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of Jesus Christ
by John Fearon, O.P.
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THE GOOD TREE

*Meditations on the Passion of
Our Lord Jesus Christ*

by

JOHN FEARON, O.P.

Price Twenty-five Cents

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St. Meinrad

Indiana

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THE GOOD TREE



INTRODUCTION

THE saints of God are unanimous in the opinion that meditation on the Passion and Death of Jesus is essential for achieving the true Christian spirit and indispensable as a means for progressing in charity, and the Church of God has in all times and in all places given this phase of the life of Christ a position of pre-eminence both in preaching and in art. In fact, the cross has been singled out of the Gospels as the very symbol of Christianity. Accordingly, if one is to achieve the true Christian spirit in actuality, make progress in charity, be an apt student in the school which is the Church, and understand the symbol which led Crusaders in battle, the symbol which has been pressed to the lips of countless millions of dying Christians, the symbol which surmounts every altar, every church, every school, every monastery and so many homes in the Christian world—then an intellectual appreciation of the Passion and Death of Christ is of the greatest importance.

The Passion and Death are in themselves so vivid in color, so alive with poignant details, so charged with gruesome cruelty and heroic love, that the eyes and heart of man are fixed with fascination. How-

ever, though it is true that vision must precede knowledge and that the emotions of the heart should stir the mind to deeper search, yet it can happen that bright colors, tear-filled eyes and a choking heart can dim the vision and impede knowledge and understanding. The swishing, thudding sound of a flogging, the gush of red blood upon the earth, the ominous circling of vultures can fill the heart and eye and smother the question; *why?* And not only the wealth but also the breadth of material detail can impede the understanding of the intellect. The more parts there are to a clock, the more difficult it is to assemble the clock; and just as one can be acquainted with all the parts of the clock individually and still not know the clock as a whole and the principle by which it operates, so, too, one can be familiar with the material details of the Passion and Death and still fail to perceive the totality involved as a unit, can fail to see the unifying principles upon which it is built.

Fra Angelico painted a picture of the crucifixion, placing St. Dominic and St. Thomas Aquinas on the scene. St. Dominic is collapsed in sorrow at the foot of the cross, tears streaming down his face. St. Thomas stands beside the cross, his quiet gaze upon the Master, wrapt attention written on his face. That picture rather accurately summarizes St. Thomas' ap-

proach to the Passion and Death of Jesus in his *Summa Theologica*—logical and quiet. The Angelic Doctor considers the Passion and Death with a minimum of pictorial detail and complete absence of emotion. And in view of the importance of the Passion and Death, his consideration is surprisingly brief, though indeed logically unified and coherent. This suppression of vivid color, this substitution of logic for feeling, this tendency to view generalities rather than particular details, to enumerate causes and effects rather than to count wounds, is not because of a disdain for feelings on the part of the great Doctor, nor because of a revulsion from awful reality as is the case with those who strip the *corpus* from the cross. No. St. Thomas' consideration is aimed at imparting an understanding of the Passion and Death, an intellectual appreciation of that climactic moment in the history of the world.

St. Thomas did not disdain the tears of Dominic. But he was writing a theological work for men, for beginners like ourselves. His aim was understanding. He knew full well that if we could understand with him we would be more likely to weep with Dominic.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

A CERTAIN amount of antecedent knowledge is necessary for an understanding of the Passion and Death that aspires to be more than superficial. Meditation is not like writing on a slate—first you write one lesson, then erase it and write the second. It is more like painting a picture in oils—first you rough out the figures, then paint in this figure and that, part by part. It is an accumulative process, and painting the last buttons on the coat makes sense only in view of what has gone before and is still actually present on the canvas. So too with the mind that would understand the Passion—it must approach the study of the Passion filled with many previous ideas.

The first prerequisite for understanding the Passion and Death of Jesus is a knowledge of the theology of the Incarnation, an intellectual sketch of the basic dimensions of the central figure in this picture.

The briefest possible description of Christ says that He is the Incarnate Word, but in these two terms there is a wealth of mystery. For Christ is both God and man, and yet He is but one Person, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. His Godliness and His manliness are distinct and separate things, yet He

Himself is one thing, one Person. This real duality of natures, of what Christ is, and this equally real unity of person, i.e., who Christ is, is the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. To indicate that this mystery is a two-in-one combination that differs from any other two-in-one combination in the whole world, theologians have given this union of two natures in one divine Person the special name of hypostatic union. For example, it is much more real a union than two eggs in one basket, for such a union is only one of place. Again, one person may unite within himself the abilities of a plumber and a musician, but being a plumber and being a musician are not separate different things but only separate different abilities. The Incarnation is not a question of the Word having two sets of abilities, but of being two really different things. Nor is the hypostatic union a question of the Word having two different natures the way Peter, one person, has a body and a soul. In the first place Peter's body and soul, though different and separable, are by themselves imperfect things, whereas Christ's human and divine natures are by themselves perfect things. In the second place Peter's body and soul are knit together to form one thing, they dove-tail and complete each other and form one thing, Peter. In Christ, the divine and human natures are not knit together, blended together or in-

termixed, but remain distinct and separate perfect entities, united in the sense that they are united to the same divine Person, that they belong to the Person of the Word. This is the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of what Christ is.

This ineffable mystery of two natures being in one person has as its counterpart a special kind of unity in operation. Now, the divine nature has an intellect and a will, the very mind and heart of God Himself. And the human nature of Christ is likewise equipped with an intellect and will, for it *is* a human nature. Furthermore, each of these intellects and wills has its own proper actions, each thinks its own thoughts and loves its own loves. However, there is not the complete duality and separateness of action in Christ that we in our imagination attribute to Siamese twins or split personalities. Christ's actions have their own special kind of unity. In the first place, unlike the twins, the divine and human love and knowledge of Christ are the operations of one person. In the second place, unlike the split personality, the human element is consciously and organically united to the divine and acts as an instrument of the divine, somewhat the way the hand is the instrument of the will in feeding the body. Though in a way this was perhaps obvious when Jesus put His hand upon the leper and cured him, it is equally true in the sufferings of Jesus and

must be kept in mind even if it is not quite as obvious.

Everything that is true of the divine mind and divine heart of God is true of the divine mind and divine heart as it existed in Christ. When the Word assumed human nature He lost none of His divinity, He merely added the humanity. Inasmuch as the humanity of Christ was so intimately associated to the divinity in its very being and in its operations, the human mind and heart of Christ were filled with perfections that far surpass the perfections of any other man. As a man, as a way-farer, Christ had not only the Beatific Vision of the Triune God, but also the fulness of knowledge about absolutely everything else that did or will happen in the world of men, all history past and present, all the secret thoughts and desires of all men through the ages until the end of the world. As regards the will of Christ, He was perfect in grace. All the grace that has existed or will exist in the world pre-existed in His will as in a cause, somewhat the way the oak tree pre-exists in the acorn. As a matter of fact the fullness of grace in Christ, which theologians call capital grace, enabled Him to merit not only for Himself but for all men past and present. Finally, Christ's human will was perfectly conformed to the will of God in all that He deliberately and freely willed. This was not just a

general sort of conformity as when we say we will what God wills, not knowing what God wills in detail. This conformity of human and divine will in Christ was a point by point conformity, for Christ as a man had the fullest knowledge of what God willed.

Just as the perfections of the manhood of Christ flow from and are determined by its proximity to the divinity, so too the imperfections and weaknesses in His human nature are determined by His role in the world as a suffering Savior. On the one hand, unless He were exceptionally holy, His life would have had no special merit, His actions would have had no special virtue. But on the other hand, unless He had some weaknesses of an inculpable nature, some vulnerability, He would have been incapable of pain and suffering. Inasmuch as Jesus had the Beatific Vision His human nature in all its totality should have participated in glory, and enjoyed as a result the completest type of invulnerability. Whatever there was of defect and vulnerability in Jesus was voluntarily assumed and freely embraced, not a necessary side of being human, as with us. None the less His body was just as capable of pain and suffering, of hunger and thirst as any human body. His soul was just as capable of sorrow and love and desire and bravery and hurt as any human soul. Whatever there is in human nature that contributes to vulnerability whether of body

or of soul, whatever there is in our make-up that makes suffering possible, was His. The boundaries for this aspect of His nature were laid down, on one side, by His divine dignity, for no defects were present that derogated from that dignity, and, on the other, by the work for which He was predestinated, that He save the world by suffering and death.

This factor of predestination was almost constantly on Christ's lips. Time and again He speaks of the will of the Father, of the purpose for which He came into the world. For Jesus as a man was predestined by God. All the details of His life were planned by God from all eternity: that Simon of Cyrene should happen by the road to Calvary, that Peter should be tempted to deny Him, that there should be a sponge on the wine jug at Calvary. There is a temptation to consider many of the little facts in Christ's life as chance, mere accident. Yet all the details of His life, as of ours, were part of a divine eternal plan, and this plan was fully appreciated by Jesus as a man, and totally embraced by Him at every moment of His life.

The second prerequisite for an understanding of the Passion and Death of Jesus is the admission of the existence of sin, and the relation that suffering bears to it. If the Passion is going to be in any way intelligible, some appreciation of the relationship between suffering and sin is necessary, some knowledge

of the relationship between the suffering of Christ and revelation on the one hand, and between sin and the deception of the devil on the other.

