

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE PRIVATE THOUGHTS AND WORDS OF JESUS.

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## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 12TH, 1891,

DELIVERED BY

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“And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.”—Matthew xx. 17—19.

You have this same story in Matthew and Mark and Luke, a little differently told; as would naturally be the case when the information came from three different observers. It will be to our edification to put the three accounts together, so as to get a complete view of the incident; for each evangelist mentions something omitted by the others.

Our Lord firmly resolved to go to Jerusalem, about a fortnight before the Passover, with the view of becoming himself the Lamb of God's Passover. He had frequently quitted Jerusalem when his life had been in danger there, because his time was not yet come, and he thus set us the example of not wilfully running into danger, or braving it with foolhardiness; but now that he felt that the hour of his sacrifice was near at hand, he did not hesitate, or seek to avoid it; but he resolutely set out to meet his sufferings and his death. When he was in the highway that led to Jerusalem, he marched in front of the little band of his disciples with so vigorous and bold a step, and with such a calm, determined air of heroism upon him, that his followers were filled with astonishment (Mark x. 32). Here are the very words: “And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid.” Knowing that, according to his own account, he was going to suffering and death; and being well assured, from their own observation, that he was about to encounter the most furious opposition, they were amazed at the dauntless courage of his mien, and wondered what made him so resolved. We read also that “they were afraid”, afraid

for themselves, in a measure, but most of all afraid for him. Would not his daring lead to conflict with the powers then in authority, and might not terrible things happen both to him and to them? It was not altogether timidity, but awe which came over them: his manner was so majestic and sublime. That lowly man had a something about him which commanded the trembling reverence of his disciples. After all, meekness is imperial, and commands far more reverence than anger or pride. His followers felt that great events were about to transpire, and they were deeply sobered and filled with awe-struck apprehension. In the presence of their Lord, who seemed to be leading a forlorn hope to a fierce battle, they were afraid. They were amazed at his courage, and afraid for the consequences. They were also amazed at him, and afraid because of their own unfitness to stand in his presence. Do we not know what this feeling is? Then it was that he took the twelve aside, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him. The conversation was private. We will go aside with the chosen apostles for a little while at this time, and hear what their Lord would say to us, even as he aforetime said it to them. May the good Spirit bless our meditation!

I shall have three things to speak of; and the first will be *our Lord's private communings*. This will give us an insight, secondly, into *our Lord's private thoughts*; and when we have looked into these a little, as far as our dim eyes are able, we will then notice, in the third place, *our Lord's dwelling on the details of his passion*; for into those details he went with singular impressiveness. Let us not forget our need of the Holy Spirit's illumination while we come near to a place so holy as this of "The Revelation of the Passion."

I. First, then, OUR LORD'S PRIVATE COMMUNINGS. He did not say all things to all men. He spoke certain matters to his disciples only. To the outside world it was given to hear the parable; but to the disciples alone was it given to know the explanation. Not even to all the disciples did our Lord make known the whole of his teachings. He had an elect out of the elect. First came twelve out of the many, and then came three out of the twelve. These three were admitted to special manifestations, which the other nine did not share. As if to carry the principle of election to the utmost extent, one was chosen out of the three, who enjoyed a peculiar personal love, and leaned his head upon his Lord's bosom, as the other two never did. We are happy to be admitted, by the key of inspiration, into the inner chamber of our Lord's private conferences.

On this occasion, *our Lord's communings were with the leaders of his band*. Those who have to lead others need more instruction than the rest. It needs more grace to lead than to follow. No man can give out what he has not received. If you are to be a fountain of living waters to others, you must be filled yourself from the fulness of God. Dear brethren and sisters, you whom the Lord has chosen to be vessels of mercy to others, take care that you wait much upon him yourselves, and are much with him in secret retirement. Live near to God, that you may bring others near. I remember sitting, one rainy day, in an inn, at Cologne, looking out of a window upon a square. There was not much to see, but what was to see I did see, as I occasionally looked

