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**SERMONS**  
**ON THE**  
**PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST**

**McQUIRK**



MacQuirk



# SERMONS

ON THE

## PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY

RIGHT REV. JOHN McQUIRK, D.D., LL.D.

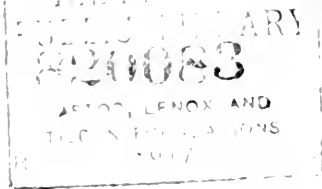
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"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor night, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—St. Paul. Rom.

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Dedication

This Book of Sermons  
on the  
Passion of Jesus Christ  
His Laid at the Feet of the  
Redeemer of all Men

“For “He is the goal of all, and the center to which all things tend; who knows Him knows the reason of all things.” Pascal.

**Imprimatur**

JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

*Archbishop of New York*



## REMARK.

The following sermons on the Passion of Jesus Christ are not meant as a series, consecutive and exhaustive in their character; but as ten discourses preached at different times and various occasions. Hence there is not one that does not contain, in part at least, what is contained in another. This is not to be construed to mean that there is not much in each which is not contained in many or all of the others. It is simply a collection of the sermons on the Passion of Christ, which the Author in forty-five years has preached in the course of his ministry. However, not all that he has preached is contained therein.

He hopes his brethren in the ministry may find them useful; and that others who read them may be edified and moved by them to a love of Jesus Christ.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEW YORK,  
FESTIVAL OF CORPUS CHRISTI, 1916



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## THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

We can never at all realize or even have any idea of the meaning of the great, the stupendous fact which the Church today commemorates, unless we know and keep before us, Who it is that suffers on the cross. Hence I begin our instruction with asking—Who is it that hangs, agonizing and suffering, on the hill of Calvary?

It is Jesus Christ, at once God and Man, the Eternal Word and Wisdom of the Godhead, the very Figure of His substance and the Splendor of His glory; He before Whom the worlds tremble and the Angels are not pure. It is He Who from the beginning was in the Father; in Whom and by Whom and through Whom all things have been made; the Second adorable Person of the Blessed Trinity, and no less. Let this truth sink deep into your souls; for without it Calvary has no meaning. If Christ were but a mere man, His Sacrifice would not be that which it claims to be, and which it is our hope and security and salvation that it is.

While pain, and passion, and death, and burial belong to Him as man, not as God, they are attributed to Him as God also: because of His hypostatic union with our nature, by which what belongs to either belongs to both; thus we say God suffers and dies when Christ suffers and dies. And although He was delivered to death by the Father, yet He suffers freely and spontaneously.

No wonder that the earth trembled, and the sun was darkened, and the dead arose, and the rocks were rent,

and the whole frame of nature was convulsed. If material, inanimate nature did thus, in its own mute but unutterably expressive way, attest its grief and anguish at the agony and death of its Creator, with what feelings should not men, rational beings, while attesting their joy at their redemption, at the same time attest their agony and grief at the price that had to be paid for it? There could be nothing more calculated to excite our compassion. Why does He die? To blot out original sin and the sins of all ages.

Why, at the very mention of a God dying, it should not be a matter of marvel that the roof of this temple should be rent in twain as was the veil of the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus expired upon the cross. And if we are no longer to look for such manifest signs of Divinity, I ask, how should not our hearts be wrenched with grief, seeing that we have been the cause of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, or, at least, how should we not be overwhelmed with the remembrance of the love of the Incarnate God, that impelled Him to this Sacrifice for our sake.

That Christ was God is what gives to the Crucifixion its whole meaning. His sufferings and death were endured not indeed in His Divine nature—for God could not suffer or die—but in His human nature; and these were of an infinite price because the sufferings of a Man-God. This mystery may be unfathomable to reason; but reason can never show why the omniscient God could not so unite Divinity and Humanity in such wise that the sufferings of a man would become truly and indeed, by reason of His permanent union with the Godhead, the sufferings of God. And this is what we claim. We do not say that God suf-

ferred as God, but that God having assumed human nature suffered in that nature, and that these sufferings because of that hypostatic union of the two natures, became truly and indeed the sufferings of the Godhead, and as such are of an infinite value and unutterable efficacy. While God could not suffer, yet this did not prevent Jesus Christ from suffering to the full all that He as man without the presence of the Godhead could have suffered. The Divine nature was not there to protect or shield Him from His agony and death. He deliberately deprived Himself of the power and glory of His Divine Person. He came not to suffer as little as He might, but to suffer (if I may use the word) in an heroic manner, in an infinite degree. Nor must we imagine that because the Godhead could not suffer, yet it saved Christ from suffering. "My soul is sorrowful unto Death"; "Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Words which plainly show that Christ suffered to the full all that He would have suffered had He been mere man, and not God. For although the Human nature was united to the Divine by the Divine personality, yet Christ suffered all the bitterness of His Passion and torments of His death just as if that Divine union did not subsist; for in the one person of Jesus Christ all the attributes of each nature were preserved. Each nature operated what belonged to it. Christ, therefore, suffered in His human nature because the soul was not exempted from suffering: but no torment or pain could reach His Divinity, incapable as it is of distress or change. The Divinity withdrew itself into some loftier region of the soul, and allowed the soul at least in its inferior part, to be made subject to human sufferings and feel-

ings; and accordingly, to endure all suffering and torment and agony that were the portion of any man enduring what the Lord Jesus endured. Even the consciousness of innocence and every other consideration that would have served as solaces or alleviations or palliatives of His sufferings did the Lord Jesus preclude from His soul; so resolutely was He bent on suffering the full tide of His predestined atonement for the sins of men.

From this Union with Divinity all the sufferings and death of Christ derive all their merit and value; by it weakness and power, the passible and impassible, mortality and immortality, God and man, become united; and man so low and insignificant is exalted to the rank of the Godhead; and thus becomes capable of offering an adequate atonement. It was necessary that this atonement should be undeserved and spontaneous, to render God glory. In this mystery of mysteries Jesus is at once the Judge, the avenged, and the Mediator. Nailed to the cross He is truly to be adored because at once God and man by the Hypostatic union.

What does He suffer? The bitterness of His passion is so great that nothing could be added to it. He suffered the extreme anguish and torture of mind and body.

For whom does He suffer? Not only for sinners, but even for the very sinners who were both the authors and inflictors of the punishments He endured.

In this instruction I propose considering the Passion and Crucifixion, as the infinite expression and utmost and final consecration of the Infinite Love of God.

Most on hearing the words, "the infinite love of God," are content with simply the use of the words



without seeking to ponder their meaning and to bring home to the mind the infinite sense which they express, the unbounded and boundless love of God. It is not possible for limited human intelligence to lift itself to the inaccessible height of learning any way adequately, what is meant by the infinite love of God. We are so immersed and preoccupied with the things of this sensible world, we so unreservedly place our happiness and all our desires in it that not without all but insuperable difficulty can we elevate our minds to contemplate, (for we can never comprehend), the infinite love of God. We have some faint conception of human love or friendship, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice for others, but we are forever utter strangers to any adequate conception of the infinite love of God.

And, yet, the infinite love of God is of His very nature. For it is in the fruition of this infinite love that He possesses His supreme bliss and glory. Behold the relations of the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Son the infinite reflection and expression of the Father; the Holy Ghost the infinite expression of the love that subsists between the Father and the Son. Why, the love of God thus viewed is His very essence, His very life.

When we talk of love or goodness, we always associate with it some amount of sensibility. We sympathize with another in his sufferings, because those sufferings strike our own sensibilities.—Not so much because they appeal to the reason, which indeed they do, but what moves us is that they strike a chord, so to speak, in our own hearts; it is for this reason that

we cannot dissociate any conception that we have of love from human sensibility. In God there is no sensibility, because sensibility is the result of physical organization, of flesh and nerve, of matter. God is a pure spirit; and hence His love is infinitely removed from anything involved in sensibility or sympathy. To understand the nature of the love of God, we must bear in mind that He is spiritual, and that, therefore, His love must be analogous to His nature, and therefore spiritual, unlike any human sensible love.

According to our human notions we fail to understand how mercy may be shown without infringement of justice or justice without detriment to mercy. But all the Divine attributes are evenly balanced and in perfect harmony. They are not distinct or separated. We separate them in our mental efforts to comprehend them; as they exist in the Divine Essence there is no distinction or opposition between them in any way. His mercy does not exclude His justice, while His justice is no hindrance to His mercy.

As God's essence, His goodness is necessarily infinite; so good that He cannot be better; not merely that we cannot conceive a more perfect being, but that, irrespective of our conceptions, there cannot exist a more perfect Being.

As God is essentially infinite His goodness and all His other attributes are infinite in themselves and incomprehensible to us. They are all one with His essence. Omniscience, omnipotence, eternity, justice, power, mercy, love—all that we can conceive of God are as infinite as the Divine nature; as necessarily infinite because He is the Creator as man is necessarily finite because he is the creature.

Travel back, then, as far as your imagination can go, even, if possible, to the very bounds of eternity, and God's existence was before even that. Contemplate the wisdom of God in its highest or least exhibition, whether in the heavens which are said to reveal the glory of God, or in the apparently most contemptible atom of matter, which is, indeed, no less a manifestation of His glory and power, and you will find that there is no limit to the universal and all-pervading omniscience of God.

Consider His justice. See it in the fall of the Angels; see it in the punishment meted out to our race because of the primal sin; see it in the eternal abyss filled with the agony and wailing of the immortal souls of men lost through sin and contempt of Divine love.

Behold His love and mercy; what an incomprehensible, amazing exhibition does it present this day in the Crucifixion on Calvary; an exhibition surpassing all created intelligence; how wondrously has He loved the children of men from all eternity! for this sacrifice was made from all eternity in His eternal counsels.

Consider the power of God in whatever way you can best realize it; exert your powers of comprehension to the utmost, and you will yet fall short of any true conception of His illimitable omnipotence.

Embrace in thought, if you can, His unbounded and boundless immensity. Take the wings of the morning and travel to the ends of the earth; descend into hell; ascend into heaven; transport yourself wherever thought can carry, even to the very limits of creation; and you will find that God's immensity and all-embracing essence reaches and extends far beyond all that.

What marvel, therefore, if the infinite God, infinite in all His attributes, is infinite also in His love! How could He fall short of infinity in this one attribute while He is so superlatively infinite in all others? And as He has shown all these in an infinite manner, why should He not show His love by sending His only begotten Son to become incarnate and suffer and die, yea even upon the cross?

From what we have said of the infinite goodness of God, as shown in His very essence and in all His attributes, it is obvious that God has loved us, each and every one of us, from eternity, with an infinite love; not from the time that we were born merely, but from the moment that He conceived we were to be born in time, that is, from eternity. Nor has, or does the vast uncounted multitude of men diminish or hinder His universal and all-reaching thought and care. Not merely does He see men in general, but He sees every one in particular, even as if that one were the only one in existence. The sun's light and glory does not wane or grow feeble for individuals because it is and has been shed upon the uncounted millions who tread or have trod this earth. Each receives as much as all, and all or much as each. So with God and His all-embracing care and watchfulness. All are sharers in its bounty.

God both now, and from everlasting has in His eye every child of Adam. For with Him there is no past or present or future; to Him there is properly no foresight; that is only our human way of talking; all things are present to Him; a thousand years as one day, nay, as one moment. In the countless ages of the past as it seems to human sense, but which to God is

ever present, He had you in view ; creation, the fall of man, his redemption through the Blood of the Lamb were all predestined, or existed as facts in the Divine intelligence.

God could have refrained from creating us, or brought us into being in some other form. There was nothing in man as a possible entity that called for or entitled him to existence. What then, induced God to create us? It is because there was nothing in us calling for existence that God created us. For goodness to be goodness must be spontaneous, and not a reward or discharge of any claim ; it must be given simply because there is nothing that claims it. Otherwise, it was not goodness. It was, then, the infinite goodness and unutterable love of God that induced Him to make man. His creation is the beginning of the external showing forth of the Divine love which constitutes the very life and essence of God: the life of God in the treble operations of the adorable Nature, resulting in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This love begins, as it were, to flow outward, and first manifests itself in the love which from everlasting God has had for each and every one of us.

Finally, God creates the world and man. And what a world does He create! Even to those of us who know nothing of the heavens but the sun and moon and stars which the eye beholds, and who are entirely ignorant of physical science, except what the earth on its face presents ; who know nothing of the planets and heavenly bodies, incalculable in number, revolving in immeasurable distances, and in musical harmony ; so distant in the realm of space that they seem to be immovable ; what a glorious manifestation of Divine

power and goodness is not this universe! Verily the heavens proclaim and earth and all things created proclaim the glory of God.

The same infinity of glory is manifested in the least of God's works no less than in what at first seems the greatest: the insect that we trample under foot, the atom of matter incomparably beyond the power of the human eye, the drop of water under the microscope reveals worlds of intelligence.

Consider this earth of ours: consider its different orders, the material, the vegetative, the sensitive, the animal, the rational; the wondrous laws that govern them all, a few of which only, after thousands of years of study and investigation man has been able to discover, and which he will never know in full.

Study the hidden principles, the unfailing virtue shown in the seed, growth and expansion, fruit and produce of vegetable nature, suitable for man's sustenance; the continual dying and unfailing resurrection of this order, before its death always providing for its plentiful renovation by the teeming seed which it casts upon the earth. What infinite love and fatherly care does not God show in all this. Behold the myriads of animals of varied kind, which, if meant for other purposes, are also meant to serve for man's use and benefit. What wisdom and power in the creation of these "rude and inchoate creatures."

Be amazed at the gifts of mind, the endowments of genius, capacity of acquisition and attainments which God has showered so plentifully upon rational nature. All show the unstinted love and generosity of God toward man—the masterpiece of creation—and through whom all things else are to glorify their

Maker. Yet man, in his infatuation, is so transported by these objects that he would fain idolize them, and render to them the tribute due alone to the Creator.

Yet the love shown in the Passion of Christ surpasses all these manifestations of Divine love. The passion and death of Christ embodies and realizes all these. It brings the love of God into our hearts in a human, sensible way, such as we can feel and appreciate. But if we would measure and realize the love of God for man, we must ascend beyond all the tokens of His love which this world affords; beyond the love shown in nature in its various and myriad forms and all-pervading and stupendous laws and manifest endowments, in matter or in mind; we must mount beyond this world: beyond the stars, beyond the sun, and moon, and all the heavens; we must penetrate into the heaven of heavens, passing the myriad choirs of angels, cherubim and seraphim, that stand continually before His transcendent majesty, and contemplate God Himself seated on His throne, and then realize that this Lord God has come down from that throne and become a man, a man like unto one of us, and lived a life of suffering, and died upon the cross a death of bitter agony and untold torments. This we must do if we would realize the love of God and the stupendous meaning of the Crucifixion of the Lord God on Calvary's gibbet.

And why thus? Out of mere compassion for man, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that all who would believe in Him might not perish but have life, and life more abundantly. This is the mystery of love which God has hidden from the wise of this world, which was hidden before the foun-

dation of the world; which God has revealed only to the lowly, the pure of heart, to those who, in His inscrutable counsels are destined to eternal glory. "This was not known to the princes of this world; for if they had known, they would have never crucified the Lord of glory." In this we are made free, sons of God, sons of the Most High; the Lord God becomes our brother in the flesh; we become His brothers, and sharers in His Divinity.

All else that I have said as evincing the love of God—the immensity and majesty and power of His works as emanating from His goodness and love, which was their motive—are as nothing for declaring His goodness, to this amazing fact, and to human intelligence incomprehensible, of God the Lord and Creator descending from His lofty throne, and coming upon earth in the form of a man, and dying upon the cross in the form of a culprit bearing the load of the accumulated sins of the human race. And all this for each and every one of us: as much for one as for all; as much for all as for one. No work of God in creation, no token of goodness that we can behold in the heavens, or in the earth, or in the bodies or souls of men, nothing that His visible handiwork affords, or of which we can conceive, proclaims the height and depth and breadth of Divine love, and brings home to our human consciousness, the goodness of God as the amazing fact of this Divine condescension; all things else are as nothing for this, compared with the crucifixion and death of His only Son! Consider the victim: what must have been the love that made such a sacrifice. God so loved the world that He gave His



only begotten Son that the souls of men should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And all this for me! Why? Out of Divine compassion proceeding from the infinite goodness of God. Who can fathom this boundless ocean? For all the oceans that God has made on this earth, or it may be on the uncounted planets, and all the immensity of God's work, would be a drop or a particle compared to the infinite ocean of Divine goodness. As every thing that God has made is but a unit of the whole, so every emanation of goodness that He has spread abroad on His works and creatures is but a share of the ocean—boundless, fathomless, limitless, eternal—of His goodness.

Carry yourself in thought to the very bounds of eternity, and God was before that. Exhaust your mind in the vain effort to realize the power of God, and His power exceeds what may seem your most successful efforts. Stretch your imagination to comprehend the Divine immensity, and when you seem to have reached the uttermost limits, there is immensity beyond all that, which you can never compass. But, if it were possible to conceive these attributes or to reach their uttermost extent or limits, the goodness of God would still be infinitely greater, and would extend infinitely beyond these limits. His Divine goodness is the greatest of all His attributes, as being His very essence. "But we speak the wisdom of God, in a mystery, which is hidden, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

And this goodness is manifested to men in concrete form in the incarnation and death of the Son of man, the Eternal Word. This it is that "is a stumbling-block

to the Jew, and to the Gentile folly." "These are the things which eye hath not seen or ear heard, nor the heart conceived." God died for sinners. God loves us more than a father loves his son: for thus He must love Who spared not His Son for us. Scarcely for a just man will any one die; yet God died for sinners. He pardoned Peter; He invited Judas to repentance by the kiss; He prayed for His executioners.

Under what form do we get our best conception of love? Is it the love implied in friendship? Could we conceive the love of any friend to be on a level with the love of God? And if we did, the Lord anticipated the friend; for He says, "I do not call you servants, but friends." How, then, can any human friend surpass in friendship this Divine Friend? Do you draw your best conception of love from the love, the conjugal love of husband and wife? Why, the Lord is beforehand, for He declares: "Even as the spouse waiteth for the bridegroom, so the Lord waiteth for thee." Would you form your best idea of love from that of a father, or mother, or child? Why, the Divine love is unutterably superior to all this. For it impelled God for our sakes to sacrifice His only begotten Son! What love, fatherly, motherly, or filial, can for a moment be put in comparison? There is no illustration that we can find derivable from our human relations and which expresses love—deep, tender, intense love—which is not embraced in the figures used by our Lord Himself descriptive of His Divine love embodied in His human form for every one of us. He is like unto the pelican that strikes open its breast and with its warm life blood nourishes its young. He is the Divine Pelican who, with His blood streaming from hands

and feet and opened side, feeds us and nourishes us unto eternal life. He is like unto the prophet of old who, stretching himself upon the dead child, breathed upon it and brought it back to life. So, are we resuscitated by His embraces and graces to eternal life and immortal glory.

The tenderest illustrations of instinctive love which even animal nature affords are used by Our Lord to declare His love for us. When peril of any kind is at hand, or when the heavens lour and the storm is felt the hen instinctively gathers her brood under her wings. Similar is the tender love of God incarnate: when He, foreseeing the desolation and misery and ruin impending over the Holy City, and, weeping with compassion, exclaimed: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen gathers her chickens, but thou wouldst not." The Roman matron who fed her famishing father with the milk from her breasts is, perhaps, as striking an instance of pure human love as we can find recorded, or of which our nature is capable. But Christ does more. He feeds us with His Body and nourishes us with His Blood daily, so as to become our continual and unfailing support. Not the heartfelt and burning love of the mother for her child, not the highest types of the most self-sacrificing filial love, not the love of man dying for his fellow-man, not the love that lays bare the arteries to infuse new blood and life into the languishing and exhausted, restoring to them new vigor and strength, not the love of country that prompts the patriot to shed his blood and lay down life itself, no; not even the martyr ascending the gibbet or the funeral pyre or laying his head upon the

block, or meeting death in its most awful forms, can declare for us the love of the Incarnate Word, dying upon the cross that He might supply to our souls the Divine Medicine of His Blood to resuscitate them dead in sin and restore them to immortal life. Contemplate the Creator assuming a form capable of suffering and bathing in His life blood an insect dead in His sight, and with His life giving warmth restoring it to life. This is the love of the Incarnate Word for every human soul. And "Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friend."

Imagine some prince or king forsaking his liberty and abandoning his throne, reducing himself to the level of an ordinary man, and spontaneously putting himself in the place of some criminal condemned to imprisonment for life, or even to death. Human annals afford no such instances. But the annals of God's mercy do. For in the Incarnation and Death of the Eternal Word we behold the Prince of princes, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Eternal God Himself coming into the world and taking the stead of a man condemned, not to temporal punishment and death, but to eternal death and punishment.

Every one can make use of any of these illustrations for himself, and according to his habit of mind that brings best home to him the amazing love of God exhibited to-day in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Reflection, earnest and sustained, will be necessary and will contribute much to this end.

RT. REV. JOHN McQUIRK, DD., LL.D.

*Pastor of St. Paul's Church.*

WITH ECCLESIASTICAL SANCTION

## THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

I propose to present to your devout contemplation the principal circumstances of the Passion and Death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It will not be so much a sermon on this Divine Mystery as a plain and simple narrative of its various scenes. I feel that anything like rhetoric or attempted eloquence would profane so sacred a subject. He who would undertake to present with human eloquence the Divine mystery of the passion and death of Jesus Christ would certainly show his mind to be far removed from the spirit of the Gospel itself; and that he was destitute of the devout contemplation that guided the Evangelists when they wrote their narrative of the sufferings and death of Christ. Hence it is not to sermonize on, but rather to place before your devout contemplation, without the least attempt at eloquence, the Passion itself told, in as far as may be, in the words of Holy Scripture.

The Passion of Jesus Christ may be said properly to begin with the Last Supper, when for the last time on earth, He broke food with His Apostles. He had on this occasion washed their feet, to impress upon them and others the lesson of Christian humility. He had taught them that he who was first should be as the least and he that is ministered to, as he that ministers. He prayed His heavenly Father to reinvest Him

with the glory which He had with Him before the foundation of the world. He besought Him that the spirit of unity should always prevail among His followers: that His Apostles and those who through their word should believe in Him would be one even as the Father in Him and He in the Father are one. He ate the Pascal lamb for the last time, and established the great Mystery and Sacrifice in which He would for all time give as His body to eat and His blood to drink. He declared: "Truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: 'Is it I, Lord?' But He answered and said: 'He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he will betray me.'" And Judas, who betrayed Him, answered and said: "Rabbi, is it I?" He saith to him: "Thou hast said it." St. Matt. xxvi. 21-25. "And after the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him: That which thou dost, do quickly. \* \* \* He went out immediately. And it was night." St. John xiii. 27, 30. This manifest disclosure of his heart's secret should have opened Judas's eyes; but avarice had blinded him, and the treachery already begun was to be consummated. He sought the high priest to perfect his measures for the betrayal of his God. He thus fulfilled the prediction uttered by Christ.

After the supper was over, Jesus and the eleven Apostles betook themselves to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was wont to resort for prayer and communion with His heavenly Father. As they entered this retreat, Jesus said to some of the Apostles: "Stay you here while I go yonder and pray;"

leaving eight of them, He took with Him Peter and James and John and went still further, and there said to them, "Stay you here." Going a stone's throw, He prostrated Himself upon the earth in prayer; He fell into an agony that resulted in a sweat of blood. Having thus prayed, He returned to the three, and found that they had fallen asleep. He gently upbraided them, saying: "Could you not watch one hour with Me?" Thrice He retired to communion with His Father, and thrice He returned to the Apostles. The last time finding them still asleep He said to them: "Sleep you on and take your rest, behold they are at hand who will betray the Son of man." At a short approach were seen those who had been sent to apprehend and deliver Him up. At their head was Judas.