Original sin is a fact. Adam was constituted by God as the physical and moral head of the race. And original justice and all the supernatural and preternatural gifts were given to Adam somewhat after the manner of characteristic features or properties. Thus justice and charity and immortality were to be passed on to Adam's children in the same way that human nature and intellectuality and spirituality were to be passed on. However, these gifts were given to Adam in such a way that their future existence depended upon his will, upon his faithfulness to God. Adam's defection is a revealed fact. Hence Adam's personal sin not only made him an enemy of God, but also infected the whole human race. As a result of Adam's sin every man (Mary excepted) comes into being not as accepted but as rejected by God, devoid of any supernatural goodness.

Personal sin is likewise a fact. It is a fact not only of faith but of personal experience in every man's life. Now, personal sin consists in a free and personal pursuit, contrary to the will of God, of some apparent but not real good or pleasure. In us, as in Adam, sin is faithlessness to the divine good. All men without grace were doomed to such a life, a life which

would have been a permanent state. Because of the subsequent mercy of God the permanence of sin as a state is generally forgotten. However, except for the mercy of God, sinning would be like falling into a well. Men could fall in of their own power but would be unable of themselves to rise again.

Except for the mercy of God! The misery of sinful man called down the mercy of God and the result was the suffering Christ.

While Jesus hung upon the cross darkness covered the earth, though it was actually mid-day. No star shone upon Him as at Bethlehem, no bright cloud overshadowed Him as at His Baptism, Transfiguration and Ascension. Yet at no moment in His life did the Son of God shed more light upon the world. This moment contrasts vividly with that moment in the Garden of Eden when all was clean and bright, when the sun was clear in the heavens, when man's eyes were alive with honesty—and Satan deceived our first parents. With the temptation of giving them a knowledge of good and evil, of opening their minds to the light, the angel who was the prince of darkness cast darkness upon the earth, upon the mind of man. It is indeed a strange paradox that revelation was at its brightest when darkness covered the land, and deception at its darkest when light covered the face of the Garden.

However, not only does the brilliant light shed by the suffering Christ contrast with the engulfing darkness of the mendacious devil, but sacrificial suffering itself is the very antithesis of sin. For sin is the pursuit of one's own will contrary to the will of God. Sin is the pursuit of a false good, a false pleasure, not because it is false but because darkness and deception have made the false good appear as true. Sacrificial suffering, on the other hand, is the pursuit of God's will when it hurts and pains one's own will, when everything that appears to sense and feeling is apparently evil. True, this is only one aspect of sin and sacrificial suffering, but under this one aspect they are contraries like hot and cold, like fire and ice, and it takes one to drive out the other. At any rate this one aspect casts some light and logic on the unfathomable wisdom of God who chose the suffering Christ to drive sin out of infected human nature.

Note, however, that what actually breaks the cold clutch of sin upon the human soul is the fire of grace. Grace works invisibly, for it is the work of God. But God treats men as men, as intelligent and free beings. Accordingly, when in His mercy He destroyed sin, He did it in a visible way, with a brilliant revelation, so that we could see and believe, and freely and deliberately respond to that merciful act of God.

Without this admission of the fact of sin, without some knowledge of this contrariety between sin and sacrificial suffering, our loving, happy, joyful God ever appears as a cruel and heartless God who rejoices in pain; and the Christian spirit appears as a twisted contradiction of human nature that revels in self-torture. Without some understanding of this relationship Christianity appears as a contradiction, an unintelligible paradox, and the cross is indeed a stumbling block and a scandal.

Hence it is important that we keep in mind that the only reason given in Scripture for the Incarnation is the liberation of man from sin. We only know God's mind from revelation. And it is futile to speculate on what God might have done if He had planned a totally different order of things for this world in which there would have been no sin. It is futile to speculate on what might have been when a lifetime of meditation will never exhaust the truth of what really is. Scripture tells us that Christ came to take away the sins of the world, and in no other contact would the mercy of God have appeared more brilliantly. This motive must especially be applied to the Passion and Death, the moment when Christ indeed convinced the world of sin.

As a final bit of background to an exposition of St. Thomas' doctrine on the passion and death of Jesus,

it might be useful to consider the utterly simple outline he follows in his treatise: the Passion itself, the causes of the Passion, and the effects of the Passion. After all, the Passion and Death were human actions, deliberate human actions of a man who was God. And if any human action is to be understood it must be looked at from these three points of view. For example, we read in the paper or hear on the radio that two famous politicians dined together the day before. However, if one is to comprehend the fact it would be important to know just what was discussed at that meal. Likewise, to understand the event it might be well to know the causes. Did an emergency demand that they pool their forces, or did they just happen to be guests of the same host? Furthermore, the full significance of the event would have to be considered from the view point of effect. Would their conversation lead to party unity or to strife? No special illumination is needed, then, to see the commonsense necessity involved in St. Thomas' division of his consideration into the Passion itself, the causes of the Passion and its effects.



CHAPTER TWO

WHY THE CROSS?

FIRST of all it is obvious that the Passion was not absolutely necessary. You cannot answer the question "why" by saying that it just had to be. God could have freed man from sin by a simple act of His will, by just willing He could have wiped the slate clean. Nor was it necessary in the sense that Christ was forced to suffer. You cannot answer the question "why" by saying the Roman soldiers forced Him to suffer. For Jesus, Who had escaped from them so often, could easily have escaped from them now and could, as He said, have called legions of angels to His defence. No, He suffered freely and voluntarily. The only way it can be said that Christ necessarily had to suffer is in the sense that it was the best conceivable way to get the task accomplished, the best way that divine wisdom could invent to save man from sin. St. Thomas brings forth the following reasons to prove this point.

From Christ's point of view it was fitting that by the humiliation of His passion He merit the exaltation of His glory. And as a matter of fact this is the reason Jesus gave the two disciples after the resurrection as He walked with them to Emmaus. "O fool-

ish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into His glory?" (Lc. 24, 25-27) However, this reason seems to be reduced to the third reason which will soon be mentioned, i.e., to show us the pattern for entering into glory.

As far as God is concerned, He had arranged prophecies of the suffering of Christ and in the Old Testament had prefigured it in the liturgical observances of the Old Law. Thus Jesus said "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning me. . . . Thus it is written, and thus the Christ should suffer and should rise again from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem." (Lc. 24, 44-46). This reason too seems to be reduced to the one following, for after all it was prophesied because it was going to happen.

Actually the end or goal of the Passion must be considered from the part of man. It was to free man from sin and to promote him on the paths of goodness. God extinguished the tiny flame of sin with a Niagara when a drop of His blood would have been

sufficient, because God in His wisdom knew that no other type of salvation would so effectively save us, no other kind of redemption would so beautifully and sweetly win us. God knew that the biggest battle in our life was not for wealth or health or fame, but a contest with evil, a struggle to be good. God knew that it would be immeasurably easier for us to be good and unspeakably harder for us to be evil if we were saved by the Passion and Death of Himself become man. This can be seen at least dimly in the following arguments.

Consider the things that lead us into sin. First and foremost there is the desire for false liberty, the unwillingness to have the goodness and badness of our actions determined by another, the unwillingness to depend on outside help in carving out our happiness. But with the vision before us of Jesus obedient to His Father even to death, who can be deceived by the desire for false liberty which tempted Adam? The pleasures of sex and the pleasures of food and drink, the lure of romance made so rosy in our motion pictures and magazines, are they not robbed of their persuasive powers to lead us into sin by sympathy and compassion for the excruciating pains that Christ suffered for these very sins? The fear of poverty which makes men steal, the fear of a loss of reputation which makes men lie, the fear of death which makes men

traitors, the fear of motherhood which makes women afraid to be women—what power has fear for us who now behold the courage of Christ dying, for by His death He has taken away even the sting of death itself?

And just as the suffering Christ has stripped false desire of its evil power over us, so too has He stripped ignorance of its deceit. Who can be in doubt about the right road to heaven, who can be confused about what sort of life God wants us to live, who can weep in hell for all eternity because he did not know mortal sins were serious in the sight of God, now that we have the suffering, dying Christ for our example, now that we can see at a glance how offensive sin is in God's sight?

Evil has been stripped of its allure by the Passion of Christ, and much of the difficulty in pursuing good has been taken away. God wants us to believe in Him, hope in Him and love Him. These are the dimensions of human goodness in the sight of God. He wants us to have faith in Christ, in the truths that Christ preached: that He is God, that He is man, that He is the way to salvation. Now all these things are unseen, we cannot prove them. They are mysterious. It is difficult to bring the mind to assent to them. Yet Jesus died to prove them, he suffered to prove the truth of what He preached. Thus from our feeble hu-

man point of view it is made immeasurably easier to give whole-hearted assent to one so obviously sincere as that.

Again, God wants us to love Him with our whole heart. He is a jealous God. That very totality of love can be a stumbling block for the heart of man. But it is made much easier now that we can see how good God is, how lovable beyond our most extravagant dreams, how much He loves us. Blind is the man who can now complain that God is a jealous God when he demands the total heart of man, that He is unworthy of all our love. Can man be slow to love this God? Dying clots of clay that we are, unable to find anyone so much in love with us as to lay down his life for us—yet our God has done just that. Perhaps the heart of man can be slow to love, but can it be slow to return such love as this?