up from my writing. I saw a man coming to a pump that stood in the middle of the square, and from that pump he filled a vessel. A little while after, I saw the same man again filling his buckets. All that morning I saw no one else, but only that one water-loving individual man, filling his buckets again and again. I thought to myself, "What can he be? Why is he always drawing water?" Then I perceived that he was a water-carrier, a bearer of water to families in the adjoining streets. Well might he often come to the fountain himself, since he was supplying others. You that are water-carriers for thirsty souls must needs come often to the living water yourselves, and be thankful that your Master is always willing to meet you, and give you rich supplies. He graciously waits to take you apart in the way, and speak to you things which you need to hear and tell. Take care that you hear well that which you are commissioned to publish to all the world. Take good note of this, ye who instruct others: neglect not the yielding of your ear to your Lord quite as completely as your tongue. Hear him that you may speak of him. Be ye sure that ye are much with your Lord alone, that you may have him much with you in public.

When our Lord, on this occasion, spoke to the twelve, the time was significant: *it was on the way to a great trial*. To him his coming suffering was the sum of all trial. He was about to be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was about to fall upon him, that with his stripes we might be healed. But it was to be a time of great trial to the disciples also. Inasmuch as they loved their Lord, they would sympathize with his sufferings and death. Inasmuch as they trusted in him, it would be a sharp trial to their faith to see him dying on the cross, vanquished by his remorseless enemies. Inasmuch as they loved his company, they would weep and lament, and feel like orphaned children when he was taken from them. Therefore they must be favoured with a special private interview, to prepare them for the coming ordeal. Have you never noticed how our Lord, before the coming to us of a great tribulation, strengthens our hearts by some heavenly visitation? Either before or after affliction, it has happened to me to enjoy very special manifestations of the Well-Beloved. At such junctures he brings us into his banqueting house, and his banner over us is love, that we may go down to the battle like men refreshed by a feast. He gives us a joyful bracing up, that we may be ready for to-morrow's stern service. I feel that it is so; and I pray that each of you may know, by personal experience, how wise is your Redeemer's foresight; and how, by the communion apart, he prepares us for that which we are to meet at the end of the way. A drink from the brook of fellowship by the way will make you ready for the heat of the conflict. A word from his myrrh-dropping lips will perfume the air, even of the valley of death-shade. Speak to us, Lord, and we will not heed the howlings of the dog of hell.

When our Master thus took the twelve apart, we may say of his conversation, that *it was upon choice themes*. Our Lord's converse is always holy and suitable for the occasion. *He spoke to them of the Scriptures*. Luke says, "He took unto him the twelve, and said unto

them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." Blessed theme—the Word of the Lord by his prophets and the fulfilment thereof. Have you never noticed how our divine Lord delights to speak upon the Scriptures? How often does he enforce his teaching by "as the scripture hath said"! If he has only two of them, and they are walking on the road, we read, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Communion with Christ Jesus must be based on the Word of the Lord. If you speak half a word derogatory of holy Scripture, your fellowship will evaporate. Men talk about building upon Christ, and not upon the Scriptures; but they know not what they say; for our Lord continually established his own claims by appealing to Moses and the prophets. They would be Christo-centric, they say: I only wish they would. But if they take Christ for a centre, they will inevitably have the Scriptures for a centre too; and these men neither want the one nor the other. They care nothing for the centre; they only want to do away with the circumference, that they may roam at their own proud wills. Our Lord made the written Word to be the reason for many of his acts: he did this, and he did not do that, because of what the Scriptures had said. He comes not to take away the law and the prophets, yea, not a jot or a tittle does he destroy, so careful is he of the Scriptures of truth. We learn from him to believe not only in inspired words, but in inspired jots and tittles. They that have been much with Christ always show a profound reverence for the Word of God. I have never yet met with a person worthy to be called a saint who did not love and revere the inspired Book. I have heard in the last days the newly-coined word "bibliolatry", which is meant to set forth the imaginary crime of worshipping the Bible. I know not who may be guilty of the offence: I have never met with such idolaters. When I do, I will try to show them their error; at present I am too much occupied with the enemies of the Bible to think much of its too ardent friends, if such there be. While the word may be used in an accusation against us, it most surely is a confession on the part of those who use it that they see nothing special about the Scriptures, and are angry with those who do. Let them speak as they will, O Lord, "my heart standeth in awe of thy Word." I would be numbered with the men who tremble at thy Word. The words of the Holy Ghost are more than words to me. I tremble lest I should sin against *him* by sinning against them. I would not take away a word from the Book of this prophecy, nor add thereunto; but let it stand as it is; for here it is that Jesus meets us and communes with us. He opens the Scriptures to our understanding, and then he opens our understanding to receive the Scriptures. He makes us hear his voice in these chapters; yea, we see himself in them.

