

St. Thomas Aquinas,
Catena Aurea (Golden Chain),
Gospel of Matthew 27_Palm_Sunday

And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients, Saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed: and went and hanged himself with an halter.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 7: The Evangelist had above brought down his history, of what was done to the Lord as far as early morning; he then turned back to relate Peter's denial, after which he returned to the morning to continue the course of events,

“And when morning was come, &c.”

Origen: They supposed that by His death they should crush His doctrine, and the belief in Him of those who believed Him to be the Son of God. With such purpose against Him they bound Jesus, Who looses them that are bound. [marg. note: see Isa 61:1]

Jerome: Observe the evil zeal of the Chief Priests; they watched the whole night with a view to this murder. And they gave Him up to Pilate bound, for such was their practice to send bound to the judge any whom they had sentenced to death.

Raban.: Though it should be observed that they did not now first bind Him, but before, when they first laid hands upon Him in the garden, as John relates. [John 18:12]

Chrys., Hom. lxxxiv: They did not put Him to death in secret, because they sought to destroy His reputation, and the wonder with which He was regarded by many. For this reason they were minded to put Him to death openly before all, and therefore they led Him to the governor.

Jerome: Judas, when he saw that the Lord was condemned to death, returned the money to the Priests, as though it had been in his power to change the minds of His persecutors.

Origen: Let the propounders of those fables concerning intrinsically evil natures [ed. note: vid. S. Basil. Reg. Brev. 84.] answer me here, whence Judas came to the acknowledgment of his sin, “*I have sinned in betraying innocent blood,*” except through the good mind originally implanted in him, and that seed of virtue which is sown in every rational soul? But Judas did not cherish this, and so fell into this sin.

But if ever any man was made of a nature that was to perish, Judas was yet more of such a nature. If indeed he had done this after Christ's resurrection, it might have been said, that the power of the resurrection brought him to repentance. But he repented when he saw Christ delivered up to Pilate, perhaps remembering the things Jesus had so often spoken of His resurrection.

Or, perhaps Satan who had “entered into him” [John 13:27] continued with him till Jesus was given up to Pilate, and then, having accomplished his purpose, departed from him; whereupon he repented.

But how could Judas know that He was condemned, for He had not yet been examined by Pilate? One may perhaps say, that he foreboded the event in his own mind from the very first, when he saw Him delivered up. Another may explain the words, when “he saw that he was condemned,” of Judas himself, that he then perceived his evil case, and saw that he himself was condemned.

Leo, Serm., 52, 5: When he says, “*I have sinned in betraying innocent blood,*” he persists in his wicked treachery, seeing that amid the last struggles of death he believed not Jesus to be the Son of God, but merely man of our rank; for had he not thus denied His omnipotence, he would have obtained His mercy.

Chrys.: Observe that he repents only when his sin is finished and complete; for so the Devil suffers not those who are not watchful to see the evil before they bring it to an end.

Remig.: “But they said, What is that to us?” that is to say, What is it to us that He is innocent? “See thou to it,” i.e. to thy own deed what will come of it. Though some would read these in one [marg. note: Quid ad nos tu videris?], What must we think of you, when you confess that the man whom yourself have betrayed is innocent?

Origen: But when the Devil leave any one, he watches his time for return, and having taken it, he leads him into a second sin, and then watches for opportunity for a third deceit. So the man who had married his father’s wife afterwards repented him of this sin, [1 Cor 5:1] but again the Devil resolved so to augment this very sorrow of repentance, that his sorrow being made too abundant might swallow up the sorrower.

Something like this took place in Judas, who after his repentance did not preserve his own heart, but received that more abundant sorrow supplied to him by the Devil, who sought to swallow him up, as it follows, “*And he went and hanged himself with an halter.*” But had he desired and looked for place and time for repentance, he would perhaps have found Him who has said, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” [Ezek 33:11]

Or, perhaps, he desired to die before his Master on His way to death, and to meet Him with a disembodied spirit, that by confession and deprecation he might obtain mercy; and did not see that it is not fitting that a servant of God should dismiss himself from life, but should wait God’s sentence.

Raban.: He “hung himself,” to shew that he was hateful to both heaven and earth.

Pseudo-Aug., Hil. Quaest. V. et N. Test. q. 94: Since the Chief Priests were employed about the murder of the Lord from the morning to the ninth hour, how is this proved that before the crucifixion Judas returned them the money he had received, and said to them in the temple, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood?”

Whereas it is manifest that the Chief Priests and Elders were never in the temple before the Lord’s crucifixion, seeing that when He was hanging on the Cross they were there to insult Him. Nor indeed can this be proved hence, because it is related before the Lord’s Passion, for many things which were manifestly done before, are related after, that, and the reverse. It might have been done after the ninth hour, when Judas, seeing the Saviour dead and the veil of the temple rent, the earthquake, the bursting of the rocks, and the elements terrified, was seized with fear and sorrow thereupon. But after the ninth hour the Chief Priests and Elders were occupied, as I suppose, in the celebration of the Passover; and on the Sabbath, the Law would not have allowed him to bring money. Therefore it is to me as yet unproved on what day or at what time Judas ended his life by hanging.

But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. 7 And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying place for strangers. 8 For this cause the field was called Haceldama, that is, The field of blood, even to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel. 10 And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.

Chrys.: The Chief Priests knowing that they had purchased a murder were condemned by their own conscience; they said, “It is the price of blood.”

Jerome: Truly straining out the gnat, and swallowing the camel; for if they would not put the money into the treasury, because it was the price of blood, why did they shed the blood at all?

Origen: They thought it meet to spend upon the dead that money which was the price of blood. But as there are differences even in burial places, they used the price of Jesus’ blood in the purchase of some potter’s field, where foreigners might be buried, not as they desired in the sepulchres of their fathers.

Aug., App. Serm., 80, 1: It was brought about, I conceive, by God's providence, that the Saviour's price should not minister means of excess to sinners, but repose to foreigners, that thence Christ might both redeem the living by the shedding of His blood, and harbour the dead by the price of His passion. Therefore with the price of the Lord's blood the potter's field is purchased. We read in Scripture that the salvation of the whole human race has been purchased by the Saviour's blood. This field then is the whole world. The potter who is the Lord of the soil, is He who has formed of clay the vessels of our bodies. This potter's field then was purchased by Christ's blood, and to strangers who without country or home wander over the whole world, repose is provided by Christ's blood.

These foreigners are the more devout Christians, who have renounced the world, and have no possession in it, and so repose in Christ's blood; for the burial of Christ is nothing but the repose of a Christian; for as the Apostle says, "We are buried with him by baptism into death." [Rom 6:4] We are in this life then as foreigners.

Jerome: Also we, who were strangers to the Law and the Prophets, have profited by the perverse temper of the Jews to obtain salvation for ourselves.

Origen: Or, the "foreigners" are they who to the end are aliens from God, for the righteous are buried with Christ in a new tomb hewn out in the rock. But they who are aliens from God, even to the end, are buried in the field of a potter, a worker in clay, which being bought by the price of blood, is called the field of blood.

Gloss, non occ.: "To this day" means to the time when the Evangelist was then writing. He then confirms the event by the testimony of the Prophet; "*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying,*" &c.

Jerome: This is not found at all in Hieremias; but in Zacharias [marg. note: Zech 11:13], who is the last but one of the twelve Prophets, something like it is told, and though the sense is not very different, yet the arrangement and the words are different.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 7: But if any one thinks this lowers the historian's credit, first let him know that not all the copies of the Gospels have the name Hieremias, but some simply "by the Prophet."

