

Sixth Passion Sermon

Christ is Delivered To Pilate.—Judas Hangs Himself.—The Potter's Field.

Martin Luther, "Sixth Passion-Sermon," Matthias Loy, ed., *Dr. Martin Luther's House-Postil, or, Sermons on the Gospels for the Sundays and Principal Festivals of the Church Year. Volume 2. Two Volumes. Second Edition.* (Columbus, Ohio; J. A. Schulze, 1884), pp. 134-153.

Matt. 27, 1-10

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death: and when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed Him. when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this, day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

You have heard, my friends, how the Lord Jesus was first led to Annas, who then sent Him bound to Caiaphas, where the chief priests and scribes were assembled, and where these latter and the entire council sought false witness against Him, and finally falsely accused Him of blasphemy, for which, they said, He ought to die. We expect to speak further on this hereafter.

Next we find Him brought before Pilate; we shall see what happened there. But before we speak of this, we ought to know what was, after all, the reason why the chief spiritual and temporal rulers at Jerusalem were so highly incensed and embittered against the Lord that they flock together by night, make inquisition concerning Him at an unseasonable hour, and are in such uneasy haste to have Him destroyed, at the same time being unable to allege aught against Him except invented lies. It would be too lengthy, however, to relate all this now; each one can read it for himself in the history written by the four Evangelists, or learn it during the year from the preaching of the Word at Church. The Lord Jesus excuses

neither the doctrine nor the life of these men, but censures both severely. Thus He calls them "an evil and adulterous generation," a "generation of vipers," and not the children of God, which they boast themselves to be, but "the children of the devil," because they can neither speak, teach, nor do that which is good. And shortly previous to this time, before He was taken, He gave them a final rebuke, calling down upon them, Matt. 23., the eight times uttered "woe!" And this it was that enkindled their hatred into such consuming flames, that lent cruelty to their enmity, and that made them so impetuous in the pursuit of their object, that Christ, being now in their power, had no opportunity to escape. Still, in order to give their savage, murderous hatred a plausible appearance, that is, to make it seem that their law fully authorized them to kill Christ, the high priest, as the Evangelists write, when he heard Christ say: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," rent his clothes and said: "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blas-

phemy. What think ye?" And all the others who were present said: "He is guilty of death." Soon after this they began to treat the dear Lord Jesus most miserably, not one among them having compassion on Him, but all of them enraged against Him like raving lions. The 22. and other Psalms tell us about this.

One thing, however, was still in their way. They knew very well that Pilate would care very little for that which they deemed sufficient cause for death; for He was a Gentile and had not received command of the Roman Emperor to execute the Jews because of their faith, — else he would have had to destroy all of them. For this reason they assembled when the morning was come, and, as Matthew writes, "took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death," that is, they considered what accusation they would bring against Him before Pilate. For they knew well enough that Pilate would not slay Christ on account of His having blasphemed in the judgment of the Jews. They found it necessary, therefore, to devise some specious, civil charge to be presented to Pilate, who was a temporal judge. For, by saying that Christ was a blasphemer, they could not have broken His neck.

Let us here see and learn how quick and venomous Satan is when men stand in need of advice how to kill Christ! The first word spoken by Pilate to Christ is his question: "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" This question clearly shows that, in this consultation of the Jews, they had agreed, as stated, to accuse the Lord Jesus before Pilate of desiring to excite sedition and to set Himself up for the king of the Jews. But what ground have they for such a charge? Where has Christ ever called Himself a king? Where has He attempted to pass Himself off as a lord? If they had been willing they might, on the other hand, have testified how He refused, departed and hid Himself, when the people attempted to take Him by force to make Him a king. They might have told too that He had commanded them not to keep back from Caesar that which belonged to him, but to render to him his due. Now, we must also consider that Pilate could hardly have been satisfied with bare accusations, but must certainly have demanded proofs. And how were these furnished? No doubt,

as follows. They had heard Christ confess to the chief priest that He was the Christ. Then they took the evidence of the Scriptures, showing from the Prophets how Christ should be a king. For Zechariah says: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation, &c.;" and Hosea, in his 3. chapter, "They shall seek David their king;" and many other passages express the same. Therefore, since the Lord acknowledges Himself to be the Christ, He thereby acknowledges Himself to be also the king of the Jews. Behold, how accurate the researches of the devil!