Finally, God wants us to hope in Him, to trust in His power and willingness to raise us up to His level, in the sincerity of His desire to share with us His eternal, overwhelming joy. But we who become so quickly accustomed to the little earthly life of man, and so quickly deluded about anyone's willingness to do us good, would find it difficult to hope like this in God if we did not have His Son for our crucified Savior. For if God is able to descend this low, He is certainly able to raise us up. If God is willing to

suffer for our redemption from sin, He is certainly willing to crown us with glory. Why did Christ suffer, how does His suffering fit into the divine plan? Because God knew that nothing would save us so effectively, nothing would redeem us so beautifully as His suffering Son.

Just as Jesus suffered freely and voluntarily, so too He died freely and voluntarily. His death was not mere physical collapse. No power on earth could have separated His body and soul had He not permitted it. He voluntarily embraced death as part of God's plan. Nor can the question "why" be answered with "it just had to be so." Nothing just has to be so in God's plans, for God always has His reasons. From Scripture and theology we can glean five of these reasons.

Christ came to free man from his sins, and part of that freeing process consisted in satisfying for sin, in paying the debt that man incurred by sinning. According to Genesis 2, 17, that debt consisted in death. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." And though it is true that a debt can be satisfied by paying an equivalent price, e.g., satisfying for the theft of a cow by paying back in money the price of the cow, still the most suitable and perfect way to make satis-

faction for self or for another is to pay the very thing that is owed. Hence it is that Christ wished to satisfy for sin by dying. According to Peter, "because Christ also died once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might offer us to God" (I Peter 3, 18). This argument has a sound foundation in Scripture.

In the second place, from our point of view, death is perhaps the most convincing sign of human life. If Jesus had come among us as a man and then just mysteriously disappeared there would have been some foundation for suspecting that He was not truly a man. Thus by dying He has left us an irrefutable proof of the truth and reality of His human nature.

Since Adam lost the gift of immortality for the human race, death has stalked every man's footsteps and clouded every man's days with fear. By dying Jesus freed us from this fear of death. He has taken the sting out of it. Thus St. Paul says: "therefore because children have blood and flesh in common, so He in like manner has shared in these; that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver them who throughout their life were kept in servitude by the fear of death." (Hebrews 2, 14).

By dying corporeally for sin, for death is the penalty that results from sin, Jesus also gave us an example which we should follow in dying spiritually to sin.

Sin was a spiritual death which had as part of its punishment corporeal death. Thus by corporeal death Jesus taught us that we in turn should die to sin spiritually, i.e., kill it in our souls. Hence St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "for the death He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives he lives unto God. Thus do you consider yourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ." (Romans 6, 10).

And unless Jesus had died He would not have been able to rise from the dead and show us the power which overcomes death, and give us the hope of rising from the dead ourselves. The motive of hope is power. We hope in one who is able to help us, who has the power of doing what we cannot do. By rising from the dead Jesus shows that He has this power, thus providing us with a motive for our hope in our own resurrection. Yet if He had not died this resurrection would not have been possible. Thus St. Paul could write: "now if Christ is preached as risen from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead neither has Christ risen and if Christ has not risen then our preaching is vain and vain too is your faith." (I Cor. 15, 12-14)

Granting all these reasons in Divine Wisdom why Jesus suffered and died, the mind of man can still

wonder why this had to take place on a cross. Why crucifixion instead of beheading as with John the Baptist? As a matter of fact, crucifixion was not the customary method of execution prescribed by Roman law, but rather a type usually inflicted on slaves and the perpetrators of peculiarly heinous crimes. It was used by the Romans only on non-Romans. The customary method of Jewish execution was stoning. In clamoring for crucifixion the Jews might well have had in mind an element of special indignity, but Divine Wisdom had many others.

Inasmuch as this type of death, at least in those days, was the most execrable type of death, it was peculiarly suitable to the needs of Divine Wisdom, i.e., to give men an example of virtue. Virtue consists in right and reasonable living, in not fearing those things which are not to be feared. Though perhaps many men might not fear death itself, yet all men have a fear of certain types of death, e.g., some say they would not mind dying but they do not want to drown or be burned to death. Thus by dying the worst kind of death Jesus taught us that no particular type of death need be feared, and in fact should not be feared.

Again, the death of Jesus was to satisfy for the sin of Adam. This sin consisted in being disobedient to God by eating the fruit of a forbidden tree. Jesus,

by dying to satisfy for this sin, died out of obedience on the tree of the cross, thereby restoring the fruit which Adam had stolen.

Furthermore, by His death Jesus was to save the whole world, to lead all men back to God. By dying crucified on a cross the very position of His body teaches this: His arms outstretched to embrace all men, His feet pointed to the earth where men live, His head toward heaven whither He would lead the world.

Finally, this manner of death, in a way, fulfilled most of the types of salvation prefigured in the Old Law. Noah was saved from the flood by an ark made of wood. Moses parted the sea and led the chosen people from bondage with a rod. The Old Law was kept in an ark of wood. Thus, step by step, these figures indicated the wood of the cross through which salvation from sin would come.



CHAPTER THREE

IS THERE ANY SORROW LIKE TO MY SORROW?

IN trying to comprehend just "what happened" in the Passion and Death of Christ it is important to try and see "how" such an event fitted into God's plans, a point too frequently neglected in meditation upon the Passion. The details of that suffering, the extent and degree of that suffering are much more familiar. Yet in trying to comprehend what happened, a certain amount of logical order is essential if one is going to have a balanced, complete and unified picture, a feature which is likewise too frequently neglected in meditations on the Passion. In general the problem of delineating the extent of Jesus' Passion falls into two parts: whether He suffered all suffering, and whether His suffering was the greatest possible instance of painful experience. Thus, for example, one might inquire about the extent of a man's knowledge from two points of view, did he know everything, and was he the most intelligent man in the world.

Basically, Jesus suffered all types of pain. Obviously He could not suffer every single individual type of pain for some of them are contradictory, e.g., He

could not burn to death and freeze to death simultaneously; and some of them are impossible to the Incarnate Word, e.g., toothache and the like. Yet He suffered every general type of pain, for freezing and burning both afflict the sense of touch but so does flogging. This generic completeness can be considered from several points of view: the various groups of men who inflicted it; the various possessions stripped from Him by it; and the various parts of His body which suffered it.

In the first place Jesus suffered at the hands of all classes of men. Unlike other sufferers He was buffeted by men but consoled by women, persecuted by authority but acclaimed by the crowd, a traitor in one nation and a hero in another. He suffered at the hands of Jews and Gentiles alike. Raucous male voices were raised against Him, but also the insinuations of the serving maid who accused Peter. Pilate, the authority of Rome; Herod, the king of the Jews; the high priest himself—all persecuted Christ; and the mob with a loud roar demanded His death. His enemies triumphed over Him and His friends abandoned Him—Judas by betrayal, Peter by denial, and the other ten by desertion. And in the fullness of knowledge which Jesus had, as He prayed in the Garden, as He hung upon the cross, He saw the sinners of all ages from Adam to the last man who shall be born,

those billions and billions of souls (all save one) lending a hand to His passion by their sins. In the fullness of this knowledge He suffered not only at the hands of the sinners who would learn from the cross and repent, but also at the hands of the sinners who would choose an eternal hell rather than receive of His mercy.

In the second place, suffering can be considered from the viewpoint of the possessions and goods stripped from Him. Consider these goods in which a man can feel hurt: friends, reputation and earthly possessions.

In a lifetime a man makes few real friends, he chooses but few to share the secrets of his heart and mind. Yet these few are dearer to him than all else. They relieve his loneliness, they console him in anguish, they are a constant source of confidence in facing future troubles. Christ chose but twelve men to be His closest friends. He poured out to them the secrets of His heart. He kept them close to Him in all His works, and looked to them with confidence, trusting that they would carry on His work when He was gone. Yet one of them betrayed Him with a kiss. Who shall ever fathom the hurt He felt in speaking those final words to Judas, "friend, a kiss for what thou hast come to do"?

The second dearest possession a man can hold is a

good reputation. Most of us put our best thought into building up a worthy reputation and are willing to spend and willing to sacrifice to preserve it. And Christ was the Son of God: He was entitled to a worthy reputation, to fame and glory. Yet this was stolen from Him by blasphemies: "Thou who destroyest the temple and in three days buildest it up again, save thyself! If thou art the Son of God come down from the cross!" Instead of honor, instead of respect, instead of adoration, He suffered mockery, He suffered derision and scorn. He heard men make His kingdom a ridicule. "Let the Christ, the King of Israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him for he said I am the Son of God."

Admittedly, earthly possessions rate rather low on the scale of values. None the less, the loss of wealth is never joyful. Admittedly, Jesus was a poor man; He had not whereon to lay His head. None the less, He suffered the loss of all He had, the clothes He wore. They stripped His garments from Him and cast lots for His cloak. What more painful kind of poverty is there than this, to hang upon a cross naked before the eyes of all?

