

from the same source ; they led into the same depths ; they were connected with the same circumstances. The two sorrows were but one sorrow afflicting two hearts. Besides this, as we shall see afterward, there were many peculiar points not only of striking resemblance, but of actual union, between her dolours and His. Yet, though we cannot separate her dolours from her Maternity in fact, her Maternity is quite conceivable without her dolours, and its peculiar co-operation with our Lord in the redemption of the world depends on other things than the dolours, things to which the dolours are by no means indispensable. So in like manner, or rather as a consequence, the co-operation of her dolours was a distinct co-operation from that of her Maternity, and has a character of its own.

Thus, Mary has three distinct rights to the title of co-redemptress. She has a right to it, first of all, because of her co-operation with our Lord in the same sense as the saints, but in a singular and superlative degree. She has a second right to it, which is peculiar to herself, because of the indispensable co-operation of her Maternity. She has a third right to it, because of her dolours, for reasons we shall see presently. These last two rights are unshared by any other creature, or by all creatures collectively. They belong to the incomparable magnificence of the Mother of God.

It has been our privilege, more than once during the course of this inquiry into our Lady's dolours, to ascend some fresh height from which a new view of her grandeur has presented itself to us. Like the great summits in the mountain-ranges of Alps, Andes, or Himalaya, each new aspect of Mary's glory looks

grander than the others. In truth, it is with her greatness as with the greatness of sublime mountain-scenery : we cannot carry its magnitude away with us in our minds. We see it, and appreciate it, while we are actually gazing on it : but when we turn away, the image of it in our minds is less than the reality. So, when we see the mountain again, from whichever side we get the view, it looks larger than it did before, because it is larger than our remembrance of it. So is it with our Blessed Lady. The moment we cease to rest our eye upon her in deep meditation, our idea of her is less than it ought to be. We never do her justice except when we gaze upon her. Perhaps it is so with all God's greatest works, as we know it is with God Himself. Hence it is that we so often hear objections to statements about the glory of Mary, coming even from pious believers. Their eye is not on her, and therefore what is said is incredible to them. Nay, they are the more convinced that the statements are exaggerated, because they so far transcend the image of Mary which is impressed upon their minds. They believe more of her, and they believe it more readily, as her feasts come round, for then their eye is on her, and they conceive more justly of her vastness. In nothing is she more like God than in having to be thus learned in order to be understood, and in having to be kept before us in vision, because our memory is not wide enough to hold her vast proportions when she is out of sight.

This co-operation of our Blessed Lady, is, therefore, another summit from which we gain a fresh view of her magnificence. It is the grandest privilege of the

creature to be a fellow-laborer with the Creator, just as it will be our home and blessedness to enjoy His everlasting sabbath. But what is to be said of co-operating with Him in such a work as the redemption of the world, and co-operating in it with such efficacy, intimacy, and reality, nay, with a co-operation simply indispensable to its accomplishment? What an idea does it convey to us of immeasurable holiness! What gifts and graces does it not presuppose! What marvellous union with God does it not imply! It is as if He vouchsafed to select the very things about Him which are most incommunicable, and in a most mysteriously real way communicate them to her. It is as if, in those things in which He stands alone and solitary, He drew her so nearly to Himself, that to us it should seem as if He was not solitary, because she was with Him. See how He had already mixed her up with the eternal designs of creation making her almost a partial cause and partial model of it. Yet this, while it accounts also for her share in the redemption, does not make her co-operation less wonderful. Divine works grow more wonderful in our eyes as we discern more of their consistency and unity. No wonder then the saints should have sought to invent a word, a bold and startling word, which should express such an indescribable grandeur in a creature as is involved in this threefold co-operation of Mary in the redemption of the world. Our Lord had taken a created nature, in order that by its means He might accomplish that great work; so it seemed as if the highest honor and the closest union of a sinless creature with Himself should be expressed in the title of

co-redemptress. In fact, there is no other single word in which the truth could be expressed; and, far off from His sole and sufficient redemption as Mary's co-operation lies, her co-operation stands alone and aloof from all the co-operation of the elect of God. This, like some other prerogatives of our Blessed Lady, cannot have justice done it by the mere mention of it. We must make it our own by meditation before we can understand all that it involves. But neither the Immaculate Conception nor the Assumption will give us a higher idea of Mary's exaltation than this title of co-redemptress, when we have theologically ascertained its significance. Mary is vast on every side, and, as our knowledge and appreciation of God grow, so also will grow our knowledge and appreciation of her His chosen creature. No one thinks unworthily of Mary, except because he thinks unworthily of God. Devotion to the Attributes of God is the best school in which to learn the theology of Mary; and the reward of our study of Mary lies in a thousand new vistas that are opened to us in the Divine Perfections, into which except from her heights we never could have seen at all.