But concerning that which goes against them and might serve the Lord Jesus, they are silent. Where Zechariah says: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation," he immediately adds, "lowly," that is, He shall be a spiritual King, who shall justify His own that believe in Him, and deliver them from death and all evil, that they might have consolation through Him against sin and God's wrath, — not a temporal king having business with money and possessions. He implies that God has ordained other kings who should control nations and individuals and possess opulence and power; but that these kings should not impart righteousness and salvation, which gifts are brought and bestowed alone by this King, of whom the Prophet says, "Behold thy King cometh," &c. These villains do not mention a syllable of this, but the naked idea that Christ had made Himself the king of the Jews is what they dress up for Pilate's sight. Thus Pilate, who would not have assisted them had their charge not exceeded what it was at first, viz., heresy and blasphemy, was beguiled into participating in their work.

Just so it goes to-day; for civil governments, at any rate, usually have the fault that they care very little for the kingdom of God and for religion. When kings and princes enjoy allegiance, tribute and royal glory, they are careless about everything else, and thus are satisfied that Pilate's throne should be the only one before which Christ appears. ... But the chief priests and elders of the people, [including some church leaders in these days], come and accuse Christ before Pilate; they instigate the temporal authorities, such as emperors, kings and princes against the Gospel, as the

Jews incited Pilate against Christ, saying that it teaches insurrection and that, unless its influence is checked in time, every subject will become a rebel. They urge the authorities to oppose the Gospel with zeal, if they would not have prosperity and happiness to forsake their scepter. Yea, these bloody, papal asses preach to the princes that it is the Gospel's fault that the Turk assails us and that we are not more successful in repelling him, — that the Gospel must be blamed for the great failures in our crops and for our being surrounded by misfortunes. By this means they arouse Pilate, who otherwise is not at all concerned about Christ and His preaching, to expose the Lord, and finally to command Him to be nailed to the cross.

Now, it cannot be helped that such falsehoods and virulent slander bring about painful results. But for this very reason have the Evangelists left us this history, so that, when like things come upon us, we may patiently bear them, saying, My Lord Jesus had to suffer the same. The servant is not better than his lord. Pilate would have permitted Christ to preach and perform miracles all His life, and would never have thought of interfering; but the high priests, the heartless horde, bring it to pass that Pilate as judge and Christ as criminal are brought together. ...

And so it is still; the Lord Jesus' greatest enemies are [some of today's church leaders]. When they have branded as heresy that which does not please them, or that which opposes them, they seek to hunt down the Gospel through worldly potentates; these latter must be their executioners and must, like Pilate, bedaub themselves with innocent blood, on the accusation and at the solicitation of these enemies. Pious Christian, bear it all! With thy Lord Jesus too they sported thus. Therefore, give thanks to God that thou art counted worthy to suffer for His name, as Luke tells us, in the 5. chapter of Acts, that the Apostles did! So much for the first part of our text.

The second part relates the terrible example of Judas. This the Evangelists so diligently portray that we may, as in a picture, recognize the peculiar character and nature of sin, and learn to shun it. For in Judas' case we see both how si-

lently sin at first creeps in, but also how it afterwards causes such a horrible end.