But I do not like this defence, because the more, and the more ancient, copies have Hieremias, and there could be no reason for adding the name, and thus making an error. But its erasure is well accounted for by the hardihood of ignorance having heard the foregoing objection urged. It might be then, that the name Hieremias occurred to the mind of Matthew as he wrote, instead of the name Zacharias, as so often happens; and that he would have straightway corrected it, when pointed out to him by such as read this while he yet lived in the flesh, had he not thought that his memory, being guided by the Holy Spirit, would not thus have called up to him one name instead of another, had not the Lord determined that it should thus be written.

And why He should have so determined, the first reason is, that it would convey the wonderful consent of the Prophets, who all spake by one Spirit, which is much greater than if all the words of all the Prophets had been uttered through the mouth of one man; so that we receive without doubt whatever the Holy Spirit spake through them, each word belongs to all in common, and the whole is the utterance of each. Suppose it to happen at this day, that in repeating another's words one should mention not the speaker's name, but that of some other person, who however was the other's greater friend, and then immediately recollecting himself should correct himself, he might yet add, Yet am I right, if you only think of the close unanimity that exists between the two. How much more is this to be observed of the holy Prophets!

There is a second reason why the name Hieremias should be suffered to remain in this quotation from Zacharias, or rather why it should have been suggested by the Holy Spirit. It is said in Hieremias, that he bought a field of his brother's son, and gave him silver for it, [Jer 32:9] though not indeed the sum stated in Zacharias, thirty pieces of silver. That the Evangelist has here adapted the thirty pieces of silver in Zacharias to this transaction in the Lord's history, is plain; but he may also wish to convey that what

Hieremias speaks of the field is mystically alluded to here, and therefore he puts not the name of Zacharias who spoke of the thirty pieces of silver, but of Hieremias who spoke of the purchase of the field. So that in reading the Gospel and finding the name of Hieremias, but not finding there the passage respecting the thirty pieces of silver, but the account of the purchase of the field, the reader might be induced to compare the two together, and so extract from them the sense of the prophecy, how far it refers to what was now accomplished in the Lord.

For what Matthew adds to the prophecy, "*Whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me,*" this, "as the Lord appointed me," is found neither in Zacharias nor Hieremias. It must then be taken in the person of the Evangelist as inserted with a mystic meaning, that he had learned by revelation that the prophecy referred to this matter of the price for which Christ was betrayed.

Jerome, Hieron. ad Pam. Ep. 57, 5: Far be it then from a follower of Christ to suppose him guilty of falsehood, whereas his business was not to pry into words and syllables, but to lay down the staple of doctrine.

Aug., Hieron. in loc.: I have lately read in a Hebrew book given me by a Hebrew of the Nazarene sect, an apocryphal Hieremias, in which I find the very words here quoted. After all, I am rather inclined to think that the passage was taken by Matthew out of Zacharias, in the usual manner of the Apostles and Evangelists when they quote from the Old Testament, neglecting the words, and attending only to the sense.

And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to him: Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee? And he answered him to never a word; so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 7: Matthew, having finished his digression concerning the traitor Judas, returns to the course of his narrative saying, "Jesus stood before the governor."

Origen: Mark how He that is ordained by His Father to be the Judge of the whole creation, humbled Himself, and was content to stand before the judge of the land of Judaea, and to be asked by Pilate either in mockery or doubt, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

Chrys., Hom. lxxxvi: Pilate asked Christ that which His enemies were continually casting in His teeth, for because they knew that Pilate cared not for matters of their Law, they had recourse to a public charge.

Origen: Or, Pilate spoke this affirmatively, as he afterwards wrote in the inscription, "The King of the Jews." By answering to the Chief Priest, "Thou hast said," He indirectly reprov'd his doubts, but now He turns Pilate's speech into an affirmative, "Jesus saith unto him, Thou sayest it."

Chrys.: He acknowledges Himself to be a King, but a heavenly one, as it is more expressly said in another Gospel, "My kingdom is not of this world [John 18:36], so that neither the Jews nor Pilate were excusable for insisting on this accusation.

Hilary: Or, when asked by the High Priest whether He were Jesus the Christ, He answered, "Thou hast said," because He had ever maintained out of the Law that Christ should come, but to Pilate who was ignorant of the Law, and asks if He were the King of the Jews, He answers, "Thou sayest," because the salvation of the Gentiles is through faith of that present confession.

Jerome: But observe, that to Pilate who asked the question unwillingly He did answer somewhat; but to the Chief Priests and Priests He refused to answer, judging them unworthy of a word; "And when he was accused by the Chief Priests and Elders he answered nothing."

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 8: Luke explains what were the accusations alleged against Him, "And they began to accuse him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king." [Luke 23:2]

But it is of no consequence to the truth in what order they relate the history, or that one omits what another inserts.

Origen: Neither then nor now did Jesus make any reply to their accusations, for the word of God was not sent to them, as it was formerly to the Prophets. Neither was Pilate worthy of an answer, as he had no fixed or abiding opinion of Christ, but veered about to contradictory suppositions.

“Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee?”

Jerome: Thus though it is a Gentile who sentences Jesus, he lays the cause of His condemnation upon the Jews.

Chrys.: He said this out of a wish to release Him, if He should justify Himself in His answer. But the Jews, though they had so many practical proofs of His power, His meekness and humbleness, were yet enraged against Him, and urged on by a perverted judgment. Wherefore He answers nothing, or if He makes any answer He says little, that total silence might not be construed into obstinacy.

Jerome: Or, Jesus would not make any answer, lest if He cleared Himself the governor should have let Him go, and the benefit of His cross should have been deferred.

Origen: “The governor wondered exceedingly” at His endurance, as knowing that he had power to condemn Him, He yet continued in a peaceful, placid, and immovable prudence and gravity. He wondered “greatly,” for it seemed to him a great miracle that Christ, produced before a criminal tribunal, stood thus fearless of death, which all men think so terrible.

Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner, that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to 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. But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified.

Chrys.: Because Christ had answered nothing to the accusations of the Jews, by which Pilate could acquit Him of what was alleged against Him, he contrives other means of saving Him.

“Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would.”

Origen: Thus do the Gentiles shew favours to those whom they subject to themselves, until their yoke is riveted. Yet did this practice obtain also among the Jews, Saul did not put Jonathan to death, because all the people sought his life. [marg. note: 1 Sam 14]

Chrys.: And he sought to rescue Christ by means of this practice, that the Jews might not have the shadow of an excuse left them. A convicted murderer is put in comparison with Christ, Barabbas, whom he calls not merely a robber, but a notable one, that is, renowned for crime.

Jerome: In the Gospel entitled ‘according to the Hebrews,’ Barabbas is interpreted, ‘The son of their master,’ who had been condemned for sedition and murder. Pilate gives them the choice between Jesus and the robber, not doubting but that Jesus would be the rather chosen.

Chrys.: “Whom will ye that I release unto you?” &c. As much as to say, If ye will not let Him go as innocent, at least, yield Him, as convicted, to this holy day. For if you would have released one of whose guilt there was no doubt, much more should you do so in doubtful cases. Observe how circumstances are reversed. It is the populace who are wont to petition for the condemned, and the prince to grant, but here it is the reverse, the prince asks of the people, and renders them thereby more violent.

Gloss., non occ.: The Evangelist adds the reason why Pilate sought to deliver Christ, “For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.”

Remig.: John explains what their envy was, when he says, “Behold, the world is gone after him;” [John 12:19] and, “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.” [John 11:48] Observe also that in place of what Matthew says, “Jesus, who is called Christ,” Mark says, “Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” [Mark 15:9] For the kings of the Jews alone were anointed, and from that anointing were called Christs.

Chrys.: Then is added something else which alone was enough to deter all from putting Him to death; “When he was set on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man.” For joined with the proof afforded by the events themselves, a dream was no light confirmation.