What then is the place which our Lady's Compassion holds in the purposes of God? This grandeur of co-operation in a great measure answers the question. Her dolors were not necessary for the redemption of the world, but in the counsels of God they were inseparable from it. They belong to the integrity of the divine plan; and they doubtless perform many functions in it which we are unable to apprehend, and which perhaps we do not so much as suspect. Ac-

according to God's ordinance, without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. One of our Lord's infantine tears had enough in it of worth, of humiliation, of merit, and of satisfaction, to redeem the sins of all possible worlds. Yet as a matter of fact we were not redeemed by His tears, but only by His blood. Hence Bethlehem was not necessary for our salvation, nor the worship of the three kings, nor the presentation in the temple, nor the flight into Egypt, nor the disputing with the doctors. Nazareth was not necessary for our salvation, with all the beautiful mysteries of those eighteen years of hidden life. The public ministry, with its three years of miracles, parables, sermons, conversions, and vocations of apostles, was not necessary to our salvation. Indeed, our Lord might have suffered as a Child, or He might have come full-grown like Adam, and simply suffered death at once. His Blood was all that was absolutely necessary. But Bethlehem and Nazareth and Galilee belonged to the integrity of the divine plan. They were not only congruous, and beautiful, and significant, and full of teaching; but there are deeper mysteries in them, and a diviner reality, simply because God planned it so. All His works partake in their degree of His perfections: in what degree then must the mysteries of the Thirty-Three Years partake of His perfections? The creation of the world was as nothing compared to the spiritual cosmogony of those Thirty-Three Years, except that it was the root of them. No one would dream of thinking lightly of the mysteries of our Blessed Lord's Sacred Infancy because we were not redeemed by them. They are a part of a whole, a

divine whole. We do not know what would have happened, or what we should have lost, and what eternal consequences might have come, if they had not been there. So it is with our Lady's dolors. Her Maternity was indispensable to the Passion. Her dolors do not appear to be so. But they were an inevitable consequence of her Maternity under the circumstances of the Fall. They take their place among the Gospel mysteries. They rank with the mysteries of Bethlehem and Nazareth, not perhaps in their intrinsic importance, but in the relation in which they stand to the redemption of the world. Indeed, we may be allowed to say that even in their intrinsic importance they might be compared with some of our Lord's own mysteries. For is it quite clear that His mysteries and hers can be divided off in this way? Are not her mysteries His, and His mysteries hers? Is not the Immaculate Conception a glory of His redeeming grace? Is not her Purification as much His mystery as His own Presentation? And in the case of the dolors the union of the Mother and Son is greater than any other mystery. He is Himself her one dolor seven times repeated, seven times changed, seven times magnified. In our belief, the dolors of our Blessed Lady rank very high indeed among the divine mysteries, and have a more privileged precedence there than is commonly suspected. But, at any rate, so far as their relation to the redemption of the world is concerned, they are not further off from it than the unbloody mysteries of Jesus, and perhaps nearer, because of the immediateness of their connection. The truth appears to be, that all the mysteries

of Jesus and Mary were in God's design as one mystery. We cannot break it up, and divide and parcel it out, and classify the importance of its various glories. This is a task beyond our science. Who can doubt that it is true to say that many, who now are saved, would have been lost except for Mary's dolors,—while yet her dolors do not bear the same relation to us as the Passion of our Blessed Lord, even in their subordinate degree? The whole of the Three-and-Thirty Years, and the Hearts of Jesus and Mary in all the mysteries of those Years, are tintured with the Passion; yet outside the Passion itself, where are the colors deeper, and the traits more lifelike, than in the Mother's dolors? Mary's Compassion was the Passion of Jesus as it was felt and realized in His Mother's Heart.

Is this then the whole account of the matter, that the Passion was necessary, and the Compassion unnecessary? Who would venture to say so? Who would dare to say that the Hidden Life of Nazareth was unnecessary? There is surely a very grave sense in which all the component parts of a divine work are necessary; for God is not such an artificer as man. If we are to rest simply on the doctrine that it was precisely blood-shedding by which our redemption was accomplished, then in the Passion itself were there not many things which were by no means necessary? There were the mental agonies, the public shame, the varieties of corporal torture, the insults, the lassitude, the thirst, the fear, the dereliction on the Cross. In that sense none of these things were necessary for our redemption. Even in the matter of Blood-shedding

one drop would have sufficed: why was it all shed? Why the Sweat, the Scourging, the Crowning, the violent Unvesting, the Piercing after death? The profusion of the infinite was surely unnecessary, in our sense of that word. Now, these are precisely the mysteries among which we ought to rank the dolors of Mary. They belong to the class of what we call the Unnecessary Sufferings of the Passion.* Indeed, they were literally our Lord's own Unnecessary Sufferings; for were not her sorrows by far the most cruel instruments of His Passion? Her co-operation with the Passion by means of her dolors is wanting certainly in that indispensable necessity which characterizes the co-operation of her Maternity. But it far more than compensates for that by the heroic detailed endurance of such griefs, the ever-flowing fountain of free will and promptitude, the unmingled and disinterested suffering, and its immediate contact with the Cross of Christ, which distinguishes it. In her Maternity she had joy as well as sorrow, and an unexampled dignity. Her consent to it was given once for all; and the co-operation of her Motherhood with the Passion was rather material than formal. This second co-operation of her dolors had more of herself in it and more similitude to her Son; it cost her more, and the very absence of necessity for it made the sacrifice the more generous and wonderful. Her Maternity had to do with the Incarnation as the Incarnation: her dolors with the Incarnation as it was redemption also.

* For an account of these sufferings see the Second Chapter of the author's Treatise on the Passion.