We have heard, on a former occasion, what a seemingly small beginning this monstrous sin of Judas had, viz., that it began with his natural avarice and love of money. But its real fountainhead we find in Judas' being such a godless hypocrite and such a wicked, desperate despiser of God. Thus, when the opportunity to make money out of the Lord Jesus presented itself, he regarded it a trifling matter to betray his innocent Lord and Master. Besides, he thinks it quite a prize that he can so soon possess himself of such an amount of money. At the Last Supper the Lord admonishes Judas so pointedly and so often, that he could not have misunderstood Him. But let the Lord preach to him and warn him ever so faithfully, it is all in vain; Judas does not lose sight of his object; his heart is riveted to the thirty pieces of silver! What a faithful, stern and earnest warning was not that which the Lord Jesus gave him, saying: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me;" again: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born!" Should not Judas have taken these words to heart? Should he not have repented, saying: Great God, what have I not suffered the devil to put into my soul, miserable fellow that I am! But he does nothing of the kind; on the contrary, when he is so faithfully warned, he even asks whether his intentions are known. He puts the question: "Master, is it I?" The Lord answers him: "Thou hast said," i. e., yes, thou art he. But this matter, as already said, gave him no care nor trouble, because it was the means by which he could obtain so much money.

This should be remembered; for if we wish a correct picture of sin it must be painted as seeming at first sight an indifferent, simple thing, which is not at all dangerous. In committing sin men do not concern themselves about God's wrath; they fear no misfortune and they regard sin not as a burden, but as a little feather which a breath can balance in the air or drive away. Therefore, when sin assails us we do not fear it; yea, we rejoice in it and love it, and we even think that the

more we can sin in doing our work, the better our work shall be done. Suppose we illustrate this by the case of an avaricious usurer, an adulterer or a drunkard. Upon such Paul passes an appalling judgment, when he says, 1 Cor. 6: "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor covetous, nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God." This terrible decree is written here, is preached too, and the very ones who are subject to such vices get to hear it; but they accept it no more than Judas accepted it. Could they only dispose of their property so as to make it yield them twenty or thirty per cent; could only their evil desires be satisfied; could they only have gay companions every day and be jolly and drunk every night, — then would they think themselves very fortunate and, neither caring for nor grieving over the judgment pronounced upon them, be in good spirits and perfectly merry.

This is spoken for the common people who grossly tread in Judas' footsteps. But exceedingly dreadful it is that to-day [some church leaders] persecute and condemn God's Word, the acknowledged truth, invent many base and blasphemous lies against this Word, and induce worldly potentates to use their power against it and to exterminate the truth of God and all who hold it, so that Judas' trade may be made to flourish as formerly. And then they are so utterly blind and obdurate that their conscience does not trouble them, and that they think it would be an excellent thing to overflow this land with blood. What blindness, — what diabolical enmity against Christ's Word and the true Church ! But more of this hereafter.

Adam preached the same thing to Cain, his son, and warned him against sin, when he perceived what hatred there was in his heart toward his brother Abel. He says to him, Gen. 4: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." By this he meant to say: Make thyself well acquainted with sin; for when it attacks a man it always is as a wild, rapacious beast, which pretends to be asleep and lets men handle and stroke it; no one fears and no one is hurt. Even as innocent as this does sin seem. It is a smooth, pretty kitten, which permits itself to be played with and caressed. But be

careful, saith Adam; it sleeps, indeed, but will not sleep forever. "Why not? Because it "lieth at the door," in a public place, where every one comes and goes; nothing easier, therefore, than that it should awake. And then it will be a furious lion, an angry bear, tearing to pieces and destroying all in its way. Now, as Adam had foretold to Cain, so it came. Adam commanded him to conquer sin, and not let sin rule and lead him. But Cain gave no heed; he let sin have its own way; he slew his brother. Sin did not rest long here; its sleep was soon over, and then it tortured Cain until he did not know where to stay. He dared not remain with his father and mother, and besides, had fears for his body and his life.