Raban.: It is to be noted, that the bench (tribunal) is the seat of the judge, the throne (solium) of the king, the chair (cathedra) of the master. In visions and dreams the wife of a Gentile understood what the Jews when awake would neither believe nor understand.

Jerome: Observe also that visions are often vouchsafed by God to the Gentiles, and that the confession of Pilate and his wife that the Lord was innocent is a testimony of the Gentile people.

Chrys.: But why did Pilate himself not see this vision? Because his wife was more worthy; or because if Pilate had seen it, he would not have had equal credit, or perhaps would not have told it; wherefore it is provided by God that his wife should see it, and thus it be made manifest to all. And she not merely sees it, but “suffers many things because of him,” so that sympathy with his wife would make the husband more slack to put Him to death. And the time agreed well, for it was the same night that she saw it.

Chrys., Hom. iii, in Caen. Dom.: Thus then the judge terrified through his wife, and that he might not consent in the judgment to the accusation of the Jews, himself endured judgment in the affliction of his wife; the judge is judged, and tortured before he tortures.

Raban.: Or otherwise; The devil now at last understanding that he should lose his trophies through Christ, as he had at the first brought in death by a woman, so by a woman he would deliver Christ out of the hands of His enemies, lest through His death he should lose the sovereignty of death.

Chrys.: But none of the foregoing things moved Christ’s enemies, because envy had altogether blinded them, and of their own wickedness they corrupt the people, for they “persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.”

Origen: Thus it is plainly seen how the Jewish people is moved by its elders and the doctors of the Jewish system, and stirred up against Jesus to destroy Him.

Gloss., non occ.: Pilate is said to make this answer, “Whether will you of the two to be released unto you?” either to the message of his wife, or the petition of the people, with whom it was a custom to ask such release on the feast-day.

Origen: But the populace, like wild beasts that rage the open plains, would have Barabbas released to them. For this people had seditions, murders, robberies, practiced by some of their own nation in act, and nourished by all of them who believe not in Jesus, inwardly in their mind. Where Jesus is not, there are strifes and fightings; where He is, there is peace and all good things. All those who are like the Jews either in doctrine or life desire Barabbas to be loosed to them; for whoso does evil, Barabbas is loosed in his body, and Jesus bound; but he that does good has Christ loosed, and Barabbas bound.

Pilate sought to strike them with shame for so great injustice, “What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ?” And not that only, but desiring to fill up the measure of their guilt. But neither do they

blush that Pilate confessed Jesus to be the Christ, nor set any bounds to their impiety, They all say unto him, "Let him be crucified." Thus they multiplied the sum of their wickedness, not only asking the life of a murderer, but the death of a righteous man, and that the shameful death of the cross.

Raban.: Those who were crucified being suspended on a cross, by nails driven into the wood through their hands and feet, perished by a lingering death, and lived long on the cross, not that they sought longer life, but that death was deferred to prolong their sufferings. The Jews indeed contrived this as the worst of deaths, but it had been chosen by the Lord without their privity, thereafter to place upon the foreheads of the faithful the same cross as a trophy of His victory over the Devil.

Jerome: Yet even after this answer of theirs, Pilate did not at once assent, but in accordance with his wife's suggestion, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," he answered, "Why, what evil hath he done?" This speech of Pilate's acquits Jesus. "But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified;" that it might be fulfilled which is said in the Psalm, "Many dogs have compassed me, the congregation of the wicked hath inclosed me;" [Ps 22:16] and also that of Hieremias, "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, they have given forth their voice against me." [Jer 12:8]

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 8: Pilate many times pleaded with the Jews, desiring that Jesus might be released, which Matthew witnesses in very few words, when he says, "Pilate seeing that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made." He would not have spoken thus, if Pilate had not striven much, though how many efforts he made to release Jesus he does not mention.

Remig.: It was customary among the ancients, when one would refuse to participate in any crime, to take water and wash his hands before the people.

Jerome: Pilate took water in accordance with that, "I Will wash my hands in innocency," [Ps 26:6] in a manner testifying and saying, I indeed have sought to deliver this innocent man, but since a tumult is rising, and the charge of treason to Caesar is urged against me, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. The judge then who is thus compelled to give sentence against the Lord, does not convict the accused, but the accusers, pronouncing innocent Him who is to be crucified.

"See ye to it," as though he had said, I am the law's minister, it is your voice that has shed this blood. Then answered all the people and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." This imprecation rests at the present day upon the Jews, the Lord's blood is not removed from them.

Chrys.: Observe here the infatuation of the Jews; their headlong haste, and destructive passions will not let them see what they ought to see, and they curse themselves, saying, "His blood be upon us," and even entail the curse upon their children. Yet a merciful God did not ratify this sentence, but accepted such of them and of their children as repented; for Paul was of them, and many thousands of those who in Jerusalem believed.

Leo, Serm., 59, 2: The impiety of the Jews then exceeded the fault of Pilate; but he was not guiltless, seeing he resigned his own jurisdiction, and acquiesced in the injustice of others.

Jerome: It should be known that Pilate administered the Roman law, which enacted that every one who was crucified should first be scourged. Jesus then is given up to the soldiers to be beaten, and they tore with whips that most holy body and capacious bosom of God.

Chrys., Hom. iii, in Caena Dom.: See the Lord is made ready for the scourge, see now it descends upon Him! That sacred skin is torn by the fury of the rods; the cruel might of repeated blows lacerates His shoulders. Ah me! God is stretched out before man, and He, in whom not one trace of sin can be discerned, suffers punishment as a malefactor.

Jerome: This was done that we might be delivered from those stripes of which it is said, "Many stripes shall be to the wicked." [Ps 32:10] Also in the washing of Pilate's hands all the works of the Gentiles are cleansed, and we are acquitted of all share in the impiety of the Jews.

Hilary: At the desire of the Priests the populace chose Barabbas, which is interpreted 'the son of a Father,' thus shadowing forth the unbelief to come when Antichrist the son of sin should be preferred to Christ.

Raban.: Barabbas also, who headed a sedition among the people, is released to the Jews, that is the Devil, who to this day reigns among them, so that they cannot have peace.

Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band; And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 9: After the Lord's trial comes His Passion, which thus begins, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the hall," &c.

Jerome: He had been styled King of the Jews, and the Scribes and Priests had brought this charge against Him, that He claimed sovereignty over the Jewish nation; hence this mockery of the soldiers, taking away His own garments, they put on Him a scarlet cloak to represent that purple fringe which kings of old used to wear, for the diadem they put on Him a crown of thorns, and for the regal sceptre give Him a reed, and perform adoration to Him as to a king.

Aug.: Hence we understand what Mark means by "clothed him with purple;" [Mark 15:17] instead of the royal purple, this scarlet cloak was used in mockery; and there is a shade of purple which is very like scarlet. Or it may be, that Mark spoke of the purple which the cloak contained, though its colour was scarlet.

Chrys., Hom. lxxxvii: What should we henceforth care if any one insults us, after Christ has thus suffered? The utmost that cruel outrage could do was put in practice against Christ; and not one member only, but His whole body suffered injuries; His head from the crown, the reed, and the buffetings; His face which was spit upon; His cheeks which they smote with the palms of their hands; His whole body from the scourging, the stripping to put on the cloak, and the mockery of homage; His hands from the reed which they put into them in mimicry of a sceptre; as though they were afraid of omitting aught of indignity.

Aug.: But Matthew seems to introduce this here as recollected from above, not that it was done at the time Pilate gave Him up for crucifixion. For John puts it before He is given up by Pilate.

