

Jesus Christ has endured for our sakes, that bitter and profound grief, which made his *soul sorrowful, even unto death.*

That perfect contrition, which certain souls who are deeply penetrated with grief for their offences against God, feel in such a manner as to cause their death, was felt by Jesus Christ for all men, and for each of them in particular, and felt for each of them to such a degree, as none amongst them could bear. This is true to such an extent, that it would not be too much to say, that if the grief which afflicted the heart of Jesus were distributed amongst all mankind, who have ever existed, or who shall ever exist, it would be enough to cause their death. O sinner, meditate for an instant, at least on this abyss of sorrow!

Our generous Saviour, Jesus Christ, up to this moment surmounted this grief, and expanding his great soul, and his immense love, he extended them like a network of mercy on all men together, by praying for his executioners. From thence, without however for a moment losing sight of the entire world, whom he redeems, his thoughts are fixed on a penitent sinner, then on his mother, and on his friend. They at length were directed to himself, at this moment. It was then, that weighed down by a consciousness of his evils, and as if, affrighted at his own appearance, instead of merely speaking, he cries aloud, as the Evangelist informs us, and throws himself, if we may say so, into the bosom of God, of that God who had stricken him, to implore consolation. It is to him that he addresses himself, and with him he is henceforward to treat, even to his last sigh.

My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me? My God, my God, it is no longer, My Father, Jesus no longer beholds in him a father. Did a father

ever treat his only son in such a manner, He sees in him only an avenging God, whose paternal tenderness has vanished, and who no longer feels any thing but implacable resentment for a son, who is charged with the iniquities of those who have offended him. This what he wishes to express by these words: Why hast thou forsaken me? for God was always with him; but it was from this very divine presence that sprung the immensity of his sufferings, and the strength by which he was enabled to endure them.

But let us more deeply examine this adorable complaint. We see that it is couched in an interrogation. Was Jesus, then, ignorant of the cause of this divine abandonment? Undoubtedly not. Why, therefore, does he enquire, and why is the enquiry permitted without a reply?—This is a mystery—but it is one which we can easily penetrate. Jesus asked why his God had forsaken him, in order to excite our attention, and to teach us that it is our duty to enquire into the cause, and to reflect upon it. He does not answer, in order that we may answer in his place. Or rather, Jesus Christ has given an excellent answer himself. But in what manner? Let us read the 21st psalm, from which this complaint is extracted, and which Jesus seems to have entirely recited during his Passion. There we see, that after these words which form the very commencement of the psalm; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, it is immediately added, the cry of my sins are far from my deliverance.

Behold then this reply, which should be ours, and which is really ours, because Jesus, who was sanctity itself, had no other sins but our sins; but this answer he made in the silence of grief, and of the most profound confusion, and he continues to sigh before his God; and to invoke his assistance, with the greatest fervour and the most touching language.