Most of us are so crude in feelings, so unfamiliar with living in the presence of God, so prone to take

it for granted that God cares for us, that we shall never be able to understand the sorrow of Christ's soul upon the cross when He said "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." We shall never be able to understand His dereliction; how utterly strange, how unspeakably wretched, how intolerably alone He felt. However, perhaps some of us might be able to see at least dimly a small portion of the sadness that flooded His soul when looking down from the cross He saw the sorrow He was causing in the heart of His own Mother, Mary.

Certainly we know weariness and tedium and exhaustion. Yet we have never actually carried a cross, we have never fallen beneath a cross, we have never hung for three long hours upon a cross with the full knowledge that much of what we suffered was to be in vain. Our experiences can give us a glimpse but never an understanding of the weariness of soul Christ suffered on that Friday.

Perhaps we know fear better, fear of the surgeon's knife, fear of death in battle, fear of sickness. Yet in our fears there is an element of hope that death might not come soon, that death when it comes will come quickly, that perhaps we will escape. In our fear, too, there is an element of uncertainty and ignorance, for we do not know how bad the future will actually be, we have no previous experience of death.

But Christ in the Garden knew perfectly what lay ahead of Him and when it would come. Hanging upon the cross He was most certain of the anguish which would put an end to those three hours. He had a human heart like ours, a heart that could freeze with fear, that could suffer in anticipation, that could shrink and recoil while yet He strode forward. In His soul he suffered sorrow, weariness and fear on a scale that makes the sorrow, weariness and fear of our sad world sound like a whisper after a clap of thunder.

And Christ suffered not only in soul but also in all the members and senses of His body. His head was bound and pierced by the crown of thorns. His wrists and feet were run through with nails. His face was struck by the soldiers and spit upon by the Jews. His whole body was torn and bleeding and criss-crossed with swollen blue welts from the flogging. His sense of touch was outraged with the pain in His hands and feet, and in all His body from the flagellum. His sense of taste was nauseated with the gall and cheap wine, His tongue and lips seared with thirst. His sense of smell was oppressed by the odor rising from the throng of living unkempt men, rising from the mouldering bones of the dead in that place of execution. His ears were pierced by the raucous blasphemies hurled at Him and the ironic derision upon the lips of smug enemies. His quiet eyes which had rejoiced

at the sight of little children then beheld His mother and His beloved disciple torn with compassion at His feet.

The question of deciding whether Christ's suffering was the greatest experience of pain possible in man is not merely a matter of counting the strokes of the scourge and investigating whether any other man ever suffered more strokes from a lash than He. Suffering and pain, in general, involve an excessive change from normality in the sense receptors. Thus in normal circumstances we feel neither heat nor cold, and sense both heat and cold as such only within certain limits. Once the sensation exceeds normal limits some sort of deterioration occurs in the receptors and the sensation becomes what we call painful. Furthermore, suffering and pain involve some consciousness of this deterioration. After all when a man is asleep he feels no pain regardless of the deterioration. Physical or bodily pain consists in a bodily injury which is actually sensed. Spiritual pain or sorrow comes from the awareness or knowledge of a present evil, the loss of some good. Thus, for example, the loss of a purse does not immediately hurt any one of the five senses, but the knowledge of that loss can cause sorrow in the soul, and usually does. Accordingly, in determining whether Christ's sufferings were greater than the sufferings of any other human being, it is not so

much the quantity of the blood spilt, the number of lashes administered, the period of time involved that counts, as the perceptibility of the one suffering, the purity of that suffering, whether it was in any way relieved by other considerations that might cause pleasure and joy. These things are more important, more significant in a measurement of suffering than the others. And from four points of view St. Thomas says that the sufferings of Jesus were the greatest.

First, from the viewpoint of cause, the sufferings of the passion were the greatest both as regards sensible pain and interior sorrow. As regards the intensity of the physical pain, it was the greatest both because Jesus suffered so totally, [in this line,] in all His senses and in all His members, and because He suffered a type of execution in itself most painful, for crucifixion afflicts the most sensitive parts of the body, the nails are driven through the hands and feet, the weight of the whole body upon the hands and feet aggravates the pain; and this acuteness of pain is protracted through several hours. It is not a quick death like beheading. The causes of interior sorrow were the greatest possible, first, because He suffered from and for the sins of all men; secondly, because He suffered from the Jews, His own chosen people, (He came unto His own and His own received Him not), and from His disciples whom He had loved

above all others and who were scandalized by His Passion; and thirdly, because the prospect of losing life is in itself, and naturally, the most horrible evil to foresee and anticipate.

And the magnitude of the sufferings of Jesus both in body and soul depended on the perceptibility of the one suffering. Since He was the most perfect man that ever lived or will live, His sense of touch, of hearing, of smell and taste were the most acute, and, hence, the most capable of experiencing pain; and His powers of intellectual perception were the most capable of the awareness of evil. In other words, He was more conscious of personal suffering than any other man could be. Furthermore, painful sensations as we experience them become progressively weaker in consciousness with the passage of time. The physical equipment of sensation breaks down under the strain. This did not occur in Christ, since He had absolute dominion over the behavior of His body and voluntarily impeded any natural alleviation of pain. Then too, there is normally a limitation of attention in the experience of a plurality of sensations. A second pain lessens the amount of attention we can give to the first pain, and a pleasant sensation can even completely distract our attention from the existence of simple discomfort. For this reason a crying child with a pain in the foot is given an ice cream

cone. However, this limitation of attention did not occur in Christ. He was the complete master of His psychological and physical reaction. Accordingly He was more capable of pain and suffering than any other man could possibly be.

Finally, the magnitude of the suffering of Christ can be considered from the viewpoint of the very purity of pain and sorrow, the complete lack of a mixture of joy or consolation. It is possible that a man suffer pain from the surgeon's knife, for example, but at the same time be consoled by the knowledge that his appendix will bother him no more. "A mother giving birth to a son is in physical pain but rejoices that a man child is born into the world." Jesus had complete domination over His feelings and willed that no such consolations relieve His suffering, that no such joy overflow into the awareness of His sorrow. No other man can so control his feelings and, hence, no other man can suffer such unmitigated pain and sorrow.

It must be remembered that Christ's sufferings were undertaken deliberately. Because of the complete domination He had over His human nature, not only the fact that He suffered but the very quality of His sufferings depended on His will—a circumstance that exists in no other man's sufferings. And Jesus willed freely to undergo pain that was proportionate in

quantity to the punishment that all the sins of all the world should merit. We are accustomed to think of pain and death and of the agony in hell for all eternity in terms of our selves and in terms of one mortal sin. But Jesus embraced the punishment that was due in divine justice to all the sins of all the billions of souls who should ever live.

However, in considering the extent of Christ's sufferings, it is important to keep in mind at the same time that there were some limits to that suffering. In the first place He enjoyed the Beatific Vision continuously through His whole life, and all through the passion and death. Yet He did not permit that joy to flood the lower reaches of His soul and flow over in the sphere of bodily feeling. And in the second place, He suffered as a just and holy man. Actually, the punishment for mortal sin is eternal damnation and the full awareness that the pain of loss of the vision of God shall be unending. Inasmuch as He was a just and holy man, inasmuch as He was the Word Incarnate, Jesus was incapable of such an experience. Only the damned can actually experience eternal damnation which is the punishment of mortal sin. Yet Jesus experienced all the painfulness of that state in the dereliction on the cross. It was the same pain but from different causes. All the souls in hell for all eternity shall never know such anguish.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON WHOM LIES THE GUILT?

IF the Passion and Death of Jesus are a distinctly voluntary part of the life of the Incarnate Word to such an extent that they would not have occurred if He had not so willed, then in some sense this act of Christ's will was the cause of His Passion and Death. And we protest loudly in our prayers that it was indeed our sins and not the soldiers of Rome which put Christ to death. Hence, in some sense our sins are the cause of His Passion and Death. Finally, it is undeniable that in some sense the soldiers and the Jewish leaders did cause the Passion and Death of Jesus and it would not have occurred without their contribution. We employ the word cause in each of these three cases. Now, our simple crude concept of causality involves such factors as the fire causing heat in the coffee that is on the stove. If we seek no deeper into the idea of causality than the hand which swung the lash, we have not begun to understand the Passion. And if we protest loudly that it was indeed our sins and not the soldiers of Rome which caused Christ's death, and still understand causality in terms of fire causing heat, our concepts labor under an inherent contradiction that must make meditation fruitless, for

thought which is not true cannot really convince. Obviously our simple crude concept of causality must be refined and distinguished if we are going to understand completely and adequately the causality involved in the Passion and Death of Jesus.

A person can cause an effect in two ways: first, by directly bringing about the effect: second, indirectly by not impeding the effect. Thus, for example, a man can burn down his neighbor's house by knowingly and willingly starting a fire in the beasement for that very purpose, or he can burn down his neighbor's house by not putting out a fire which he discovers already blazing within his neighbor's room.

Directly, the persecutors of Christ caused His Passion and Death because they provided sufficient cause for His Death with the intention that death should follow. Indirectly, however, Christ was the cause of His own Passion and Death for He was able to impede the efforts of His persecutors either by reprimanding them and escaping from them as He so did previously, or by exercising a power that was fully under His control He could have prevented the suffering and death regardless of whatever efforts were made by His persecutors for that purpose. Being joined to the Divine Nature in the Word, Jesus had full control over the conjunction of His body and soul, a conjunction which could not be severed with-

out His willing it. As a matter of fact, to prove this, He spoke in a loud, clear, distinct voice just the moment before He died, manifesting that life was not ebbing from Him as from a man on the brink of death, but that He was still fully alive and deliberately allowing Himself to suffer death.