Jerome: All these things we may understand mystically. For as Caiaphas said that "it is expedient that one man should die for the people," [John 11:50] not knowing what he said, so these, in all they did, furnished sacraments to us who believe, though they did them with other intention. In the scarlet robe He bears the bloody works of the Gentiles; by the crown of thorns He takes away the ancient curse; with the reed He destroys poisonous animals; or He held the reed in His hand wherewith to write down the sacrilege of the Jews.

Hilary: Or otherwise; The Lord having taken upon Him all the infirmities of our body, is then covered with the scarlet colored blood of all the martyrs, to whom is due the kingdom with Him; He is crowned with thorns, that is, with the sins of the Gentiles who once pierced Him, for there is a prick in thorns of which is woven the crown of victory for Christ. In the reed, He takes into His hand and supports the weakness and frailty of the Gentiles; and His head is smitten therewith that the weakness of the Gentiles sustained by Christ's hand may rest on God the Father, who is His head.

Origen: Or, The reed was a mystery signifying that before we believed we trusted in that reed of Egypt, or Babylon, or of some other kingdom opposed to God, which He took that He might triumph over it with the wood of the cross. With this reed they smite the head of Christ, because this kingdom ever beats against God the Father, who is the head of the Saviour.

Remig.: Or otherwise, By the scarlet robe is denoted the Lord's flesh, which is spoken of as red by reason of shedding of His blood; by the crown of thorns His taking upon Him our sins, because He appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh." [Rom 8:3]

Raban.: They smite the head of Christ with a reed, who speak against His divinity, and endeavour to maintain their error by the authority of Holy Scripture, which is written by a reed. They spit upon His face who reject in abominable words the presence of His grace, and deny that Jesus is come in the flesh. And they mock Him with adoration who believe on Him, but despise Him with perverse works.

Aug., Quaest. Ev., ii, in fin: That they took from off the Lord in His passion His own garment, and put on Him a colored robe, denotes those heretics who said that He had a shadowy, and not a real body.

And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him. And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink.

Gloss, non occ.: After the Evangelist had narrated what concerned the mocking of Christ, he proceeds to His crucifixion.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 9: This is to be understood to have been done at the end of all when He was led off to crucifixion after Pilate had delivered Him up to the Jews.

Jerome: It is to be noted, that when Jesus is scourged and spit upon, He has not on His own garments, but those which He took for our sins; but when He is crucified, and the show of His mockery is completed, then He takes again His former garments, and His own dress, and immediately the elements are shaken, and the creature gives testimony to the Creator.

Origen: Of the cloak it is mentioned that they took it off Him, but of the crown of thorns the Evangelists have not spoken, so that there are now no longer those ancient thorns of ours, since Jesus has taken them from us upon His revered head.

Chrys., Hom. de Cruc. et Lat., ii: The Lord would not suffer under a roof, or in the Jewish Temple, that you should not suppose that He was offered for that people alone; but without the city, without the walls, that you might know that the sacrifice was common, that it was the offering of the whole earth, that the purification was general.

Jerome: Let none think that John's narrative contradicts this place of the Evangelist. John says that the Lord went forth from the praetorium bearing His cross; Matthew tells, that they found a man of Cyrene upon whom they laid Jesus' cross. We must suppose that as Jesus went out of the praetorium, He was bearing His cross, and that afterwards they met Simon, whom they compelled to bear it.

Origen: Or, as they went out, they laid hold of Simon, but when they drew near to the place in which they would crucify Him, they laid the cross upon Him that He might bear it. Simon obtained not this office by chance, but was brought to the spot by God's providence, that he might be found worthy of mention in the Scriptures of the Gospel, and of the ministry of the cross of Christ. And it was not only meet that the Saviour should carry His cross, but meet also that we should take part therein, filling a carriage so beneficial to us. Yet would it not have so profited us to take it on us, as we have profited by His taking it upon Himself. [marg. note:]

Jerome: Figuratively, the nations take up the cross, and the foreigner by obedience bears the ignominy of the Saviour.

Hilary: For a Jew was not worthy to bear Christ's cross, but it was reserved for the faith of the Gentiles both to take the cross, and to suffer with Him.

Remig.: For this Simon was not a man of Jerusalem, but a foreigner, and denizen, being a Cyrenean; Cyrene is a town of Lybia. Simon is interpreted 'obedient,' and a Cyrenean 'an heir;' whence he well denotes the people of the Gentiles, which was strange to the testaments of God, but by believing became a fellow-citizen of the saints, of the household, and an heir of God.

Greg., Hom. in. Ev., xxxii, 3: Or otherwise; By Simon who bears the burden of the Lord's cross are denoted those who are abstinent and proud; these by their abstinence afflict their flesh, but seek not within

the fruit of abstinence. Thus Simon bears the cross, but does not die thereon, as these afflict the body, but in desire of vain-glory live to the world.

Raban.: “Golgotha” is a Syriac word, and is interpreted Calvary.

Jerome: [ed. note, b: He probably refers to an anonymous disputant, of whom he speaks more at length in his Commentary on Ephesians 5, 14; but a tradition to the same effect is mentioned by Origen, whose words, as preserved in a MS. Catena quoted by Ruaeus, are, “A tradition has come down to us, preserved by the Hebrews, that the body of Adam is buried in Calvary, so that as in Adam all die, so in Christ may all be made alive.” And to the same effect Epiphanius cont. Tatian, and the Pseudo-Cyprian. ‘De Resur. Christi.’]

I have heard Calvary expounded as the spot in which Adam was buried, as though it had been so called from the head of the old man being buried there. A plausible interpretation, and agreeable to the ears of the people, yet not a true one. Without the city outside the gate are the places where criminals are executed, and these have got the name of Calvary, that is, of the beheaded. And Jesus was crucified there, that where the plot of criminals had been, there might be set up the flag of martyrdom. But Adam was buried near Ebron and Arbee, as we read in the volume of Jesus the son of Nave. [ed. note: Josh. 14, 15. in the Vulgate, “Adam maximus ibi inter Enacim situs est;” departing from both the Heb. and LXX.]

Hilary: Such is the place of the cross, set up in the centre of the earth, that it might be equally free to all nations to attain the knowledge of God.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 11: “And they gave him to drink wine mingled with gall.” Mark says, “mingled with myrrh.” [Mark 16:23] Matthew put “gall” to express bitterness, but wine mingled with myrrh is very bitter; though indeed it might be, that gall together with myrrh would make the most bitter.

Jerome: The bitter vine makes bitter wine; this they gave the Lord Jesus to drink, that that might be fulfilled which was written, “They gave me also gall for my meat.” [Ps 69:12] And God addresses Jerusalem, “I had planted there a true vine, how art thou turned into the bitterness of a strange vine?” [Jer 2:21]

Aug.: “And when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.” That Mark says, “But he received it not,” we understand to mean that He would not receive it to drink thereof. For that He tasted it Matthew bears witness; so that Matthew’s, “He could not drink thereof,” means exactly the same as Mark’s, “He received it not;” only Mark does not mention His tasting it.

That He tasted but would not drink of it signifies that He tasted the bitterness of death for us, but rose again the third day.

Hilary: Or, He therefore refused the “wine mingled with gall, because the bitterness of sin is not mingled with the incorruption of eternal glory.

And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots. And they sat and watched him. And they put over his head his cause written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were crucified with him two thieves: one on the right hand, and one on the left

Gloss, non occ.: Having described how Christ was led to the scene of His Passion, the Evangelist proceeds to the Passion itself, describing the kind of death; “And they crucified him.”

Aug., Lib. 83, Quaest q25: The Wisdom of God took upon Him man, to give us an example how we might live rightly. It pertains to right life not to fear things that are not to be feared. But some men who do not fear death in itself, yet dread some kinds of death. That no sort of death is to be feared by the man who lives aright, was to be shewn by this Man’s cross. For of all the modes of death none was more horrible and fearful than this.