Let us mark well this second characteristic of sin! At first it sleeps and seems a trifling, harmless thing. But it sleeps not long, and when it awakes it becomes a grievous burden which we cannot bear without God's special help. This we see in the case of the traitor Judas. While sin rested, it was impossible for him to fear; the glossy fur deceived him so, that he did not perceive the sharp, poisonous claws. But its rest could not last a great while, for it lay at the door where it could be easily waked. Where all pleading and all admonition failed before, now a single moment comes and drives such terror to his soul that he knows not what to do. For when he sees the Lord led to Pilate he fears that the Lord's life is imperiled, is sorry, and now perceives, for the first time, what he has done. Now sin awakes and, according to its natural way, acts with such fury and horror that he cannot bear it. Before, he so loved the thirty pieces of silver that, for the sake of having them, he could betray and sell the Lord Jesus without a pang; now, the matter stands reversed. If he now had the money and wealth of all the world, he would give it all to save the Lord Jesus' life. Since it was love of money that made him so miserable, and his purpose to possess it that brought this sin upon him, he now hates money so, that he has neither rest nor peace in its possession, but runs after the high priests into the temple, confesses that he has done wrong, and offers to give them back the money if they will only liberate Jesus. And when the chief priests will not do this, to get rid of the money at all events he

casts it down at their feet. Now, this is the peculiar character of sin; when it awakes it so violently attacks conscience and preaches a sermon of such horrors that the frightened heart knows not what to do and what not to do. And sin inflicts the further calamity, that, as little as is the consolation which the poor creature finds in himself, so little too is the comfort he derives from others. Judas honestly tells the chief priests his troubles. Alas, he says, "I have sinned,—I have betrayed the innocent blood!" But how do they console him? "What is that to us? see thou to that," they tell him. They shove everything over to the shoulders of Judas, and let the intolerable load lie there, unwilling in the least to help the poor, frightened soul with words of consolation or of counsel.

Now follows the third and last calamity. For when it so happens that sin persists in castigating conscience, the devil does not loiter, but pokes and blows the fire until the red flames rage within, and all attempts at rescue seem vain. In such fear and agony Judas is urged on by Satan until he goes out quickly, and in his misery hangs himself. Now, this is the end which Satan from the beginning sought to bring about by sin. He who could, at the beginning, consider and credit this end, would surely pray and guard against it. But it is hidden; sin is very quiet, and does not disclose in the start what its final object is. So much for the history of poor, unhappy Judas, who for a trifle sold the Lord Jesus, and who not only did not enjoy this money, but also lost on its account body, life, soul and salvation.

Therefore, study well this example, and let its memory nevermore depart; for it is to help me and you and all of us to an accurate knowledge of sin, and to serve us as a shield against it. If we do not mark this example and learn from it to know sin, we are liable to be deceived by sin and are exposed to the damage which it does. For, in the first place, it is the nature of sin so to flatter and please the old Adam that he delights in it and loves it; but this lasts wily until sin awakes. Then, in the second place, follow trouble, toil, fear, danger, terrors, tremblings, despair and, finally, eternal death. Let us recognize these two features of sin from the case of Judas, and not suffer ourselves to be deluded like the world, which ac-

cepts neither instruction nor reproof, being deceived by sin's beautiful, fair and cheerful countenance! Many a citizen, peasant and nobleman knows how to make an easy living. If he has anything for sale, he tries to get the highest price. When he buys, he tries to buy as cheap as possible. He is not content with what his houses have brought him hitherto, but raises the rent. And When he disposes of money, wheat or other commodities, he has an eye to his best interests. Such a course soothes and pleases our Adam's nature. Every one thinks his shrewdness to have been admirable when he, by some means or other, has obtained and laid by in one year, say one, two or three hundred dollars, according to the nature of his business. Hence we see every one pursuing his daily bread, and this with all manner of haste.

This is the very sin of which Judas was guilty in the beginning of his career. The world to-day does just as Judas did; it does not fear this sin and thinks there is no danger in it. But why? Simply because sin rests and sleeps and rarely shows its nature in the start. Sin paints and adorns itself; it puts on the mask of beauty and of youth; in this way it hides its hideousness. But if we could at once unmask it and wash off its paint with strong lye, we would run away from it as from the devil. No one would consent to extortion and addict himself to avarice, if he knew what the consequence will be when sin begins to rack the conscience and when remorse comes. For the numerous examples which we have, prove that people who pursue only money and possessions, cannot in the last hour abandon their accustomed course of thought. In that hour their hearts are closed to all consolation from God's Word, for their thoughts are even then rambling through the counting-room, the market and the warehouse, and engaged with this or that debt not yet collected. In short, thorns have so enclosed them that they cannot flee; or else their consciences are so molested as to make them totally unfit for taking comfort.

