

On the Incarnation of Christ by Simon of Tournai Excerpts 7.1 Through 7.5

On the Incarnation of Christ ~ Institutions on the Sacred Page 7.1–67

—by Simon of Tournai (approx. 1165) ~ Edited by Christopher P. Evans

- De Gruyter <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781771103923/html>
- Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Incarnation-Christ-Institutiones-paginam-Studies/dp/0888442114>

“So that heaven would be opened by a proper reason of meriting, it was necessary that the one who merits be God, in order to be the author of merit, and man, in order to have someone greater than himself before whom he would merit. Indeed Christ as man is less than God...//...the Father did not become incarnate not because he could not but because it was not necessary...for the reasons given it was more fitting for the Son to be incarnate...”

Begin Excerpt of 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5

<1> It is asked therefore why Christ became incarnate, given that the remission of sins occurred before the advent of Christ (the granting of virtues in Abel, Abraham, and similar demonstrated this).

It is replied: The remission removed the punishment, but it did not open the door of paradise. The book of life was sealed, which only the lion of the tribe of Judah (i.e., Christ) was able to open.

<2> It is asked why only Christ could merit to have heaven opened for man, since man merited to have it closed on himself.

It is replied: By sinning man merited to have heaven closed on humankind. Therefore, it was suitable for man to have merited by his good work to have heaven opened for humankind. “Contraries are cured through their contraries.” But a pure man could not accomplish this, neither could pure God. Three things coincide to constitute the true grounds of merit. **The first** is that he who merits be the author of the work by which he merits. Someone merits by his own work not by someone else’s. **The second** is that he has someone greater than himself before whom he merits. A greater does not properly merit before a lesser, but a lesser before a greater. **The third** is that the authority of the one rewarding be different from the authority of the one meriting. But a pure man is not the author of a good work, as the Apostle says: It is not the will of him who wills, nor the running of the one who runs, but the whole is of God who shows mercy (Rom. 9:6). Thus, a pure man cannot merit by his own good work, about which an authority says: “God does not crown our merits but his own gifts in us.” Likewise, pure God could not merit to have heaven opened for human kind, because he did not have someone greater than himself before whom he would merit. Nothing is greater than God. Nor could one of the

three persons, being pure God, merit this before another, because the authority of the one rewarding would not be different from the authority of the one who merits since the three persons have the same authority. So that heaven would be opened by a proper reason of meriting, it was necessary that the one who merits be God, in order to be the author of merit, and man, in order to have someone greater than himself before whom he would merit. Indeed Christ as man is less than God.

<3> Because the Father is God, it is asked why he did not become man and merit this.

It is replied: The Father does not have someone greater than himself before whom he may merit, whose authority would be different from authority of meriting. It is also replied by Augustine in his book *De Trinitate*: “Only the Son was sent in the flesh. This occurred so that he who was the Son of God in divinity would become the Son of Man in humanity. The Father did not put on flesh lest the Father and the Son might be the same, if the Father were born of man.”

<4> It is also asked why the Holy Spirit did not become incarnate.

It is replied: Lest there might be two sons in the Trinity. About this Augustine says in *his De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus*: “Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit assumed flesh, but only the Son, so that he who was Son of God in divinity would become Son of Man in humanity, lest the name ‘son’ might pass to another who was not the Son by eternal birth.”

<5> It is asked whether the Father or Holy Spirit could or can be incarnate.

It is replied: The Father or Holy Spirit could and can become incarnate. An authority says: “The Father did not become incarnate not because he could not but because it was not necessary.” For the reasons given, it was more fitting for the Son to be incarnate.

End Excerpt of 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 (bold added)

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