Aug., in Serm., non occ.: Let your holiness consider of what might is the power of the cross. Adam set at nought the commandment, taking the apple from the tree; but all that Adam lost, Christ found upon the cross. The ark of wood saved the human race from the deluge of waters; when God's people came out of Egypt, Moses divided the sea with his rod, overwhelmed Pharaoh, and redeemed God's people. The same Moses changed the bitter water into sweet by casting wood into it. By the rod the refreshing stream was drawn out of the rock; that Amalech might be overcome, Moses' outstretched hands were supported upon his rod; the Law of God is entrusted to the wooden ark of the covenant, that thus, by these steps we may come at last to the wood of the cross.

Chrys., Hom. de Cruc. et Lat. ii: He suffered on a lofty cross, and not under a roof, to the end that the nature of the air might be purified; the earth also partook a like benefit, being cleansed by the blood that dropped from His side.

Gloss., ap. Anselm: The shape of the cross seems also to signify the Church spread through the four quarters of the earth.

Raban.: Or, according to the practical exposition, the cross in respect of its broad transverse piece signifies the joy of him that works, for sorrow produces straitness; for the broad part of the cross is in the transverse beam to which the hands are fastened, and by the hands we understand works. By the upper part to which the head is fastened is denoted our looking for retribution from the supreme righteousness of God. The perpendicular part on which the body is stretched denotes endurance, whence the patient are called 'long-suffering' [marg. note: longamines]. The point that is fixed into the ground shadows forth the invisible part of a sacrament.

Hilary: Thus on the tree of life the salvation and life of all is suspended.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 12: Matthew shortly says, "They parted his garments, casting lots;" but John explains more fully how it was done. "The soldiers, when they had crucified him, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat; now the coat was without seam." [John 19:23]

Chrys.: It is to be noted, that this is no small degradation of Christ. For they did this as to one utterly abject and worthless, yet for the thieves they did not the same. For they share the garments only in the case of condemned persons so mean and poor as to possess nothing more.

Jerome: This which was now done to Christ had been prophesied in the Psalm, "They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." [Ps 22:18] It proceeds, "And sitting down, they watched him there." This watchfulness of the soldiers and of the Priests has proved of use to us in making the power of His resurrection greater and more notorious.

"And they put over his head his cause written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." I cannot sufficiently wonder at the enormity of the thing, that having purchased false witnesses, and having stirred up the unhappy people to riot and uproar, they found no other plea for putting Him to death, than that He was King of the Jews; and this perhaps they set up in mockery.

Remig.: It was divinely provided that this title should be set up over His head, that the Jews might learn that not even by putting Him to death could they avoid having Him for their King; for in the very instrument of His death He not only did not lose, but rather confirmed His sovereignty.

Origen: The High Priest also in obedience to the letter of the Law wore on his head the writing, 'Holiness to the Lord,' but the true High Priest and King, Jesus, bears on His cross the title, "This is the King of the Jews;" when ascending to His Father, instead of His own name with its proper letters, He has the Father Himself.

Raban.: For because He is at once King and Priest, when He would offer the sacrifice of His flesh on the altar of the cross, His title set forth His regal dignity. And it is set over and not beneath the cross, because though He suffered for us on the cross with the weakness of man, the majesty of the King was conspicuous above the cross; and this He did not lose, but rather confirmed, by the cross.

Jerome, Hieron., non occ.: As Christ was made for us a curse of the cross, so for the salvation of all He is crucified as guilty among the guilty.

Leo, Serm. 55, 1: “Two thieves were crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left,” that in the figure of His cross might be represented that separation of all mankind which shall be made in His judgment. The Passion then of Christ contains a sacrament of our salvation, and of that instrument which the wickedness of the Jews provided for His punishment, the power of the Redeemer made a step to glory.

Hilary: Or otherwise; Two thieves are set up on His right and left hand, to signify that the entire human race is called to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Passion; but because there shall be a division of believers to the right, and unbelievers to the left, one of the two who is set on His right hand is saved by the justification of faith.

Remig., ap. Gloss. ord.: Or, by the two thieves are denoted all those who strive after the continence of a strict life. They who do this with a single intention of pleasing God, are denoted by him who was crucified on the right hand; they who do it out of desire of human praise or any less worthy motive, are signified by him who was crucified on the left.

And they that passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads, And saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it: save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, 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 now deliver him if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God. And the selfsame thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with.

Chrys.: Having stripped and crucified Christ, they go yet further, and seeing Him on the cross revile Him.

Jerome: “They revile him” because they passed by that way, and would not walk in the true way of the Scriptures. “They wagged their heads,” because they had just before shifted their feet, and stood not upon a rock. The foolish rabble cast the same taunt against Him that the false witnesses had invented, “Aha! thou that destroyest the temple of God and rebuilddest it in three days.”

Remig.: “Aha!” is an interjection of taunt and mockery.

Hilary: What forgiveness then for them, when by the resurrection of His body they shall see the temple of God rebuilt within three days?

Chrys.: And as beginning to extenuate His former miracles, they add, “Save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Chrys., Hom. de Cruc. et Latr. ii: He, on the contrary, does not come down from the cross, because He is the Son of God; for He therefore came that He might be crucified for us.

Jerome: Even the Scribes and Pharisees reluctantly confess that “He saved others.” Your own judgment then condemns you, for in that He saved others, He could if He would have saved Himself.

Pseudo-Chrys.: [ed. note, d: Hom. de Cruce et Latr. in the Latin Chrys. (ed. Paris. 1588.) vol. iii. p. 750]

But attend to this speech of these children of the Devil, how they imitate their father’s speech. The Devil said, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down;” [Matt 4:6] and they say now, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Leo, Serm. 55, 2: From what source of error, O Jews, have ye sucked in the poison of such blasphemies? What teacher delivered it to you? What learning moved you to think that the true King of Israel, that the veritable Son of God, would be He who would not suffer Himself to be crucified, and would set free His body from the fastenings of the nails? Not the bidden meaning of the Law, not the mouths of the Prophets. Had ye indeed ever read, “I hid not my face from the shame of spitting;” [Is 50:6] or that again,: They pierced my hands and my feet, they told all my bones.” [Ps 22:16] Where have

ye ever read that the Lord came down from the cross? But ye have read, “The Lord hath reigned from the tree.” [ed. note, e: Ps. 96, 10. ‘Dominus regnavit a ligno,’ in the old Italic Version; and so Tertullian adv. Marc. iii. The Vulg. follows the Heb.]

Raban.: Had He then been prevailed on by their taunts to leave the cross, He would not have proved to us the power of endurance; but He waited enduring their mockery; and He who would not come down from the cross, rose again from the tomb.

Jerome: But unworthy of credit is that promise, “And we will believe him.” For which is greater, to come down while yet alive from the cross, or to rise from the tomb when dead? Yet this He did, and ye believed not; therefore neither would ye have believed if He had come down from the cross. It seems to me that this was a suggestion of the daemons. For immediately when the Lord was crucified they felt the power of the cross, and perceived that their strength was broken, and therefore contrive this to move Him to come down from the cross. But the Lord, aware of the designs of His foes, remains on the cross that He may destroy the Devil.

Chrys.: “He trusted in God, let him now deliver him, if he will.” O most foul! Were they therefore not Prophets or righteous men, because God did not deliver them out of their perils? But if He would not oppose their glory, which accrued to them out of the perils which you brought upon them, much more in this man ought you not to be offended because of what He suffers; what He has ever said ought to remove any such suspicion.