Delving deeper into the causality of the passion, we might well ask what motive determined Jesus voluntarily to accept death rather than impede the work of His persecutors. Surprising as it may seem, the Scriptures assign obedience as this motive. "He was obedient to the Father even to death" says St. Paul (Phillip 2.8). St. Thomas gives several reasons why it was fitting that Jesus should have suffered death from this motive.

Death out of obedience was most fittingly suited to the work of justification. As St. Paul says, (Romans 5, 18), "therefore as from the offence of one man the result was unto condemnation to all men, so from the justice of one the result is unto the justification of life to all men. For just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted as just."

Then, too, it was most fitting that man be reconciled to God by the obedience of Christ. According to St. Paul, (Romans 5, 10) "we are reconciled to

God through the death of His Son," for the very death of Christ was a sacrifice most pleasing to God—"as Christ . . . delivered himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God to ascend in fragrant odor." (Ephesians 5, 2). Reconciliation was brought about by something pleasing to God, and we learn in the Scriptures (I Kings 15, 22) that "obedience is better than sacrifice."

Obedience, of course, presupposes that a command or precept has been given. And Jesus certainly spoke as if such a command had been given Him by the Father. Thus in St. John's Gospel He says, "I have the power to lay it (His life) down, and I have the power to take it up again. Such is the command I have received from my Father." (John 10.18). However, this motive of obedience in no way excludes charity or love as a motive for His Passion. A work of obedience can be done from love, and love can in turn be a command of God. And, as a matter of fact, as Jesus rose from the meal in the upper room to go out to the place of the Passion, He said, "that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father has commanded me, arise, let us go from here." (John 14, 31). And St. Paul says, "He has loved me and given himself up for me." (Gal. 2, 20). Loving the Father meant loving and willing everything the Father loved and willed, and

the Father indeed loved us and willed that we be saved from our sins by the Passion and Death of the Son.

If a subject does a stupid thing out of obedience we do not hesitate to put the blame on the superior. Hence, in following back the line of causality in the Passion and Death, we must finally arrive at the Father who gave the command to Jesus to lay down His life for us. In the plans of Divine Providence the Father in His eternal will pre-ordained that we whom He permitted to fall into sin should be saved by His directly willing that His only-begotten Son become man and die for us. He further inspired Christ in His human will with the desire to die for us out of charity, and in His eternal plan arranged to abstain from protecting His only Son in that dire hour when the forces of evil raged against Him.

The role of the Father is indeed a most merciful gesture of love, the role of the Son one of infinite merit. Yet the role of the persecutors who directly brought about Christ's death, and our role—we the sinners who in our misery called forth the mercy of God—is one of guilt. It is true that Jesus prayed upon the cross "Father forgive them; they know not what they do." In praying thus He prayed especially for the leaders of the Jewish people who indeed needed forgiveness. And the phrase "they know not what

they do'' was not meant as an excuse for them (for ignorance in some instances excuses from guilt), but rather as the thing for which they primarily needed forgiveness. They knew not what they did because they had refused to believe, blinded by their pride and self-love. Since their ignorance was itself culpable and directly willed by them their crime was the greater. The people who followed them had less guilt for they were merely following their leaders whom they had been accustomed to follow as the voice of God for centuries. And the Roman soldiers were merely carrying out the orders of their superiors. It is most likely that they had not even heard the preaching of this Man and, hence, had no opportunity to believe.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOOD TREE BRINGS FORTH GOOD FRUIT

TURNING now from the causes of the Passion and Death to the effects of that climactic event, it might be well to probe more deeply into the concept of effect, since for some strange reason, the simple ideas of cause and effect have become very confused in the ordinary mind. Thus, for example, a soap manufacturer assumes to himself and his product the full credit for turning out white wash when, as a matter of fact, it was the hard labor of the housewife that made the wash white, and one soap would have done about as good a job as another. In general, it is sufficient to know that an effect is something that depends on another thing either for its being or for its coming into being. For example, a statue depends upon the wood out of which it is carved for its being. But here we are most interested in efficient causes, causes upon which effects depend for their coming into being—somewhat the way a boiled egg depends upon heat for its coming into that state, but remains a boiled egg even after the fire is turned off. This dependency upon another in the matter of coming into being can be divided into two types: direct and

indirect. But in this chapter these terms are going to have a different meaning than in the last chapter. Take, for example, the mother who suggests that her daughter clean a window. The fact that the window becomes clean depends upon both the mother and the daughter. But it depends upon the daughter directly, she is the one who climbed the ladder and applied the soap and water to the window. It depends on the mother indirectly, she is the one who moved the will of the daughter to engage in such an occupation. In speaking of the effects of the Passion and Death of Christ these effects are going to depend upon the suffering Christ in both ways, directly and indirectly.

The idea of direct causality can also be ambiguous, for we say that the fire which heats the water is the direct cause of the hot water, and the hand which pulls the trigger on the gun is the direct cause of the killing. But, in the first case, the heat in the water comes only and completely from the fire. In the second case the killing comes from the bullet which was propelled by the explosion of the power which was set off by the finger on the trigger. The size of the finger has nothing to do with the killing, while the size of the fire has considerable to do with the heat in the fire. Here we are speaking of direct causality in the first sense. And in this sense, only

God can bring about the effect of the Passion, i.e., grace. God, and only God, causes grace the way a fire causes heat. Yet the human nature of Jesus is an instrument in the hands of God and also has a role to play in this direct causality. Thus, for example, the hand which moves the eraser, directly cleans the blackboard, but the eraser in the hand has a certain instrumentality in that operation. Thus, too, the human nature of Jesus, the voluntary suffering of Jesus, is an instrument in the hands of the divine nature, causing grace and abolishing sin. Yet it is to be noted that the eraser is a dead, inanimate instrument, where the human nature of Christ is a living, free, deliberate instrument. In this sense, only the human nature of Jesus is the instrument of the divine nature in the causing of grace, and all grace comes through that suffering human nature as from an instrument. No other instrument, either sacrament or priest, is united to the divine nature in the Word.

Meritorious causality is one of the many types of causality that might be classified under what we have here called indirect causality. Basically, merit means having a right to a reward because of some good work done for the benefit of another. The foundation for that right may be either justice or friendship. Thus, a laboring man by dint of his day's labor acquires a right in justice to the wages he is to receive.

He does not beg for his wages but demands them. He does not say to the paymaster, "Be a good friend and give me five dollars." He says, "Give me my wages." The favorite niece of a rich uncle feels entitled to the price of an ice cream cone, however, not on a basis of justice but of friendship. If she is refused she does not say that uncle is a very unjust man, but that uncle does not love her any more.

Now, the basis of merit, the thing that makes it possible for a man to merit in God's sight, is grace. An action which proceeds from grace gives a man a right to an increase in grace and to glory. Yet it is to be noted that the effect, i.e., the increase of grace or glory, does not flow directly from man's action, as heat from fire, but from God. Thus, for example, sweeping a floor out of charity directly gets the floor clean, but indirectly and meritoriously causes an increase in charity, which increase comes directly from God. Christ had what theologians call "capital grace" which enabled Him to merit in justice not only for Himself but for all mankind. And it was by His Passion and Death that He merited all the grace that exists in the world, or will exist. Note, however, that as a meritorious cause He was acting as an individual complete man and not precisely as an instrument of the divinity.

Saying that grace is the effect of the Passion and

Death and saying that the suffering Jesus was the instrumental and meritorious cause of that grace, says everything. Yet our feeble minds have to have the matter broken down into still smaller pieces in order to understand what is meant by saying that. One of the ways to break down that statement is to distinguish various modes of effecting grace. Thus, for example, we might say that the manager of a restaurant is the indirect cause of dinner, inasmuch as he orders the dinner, and the cook the direct cause, inasmuch as the cook actually prepares the dinner. That would account for the types of causality involved. But this concept could be broken down into smaller pieces by distinguishing the various modes in which this causality operated, e.g., in cleaning the vegetables, in mixing the soup, in heating the various dishes and in serving the meal. So, too, the causes at work in the Passion operated in a variety of ways: by way of satisfaction, by way of sacrifice, and by way of redemption.

Basically, satisfaction involves a process of exhibiting to the offended one something he likes equally as well, or more than he detests, the offensive thing done for him. Thus you might tread on a man's foot on the street car and to satisfy him for that offense treat him to a milkshake, since that particular man happens to have an equally intense fondness for milk shakes and distaste for damaged feet. Now,

Christ suffering and dying out of charity and obedience exhibited to God something more pleasing to Him than sin had been displeasing. Christ's passion was so pleasing first because of the magnitude and intensity of His love, and secondly because of the value of the thing He offered, i.e., His own human life, and thirdly because of the extent and totality of His sufferings.