On arising from His agony, it was seen to have been so great that He was covered with a sweat of blood; great drops of blood stood out upon Him, saturated His garments, and fell to the earth and bedewed it. The Apostles were present; they witnessed it, and they have recorded it.

What was the nature of this stupendous fact of Christ's agony thus resulting in a sweat of blood? Is it mysterious? If it is not absolutely such, it is, doubtless, partly miraculous and partly human. We know that fearful agony has often most disastrous effects upon the mind and through it upon the body. Fear and anxiety and anguish and distress and other passions weaken the heart, and exasperate the mind. It has been known that those doomed to death or otherwise in great distress have had their hair turn grey in a night or in a few hours. Small drops of

blood have oozed from the system because of mental trepidation and anxiety. But there is no case recorded in which the heart has in a manner broken and given out its contents, diffusing them through the whole body. It is true that Christ's heart did not break, because if it had broken He would have died. He preserved His heart because of the sacrifice He was the next day to make. It is probable that this bloody sweat was the result of fear and fortitude: fear draws the blood to the heart, which it closes; fortitude draws the blood from the heart, which it expands; the combined action of the two, their irritation and counter-irritation, as the waves of the sea lashing one another, and driving one before the other, and afterwards by a counter action drawing them back, caused the blood to issue from the body of Christ. Yet, as there is no instance in history in which human agony has been so tremendous as to cause the blood to issue from the heart and to flow through the whole system and transfuse the body, it is reasonable to believe that in the case of our Lord it was miraculous. Whether miraculous or not, it is obvious that the agony which produced this sweat of blood must have been overwhelming.

Now we may ask how these sufferings could have been endured by Jesus Christ; how could He as God or man or both endure them? Was He not perfect man and at the same time was He not God? Surely both, and for this very reason could He endure all the suffering, mental and physical, which this agony implies. Our Lord was a perfect man: He had a perfect soul and a perfect body. He was as really man as He was God: He had a divine and a human



nature. He took a soul as truly as He took a body. He took a soul that He might take a body. Nothing, then, belonging to a man was wanting to Him. We must not imagine that His sufferings were not real. He suffered as only a perfect man could suffer, as one who could be perfectly familiar with every manner of infirmity. In every respect, excepting sin, like unto another man was Jesus Christ. No less man than God and no less God than man. He was capable of all the feelings of which human nature is capable. Hence His hunger after He had fasted forty days; hence His tears at the tomb of Lazarus; hence His joy at the marriage feast. As God he could not suffer: His suffering was endured in His human nature. These sufferings thus endured by reason of His Personal Union with the Godhead constituted the infinite value and ransom that was paid for the sins of mankind.

Christ in His human nature was subject to all the feelings, emotions, inclinations that belong to that nature, with this restriction: that in a man these are frequently the result of worthy or unworthy objects, while in Christ they were the result of the loftiest motives. In a man these passions may darken the mind and pervert the will, and become to him a source of sin; while in Christ they could never dominate His will, nor lessen its vigor, nor obscure His mind, because He was incapable of sin. It was not involuntarily that He suffered. When He allowed these human influences upon Him it was because He willed it. All the passions, inclinations and emotions of the human heart were controlled by His Divinity. He began to fear and to be distressed be-

cause He willed it. He was always complete master of His mind and of His will, and no inclination or influence swayed Him, except when and how and in so far as He permitted it. Jesus Christ, therefore, was subject to all the feelings that man is subject to. He only permitted the feelings of pain, suffering and distress because of the Sacrifice which He came upon earth to make.

Then you may ask, how Christ being God, could suffer? Christ in so far as He was God did not suffer, the Deity could not suffer. How, then, the Deity being in Christ, did He suffer? Because He willed to suffer. He came on earth to suffer. He suffered that He might cancel the debt that was due to our transgressions and to that of our first parents. As the Godhead could not suffer, what became of it when Christ suffered? Filled with glory that comes from the contemplation of the Godhead, He could not suffer. This, indeed, is a great mystery. Christ knowing that He was the predestined Sacrifice for the sins of mankind, suspended the consolation and support of the Godhead in the Garden of Gethsemane, and during that night, and the next day of His passion even until His resurrection, when the Deity was reunited to His body. Unless He did this He could not suffer: unless He made Himself to be that which, except in seeming, he could never be, a sinner, He could never have become sin's atonement. During His days of agony and suffering, He separated Himself as far as He could from the glory and bliss of the Godhead; just as during life He did not permit the glory of the Deity to transfigure or illumine His body, so that He might be subject to all the

vicissitudes of His human life. Whether the Godhead withdrew Itself into Itself, or betook Itself to some superior part of the soul, we know not, as it is and must forever remain mysterious or incomprehensible to us. However it may be explained, if explained it can be, the fact is that Jesus Christ must have deprived Himself of the support and consolation which comes from Deity. This He must have done in order that He might suffer and agonize.

Voluntarily and of His own free accord did Christ die for mankind. When He suffered, He did not seek to lessen the bitterness of the chalice of suffering; He drained it to the dregs. He permitted all the sorrow and agony and remorse and distress that are the fruit of sin to fall upon Him. And it all resulted in that mysterious sweat of blood. All this for love of His eternal Father and for the salvation of men. It was for this interior love and the burning desire of His soul that ample compensation should be made to His Father for the sins of men, that He had come into the world: the manner of His sufferings was in proportion to the love which He had for its salvation. He wished to make a full expiation for sin. He alone, being God, knew what sin is; and He meant His sufferings to be a full equivalent for it, and to be a full consummation of the work assigned Him by His Father.

Among the immediate causes of His agony in the garden was the prospect of the suffering He was about to endure. As a man, He recoiled from these sufferings. As he who for his body's sake consents to have his leg amputated, yet recoils from the infliction, so our Lord, all willing for and all bent as

He was on His Sacrifice, recoiled from it because of the reluctance of His human nature to suffering; not that there was ever the slightest want of harmony between His Divine and human will, and that of His eternal Father. But His under or sensitive nature, exquisitely sensitive because of its perfection and that of His soul, had a natural shuddering for suffering, just as all men have according to the perfection of their faculties and the mold of their organization.

There is nothing that we feel so much as pain; we tremble at the thought. There are few of us who would undergo some surgical operation without resorting to some drug by which pain may be deadened and consciousness suspended. It is the study of our life to avoid pain or suffering. We seek comfort and indulgence as relief from pain, and conducive to ease. This is instinctive in the human heart. The necessity of drawing a tooth, the thought of a pin piercing the finger, is enough to disturb the soul and fill us with distress. The infliction is received in the body, but the pain that results from it is in the soul. A dead man can feel no pain. The animal feels pain but not as man feels it; because the animal feels it only during its actual infliction, while man feels not only while it lasts, but remembers what is past, and contemplates what is to come, because his is an intellectual soul. Nor in this do we mean alone mental agony or what may be called spiritual pains, but all physical suffering must be in the soul—the receptacle of all sensation. To pain and suffering of every kind the soul and body of Christ were in an especial manner keenly alive, because of their delicate organ-

ization. Those who are callous in their feelings and rough and rugged by nature feel pain far less than others. The exquisite texture and formation of Christ's body, its responsiveness to the emotions of the soul—itsself the most perfect of human souls—rendered the one susceptible of greater infliction, and the other of greater pain than the rest of men. Soul and body are made for one another. In so far as the body reveals the internal emotions of the soul, the soul speaks in the face; according as they thus are responsive mutually are they perfect. Christ's body was formed by the Divine action of the Holy Ghost in the chaste womb of the Virgin Mary. Hence it was the most perfect human body ever vouchsafed to the children of men; and as such was subject to greater pain than the rest of men.

Nor was Christ relieved of suffering by the consciousness of His innocence; in other words, the knowledge He had of His absolute sinlessness did not assuage His agony or diminish His pain. The consciousness of innocence goes far to sustain him who suffers innocent and for justice' sake. It was this that supported the martyrs in shedding their blood for Christ. It is the source of the consolation and sustaining power of those who by miscarriage of justice are convicted unjustly and die victims of circumstances or perjury. We may ask did not this consciousness of innocence sustain our Lord in His agony and death? For the very reason that Christ came to suffer and to drain the chalice of suffering to its dregs, He denied Himself this consciousness, removed Himself from its consolation, and made Himself

feel that He was what he could never be—the guiltiest of men, because the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of all. He made Himself feel not innocent, but guilty, because charged with all guilt, He suffered because He willed it; if He had not willed it, He could not suffer. He laid down His life; He could not have laid it down unless He had willed it. All the sins of men being placed upon Him as the victim to satisfy Divine justice and His eternal Father, He felt Himself the outcast of humanity and the guiltiest of men.

Christ had offered Himself to His eternal Father for the redemption of the world; He was the accepted victim for the sins of men; He was the Divine Atonement for the outraged justice and majesty of God. Those sins were before Him in Gethsemane: Not only the sins already committed, but He fore-saw all the sins that were to be committed. You were there, I was there, every son of man was there; the sins of those who lived before the flood, the sins that called it down as the vengeance of Almighty God: the unutterable sins that swept away Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain; all the sins that men committed till the Christ came; and from then down to now, and from now till the end of time: all this was present to the mind of Christ, and this overwhelming burden cast Him upon the earth and forced from Him that mysterious sweat of blood. He endured the remorse that every sinner endures. Who has not felt it, that keen, piercing sorrow that comes after and is the fruit of sin? Take, not individually but collectively, all the remorse that has been endured by all the children of

men; all this was present in the soul of Jesus Christ that night in Gethsemane. It was a part of the Divine punishment meted out to Him, as the vicarious victim for the sins of mankind. What a crushing weight must it not have been upon His soul! This remorse endured by Him for all men, in their stead, was one of the causes that resulted in the sweat of blood which we are considering. Christ came to suffer. He came to restore us; and He restored us in the most heroic, energetic manner.

Sin once committed is sin forevermore. Sin once committed is irreparable. Jesus Christ, knowing that His sacrifice was the divinely appointed ransom for sin, felt its necessity. Christ knew better than any one else, because He was God, what the nature of sin is: He loved the Father with an infinite love: He loved mankind with an unbounded love: He, therefore, made to the Father in Gethsemane such an act of contrition as would atone for all the sins of men; and one which could be accepted by Almighty God as an expiation for sin. It was this act of sovereign contrition that burst His veins and sent the blood coursing to the surface of His body.

And yet more; He realized the precious oblation that He was making to His eternal Father; He knew that He was God incarnate. He felt the necessity of that sacrifice, and the fulness of that sacrifice. He wished every son of Adam, every soul of men to be saved. And yet He knew that after His redemption the salvation of men would yet in great measure depend upon themselves; that every man would be saved or lost in the exercise of his free will. He would save mankind, yet so as no constraint

would be put upon men's free will. He felt that while he suffered abundantly, sufficient for the salvation of all, yet it would be insufficient for the countless multitudes who, in the exercise of their free will, would reject it, and fail to apply it to their immortal souls. It was this thought, this crushing and despairing thought, that agonized the soul of Jesus, and forced the blood from His heart. The fruitlessness of His sufferings and death for so many contributed more than anything else to His agony. In His divine foresight He saw that, in spite of all He was enduring—this overwhelming agony, this fearful anguish, which deluged His soul even to the shedding of blood; in spite of all that He was yet that night and the next day to undergo till He was nailed to the cross and on the cross; in spite of all this, men would still resist His grace and light and blindly persist in being lost; that all His sufferings would not save all men, and that it would be only a small part that would be saved. If He could have believed that every soul would be saved, it would have been an inexpressible consolation. Yet He knew that the obstinacy and obduracy of men would outweigh and overcome His sufferings. No wonder He exclaimed, "My soul is sorrowful unto death; if it be possible, let this chalice pass away; nevertheless, let not My will, but Thine, be done."

St. Augustine would understand these words to mean that He prayed His eternal Father to permit this chalice to pass into the souls of men; that is, by applying the merits of His sufferings to the end for which He had come into the world—namely, the salvation of souls. Others think that He thus prayed



to enable us to comprehend the bitterness and intensity of His sufferings; that they were not assumed, but as real as man could suffer; that He was here to suffer and die as a true sacrifice, which imports real pain. The prayer of our Lord was not an efficacious or absolute prayer; for He came on earth to drink that chalice and embrace that cross; it was the expression of the infliction endured by His inferior nature, the struggle between the natural repugnance of nature to suffer and His divine will bent upon suffering.

There were other sources of distress that oppressed Him and increased the agony of His soul. There were human causes to work. I have already indicated that Judas had risen from the supper-table to go to the high priests to deliver Jesus. He knew that He was about to be betrayed by His own disciple, and abandoned by the Apostles, and denied by Peter. He knew what was yet in store for Him: that He was to be dragged that very night before Ananias and Caiaphas, and the next day before Pilate; then to be haled to Calvary and die a victim upon the cross. All this was in prospect before Him as He lay prostrate in Gethsemane, and bore in upon His soul, and induced this agony of blood.

It must have caused the keenest distress to the heart, the tender heart of Christ—that Judas, one of His chosen Apostles, should betray Him. The Apostles themselves were amazed when they heard the Lord declare that “one of them was about to betray Him.” They could scarcely realize that one so perfidious could be found among them. This perfidy of Judas must have pierced the soul of Jesus. It

was the basest act of disloyalty and ingratitude. Judas was bound by every motive to defend His Master, to die, if need be, for His sake. He had been in His service and company for three years; he had from all the children of men been chosen to be one of the twelve Apostles of the Incarnate God; a vocation, in a manner, as lofty as that of the Blessed Virgin herself. Yet he betrayed his God. There is no power of language to portray such ingratitude and malice. And doing it as a friend and in the guise of friendship! If a stranger had done so, it were base enough. But that a friend should betray a friend, and that in the pretence and with the sign of friendship, is accounted among men as the rankest villainy, and is the mark of those whom men will most anxiously avoid. Such a violation of the noblest instincts and laws of true friendship against the Redeemer Who came to die for the souls of men! Such treachery! He had received from Christ the power of working miracles, and other unutterable graces and privileges; and this is the return he makes for all! No wonder that "ingratitude more strong than traitors' arms" quite overcame Him, as it has other men invulnerable to assault and open arms.

Judas received thirty pieces of silver, about seventeen dollars of our money, for his treachery. It was the price of a slave. He, a few hours afterward, overcome by his conscience, would willingly undo what he had done. Perhaps he never realized that his act would result in Christ's being taken by the Jews; that He would escape from their hands, as He had before when they sought Him. But when he saw Christ fallen a victim into their hands, he

went to the chief priests, saying, "I have sinned, betraying innocent blood"; and cast the money upon the floor of the temple. "What is that to us; look you to it," was their heartless reply. They treated him with the contempt that spies and traitors usually get from their employers. But they would not use this money for any sacred purpose, because it was the price of blood. They abhorred it; hence they bought with it a potter's field, a field out of whose substance pottery was made. The excavation necessary for this purpose reduced the value of the land, and thus was deemed a suitable burial-place for outcasts and beggars.

If Judas had repented (the remorse with which he was filled was not repentance), he would have been saved, as Peter was saved, although he had denied his Lord. Yet it were unjust to think of Peter's denial as we think of Judas's perfidy. Peter denied his Master on a sudden impulse, scarcely realizing the crime he was committing. Judas's crime was thought over; he had it in his heart days before he put it into effect. Besides, the sin of Judas was one of those sins that mark some incorrigible villain. Peter's fall was venial compared to Judas's treachery. He owned that "he betrayed innocent blood," and overcome by remorse (it must have been the remorse of the damned), he put hands on his life. He gave way to despair, and died impenitent. He should not have despaired. Christ died for him as He did for Peter and the rest of men. "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed; it would be better for that man never to

have been born." That he was damned we have the express words of the Lord.

When Jesus in Gethsemane goes to the Apostles for the last time, and said to them, "Sleep ye on and take your rest; behold, he is at hand who will betray me," Judas was seen approaching with the soldiers and mob with clubs sent by the high priests. Christ now shows that His agony was self-imposed; that He need not have endured it if He would not; for at once He assumes the most imperturbable serenity, and advances before the Apostles to meet Judas and those sent to seize Him. He receives the kiss of Judas with the mild rebuke, "Friend, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" And to the others, "Whom seek ye?" and they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth"; and He answered, "I am He." And at once, overcome by the majesty of His bearing and the divine glow that illumined His face, they fell prostrate to the earth. Thus He caused them to stop in their impious course, and held them powerless until He allowed them to rise. This display of power should have opened their eyes and enabled them to see the character of Him whom they are about to maltreat. But they were so hardened in their unbelief that even this sign of power, causing them to fall before Him, was lost upon them. He allowed them to rise. As if anticipating resistance or flight, they tied His hands behind His back and led Him thus to Ananias and Caiaphas.

During the seizure of Jesus Peter looks at Him, as if to ask, "Shall we not defend Thee?" and in his hot indignation draws his sword, strikes Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off

his ear. Jesus replied: "Put up thy sword into its scabbard; for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Can I not ask my heavenly Father, and He will send me a legion of angels?" And at once He heals the wound and restores the ear of Malchus. Here was another miracle capable of opening eyes that were not closed to light and hearts that were not proof against grace.

When the Apostles saw that Jesus had fallen a victim into the hands of His enemies, although He had ordered these satellites to permit them to go away, they yet feared they were unsafe, and might be themselves dragged to trial and punishment; they ran away and disappeared. But it would seem that they did not go far; for Peter, to his misfortune, was present that very night in the hall of Ananias. Yet they were disconcerted when they saw the Lord fallen a prisoner. Where was Thomas, who said, "Lord, let us go with Thee and suffer?" Where were James and John, who declared that they could drink of the chalice which He was about to drink, when they besought of Him to sit with the others at His right and at His left in His kingdom? They all fled.

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*(With Ecclesiastical Sanction.)*





## THE AGONY OF JESUS CHRIST

It was late on Thursday night when Christ was seized, and brought before Ananias. St. John records His trial before him; the other Apostles speak as if His trial before him was the same as that which took place before Caiaphas. Ananias was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and they lived in the same building; he had been removed from his office by the Romans, but yet doubtless performed the duties of the high priesthood because of his kinship with Caiaphas, and because the Jews would not be apt to recognize his removal by pagans.

Jealousy was the motive of Ananias; animosity to Jesus; a motive which he must needs conceal, and therefore all the more bitter. Jealous lest the people should follow Jesus; jealous because Jesus drove the dove-sellers from the temple, in which he had a profit; jealous because Jesus had called it His Father's house; which had been in possession of himself and his five sons for fifty years. These were the very human motives which made him the instrument of Providence in the salvation of mankind.

Jesus is led before Ananias and afterwards before Caiaphas. The Judge of heaven and earth, and the Searcher of the souls of men stands before men, and before such men! the truculent, the time-serving, the mercenary, prompted by motives which they dare not avow. Alas, how often have been and are such



scenes acted over again in human life; how often have such injustices been perpetrated. How often have such procedures, iniquitous because of the motives behind them, been condemned. How many of them remain to be exposed, condemned, and reversed in the light of the Final Judgment of men.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus concerning His disciples and concerning His doctrine. Jesus answered him: "I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why dost thou ask Me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them: behold, they know what I have said." He had said nothing in secret that did not agree with His public teachings; and concealed nothing through fear of censure. The words marked a manner very different from that of his judges, whose characteristic mark was duplicity and unfairness; who had sought spies, and the midnight hour to seize Him; and who now by night, when all Jerusalem slept, sat in judgment upon Him. What right to interrogate Him against Whom no proof had been brought? Why not ask of those who had heard Him, as Our Lord challenged him?

And when He had said these things, one of the officers standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying: "Answerest Thou the high priest so?" Jesus answered him: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why dost thou strike Me?" No more galling insult could be given under the circumstances. The striker was as mercenary as the high priest. There are always those ready to show or

pretend loyalty to them upon whom they depend, and give kicks to the unfortunate. No words but those of reasoned reproof escaped our Lord. Justice required that this striker should be rebuked by the Judge. Even if a preliminary trial, our Lord should have been defended against insult and affront, as one against Whom no charge had been made. "And Ananias had sent Him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest." He it was who said that "it was expedient that one man should die for the people." He spoke wiser than he thought and in a sense which never dawned upon him. But in his mercenary mind he meant that it was expedient for himself and his worldly prospects and as a gratification of his unworthy feelings, that Jesus should be taken out of the way. "And the chief priests, and the whole council sought false witnesses against Jesus, that they might put Him to death; and they found none, although many false witnesses had come forward. And last of all came two false witnesses; and said: This man said I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days. And the high priest arose, said to Him: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these testify against Thee?"—"For many bore false testimony against Him, but their testimony did not agree." Their testimony must indeed have been contradictory when Caiaphas did not accept it; for he was determined on Christ's execution. Yet, although truculent and hard of heart, he was astute and politician enough to wish some pretense to fairness and plausibility.

False witnesses are always to be had. Many are the motives that influence men to give lying testi-

mony. Sometimes hatred of him whom they belie; sometimes they are bribed; sometimes to purchase favor with those interested; always for one consideration or other may be had those willing to besmirch the reputation, or even to forswear the lives of others. These, also, are apt to be believed; for men ask, why should they say so unless it were true, forgetting that calumny is only one species of sin and one man is as capable of lying as another is of doing other wrong. As there are men who steal, and rob, and even murder, for small consideration; what wonder that there are others who will destroy character? particularly, as this is comparatively so easy. "And last of all came two false witnesses: and said: This man said I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days." This statement was all the more dangerous because there was a certain skein of truth in it. The lie is all the more fatal when it is not entirely a lie. There are those who fain would think that they lie not, because what they say may be literally true, while virtually false. The greater the truth, the greater the lie: the greatest law may be the greatest injustice. Literal adherence to words with perversion of the sense and meaning, may be the greatest violation of the truth. The liar tries to make himself feel that he is not lying; and hence he has no motive to sustain him. Next to the soul and the life of a man there is nothing more precious than his good name; hence, after soul-murder and body-murder there is no sin greater than the murder of his reputation.

We have said that there was a particle of truth, although none the less the lie, in the charge brought

against our Lord by these false witnesses. He had said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it;" He referred, as St. John says, to the temple of His body. It was in answer to their challenge for a sign from heaven. He gave them instead, His resurrection from the dead. The lying witnesses stated that He spoke of the temple of Jerusalem. Perfectly true, indeed, was it that He as God could in three days or three minutes restore that temple or any other work of man; but He spoke of the temple of His body. "But Jesus was silent." He stood there in the majesty of His innocence, and in the ineffable consciousness that He was the victim for the sins of men; and that His judges and accusers were but the instruments of Divine Providence, in their free will and unknowingly accomplishing the mystery of the world's redemption. Reply was useless to those bent on His destruction. Finally, "the high priest said to Him: I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." The very question, if asked sincerely, would imply the presence of a doubt, or a possibility in the mind of the high priest; or, what is more likely, he sought to trap Jesus in His reply, and to condemn Him by His own words. At that solemn moment when He is to be adjudged to the death which was to save the world, Christ should declare the truth for which He was about to die. "Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. But I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest had apparently got what he wanted, and what he deemed was better

for his purpose than any other testimony. "Then the high priest rent his garments" in sign of horror, "saying: He hath blasphemed: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" As they were expected to do, "They answered and said: He is worthy of death. Then they spat in His face, and buffeted Him; and some struck His face with the palms of their hands. Saying: Prophecy to us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" They all condemned Him as worthy of death. O ye Judges of the earth, give ear to this iniquitous sentence! was there ever one more revolting! Be comforted ye that innocent suffer persecution for justice' sake, whether from the unjust sentences of courts, or the lying judgments of men. How many of the judgments of human tribunals shall be reversed before the tribunal of Christ, when hearts shall be turned inside out!