When they add, “Because he said, I am the Son of God,” they desire to intimate that He suffered as an impostor and seducer, and as making high and false pretences. And not only the Jews and the soldiers from below, but from above likewise. “And the selfsame thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with.”

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 16: It may seem that Luke contradicts this, when he describes one of the robbers as reviling Him, and as therefore rebuked by the other. But we may suppose that Matthew, shortly alluding to the circumstance, has used the plural for the singular, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have, “Have stopped the mouths of lions,” [Heb. 11:33] when Daniel only is spoken of. And what more common way of speaking than for one to say, See the country people insult me, when it is one only who has done so. If indeed Matthew had said that both the thieves had reviled the Lord, there would be some discrepancy; but when he says merely, “The thieves,” without adding ‘both,’ we must consider it as that common form of speech in which the singular is signified by the plural.

Jerome: Or it may be said that at first both reviled Him; but when the sun had withdrawn, the earth was shaken, the rocks were rent, and the darkness increased, one believed on Jesus, and repaired his former denial by a subsequent confession.

Chrys.: At first both reviled Him, but afterwards not so. For that you should not suppose that the thing was arranged by any collusion, and that the thief was not a thief, he shews you by his wanton reproaches, that even after He was crucified he was a thief and a foe, but was afterwards totally changed.

Hilary: That both the thieves cast in His teeth the manner of His Passion, shews that the cross should be an offence to all mankind, even to the faithful.

Jerome: Or, in the two thieves both nations, Jews and Gentiles, at first blasphemed the Lord; afterwards the latter terrified by the multitude of signs did penitence, and thus rebukes the Jews, who blaspheme to this day.

Origen: The thief who was saved may be a sign of those who after many sins have believed on Christ.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth Elias. And immediately one of them running took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the others said: Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. And Jesus

again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Pseudo-Chrys., in Hom. de Cruce et Latr.: Creation could not bear the outrage offered to the Creator; whence the sun withdrew his beams, that he might not look upon the crime of these impious men.

Origen: Some take occasion from this text to cavil against the truth of the Gospel. For indeed from the beginning eclipses of the sun have happened in their proper seasons; but such an eclipse as would be brought about by the ordinary course of the seasons could only be at such time as the sun and moon come together, when the moon passing beneath intercepts the sun's rays. But at the time of Christ's passion it is clear that this was not the case, because it was the paschal feast, which it was customary to celebrate when the moon was full.

Some believers, desiring to produce some answer to this objection, have said, that this eclipse in accordance with the other prodigies was an exception to the established laws of nature.

Dionys. ad Polycarp. Ep. 7: When we were together at Heliopolis, we both observed such an interference of the moon with the sun quite unexpectedly, for it was not the season of their conjunction; and then from the ninth hour until evening, beyond the power of nature, continuing in a direct line between us and the sun. And this obscuration we saw begin from the east, and so pass to the extreme of the sun's orb, and again return back the same way, being thus the very reverse of an ordinary eclipse.

Chrys., Hom. lxxxviii: This darkness lasted three hours, whereas an eclipse is transient, and not enduring, as they know who have studied the matter.

Origen: Against this the children of this world urge, How is it that of the Greeks and Barbarians, who have made observations of these things, not one has recorded so remarkable a phenomenon as this? Phlegon indeed has recorded such an event as happening in the time of Tiberius Caesar, but he has not mentioned that it was at the full moon. I think therefore that, like the other miracles which took place at the Passion, the rending of the veil, and the earthquake, this also was confined to Jerusalem.

Or, if any one chooses, it may be extended to the whole of Judaea; as in the book of Kings, Abdias said to Elias, "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee," [1 Ki 18:10] meaning that he had been sought in the countries round about Judaea. Accordingly we might suppose many and dense clouds to have been brought together over Jerusalem and Judaea, enough to produce thick darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour. For we understand that there were two creatures created on the sixth day, the beasts before the sixth hour, man on the sixth; and therefore it was fitting that He who died for the salvation of man should be crucified at the sixth hour, and for this cause that darkness should be over the whole earth from the sixth to the ninth hour. And as by Moses stretching out his hands towards heaven darkness was brought upon the Egyptians who held the servants of God in bondage, so likewise when at the sixth hour Christ stretched out his hands on the cross to heaven, darkness came over all the people who had cried out, "Crucify him," and they were deprived of all light as a sign of the darkness that should come, and that should envelop the whole people of the Jews. Further, under Moses there was darkness over the land of Egypt three days, but all the children of Israel had light; so under Christ there was darkness over all Judaea for three hours, because for their sins they were deprived of the light of God the Father, the splendour of Christ, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

But over the rest of the earth there is light, which every where illumines the Church of God in Christ. And if to the ninth hour there was darkness over Judaea, it is manifest that light returned to them again after that; "so, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have entered in, then all Israel shall be saved." [Rom 11:25]

Chrys.: Or otherwise; The wonder was in this, that the darkness was over the whole earth, which had never come to pass before, save only in Egypt what time the Passover was celebrated; for the things done then were a type of these. And consider the time when this is done; at mid-day, while over the whole world it was day, that all the dwellers on the earth might perceive it. This is the sign He promised to them that asked Him, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and there shall no sign be given it save

the sign of Jonas the Prophet,” [Matt 12:39] alluding to His cross and resurrection. And it was a much greater marvel that this should come to pass when He was fastened to the cross, than when He was walking at large on the earth.

Surely here was enough to convert them, not by the greatness of the miracle alone, but because it was done not till after all these instances of their frenzy, when their passion was past, when they had uttered all that they would, and were satiated with taunts and gibes. But how did they not all marvel and conclude Him to be God? Because the human race was at that time plunged in exceeding sluggishness and vice, and this wonder was but one, and quickly past away, and none cared to search out its cause, or perhaps they attributed it to eclipse, or some other physical consequence.

And on this account He shortly afterwards lifts up His voice to shew that He yet lives, and Himself wrought this miracle; “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,” &c.

Jerome: He employed the beginning of the twenty-first Psalm. [marg. note: Ps 22:1, Vulg.] That clause in the middle of the verse, “Look upon me,” is superfluous; for the Hebrew has only ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,’ that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It is impiety therefore to think that this Psalm was spoken in the character of David or Esther or Mardocheus, when passages taken out of it by the Evangelist are understood of the Saviour; as, “They parted my garments among them,” and, “They pierced my hands.”

Chrys.: He uttered this word of prophecy, that He might bear witness to the very last hour to the Old Testament, and that they might see that He honours the Father, and is not against God. And therefore too, He used the Hebrew tongue, that what He said might be intelligible to them.

Origen: But it must be asked, What means this, that Christ is forsaken of God? Some, unable to explain how Christ could be forsaken of God, say that this was spoken out of humility. But you will be able clearly to comprehend His meaning if you make a comparison of the glory which He had with the Father with the shame which He despised when He endured the cross.

Hilary, de Trin. x. 50 &c.: From these words heretical spirits contend either that God the Word was entirely absorbed into the soul at the time it discharged the function of a soul in quickening the body; or that Christ could not have been born man, because the Divine Word dwelt in Him after the manner of a prophetic spirit. As though Jesus Christ was a man of ordinary soul and body, having His beginning then when He began to be man, and thus now deserted upon the withdrawal of the protection of God’s word cries out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Or at least that the nature of the Word being transmuted into soul, Christ, who had depended in all things upon His Father’s support, now deserted and left to death, mourns over this desertion, and pleads with Him departing. But amidst these impious and feeble opinions, the faith of the Church imbued with Apostolic teaching does not sever Christ that He should be considered as Son of God and not as Son of Man. The complaint of His being deserted is the weakness of the dying man; the promise of Paradise is the kingdom of the living God. You have Him complaining that He is left to death, and thus He is Man; you have Him as He is dying declaring that He reigns in Paradise; and thus He is God. Wonder not then at the humility of these words, when you know the form of a servant, and see the offence of the cross.