"Here I behold my Saviour's face  
Almost in every page."

We cannot look up to heaven and see Jesus amid the celestial splendours; but he lovingly looks down from the throne of his glory into the looking-glass of the Word, and when we look into it we see

the sweet reflection of his face. As in a mirror, his countenance is displayed by Scripture. O believers, love the Word of God! Prize every letter of it, and be prepared to answer the cold, carping words of critics, who know nothing of the benediction which comes to us through every line of inspiration. These are they who would cruelly divide the living child, for it does not belong to them; but we will have no sword come near it, for it is our love: it is life and bliss to us. Our Lord, in his most private intercourse with our souls, speaks in, and by, and through the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Ghost.

But the chief theme that our Lord dwelt upon was *his own suffering even unto death*. Beloved, our Lord Jesus has said many delightful things; and let him say what he will, his voice is as angels' music to our ear; but from the cross his voice is richest in consolation. We never come so near to Jesus—at least, such is my experience—as when we gaze upon his bloody sweat, or see him robed in shame, crowned with thorns, and enthroned upon the cross. Our Lord's incomparable beauties are most visible amid his griefs. When I see him on the cross, I feel that I must borrow Pilate's words, and cry, "Behold the man!" Covered with his own blood from the scourging, and about to be led away to be crucified between two thieves, you look into his inmost heart, and behold what manner of love he bore towards guilty men. We know not Christ till he putteth on his crimson garments. I know not my beloved when he is only to me as the snow-white lily for purity; but when, in his wounding, he is red as the rose, then I perceive him. "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." A suffering Saviour bears the palm for me: a wounded Saviour is my Lord and my God. The lower he went for my redemption, the higher does he rise in my soul's loving esteem. He saw this when he said, "I, if I be lifted up"; for indeed it was a lifting up for him to die upon the cruel gibbet. To the wondering universe the Son of God is lifted to a height of wondering admiration, by his becoming obedient unto death, out of love to his chosen. He is lifted up in every grateful heart, and shall be lifted up for ever. Our fellowship with Jesus largely flows along the great deep of his suffering; and to me, at least, it is then deepest, truest, and sweetest.

Our Lord talked to the twelve of his sufferings in great detail, of which we will speak further on; but he did not shrink from dwelling upon his death, nor did he stop there, but *foretold his rising again*. In each of the three accounts he appears to end the story of his passion by saying that on the third day he would rise again from the dead. That was a glorious climax—"The third day he shall rise again." Oh, that blessed doctrine of the resurrection! If our Lord's record ended at the cross, it might drive us to despair; but he is declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. That he was raised from the dead makes us see the merit, the power, the great reward of his death. He that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, even he will make us perfect in every good work to do his will. Whenever the Master comes very near to us in his gracious condescension, he shows us not only that he

shed his blood for us, but that he rose again, and ever liveth to carry on our cause. When you worship most closely, you will worship him that lived, and died, and rose again, and now liveth for ever and ever. This is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is not a teacher only, or a bright example merely; but one whose death is the source of our salvation, and whose resurrection and eternal glory are the guarantee and foretaste of our everlasting bliss. A living, dying, risen Christ is one with whom we have joyful fellowship; and if we know him not in this character, we do not know him at all.

Furthermore, he conversed with them upon *their share in all this*. They were one with him in that which would befall him. He says, "Behold *we* go up to Jerusalem." True, they would have no share in the scourging, and the spitting, and the crucifixion. He must tread that winepress alone. But yet they would with him carry the cross in the near future, and with him deny themselves during the rest of their lives. Henceforward, it would not be only Jesus the Lord who would bear witness for God and righteousness, but the followers of the Crucified One would unite in testimony to the same truth, for the same great purpose. It was well for him to speak to them on such a practical theme: they would be cheered and comforted on after days when they remembered that he had told them of these things. He will draw us into very intimate communion if we are willing to take up his cross and bear his reproach. We lose much when we quit the separated path because it is rough, for we lose our Lord's sweet company. Oh, for grace to love the rough paths, because we see his footprints upon them!