The Mosaic law punished blasphemy with death. Caiaphas of himself could not pronounce this sentence. It required the action of the Sanhedrim or Jewish Council, or at least of twenty-three of them. But even these had no longer the power of life and death. "It was not lawful for them to put any man to death," at least in civil cases; although it is claimed that they still had power in religious cases; but yet with the approval of the Roman authorities. The infliction of death was reserved to Roman authority, to which the Jews were subject.—Until they could bring Him before the civil power next morning, and until the larger meeting of the Sanhedrim which took place in the early hours of that day,

during the rest of the night He was delivered blindfolded and manacled to the cruel sport and mockery of the Roman soldiery, who treated Him with contempt and every manner of cruelty. They whiled away the long hours of the night with their barbarous jests, taunting insults; striking Him in the face, mocking at His silence, deriding Him as claiming to be the King of the Jews, challenging Him, if He could, to declare who it was that struck Him. Thus His sensibilities were no less the object of their insults than His body of their blows. The innocence of His life, and the blamelessness of His character, and the majesty of His bearing were considerations lost upon a brutalized soldiery who knew nothing of the claims or works of our Divine Lord. No dictate of reverence, no restraint of decency stopped their torture of His body, or the sensibilities of His soul.

While Our Lord passed from Ananias to Caiaphas an event took place that cannot be passed over, because augmenting the sufferings of Christ, and being pregnant with lessons for our edification; I refer to His denial by St. Peter. "But Peter sat without in the court; and there came to him a servant maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied it before all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she said to those who were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied it with an oath: I do not know the man. And after a while, they who stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them, for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then

he began to invoke curses upon himself, and to swear that he knew not the man. And immediately a cock crowed. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which He had said: Before the cock crow thou wilt deny Me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly."

Peter and John had followed Jesus from Gethsemane to the court of the high priest. Better for Peter that he had never entered it; for he would never have betrayed his Master. This was Peter, who had declared Christ to be the Son of the living God; as He who had the words of eternal life; that, though all men should deny Him, yet he never would. Christ had told Judas that he would betray Him; He had told Peter that he would deny Him. And they both fulfilled His word. How apparently identical the offenses, and yet how different the sequel! How near Peter came to sharing the fate of Judas! There was, however, a difference, a great difference in their sins. Peter's did not result in the delivery of Christ into the hands of His enemies. Judas had this for his very end, and that, too, for a mercenary consideration. Peter's was indeed deliberate even when first uttered, but much more so by the second and still more by the third denial emphasized by curses and oaths: yet it was more injurious to Peter than to Christ. Judas's was one of black malice and heartless treachery: Peter's was sudden and impetuous, and was the result of human respect. The character of the sin of each is shown in the character of the sorrow that agitated their souls,—leading one to despair, and the other to salutary contrition. What a grief must have pierced

the soul of Jesus when He saw Himself denied by him who was to be the foundation and head and pastor of His Church!

Yet Christ had foreseen Peter's repentance, and refers to it in the words addressed to him: "When thou wilt have risen from the fault into which thou art about to fall, confirm thy brethren" in the Faith. Our Lord had a divine purpose in permitting Peter's fall. When we think of St. Peter denying his Master, we certainly have a remarkable instance of the frailty of our nature and of our proneness to fall, unless aided by grace we shun the occasions of sin. Hence Our Lord would teach Peter and the Apostles and us all the need of being always on the watch "lest they that stand may fall, and that it is with fear and trembling we are to work out our salvation." He meant also to admonish those who rule in the Church that "he that is ministered to should be as he that ministers, and he that rules as he that serves." He would also have the Head of the Church His Vicar, one who could compassionate with those entrusted to his care, a "high priest who, like Himself, could compassionate with our infirmities."

If we come to inquire into the particular cause of Peter's fall, we shall find it was overconfidence in himself. He made too much of his strength: he should have known his weakness. He overlooked the weakness of nature and the strength of temptation. He should have remained away altogether, or have gone resolutely before the high priest, and defended our Lord with something of the spirit which impelled him to draw the sword and strike off the ear of Malchus.



We may ask how was it that Peter was saved; and that, as far as we can know, Judas was damned. How was it that from his fall Peter came forth the model penitent, the admiration of all succeeding generations, while Judas from frantic despair became "the son of perdition who was lost"? Let us look close into this matter, for it conveys a lesson salutary and necessary to us all. Jesus, on hearing the words of Peter denying Him, glanced at him and that glance pierced his very soul, and filled it with the grace of contrition. Peter corresponded with that grace, admitted it into his soul: was faithful to it. If he had shut his eyes and pretended not to see his Lord; if he had hardened his heart to that silent rebuke; if he had not hearkened to his conscience stirred by grace and pretended not to hear, he would have shared the fate of Judas. He allowed his soul to be broken with contrition, to be crushed with anguish and bitterness and salutary remorse. He was a penitent for the rest of his days. His cheeks were furrowed with the tears he shed at the remembrance of his faint-heartedness and disloyalty to his Divine Master. There is a pregnant lesson for every one of us in the fall, and in the rise of this blessed Apostle. There is no one of us who may not fall as he fell: there is no one of us who may not rise as he rose, if we be equally faithful to God's grace, and resolutely shun the occasions of sin. Peter was a sincere penitent before Christ left the hall of Caiphas. He had already partaken of Christ's grace. Amidst all His agony and abandonment this was a consolation to the heart of Jesus.

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## THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

Behold Christ on Calvary, crucified upon the cross. It is, O Sin, thy work; it is thy malice that has driven these nails through hands and feet, and raised aloft that victim bleeding in every pore, drenched in agony, stretched in every joint, groaning with pain; no rest or support but that which augments agony and intensifies torment by the very rest or support. Man sought forbidden pleasure in sin: Christ submits Himself to a horrible death.

Sin called for condign satisfaction: an infinite evil called for an infinite atonement. It was not in the power of finite Man to render it: the sacrifice of no creature could be commensurate with sin and exhaust its malice. It required a Sacrifice truly Divine that it could be infinite in its merits; and truly human that it might be the atonement of the offending race. All this is found, and could be found only in the Sacrifice of a man-God, the incarnate Word. This, Divine justice exacted as the penalty and expiation of sin. And this, Jesus Christ, out of love for the glory of the Eternal Father and for the salvation of men, freely and unreservedly offered.

We cannot comprehend the justice that required such a satisfaction. Why should we? We cannot understand His other attributes; they are all profoundly mysterious to us. Why balk at His justice!

is it more level to our intelligence? Because it may be attended with greater and more direct and even eternal consequences to ourselves, are we, therefore, better able to comprehend it? Why should it be less strange or less intelligible to our minds than His other attributes? If God be infinite in Himself and in all His attributes, why not in His justice? Do we comprehend His power, do we fathom His wisdom, do we realize His love, do we measure His abasement in the Incarnation, do we at all conceive His Eternal Majesty and glory? No! these prerogatives do not appear to concern us. But we stagger at His inexorable justice. Is He, then, to alter His nature, and measure and adapt this one attribute to our capricious fancy and the narrow limits of our very contracted minds? Forsooth; because we do not like to believe that the Eternal God is infinite in His justice and knows to the full what is due to His Majesty violated by sin. God alone as a Being of infinite justice can declare what expiation or punishment can bear a proportion to sin: He alone can measure its malice and the outrage offered, and determine the reparation due to His injured majesty.

This we know: sin inflicts death upon him that sins. Not only as the curse pronounced upon our race, is it true, that "by sin came death in whom all had sinned," but as the consequence and penalty of every individual is it true that sin brings death upon his soul; for mortal sin kills the soul. The sinner seeks the pleasure of sin and the gratifications of this life; he incurs death of soul, and contracts a debt to divine justice which Hell alone can liquidate.

This eternal death and punishment of Hell can be avoided only by adequate satisfaction and voluntary punishment. And this too, only on the supposition that God is willing to accept expiation and bestow pardon. Who is to discharge this punishment, to offer this satisfaction? Man? No! because he is incapable; his resources are too limited; his finite nature cannot, nor can it produce anything that can equal the malice of sin and compensate for it, and make atonement that can exert any claim upon the justice of God; nor can any human satisfaction rescue the sinner from the eternal punishment which sin entails upon him.

As we have already seen that the Incarnate Word alone could exercise contrition for us; and that He alone could compensate by His humility for the pride of sin; by His ignominy at the hands of the Jews for the contumely which sin offers; by His obedience in yielding to the sentence of the judges and the fury of the mob; so, now we say that He alone could by His crucifixion compensate the justice of God and render satisfaction for the sins of men: thus saving them from the death which sin brought upon them, by His voluntary death, and rescuing them from eternal punishment, paying the price of their ransom by shedding His blood. Christ's submission to death purchases from the Father the revocation of the sentence of death pronounced against all men, and men are restored to life: Christ's blood shed on Calvary discharges the debt of eternal punishment due to sin, and men are rescued from eternal punishment.

Christ, then, in "Whom there was no sin nor the

shadow of sin," offers Himself as the victim for all the sins of men. As such He is accepted by the eternal Father: He let fall upon Him the full load of punishment due to all the sins of the world. It was for your sins and mine and the sins of all men that Christ suffered such torments and died such a death on the cross. Blame not the Jews: they were but the material instruments of a providence which they little understood. Blame not the Eternal Father, and think not that His justice could have been satisfied with something less: He only inflicted that which the Divine Intelligence contemplating the Divine Essence saw the nature of sin in itself called for; for the nature of sin and its punishment were not determined by His free act, but were such an affront to His divine majesty as His nature determined; and He did not make His own nature. As His existence does not depend upon Himself, so neither His essential majesty or perfection: hence an offense to these is such, irrespective of any free act of His own: it exists in the very nature of things. Blame not the Lord Jesus Himself and say not that He carried His love too far: for He did not go beyond that which He felt His Father's honor called for; and which He would willingly have renewed bloodily, as He day by day renews it unbloodily in the Sacrifice of the Altar. Say not that He loved men to excess: for He did not exceed that which He knew immortal souls to be worth; because it was not unworthy of even an incarnate God to die to save such souls from eternal misery, and place them in eternal bliss. Blame not sin in the abstract and apart from your act: for as such it has no existence;

it is your act that gives it substance and life, and makes of it a sin-destroying and hell-deserving element.

It was your sins and the sins of all men that nailed Him to the cross; the sins of each individual as much as the sins of the world. For the sun's heat and light, falling upon all, falls as much upon every one as if no one else existed. The sufferings of Christ endured for all, were endured for each one as if no one else existed. It was your sins that drove the spikes through His hands and feet; you are the culprit, the guilty executioner; look not for another; shirk not the blame. "He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins." For as He was made a worm of the earth, "an outcast from men." "Upon Him was placed the iniquities of us all." "He hath borne our iniquities; He hath carried our sins." He was made accursed for our sins; "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Upon Him were poured the full vials of divine wrath reserved for your sins. It was you that pressed the thorn-crown into His brain, that gave Him wormwood to drink, that opened His side whence issued the blood and water to cleanse your sin-stained souls. Your treasons were not less present to His soul than that of Judas. Your perfidies were not more absent than that of Peter. All the sins of men were there; there is no future to His mind: all were present to Him: He died for all. The sins of ten thousand years to come, were not removed from Him as they are from us. They were actual; and as actual as those committed in the hour in which He suffered, and as those that had been done before His



time, since the creation of man. The injustices of His judges, the fury of the mob howling for His innocent blood, the mercenary hearts and base instincts of Annas and Caiphaz; the crafty and scoffing and bloodthirsty Herod; the time-serving and political chicanery of Pilate,—all these were but the types of those who have ever since, and will to the end continue to play their sinful parts, and recrucify, as far as in them lies, the Son of God. These were all there in the drama of the Saviour's passion and death, as truly as their prototypes and forerunners. All the sacrileges which have profaned His living Presence in the tabernacle were as vividly present to Him as the unworthy communion made by Judas, or as any of the other sacrileges that were offered to His Sacred Person during the time from His appearance before Caiphaz till they cast lots for His seamless garment.

It was the avarice of men, and the countless sins and crimes and oppressions to which it leads, no less than that of Judas betraying Him for sixteen pieces of silver, which was only a specimen of your crimes, that delivered Him up to the Jews: your hard-fisted greed and the blood money that you squeeze from just wages, or the just labor for which no wages are paid, was before His mind. It was your calumnies and evil speaking that led to His condemnation, no less than the lying testimonies of the hired witnesses: your calumnies and contentions were all present, and drove Him to a false conviction of blasphemy that entailed His death. It was your inconstancy in the way of virtue and in shunning sin, and your ingratitude for all that He has done for

you in the natural and supernatural order,—for all the graces that you have abused, for your steeled unconsciousness of the blood He shed, the sufferings He endured, the death He underwent,—it was all this far more than the ingratitude of the Jews that overwhelmed His soul with grief and pain. With far better reason than when during His life He asked them for which of His good works they stoned Him, could He ask every one of you, for which of the divine mercies and graces bestowed upon you by this agony and death, did you take part in His execution by your unsteadiness in avoiding sin, and in your hardened ingratitude for all that He has done for you.

You inflicted these wounds upon your Redeemer by the cruelties which you have practiced, and the wrongs and sufferings of the innocent which you have caused, or not prevented. These wanton cruelties, these persecutions of the just, these calumnies of the innocent, were present to Him and afflicted His body and soul no less than those which the Jews inflicted upon Himself. All these had their part in filling Him with shame and sorrow, in crowning Him with thorns, in lashing Him at the pillar, in driving Him upon the gibbet. Your envies of your neighbor, your jealousies of his good, temporal or spiritual; your misplaced and pharisaical zeal that sees a mote in your brother's eye, and not a beam in your own, that is rigidly censorious of your neighbor's conduct, and criminally indulgent to your own, were not a whit less in the persecution of Jesus and His death, than the cries of the high priests, who through envy sought His death; or their zeal who

pretended that He blasphemed in declaring Himself to be the Son of God; who hesitated not to execute an innocent man, and at the same time "would not have His body remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that was a great Sabbath day;" your character and conduct were not future, but present and actual to Jesus; Who comprehended all the sins of men as actually before Him as the fuel to destroy the holocaust which was offered up for them.

Yes, truly, your sins each and all, of one and all, were the true causes that shed Christ's blood; that sundered His soul and body, and offered Him to the Eternal Father as a holocaust and sacrifice. His own words may well be adapted to this meaning: "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves" and your sins.

There is no measure to the love which we owe to Christ for His sufferings and death. We naturally love those who suffer, and show love by their suffering, even when we are no wise concerned and have no part in its causes. There is an instinct in the human heart that compels homage and sympathy for pure disinterested love and sacrifice. But, how should we feel towards those who suffer for our own sakes, and of whose sufferings we are the cause; when, but for us, they would not suffer, nor have cause of suffering? We revere the martyrs who died for their faith in God: how we should love the King of martyrs, Who died to atone for our sins and to save our immortal souls? Human love, even the best, is sometimes mixed with human considerations or is the result of natural affection, springing from the ties of blood or sensible obligations. But Christ's

love is the purest, the most disinterested, the most exalted possible. His outpouring of love was no wise necessary to His bliss, nor did it add aught to His intrinsic glory. Nor was He in any wise indebted to man that gratitude might have any part in it. Such love as this should move the human soul to its profoundest depths and fill it with gratitude and love unlimited in measure and intense in degree.

Nor was the Sacrifice of Christ unnecessary, since God required a condign or adequate satisfaction. For it was meant to take the place of the eternal punishment due to sin. Look at Christ, the Incarnate Word, dying on the cross, and deny, if you can, the eternity and intensity of the punishment due to sin. There must be proportion between these torments of hell, and the sufferings and death meant to take their place. That these punishments were in lieu of hell's torments, is the very meaning of the expiation. Christ as the victim of sin did not suffer too much. Sin and Hell are correlative terms: sin belongs to hell: and hell belongs to sin, and is its fit and eternal abode; originally created to last forever for its condign punishment.

When we speak of Christ taking upon Himself our sins, and being Himself the victim, the vicarious Sacrifice for men, we are to shut out from any part of the suffering His Divinity: He is to be considered as a mere man offering Himself as a Sacrifice; which Sacrifice is endured only in His human nature; yet of an infinite value because of that nature's Personal union with the Godhead. It is only in this respect that Christ could suffer; it is only in this way that His sufferings and Sacrifice could be reputed as ours,

—as the atonement and satisfaction of the race that had sinned and incurred a guilt ineradicable, and beyond all its capacity to expiate or blot out. For sin committed is sin forevermore. Everything that is done, even what is innocent, or indifferent, or praiseworthy, can never be undone. God's power does not extend so far; or, rather, God's power cannot effect contradictions; He is too truly omnipotent for that absurdity. How much less can the evil that is once admitted be made not to have been. It may be pardoned, or forgotten, or even turned into a source and instrument of good by the goodness of God; but it remains an eternal and indestructible fact. And God is as little powerful to destroy this fact as man is unable to merit its forgiveness. The blood of God alone could obtain this.

The crucifixion stood between men, and the eternal torments of hell. From His cross Christ surveyed as it stretched out before Him the vast unmeasured gulf, bottomless, inconceivable in its torments, eternal in duration, filled with cries of agony of unnumbered souls,—an agony ever increasing by new accessions, and which will never end. On the other hand, He beheld men in their mad blindness and headlong fury rushing into this gulf of misery and despair. His expiation on the cross was the flag of truce hoisted between the swift and far-sweeping justice of God, pursuing the legions of the rebellious souls of men, as it formerly cast from heaven and sunk in hell the reprobate angels, who in pride rose against Him. Just as on the field of battle before this emblem the cannonading ceases and the general massacre rests, and terms of peace are fixed. Willingly He offers Himself to undergo men's punish-

ment,—to suffer torments all but those of hell to save them from their doom. And in so far as human nature was capable, He suffered agony and anguish and piercing and crushing pain, which bore a comparison to those torments from which He would rescue men; and which, because of the infinite value which they reached by reason of the manhood which endured them, being united to the Godhead, were a full equivalent for all the torments, unending though they be, of hell.

The abandonment of Christ upon the Cross by his Eternal Father and His heart-wrung cry, "Father, why hast Thou abandoned Me," was a faithful expression of the abandonment of the reprobate sinner to everlasting woe, and of the withering agony, woeful wailing and the cries of despair that shall wrench the souls of the reprobate in that day when they shall call upon the hills to cover them, and the mountains to annihilate them from the face of an angry God. By that cry on the cross Christ taught men the reality of His dereliction by the Father endured to save them from eternal abandonment in hell. But it will not be in the power of the damned to ask, Why has He damned them: for their conscience will condemn them, and overwhelm them with the conviction that they have deserved their doom. That cry was wrung from Jesus, conscious of His innocence, as the expression of His sense of abandonment by God for the guilt of others; Himself all innocent, and as the Vicarious Sacrifice for the souls of men.

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## CHRIST'S DEATH THE EXAMPLE OF OURS

As in His life Christ had taught the most exalted virtues, in His passion and death He gives concrete expression and exhibition of them. "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," was the lesson He inculcated upon men. That it was not too much for human nature—the adopted children of God—receiving thereby the necessary Grace, nor unworthy Christ Himself the natural Son of God, is implied in the precept of Christ and example.

That the Incarnate word came into the world to suffer and die does not diminish the charity and self-sacrifice involved in the actual execution of His mission, but rather increases it as showing that it was eternally and voluntarily determined. Besides in these His actual suffering and death, He laid aside the support of His Godhead; wherefore He as man, unless sustained by His love for men, and spirit of self-surrender for their souls, might have recoiled from the tremendous task.

During life Christ longed for the hour of His passion and death when would be consummated the sacrifice He had come to make. "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you," He said to the Apostles the night that His agony began in Gethsemane. Scarcely for even a just man, will any one die; but in the sacrifice made by Christ, the just dies for the unjust; the Lord of holiness for the creature sinful and undeserving.

Greater love than this no man hath than that he lay

down his life for another. But who is the man that hath this love? Where will you find it? How seldom do instances occur in which there is even a resemblance to this love? Even when you find it, there you will on scrutiny find that there is a mixture of motive, in which there is usually a measure of self-love or self-interest. The closest approach to such self-sacrifice is in parental love. Yet even here it is seldom that father or mother will of choice and with certainty of death before them, die for their offspring. When it does happen there is usually not absent the prospect or hope that both may be saved. And in a familiar and frequent peril there is little hesitancy to slaughter the child for the sake of the mother.

Behold the utter self-sacrifice to which the love of Christ constrains Him in this mystery. The least suffering of Christ was of an infinite value and would have sufficed for men's salvation. Yet He undergoes agony of mind and torture of body that beginning at the Last Supper only ended when He breathed His last on Calvary—an interval of nearly a whole day. This might appear to human hearts a reckless waste of suffering; not so, however, to Him Whose heart was aflame with love for souls, and Who meant that His suffering should be its exponent and measure. Christ in His Passion shows that God loves us more than father or mother can love child. For He that spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him for us, must love us with a love far transcending all human or parental love in its perfect form, and even all human or angelic conception.



It were superfluous to say that Jesus could have rescued Himself from the hands of His enemies. He could, indeed—as He said to St. Peter, who drew his sword in His defense: “Put up thy sword into its scabbard; for could I not ask of the Father twelve legions of angels?” But He had come into the world to suffer; and to do the Father’s will; wherefore, what does He desire but that His mission be fulfilled. The Jews could do nothing against Him except when, and to the degree, which He allowed. He resolutely gave Himself into their hands: “Now is your hour, and that of the powers of darkness,” said He, when at the opening of His Passion.

Consider the sublime humility and obedience and resignation involved in this self-annihilation of the Son of God. He prostrates Himself in agony in Gethsemane before the Eternal Father in prayer and contrition for the sins of men. And while the Divine Majesty is thus humbled, and infinite power becomes weakness, and unutterable innocence assumes the form of guilt, human nature raises its head in pride, and human weakness affects pride, and human guilt would fain wear the garb of innocence. And while He feels the horror of men’s sins, and the anguish with which they wrench His soul, He submits to the will of the Father: Yet “let not My will but Thine be done.” He allowed Himself to be reputed among the wicked; and was executed between two thieves, and robber and cut-throat preferred to Him. “I am a worm, and no man, the shame of men, and an out-cast from the people. For thee I have borne shame, and confusion hath covered my face.”

The Incarnate word, the Lord of Eternal majesty and glory became obedient unto mental agony and sorrow, unto bonds and stripes, unto shame and confusion, unto contumely and flogging and crowning with thorns, unto dying on a gibbet, to compensate the injury, and restore the obedience which men had refused to their God. "He was made obedient unto death, unto the death of the Cross. Wherefore, God hath exalteth Him and given Him a Name above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, of them that are in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth."

Christ displayed in the various stages of His Passion, a clemency and mildness and patience truly divine. Judas, on the point of betraying Him with a kiss, He received with the mild rebuke: "Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" The word of Christ would seem to reprove the desecration of the emblem of human friendship, as much as the act of treachery itself. To Peter: "Put up thy sword into the scabbard, for all who take the sword, shall perish by the sword." And He restored the ear of Malchus which Peter had cut off. The mild glance which He cast at Peter at his thrice denial, in fulfillment of Christ's prediction to him when, in his overweening confidence he declared that, "Though all men should deny Him, yet he never would," brought sorrow and confusion, and tears of true repentance to him. To the minister of the High priest who struck Him in the face when He answered the query of the High priest, He addressed the mild rebuke, whose justice must have been obvious to all the crowd of sycophants

who stood by: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: if well, why strikest thou Me?" In spite of all the contempt and contumely poured upon Him, "He opened not His mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Nor did He fail to set mankind an example of filial regard for Her to Whom He was indebted for His human nature, as a child to its parent: "Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother." The beloved disciple was to take His place in her regard; and she to him to be a mother. Wonderful illustration of the love for one another and care that should distinguish child and parent.