Recall that Jesus died out of obedience, that his death was commanded by the Father. Hence ultimately Christ's death was a sacrifice of will, of obedience. However, in the context of cult it was also a sacrifice, an external demonstration of the interior desire to honor God. In this sense sacrifice involves, first of all, a will that desires to honor God, to worship God as the supreme source of all being and goodness, to annihilate self inasmuch as possible before the Infinite Majesty, to be a willing subject of the one, true Lord. In the second place, it involves an externalization of that spirit, a physical visible sign of that attitude of soul, somewhat the way a smile is the sign of a happy soul. Since the actual annihilation of self by death is not licit for us and, as a matter of fact, would not make us living subjects but dead and useless non-entities, death is not an appropriate way for us to demonstrate the spirit of sacrifice. Ordinarily we take food which supports life

and destroy it, e.g., pour out wine, burn a lamb, etc., to show what we mean. Christ however, was a priest (one who stands between God and man), because of the Incarnation, and was a most perfect victim because He had a human life which could be destroyed but not permanently annihilated. Hence, Christ as the head of the human race could sacrifice Himself for the whole human race, could honor God in a way that made up for all the dishonor that the sins of man exhibit to Him.

Basically, redemption involves a process of freeing oneself from obligations. A man obliges himself to return money that was loaned to him by writing an IOU, and redeems it by paying the money and thus frees himself from that obligation. By sin man was under a twofold necessity: to serve the devil, which is one of the punishments of sin; and to bear the pains of hell, which is the other punishment of sin. By suffering and dying on the cross Christ freed us from both of these obligations. He Himself was the price, a life which was more valuable in God's sight than all the souls of men. And He actually paid the price. For though man was the slave of the devil, the price of redemption was paid to God. He laid down that life for us.

Now, in general, the effect of Christ's passion and death was grace, somewhat the same way that a day's

work results in pay. But just as a man's pay enables him to get out of debt and make new purchases, so too grace has various particular effects which are, indeed, the direct fruit of the Passion. All of those fruits spring from the Passion by the two types of causality already mentioned, i.e., instrumental and meritorious.

The first and most frequently mentioned of these fruits was freedom from sin. The Passion of Christ is properly a cause of the remission of sin in three ways. First, it excites our charity and moves us to love God, as St. Paul says, "but God commends his charity towards us because when as yet we were sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 5, 8). And, as a matter of fact, it is by love that sins are taken away according to Jesus, "many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much." (Luke 4, 7). Second, the Passion freed us from sin by way of redemption. As the head of the Mystical Body He paid by His passion the debt for sin which the members of that Body owed. Third, the human nature of Christ in the Passion was an efficient cause, the instrument of the divinity which expelled sin from the human race.

Speaking in the temple shortly before His Passion began, Jesus said, "now the prince of this world is cast out, and I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto myself." (John 12, 31). By sinning man suc-

cumbs to the temptation of the devil and thus merits to come in some sense, under the control of the devil. And God, who is offended by sin, quite justly relinquishes man to the power of the devil as a suitable punishment, a sort of "poetic justice." The devil himself in his supreme and malevolent arrogance strives with all his (diabolic) power to snatch wayfarers from the path that leads to heaven. For this reason just before His Passion Jesus announced that now the prince of this world is cast out, for in taking away sin the Passion destroyed the very basis upon which man subjected himself to diabolic government and for which God justly punished him by allowing him to have what he chose. In the Passion too the devil's efforts to wreck souls suffered such a disappointment that he will never hold quite the same sway as before.

The Passion not only took away sin, the very guiltiness that it brings to the human soul, but it also took away the punishment that was coming to sinners as the just deserts of their crime. Thus Isaias (53, 4) prophecied, "surely he hath born our infirmities and carried our sorrows." By suffering and dying Jesus exhibited to the Father a work which more than satisfied for all the offences of men. This abundant satisfaction lifted from the shoulders of men the weight of eternal punishment which otherwise would have

burdened every sinner at the hour of death. Furthermore, inasmuch as the passion took away the guilt of sin, it took away the basis for punishment. And thus men instead of being children of wrath became "sons, and if sons heirs, heirs indeed of God, coheirs with Christ." (Romans 8, 17).

St. Paul says, furthermore, "we are reconciled to God through the death of His Son." (Romans 5, 10). Because of the passion and death men are no longer looked upon by God as enemies, but as friends and as children. This was accomplished first by taking away sin, which made men enemies in God's sight and children of wrath. In the second place, the Passion and Death constituted the perfect sacrifice, and the proper effect of sacrifice is to honor God, to placate His wrath. And God finding such an exquisite gift among the children of men took the whole race back into His good graces.

In olden times cities were surrounded by walls and roads led into the city through gates. Thus heaven too was pictured, as a city surrounded by walls and entered through gates. Closing the gates meant putting an obstacle in the way to entrance to the city. Thus both original and personal sin closed the gates of heaven. But Christ by his Passion and Death took away original sin and personal sin and thus opened the gates again to mankind, opened to man the celestial

city wherein God dwells. Shus St. Paul says, "we have confidence then, brethren, to enter the Holies (heavenly courts) in virtue of the blood of Christ . . ." (Hebrews 10, 19). We are pilgrims and wayfarers upon this earth, but we now walk with confidence that the gates of the city will be open for us when we arrive.

Finally, the Passion and death merited for Christ His own exaltation. As St. Paul says, "and appearing in the form of a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to the death on a cross. Therefore God also has exalted him. . ." (Philippians 2, 8). When out of injustice a man deprives another of some possession, he merits some sort of pain in his own will, that the scales of justice may be balanced. So, too, when out of justice a man deprives himself of some possession or pleasure, he merits for himself still greater goods or pleasures that the scales of justice may be balanced. This latter standard of divine justice was frequently upon the lips of Jesus, e.g., (Luke 14, 11) "he who humbles himself shall be exalted." And in His Passion Jesus humbled Himself from four points of view. First, he suffered pain and death, afflictions which He was in no way bound to suffer. Secondly, He was humiliated or made lowly by having His priceless body consigned to a tomb, and His human soul to the infernal regions. Thirdly, He

suffered the humiliation of public opprobrium and the sense of being abandoned by God. Fourthly, being the Son of God he voluntarily made Himself lowly by allowing Himself to be handed over to earthly powers, both Jewish and Roman. By this He merited a fourfold exaltation: the glorious resurrection, the ascension into heaven, the seat at the right hand of the Father, and the power to judge the whole world.



CHAPTER SIX

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

MEN of all ages have pondered with anguish what is usually called the problem of evil. In the face of war, in the face of death, in the face of famine and flood they ponder it. Confronted by pain, confronted by sin and crime they question "why"? When the innocent starve, when children die, and when just men are persecuted the cry goes up "why must these things be"? The atheist shrugs his shoulders and says that is just the way life is, so grin and bear it. Really, that is no answer at all, but then the atheist really has no problem. The problem emerges only when the existence of evil is placed beside the existence of an all-powerful and all-loving God. Is God powerful enough to create this world but too weak to exclude imperfections from it? Does the all-good God who made this universe out of His abundant love have a cruel side to His character? As a matter of fact this was one of the two objections St. Thomas thought worthy to oppose to his proofs for the existence of God. And with St. Augustine he answers that evil does not argue to the non-existence of God or to any imperfection in Him, but rather to imminent power and goodness since God brings good

out of evil. He permits evil that good might abound. In less sublime terms, the argument would be that any cook can start out with a fresh roast and raw potatoes and produce a fair meal, but it takes a most excellent cook to walk into the kitchen after the potatoes have burned and the roast is tough and still turn out a good meal.

This answer to the problem of evil is a real answer; it has logic and sound thought in its favor. But the problem of evil is not only a speculative problem which can be solved by a speculative answer. The problem of evil is a real, vital, personal problem demanding a concretely convincing answer. The general speculative answer leaves so much of mystery, it moves the mind but not the heart. So God has given us a concrete vivid example and case-history of this axiom of divine wisdom in the Passion and Death of Jesus. For the theme running through the whole of the theology of the Passion and Death is just this—God permits evil that good might abound. If there had been no sin there could have been no Savior. In no other way could the goodness and mercy of God have been manifested so gloriously. And with this supreme convincing example of the wisdom behind the axiom that God permits evil that good might abound, men can face the problem of evil in all its particular, personal, anguishing and mysterious details

with more conviction, more faith, more energy, more confidence and love.

This answer to the problem of evil not only answers all objections to the existence and goodness of God but puts a depth of meaning into evil and a wealth of value into suffering. It not only destroys the charge of cruelty leveled by the atheist against our Happy God but also the cry of twisted self-torture hurled at joyful Christian suffering by a hedonistic age.

The practical consequences of this truth, that God permits evil that good might come, are endless. Since the passion and death of the Son of God has become an historic fact, human life should be different.

In the first place, though we cannot fully understand the workings of divine providence in permitting war, premature death, starvation and suffering as pictured so graphically in the daily papers, we can be sure that God has permitted them that some good might come, that more souls will be saved this way than without these would-be tragedies. However, it is not sufficient to sit back in smug Christian confidence. That good be brought from these evils involves the contribution of the human will, the contribution of our Christian hearts. Suffering is meant to bring good not only to the heart of the sufferer but to the heart which in mercy yearns to relieve that

suffering. The mistakes of history are meant to be a lesson in prudence for future generations.