What has been said applies not only to the bag of Judas, i.e., avarice, but to all sins. For, no matter where it sleeps, sin finally must awake, and it always then creates such wretchedness as was that of Judas. Still, this is done especially in

the true disciples of Judas, who, for the sake of money and possessions, oppose the Word of God, persecute the Gospel, and give occasion for false doctrine and idolatry. Such disciples are [seen today] who crowd around Judas' bag and fight for it. No wonder, for this bag is not prickly and thorny, but its touch is very soft and velvety; in other words, the world loudly applauds those who have succeeded in securing sufficient means for living at ease and in splendor. Besides, it seems a trifle to violate the Word of God in this respect or that, thus sinning against the acknowledged truth, and to act contrary to one's convictions; yea, it seems an easy thing for the prebendary who occupies the cathedral, and for the minister who moderates himself, to justify their unwillingness to speak the truth openly. For the world and the devil pay big wages for such work. But when sin awakes, the little, black, rabid dog, Remorse, will surely come, and touch and terrify thy conscience so, that thou shalt find consolation nowhere, and thus be hurled into despair by the machinations of the devil. Then shalt thou have received the same reward with "Judas.

It were well, therefore, to consider this danger in time, to forego [lofty Christian titles], Epicureanism and the like, to resolve to be a Christian, to further and confess God's Word, and to walk before God with a clear conscience. Even if we had no superabundance of bread, God would still give us our daily bread and not suffer us to starve, for He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."

The following, therefore, is what this history teaches. Since sin, at first, is quiet and sleeps, but afterward awakes and fills conscience with all misery, by which Satan then drives his victims into despair, we should beware of sin, do nothing against our better knowledge and, besides, ask God daily, yea, every moment, for His Holy Spirit, that He may not lead us into temptation, but mercifully save us from falling and shield us from sin. It has already been stated that we are not apprehensive of the evil results of sin, because sin is not awake in the beginning, but sleeps, and that deception and ruin, therefore, are very near us. For this reason we ought to pray without ceasing,

and be very careful everywhere, so that sin may not steal upon us unawares.

But when the fall has occurred and we have been deceived, and when sin, which slept at first, now awakes, appears to us and upbraids us, we must be prepared for this encounter, and from the example of Judas we can learn how to be prepared. For how clearly do we not see what was the matter with Judas! Satan converted his sin into a mountain so huge and lofty that it shut out from his sight God, together with His Word, His promises and His mercy; hence, he simply despairs. Now, when we trace this confusion back to its origin, can we deny that Judas could have consoled himself even in such great distress, had he not set at naught God's Word, but more eagerly studied and obeyed it? Having always despised and neglected the Word, is it to be wondered at that now, when he stands in need of its comfort and aid he must do without them? Therefore, as we must, on the one hand, guard ourselves, with godliness and constant prayer, against sleeping sin, so that we may not be deceived and seduced; so also, on the other hand, when sin awakes, and chastises and disturbs us, we must defend and support ourselves with the Holy Gospel. This Gospel shows us Christ as Him who suffered and made satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And in this Gospel we find that God, the Almighty Creator and Father, desires not the death of a sinner; but that He does desire the sinner to return and live, that is, to acknowledge and lament his sins and to hope for forgiveness through the Lord Jesus. But Judas had not these Gospel gifts; hence he despaired.