The Apostle Peter admonishes us to imitate the patience which Christ exhibited in His Passion: "For what glory is it, if, when ye are punished for faults, ye bear it? But if doing well ye suffer patiently, this is acceptable before God. For to this ye are called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving to you an example, that ye should follow in the steps of Him, Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth: Who when He was reviled, reviled not: when He suffered, threatened not, but delivered Himself up to him who judged Him unjustly: Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by Whose stripes ye are healed."—*I: Peter, II.*

St Paul also exhorts us to be imitators of this divine patience, "that we may be made companions and partakers in His cross, that planted in the image of His death, we may rise in image of His glory." Christ Himself teaches that "unless we bear our cross and

follow Him suffering, we are not worthy to be called His disciples."

This patience He evinced in every circumstance of His suffering; from His patient surrender into the hands of the Jews, in their nocturnal seizure, until He commended His soul into the hands of His Father. Behold His unbroken serenity before Caiphas, when He could easily have disclosed the hidden malice of Caiphas, which instigated His arrest; before Herod, when He was clothed as a fool and scoffed at; before Pilate who with trifling levity asked Him, "What is truth"; and handed Him over to the Jews to be scourged; behold Him in the hands of the soldiers when He is crowned with thorns, presented with a mock sceptre, in derision of His claim of Kingship; struck, spat upon, lashed at a pillar, treated with every manner of contumely until nailed to the cross. And even then the ribaldry and mockery and insults did not cease: "He was challenged to come down from the cross; to save Himself as He had saved others." And all this from those for whom He had done so much: "Many good works have I done to you; for which of them do you stone Me"; He had said during life; and He could now have repeated it with greater meaning and force than ever. How easily could He at Whose simple declaration, "I am He," uttered at the moment of His arrest, when the crowd of soldiers and accompanying mob were struck, as by lightning and fell flat on the earth, could He, I say, have paralyzed them with one bolt of the Divine anger, and sent them, perhaps, before their time, headlong to hell! But no; the work for which He

had come among men was to be accomplished; the Divine purpose was not to be frustrated by the malice of those for whom it was designed. Hence, His unbroken patience, His unruffled composure, His lofty serenity throughout all. This tranquillity of soul and patient endurance of pain concentrating the soul in itself, but augmented His anguish, and showed how heartily He yielded Himself to His sufferings.

This unutterable patience displayed by Our Lord in His passion and death led Him to forgive His enemies and to pray for all, even for those who were His tormentors and executioners. This was a virtue which till then the world had never seen, and which will be sought in vain in the lives and actions of the loftiest examples which history records of a virtue merely human: to forgive one's enemies, truly and from the heart, is a truer conquest of one's self, and evinces greater mastery of feeling, and higher heroism than the endurance of bodily suffering, or mental anguish. He imparted the grace of contrition to Peter after his base denial; and He would have given the same to Judas, who after his treason confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood, if he had not completely abandoned the company of Jesus, gone into the outer darkness, and given himself to despair and the halter. On the Cross He besought His eternal Father to forgive those who were putting Him to death: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And to the penitent thief who had at first reviled Him, and afterwards sought to be remembered in His kingdom; He said: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Nor should even His execu-

tioners despair; those for whom the Lord Himself besought mercy and pardon.

Consider the unalterable firmness of mind and resignation which Christ showed throughout all these tortures. When in the garden His sensitive nature recoiled at the prospect before Him;—when He deprived Himself of the support of His conscious innocence, and He allowed Himself to feel the load of sin which He had come to destroy, and to feel as His own; of the guilt of which He was but the vicarious victim, when the consolation of the Godhead retired into the higher regions of His soul,—when He shut from view or allowed to be obscured His speedy triumph, in the anticipation of the reprobation of most men in spite of all that He was suffering,—and when the flood of sorrow that overwhelmed His soul caused Him to pray that the chalice of suffering might pass from Him; yet, He prayed that not His will but the Father's should be done. And when on Calvary His intense anguish and torture forced the same sensitive nature to express itself in the words of the Psalm: to inquire the cause of His mysterious abandonment to ignominy and torture for sinners; thus showing the depth and bitterness of His sufferings, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me"; yet at once He commends His Spirit into the hands of His eternal Father, and expires. He had already refused the potion which before being nailed to the cross would have deadened pain and induced insensibility; and even on the cross turned away from the wine or vinegar which they extended to Him on a reed on exclaiming that He thirsted. All this be-

spoke the readiness and resoluteness with which He had abandoned Himself utterly to His sufferings, and of draining to the dregs the chalice of suffering. In all this we behold the fearless intrepidity, the unconquerable fortitude of soul with which He suffered.

We marvel at the resignation of Isaac, as the willing victim of his father, Abraham: "But a greater than Isaac here." This victim had been slain in God's eternal counsels and was the inspiration of Abraham's faith and obedience and of Isaac's resignation, long before Abraham was. How we, the members of this Crucified Jesus, are taught in all this, to shun ease and luxury and pleasure, and to embrace privations, hardships and sufferings. The crown of thorns and the cross on which He died, are the emblems of what we are to do, to suffer, and to avoid. How can the members of His mystical body made one with Him by His tears and blood, give themselves to luxury and sloth and sin? How can the roses and flowers of the pleasures and vanities and passions of this world be intertwined with the thorns of His crown, or the nails and spears of His cross, or adorn the brows or fill the hearts of those who, redeemed with His blood and baptized in His name and nourished with His body, claim Him for their Father, and Redeemer, Friend and Brother? Shame upon such soft and delicate and sinful members of a head crowned with thorns, and of a body pierced with nails, and lacerated on a cross. Let the agony of Jesus be the fount of your contrition; let the crown of Jesus be your bliss and joy; let His sufferings be your school and solace; let His cross be your portion and hope and salvation.

Christ is more radiant in His shame and confusion than in the glory which was His from everlasting: More glorious, blood-stained from the wine-press of His agony, nail-pierced with the sins of men, stretched upon a gibbet, for the love of men and as the expiation of His Father's anger and sovereign justice, than when in the beginning He went forth to create the world by His power, which was to be the scene of His suffering, and to create the race He was one day to redeem with His blood.

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## THE PASSION THE POWER OF GOD.

The Passion of Christ is an inscrutable mystery of the power of God. Nothing less than His omnipotence could have wrought the effects which that Passion and Death accomplished.

Sin had entered into the world, and with sin, all its doleful consequences. That one sin of Adam was entailed on all his posterity. This together with men's own actual sins constituted them accursed from God and of themselves irremediably estranged from His grace. Death, the wages of sin, "passed unto all men in whom and by whom all had sinned." All men fell and were subject to death in the prevarication of their progenitor. This subjection to death was unyielding and universal.

The world was, in a manner by right of conquest, become enslaved to the devil; however iniquitously and by what fell strategy and fatal purpose, in fact, he dominated the hearts of men. They had been allured from their Creator, and bewitched by diabolical artifice and fascinated by the allurements of sense; they pursued error. They were sunk in passion, and gave themselves to sin, abandoning the Creator, and if worshipping at all, worshipping the creature.

They forfeited the immortal bliss for which they had been destined; heaven was shut upon them. They had incurred a punishment which of itself was inevitable and unpardonable, a punishment temporal and eternal. Such was their guilt as contracted by insult to an infinite Being. To Him of themselves they could

never be reconciled; for it was utterly beyond them to make any expiation by which Divine justice could be mollified or averted. Man had fallen into a state that was never designed; not into a state of simple or pure nature (such a state never was); not into a state in which he might indeed be deprived of heaven, and yet abide happy forever with a natural beatitude on earth; but into a state of separation and damnation from God, issuing necessarily in hopeless and endless misery.

The order and design of God was for a time subverted; His final and ulterior providence was not yet disclosed. The moral world was in ruins and apparently inextricable confusion. It was as if the laws which support the physical world had lost their power or forgotten the will of the Creator, and the whole universe was in dissolution. It was as if the most majestic temple which human ingenuity could devise, with all its noble symmetry, unrivalled proportions, lofty pillars rounded and fluted, crowned with flowered cornice and supporting an architrave or dome so high as to bewilder the beholding eye, had been shaken by some Samson or earthquake, and fell to the earth, convulsed and collapsed, a shapeless mass. The earth shuddered at the fall of men, and "gave sign through all her works that all was lost." No material disturbance or convulsion of the heavens could parallel the convulsion of the moral world consequent on the admission of sin and sundering of the relations between God and man in the beginning.

What power could correct so great evil, could re-adjust the heavenly balance and order in which all

things had been originally constituted?—in a moral convulsion in which the design of God Himself seemed for the moment to be traversed or subverted, in which the archenemy, cast out of heaven, seemed to have obtained his long sought vengeance against the Most High, by involving in ruinous sedition his latest born sons; what intelligence can conceive, what all-powerful, all-accomplishing, irresistible agency can execute any remedy against so great evils; can undo so great ruin and desolation, can restore all the lost hopes and destiny of humanity, now shattered beyond recognition, and doomed to unending misery? Who can do it but the Creator Who for inscrutable reasons has allowed these transient evils that He might evolve more glorious results, that from this disorder and apparent chaos He might produce an order immeasurably more sublime and a dispensation of love and mercy impossible without this fall and ruin and sin; and a manifestation of His Divine attributes transcendently glorious and before which pale the glories of creation and of all preceding works of His hands. His omniscience and omnipotence will undo this misery and reveal the final purpose of His all-seeing and all-reaching providence. It will be seen that this was only a previous and necessary work to that which was in His thought and design from everlasting. For “the Lamb was slain in God’s eternal foreknowledge from the beginning.”

Sin may be considered as an act and as an offense offered to God. As an act God Himself cannot undo it, or make it to be as if it had never been. For He cannot recall the past; for He cannot make a thing to

be and not to be at the same time. This is only saying that God cannot contradict Himself; the result of His power cannot be absurdity, or nothing. Even viewed as an offense to God, His omnipotence cannot recall or undo it. The insult once given must stand forever, as any other fact. Pardon does not remove the act of sin, or make it as if it never had been. And sin in itself calls for no pardon; for pardon is no essential element in sin; the malice of sin makes no provision for its forgiveness. Sin in itself is irremissible. Its infinite malice once admitted stands for ever. If God had not forgiven it, we cannot comprehend how its forgiveness could enter His intelligence, or be compassed by His power. This is illustrated in the fall of the angels: unforgiven, though but for one offence, and no second trial. For sin to necessarily and essentially carry with it assurance of forgiveness on the part of God, would be the same as to make right and wrong convertible terms; as to say that Divine power can change the fundamental principles of truth and error; can subvert the principle of contradiction, and make a thing to be and not to be at one and the same time.

It is, then, a mystery of the power of God that, letting, as it must, the fact of sin remain, He ordained the forgiveness of sin, and the ransom of sinners and putting them in no worse state than before, through the Passion and Death of His only begotten Son—God as Himself. And the unutterable nature of this stupendous means for their forgiveness proclaims the prodigious efforts of Divine intelligence, and exhaustion of Divine power involved in destroying

and forgiving what, we have said, is itself indestructible and unforgivable.

The facility of pardon for sin since its abolition was decreed on high through the blood-shedding of the Incarnate Word has associated in our minds the ideas of sin and pardon that they stand inseparable, one suggesting the other. Yet, in very truth, it is a mystery of the power of God that the Passion and Death of Christ could be ordained for the redemption of the world and the destruction of sin.—Except as ordained for this purpose by Divine power, there is no necessary connection between this Sacrifice of the Incarnate Word, or any other sacrifice, and the forgiveness of sins. No atonement could claim this forgiveness as its right and due. Even the atonement made by the Eternal Word should needs be accepted by the Eternal Father before It could exert any indeclinable power. As it is a mystery of the power of God that He could conceive the design of any redemption, and entertain the purpose of forgiving sin, it was necessary that some adequate sacrifice, expiatory in its nature, should be offered to Him. Christ by His death, viewed as a sacrifice most acceptable, and abundantly commensurate and even surpassing the infinite malice of sin, rendered God propitious; and disarmed His justice and appeased his indignation, and invoked His mercy upon men; and purchased pardon for all sin, past and future, grieved for with contrite and humbled heart. “But all things are from God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation. Since God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to

Himself, not imputing to them their sins, and He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation.”—2 Cor. xi; 18-19. “Christ loved us, and delivered Himself up for us as an oblation, and hence a sacrifice to God in the odour of sweetness.”—Eph. v; 2.

But, where was the necessary sacrifice to be found? No creature inferior to man—the most excellent in nature and endowments of all creatures—could atone for man. “No brute animals offered as victims could satisfy the justice of God for a rational being. Nothing of less rank than His own could compensate by his blood for the injured majesty of God. Moreover, this victim should be wholly innocent, free from all defilement. For if the victim itself stained with sin needed expiation, how could it expiate the sins of others? The unclean could not clean the unclean: iniquity could not wash away iniquity. Hence no man could atone for the sins of men; for human nature was defiled in its very source by sin. “Who can make pure the seed conceived impure?” Yet, even if such a victim, of the same rational nature as those for whose sins he is to be offered, himself without sin, and needing no expiation, innocent as it behooves the expiatory victim to be, could be found, of how little avail could he—a finite creature—be to exhaust the infinite malice of sin, and to make adequate atonement to the infinite majesty of God? Only a man-God could constitute this all-sufficient atonement for the infinite malice of sin and the contemned infinite majesty of God; only a sacrifice in which God Himself would be both priest and victim,—man of the race that had sinned, and God against Whom it had

sinned. This is the only sacrifice, proceeding from infinite love offered in His honor, and undertaken as an atonement for sin, to satisfy His justice and to appease His wrath, that could be acceptable before God. For it is impossible that sins should be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats. Therefore coming into the world He saith: "sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not have: but Thou hast fitted to Me a body. Sacrifices and holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then I said: Behold I come: at the head of the Book it is written of Me, to do thy will, O God . . . By which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." Heb. x; 4-10. "Accordingly for our sake the Son of God came into the womb of the Virgin, and there for us was made man; nature was taken from it, not fault. He made for us a Sacrifice, He exhibited His body for sinners, a victim without sin, which was able to die by its humanity, and to make clean by its holiness." Nat. Alex.

Is it not obvious that the Passion of Christ, as the adequate means of propitiating Divine justice and as the expiation for sins, is the work of the power of God, and that in it His omnipotence shines as clearly, and unutterably more so, than in the creation of the physical world which we see around us? Who can scrutinize the depth of counsel, the resourceful wisdom, the illimitable power shown in this Divine Passion rendering God capable of propitiation; and in finding a sacrifice adequate to the exigence of His justice, and offering to His mercy an abundant, nay, an overwhelming satisfaction for the outrage of sin and

the implied malice of men sinners? But what mind, or even angelic intelligence can look without bewilderment and mental exhaustion and collapse, from the height of the loftiest intelligence into the abyss of conceiving or imagining how God can atone to God for sins that were as much offences to the victim as to the offended, to the Son as to the Father; because they were both one by the unity of their nature? "Truly abyss summons or invokes abyss."

The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ showed itself to be the mystery of the Power of God in the results which it accomplished. It rebuilt the temple of the moral world from its ruins to renewed grace and even increased magnificence. Man was raised to higher rank than even that to which he had been created: by the Eternal Word taking his nature to Himself, and raising him not only to the supernatural state, which by sin he had lost, but by becoming his brother in the flesh and exalting human nature to the throne of God, making man the adopted Son of the Most High. Happy was the fall which produced the superabundant love of the Incarnation, and caused men to share the inestimable benefits which it purchased. As the second temple far surpassed in glory, although incomparably inferior in material splendor, the first, because it was filled with glory of the presence of the Incarnate Word; so, humanity regenerated from sin, purified in the blood of Christ, reconstructed and re-endowed, and the moral world illuminated with the light of the Gospel, and the souls of men radiant with the superabundant grace and lights shed abroad by the Holy Ghost,—so did hu-



manity recreated in Jesus Christ surpass humanity as it issued from the loins of the first Adam. Thus the evil design plotted by the devil recoils on his own head, his strategies led to his own discomfiture; and men, whom he envied, became dearer to God because of the blood of His Son poured out for their salvation.

The Passion of Christ delivered men from sin and destroyed the power of sin;—not in the sense that sin no longer exists or that men may not fall into it, but in the sense that men may remain immune from it, if they will; and that it can have no power over them but that which they freely allow. The freedom of the human will abides inviolate. Men cannot be made innocent, or sanctified against their will; it calls for their free and hearty and earnest consent and cooperation. Grace waits upon, but does not coerce their will; it invites, but does not compel their free consent.

The only source and cause of the remission of all the sins of men, past, present and to come, is the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Truly, there is no other name under heaven by which men can be saved—no other sacrifice adequate for their guilt, nor acceptable to the Father. From the living flesh suffering the tortures of Calvary, from His Sacred blood shed by diabolical malice, and the wounds inflicted by those whom they were to save, Divine Wisdom has compounded a sovereign medicine to be applied to the souls of men. To those who receive it with faith animated by charity, and those who are made partakers of it by the worthy reception of the sacraments, it works grace, and pardon and salvation. To those

who refuse it, or who receive it without these essential dispositions, it works sin and unforgiveness and perdition. "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice, for the remission of former sins."—Rom. iii; 24-25. "He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood."—Apoc. i. "And ye being dead in sins and the foreskin of your flesh, He hath quickened together with Him, forgiving you all the sins; blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, and the same He took out of the way, nailing it to the cross."—Coll. ii; 13-14. "So also the Christ was offered once to take away the sins of many."—Heb. ix; 28.

The Passion of Christ destroyed the power of the devil. "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."—John xii; 31. The human race was enslaved to the devil, as a consequence of the primal sin; he had seduced men from their loyalty to God, and they were made his victims. They deserved punishment by the handwriting of sin. The evil one shows his conquest and domination over men, by obscuring their minds and perverting their wills to forget or contemn the Creator, and to deify and worship the creature, even inanimate objects. His tyranny was by divine permission and human consent. But from tyrannizing over the children of men, innocent and guilty, he assailed the Son of God Himself, the Author of justice and the Redeemer of men. He was overcome by the holiness of Christ, and his

power was destroyed, and the divine permission by which he had run riot was withdrawn. "For the prince of this world cometh; he hath not anything," that is, no sin, and, consequently, no power over Him. Yet he instigated men to slaughter Him, the Holy one of Israel, the Incarnate Word, whose betrayer and enemies acknowledged Him innocent and undeserving of death.

The blood of Christ is a ransom by which while we are freed the devil is enchained. Far from enriching the evil one, it impoverishes him and deprives him of his prey. Christ, Himself without blemish or spot, against Whom sin had not aught of claim, Who Himself needed no sacrifice for sin, had, not from debt or compulsion, but freely and spontaneously shed His blood to redeem the children of men. By faith in Christ dying for the sins of men, rising for their justification and by the efficacy of His blood shed for the blotting out of sin, men are ransomed from the bondage of Satan, purified from all sin, actual or inherited; are engrafted on the body of Christ, are nourished with His blood and grace, animated by His spirit. This expulsion of the evil one from the redeemed, and this assignment of the elect to their Lord, is the judgment or condemnation of the prince of this world. It was just that the children of God, the redeemed of Christ should not remain in the thralldom of His archenemy; that they should not be oppressed longer by him who instigated men to the crime of Deicide; although in the event, far from his fell purpose, it led to the redemption of the race and its liberation from his grasp. They who believed in the only begotten Son of God,

should enjoy the freedom of His children, nor be subject to him whom their Redeemer had cast down, and who without the shadow of cause had brought upon the all innocent His passion and crucifixion. The spoils of his malice and treachery should be rescued from his grasp; those once vessels of anger should be transformed into vessels of mercy. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."—Col. i; 13-14. "And despoiling the principalities and the powers, he led them boldly, openly triumphing over them in Himself."—Col. ii; 15. "No man can enter into the house of the strong one, and rob him of his goods, unless he first bind the strong one, and then shall he plunder his house."—Mark iii; 27.

Original sin had deprived men of the immortal heritage of bliss which the fidelity of Adam would have secured to all his children: bliss or woe was in the balance of his obedience. It had been God's gratuitous gift; there was nothing in man that could claim as a right the happiness of heaven. Nor, as the event proved, was his will so steadfast to its God and so clinging to obedience that it did not perversely abandon God and sovereign felicity at the instigation of the arch fiend and for sake of a passing gratification and an unexpressed curiosity. Hence heaven because of that primal sin and in view of all the subsequent sins of men was closed, the assurance of undying felicity vanished as it seemed forever. The passion and death of Christ is the potent instrument and key by which

its bolts are withdrawn, and its portals fly open again to the children of men. They are by the all-pardoning efficacy of that Passion and death restored to the felicity to which they were at first created and predestined. Wide is the entrance and loud and long the acclaim of welcome with which the heavenly Spirits greeted and with outstretched embrace received Christ the Redeemer returning to the bosom of His Father, leading captivity captive, leading as their Lord and Redeemer the Spirits of those who had been in bondage, the first fruits of the children of men who till the end of time through innocence never lost or heroically recovered and persevered in, through tribulation and temptation and blood shedding, and purified in the blood of the Lamb, shall surround their Great High Priest and Intercessor at the right hand of the Father. Christ by His passion and death paid the ransom by which we are freed from the original sin of our nature both as to the fault, and the guilt of punishment. Hence hell is closed, and heaven opens because the decree of our exclusion is cancelled. Not only are we liberated from pain and punishment, but we are not to be deprived of reward; for that were punishment itself. And from their own personal sins are they loosed, and as consequence restored to the right of entering heaven, who partake in His passion through faith and charity and the sacraments of His grace, and apply to themselves through sincere co-operation, and heavenly living the merits of the same Passion and Death. "Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Christ, by the new and living way which He hath

consecrated for us, through the veil that is His own flesh.”—Heb. x; 19-20. “But Christ being come a High Priest of the good things to come, by the greater and better tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this building.” “Neither by the blood of goats, or calves; but by His own blood, entered once into the sanctuary, having obtained an eternal redemption.”—Heb. ix; 11-12. “For Jesus is not entered into a sanctuary made with hands, the figure of the true one, but into heaven itself, that He may now appear in the presence of God for us.”—Heb. ix; 24.

The Passion of Christ showed itself to be a mystery of power in that it relieves man’s inability to atone for sin, and enables him to offer to God an adequate even superabundant atonement, which is all his own. Truly human weakness is changed into power by this mystery in which the least suffering endured by Christ assumes an infinite value because of His personal union with the Godhead.

Mere man could never offer to God the infinite satisfaction which is alone worthy of Him, and which alone would be the measure of sin and commensurate with its pardon,—which alone could satisfy the justice of God and move Him to save men from the infinite punishment which an infinite offence calls for. For man, or all men are finite: God is infinite: sin, therefore offered by such creatures to such a Creator is necessarily infinite. Man, therefore, could never by his own resources or any expiation that he could make, clean out the malice of sin, or satisfy the exigencies of Divine justice, or move divine compassion toward those, who, while they had the misfortune of contract-

ing a guilt, eternal in itself, could never make an atonement fully equal to their guilt. For whatever sacrifice men could offer, be it the most excellent in kind, or the most uncounted in number, would ever retain a finite character, and fall infinitely below that due to the boundless majesty of the Godhead: it would ever remain an inadequacy and hopelessly short of its purpose.