They listened to this private talk, but we are told by Luke that *it was very much lost upon them*, because they did not understand him. "And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Yet, say you, "it was very simple." Possibly that is why they did not understand it. Numbers of people imagine that they understand mysteries, and yet the simplicities of the faith are hid from their eyes because they are gazing after abstruse doctrines. They search after difficult things and miss the plain truth. We groan as we wantonly dive into a profound abyss; and yet we stand confounded over a little transparent stream, which, to wade through, would bring us bliss. When our Lord told the twelve that he would die, they imagined that it was a parable, concealing some deep mystery. They looked at one another, and they tried to fathom where there was no depth, but where the truth lay on the surface. The deep things of God thousands will pry into; but yet these are not saving matters, nor are they of any great practical value. Fixed fate, free-will, predestination, prophecy, and the like, these have small bearings upon our salvation from sin; but in the death of our Lord lies the kernel of the matter. Beloved, when we try to commune with Jesus, let us wear the garments of simplicity. It is the serpent who trades in subtlety, but I would have you remember "the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus." There is in him a depth which we cannot fathom; but his every word is pure truth, and those things which are necessary are made so plain that he who runs may read, and he who reads may run. Believe him

to mean what he says, and take his promises as they stand, and his precepts in their plain meaning; and, oh, if we do this, we shall be made greatly wise! Do not confuse your minds with doctrinal riddles, nor amuse your souls with spiritual conundrums; but believe in him who is Jesus, the faithful and true, who makes known to us the heart of the Father. Believe that he died in our stead. Believe that he took our sin upon him, and carried it all away. Believe that we are justified through his resurrection, and are made to live because he lives. Hypotheses and critical doubts we may leave to the dogs that first sniffed them out; but as for us, we will be as children who eat the bread their Father gives them, and ask no questions as to the field in which the wheat was reaped, and raise no debates as to the mill at which the corn was ground.

Thus, you see, the private conversations of our Lord with the twelve dealt with his sufferings and death, and his communications come home to our hearts in proportion as we are prepared to receive them in childlike simplicity.

II. Secondly, we will now turn our minds to THE PRIVATE THOUGHTS OF OUR LORD JESUS. We shall not be presumptuous if we humbly enquire—What were the thoughts of our Lord at the time? When he had called them quite apart, and spoken to them, we may be quite sure that what he said to them was the outcome of his innermost meditations.

*Our Lord was forecasting his death in all its mournful details.* Do you not know that frequently it is more painful to anticipate death than it is actually to die? Yet our Lord dwelt upon his sufferings, even to their minutiae. A person was speaking to me the other day of a painful operation which he was bound to undergo. There was no probability that he could get into the hospital for another month or two, and he remarked that he greatly wished that the operation could have been performed sooner; “for”, said he, “it is so painful to be looking forward to a matter so distressing. Let it be soon”, was his cry. Our Lord was like a grain of wheat which is cast into the ground, and lies there awhile before it dies. He was buried, as it were, in prospective agony; immersed in suffering, which he foresaw. In the thought of the cross he endured it before he felt the nails. The shadow of his death was upon him before he reached the tree of doom. Yet he did not put away the thought, but dwelt upon it as one who tastes a cup before he drinks it to the dregs. After so deliberate a testing, is it not all the more marvellous that he did not refuse the draught?

Did he not remember *his engagement to go through with our redemption*? “Lo, I come”, said he: “in the volume of the Book it is written of me.” He had pledged himself by solemn covenant, and in the Book it was written that he would stand in our stead, and give his life an offering for sin. From this suretyship he never departed. He knew that the Father would bruise him and put him to grief in the approaching day of his anger. He knew that the wicked would pierce his hands and his feet. He knew all that would occur, and he started not back from the pledge which he had given in the council chamber of eternity that his life should be rendered up as a ransom for many.

It were well if we also remembered our vows to God, and the obligations under which we are placed by his great love.

