Jesus Christ most wanted words of pity and looks of kindness, they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads. Perhaps the most painful part of ridicule is to have one's most solemn sayings turned to scorn, as were our Lord's words about the temple of his body: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. " He might have saved himself, he might have "come down from the cross; "but if he had done so, we could never have become the sons of God. It was because he was the Son of God that he did not come down from the cross, but hung there until he had completed the sacrifice for his people's sin. Christ's cross is the Jacob's ladder by which we mount up to heaven.

This is the cry of the Socinians today, "Come down from the cross. Give up the atoning sacrifice, and we will be Christians." Many are willing to believe in Christ, but not in Christ crucified. They admit that he was a good man and a great teacher; but by rejecting his vicarious atonement, they practically un-Christ the Christ, as these mockers at Golgotha did.

Matthew 27:41-43. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

The chief priests, with the scribes and elders, forgetting their high station and rank, joined the ribald crew in mocking Jesus in his death pangs. Every word was emphatic; every syllable cut and pierced our Lord to the heart.

They mocked him as a Savior: "He saved others; himself he cannot save ."

They mocked him as a King: "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and, we will believe him. " They mocked him as a believer: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him. " They mocked him as the Son of God: "For he said, I am the Son of God. " Those who say that Christ was a good man virtually admit his deity, for he claimed to be the Son of God. If he was not what he professed to be, he was an impostor. Notice the testimony that Christ's bitterest enemies bore even as they reviled him: "He saved others;" "He is the King of Israel" (R.V.); "He trusted in God."

Matthew 27:44. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

The sharers of his misery, the abjects who were crucified with him, joined in reviling Jesus. Nothing was wanting to fill up his cup of suffering and shame. The conversion of the penitent thief was all the more remarkable because he had but a little while before been amongst the mockers of his Savior. What a trophy of divine grace he became!

Matthew 27:45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Some have thought that this darkness covered the whole world, and so caused even a heathen to exclaim, "Either the world is about to expire, or the God who made the world is in anguish." This darkness was supernatural; it was not an eclipse. The sun could no longer look upon his Maker surrounded by those who mocked him. He covered his face, and traveled on in tenfold night, in very shame that the great Sun of righteousness should himself be in such terrible darkness.

Matthew 27:46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

In order that the sacrifice of Christ might be complete, it pleased the Father to forsake his well-beloved Son. Sin was laid on Christ, so God must turn away his face from the Sin-Bearer. To be deserted of his God, was the climax of Christ's grief, the quintessence of his sorrow. See here the distinction between the martyrs and their Lord; in their dying agonies they have been divinely sustained; but Jesus, suffering as the Substitute for sinners, was forsaken of God. Those saints who have known what it is to have their Father's face hidden from them even for a brief space, can scarcely imagine the suffering that wrung from our Savior the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, his man calleth for Elias.

They knew better, yet they jested at the Savior's prayer. Wicked, willfully, and scornfully, they turned his death-shriek into ridicule.

Matthew 27:48, 49. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

A person in such agony as Jesus was suffering might have mentioned many pangs that he was enduring; but it was necessary for him to say, "I thirst," in order that another Scripture might be fulfilled. One of them, more compassionate than his companions, ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, from the vessel probably brought by the soldiers for their own use, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. It always seems to me very remarkable that the sponge, which is the very lowest form of animal life, should have been brought into contact with Christ, who is at the top of all life. In his death the whole circle of creation was completed.

As the sponge brought refreshment to the lips of our dying Lord, so may the least of God's living ones help to refresh him now that he has ascended from the cross to the throne.

MATTHEW 27:50-54 "IT IS FINISHED"

Matthew 27:50. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Christ's strength was not exhausted; his last word was uttered with a loud voice, like the shout of a conquering warrior. And what a word it was, "It is finished"! Thousands of sermons have been preached upon that little sentence; but who can tell all the meaning that lies compacted within it? It is a kind of infinite expression for breadth, and depth, and length, and height altogether immeasurable. Christ's life being finished, perfected, completed; he yielded up the ghost, willingly dying, laying down his life as he said he would: "I lay down my life for the sheep. I lay it down of myself.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

Matthew 27:51-53. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Christ's death was the end of Judaism: The veil of the temple rent in twain from the top to the bottom As if shocked at the sacrilegious murder of her Lord, the temple rent her garments, like one stricken with horror at some stupendous crime. The body of Christ being rent, the veil of the temple was torn in twain from the top to the bottom. Now was there an entrance made into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus; and a way of access to God was opened for every sinner who trusted in Christ's atoning sacrifice.