From what has been said it is manifest that an infinite sacrifice was necessary to satisfy Divine Justice. It is equally clear the required sacrifice should belong to and be the atonement of the sinning race,—that it could claim it as its own, and offer it to God as such. For, otherwise, it would not be the sacrifice of men, and they could not appropriate it to themselves. Now, then, the Passion and Death of Jesus was infinite, because of His Divinity. And this gave the infinite value to His sufferings which the infinite malice of sin called for. While God, He was truly man, as truly man as any of us,—nature, soul, body, mind—everything necessary and proper to us as men. It was only in this human nature, and could be only in this nature that He suffered: as God He could not suffer. Hence His sacrifice was the sacrifice of man, and was justly reputed his, the property of the human race. “He was truly our brother in the flesh.” As such He reconciled us to His Father, and our Father in heaven: He as the natural Son, we as the adopted sons of the Most High. Thus man was restored to God and His destiny.

He paid the debt of punishment due to our sins. The infinite malice of sin which called for the fire of

hell, found in the passion and death of the God-man its antidote; these eternal torments were forever quenched for those who apply this passion and death to their souls.

The human race corrupted in its source, the stream of the generations of men is necessarily defiled. The whole race is sunk in sin. The handwriting of death is decreed upon all men. "Death hath passed unto all men in whom all have sinned." Heaven is forfeit; desolation and despair man's merited lot; hell with its misery and woe yearning to engulf the souls of men. Pain, sickness, distress once so far from men have become his inseparable attendants. This is the state of the children of men.

Where is the ransom, when the power that can resuscitate the race thus overwhelmed with calamities, dead in sin, and outcast from its God? Who can offer the necessary atonement? Not man surely; for he is the sinner; and "no one can pay the price of his own soul."

The honor of which the majesty of God has been outraged by sin must be restored: Divine justice must be appeased; and this can be done only by an oblation of infinite value, rank, and efficacy. The dignity of Him offended, the vileness of the offender gives sin its measure and degree of guilt: as either increases, the enormity of sin increases, and its malice intensified. While the value of the atonement is commensurate with its excellence and that of Him who offers it. No one, nor many, themselves under the curse upon the race, could redeem it. No one, himself with incurable disease, could cure the same disease in others. Even



if there had been one or many who had been saved from the fall, their sinlessness together even with all the good that might yet remain in the fallen, would have sufficed as an oblation to restore his integrity, and raise man from his degradation, and give back his supernatural destiny. All the children of men with all that is excellent in their nature, and with even the gifts of grace, and with all the good that may have survived the fall, as an oblation, could not avail to exert a claim upon Divine justice. At its highest and best, it would be limited, and, therefore, inadequate for a condign satisfaction.

Nor could the calamity, irremediable by all human agency, which had befallen the race be repaired by beings of a loftier rank and diviner intelligence and celestial endowments. No angel or choirs of angels could by their beseechings before the Throne which they surround from eternity to eternity move the Divine compassion for men by any sense of merit or semblance of satisfaction on their part. Nay, more; if these heavenly spirits became men, and lived on earth, and died amidst anguish and torment for the lost sons of men, they could exert no claim of justice by which Divine mercy should be moved to pardon the sins and restore the hopes of men fallen away from their Creator by wilful rebellion against His laws, and indestructible contempt of His majesty. Sin once committed, is sin forevermore: admitted into the region of God's creations, and become the delight of His rational creatures, can be driven hence and expunged only by God's own Almighty arm; and even then it will be on condition of man's moral freedom, and future loyalty. God alone, the source of life, can

restore life,—true life, to those dead in His sight. God alone, the Father of eternity, and the dispenser of the life to come, can restore them to those who have forfeited them by sin. The just endowments staked upon man's obedience, and lost by his prevarication can only be entrusted to a second pledge by the gratuitous bounty of their first Restorer. The blood of the Immaculate Lamb shed from the foundation of the world was, in God's inscrutable councils, the only atonement for sin, the only redemption for men. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written: Cursed is every one, who hangeth on a tree."—Gal. iii; 13. "Knowing that not with corruptible things, gold or silver, ye were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, spotless and undefiled."—I Peter i; 18-19. We do not declare the full truth when we say that Christ's Sacrifice was enough to appease God's wrath and justice, and to pay the penalty of man's guilt and to restore him to the state from which he fell. Christ's satisfaction for men was an exuberant, overflowing satisfaction, far beyond that which was required; far more acceptable in God's sight, than sin had been offensive; far more precious than all actual or possible creatures. God received more glory from the life and death of the Incarnate Word than He received insult from all the sins of men: the augment to the Divine honor out-balanced their malice. With an extravagance beyond all measure, and in harmony with His eternal love for the Father and for men, did He undo the consequences

of the fall and raise men to even a higher pitch of glory: did He atone to God and renew and even augment His honor violated by sin.

The sin of Deicide in His slaughter and death beyond conception is greater than all other possible sins uncounted, and enormous in guilt. Yet the glory to God therein resulting was greater still, and ensured, as it deserved, the salvation of the world. Nor can we believe that His blood did not reach the souls of even those who shed it and shed mercy upon them. For it was the Victim Himself whose prayer the Father could not let go unheard, who imprecated pardon for them: "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

When He, upon Whom death had no claim because no one could accuse Him of sin, the Immaculate Lamb conscious of the holiness of the Godhead, spontaneously gave Himself up to death for His Father's glory and men's salvation, He made an oblation at which hell stood aghast, men staggered and still stagger in their belief; and which the angels, recovered from amazement, have never ceased and will never cease to sing in transports of love and homage, "Benediction and praise and power and glory to the Lamb of God who liveth and reigneth forever, world without end. Amen." "With the Lord there is mercy and plentiful redemption."—Ps. 129. "For if by the offence of the one, the many died: much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace of the one man Jesus Christ."

The Passion and death of Christ shows itself to be a mystery of the power of God in that it is divinely adopted to work a reformation in the moral nature

of man; thereby rescuing him from the moral disorders into which the fall plunged him, and restoring to him the excellence of his nature, and giving him grace to subject passion to reason and reason to God. For it was not merely to redeem man, and pay the price of his soul that Christ died: it was no less to teach men how to live, to enable them to practice virtue, to reclaim them from the tyranny of vice, the delusion of sense, and the darkness of error and of mere reason: to raise them above the rank of mere creatures to what grace and truth should make them: free with the freedom of the children of God; to bring them back, as far as may be, to their condition of original justice and sanctifying grace, and to graft them on Himself as members of His Sacred Humanity. For this purpose virtues were to be infused into them that would make them not unworthy of their exalted destiny: new principles and motives of action were to be made known to them: it was necessary that the whole man should be renewed even in the image of the new Adam; as by the fall of the first Adam "the whole man had been changed for the worse."

This reformation of man necessitated a new force of grace; that would take the place of the original justice in which man had been made: and the grace was given by Him Who called upon men to be perfect as their Father is perfect; this grace was one of the fruits of His passion and death. But, as men are moved by nothing as by example, He gave us in His life and death a concrete exhibition of the perfection of which nature is capable and of which He was a living Exemplar, a model of all virtues which during

life we should seek to make our own, that we may enter eternal bliss and the company of the angels and saints in life everlasting; which the corrupt of heart cannot enjoy, and which can only be enjoyed by those whose spirits have been purified from sin and defilement and the dross of earthly things. All sins come from pride, avarice and sensuality: these are the corrupt sources of all the vices of men, and of the deluge of iniquity that fills the earth. Trace any wickedness to its source and haunt, and you will find it in one, or other, or all of them. Pride: what an inexhaustible brood of evils issues from its teeming womb! Avarice: the labyrinthian net that inveigles the heart, and ensnares the feet of the children of men! Sensuality: whose maws are never glutted, and only grows insatiable by what it feeds on. These are the ferocious passions, which like so many beasts, original sin has let loose in the human heart and upon the children of men to corrupt and desolate them, and to fill the earth with havoc and iniquity and despair.

These are the sins which Christ denounces: He had seen Lucifer the angel of pride fall as a star from heaven: Woe to you rich men, weep and howl: the impure shall never enter the Kingdom of God. These are the sins which He sought to cure by the contrary virtues: humility, poverty, mortification. These virtues are the sovereign antidotes of those monster vices: by these they are controlled, and it may be extirpated. No one can cultivate the one while enslaved to the other: while fettered by their bonds he cannot break his bondage but by Divine grace. When he gives himself to humility, poverty, mortification, he must turn his

back upon pride, avarice, sensuality. If he look back he is not worthy of the Kingdom of God.

Not alone do these virtues cure all vices, but they are the sources and supports of all virtues: not only negative, but positive in their influence and scope. Humility! founded in truth and its realized sense, and, therefore, the source of every virtue, and the exposure of every imposture, artifice, and dissimulation. Poverty! cutting away at one blow every reason and every pretext for seeking riches, and thus detaching men from sense, leads them to God. Mortification! that quenches sensuality and lust by denying to the body more than its bodily needs require; for superfluity is the fuel of concupiscence. These are the virtues that Christ inculcates upon mankind for even salvation. And the duties which He inspires upon those who would be perfect, are but a higher measure and degree of these ordinary virtues which are required even for life eternal. Unless you become in your humility even as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. . . . Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the Kingdom of heaven. Adulterers and fornicators shall not possess the Kingdom of God.

Faithful preacher! He practices what He preaches: Faithful captain: He asks His followers to do nothing which He has not done; to put themselves in no danger or to suffer naught, in which He has not first placed Himself or suffered. Faithful teacher: He gives in Himself a concrete exhibition,—His life a long object lesson of the virtues with which He would indoctrinate mankind. "Learn of me for I am meek

and humble of heart"; "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; yet the son of man hath not whereon to lay His head;" "He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me;" "Which of you will accuse Me of sin?"

This is His life; conformable to His lessons: this is His practice; the standard which He held up to others. And these lessons which He preached, and their concrete exhibition which He lived, He further illustrated and verified and sealed by His passion and death and blood. May He in His own good time, and according to his inscrutable counsels draw all things, in all ways and for all souls to Himself. May His blood be upon all souls to their salvation and sanctification.

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## THE PASSION AND DEATH OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ proclaims the infinite justice of God. The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ satisfies the infinite justice of God. The Passion and Death of Christ declares the infinite evil of sin. The Passion and Death of Christ destroys this infinite evil of sin. The Passion and Death of Christ manifests the eternity of hell. The Passion and Death of Christ saves us from this eternal hell.

Man through Christ,—his Brother, by the assumption of human flesh, thus making Himself the second Adam and moral head of humanity, redeemed and renovated—was rendered able to present to God an infinite and altogether condign satisfaction. The first, because by reason of His Personal union with humanity, His sacrifice was truly and indeed that of man; the second, because Christ being, as God, infinite, His sacrifice was infinite—far outweighing the debt contracted by all sins—complete and absolute in all respects.

Behold, Christ in His agony. It is the work of sin. Let us contemplate this amazing scene, and study it in its causes.

He with His Apostles, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, who had gone to consummate his nefarious bargain with the high priests of betraying the Son of Man, had left the supper-hall where, for the last time, He had eaten with them and given them the Sacrament of His body

and blood, and entered the garden of Gethsemane, where He was wont to retire to pray. Scarcely had He passed into its shade, when "He began to be sorrowful." The Evangelists declare it in many places: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." They do not conceal it. "He began to be sore amazed"; "He began to be very heavy." There is conflict or anguish in His soul, which relieves itself or issues in a sweat of blood; as mental strain bursts blood vessel, or tears relieve or assuage piercing or consuming sorrow. "He was in an agony, and His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground." They bedewed His garments; they soaked the earth; His strength was exhausted; His heart was enfeebled; He might have died but for the sacrifice He was yet to undergo, and of which this mental agony was but the necessary prelude.

I do not propose to present to you any harrowing pictures, that might move your sensibilities, of Jesus suffering this physical pain or mental anguish; it is sufficient for our purpose to consider that He thus agonized unto blood, and to keep this fact in mind.

It must always be borne in mind that Christ suffered willingly; "He was offered because He willed it"; "I have a baptism wherewith to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" Not only willingly, but even with eagerness, and longing, and earnestly, with His whole soul did He plunge into this gulf of suffering; did He resolutely withdraw all that might have mitigated His sufferings, and sustained and consoled Him, and let fall upon Himself the full torrent of the predestined pain and agony which He

came into the world to undergo, and to offer to His eternal Father as an atonement for the sins of men. His enemies had no power against Him except what He willed. He could have called upon ten thousand angels to do His bidding. With a word He could have prostrated or annihilated His tormentors and those bent on His murder. "No one could take His life from Him; for He had power to take it up and put it down." "This was their hour and that of the powers of darkness," because it was given them from on high consequent on His own virtual and expressed will. For He had come to suffer. His sufferings were in the truest sense self-imposed. This, however, did not diminish their poignancy, nor blunt their edge, nor shorten their duration. He had suffered keen pain in their anticipation all His life long; He was afflicted till they were endured and all that was written of Him should be fulfilled. If the assured and ever-present prospect was a source of pain and keen distress, what must not their actual undergoing and realization have been?

He felt His agony and suffering not less than if He were only a man, and not God. He tempered them with no consolation or dulled them with no potent drug. His sorrow and anguish was not softened or made endurable by the consciousness of His innocence, nor were His senses and sensibilities deadened with inward joy and bliss consequent on the consolation and transports of the Beatific Vision. Far from Him was the experience of St. Paul, who "was filled with comfort and over abundant with joy in all his tribulations."—2 Cor. 7, 4. For resolutely and divinely bent on suf-

fering and torture, as His mission called for, He surrendered Himself to His agony and subsequent tortures with a whole-heartedness which we can never even faintly conceive. Hence He deprived Himself of the bliss and glory of the Godhead (which were incompatible with sufferings). And, that He might be overwhelmed with the sins of men, and feel Himself to be what He could never be, the vilest sinner and the outcast of men and the victim of God's anger; He even excluded from His soul the consciousness of His unutterable sinlessness and adorable innocence. This was the cause of all this mysterious agony.

It was not the fear of His early and unjust and painful death; for that death was to be the seed, after a few days, of the resurrection of the first fruits of them that sleep, whose glory would more than compensate for all its injustice and woe and pain. It was not the loss of life, nor even the circumstance of losing it at that time when men cling to it with utmost tenacity and fondness; for it was the prelude to a life whose years shall never end and whose glory shall be undimmed and ever-increasing throughout the long days of eternity. It was not the prospect of wasting anguish and piercing pain; for this was the purchase price of the bliss and joy of appeasing His Eternal Father and compensating for the sins of men; and for this He would begrudge nothing. It was not the contumely of His judges; for what was that to Him Who was surrounded with myriads of angels in transports of adoration and love? It was not the ignominious handling of the ruffian mob of Roman soldiers or Jewish executioners; for what were they in

His Divine eyes but the mere blind, though free and responsible, agents of the inscrutable mystery of justice and love of His Father and Himself? It was not the shame of the cross and the scorn of men; for He knew it was to be His throne of glory till time should end, and that men would honor Him as man has never been honored. It was not the ruin of His country and the fall of the temple and the eclipse of its glory portended in His barbarous execution; for this He knew was in God's inscrutable counsels. It was not the ingratitude and injustice of His generation for whom He had done so much; for all this He knew was foredoomed. It was none of these nor all these together that caused that sweat of blood. These doubtless had some part in His depression and sorrow; but are utterly inadequate to produce so stupendous a result. What was it then? Why, we have it in the inspired writer: God had laid upon Him the iniquities of us all,—all the sins of men, past, present, and to come.

All the sins of men, of whatsoever kind and degree of guilt, and whatsoever number or multitude; and in all its detail and circumstance; of all men, and of each man in particular, from the beginning till now, and from now till the end of time; all sins, in their inherent malignity and foul phantom and blasting influence, and innumerable multitude and revolting heinousness and appalling guilt,—all were present as a circumincumbent mass or overwhelming weight to crush the soul of Jesus and fill it with anguish and to force His blood from His veins.

All the idolatries into which the hearts of men have

ever sunk, and disgraced our nature "perverting the truth of God into a lie, and giving to the creature the glory due to the Creator"; all the strange superstitions and diabolical rites into which men, eager in their blind search, would peer through the shades of this life and learn aught of the invisible and future world, devising rites and teachings insulting to God and disgraceful to men; all the sacrileges, hidden or open, disguised or scandalous, perverting or debasing the holiest rites and turning the instruments of grace and salvation into instruments of malediction and perdition, contemning the Lord in His very bounty and mercy; the blasphemies unutterable and impieties unhallowed, revolting to conscience and heart and inviting, as deserving God's swift and sudden retribution; the oppression of the just, the massacre of the innocent, the scandalizing of the young, the violation of the loving and confiding, the ten thousand heartless wrongs and crying injustices that daily, and hourly pierce the heavens and call down God's wrath; the red-handed murders, the parricides, fratricides, homicides, infanticides, and crimes against the innocent to shield the guilty, the uncounted murderous deeds of blood, and more direful still, the murdered characters and dishonored reputations, the work of vengeance and uncontrolled passion, which fill the annals of time and crowd the volumes of daily human experience; the evil thoughts that corrupt the heart, the deceits that entrap and destroy, the vengeance that rankle in the blood and make man hate his brother with a ferocity more than brutal, the lusts of Sodom and Gomorrah and of all the cities that

have followed in their wake, the polluted breaths of the impure and lecherous, the violated pledges, the desecrated vows, the base ingratitude, the black treacheries, the direful vengeance, the foul orgies, the pretended virtues and consummate hypocrisies, the false friendships and disguised enemies or enmities wearing the garb of friendship, the unnatural and worse than beastly lusts, the insatiate gluttonies, the infuriate drunkennesses; the sins of those who by their manner of life have mocked Christ's agony and been deaf to His piteous sufferings and heeded not to slake His thirst for their souls; the sins of the saved who hearkened to His voice and were responsive to His grace; the sins of those yet living or yet unborn, and unto whom the destiny reserved and deserved is unknown, save unto Him Who agonized in Gethsemane, and Whose omniscience comprehends the fate of all and every soul of every time and clime and race, from Adam to the child who is born with the sound of the Archangel's trumpet, and all of whom, each one in his proper person was present to Jesus as the especial object of His agony;—the sins of all men, of all the generations of men, of all times and ages, of all regions of the whole earth, all, all was before the mind and in the soul of Jesus in this mysterious, all-comprehending, all-enduring agony.

“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 having bound Him, they led Him away; and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.” “And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him, say-

ing: Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when He was accused by the chief priests and the ancients, He made no answer. Then Pilate saith to Him: Dost Thou not hear how many things they testify against Thee. And He answered not a word, so that the governor wondered exceedingly."

The Jews had not the power of life and death, which belongs only to supreme power; they were a subject race; they could only pass upon the guilt of those charged with blasphemy or other offense against their religion. This execution could be only ordered and put into effect by the Roman tribunal. Hence Jesus was led before Pilate, the representative of Roman authority and the dispenser of Roman justice. It would seem also that the Lord Jesus should be persecuted by all for whom He was to die, both Gentile and Jew.

The Jews hated Pilate; Pilate contemned the Jews. Nevertheless, they thought that he would not hesitate in authorizing the death of Jesus. Hence they were surprised when coming upon the tribunal, he asked: "What charges do you bring against this man?" They in the embarrassment and discomforture could only answer: "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have brought Him to you." But Pilate, conscienceless and mercenary and devoted to self-interest as was his character, and as he subsequently showed himself in his treatment of Jesus, yet had some regard for the forms of justice; he insisted upon knowing the alleged cause for which they claimed the blood of Him Who stood before him: "Why, what evil hath He



done?" They then declared that He had been found teaching to refuse tribute to Cæsar, disturbing the peace of the country, and making himself king. These were atrocious calumnies, and they knew them to be such. The claim of Kingship asserted by these accusers seemed to strike the ear of Pilate. Hence he calls Christ aside, and asks Him: "Art thou a King?" "Dost thou say this of thyself or have others told it to thee of me?" implying that he could not make this charge himself, for there was no foundation for it, and that it was only the calumny of others. And Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world: that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. "My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now 'My Kingdom is not from hence.'" King of a Kingdom not of this world had no interest for Pilate. That was too far off, as it is to-day, for a man flaming with human ambition and engrossed with the pleasures and objects of this life. He then declared to the Jews that he found no guilt in Jesus. It was his obvious duty to discharge a man in whom he found no crime and against whom no proof had been brought:—this he should have done in spite of the Jews clamoring for His death, at the risk of his office and even of his life. As a Roman magistrate he should have thrown the majesty of Roman justice as a shield between Jesus and those clamoring for His innocent blood. But Pilate was a politician, a diplo-

matist, a compounder of injustices; he was on the look out for himself and his interests. Hence he would compromise. He would not offend the mob: incurring its animosity might come against him in some way; he wanted its backing or support; he could not think of openly contemning or disregarding their demands; especially not for sake of an outcast Jew whom the Jews themselves despised. He would not shed the blood of Christ; yet he would shed it rather than suffer any disadvantage. And when against conscience he would shed innocent blood, he would fain wash himself of guilt by the idle ceremony of washing hands, as if cleansed hands cleansed the heart. If he had shown even a part of the firmness in resisting the Jews, which otherwise marked his administration, Jesus would have been saved.

But the mystery of salvation was not to be frustrated. Thus God makes use of the perversity of man to advance the counsels of His providence. How easily Christ could have mounted that tribunal, and put Pilate on trial for his pusillanimity, and those hireling Jews for their treachery and blood-thirstiness; and condemned them all of mortal sin, and sent them where they belonged. But this could not be: He could not destroy His own mission into the world: He should permit the wrongs of men to work their course in advancing the Divine scheme of atonement. After all this, how little sensitive should we be about our honor and reputation! How little annoyed at the caprices of fortune, or the ingratitude of men! Men think themselves justified in taking life to avenge their honor. Alas! look at Jesus Christ! What is the les-

son He teaches! What the admonition to those who cherish the spirit of vengeance and seek to return injury for injury.

But the Jews persisted: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate hearing of Galilee, asked if the man was a Galilean." A happy thought struck him; Herod, the King of Galilee, was in Jerusalem; they had not been friendly for some years. He would please Herod's vanity by sending Jesus to him as his subject. By this means he might regain his friendship and at the same time decline responsibility for the life of Jesus. He might even escape the resentment of the Jews. All suitable motives for a trimmer and political aspirant such as Pilate was.

Herod, with all his regal dignity, was an ignoble character. He passed his life in debauchery of every kind. He it was who had caused St. John the Baptist to be beheaded. He was so captivated with Herodias' dancing that "he would give her whatever she asked, though it were half his kingdom." Instead, she asked, at her mother's instigation, the head of John; because he had denounced her for living with Herod, her husband's brother. And forsooth, Herod would not foreswear himself, because of those before whom he had made the rash promise. He would murder John sooner than break his word! The vile character, the deceitfulness, the foxiness of the man was summed up in the term of scorn which Christ applied to him, when He said to the Apostles: "Go, tell that fox that the Son of man will leave Jerusalem on the third day."

Herod had been hoping to see Jesus, for some time. He probably expected to see some miracles wrought for his amusement by him of whom he had heard so much,—something for his diversion, or to please his fancy. If he had sought them at any earlier period with a salutary intention, he could have witnessed them. But it was now too late; the time was gone by when with a deaf ear and hardened heart he had heard of the dead brought back to life, of the blind made to see, the deaf to hear. That was the season of grace for him, the day of salvation. But now, opportunities were gone and the measure of his iniquities filled.