In the second place, suffering, death and sin are permitted to exist in our own personal individual lives that good might come forth from them. By suffering in union with Christ, be it heart-ache, head-ache or cancer, we can purify our charity, do penance for our own sins, and expiate the sins of the world. And death is not meant to be just a biological necessity. Our last breath should be decidedly different in nature from any other during life. For us death is an opportunity to pay God the price of our sins. For us too, death can and should be a sacrifice of obedience to the command of God. When death comes life should be surrendered with gratitude that we have something to offer to God, that we have the opportunity to make recompense. And sin exists in our own souls, that good might abound there. Thus having been forgiven by God in confession, we have yet one more real and personal taste of the mercy of God, and one more concrete motive for loving God with greater love than ever before. As a matter of fact, St. Thomas says that a soul returning to the state of grace need not return to a lower degree of charity than before, but can return to a much higher degree, if it only wills to. And, having fallen in the past, we have yet one more reason for distrusting our own

powers, one more reason for learning to be truly humble, one more reason for putting more trust in God and less trust in self. And having made a mistake in the past we have before us unmistakable lessons in prudence. We should rise wiser, more filled with knowledge of self, more experienced with the dangers of the occasions of sin. These are the reasons God permits sin to exist in our hearts. It is up to us to see that good comes forth from them. Else good shall, and infallibly, come, but a good no man desires; that he himself manifest the glorious wrath of God's justice for all eternity from the pit of hell.

Finally, life is now more valuable, more worth living. We have been purchased at such a price. We are no longer wayfarers traveling to a city whose gates are shut. We need no longer wander far from God, enemies in His sight.

What a depth of wisdom there is upon the cross! Well might we meditate upon it day after day. There is no greater tragedy than not to see this wisdom, than to die without one's lips pressed against the mangled body upon a wooden cross.



APPENDIX

The following quotations from the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas are included here for several reasons. First, they have the value of footnotes verifying the fact that the text is a more or less faithful reproduction of St. Thomas' doctrine. Second, inasmuch as they are the words of St. Thomas himself they bear the weight of his authority as a Doctor of the Church, unencumbered by less authoritative interpretation. Third, in conjunction with the above text they might serve as a stimulus to a more complete study of St. Thomas himself. All of the quotations are taken from the third part of the *Summa*.

Notes for Chapter 1

Whether Christ's Passion Is To Be Attributed To His Godhead? (Q. 46, Art. 12)

As stated above, the union of the human nature with the Divine was effected in the person, in the hypostasis, in the suppositum, yet observing the distinction of natures; so that it is the same Person and hypostasis of the Divine and human natures, while each nature retains that which is proper to it. And therefore, as stated above, the Passion is to be attributed to the suppositum of the Divine Nature, not because of the Divine Nature, which is impassible, but by reason of the human nature. Hence, in a Syndal Epistle of Cyril (Act. Conc. Ephes. P. i., Cap. 26) we read: "If any man does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh and was Crucified in the flesh, let him be anathema." Therefore Christ's

Passion belongs to the suppositum of the Divine Nature by reason of the passible nature assumed, but not on account of the impassible Divine Nature.

Notes for Chapter 2

Whether There Was Any More Suitable Way of Delivering The Human Race Than By Christ's Passion?
(Q.46, Art. 3)

Among means to an end that one is the more suitable whereby the various concurring means employed are themselves helpful to such an end. But in this that man was delivered by Christ's passion, many other things besides deliverance from sin concurred for man's salvation. In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation; hence the Apostle says (Rom. v. 8): "God commendeth His charity towards us; for when as yet we were sinners Christ died for us." Secondly, because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence it is written (I Pet. ii. 21): "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps." Thirdly, because Christ by His Passion not only delivered man from sin, but also merited justifying grace for him and the glory of bliss, as shall be shown later. Fourthly, because by this man is all the more bound to refrain from sin, according to I Cor. vi. 20: "You are bought with a great price: glorify and bear God in your body." Fifthly, because it redounded to man's greater dignity, that as man was overcome and

deceived by the devil, so also it should be a man that should overthrow the devil; and as man deserved death, so a man by dying should vanquish death. Hence it is written (I Cor. xv. 57): "Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ." It was accordingly more fitting that we should be delivered by Christ's Passion than simply by God's good-will.

Whether Christ Ought To Have Suffered on The Cross? (Q.46, Art. 4)

It was most fitting that Christ should suffer the death of the Cross. First of all, as an example of virtue. For Augustine thus writes (QQ. lxxxiii., qu. 25): "God's Wisdom became man to give us an example in righteousness of living. But it is part of righteous living not to stand in fear of things which ought not to be feared. Now there are some men who, although they do not fear death itself, are yet troubled over the manner of their death. In order, then, that no kind of death should trouble an upright man, the cross of this Man had to be set before him, because, among all kinds of death, none was more execrable, more fear-inspiring than this."

Secondly, because this kind of death was especially suitable in order to atone for the sin of our first parent, which was the plucking of the apple from the forbidden tree against God's command. And so, to atone for that sin, it was fitting that Christ should suffer by being fastened to a tree, as if restoring what Adam had purloined; according to Psalm lxviii. 5: "Then did I pay that which I took not away." Hence Augustine says in a sermon on the Passion (Cf. Serm. ci. De Tempore):

"Adam despised the command, plucking the apple from the tree: but all that Adam lost, Christ found upon the cross."

The third reason is because, as Chrysostom says in a sermon on the Passion (*De Cruce et Latrone* 1., ii): "He suffered upon a high rood and not under a roof, in order that the nature of the air might be purified: and the earth felt a like benefit, for it was cleansed by the flowing of the blood from His side." And on John iii. 14: "The Son of man must be lifted up, Theophylact says: When you hear that He was lifted up, understand His hanging on high, that He might sanctify the air who had sanctified the earth by walking upon it."

The fourth reason is, because, by dying on it, He prepares for us an ascent into heaven, as Chrysostom says (*Athanasius, vide A. III., ad 2*). Hence it is that He says (*John xii. 32*): "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself."

The fifth reason is because it is befitting the universal salvation of the entire world. Hence Gregory of Nyssa observes (*In Christ. Resurr., Orat. 1*) that "the shape of the cross extending out into four extremes from their central point of contact denotes the power and the providence diffused everywhere of Him Who hung upon it." Chrysostom also says (*Athanasius, ioio*) that upon the cross "He dies with out-stretched hands in order to draw with one hand the people of old, and with the other those who spring from the Gentiles."

The sixth reason is because of the various virtues denoted by this class of death. Hence Augustine in his book on the grace of the Old and New Testament (*Ep. cxl.*) says: "Not without purpose did He choose this

class of death, that He might be a teacher of that breadth, and height, and length, and depth, of which the Apostle speaks (Eph. iii. 18): "For breadth is in the beam, which is fixed transversely above; this appertains to good works, since the hands are stretched out upon it. Length is the tree's extent from the beam to the ground; and there it is planted—that is, it stands and abides—which is the note of longanimity. Height is in that portion of the tree which remains over from the transverse beam upwards to the top, and this is at the head of the Crucified, because He is the supreme desire of souls of good hope. But that part of the tree which is hidden from view to hold it fixed, and from which the entire rood springs, denotes the depth of gratuitous grace." And, as Augustine says (Tract. cxix. in Joan.): "The tree upon which were fixed the members of Him dying was even the chair of the Master teaching."

The seventh reason is because this kind of death responds to very many figures. For, as Augustine says in a sermon on the Passion (loc. cit.), an ark of wood preserved the human race from the waters of the deluge; at the exodus of God's people from Egypt, Moses with a rod divided the sea, overthrew Pharaoh, and saved the people of God; the same Moses dipped his rod into the water, changing it from bitter to sweet; at the touch of a wooden rod a salutary spring gushed forth from a spiritual rock; likewise in order to overcome Amalec, Moses stretched forth his arms with rod in hand; lastly, God's law is entrusted to the wooden Ark of the Covenant; all of which are like steps by which we mount to the wood of the cross.

Whether It Was Fitting That Christ Should Die? (Q. 50, Art. 1)

It was fitting for Christ to die. First of all to satisfy for the whole human race, which was sentenced to die on account of sin, according to Gen. 11, 17: "In what day soever ye shall (Vulg., thou shalt) eat of it, ye shall (Vulg., thou shalt) die the death." Now it is a fitting way to satisfy for another by submitting oneself to the penalty deserved by that other. And so Christ resolved to die, that by dying He might atone for us, according to Peter I, iii. 18: "Christ also died once for our sins." Secondly, in order to show the reality of the flesh assumed. For, as Eusebius says (*Orat. de Laud. Constant. xv.*), "if, after dwelling among men Christ were suddenly to disappear from men's sight, as though shunning death, then by all men He would be likened to a phanton." Thirdly, that by dying He might deliver us from fearing death: hence it is written (*Heb. ii. 14, 15*) that He communicated "to flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death and might deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to servitude." Fourthly, that by dying in the body to the likeness of sin—that is, to its penalty—He might set us the example of dying to sin spiritually. Hence it is written (*Rom. vi. 10*): "For in that He died to sin, He died once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God: so do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God." Fifthly, that by rising from the dead, and manifesting His power whereby He overthrew death, He might instill into us the hope of rising from the dead. Hence the Apostle says: "If Christ be preached that He rose

again from the dead, how do some among you say, that there is no resurrection from the dead? (I Cor. xv. 12).