See what marvels accompanied and followed the death of Christ: The earth did quake, and, the rocks rent; and the graves were opened. Thus did the material world pay homage to him whom man had rejected; while nature's convulsions foretold what will happen when Christ's voice once more shakes not the earth only, but also heaven.

These first miracles wrought in connection with the death of Christ were typical of spiritual wonders that will be continued till he comes again,— rocky hearts are rent, graves of sin are opened, those who have been dead in trespasses and sins, and buried in sepulchers of lust and evil, are quickened, and come out from among the dead, and go unto the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:54. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

These Roman soldiers had never witnessed such scenes in connection with an execution before, and they could only come to one conclusion about the illustrious prisoner whom they had put to death: "Truly this was the Son of God ." It was strange that those men should confess what the chief priests and scribes and elders denied; yet since their day it has often happened that the most abandoned and profane have acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God while their religious rulers have denied his divinity.

MATTHEW 27:55-61 THE KING'S FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Matthew 27:55, 56. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

We have no record of any unkindness to our Lord from any woman, though we have many narratives of the loving ministry of women at various periods in his life. It was meet, therefore, that even at Calvary many women were there beholding afar off. The ribald crowd and the rough soldiers would not permit these timid yet brave souls to come near; but we learn from John 9:25 that some of them edged their way through the throng till they "stood by the cross of Jesus." Love will dare anything.

Matthew 27:57, 58. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

This rich man of Arimathaea, named, Joseph,- a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, was Jesus's disciple, "but secretly for fear of the Jews" (John 19:38); yet when his Lord was actually dead, extraordinary courage nerved his spirit, and boldly he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Joseph and Nicodemus are types of many more who have been emboldened by the cross of Christ to do what, without that mighty magnet, they would never have attempted. When night comes, the stars appear; so in the night of Christ's death these two bright stars shone forth with blessed radiance. Some flowers bloom only at night: such a blossom was the courage of Joseph and Nicodemus.

Matthew 27:59, 60. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.

Our King, even in the grave, must have the best of the best: his body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and, laid in Joseph's own new tomb, thus completing the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9. Some see in this linen shroud an allusion to the garments in which priests were to be clothed.

Joseph's was a virgin sepulcher, wherein up to that time no one had been buried, so that, when Jesus rose, none could see, that another came forth from the tomb instead of him.

That rock-hewn cell in the garden sanctified every part of God's acre where saints lie buried. Instead of longing to live till Christ comes, as some do, we might rather pray to have fellowship with Jesus in his death and burial.

Matthew 27:61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher.

Love and faith were both typified by these two Marys sitting over against the sepulcher. They will be the last to leave their Lord's resting-place, and the first to return to it when the Sabbath is past.

Can we cling to Christ when his cause seems to be dead and buried When truth is fallen in the streets, or is even buried in the sepulcher of skepticism or superstition, can we still believe in it, and look forward to its resurrection? That is what some of us are doing at the present time. O Lord, keep us faithful!

MATTHEW 27:62-66 GUARDING THE KING'S SEPULCHER

Matthew 27:62-64 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priest and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

These punctilious priests and Pharisees, who were so scrupulous about keeping the Sabbath, did not mind profaning the day of rest by holding a consultation with the Roman governor. They knew that Christ was dead and buried, but they still stood in dread of his power. They called him a "deceiver "; and they even pretended to "remember " what "he said, while he was yet alive. " At his trial, their false witnesses gave another meaning to his words; but they knew all the while that he was speaking of his resurrection, not of the Temple on Mount Zion. Now they are afraid that, even in the sepulcher, he will bring to nought all their plans for his destruction. They must have known that the disciples of Jesus would not steal him away, and say unto the people, "He is risen from the dead;" so they probably feared that he really would come forth from the tomb.

Whatever conscience they had, made great cowards of them; so they begged Pilate to do what he could to prevent the rising of their victim.

Matthew 27:65, 66. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

The chief priests and Pharisees wanted Pilate to make the sepulcher sure, but he left them to secure it. There seems to have been a grim sort of irony about the governor's reply: "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. " Whether he meant it as a taunt, or as a command to secure the sepulcher, they became unconsciously witnesses that Christ's resurrection was a supernatural act. The tomb in the rock could not be entered except by rolling away the stone, and they guarded that by sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

According to the absurd teaching of the Rabbis, rubbing ears of corn was a kind of threshing, and therefore was unlawful on the Sabbath; yet here were these men doing what, by similar reasoning, might be called furnace and foundry work, and calling out a guard of Roman legionaries to assist them in breaking the Sabbath. Unintentionally, they did honor to the sleeping King when they obtained the representatives of the Roman emperor to watch his resting-place till the third morning, when he came forth Victor over sin and death and the grave. Thus once more was the wrath of man made to praise the King of glory, and the remainder of that wrath was restrained.