Christ did not open his lips before him when led to his tribunal. While Christ before Caiphas and Pilate broke silence so far as to answer some of their questions, among others, to declare His divinity, and that He was King, but not of a kingdom of this world, before Herod He refused to open His mouth. He contemned Our Lord because of His silence which he ascribed to witlessness; he regarded Our Lord's conduct as that of a fool. And this, because of the interior dispositions of Herod's soul, stained with the blood of the Baptist, and polluted by his crime of incest with his brother's wife; because of his guile and duplicity, because he wanted to be entertained, and not converted, because Christ was to him an object of merriment he became to Christ an object of scorn, shown in the words, "Go tell that fox," as already quoted.

All the officers of Herod's court fell in, of course, as sycophants always do, with the derision with which

Christ was treated. When the king smiles, all smile; when he frowns, who will smile? Such is human respect; such the atmosphere of flattery that surrounds those in position, which renders it impossible for them to know the truth. Courtier is a synonym for flatterer. The highest wisdom when displeasing to courts and those in authority, is always accounted folly, and its professors fools. Pilate had been astonished and marveled at the silence and majesty of Him before him: the same bearing and majesty, because of Herod's moral crookedness, evoked insult to Jesus, and contempt for the Jews and their credulity in heeding Him. He clothed Our Lord in the garb of a fool, and sent Him back to Pilate. What sovereign contempt for the Redeemer of mankind: the Eternal Son of the Father, His Word and Wisdom, to be accounted a fool; and by such a man, the vilest among men; possessing none of the qualities that ennoble, but all the vices that disgrace high station, a murderer, a profligate, a renegade, the votary and slave of everything vile!

On Christ's return to Pilate, Pilate calling together the chief priests and the magistrates and the people, said to them: "Ye have brought before me this man, as one who peverteth the people: and behold, I having examined Him in your presence, find no guilt in this man in respect to those things wherein ye accuse Him. Nor Herod either: for I have sent Him to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by Him. I will therefore chastise, and release Him." But why, O Pilate, chastise Him Whom you believe and declare innocent? Why not

discharge Him as you acknowledge that nothing has been proved, and that He is innocent? Clearly thou art yielding to the frenzy and clamor of the mob. You would steer between putting the innocent to death, and incurring their anger, by inflicting the wrong and pain of chastisement upon Him Who you own deserves it not. Pilate was indeed a trimmer; he was straddling the fence; he was looking out for himself and his interests, at the price of his conscience. He would rather imbrue his hands in innocent blood than withstand the anger and hate of the priest-led mob.

THE PASSION AND DEATH OF CHRIST THE  
MEASURE OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

*(Continued; Second Part.)*

The simplicity and majesty of the character that stood before him awed him for a moment: but it was soon forgotten in the cries of the mob bent on Deicide. His welfare and prospects did not allow him to take that stand which his office as a dispenser of justice imperatively called for. He would reconcile irreconcilable courses of action for his own profit, as so many would fain today do: as they do who try to unite the profit of sin with innocence; the world with God, as if any one could serve two masters; as if there was anything in common between God and the devil.

“But ye have a custom that I should release one to you at the passover; will ye therefore that I release to you the King of the Jews? Then they all cried out: not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber and murderer. Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it upon His head, and they put on Him a purple garment. And they came to Him, and said: Hail, King of the Jews: and they gave Him blows.” “And they struck His head with a reed: and they spat on Him, and bending their knees, worshipped Him.” Barabbas was preferred to Him Who had conferred so many benefits upon them, Who had gone among them doing good. What a contrast to the exultation with which they greeted Him on Palm Sunday: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of

the Lord." The Roman soldiers took a particular zest in torturing Christ because of their hate and contempt for a Jew; and they poured upon Him all the contempt and insults and affronts of which their base hearts were capable. Pilate would make a further effort to save Him. He goes forth and saith to them: Behold I bring Him forth to you that ye may know that I find no guilt in Him. Jesus therefore came forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment. And he saith to them: "Behold the man! When the chief priests, therefore, and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying: Crucify Him, Crucify Him. Pilate would appeal to their feelings as men; to the instincts of common humanity in the affliction of Him Who innocent had already suffered so much. Behold the man! But all was lost upon the Jews; it did not soften them. They cried out,—away with Him, away with Him, let Him be crucified." "Why, what evil hath He done?" "And they cried out the more: let Him be crucified. Pilate saith to them: Take Him yourselves and crucify Him: for I find no guilt in Him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate, therefore, heard this saying he feared the more."

The word struck the ear of Pilate with terror. He had observed the unperturbed self-possession, the divine patience which Jesus exhibited throughout all the circumstances of the trial. Who can tell what thought may have entered the mind of the pagan Pilate? He had already heard Him proclaim Himself the King of a Kingdom to come; and that "everyone that is of the



truth heareth His voice." He had put to Him the question, idle indeed at the time and occasion, yet portentous then and forever: "What is truth?"—so "he entered the hall again, and said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to Him: Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee? Jesus answered: Thou wouldest not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he who hath delivered Me to thee, hath the greater sin. And thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not a friend of Cæsar: for whoever maketh himself King, speaketh against Cæsar." Pilate was alarmed when he heard this declaration from the Jews; he feared that he might be accused before the Emperor of disloyalty. Hence when he heard these words, "he brought Jesus forth; and sat down on the judgment seat. . . . And he saith to the Jews: Behold, your King. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest answered: We have no King but Cæsar." This was more than enough for Pilate not to hesitate to destroy even the innocent; he balanced his own possible ruin against the infliction of death upon Whom he believed innocent; he uttered the sentence of death and consented to the iniquity. Yet, he would fain even yet keep his hands clear of His blood, his wife's warning is sounding in his heart; so he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying: "I am innocent

of the blood of this just man: look ye to it. And all the people answered and said: His blood be on us, and on our children." As if the washing of the hands could wash the soul, that the cleansing of the fingers, could clear the conscience of Deicide. Their imprecation was heard: His blood has been upon them and their children from that day to this; even in that very generation God's anger was seen amongst them. When Jerusalem fell in a siege whose details make the blood run cold: when mothers nourished themselves with the flesh of their own offspring, when not a stone was left upon a stone of the once proud city,—indeed His blood was upon themselves and their children.

The cross was prepared. It was the vilest of punishments; such as was dealt out only to the basest and most servile. In Roman jurisprudence it was accounted an outrage that a Roman citizen should be crucified; that it had actually been inflicted upon one was a grave accusation brought against Verres, the governor of Sicily by Cicero. Among the Jews crucifixion was not a general punishment. But it had been predicted that Christ should die in this way: hence it was to be fulfilled. This cross which was to be the Altar of His Sacrifice was placed upon His shoulders; and as another Isaac, or rather as the fulfillment of Isaac, He went forth to Calvary, the place where the oblation was to be made.

I need not dwell upon the various stages of Our Lord's passage to Calvary; you have them before you in the Stations of the Cross; you have been going through them during Lent, and familiarity has impressed them upon your hearts. "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 as they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up His cross," lest because of the exhaustion already undergone, He might not reach the place of execution. And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning to them, said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." At length after a journey during which, according to tradition, Our Lord fell several times owing to His weakness and the weight of the cross, they came to Calvary.—"And when they had come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there: and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." This was the place of execution used by the Jews and Romans.

They stripped Our Lord; they laid Him flat upon the cross, His hands outstretched upon the cross beam. They drove by main force rough nails through His opened hands and through His feet. We cannot conceive the excruciating torture which must have been caused by those spikes piercing the flesh, crushing the bones, lacerating nerves and sinews, and fastening Him to the cross in the most helpless and agonizing of postures. There is no torture greater than that of crucifixion. It is even believed that burning is not as dreadful; for death soon ends the agony. But in crucifixion death is delayed for hours, it may be for days. There is no pain, mental or physical, that is not experienced. Pain already endured, pain yet to

come, the desire for death to terminate it all, death's delay and slow advance; fever, thirst, starvation, the fearful bodily pain, caused by having nothing to rest upon but lacerated hands and feet, the very support which they give becoming, and intensifying the torture and anguish. The endurance of the human frame strained to the utmost tension and as far as it is possible for it to stand, and never reaching to that which would cause death or unconsciousness. Death or unconsciousness would be mercy; but the last is impossible, while the first is of slow approach: sleep or rest of any kind is beyond possibility. The contempt of the thoughtless and cruel rabble, the mockery and derision of the blaspheming mob of priests and executioners, even the pitying looks of the compassionate women, and the pierced heart of His Mother, which filled the heart of Jesus with the pain and anguish which they themselves felt,—everything capable of wrenching the heart or torturing the body was the portion of Jesus crucified. He was nailed to the cross. It was raised aloft; its lower extreme was brought to the edge of the hole in which it was to stand, and of a sudden was dropped into it. How great must have been the agony that convulsed and the paroxysm of pain that broke as upon a wheel, that delicate frame, as the cross was raised aloft and let fall into the earth!

What, too, was the dismay of the Jews when they read or realized for the first time the hidden insult which Pilate had reserved for them in the inscription which he had caused to be affixed to the cross, designating Him as the King of the Jews, to taunt them be-

cause they had forced him to sin against his conscience, or because in his heart he believed that Jesus was their King. In their indignation they ran to him saying: Write "not the King of the Jews, but that He said He was King of the Jews!" And Pilate's curt and contemptuous, "What I have written, I have written."

The Jews had a custom of offering to those about to be crucified a drug of wine and myrrh which would in a measure deaden the sense to pain and thus somewhat relieve the sufferings. It was offered to Jesus Christ. But He refused it. Unutterable heroism. He did not wish to reduce or lessen the agony and torture He had come on earth to undergo. He would drain the chalice of suffering to its very dregs. As it was voluntary, He willed it to be without measure. It shows the divine strength and fortitude of His purpose.

And they who passed by, and those who stood there, and the soldiers, and the chief priests with the scribes and ancients, revelling in His sufferings, blaspheming and mocking Him, 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." "And one of the malefactors, who was crucified, blasphemed Him, saying: "If Thou art Christ, save Thyself, and us." But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: "Dost thou not fear God, since thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but He hath done nothing wrong." And he said to Jesus: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in

Thy Kingdom." And Jesus said to him: "Truly, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."

But Our Lord did not come down from the cross. He had never conformed to the dictates of human malice, nor subserved the perverse whims and humors, nor steered His life according to the good pleasure of a blind and infuriated rabble, so now He would not frustrate His Divine purpose by an ostentatious display of His omnipotence, which would have been nothing short of the "sign from heaven," which they had formerly demanded, and which was refused them. It was for God to declare the proofs of His mission, which He deemed sufficient: it was for men to gratefully receive them so given. Men have no right to dictate terms to God. He had given proofs sufficient; He preferred our salvation to coming down from the cross. It was not in the power of human mockery to frustrate the Divine Atonement which he had descended from the Father to make for the salvation of the world. If He had purposed to come down from the cross, He would never have been raised upon it. No new wisdom or light came to the Divine Mind and purpose from the taunts and mockery and blasphemies of the ignorant, howling, infuriate, blood-thirsty crowd of hirelings and reprobate priests. His Sacrifice was self-willed: they were but the instruments of a wisdom of which they never dreamt, and certainly never realized.

Even if He had come down from the cross they would not have believed Him. Mark the words of their imprecation: "He saved others."—how? from

what? from death and sickness and every manner of affliction; why, then, did you not believe Him; you belie yourselves in your very challenge. Truly; "He saved others," and you did not believe Him. Why, it was because of His raising Lazarus from the dead, which was a greater miracle than that of coming down from the cross, that they had apprehended and seized Christ. His resurrection from the dead was a greater miracle, than that He should come down from the cross: and yet, when He came back to life, they refused to believe it; they even bribed the soldiers to say that He had not risen from the dead, but that the Apostles had stolen His body while they slept. He did not come down from the cross because He did not wish to destroy His own work; God cannot effect contradictions; He cannot do and undo at the same time.

It would seem that in the beginning both robbers reviled Him; but the one, probably, less violently than the other. It is likely that it was not until some of the signs happened which the Gospel records, that one rebuked the other: "Dost thou not fear God, since thou art under the same condemnation?" The punishment which he endured, or whatever it was that moved the one to compunction would seem to have hardened the other even unto blasphemy of the Lord, and to unrepentance. How the same motive can work results so essentially and eternally dissimilar but shows the necessity of proper dispositions in the soul to profit by the light and grace vouchsafed to it. It is the mystery which is realized in the salvation or damnation of every soul. The true-heartiness and

sincerity of the penitent thief is shown in the forgiveness granted him: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." How the grace of conversion was granted him, God alone can tell. It may have been the spirit in which he suffered what he acknowledged was his just reward. It may have been that during life he had heard Christ or seen His miracles, and the seed was then sown which only now matured amidst the portentous scenes of the crucifixion and the signs on Calvary. It may have been the same light and grace that led the centurion to exclaim: "This truly was the Son of God." But if one died penitent, it is well to keep in mind that, so far as we can judge, the other died impenitent: hence there is no encouragement for those who would delay their repentance in the hope that their lot may be with the good thief. Conversion depends upon grace; and they who abuse grace during life will not find grace waiting for them at the last moment. We have no evidence that the penitent thief had ever sinned against light. If he had his fate might have been that of his companion. Delude not yourself with the hope of repentance at the hour of death. God forbid that your lot should be that of the unrepentant thief. Yet it is a matter that rests in your own hands.

In the first minutes of His crucifixion Our Blessed Lord prayed to His eternal Father: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Are we to believe that the Jews were guiltless, and really did not know what they were doing?—especially after Christ's own words: "If you believe not Me, believe the works that I do; for they give testimony of Me. If I have



not done works such as no other man hath done, they would be without sin. But having done works such as no one else hath done, their sin remaineth." It is clear on the one hand that the Jews did know what they did, or had sufficient reason to know what they did, from the works which He performed; and yet that they did not fully know, or realize what they did. Just as we may have faith to know what we believe, and yet do not realize or bring it home to ourselves. We know that Christ died for our souls; but which of us actually apprises his soul at any such price? with most men it is the cheapest of all goods. Religious truths to be effectual must be realized.

The Jews should have known that Christ was the Son of God. But they did not want Him to be the Son of God; He was not the kind of Christ they had looked for. They turned their ears from hearing, and their eyes from seeing the evidences which He afforded of His Divine character and mission. They resisted testimony, and sinned against light,—the sin against the Holy Ghost. They even worked themselves into a certain subjective persuasion which they believed to be good faith or honesty, as many heretics to-day do; their ignorance was crass or reprehensible. While this state of the Jews may have made them fit objects for Divine mercy, and as such fit objects for the prayers of the Lord Jesus upon the cross, it must be confessed that they had justly incurred the anger of God by their stiff-necked obstinacy and hard-hearted incredulity and wilful obduracy and persistent resistance to the truth. For, otherwise, they would not have deserved the malediction pronounced upon

them, and the manifest tokens of Divine anger that then and thereafter and to this day have followed them. Nor, if they were without sin because of not knowing what they did, could Christ have said that their sin was against them; because He had done works which no man had ever done, and which they had refused to believe. Hence the prayer of Christ on the cross does not argue the sinlessness of the Jews. For, if they were sinless, the eternal Father would have nothing to forgive them. It was only, therefore, in a very palliative sense that the Lord Jesus said that "they knew not what they did." The sense of guilt is never as heavy or as deep at the act of sinning, as it is at the time of repentance and sought for pardon.

Our Lord even in those hours of His agony was not unmindful of her to whom He owed His sacred humanity. She had not forgotten Him; how could she, being His Mother. When He was abandoned by even His Apostles, she with the other holy women and St. John had stood by His cross. In accents of the tenderest love, He replaces Himself in the person of John in her maternal affection by the words: "Woman, behold thy Son." And to John He indicates the filial care and love He would have her shown: "Son, behold thy Mother. And from that hour he took her unto his own." With him she lived until she died, and was assumed into heaven.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," was the cry with which He proclaimed to the world the depth and reality of His sufferings; not that He did not comprehend the mystery of the atonement of which He was the victim; not that He did not know

that, having offered Himself as a vicarious sacrifice to bear the sins of men,—sinking from one depth of pain to another till he reached all that His humanity could bear,—He seemed truly abandoned by the God-head, Whose support He had Himself freely shut out from His soul that He might suffer the full measure which the atonement He was making called for. It was the suffering of His sensitive nature that forced this cry from His agonized soul, and which seemed to point out to men, (what He Himself but too well knew) that there was a cause for Him to suffer, which none but God could fathom, and which God incarnate alone could expiate. Lest men should estimate the value of His sufferings from what they saw; lest taking them for the sufferings of a mere man, they should ever become unmindful that they were the sufferings of a God-made man; Who suffered just as truly and as fully as if He were not God at all; and yet at the same time that these sufferings were of an infinite nature because of the man Christ's hypostatic union with the God-head. Just as in Gethsemane when His sensibilities were overwhelmed with the flood of His agony, He prayed that the chalice of suffering might pass from Him, yet so as not to contravene the Father's will, and His own will which was always in harmony with the Father's; so, now overwhelmed with intensest agony and torture unimaginable and incomprehensible, He asks the Father: Why He has forsaken Him, as the expression of His woe, and as the measure of the magnitude of the cause for which He suffers. Christ could not suffer in His Divine nature, hence He took to Himself a human nature, and

in this human nature He was deluged with suffering. It entered into and penetrated the innermost recesses of His being; it struck Him in the very depths of His soul. No one can conceive what His sufferings were. He came on earth to endure them, and endure them He did; He suffered because He willed to suffer. He died because He willed to die. No one could take from Him His life. He laid down His life.

No one could have gone to death with greater resignation than Jesus Christ; and yet with that reluctance of His lower or sensitive nature to suffer and to die, which showed that it was a sacrifice, that He was the divinely appointed victim for the sins of men, that upon Him the justice of the eternal Father was to fall. The repugnance which He felt to pain and death was not and could not be replaced or compensated for by the consciousness of His own innocence; and that He was the victim only for the sins of others, and that immortality was His portion when He would have passed through death,—if thus, the reluctance to suffer and die could be cancelled, there would have been no sacrifice and atonement. This, then, is the secret of the heart-wrung appeal to God,—“O God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?”

After hanging for six hours on the cross, exhausted by His dreadful anguish and torture, and being on the very verge of dissolution, He again showed the reality and intensity of His sufferings, by exclaiming: “I thirst.” Thirst is the most dreadful of all the pains of those in the throes of dissolution, and precedes and is a sure forerunner of death. One of those standing

by, extended to Him on a reed a sponge soaked in water and vinegar. Others sought to restrain this kindness, saying: "Hold, let us see if Elias will come to save Him." Evidently, in spite of all their bravado and apparent unbelief, they had some misgiving that after all they had done to death an innocent man, an object of special predilection to God; since they thought that Elias might be sent to rescue Him. That it was the quenchless thirst that precedes death, is clear: for when He tasted the drink, He exclaimed: "It is finished": finished was the sacrifice foreordained from everlasting for the lost souls of men: finished His life and work: finished His sufferings and death: finished the fulfillment of all the types and figures: finished the foundations of God's Kingdom on earth.

And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: "Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit." "And bowing His head, He gave up the Ghost." With the feeblest accents the dying speak or even breathe into the ears of their surrounding friends; yet, our Lord with a loud voice commended His spirit into the hands of His Eternal Father. This would show that our Lord's death was not the result of human weakness, but the work of His omnipotence. "He was offered because He willed it"; "No man can take My life from Me"; "I lay it down and I take it up again." The Jews, surely, were not constituted priests for the oblation to be made for the sins of men: they were but the material instruments. Even Pilate was astonished that Christ had died so soon. He died when in His inscrutable counsel He willed to die. Christ was at once

priest and victim: as priest it behooved Him to sacrifice the victim.

The confidence with which He commended His spirit into the hands of His Father revealed the consciousness of His innocence, and the fidelity with which He had always done the Father's will; and the honesty with which He had proclaimed His Divinity. In His example we are taught how we should live and die. As He had lived always doing the will of the Father, so should we also live: as He died with unstinted confidence in His Father, we should by our manner of life purchase for ourselves the same confidence when we come to die. The grave has no terrors for a life without sin. The natural dissolution of soul and body, the judgment that follows, the body sinking into the earth, are as nothing in beholding Jesus Christ dying and rising from the dead to die no more: in Him death is divested of all its horrors: for if we so die, we shall so rise. Christ has gone before us. From the grave we shall come forth to enjoy God forevermore.

“And behold the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top even to the bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were rent, the graves opened and many bodies of the saints who had slept, arose, and going forth from the tombs after His resurrection came into the holy city and appeared to many.” There was darkness over the whole earth for three hours. This was evidently a miracle. For an eclipse is caused by the moon passing between the earth and the sun. But it being the middle of the month when Christ died, the moon was full on every side of the earth,

and therefore could not eclipse the solar rays. The sun refused to shed its light upon the heinous iniquity of Deicide; inanimate nature resented the murder of its Creator.

The dead arose: He came to destroy sin and death, the wages of sin. He destroyed both. His death was the price He paid. Not that death does not yet take place, but that as we shall die, as He died; so we shall arise even as He arose.

And the centurion and those who were with him guarding Jesus, seeing the earth quake and the other things which took place, and the manner of His death,—crying out with a loud voice in the very throes of death—feared very much and glorified God, exclaiming: “Truly, this was a just man,” nay, “verily this is the Son of God.”

The soldiers came according to the custom to make sure of the death of the crucified. This was done by breaking their legs, a shock which was enough not only to accelerate but to cause death. When they came to Jesus they found that He was already dead; for it had been foretold that a “bone of Him should not be broken.” “But they opened His side with a spear; and from it issued blood and water.” This may have been the result of conditions induced by His tortures, or it may have been that the spear of the soldier opened His heart. Whatever it was, it declared, beyond all possible doubt, the truth of Christ’s death.

I have dwelt upon the various stages of the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I have scarcely departed from the words of the Sacred text, except in

so far as it was necessary to explain, or to draw out for your edification the obvious meanings and lessons which it inculcates. I trust that our effort may be productive of great good to your souls. The Jews, demanding the blood of Christ, exclaimed: "Let His blood be upon ourselves and our children." In a far different sense, and with far other dispositions, may we pray that His blood may be upon ourselves and upon our children. May it be upon our souls to cleanse them from sin and to sanctify them: may it be upon us to detach us from this world, and to prepare us for eternal life hereafter: may it be upon us in holy Baptism to rescue us from original sin and to regenerate us into innocence: may it be upon us in holy Penance by which, having fallen into sin, we may rise again by true repentance: may it be upon us in that Divine sacrament in which we receive it as the food and life-giving sustenance of our souls: may it be upon us in all the other holy sacraments, each in its own way and for its divine purpose; particularly, may it be upon us at the hour of death, and in that Sacrament which will wash away the last remnants and stains of sin,—upon us as the powerful means by which we shall overcome at that hour the enemies of our salvation, and enter with confidence and assured hopes into everlasting life.

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## THE CONTRITION OF CHRIST.

The essential malignity of sin consists in perverting man from his last end, by substituting the creature as the Creator, as the object of his choice, love, and worship. That which should enable man to reach his last end, is made the last end, and the Creator is superseded by the creature. This monstrous perversion is the work of man's free choice; being led by some actual gratification which such a choice affords to sacrifice the real good for which he was made; and even to risk eternal punishment as the price of folly and pleasure; to risk, I say, for the sinner never realizes that this will certainly effect his ruin, for he lives always in hope of pardon. It is easy to see that such perversion is in its nature irrevocable, and that man of himself cannot undo his ruin and bring himself back to his first and normal state. He was free to ruin himself, but he is not able or free to extricate himself from the ruin.

Man's remorse after sin is the necessary and inevitable concomitant of sin. The law of God written on all things and proclaimed in their nature and order, is made known to man through his conscience. In characters of light it irradiates his soul; in the consciousness of his existence he finds the consciousness of his Creator; and in the sanction of his heart, or its disapproval, he feels His command or prohibition. Conscience promulgates the law and the law announces the Creator; through conscience the Creator and creature are brought together.