Gloss., non occ.: God is said to have forsaken Him in death because He exposed Him to the power of His persecutors; He withdrew His protection, but did not break the union.

Origen: When He saw darkness over the whole land of Judaea He said this, Father, “why hast thou forsaken me?” meaning, Why hast thou given Me over exhausted to such sufferings? that the people who were honoured by Thee may receive the things that they have dared against Me, and should be deprived of the light of Thy countenance. Also, Thou hast forsaken Me for the salvation of the Gentiles. But what good have they of the Gentiles who have believed done, that I should deliver them from the evil one by shedding My precious blood on the ground for them? Or will they, for whom I suffer these things, ever do aught worthy of them? Or foreseeing the sins of those for whom He suffered, He said, “Why hast thou

forsaken me?" that I should become "as one that gathereth stubble in the harvest, and gleanings in the vintage." [Mic 9:1]

But you must not imagine that the Saviour said this after the manner of men by reason of the misery which encompassed Him on the cross; for if you take it so you will not hear His "loud voice" and mighty words which point to something great hidden.

Raban.: Or, The Saviour said this as bearing about with Him our feelings, who when placed in dangers think ourselves forsaken by God. Human nature was forsaken by God because of its sins, and the Son of God becoming our Advocate laments the misery of those whose guilt He took upon Him; [ed. note: "These words He uttered as representing the person of men. For He was never forsaken by His Divine nature; but we were the forsaken, and the overlooked; whence He said this in as representing us." Damasc. Fid Orth. iii 24. and so Theophylact.] therein shewing how they who sin ought to mourn, when He who never sinned did thus mourn.

Jerome: It follows, "Some of them that stood by," &c.; "some," not all; whom I suppose to have been Roman soldiers, ignorant of Hebrew, but from the words "Eli, Eli," thought that He called upon Elias. But if we prefer to suppose them Jews, they do it after their usual manner, that they may accuse the Lord of weakness in thus invoking Elias.

Pseudo-Chrys., Hom. vi in Pass. (vol iii, p. 733): Thus the Source of living water is made to drink vinegar, the Giver of honey is fed with gall; Forgiveness is scourged, Acquittance is condemned, Majesty is mocked, Virtue ridiculed, the Bestower of showers is repaid with spitting.

Hilary: Vinegar is wine, which has turned sour either from neglect, or the fault of the vessel. Wine is the honour of immortality, or virtue. When this then had been turned sour in Adam, He took and drunk it at the hands of the Gentiles. It is offered to Him on a reed and a sponge; that is, He took from the bodies of the Gentiles immortality spoiled and corrupted, and transfused in Himself into a mixture of immortality that in us which was spoiled.

Remig.: Or otherwise; The Jews as degenerating from the wine of the Patriarchs and Prophets were vinegar; they had deceitful hearts, like to the winding holes and hollows in sponge. By the reed, Sacred Scripture is denoted, which was fulfilled in this action; for as we call that which the tongue utters, the Hebrew tongue, or the Greek tongue, for example; so the writing, or letters which the seed produces, we may call a reed.

Origen: And perhaps all who know the ecclesiastical doctrine, but live amiss, have given them to drink wine mingled with gall; but they who attribute to Christ untrue opinions, these filling a sponge with vinegar, put it upon the reed of Scripture, and put it to His mouth.

Raban.: The soldiers misunderstanding the sound of the Lord's words, foolishly looked for the coming of Elias. But God, whom the Saviour thus invoked in the Hebrew tongue, He had in ever inseparably with Him.

Aug., in Serm., non occ.: When now nought of suffering remains to be endured, death still lingers, knowing that it has nothing there. The ancient foe suspected somewhat unusual. This man, first and only, he found having no sin, free from guilt, owing nothing to the laws of his jurisdiction. But leagued with Jewish madness, Death comes again to the assault, and desperately invades the Life-giver.

"And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."

Wherefore should we be offended that Christ came from the bosom of the Father to take upon Him our bondage, that He might confer on us His freedom; to take upon Him our death, that we might be set free by His death; by despising death He exalted us mortals into Gods, counted them of earth worthy of things in heaven? For seeing the Divine power shines forth so brilliant in the contemplation of its works, it is an argument of boundless love, that it suffers for its subjects, dies for its bondsmen. This then was the first cause of the Lord's Passion, that He would have it known how great God's love to man, Who desired rather to be loved than feared.

The second was that He might abolish with yet more justice the sentence of death which He had with justice passed. For as the first man had by guilt incurred death through God's sentence, and handed down the same to his posterity, the second Man, who knew no sin, came from heaven that death might be condemned, which, when commissioned to seize the guilty, had presumed to touch the Author of sinlessness. And it is no wonder if for us He laid down what He had taken of us, His life, namely, when He has done other so great things for us, and bestowed so much on us.

Pseudo-Aug., Vigil cont. Felicianum, 14: Far be from the faithful any suspicion that Christ experienced our death in such sort that life (as far as it can) ceased to live. Had this been so, how could aught have been said to live during that three days, if the Fountain of Life itself was dried up? Therefore Christ's Godhead experienced death through its partaking of humanity or of human feeling, which it had voluntarily taken on it; but it lost not the properties of its nature by which it gives life to all things. For when we die, without doubt the loss of life by the body is not the destruction of the soul, but the soul quitting the body loses not its own properties, but only lets go what it had quickened, and as far as in it lays produces the death of somewhat else, but itself defies death. To speak now of the Saviour's soul; it might depart without being itself destroyed from His body for this three days' space, even by the common laws of death, and without taking into account the indwelling Godhead, and His singular righteousness. For I believe that the Son of God died not in punishment of unrighteousness which He had not at all, but according to the law of that nature which He took upon Him for the redemption of the human race.

Damasc., de Fid. Orth. iii, 27: Although He died as man, and His holy soul was separated from His unstained body, yet His Godhead remained inseparate from either body or soul. Yet was not the one Person divided into two; for as both body and soul had from the beginning an existence in the Person of the Word, so also had they in death. For neither soul nor body had ever a Person of their own, besides the Person of the Word.

Jerome: It was a mark of Divine power in Him thus to dismiss the Spirit as Himself had said, "No man can take my life from me, but I lay it down and take it again." [John 10:18]

For by "the ghost" in this place we understand the soul; so called either because it is that which makes the body quick or spiritual, or because the substance of the soul itself is spirit, according to that which is written, "Thou takest away their breath, and they die." [Ps. 104:29]

Chrys.: Also for this reason He cried out with a loud voice to shew that this is done by His own power. For by crying out with a loud voice when dying, He shewed incontestably that He was the true God; because a man in dying can scarcely utter even a feeble sound.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 18: Luke mentions the words which He thus cries out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit."

Hilary: Or, He gave up the ghost with a loud voice, in grief that He was not carrying the sins of all men.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose, And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee

Origen: Great things were done at the moment that Jesus cried with a great voice.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 19: The wording sufficiently shews that the veil was rent just when He gave up the ghost. If he had not added, "And, lo!" but had merely said, "And the veil of the temple was rent,": it would have been uncertain whether Matthew and Mark had not inserted it here out of its place as they

recollected, and Luke had observed the right order, who having said, “And the sun was darkened,” adds, “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain;” [Luke 23:45] or, on the contrary, Luke had returned to what they had inserted in its place.

Origen: It is understood that there were two veils; one veiling the Holy of Holies, the other, the outer part of the tabernacle or temple. In the Passion then of our Lord and Saviour, it was the outer veil which was rent from the top to the bottom, that by the rending of the veil from the beginning to the end of the world, the mysteries might be published which had been hid with good reason until the Lord’s coming. “But when that which is perfect is come,” [1 Cor 13:10] then the second veil also shall be taken away, that we may see the things that are hidden within, to wit, the true Ark of the Testament, and behold the Cherubim and the rest in their real nature.

