



GERBET ON THE EUCHARIST.

CONSIDERATIONS
ON
THE EUCHARIST,
VIEWED AS
THE GENERATIVE DOGMA
OF
CATHOLIC PIETY.

Translated from the French

OF
THE ABBÉ PH. GERBET.

BY A CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN.

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FOR THE

THE KUGLARI

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Entered at Stationer's Hall.

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TO THE
RIGHT REV. DR. MURPHY, R. C. BISHOP OF CORK.

MY LORD,

Accept the first English version of a Work which has already obtained a high European reputation. It is a feeble effort to transfuse into our language the luminous views, as well as the condensed and eloquent reasoning of the Abbé GERBET on the subject of the EUCHARIST.

Commenced under your Lordship's auspices, I gladly avail myself of your permission to present it in its complete form to the Catholics of this country, under the sanction of a name which cannot fail to augment considerably its circulation among the lovers of Religion and Literature.

Believe me,

MY LORD,

With every sentiment of respect,

Your Lordship's devoted subject,

THE TRANSLATOR.

PREFACE.

This work is neither a dogmatical treatise, nor a book of devotion, but something intermediate, belonging to a class which forms the link that unites these two orders of ideas.

Religion nourishes the understanding with truth and the heart with sentiment. Hence there are two modes of viewing it—the one rational—the other edifying. From this two-fold aspect there arises another point of view, in which we consider the connexion of truths in relation to the developement of love in the human soul. It is in this light we are about to view the mystery on which Catholic worship is based. In the first place, we observe that the Eucharistic dogma, is the complement of the primitive faith and worship of mankind; so that its detachment from religion would destroy the beautiful harmony of all the truths of which the latter is constituted.

After having viewed it in its principle, and, if we

may so express it, in its germ deposited in the bosom of the primitive religion, we glance at it in its results, namely in that manifestation of love of which it is the inexhaustible source ; and we demonstrate that the order of sentiments which it produces and upholds is the complete developement, or the very perfection of the sentiments inspired by primitive faith ; so that it cannot be retrenched from religion without assailing its vital principle—namely the spirit of life. This mystery is the heart of christianity. Such in short is the object of this treatise.

Nothing being isolated in religion, which like God himself is essentially one, it is necessary, in order that it may be fully understood, to view each of its parts, not separately, but in its relation to the general plan of christianity ; and the more clearly we conceive this admirable unity, the more love ought to increase with intelligence. If in this peculiar view this work will be found to contain some notions on the adorable present of Divine wisdom and goodness, Catholics will find therein new motives for attaching themselves to their faith, which will serve to nourish their devotion.

We no less fondly hope that it may contribute to remove the prejudices of our erring brethren, by shewing them this mystery in various aspects, hitherto unknown to many among them.

Owing to the happy change which is so perceptible among Protestants, the most inconsiderable efforts directed to this quarter, are attended at the present day, with pleasing results. The designs of Providence are becoming manifest. The church continually repairs by conversions the losses caused by apostacy. The places which infidelity has left vacant are filled up by Protestants. This two-fold movement which impelling some to the very boundaries of error precipitates them into scepticism and which brings back others from the regions of error and doubt into the bosom of Faith, is the grand spectacle which has been reserved for our age. It is only commenced, but let us be observant, and we shall witness its developement which henceforward no human power can arrest.

In being thus explicit as to the result of Protestantism, we hope that neither our words or intentions may be misunderstood. It is not a personal question,

nor is it a contrast instituted between any given portion of a Protestant and Catholic population, no ! it is the action of Catholicism taken in its widest sense and compared to that of Protestantism. Severe logic which is founded on general facts does not suffer us to alter the consequence in favour of the exceptions which charity may be inclined to make. The Protestants of whom we speak would deceive themselves if they fancied that Catholicism prohibits us to be just towards whatever merits respect. On the contrary, the more deeply we are convinced that Protestantism by its peculiar action is subversive of Christianity, the more are we inclined to esteem those who by the uprightness of their will resist its baneful influence ; as we admire those plants which flourish in an ungrateful soil. In truth, such Christian souls have been nurtured in a belief more ancient than that of the Reformation, and which are so little akin to it that the latter destroys them by its developement. Their humble and docile dispositions belong not to Protestantism, for in proclaiming the independence of individual reason, pride has been made the first law of each intelligence. Indeed it has been acknowledged

by a very observant clergyman of the Protestant establishment, that a volume could be filled with the Catholicism of these Protestants. It is to such in particular that this work appeals.

Though it was not our intention to furnish the infidel party with a proof of religion ; such however is the character of Christianity, that we could not view it in any particular respect without being led to recognize its truth in this point of view, or, in other words, its radical identity with the tradition of the human race, the basis of all belief and virtue. To invalidate this basis on a single point, is to destroy it, and, before this plan be adopted, would it not be prudent to reflect deeply on all its consequences ?

THE EUCHARIST—THE GENERATIVE DOGMA

OF

CATHOLIC PIETY.

CHAPTER I.

*On faith in a Divine presence, and union of
God with Man.*

RELIGION, such as it has been conceived in all ages, is based on the belief of a supernatural world. What is more supernatural than God? The immense, the divine system, of which the present world is only a transient point, does not come within the grasp of our intelligence. Creation and a future life transcend the order of things submitted to our investigation. If the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega of existence, are supernatural, why may not there be a similar series of terms destined to form, during the present life, a transition from the one to

the other? When the first, and last pages of a book contain symbolic characters, should we be astonished to find similar ones on the intermediate pages? The contrary would be far more surprising.