Our Lord's thoughts *took the form of a resolution to do the Father's will to the end*. He set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. Nothing could make him look aside. He had undertaken, and he would go through with it. Unless it should prove possible for us to be saved otherwise, he would not set aside that cup which his Father had given him to drink. The thought of our perishing he could not bear: that was not to be tolerated. He would suffer all imaginable and unimaginable woe sooner than desert the cause he had espoused. He was straitened—so he described it—straitened till his labour was accomplished. He was like a man pent up against his will: he longed to be discharging his tremendous task. He had an awful work to do, an agonizing suffering to bear, and he felt fettered until he could be at it: "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He was as a hostage bound for others, longing to be set free. He longed to be bearing the penalty to which he had voluntarily subjected himself by his covenant suretiship. He therefore thought upon that "obedience unto death" which he was determined and resolved to render.

*He had an eye all the while to you and to me.* While he was thinking of death he was chiefly regarding those for whom he would suffer. I doubt not that there flashed before that mighty mind the individuals who make up the vast host of his redeemed; and among them there were insignificant individuals, such as we are. Out of his strong love to us, even to us, he determined to pay our ransom price in death: it was part of his solace that he would deliver you and me. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." He made a voluntary offering of himself for me, before he actually died; often and often surrendering himself in purpose, before the cross was reared for the actual offering up of his body once for all.

Then there came into his mind, also, the thought of *the grand sequel of it all*. He should rise again. On the third day, it would all be over, and the recompense would begin. A few hours of bitter grief; a night of bloody sweat, a night and a morning of mockery, when he should be flouted by the abjects, and made nothing of by the profane; a direful afternoon of deadly anguish on the cross, and of dark desertion by Jehovah; and then the bowing of the head, and a little rest in the grave for his body; and on the third day the light would break upon mankind, for the Sun of righteousness would arise with healing in his wings. The light that would come when he should rise would lighten the Gentiles, and be the glory of his people Israel. He would then have said, "It is finished", and he would shortly afterward ascend to reap his reward in personal glorification, and in receiving gifts for men—yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

*Surely our Lord's thoughts were all the while upon his Father!* He remembered ever the beloved Father to whom he was to be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That twenty-second psalm, which might well be our Lord's on the Cross, is full of God: it is an appeal to God. As our Lord went on his way with the twelve, conversing upon the road, they must have seen that he was in close

communion with God. There was about him a deep solemnity of spirit, a rapt communion with the Unseen, a heavenly walking with God, even beyond his usual wont. This, mixed with his deeply-fixed resolve, and that stern joy which only they can feel who are resolved to accomplish a great purpose through bowing to the divine will, let it cost what it may. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus was everything to him, and in all his acts his heart was set upon Jehovah's glory.

I wish that I had time for my subject, but it is overwhelming me. I can only open the door, and bid you look into the private thoughts of him whose thoughts are priceless gems, whereas yours and mine are as the pebbles of the brook. What meditations were his! How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O Christ! How great is the sum of them! Wonderful things didst thou ponder in thy soul on those days of thy nearing passion!

III. Now we will have a few moments as to OUR LORD'S DWELLING ON DETAILS. I do not want to preach. I wish to be a kind of fugleman for your thoughts, just setting the example by thinking first that you may follow. May the sacred Spirit now lead you quietly into the points upon which our Lord so calmly enlarged!

Note well what our Lord said about his sufferings. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed." Stop there: "*Betrayed*"! It is as though I heard the deep boom of a death-knell. "*Betrayed*"! "*Betrayed*"! To die, ay, that is not a word with a sting in it to him! But "*Betrayed*"!—that means sold by cruel treachery. It means that one who ate bread with him lifted up his heel against him. It means that a man who was his familiar acquaintance, with whom he walked to the house of God in company, sold him for a paltry bribe. "*Betrayed*", for thirty pieces of silver! A goodly price, indeed, for the blood of such a friend! "*Betrayed*"! Hear how he cries: "If it was an enemy, then I could have borne it." "*Betrayed*"! It was no stranger; it was no bloodhound of the Pharisees who scented him out in the garden; but "*Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place.*" Betrayed with a kiss, and with a friendly word! Handed over to them who sought his blood by one who ought to have defended him to the death. "*Betrayed*"! It is a dreadful word to be set here before the passion, and it throws a lurid light over it all. We read—"The same night in which he was betrayed he took bread." This was the bitterest drop in his cup, that he was betrayed.

