

most rapid flight from hell and death, to a glorious and immortal life.

This psalm is recited by the church in the Morning Office for Good-Friday, and also at that most affecting ceremony of stripping the altar of all its ornaments, and linens, to represent the nakedness and abandonment of Christ in his Passion, which takes place at the close of Divine Service, on Holy Thursday and Good-Friday.

1. O God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

David speaks in the person of Christ on the cross, and at the height of his agony, as appears from the gospel of St. Mathew. (xxvii. 46.) in which we read, that when Christ was about to expire, he said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? which are the first words of this psalm, for the words, look upon me, are not found in the Hebrew, but were added in the Septuagint, for the sake of elucidation. But when Christ complains to God of being abandoned, he does not mean that he was forsaken by the person of the Word, as if the hypostatic union were dissolved, or that he was deprived of the favour and good will of his Father; but merely signifies, that by God's permission, he was to suffer in his human nature those dreadful torments and that ignominious death, from which God, if he pleased, might have easily delivered him. Neither did this complaint arise from impatience, or ignorance, as if Christ was not aware of the cause of his passion, or did not cheerfully submit to be forsaken by his Father, but it was a kind of declaration of his most bitter sufferings. For as during the whole course of his Passion, the Redeemer had borne every thing with so much patience, that not even a sigh was heard to escape him, all might have imagined that by some superior power he was rendered

impassable, and insensible to pain. He therefore, at the point of death declared that he was really man, that he was really capable of suffering, and that being forsaken by his Father, he experienced in his inmost soul the bitterness of his passion. Hence, he says, My God, my God. Christ, in the form of a servant, calls the Father his God, because at that hour he properly worshipped him as a true God, and offered him the sacrifice of his body, the most excellent of all the sacrifices that were ever made. Look upon me. He intreats him to look at the situation in which he is placed for his honour, to acknowledge the obedience of his Son, and to accept the sacrifice which he offers him for the human race. Why hast thou forsaken me? This is not only a declaration of his sufferings as we have said above, but also a certain expression of astonishment, as if he had said, Can it be possible that you would allow your dearly beloved and only Son, to suffer this extremity of torture? Thus we read, So God loved the world, as to give his only Son, (John iii. 16.) and He did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. (Rom. viii. 32.)

Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. That is, I have said that I am justly forsaken in my sufferings, because, the crimes of the whole world, with which I have charged myself, are incompatible with my deliverance, for in order to expiate them, I must suffer and die.—That Christ charged himself with our sins, as if they were his own, is frequently asserted in the scriptures. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. (John i. 29.) He bore our sins in his body, upon the wood. (1. Pet. ii. 24.) The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. (Isaias liii. 6.) Him, who knew not sin, he made sin for us, (2 Cor. v. 21.) that is, a victim for sin. As, therefore, a victim for sin must be immolated, in order to expiate