When man violates this law he is not at ease with himself, because he knows that he has disobeyed his

Creator: conscience becomes to him his judge, his executioner, and his jailer. He is haunted by its reproaches and condemning frowns. He realizes his lost bliss by his actual sinning. He feels that he is a debtor to the violated law. The benefit which presented itself as an equivalent and inducement for the transgression has gone, and left no lasting good, but rather permanent evil and misery. He would willingly undo the wrong, and be again as he was; but it is impossible; he cannot make that not to be which has been. He was free to incur guilt, and to lose innocence, but he is not free to regain innocence, and to destroy guilt: to bring back what he was. From this distress comes remorse: with God's grace, from remorse can come true sorrow and purpose of amendment, or the virtue of repentance which is the only means by which he can be restored to innocence, and the debt of sin against God's majesty may be cancelled. Not that it is due to sin, or is any exigency of its nature; for on the contrary sin is in itself irremissible; but owing to the infinite mercy of God, sin is forgiven upon the condition of its true contrition.

But, who of himself can have this required contrition? How can we with our gross nature and material conceptions rise to comprehend, much less to elicit that contrition eventually spiritual in its nature which in intensity and comprehension will be equal to the boundless malice of mortal sin?

We cannot of ourselves even conceive the thought of sorrow for sin, or the possibility of consequent pardon. We have grown familiar with both; but it is the result of Christ's gospel, and sufferings. Un-

aided, we could never comprehend how sorrow could compass the forgiveness of sin. How sin that originates for the most part in the flesh or in something material can be forgiven by the grief of soul, is a conception too lofty and spiritual for our gross nature; and too far beyond the sensible and material world in which we dwell and of which, to judge by our actions and manner of life, we form a part.

Our souls are so clogged with the flesh and its bonds, we are so chained to the earth, our spirits are so clouded with the mist of sin and passion, so enslaved by sense, so absorbed in the sensible things around us; we can with such difficulty, at most only by fits and starts, lift our souls above this world, and behold the light and glory of the spiritual world of which we are citizens and destined heirs hereafter,—that we cannot without untold labor and difficulty conceive and form those acts essentially spiritual by which abhorrence for sin is generated and expressed. The effort is too spiritual for flesh and blood encased in a world of sin. As for any contrition adequate to sin and it were beyond the power of our finite nature. For it is only God who can conceive the real malice of sin; for He alone comprehends the infinitude of His majesty, which sin offends; and He alone realizes the nothingness of man the creature who offends. Man's sorrow is a compound of selfishness and disinterestedness; conscience and concupiscence; its imperfectness shows by the facility with which we relapse into sin. If we had sorrow commensurate with sin, we would not so readily again offend God.

Even for that contrition in its lowest form of attrition argues and requires a degree of virtue and a degree of detachment from the creature, and an elevation of the soul to God with at least His inceptive love or fear of His justice, which must come and can come only from the Divine grace freely bestowed and faithfully corresponded with. When the dead body can restore itself to life, then can the soul dead in sin, unaided restore itself to grace and the life of the spirit which is in God. That disposition of soul, justly called contrition, which is at once supernatural in its origin, supreme in its degree, universal in its range, efficacious in repairing the effects of sin, that is, undoing it as far as possible, and in applying remedies to hinder its recurrence, and cutting away its occasions of future relapse,—this, assuredly, is supremely the work of Divine Grace, in which man can at most but cooperate, and his cooperation but itself be the result of grace.

Christ alone can grieve for sin fittingly, and as it deserves; He alone can do contrition proportionate to sin and worthy of the infinite God. What is impossible to man is possible to the Man-God. The wretched attempts at sorrow that man even at the best can make, could never appease God: the Divine Contrition that Jesus, and that Jesus alone can make is beyond comprehension pleasing to God, and even more than an equivalent for sin; from it the Eternal Father receives more glory than from sin He had received insult and contumely. The Man-God can conceive the possibility of forgiveness because He knows the satisfaction which the Father will accept as a condition of

pardon. He can comprehend the infinite sorrow that is alone adequate to propitiate God, and to expiate sin. The Man-God can elicit this infinite sorrow because He can rise superior to the flesh, to sense, and to the world: He can elevate His Divine mind and will above all things even to the throne of God, and by one act render to God that homage of soul, and prayer for pardon, and contrition for sin, that constitute one supreme act of contrition, at once worthy of God and man and sin,—which God has ever received and which the world has ever witnessed. By the favor which He has with the Father even as a man because of His virtues, by the grace which He has purchased by His passion and death, His contrition acquires its value and its power to propitiate God. Its efficacy becomes infinite and irresistible because of His Divine Sonship before eternal goodness and justice unto the blotting out of sin and the bestowal again upon men of grace and reconciliation. Jesus Christ undertakes to supply the sorrow which is necessary for man: He Who is divinely adequate to offer to God true contrition takes the place of man who is utterly powerless to grieve for sin—as it deserves. He takes upon Him all our guilt, and becomes for the time what in reality He could never be: the guiltiest of men, an outcast from God, and condemned to death. In this view we must put out of sight all our ideas of the holiness of the Son of God, and regard Him merely as the victim, the predestinate victim upon whom, as bearing the weight, assuming the guilt, and accursed for all the sins of men, becoming their vicarious Sacrifice to save them from hell and reconcile them to the Father,

should fall the full anger of the infinite God; suffering an agony and tortures and death meant to take the place of the agony and tortures and reprobation of a fallen race. As such He supplies contrition and makes apology for men: the pulsations of His agonized soul in the garden, which forced the blood from His veins, were the pangs of sorrow and the throbs of remorse that afflicted His soul for the sins which He bore. As another Isaac carrying on his shoulders the faggots for the sacrificial fire in which he was to be consumed, and the knife which was to shed his blood, Jesus bore the sins of men which were to be absolved by His contrition and atoned for by His blood; and the uplifted arm of the eternal God which was to avenge His just anger and mysterious justice. For "He Who knew no sin was made sin for us." "He hath borne our iniquities and carried our sins"; "For the sins of My people have I struck Him." In this sense no punishment was too great, no sorrow too poignant, no dereliction too desolate, no contumely too galling, as the just punishment of Him who had voluntarily taken upon Himself the sins of men—to destroy sin and reconcile man to God. For "God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself," by His passion and death. The Contrition of Christ for the sins for which He would seem, in a measure, to have made Himself responsible, was as a sea in which He was engulfed. He was deluged with human iniquity; He was covered with it as a vesture; it penetrated into His bones; distended His veins till the blood oozed from them, resulting in the sweat of blood: His mental agony so worked on His physical system that

He could not stand the strain, and the heart was on the point of breaking. This was the sovereign, energetic contrition of the Man-God. How like it, or rather how unlike it is all human contrition for sin! And yet it must be the model for our sorrow; ours must contain it in germ or principle. It must be a fearful sorrow, a mighty contrition that will suffice to save us from hell; nothing simulated or half-hearted or flavored or deadened, but unassuaged with any condiment of consolation or indulgence.

Yes! it was for your sins and mine that Christ suffered this Contrition. It was to supply the contrition which was a necessary condition to obtaining pardon from His eternal Father,—a necessity which exists in the very nature of things (for without it even God cannot forgive sin)—that Christ entered the Garden of Gethsemane, to grieve for the sins of men, your sins and mine, and those of all mankind, as much for all as for one, and for one as for all—for the multitude did not diminish the intensity of the sorrow for each—the glory of God in heaven is not less for each of the angels than it is for the myriads who behold it. It was your sins that forced Him to put aside the presence or preclude in some way known to Himself the glory of the God-head—it was your sins that compelled Him to suspend the consciousness of His innocence, which to a man under calumny and obloquy is always a source of strength and consolation, for the heartfelt knowledge of innocence compensates for seeming or external guilt,—it was your sins that caused Him, within a stone's throw of His Apostles, to cast Himself prostrate upon the earth in the attitude

of intensest guilt, and open the flood gates of heaven's hate of sin upon His soul, when with cries of anguish and divine unutterable groans that were heard in Heaven and moved the eternal God to mercy, while they filled hell with dismay, that it lost the sons of men; it was your sins that forced His blood to drench the earth while it rose to Heaven in beseechings for your lost souls; while it bedewed the earth, it softened Divine anger; it was your sins that forced that cry from His sensitive nature, overcome by the burden of your sins and the load of your guilt. "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away from Me"; it was the necessity of this agony of contrition for your sins that compelled the Father to allow that prayer to go unheeded, and for the Divine Victim at once to add, "Yet not My will, but Thine be done"; heaven sympathized with the suffering Jesus in His mental torture, and conflict of anguish for your sins, and sent an angel to console Him. No! it was not the seizure now at the hands of the Jews, nor the judgment of the Judge, nor the jeers and contumely of priests and mob, nor the anticipation of the flogging, nor of the thorn-crowned head, nor the haling to and fro from tribunal to tribunal, nor the dolorous journey burdened with the cross, nor the nailing of the hands and feet, nor the suspension between Heaven and earth, nor the abandonment, nor the death that caused the agony of Jesus,—it was that in that agony He was doing contrition for all the sins of all men. It was the necessary contrition that should precede the satisfaction: the malignity of sin should be felt before satisfaction for sin should be rendered: its guilt should be felt by sorrow, before its punishment is abolished by satisfaction.



This Contrition exercised by Jesus Christ in His agony gives to our contrition for sins all its efficacy; it was the price that was paid for the grace by which we are at all capable of contrition. For after innocence there is nothing more pleasing to God than contrition. And it is no less His gift; it is the fruit of His grace; it is the result of the light and power of the Holy Ghost. Without grace, contrition is impossible. No one can merit it for himself or obtain it by any human virtue. It is something that changes the sinner into a new man; renews him in justice and innocence. And this can only come from Him Who is the author of grace, and has purchased it for men and their redemption, by His agony, sufferings, and death.

If we would conceive or improve our contrition we must enter into the agonizing heart of Christ; and beholding the shame and confusion which He felt for sin, and sharing the bitterness and piercing pains which it cost Him, beseech God with tears and groans and by His anguish and blood to give us sorrow or render our sorrow in some measure like unto His,—worthy of God and equivalent to sin.

For Christ's sorrow must be the pattern of our sorrow,—not in its degree of the apprehension of sin, for that were impossible; nor in its intensity, for that following the comprehension of sin which belongs to God only, were equally impossible; nor in the horror which sin must inspire in the heart of the Incarnate Word,—the God of all holiness,—but in its germ and fundamental principles: it must spring from the justice and love of God, it must be sovereignly greater than any we feel for any other calamity, it must ex-

tend to all possible mortal sin, its efficacy must involve the destruction of all that may lead to a relapse, and to repairing the past in every way possible, no sacrifice must be too great to atone to the violated majesty of God. The agony of Christ contained all these principles: the intensity, the vehemence did not enter into the essence of that contrition, which was based upon these necessary principles,—at once the essence of contrition and the measure and extent of human contrition.

The Contrition of Christ, therefore, will be the standard of our contrition: will approve it, or condemn it. It will shed light upon the worth of our confessions: their acceptableness to God and availability for remission of sin,—or their abhorrence to God and their unfruitfulness except for further sin and sacrilege.

All true contrition must be judged by the standard of Christ's Contrition, as to the principles which I have explained. Judged by these, and judged favorably, it will be seen to have forgiven sin and reconciled the sinner. Judged by these, and judged unfavorably, to the extent of being wanting in any one of these principles, it will be found to have left the sin where it was, and to have left the sinner in even a worse condition: for thinking himself pardoned by what was only counterfeit or sacrilegious confession, he made no effort to improve his contrition, and continued in sin, hardened more and more by the impunity with which he committed it, feeling no remorse because of the facility with which he thought himself pardoned. Alas, that the instrument of pardon should be perverted into the instrument of perdition! If then you would shun this deplorable calamity, judge and test your contri-

tion by that of the Lord Jesus exercised for you in Gethsemane, at once its price and its model. Call not sacrilege sorrow, nor grace the mere wish to quench remorse, nor divine the motive of human respect that so often sends people to confession, nor efficacious the repentance that seeks not to undo the past, nor cuts away the occasion of sin, but is again found in those circumstances that had led or that are apt again to lead to sin, nor supernatural that which based upon human considerations, nor sovereign that greater than which you cherish for your temporal reverse or worldly loss. Think not that I exaggerate to you or would disturb you unnecessarily. It is better to be disturbed by the fire-bell than perish in the conflagration.

We should grieve for Christ's sorrow, and grieve for our sins that caused it. We naturally grieve for the sorrow of others even though we have no part in causing it; we are moved to sin by natural emotion or instinct. For we are human, and nothing human is foreign to us: one touch of nature makes the world akin. How deeply then should we be moved contemplating the agony of Jesus the innocent, the in-offensive, the self-immolated victim? But, when we consider that He suffers for us, that we are the cause of His sufferings, that but for us they would never have occurred, because there would have been no necessity for them, how the bowels of our compassion should be stirred, how we should be stung with self-reproach, how we should be filled with a sense of baseness and unworthiness, how we should be consumed with the consciousness of our ingratitude! It was we who by our sins supplied the fuel for the con-

flagration and applied the torch that kindled it. Our sins, our manifold sins, black in malice and uncounted in multitude, that caused these mental sufferings, that crowded that imagination, that compelled that self-surrender to anguish and remorse, that wrenched that frame, that forced that blood, that broke that heart. Nor can we console ourselves with the thought that it was not for our sins in particular, but for the sins of all men in general. For as we have already said, He agonized for each individual soul as much as He would had there been but that one soul in existence,—as much for one as for all, and for all as for one. "*Tantus unus, tantus omnes,*" says St. Thomas.

Behold Christ in the hands of the Jews and before the judges. Sin does it: it is its work. Condemn not those who have delivered Him up, censure not the judges: they are but the instruments of providence; guilty, indeed, because of their malice and perversity, still but instruments of divine justice making atonement to God, and salvation to men.

Sin is essentially an act of pride; it robs God of His glory; it is the usurpation by the sinner of His authority; it would dethrone Him if that were possible; it is a declaration of war against the Most High; it is the renewal of the "I will not serve," of the angels; it is the desire to be as gods, of our first parents, put into their hearts by the devil. It is all these in its very essence, not, perhaps, in the mind of the sinner, who, for the most part, would be content with the pleasure of sin without any further guilt; he would separate the gratification of sin from the offence of sin; but this is impossible. Sin must stand in its

essential constituents; he who sins is responsible for all that it is in itself.

This disorder of pride introduced by sin must be repaired, and expelled from God's moral world. The equilibrium must be restored; the balance cannot continue inclined to the side of sin. This can be done only by the depression of pride, that is by humiliation. This will reduce the disorder, and restore the plane established by Divine wisdom and justice. But man is unequal to this task. Man may introduce sin, and disturb the harmony that should exist between the creature and Creator, but he cannot undo his own work. Man may destroy life, but he cannot restore it; man may destroy the works of genius, but he cannot replace them; destruction is easy, construction is difficult and even sometimes impossible. A state may be destroyed in an hour; a thousand years could not rebuild it.

A Man-God alone can offer adequate compensation for pride; and this He will do by His own humiliation. By it He can correct the disorder, and readjust the first order and harmony. By it pride is crushed, and humiliation is exalted: the disturbed harmony restored; a new economy is proclaimed.

Sin is disobedience: obedience the corrective of its baneful influence, its direful effects. This new evil must be obliterated from the moral world; for it disturbs the system of balances in which all things are constituted and adjusted. This can be done only by the repression of the disobedience: the application of obedience becomes medicinal; it extracts the poison from the vice of disobedience.

Man cannot of himself effect this. Again he is capable of the evil but incapable of the remedy. A Man-God alone is the sovereign restorer of the order subverted by insubordination to authority. All His actions, even those of His human nature, acquire an infinite value because of His personal union with Divinity. Hence His least act of obedience, much less His making Himself obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross, assumes an infinite value, and exerts an infinite influence in readjusting the disorder occasioned by sin, and in bringing the order of virtue out of the chaos caused by sin. The Man-God is equal and greater than all: He is the sovereign Master Who can reconstruct His moral world, disorganized by human iniquity and uncontrolled sinfulness.

Sin offers contumely to God's sovereign Majesty. Contumely is the insult that is offered to one's person or to his face. We cannot say that sin sees not God. For God is everywhere actually present although invisible. There is no part of His creations which fails of His presence; never for a moment can He be absent; not now and then, or at stated intervals, but always without cessation is His presence felt. He supports all things in the palm of His hand. "If you ascend into Heaven, He is there; if you descend into hell, He is there; if you take the wings of the morning and are transported across the seas, He is there." He is present to the mind of the sinner, to his heart, to his conscience; the natural law reveals its legislator.

God requires satisfaction for this contumely offered to Him by sin, as He requires humiliation for its pride, and obedience for its disobedience. But man cannot

render satisfaction; he is incapable of it; as incapable as he is of compensation for pride and disobedience by any humiliation or obedience in his power, or which he can offer. Natural equity calls for apology from him who has insulted another; it is not enough that he offend no more; the disparity between the offender and the offended must be levelled or balanced.

Christ alone can offer satisfaction for the contumely and insult of sin; He alone can make adequate amends to the insulted Deity. As He alone can atone for pride of sin and disobedience of sin, so He alone can satisfy for the contumely of sin.

He does it; He does it in the circumstances of His trials, His treatment in the hands of the Jews and of His executioners—in all the details that occurred between His seizure in the Garden, and His insults on the cross,—for it was one continued series of approbrium and ignominy and contumely—He alone by suffering this contumelious treatment could make amends to the Majesty of God, outraged by the contumely which sin offers Him.

It was the insult to the face which your sins offered to God, for which Christ endured insult and reproach from judge, and Jew, and soldiers, and priests, and mob. It was your sins that subjected Him to the contumely of being seized and bound by the mob and dragged Him before Ananias and Caiphas; it was your insults that exposed Him to the taunts and jeers of those who hung about their courts; it was the contumely of your sins that subjected Him to the charge of blasphemy, and to the lying testimony of the witnesses suborned to swear away His life; it was your

sins that struck Him in the face by the hand of the servant of the high priest; it was the contumely of your sins that led Him to endure the ribaldry of the profane soldiery; it was your contumely that in mockery crowned Him with crown of thorns, and clothed Him with scarlet gown, and put in His hand the sceptre of mock authority; it was the contumely of your sins that subjected Him to the arrogance and cynical questioning of the political Pilate; it was the contumely of your sins that mocked Him in Herod's court and placed upon Him the white garment, emblem of a fool; it was your ignominy that placed Him, lashed and crowned, and bleeding in every pore, before the derisive crowd clamoring for His death, with the introduction: "Behold the man," when Pilate for the last time sought to move their compassion, and was frightened at their howling threats; that made Him an alternative with Barabbas. Humiliation for the pride of sin, obedience for its disobedience, ignominy and insults for the contumely of sin—this is the law of God's providence and the necessary condition for obtaining pardon. The lesson we should draw from all this, after considering it as the expiation of our sins, is that we should love and embrace humiliation, guarding against pride; cultivate and seek obedience, shunning disobedience; pursue meekness and long suffering; repressing impatience and resentment and quenching every feeling of rancor and anger, and submit to all the crosses of life.

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## THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

*“Attend, and see if there is sorrow, such as My sorrow.”*—Thren. I; xii.

Jesus feeling that the hour was at hand which His Father had assigned for His death, hastens to give His disciples the last testimony of His love: He Himself washes their feet; He gives them His body to eat and His blood to drink; finally, He takes farewell of them in a discourse with salutary instruction and an incredible tenderness. He goes from Jerusalem, and betakes Himself into a solitude where He was wont to retire after the labors of the day, and where He knew His enemies should come to seek Him. Retirement from the world and solitude in the desert was the preparation which Christ used before His ministry among men: so now before His passion and death, He again betakes Himself to its congenial embrace and invigorative spiritual atmosphere.

The Passion of Christ may be said to begin with the words—St. Matt. xxvi, 1: “He said to his disciples: ye know that after two days will be the pass-over, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.” For “then were gathered together the chief priests and ancients of the people into the court of the high priest, who was called Caiphaz: And they consulted together, that they might take Jesus by craft, and put Him to death.” He tells His disciples, that at the coming feast He will be hung upon the cross and die its ignominious death. The tranquillity with which He foreknew and beheld the dreadful doom,

and the calmness with which He proclaims it, shows the readiness with which He embraced it. They were only concerned that it should not, through fear of a tumult among the people, take place on the festival, a circumstance they were blinded to disregard in their eagerness for His blood, when they negotiated with Judas to deliver Him into their hands.

And when Jesus was in Bethany, in the home of Simon, the leper, so called because he had been afflicted with leprosy, six days before the Passover, a woman, believed to be Mary, sister of Lazarus, not Mary Magdalen who anointed His feet, and is plainly called a harlot, having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He reclined at table. Seeing which the disciples, or more likely Judas, or perhaps some of them, but from different motives, murmured, saying: to what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus, knowing it, said to them, why trouble ye this woman? for she hath wrought a good work on Me. For the poor ye have always with you: but me not always. For in pouring this ointment on My body she hath done it for My burial. For it was, as it were, embalming the body, by anticipation or forestalling of the actual embalming. Truly I say to you, wherever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which she hath done, shall be told in memory of her. Two luminous predictions: the future diffusion of His gospel throughout the world; and the undying remembrance of the woman's love and constancy. Behold His knowledge of future events, in predictions

uttered two days before His sufferings and death. And to-day throughout the world from the rising to the setting sun, and through all the ages, that which the woman did in homage to Jesus has never failed to dwell in the minds and hearts of mankind.

Then Judas going to the high priests and asking them: "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him to you?" And they assigned him thirty pieces of silver. The price of a man, about eighteen dollars or thirty shekels. Such was the niggardly price they put on the incarnate Word! A paltry sum to put on the life of any man, especially a free man; and, more especially, on one so excellent and distinguished, so far removed from the ordinary run or herd of men. It was a contemptible sum even then, when money was so scarce. It was the Jewish instinctive, stinginess mixed with scorn, for the Savior of men. Yet Judas was satisfied. It certainly was enough to measure the miserly passion of the man, and to betray to the full his base instincts. Thenceforth his villainous soul sought opportunity to betray his Lord and Master. That lucre will yet cost Judas his most poignant grief, so that he will cast it at the feet of those from whose hands, washed in the blood of Deicide, he received it: exclaiming that he had sinned betraying innocent blood. "What is that to us?" was the bitter taunt; "look you to it."

And the time being come to eat the Passover, and the time of His sufferings and death, He sat down with His twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, He said: Truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: Is it I, Lord? He that

dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he will betray Me. Christ showed that He knew the secret design of Judas; yet He admitted him to an act of friendship and even familiarity. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it were better for that man if he had not been born. And Judas said: Rabbi, is it I? And Jesus saith: Thou hast said it. And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take and eat: this is My Body. And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. And when they had sung a hymn, "In the going forth of Israel," they went out into Mt. Olivet, where a little before Christ predicted the calamities just at hand. Then Jesus said to them: All of you will be scandalized in regard to Me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. A proverbial form of speech, but according to some it was prophetic from the manner of quoting it. You will be scandalized; that is, you will give way or become victims of doubt, tried by temptation. And Peter said: Although all shall be scandalized in regard to Thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to Him: Truly I say to thee, that this night before the cock crow thou wilt deny Me thrice; Peter saith to Him: Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee. And in like manner spake all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them into Gethsemane.

