

round the neck of the criminal and afterwards nailed to the cross over his head. Written over—Matt "Set up over his head." Only the ordinary Roman cross affords space overhead for the tablets. **The King of the Jews**—This was written in three languages, Hebrew, the language of the Jews, Greek, the language of commerce, and Latin, the language of the Romans. Each evangelist gives a different form, but the sense is the same in all. The letters I. N. R. I. stand for this title in Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth, the king (Rex) of the Jews." The chief priests felt the sneer at their national pretensions contained in the words, and endeavored to get Pilate to change it to "Who said 'I am king of the Jews.'" But now that there was no danger to himself personally, the unprincipled governor could be firm enough. He refused to alter it, so that it remained to all the world a proclamation of the royalty of Jesus (John 19: 21, 22).

**27. The thieves**—R. V. "robbers." Matthew says, "Then were there two thieves crucified with him." Another band of soldiers and two new victims appear upon the scene just as the work of crucifying Jesus had been completed. The thieves were possibly followers of Barabbas. Jesus was placed between them. "This arrangement was a combination devised by Pilate. First the crucified Jesus is decked with the title King of the Jews; then two robbers as the symbol of his Jewish kindom are crucified" (Lange).

**28.** (Isa. 53: 12; Luke 22: 37). This verse is omitted in the R. V. Its genuineness, however, in Luke 22: 37 is undoubted.

**II. MOCKED.** **29.** They that passed by—(Ps. 22: 7, 8). The crowds that went into and out of the city, Railed—Jeered at him with malicious joy, using opprobrious terms. **Wagging their heads**—(Compare Job 16: 4; Ps. 109: 25; Isa. 37: 22). The gesture added emphasis to their bitter words. **Ha!**—An ironical exclamation of amazement. When they read the superscription the contrast between Jesus' claims and his present position excited their ribald mirth. Thou that destroyed—From these words we see how successful the chief priests were in circulating the words of the false witnesses. (See Matt. 26: 61). Yet the words he really spoke were now being fulfilled (John 2: 19-22).

**30.** Matt. inserts the clause "If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross," where the emphasis is on the word "Son." "If God does not interpose to help him he can be no Son of his."

**31. Mocking**—They had come to feast their eyes on his agonies. "They were not ashamed to add their heartless reproaches to those of the evil few. Unrestrained by the noble patience of the sufferer, unsated by the accomplishment of their wicked vengeance, unmoved by the sight of helpless anguish, and the look of eyes that began to glaze in death, they congratulated one another under his cross, with scornful insolence" (Farrar). **Mocking**

**him among themselves** (R. V.)—These were the words they passed from one to another, doubtless uttered loud enough to reach the sufferer's ears. **He saved others**—"There is peculiar venom in the sarcasm uttered by these rulers; as it actually taunts him with his miracles of mercy, and, without denying their reality, exults in the supposed loss of his saving power, just when it was needed for his own deliverance" (Alexander). Others understand this taunt as implying that his inability to save himself proved that all his miracles were frauds, or by the power of the evil one. **Himself he cannot save**—Words of mockery, but to us the very truth on which all our hopes are built. Because he would save others he must sacrifice himself. Their taunts are given more at length in Matthew's narrative.

**32. The Christ**—As he had claimed to be before the high priest. The Messiah. **The King of Israel**—As he had acknowledged to Pilate that he was. What cruel derision! What pitiless hate! **Descend now from the cross**—"He who refused to come down from the cross, came up from the grave; and it was a greater matter to destroy death by rising than to save life by descending" (Gregory). **See and believe**—So far from believing they would have said that the nails were not properly fastened in. They resisted the far greater miracle of his resurrection (Matt. 28: 14, 15). "For this very reason we believe; because Christ did not straightway come down from the cross, but finished then his work" (Bengel). They that were crucified with him—At first both seem to have joined in, but one of them repented, and to him was spoken the second word from the cross: "*Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*" (Luke 23: 39-43). During this period of three hours from nine to twelve o'clock Jesus commended his mother to the care of John, and uttered the third word, "*Woman behold thy son*" \* \* \* "*Behold thy mother*" (John 19: 26, 27).

**III. DYING.** **33. The sixth hour**—Twelve o'clock. **There was darkness**—This could not have been an eclipse of the sun, for it was full moon. "The gloom made it appear as though the whole earth were bewailing the ignominious death which the Son of God was dying" (Meyer). Contemporary heathen writers record the darkness and the earthquake (Matt. 27: 51). The whole land—or "earth." If the passages quoted from heathen writers refer to this event, then it must have been observed beyond the limits of Judea. **The ninth hour**—Three o'clock. The hour of the evening sacrifice.

**34. Jesus cried with a loud voice**—A voice still strong, shewing that the flame of life did not flicker out with him, but that his death was an act of his own will. **Eloi**—The words are given in the Aramaic, a language which bore a relation to Hebrew, similar to that which Italian bears to Latin. It was the