Again, Peter also fell shamefully, and experienced such pangs as those of Judas. Sin slept at first; in other words, his denying Christ did not seem specially dangerous to Peter; but it finally awakes and so torments his heart that he cannot sufficiently bewail his fall, or, as the Evangelists have it, "He went out and wept bitterly." But why is it that Peter does not hang himself like Judas? Simply because Peter, no doubt, remembered the Word of the Lord Jesus; this saved him. He must have remembered that the Lord had prophesied to him that he should fall, and also that He had comforted him, saying, as we read Luke 22., "Simon,

Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

This sermon Peter heard and kept. This Word was the staff that supported him; sin could not now crush him to earth; had it been otherwise, sin would have done with him as it did with Judas. God's Word saved him. O, learn this well, and thus be prepared for like emergencies; hear God's Word frequently; never go to bed and never rise from sleep without repeating one, two, three or four of its beautiful passages !

Christ says, Matt. 9: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 11: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Jno. 3: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned." Again, Jno. 3: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." Jno. 5: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Jno. 11: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." 1 Jno. 2: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." If we daily practice such and similar passages, and by practicing familiarize ourselves with them, we then possess the infallible remedy for all spiritual ailments. But unhappy Judas had not this remedy at hand.

We have more such examples. Dreadful was the fall of David; his was a more heinous sin than were the sins which king Saul committed in the beginning of his apostasy. How, then, are we to account for it that Saul cuts his throat, while David finds deliverance? Saul had not God's Word; therefore, when sin raged and reproached him, he could not defend himself; for he had nothing on which to lay hold. Sin, when it awaked, reproached David also, and with such severity that he himself pronounced his judgment, saying, that he had deserved to die. But in this time of need he holds to the word of the prophet Nathan, who tells him that God is gracious, and that He will not impute to him his sin. Let us, then, learn well this second lesson taught us here, viz., not only to shun sin, but also, when sin awakes, to be able to contend with it and to protect ourselves. But during our whole life we must prepare for such distress, equipping ourselves with the Word of God, else we shall have no aid nor counsel, as Judas' case shows plainly. How Judas rejoiced at first over the thirty pieces of silver! They were in his sight as a meadow mown, for sin rested not. But when sin awoke, these thirty pieces of silver became a burden which he could not bear, and so, to relieve his conscience of this load, he hanged himself. All he effected by this means, however, was, that he had to bear the burden in eternity. Of such an end beware; do not let sin creep in; live in the fear of God; keep conscience clear, and attentively hear God's Word: then consolation shall be thine in need of every kind!

The Evangelists further relate that the chief priests took counsel about the thirty pieces of silver. They would not put them into the treasury, but bought with them the potter's field, of which they made a burial-place for strangers. The prophecy, of which this was the fulfillment, does not appear remarkable. However, since the Evangelist takes the pains to quote that which the prophet Zechariah had predicted long before, the prophecy cannot be meaningless, but must have its peculiar signification. The following is, no doubt, its proper explanation.

The citizens of Jerusalem had their cemeteries, while strangers, as we see here, had none. Now, in the true Jerusalem, the Christian

Church, we find that the Jews, according to the 147. Psalm, are God's people: "He showeth His Word unto Jacob." But to us Gentiles, who are strangers, the kingdom of God does not belong; for the same Psalm continues to sing: "He hath not dealt so with any nation," &c. But the thirty pieces of silver, for which our dear Lord Jesus was sold, have bought a burial-place for us pilgrims too; that is, the innocent sufferings and death of Christ have blessed us Gentiles also with the hope of everlasting life. For the Lord had to bleed and die in consequence of being sold for thirty pieces of silver. Therefore, the Evangelist teaches us from the Prophets that we should not

forget for whom the Lord was sold, for whom He suffered, and for whom He died. It was not alone for His people, to whom He had been promised, but also for us Gentiles, who before had no final resting-place in the true Jerusalem. Those thirty pieces of silver, which Judas received for Christ, have bought us a share in the acre of our God. Now we shall be laid into that glorious grave, bed-chamber magnificent, from which our Lord Jesus will call us forth on the judgment-day, when He shall also give us everlasting joy. May our dear Father in heaven grant us this through His Holy Spirit. Amen.