It was then that properly commenced the passion of the Saviour of the world; for, a deadly sadness overwhelmed His heart; He walked in silence, no longer able to sustain the extreme dejection into which He fell; He was constrained to address Himself to His apostles, as if to seek their solace: My soul is sad even unto death; but as He did not receive any consolation, He retired aside, not to hide His trouble and His fear, but rather to abandon Himself entirely to them. See Him; see His face all wet with tears; see the sweat of blood which soaks the earth; hear the cry: Father, all things are possible to Thee; let this chalice pass from me—Mark xiv, 36. This sorrow felt in the garden was with Him all through His passion: He had without ceasing before His eyes, our crimes, our ingratitude, our blindness.

Sit ye here while I go yonder and pray. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful and to be very sad. My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay ye here, and watch with Me. And He went a little further, and fell upon His face and prayed, saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou.

The will of the Father and of Christ is the same. But Christ has a human will which, as far as the sensitive feeling went, shrunk from pain.

Jesus Christ thus on His face, the humblest position of suppliancy, as man, humbled Himself before the God-head, in the deepest humiliation of His soul, besought from the Divine Majesty, made intercession for the sins of men, and made an unfailing intercession for them. There was no divergency between the Will

of Christ and the Will of the Father when He asked that, if possible, the chalice might pass from Him. Christ knew that such was not in agreement with the Divine counsel: it only showed the repugnance of His sensitive nature to suffering: His prayer, conditional as it was, showed that it was not absolute. Christ's human will, which shrank from suffering so far as the sensitive feeling went, was shown to be that of the Father, when by a free and deliberate act He embraced it. "Let not this be done which I ask from human nature, but that for which I willingly came on earth," says St. Jerome. There could not be even a momentary dissonance between the Will of Christ-God, and the Will of the Father-God.

No passion or feeling could move Jesus beyond what He would allow for our salvation: He sorrowed because He gave Himself up to sorrow: He had come to suffer. He grieved for Peter's perfidy and timidity, for the base Judas, for the scandal of the Apostles, for the destruction near at hand of Jerusalem. He sorrowed by one masterful act of sorrow and compunction for the sins of men. This contrition was well nigh unto extinction of life in this agony which we are dwelling upon. Coming to the disciples, and finding them asleep, He saith to Peter: "So, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And this He repeated for a second and a third time, saying the same words, with acquiescence in the will of the Father. "Then coming to His disciples, He saith to them: Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand,

and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go: behold, he that will betray Me is at hand." While He was yet speaking, behold, Judas, one of the eleven, came, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And His betrayer gave them a sign, saying: Whom I shall kiss, that is He; hold Him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said: Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him: Friend, for what art thou come? Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus, and held Him. This was not a Roman but a Jewish crowd, made up of the officers of the Jewish tribunals: many private individuals were mixed with them, sent by the priests; the weapons showed the tumultuary character of the crowd. The mob may not have known that Jesus was to be arrested: this, however, was well known to Judas and the leaders. Had the multitude known it, the fame of Jesus might have deterred them from any part in His arrest. Owing to the darkness, those who knew Him may not have at once or, at all, recognized Him. Christ alludes to the familiarity which He had accorded to Judas in addressing him friend, or, in Greek, companion; and asks him the object of his approach in the guise of friendship: showing that the traitor's perfidy was open to Him; for He well "knew all that was in man." His all-seeing eye gazed into his soul, and the souls of all men.

He no sooner perceived the soldiers who were come to seize Him, than, forgetting His sadness and His fears, He rises, and advances without hesitation, and

delivers Himself to His enemies. Judas was the head of the band; many priests, many of the ancients of the people accompanied them. To be betrayed by one of His own! Jesus withal is not troubled with this; He endured the clenched fist from the ruffian in the priests' hall with a sweetness, mildness, capable of softening the fiercest. He calls Judas by name: "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" He makes Himself known; He restores the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, upon whom Peter had drawn his sword, cutting it off. Then Jesus said: "Put up thy sword into its place, for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou I cannot ask My Father, and He will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be done? Ye are come out as if to a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me. I sat among you daily, teaching in the temple, and ye did not lay hands on Me. Now all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Peter's act was the expression of hot human feeling: Jesus's, the act of a virtue all divine.

When Christ had shown His Divine power, causing the soldiers to fall prostrate on the earth; when He had declared Himself, He allowed them to bind Him, which they could never have done without His will. Then they that held Jesus, led Him to Caiphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled. And Peter followed Him afar off.—St. Matt. And the priests, and the whole Council sought false testimony against Jesus, that they might put Him



to death: And they found none, although many false witnesses had come forward. And last of all came two false witnesses and said: "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Christ had spoken of the temple of His body. They swore that He had claimed power to destroy the Jewish temple, and to reconstruct it in three days. And so He could, if that had been His meaning. "And the high priest arose, and said to Him: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these testify against Thee?" But Jesus was silent. Our Lord judged it unnecessary to reply, as nothing had been proved, as the evidence was unworthy of credit; in fact, the so-called trial was only a mockery. What use to reply when no heed would be taken. As God he knew that His testimony would be wrested to His prejudice.—St. Jerome. "And the high priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou art Christ, the Son of God." The high priest seeing and virtually acknowledging the perjured testimony, asks a confession or declaration from Himself. With the most solemn abjuration he would force Him to say, whether He claims to be the Messiah, nay, the Son of God. Christ feels the tremendous importance of answering such an interrogation upon which depended His divine character and mission into the world: Christ could not be wanting: clearly and unmistakably He answers: "Thou hast said it." This was the Jewish mode of affirmation. "But I say to you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God": Christ displaying His majesty in the last judg-

ment, in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments; this was the token of horror and grief; and saying, "He hath blasphemed: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, you have heard the blasphemy." His claim to be the Messiah could not be blasphemy, since He was predicted and expected at that very time: Jerusalem was on the alert for Him. Just men had often been called the sons of God, as Christ Himself had argued. The question as put by the priest must have implied a claim to Deity; and as assented to by Christ implied Divine homage, deriving from His eternal and unutterable Sonship. No judicial gravity was shown. The judge demands the adhesion of the crowd to his arbitrary dictum, what think ye? not their deliberate opinion. Knowing what was wanted, they answered, He is worthy of death. Then they spat in His face, and buffeted Him; struck Him with clenched fist; and some struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying: Who is it that struck Thee? And saying: prophesy to us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee? They had first blindfolded Him.

The high priest demands judgment from the whole council, and the whole council declares that Jesus deserves death: "Who all condemned Him as worthy of death." Behold the judgment of the synagogue; that is, of the pontiffs, of the priests, of the doctors of the law, of the ancients of the people. O, "Judgment of men, thou hast fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason!" How contemptible to me are human judgments! How many of the judgments of this world shall be reversed before the all-seeing eye

of Him Who sees all things, and to Whom alone true justice stands naked and open, and secrets are manifest.

Thus Jesus Christ is haled before the tribunals of the priests: He appears in the posture of a criminal; when He is, indeed, the very judge. A King, an innocent King, is judged by His faithless subjects. The Son of God, Who is equal to His Father, is led before Annas and Caiphas, two priests equally unworthy, both of the character and rank and of the office of judge, which they exercised.

They accuse Him, they overwhelm Him with false testimony; an insolent soldier gives Him a blow. The judges allow this affront to pass unpunished and unheeded. The Savior keeps His silence; but they see that when He speaks, He surprises them in His answers: He tells them that He is the Son of God, and at once the pontiff cries out as if he had heard a blasphemy.

When Pilate learned that Jesus belonged to the government of Herod, he sent Him to him, as he happened to be in Jerusalem in those days. For this, Herod was very glad, as he had long desired to see Him, having heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he put Jesus many questions. But Jesus made him no answer. Herod was the vilest of men, steeped in depravity and crime. The blood of St. John the Baptist was on his soul. His ferocious and unbridled cruelty rendered him unworthy to behold Divine works. Hence his curiosity remained ungratified. Besides, our Lord sought always to shun display, or the part

of a showman. Pilate had been astonished at the marvellous majesty and manifest innocence of Jesus. But to the sordid and base soul of Herod, this was folly. He thus insulted the person of the Savior and the credulity of the Jews, who regarded this man as a prophet. In spite of the chief priests who stood by vehemently accusing Him, Herod "could find nothing worthy of death in Him." Hence with his guards, he spurned Him, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate, formerly enemies, were made friends from that hour. Herod was won by Pilate's condescension in remitting the case to him. All the court of this monarch, and the officers of his army, railed at Him upon what they regarded as the pretended qualities of King and Son of God. He, finally, sent Him away, clothed in a white robe which it was the custom to give to fools. Even to-day that which is most excellent is often treated as a folly. The saints were so treated. Once before had Jesus frustrated Herod, when the latter sought by messengers to intimidate and drive Him away, without daring to put Him to death. But Jesus divined his mind: "Go tell that fox: Behold, I cast out devils and work cures to-day and to-morrow; and the third day I will finish.

He is sent back to Pilate. This one convinced of His innocence, wishes to send Him away acquitted. But who will dare resist the depraved multitude which demands His blood? His blood be upon us and upon our children. Unfortunate people! Ungrateful nation! This blood has fallen upon thee, and thou art accursed. But—a few days, and all Israel cried out: Hosanna

to the Son of David; blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord; and to-day the cry is: Let Him be crucified. Such is the caprice of the multitude. It has been said that wretched is the man that hangs upon a prince's favor; but far more miserable the lot and happiness of those who depend upon the favor of the mob. And now Jesus stood before Pilate who was convinced of His innocence and that had given Him up through envy. Now was the time when he should have acquitted Him. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus saith to him: "Thou sayest it," Pilate is a lax judge who fears the people: "I find no fault in Him, I will chastise Him and let Him go." If innocent, why chastise Him? He ordered that He should be flogged; it was the punishment of slaves. The rabble approach Him, strip Him of His garments, and tear Him with rods. "They have numbered all His bones."—Ps. xxi, 18. He endured the punishment in silence. "As a lamb before the slaughter." Is. liii, 7. They re clothe Him in purple, crown Him with thorns, they put in His hands a reed, and put upon Him a crown of thorns: a spectacle to angels and to men, even to those who tormented Him. But this spectacle did not soften the people: "Away with Him, crucify Him, was still their cry." "Which of the two will you that I deliver unto you, Barabbas, a murderer, or Jesus?" And, instigated by the priests and the ancients, the crowd demanded Barabbas; and Jesus should be done away with.

During the rest of the night He was delivered to the insolent soldiery, His hands tied and a bandage upon His eyes. The barbarous play that occupied

them during the night was to disturb the silence, to slap Him upon the face, to give Him blows, to address to Him insults more cruel than blows: if you can divine for us, who struck Thee? Jesus remained mute, He was immovable in the midst of outrages. Thus the Philistines treated Samson, but at last Samson avenged himself. Elias caused fire to descend from heaven upon the hundred soldiers who came to seize him. Eliseus, outraged by the children of Bethel, called from a nearby forest two furious lions, who devoured forty-six of these rash youths. St. Paul, when struck in the face by order of the high priest, could not restrain his feelings, but exclaimed: "Thou whited sepulchre, why strikest thou me? afterwards apologizing, that he knew not it was the high priest. But your Saviour upon Whom angels attend; behold Him in the hands of the cruel soldiery in their guardroom the night of His first mockery. His heart had just been lacerated by Peter's perfidy in denying Him in spite of his vehement protests of dying rather than ever denying Him. For, from these soldiers appointed His guards and persecutors, all that malignity, and heartlessness, and wanton cruelty, and pitilessness could devise was vented against Him; all the more because of His innocence and forbearance and lofty serenity and imperturbable composure. They blindfolded Him, calling upon Him, again and again, to declare, who is he that struck Thee? They struck Him with closed fists and open palms; they beat Him with rods; and the vilest insult of all—they spat in His face, which has ever been accounted the basest contempt among the lowest, the most brutal and sav-

age. Thus they whiled the night away, till the morning when Jesus was led before what was called the Sanhedrim. 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: having bound Him, they led Him away; and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, who alone had power of life and death. It was also necessary that He should be condemned by the Gentiles, because He dies for the sins of all.

Then Judas, seeing that He was condemned, repented, but not salutarily; remorse, not sorrow, was in his heart. He brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. Yes, Judas, the most innocent blood that ever fell by guilty hand: all the water in the ocean could not wash white such guilt. Better a thousand times that thou hadst not been born. No wonder they said: what is that to us? Why should that lessen, if possible, the crime of Deicide, although in their mad fury they had invoked His blood upon themselves and upon their children. "Look thou to it": thou hadst had thy price. Judas got the cold shouldered remark that always falls to the portion of the hireling mercenary, who is ever ready to betray his fellow man, his country, or his kind, or even his God for the accursed love of gold: such species of men receive the contempt which they deserve. And casting down in the temple the pieces of silver, he departed; and went and hanged himself. Falling from a high cliff against a rock, his bowels gushed out. There had been mercy for him, had he

but sued for it, and hoped in the Divine goodness. His fate was the ordinary effect of avarice upon the soul: most direful in its effects. Such blood money it was unlawful to put among the offerings: so the chief priests bought a piece of ground which, having been used for supplying potters with clay, had sunk in value, was readily bought for a small sum.

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, He made no answer. Then Pilate said Him: Dost Thou not hear how many things they testify against Thee? Without awaiting proofs, he demands confession of the charges. He knew that the charges were groundless; he pretended to give them weight, in order to elicit a reply. What response to the accusations with which He is charged before the Roman governor? Nothing. And He answered not a word, so that Pilate was vehemently astonished that He made no effort to defend Himself, and maintained His tranquillity under the alarming and perilous circumstances. Silence at such a juncture before the judge, who had power to save Him and power to destroy Him, was divinely more eloquent than the loftiest eloquence. We might say, what occasion more favorable to do Himself justice? He could do better yet: He could Himself undertake the quality of judge, command Pilate to descend from the tribunal, and, ascending it, condemn His guilty accusers. But for Him nothing is more worthy than to suffer and be silent. What shall we say to this example, we who show ourselves so sensible to all



that which attacks our honor, and who believe that to save it all is permitted? O! admirable silence of Jesus Christ; silence eloquent, more eloquent than discourse. Good Master, how exactly dost Thou accomplish the word of the prophet: "I as one dead, did not hear; and as one mute, not opening his mouth.—Ps xxxvii, 41.

Now on the pascal solemnity, the Governor was wont to release to the people one prisoner of their choosing. He had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. Pilate then asked the gathered crowd clamoring for the life and blood of Christ, whom they would have released, Barabbas or Christ. For knowing that they had delivered Him up through envy, he hoped that by working on their generous feelings, he might obtain, through clemency, what they would refuse to justice. Although the iniquity of the prosecution did not escape the sagacity of the shrewd politician, such as Pilate was, he did not dare to let them see his knowledge of their guilt, nor had he the manhood to withstand them and assert the majesty of imperial justice. If Pilate had heeded his wife, when sitting on his tribunal in the open air, she admonished him to do nothing against that innocent man; for in a dream she had suffered much, he would never have imbrued his hands in His innocent blood. She apparently was more open to the influence of grace. God made use of her to overcome the injustice of the Jews. Happy had it been for him, and happy always is it for a husband to be guided by a God-fearing and God-loving wife. It was a grace for her, but it was grace spurned by him, as similar graces generally are.

But the priests and the ancients persuaded the crowd that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And the governor answered and said to them: Which of the two will ye that I release to you? But they said: Barabbas. Pilate said to them: What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ? They all said: let Him be crucified. What base ingratitude to Him Who had done no wrong, but showed every good; Who went among them doing good! Why, what evil hath He done? well asked Pilate. But they cried out the more, saying: Let Him be crucified. The shouts of the mob fill the place where justice was to be dispensed, and usurp truth and reason. And Pilate seeing that he did no good, but rather that a tumult was made, took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look ye to it. No! Pilate, thou art not innocent of His blood; the responsibility of him appointed to do justice and vindicate innocence is not thus easily shifted: His blood is upon thy soul, and all the water of the ocean cannot wash clean their incarnadine guilt. By your paltry act, and political juggling with the mob, you have sanctioned by your high and responsible authority the crime of shedding innocent blood: You have polluted your hands with the nefarious guilt of Deicide: No clamor of the mob infuriate and exasperate by wanton passion, nor fear could palliate the guilt of murdered innocence. And you are the very man who on former occasions did not hesitate to mix the blood of the Jews with their sacrifices, for which you are now trying to propitiate the deep resentment which they have long since felt

for you. No man was so resolute as you in vindicating Roman justice, when your political chicanery did not hinder you. You now seek to avoid delation to the Emperor in whose favor you stand not well: Yet in a little you will be cast out of your office, and you will die a suicide, cutting your own throat. Such is the retribution of justice! And all the people shouted: His blood be on us, and on our children. History attests the manifest and enduring vengeance which has followed that imprecation. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them to be crucified. He ordered it even before sentence; it should not have been inflicted till after sentence; but Pilate would hope thus to appease the multitude and save Him from death. Then, says, St. Jerome, "Jesus was delivered to the soldiers to be scourged, and the scourges cut in pieces that most holy Body, and that breast which was the shrine of the Deity."

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the pretorium, or the governor's hall of audience, and gathered together unto Him the whole band, the tenth part of a legion, and consisting of 525 to 1,000 men: during the passover the cohort in Jerusalem was large. And they stripped Him, and put a scarlet cloak, probably a worn-out cloak of one of the officers, about Him. And having plaited a crown of thorns, in mockery and torture, they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And they spat upon Him; and took the reed, and struck His head. 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. A cross had been prepared. They place it upon His shoulders, and they force Him on towards the hill of Calvary. And as they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced or pressed to take His cross. The cross was first put upon the shoulders of Our Lord Himself, as the convict was wont to carry the instrument of His punishment. Yet the fear of losing their victim before their vengeance was sated, led them to press the stranger into the awful service. Arrived at a place called Golgotha or Calvary, place of skulls, for the word signifies a skull, they command Him to stretch Himself upon it. He extends Himself upon this bed of pain and agony without complaint. And they gave Him to drink an inferior kind of wine, of an acid taste, with gall or wormwood, which was mixed with the wine to lessen its acidity. The potion was usually given to those about to suffer a painful death, to diminish their sensibility to torments. But on tasting it, Christ would not drink: He would not accept this light alleviation of His sufferings. He lifts without resistance His feet; He gives His hands to be pierced with nails to the gibbet. The cross is raised aloft; His feet and hands are torn with the weight of the body which they sustain. He thirsts. The soldiers present to His mouth a sponge full of vinegar. He passes three hours in the most frightful pains and agony. In this state He is overwhelmed with the maledictions of the crowd, as a man rejected by God,

as an outcast and curse of the earth, but He keeps silence.

O, my God and Savior, will you then be silent even to the end? No, He goes to speak, but this will not be either for Him or for those who desire to hear it; He will speak for His enemies: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.—Luke, xxiii, 34. Touching words! He gives to His mother and disciple well beloved the last marks of His friendship; and then, addressing His Father: Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. He expires saying these words.—Luke xxiii, 46. These words He uttered in a loud and distinct cry. Uttered with such a voice at the moment of death was far removed from the weakness that attends the dying. The sublimest confidence and most profound submission to the will of His Father was contained in them. No wonder the centurion exclaimed: “Indeed, this was a just man”; and that “the crowds who had seen what passed, returned striking their breasts.”

And after they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots, as had been predicted. And they sat and watched Him lest He should be taken down by His friends. And they put over His head the charge for which He suffered, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Providence thus ordained that He should be declared the King of the Jews, even on the instrument of His death. There were crucified with Him two robbers: one on the right hand and one on the left. And they that passed by, blasphemed Him, using insulting language, wagging their heads: thus filling out the prophecy: All they that saw Me

laughed Me to scorn: shooting out the lip and wagging the head. And saying: Vah, Thou who destroyed the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thyself: if Thou art 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 is 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 loves Him: for He said: "I am the Son of God." Christ had given sufficient evidence of His divine power. He remained on the cross to consummate the Redemption. This mission which He had voluntarily undertaken, and with a full knowledge of all that it imported, was not to be thwarted by the incredulous Jews. Nor would they have believed Him had He descended from the cross: even then they would have found pretexts for their unbelief. It was the performance of as great a miracle, viz.: the restoration of Lazarus that gave the priests and Jews pretext to apprehend Him, and to take measures to put Him to death. And the robbers also, who were crucified with Him, reproached Him in like manner.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, or land, until the ninth hour. It is disputed whether this means all Judea or to be taken for the whole earth. Restriction to Judea, or taking it for the whole earth, is warranted by the Greek. It was at full moon, when the sun is in the opposite side of the heavens; hence the darkness could not have been an eclipse of the sun. It was a preternatural obscura-

tion. St. Jerome refers to the prophet Amos, who had predicted it. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice; while the voice of the dying is always very feeble, especially after mental and bodily suffering and exhaustion, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani? This is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? This vehement appeal was to point out why Christ was given over to His enemies. His Father allowed Him to suffer and be put to death: this, Christ knew and the reason therefor. Yet His question was meant to show the truth, and that the degree of His sufferings may be realized by men. The question was for our sake, not His own: He knew; He wished us to learn, and feel the cause for which He died. It was no accent of despair: for He at once rendered His soul into the Father's hands: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And to the thief: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Thus, with His dying breath, He asserts the sovereignty of His Godhead, promising paradise to the thief, and with unalterable love and confidence calling upon His Father to receive Him into His bosom, with Whom during life He had declared Himself to be one in His eternal generation. What divine confidence! It could only dwell in Him Who knew His Divinity—how absurd and impious in an impostor! And some who stood there and heard, said: This man calleth Elias. It was an opinion among the Jews that Elias sometimes appeared to deliver men from death; or, perhaps, the soldiers mistook the words. On Christ's saying that He thirsted, one of them ran and took a sponge soaked in vinegar, and

put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. And the others said: Hold, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him. This was said with bitter irony; for they were unwilling that the slightest relief should be afforded Him. And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit; uttering the words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent. Huge fissures yet remain attesting these extraordinary phenomena; their concurrence could not be accounted fortuitous; or, if fortuitous, they under the providence of God served as miraculous. And the monuments were opened after His resurrection, and many dead went into the Holy City, and appeared to many. These wonders shed divine light into many hearts; and persuasion of Christ's divinity was the result. "Now when the centurion, and they who were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and the things which took place, they were greatly terrified, saying: Indeed, this was the Son of God."

And many women came there from afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him. With all the sympathy that continually wells forth in the womanly heart they had rendered to our Lord all His wants, preparing His food, and discharging towards Him all kind offices: now grieving and bewailing what to them seemed His untimely death and cruel fate, and heartrending agony and torments. With womanly instinct and devotion they stood by Him to the last.



And when it was evening, a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who was himself also a disciple of Jesus, went to Pilate, and asked the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered up. And Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewn out in the rock. And rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went away. The bodies of those crucified were usually left unburied, so that, hanging on the cross, they were exposed to the inclemency of weather, and the rapacity of birds of prey; so that shortly such bodies would present a mangled and horrid sight. It was, therefore, a favor earnestly sought by their relatives and friends to have them delivered to them. Even yet the executed are frequently given to them that the last sad rites may be performed over them; and thus the craving of the heart which makes itself felt in father or mother or dear ones may be gratified.

This Sabbath, the greatest solemnity of the year, did not so crowd the mind of the Jews as to make them forget that Jesus had said while yet alive that He would rise again after three days: Hence the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive: "After three days I will rise." Command, therefore, the tomb to be made secure until the third day: lest His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: "Ye have a guard or watch: go, make it secure, as ye know how." And they went and

made the tomb secure, sealing the stone, with the aid of the guard. So they fixed a seal to ropes drawn around the sepulchre. The Roman guards were at their bidding; and most anxious to avoid punishment for any neglect on their part.

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