And still is he *betrayed*! If the gospel dies in England, write on its tomb, "*Betrayed.*" If our churches lose their holy influence among men, write on them, "*Betrayed.*" What care we for infidels? What care we for those who curse and blaspheme? They cannot hurt the Christ. His wounds are those which he receives in the house of his friends. "*Betrayed*"! O Saviour, some of us have been betrayed; but ours was a small sorrow compared with thine; for thou wast betrayed into the hands of sinners by one who claimed to be thy friend, by one who was bound by every tie to have been thy faithful follower. "*Betrayed*"! Beloved, I cannot bear the word. It falls like a flake of fire into my bosom, and burns its way into my inmost soul. "*Betrayed*"! And such a faithful friend as he! So full of love; and yet betrayed!

Read on. "The Son of man shall be betrayed *unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes.*" The chief priests ought to have been his best defenders always. They were the leaders of the religion of the day: these chief priests were the guides of Israel. When Israel bowed before the Lord, the chief priests presented the sacrifice. Yet these were our Lord's most bitter enemies: by their malice he was condemned, and crucified. It is hard to have the professed servants of God against you. The scribes, too, those Bible writers and Bible interpreters; these also were fierce against him. From the hands of scribes he would have less mercy than from soldiers. I said, the other Sabbath-day, what I now repeat: I would rather be bitten by wolves than by sheep. It is wretched work to have those against you who are reckoned to be the best men of the time. It was little to him to have Herod against him, or Pilate, and the Romans as his foes, for they knew no better; but it was heartrending work to see the men of the Sanhedrim, the men of prayers and phylacteries, the men of the temple and of the synagogue, arrayed against him. Yet into their hands he falls! Good Master, thou art delivered into the hands of men who know no mercy, for they hate thee for thy faithful words! They can compromise, and thou canst not; they can trifle with language, and thou canst not; they can play the hypocrite, and that thou canst not do!

Read on: "*and they shall condemn him to death.*" They did not leave the sentence of condemnation to the Romans, but themselves passed sentence upon their victim. The priests, whose office made them types of himself, and the scribes, who were the official interpreters of his Father's Book, these condemned the holy One and the just. They count him worthy of death: nothing less will serve their turn. This the Christ could plainly see; and it was no small trial to come under the censure of his country's governors. They could not put him to death themselves. If they dared they would have stoned him, and that would have broken the prophecy, which declared that in death his enemies must pierce his hands and his feet. They can condemn him to death, but they cannot execute the sentence. Yet none the less this iron entered into his soul, that those who were professedly the servants of God condemned him to die. If you have ever tasted of this cup you know that it has wormwood in it.

Notice, further: "*and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.*" In our Master's death all men conspired: not half the world, but all of it, must have a hand in the tragedy of Calvary. The Gentile must come in. He takes his share in this iniquity, for Pilate condemns him to the cross. The chief priests hand him over to Pilate, and he commits him to the Roman soldiery, that they may do the cruel deed. They "delivered him to the Gentiles." The Master dwells on this. It opens another gate through which his sorrows poured. At the hands of the Gentiles he dies, and for Gentiles he suffered. Beloved, I like to see how the Master notes this point. He makes distinctions; he does not say that he should be condemned by Pilate; but he is condemned to die by the chief priests, and then he is delivered to the Gentiles. He sees it all, and dwells upon the points of special interest. O believer, behold thy Lord bound and taken away to the hall of Pilate. See

him delivered to the Gentiles, while his fellow-countrymen cry, "We have no king but Cæsar"! They shout, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" and the Gentiles carry out their cruel demand. Unanimity among our persecutors must add greatly to the sting of their unkindness.

