

Him in the midst, on each side a thief and Him in the midst. But place Him where they might, or where they would, still He was the distinguished One, still distinguished whether they put Him to death apart and by Himself, or whether they placed Him to one side, or whether they hang Him in the midst, on each side a thief; He was, and would be, and will be, the most distinguished. Place Him where they would, and in what position, and with what society they might, still he was the chief object, the chief object of their malice, the chief object of the mockers that passed by; and thus still He is the centre of many a heart, and many a land. He could not but be distinguished, place Him where they would, and how they would. There were three crosses, there were three victims; but we only speak of, and think of, one cross. We only know the name of one of the victims. His name is Jesus; the others! their names are not known. We only preach of one of these victims. The other victims are there, but we preach not them. Other crosses are there, but we notice them but little—just enough to know that they are there. All these three crosses were laden and blood-stained, and yet but one of them is distinguished. And what makes it to be so? It is because of Him who was on the cross—Him that hung there—"Him!" What was He then? Who was He! "With Him," we read, "With Him" they crucify two thieves."

"With Him." The writer of the Gospel may be regarded, in one point of view, as if he spake in deep indignation when he wrote this. With Him! Oh daring insult! Oh bold dishonor! "With Him!" "With Him" who never stole aught from any man, but was always giving, with Him they crucify two thieves. With Him who did no wickedness, who did not "cry even, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets," with Him they crucify lawless and bloody men. "Him!" who had never done evil, in whom there was no guile, whom none of them could convince of sin, with Him they crucify two thieves. "Him!" It was He that had restored sight to their blind. It was He who had healed their diseases. It was He that had raised even their dead. It was He that had spoken as never man spoke. And they had cried for His death, and they crucify him, and with Him they crucify two thieves. "Him!" of whom many had said "this is that Prophet." Is not this, many had said, our Messiah. Yes indeed He was all that and more than that, even He, with whom they crucify two thieves. For it was He who created these heavens, and that sun, and these woods, and this earth, and all its beauty of mountains, and hills, and vales, and lakes, and all that is unseen in the deep and on land. He is the Creator of them all, even He with whom they crucify two thieves. It was He who said "Let there be light, and there was light." It was He who said "Let us make man in our own image." He is the Creator of the ends of the earth; the Holy One, the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, even He, and none