Notes for Chapter 3

Whether Christ Endured All Sufferings? (Q. 46, Art. 5)

Human sufferings may be considered under two aspects. First of all, specifically, and in this way it was not necessary for Christ to endure them all, since many are mutually exclusive, as burning and drowning; for we are now dealing with sufferings inflicted from without, since it was not beseeming for Him to endure those arising from within, such as bodily ailments, as already stated. But, speaking generically, He did endure every human suffering. This admits of a threefold acceptance. First of all, on the part of men: for He endured something from Gentiles and from Jews; from men and from women, as is clear from the women servants who accused Peter. He suffered from the rulers, from their servants, and from the mob, according to Ps. ii 1, 2: "Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord and against His Christ." He suffered from friends and acquaintances, as if manifest from Judas betraying and Peter denying Him.

Secondly, the same is evident on the part of the sufferings which a man can endure. For Christ suffered from friends abandoning Him; in His reputation; from the blasphemies hurled at Him; in His honor and glory, from the mockeries and the insults heaped upon Him; in things, for He was despoiled of His garments;

in His soul, from sadness, weariness, and fear; in His body from wounds and scourgings.

Thirdly, it may be considered with regard to His bodily members. In His head He suffered from the crown of piercing thorns; in His hands and feet from the fastening of the nails; on His face from the blows and spittle; and from the lashes over His entire body. Moreover, He suffered in all His bodily sense: in touch, by being scourged and nailed; in taste, by being given vinegar and gall to drink; in smell, by being fastened to the gibbet in a place reeking with the stench of corpses, "which is called Calvary"; in hearing, by being tormented with the cries of blasphemers and scorers; in sight by beholding the tears of His mother and the disciple whom He loved.

Whether The Pain of Christ's Passion was Greater Than All Other Pains? (Q.46, Art. 6)

As we have stated, when treating of the defects assumed by Christ, there was true and sensible pain in the suffering Christ, which is caused by something hurtful to the body: also, there was internal pain, which is caused by the apprehension of something hurtful, and this is termed "sadness." And in Christ each of these was the greatest in this present life. This arose from four causes. First of all, from the sources of His pain. For the cause of the sensitive pain was the wounding of His body; and this wounding had its bitterness, both from the extent of the suffering already mentioned and from the kind of suffering, since the death of the crucified is most bitter, because they are pierced in nervous and highly sensitive parts—to wit, the hands and feet; moreover, the weight of the suspended body intensifies

the agony; and, besides this, there is the duration of the suffering, because they do not die at once like those slain by the sword. The cause of the interior pain was, first of all, all the sins of the human race, for which He made satisfaction by suffering; hence He ascribes them, so to speak, to Himself, saying (Ps. xxi. 2): "The words of my sins." Secondly, especially the fall of the Jews and of the others who sinned in His death, chiefly the Apostles, who were scandalized at His Passion. Thirdly, the loss of His bodily life, which is naturally horrible to human nature.

The magnitude of His sufferings may be considered, secondly, from the susceptibility of the sufferer as to both soul and body. For His body was endowed with a most perfect constitution, since it was fashioned miraculously by the operation of the Holy Ghost; just as some other things made by miracles are better than others, as Chrysostom says (Hom. xxii. in Joan.) respecting the wine into which Christ changed the water at the wedding-feast. And, consequently, Christ's sense of touch, the sensitiveness of which is the reason for our feeling pain, was most acute. His soul likewise, from its interior powers, apprehended most vehemently all the causes of sadness.

Thirdly, the magnitude of Christ's suffering can be estimated from the singleness of His pain and sadness. In other sufferers the interior sadness is mitigated, and even the exterior suffering, from some consideration of reason, by some derivation or redundance from the higher powers into the lower, but it was not so with the suffering Christ, because "He permitted each one

of His powers to exercise its proper function," as Damascene says (*De Fide Orthod.* iii).

Fourthly, the magnitude of the pain of Christ's suffering can be reckoned by this, that the pain and sorrow were accepted voluntarily to the end of men's deliverance from sin; and consequently He embraced the amount of pain proportionate to the magnitude of the fruit which resulted therefrom. From all these causes weighed together, it follows that Christ's pain was the very greatest.

Notes for Chapter 4

Whether Christ Was Slain By Another Or By Himself?
(Q.47, Art. 1)

A thing may cause an effect in two ways: in the first instance by acting directly so as to produce the effect; and in this manner Christ's persecutors slew Him because they inflicted on Him what was a sufficient cause of death, and with the intention of slaying Him, and the effect followed, since death resulted from that cause. In another way someone causes an effect indirectly—that is, by not preventing it when he can do so; just as one person is said to drench another by not closing the window through which the shower is entering; and in this way Christ was the cause of His own Passion and Death. For He could have prevented His Passion and Death. Firstly, by holding His enemies in check, so that they would not have been eager to slay Him, or would have been powerless to do so. Secondly, because His spirit had the power of preserving His fleshy nature from the infliction of any injury; and Christ's soul had this power, because it was united in unity of person

with the Divine Word, as Augustine says (De Trin. iv.). Therefore, since Christ's soul did not repel the injury inflicted on His body, but willed His corporeal nature to succumb to such injury, He is said to have laid down His life, or to have died voluntarily.

Whether Christ Died Out Of Obedience? (Q. 47, Art. 2)

It was fitting that Christ should suffer out of obedience. First of all, because it was in keeping with human justification, that as "by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just," as is written in Rom. v. 19. Secondly, it was suitable for reconciling man with God: hence it is written (Rom. v. 10): "We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son," insofar as Christ's death was a most acceptable sacrifice to God, according to Eph. v. 2: "He delivered Himself an oblation for us and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness." Now obedience is preferred to all sacrifices; according to Kings I xv. 22: "Obedience is better than sacrifices." Therefore it was fitting that the sacrifice of Christ's Passion and Death should proceed from obedience. Thirdly, it was in keeping with His Victory whereby He triumphed over death and its author; because a soldier cannot conquer unless he obey his captain. And so the man-Christ secured the victory through His being obedient to God, according to Prov. xxi. 28: "An obedient man shall speak of victory."

Whether God the Father Delivered Up Christ To The Passion? (Q.47, Art. 3)

As observed above, Christ suffered voluntarily out of

obedience to the Father. Hence in three respects God the Father did deliver up Christ to the Passion. In the first way, because by His eternal will He preordained Christ's Passion for the deliverance of the human race, according to the words of Isaias (liii. 6): "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all:" and again (verse 10:) "The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity." Secondly, inasmuch as, by the infusion of charity, He inspired Him with the will to suffer for us; hence we read in the same passage: "He was offered because it was His own will" (verse seven). Thirdly, by not shielding Him from the Passion, but abandoning Him to His persecutors: thus we read (Matth. xxvii 46) that Christ, while hanging upon the cross, cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" because, to wit, He left Him to the power of His persecutors, as Augustine says (Ep. cxi).

Whether Christ's Persecutors Knew Who He Was?
(Q. 47, Art. 5)

Among the Jews some were elders, and others of lesser degree. Now, according to the author of *De Qp. Nov. et Vet. Test. qu. lxvi.*, the elders, who were called rulers, knew, as did also the devils, "that He was the Christ promised in the Law: for they saw all the signs in Him which the prophets said would come to pass: but they did not know the mystery of His Godhead." Consequently the Apostle says: "If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." It must, however, be understood that their ignorance did not excuse them from crime, because it was, as it were, affected ignorance. For they saw manifest signs of His Godhead; yet they perverted them out of

envy and hatred of Christ; neither would they believe His words whereby He avowed that He was the Son of God. Hence He Himself says of them (Jo. xv. 22): "If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sinned; but now they have no excuse for their sin." And afterwards He adds (24): "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sinned." And so the expression used by Job (xxi. 14) can be accepted on their behalf: "(Who) said to God: depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."

But those of lesser degree—namely, the common folk—who had not grasped the mysteries of the Scriptures, did not fully comprehend that He was the Christ or the Son of God. For although some of them believed in Him, yet the multitude did not; and if they doubted sometimes whether He was the Christ, on account of the manifold signs and force of His teaching, as is stated Jo. vii. 31, 41, nevertheless they were afterwards deceived by their rulers, so that they did not believe Him to be the Son of God or the Christ. Hence Peter said to them: "I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your rulers—namely, because they were seduced by the rulers."

Notes for Chapter 5

Whether Christ's Passion Brought About Our Salvation By Way of Merit? (Q. 48, Art. 1)

As stated above, grace was bestowed upon Christ, not only as an individual, but inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, so that it might overflow into His members; and therefore Christ's works are referred to Him-

self and to His members in the same way as the works of any other man in a state of grace are referred to himself. But it is evident that whosoever suffers for justice' sake, provided that he be in a state of grace, merits his salvation thereby, according to Matth. v. 10: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." Consequently Christ by His Passion merited salvation, not only for Himself, but likewise for all His members.

Whether Christ's Passion Brought About Our Salvation Efficiently? (Q. 48, Art 6)

There is a twofold efficient agency—namely, the principal and the instrumental. Now the principal efficient cause of man's salvation is God. But since Christ's humanity is the instrument of the Godhead, as stated above, therefore all Christ's actions and sufferings operate instrumentally in virtue of His Godhead for the salvation of men. Consequently, then, Christ's Passion accomplishes man's salvation efficiently.