Hilary; Or, The veil of the temple is rent, because from this time the nation was dispersed, and the honour of the veil is taken away with the guardianship of the protecting Angel.

Leo, in Serm. de Pass., non occ.: The sudden commotion in the elements is a sufficient sign in witness of His venerable Passion, “The earth quaked, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened.”

Jerome: It is not doubtful to any what these great signs signify according to the letter, namely, that heaven and earth and all things should bear witness to their crucified Lord.

Hilary: “The earth quaked,” because it was unequal to contain such a body; “the rocks rent,” for the Word of God that pierces all strong and mighty things, and the virtue of the eternal Power had penetrated them; “the graves were opened,” for the bands of death were loosed. “And many bodies of the saints which slept arose,” for illumining the darkness of death, and shedding light upon the gloom of Hades, He robbed the spirits of death.

Chrys.: When He remained on the cross they had said tauntingly, “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” But what He would not do for Himself, that He did and more than that for the bodies of the Saints. For if it was a great thing to raise Lazarus after four days, much more was it that they who had long slept should now shew themselves alive; this is indeed a proof of the resurrection to come. But that it might not be thought that that which was done was an appearance merely, the Evangelist adds, “And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

Jerome: As Lazarus rose from the dead, so also did many bodies of the Saints rise again to shew forth the Lord’s resurrection; yet notwithstanding that the graves were opened, they did not rise again before the Lord rose, that He might be the first-born of the resurrection from the dead.

“The holy city” in which they were seen after they had risen may be understood to mean either the heavenly Jerusalem, or this earthly, which once had been holy. For the city of Jerusalem was called Holy on account of the Temple and the Holy of Holies, and to distinguish it from other cities in which idols were worshipped.

When it is said, “And appeared unto many,” it is signified that this was not a general resurrection which all should see, but special, seen only by such as were worthy to see it.

Remig.: But some one will ask, what became of those who rose again when the Lord rose. We must believe that they rose again to be witnesses of the Lord’s resurrection. Some have said that they died again, and were turned to dust, as Lazarus and the rest whom the Lord raised. But we must by no means give credit to these men’s sayings, since if they were to die again, it would be greater torment to them, than if they had not risen again. We ought therefore to believe without hesitation that they who rose from the dead at the Lord’s resurrection, ascended also into heaven together with Him.

Origen: These same mighty works are still done every day; the veil of the temple is rent for the Saints, in order to reveal the things that are contained within. The earthquakes, that is, all flesh because of the new word and new things of the New Testament. The rocks are rent, i.e. the mystery of the Prophets, that we may see the spiritual mysteries hid in their depths. The graves are the bodies of sinful souls, that is, souls dead to God; but when by God’s grace these souls have been raised, their bodies which before were graves, become bodies of Saints, and appear to go out of themselves, and follow Him who rose again, and

walk with Him in newness of life; and such as are worthy to have their conversation in heaven enter into the Holy City at divers times, and appear unto many who see their good works.

Aug., de Cons. Ev., iii, 20: It is no contradiction here that Matthew says, that “The centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, feared when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done;” while Luke says, that he wondered at the giving up the ghost with a loud voice. For when Matthew adds, the things that were done, this gives full scope for Luke’s expression, that he wondered at the Lord’s death, for this among the rest was wonderful.

Jerome: Observe, that in the very midst of the offence of His passion the Centurion acknowledges the Son of God, while Arius in the Church proclaims Him a creature.

Raban.: Whence with good reason by the Centurion is denoted the faith of the Church, which, when the veil of heavenly mysteries had been rent by the Lord’s death, immediately asserts Jesus to be both very Man, and truly Son of God, while the Synagogue held its peace.

Leo, Serm. 66, 3: From this example then of the Centurion let the substance of the earth tremble in the punishment of it Redeemer, let the rocks of unbelieving minds be rent, and those who were pent up in these sepulchres of mortality leap forth, bursting the bonds that would detain them; and let them shew themselves in the Holy City, i.e. the Church of God, as signs of the Resurrection to come; and thus let that take place in the heart, which we must believe takes place in the body.

Jerome: It was a Jewish custom, and held no disgrace, according to the manners of the people of old, for women to minister of their substance, food, and clothing to their teachers. This Paul says, that he refused, because it might occasion scandal among the Gentiles. They ministered to the Lord of their substance, that He might reap their carnal things, of whom they reaped spiritual things. Not that the Lord needed food of the creature, but that He might set an example for the teacher, that He should be content to receive food and clothing from His disciples.

But let us see what sort of attendants He had; “Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.”

Origen: In Mark the third is called Salome.

Chrys.: These women thus watching the things that are done are the most compassionate, the most sorrowful. They had followed Him ministering, and remained by Him in danger, shewing the highest courage, for when the disciples fled they remained.

Jerome, Hieron. adv. Helvid.: ‘See,’ says Helvidius, ‘Jacob and Joseph are the sons of Mary the Lord’s mother, whom the Jews call the brethren of Christ. [marg. note: Mark 6:3] He is also called James the less, to distinguish him from James the greater, who was the son of Zebedee.’ And he urges that ‘it were impious to suppose that His mother Mary would be absent, when the other women were there; or that we should have to invent some other third unknown person of the name of Mary, and that too when John’s Gospel witnesses that His mother was present.’

O blind folly! O mind perverted to its own destruction! Hear what the Evangelist John says: “There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.” [John 19:25]

No one can doubt that there were two Apostles called James; the son of Zebedee, and the son of Alphaeus. This unknown James the less, whom Scripture mentions as the son of Mary, if he is an Apostle, is the son of Alphaeus; if he is not an Apostle, but a third unknown James, how can he be supposed to be the Lord’s brother, and why should he be styled ‘The Less,’ to distinguish him from ‘The Greater?’ For The Greater and The Less are epithets which distinguish two persons, but not three. And that the James, the Lord’s brother, was an Apostle, is proved by Paul, “Other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.” [Gal 1:19]

But that you should not suppose this James to be the son of Zebedee, read the Acts, where he was put to death by Herod. [marg. note: Acts 12:1] The conclusion then remains, that this Mary, who is described as the mother of James the less, was wife of Alphaeus, and sister of Mary the Lord’s mother, called by John,

Mary the wife of Cleophas. But should you incline to think them two different persons, because in one place she is called Mary the mother of James the less, and in another place Mary the wife of Cleophas, you will learn the Scripture custom of calling the same man by different names; as Raguel Moses' father-in-law is called Jethro. In like manner then, Mary the wife of Cleophas is called the wife of Alpheus, and the mother of James the less. For if she had been the Lord's mother, the Evangelist would here, as in all other places, have called her so, and not described her as the mother of James, when he meant to designate the mother of the Lord.

But even if Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, were different persons, it is still certain, that Mary the mother of James and Joseph was not the Lord's mother.

Aug.: We might have supposed that some of the women stood "afar off," as three Evangelists say, and others "near the cross," as John says, had not Matthew and Mark reckoned Mary Magdalen among those that stood afar off, while John puts her among those that stood near. This is reconciled if we understand the distance at which they were to be such that they might be said to be near, because they were in His sight; but far off in comparison of the crowd who stood nearer with the centurion and soldiers. We might also suppose that they who were there together with the Lord's mother, began to depart after He had commended her to the disciple, that they might extricate themselves from the crowd, and looked on from a distance at the other things which were done, so that the Evangelists, who speak of them after the Lord's death, speak of them as standing afar off.

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