These three words follow—"To mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him." Mark puts in, "To spit upon him." That was a sad part of the *mockery*. What dreadful scorning he endured! from the Jews when they blindfolded him, and buffeted him; and from the Gentiles when they put on him a purple robe, and thrust a reed into his hand, and bowed the knee, and cried before him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They plucked his hair, they smote his cheeks, they spat in his face. Mockery could go no farther. It was cruel, cutting, cursed scorn. Ridicule sometimes breaks hearts that are hardened against pain; and the Christ had to bear all the ridicule that human minds could invent. They were maliciously witty. They jested at his person; they jested at his prayers. They mocked him when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Herein is grief immeasurable, and the Saviour foresaw it, and spoke about it.

That was not all: *they scourged him*. I will not harrow your hearts by trying to describe scourging as it existed among the Romans. The scourge was an infamous instrument of torture. It is said to have been made of the sinews of oxen, intertwined with the hucklebones of sheep, and slivers of bone; so that every time the lashes fell, they ploughed the back, and laid bare the white bones of the shoulders. It was an anguish more cruel than the grave; but our Lord endured it to the full. They mocked him, and they scourged him; he dwells upon each separate item. Some of our most touching hymns upon our Lord's passion are spoken of by the cold-blooded critics of to-day as sensuous. "I cannot bear", says one, "to hear so much about the physical agonies of Christ." Beloved, we must preach the physical agonies of Christ more than ever, because this is an age of affectation, in which his mental and spiritual griefs are no more apprehended than those of his body. The device is to be rid of his sufferings altogether. This age is as fond of physical pleasure as any that has gone before it, and it must be made to know that physical pain was a great ingredient in the cup which our Lord drank for man's redemption. Very many are so unspiritual, that they will never be reached by high-soaring language, appealing to a delicacy which they do not possess. We must exhibit the bleeding Saviour, if we would make men's hearts bleed for sin. The cries of his great grief must ring in their ears, or they will remain deaf. Let us not be ashamed to dwell upon points upon which the Lord himself dwelt.

Then he adds, "*to crucify him*." Here I will come to a pause. Behold him! Behold him! His hands are extended and cruelly nailed to the wood. His feet are fastened to the tree, and he himself is left to bear the weight of his body upon his hands and feet. See how the nails tear through the flesh as the weight drags the body down and enlarges the wounds! See, he is in a fever! His mouth is dried up and has become like an oven, and his tongue cleaves to the roof thereof! Crucifixion was an inhuman death, and the Saviour was "obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross." The wonder is, that he could foresee this, and speak of it so calmly. He meditates upon it, and speaks to choice familiar friends about it. Oh, the mastery of love, strong as death! He contemplates the cross, and despises its shame.

Thus he dwells on it all, and then closes by saying, "*and the third day he shall rise again.*" We must never forget *that*, for he never forgets it. Ah! you may think as much as ever you will of Calvary, and let your tears flow like rivers. You may sit at Gethsemane, and say, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for my Lord!" But, after all, you must wipe those tears away, for he is not in the grave; he rose again on the third day. O blessed morning! not to be celebrated by an Easter once in the year; but to be commemorated on every first day of the week, more than fifty times in each year. Every seven days that the sun shines upon us brings us a new record of his resurrection. We may sing every Lord's-day morning—

"To-day he rose and left the dead,  
And Satan's empire fell:  
To-day the saints his triumph spread,  
And all his wonders tell."

The first day of the week stands for ever the remembrance of our risen Lord, and on that day he renews his special communings with his people. We believe in him; we rise in him; we triumph in him; and "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." Thus, you see, I have not preached my own thoughts, but I have set you thinking. Treasure these thoughts in your minds. All this week sweeten your souls with the sacred spices of our Lord's thoughts and words when near his death. God bless this meditation to you by his Holy Spirit!

If you have never believed in him, may you believe in him at once! Why delay? He is able to save unto the uttermost, believe in him just now. And if you have believed, keep on believing, and let your believing grow more intense. Think more of Jesus, and love him more, and serve him more, and grow more like him. Peace be unto you for his dear sake! Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew xvi. 13—28.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—287, 273, 281.

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During last week Mr. SPURGEON appeared to be making good progress towards recovery; but on Saturday he suffered a serious relapse. His condition causes grave anxiety to the Church at the Tabernacle, and all his friends. Their hope is, that the Lord will yet raise him up in answer to the prayers of the thousands of believers who are continually pleading for him.