But what is supernatural with respect to us, is natural in another point of view, if it be considered as it bears on the general plan of divine Providence, in which everything is executed according to the laws of eternal power, wisdom, and love. Each species of intelligent creatures being confined to a particular sphere of existence, the supernatural, relatively to each of these, is only the projection of some laws of a world, superior to that which they inhabit. Whatever proceeds beyond the combinations of the present order, is the means by which this order connects itself with the revolutions of the future.

Thus the general belief in a union of man with God, in a union which constitutes a connecting link between heaven and earth, always implied faith in a divine action, determined according to laws higher than those by which this world is governed, but which, at the same time, enter into the condition of our present existence, for we ourselves must concur in

effecting this union, which results from this two-fold relation which must never be forgotten.

The human race always believed that God was present to man, not merely as the first cause is present to creatures in general, but by a particular mode of relation, suited to his free will, corresponding to his various necessities, descending, if it may be so expressed, into the limits of his being; and, in this sense, a belief in the human presence of the Divinity always prevailed. The God whose name causes the human heart to throb, is not an abstract-geometrical God, holding a relation, only according to the mathematical laws of the universe, with creatures endowed with liberty. In such a system, which reduces the divine action to the mechanism of the universe, nature raises itself up as a wall of brass between man and his Creator. No communion, no active relation, no society of love, exists between them; and Deism fully developed, is at bottom the absence of the Divinity, as Atheism is its negation.

Such is not the God that tradition, the ancient historian of mankind, proclaims. For it attests that, at the beginning, God established with his creatures

a mode of communication, perfectly suited to their two-fold nature—spiritual and corporal. What does it matter that we cannot clearly comprehend the nature of this communication? Are our ideas of creation itself more clear? And who does not perceive that, in every possible hypothesis, the commencement of things is involved in mystery. In rejecting the prodigies of divine goodness, we do not escape a miracle; we only substitute for them prodigies of a different kind. For what can be imagined, more directly opposed to all authentic facts, than that primitive state dreamed of by philosophy, in which a band of human ourang-outangs, wearied from devouring one another, concluded by summoning into existence society, language and intelligence; the animal creators of man? It is not a little remarkable, that there is no medium between *the terrestrial paradise*, the recollection of which has been so fondly preserved by all the nations of the earth, and the *terrestrial hell* substituted for it by philosophy. No sooner is faith in divine love rejected, than hatred, in its most hideous form, takes its stand at the cradle of the human race.

Though the primitive order of divine communication, was impeded by this original crime,* which, as Voltaire remarks, was the basis of all the ancient theology, † nevertheless mankind was convinced that God had not entirely abandoned fallen humanity to itself, and that, though he had ceased to be personally present, he mercifully deigned to be present by his healing action. There is no dogma more universal than that of grace, nor should this be a matter of astonishment; as it was the conservative dogma of hope. The ancient philosophy of the East represents the celestial genii themselves, celebrating in their hymns the God “who condemns evil works, and who gives efficacious aid to perform good ones. Man has free will; but it is written in the *Vedah*, that works of mercy are always performed by the grace of God.” ‡

Man always prayed, and consequently always believed that there existed a divine-permanent action exercised, not according to the laws of motion, which govern the material world, but according to other laws peculiar to the free motions of the soul. This

* Vide note 1.

† Quest. on the Encyclop.

Oupnek ' hat, 9, No. 91—Ibid 27.

powerful faith swayed man even when bowed to earth beneath the dominion of his passions. When the slaves of vice supplicated heaven for the false goods they idolized, the instinct of this sacred duty manifested itself even in their unhallowed petitions. But whoever sincerely aspired after virtue, implored from on high support for his weakness. The various liturgies of antiquity contain, on this point, many affecting invocations; and so deeply was this want felt, that the Pagan worship, in one of its most enormous abuses, was, according to Cicero, but a corruption of prayer. "The passions, says he, have been deified, as their effects cannot be restrained otherwise than by divine power."*

When the will of man, borne by an ardent desire, is elevated to the supreme will, the miracle of divine intervention is accomplished. Prayer, "which makes God present to us,"† is a sort of communion by which man nourishes himself with grace, and makes it a

* *Quarum omnium rerum quia vis erat tanta, ut sine Deo regi not posset, ipsa res Deorum numen obtinuit. Quo ex genere Cupidinis, et voluptatis Lubentinæ Veneris vocabala consecrata sunt. De Nat. Deorum Lib. 11, c. 23.*

† Origen, *De orat*, opp. No. 8.

portion of his spiritual substance. In this ineffable communication, the divine will penetrates our will, its action penetrates our action, that it may produce one and the same indivisible work, which belongs entirely to one as well as the other : astonishing union of grandeur and lowliness ; of an ever fruitful, eternal power, with a created activity whose very duration is but a process of decay ; of the incorruptible and regenerating element with the weak and corruptible elements of our being ; which, generally and constantly cherished, though differently understood, from the savage tribe to the most intellectual nations, was, under various forms, the imperishable faith of mankind. If certain individuals, with whom the senses constitute all intelligence, refuse to believe that prayer is one of the conditions of the life of the soul, what does that moral idiotism prove against the sentiment of all ages ? Instead of recognising, on the faith of general experience, the conditions of the life of the body, shall we wait till it has been demonstrated that bread is nutritious ?

As every spiritual act ought, according to the laws of our nature, assume a sensible form, and as this

external realization completes what is properly called the human act, that is to say, the act of the entire man, we find among all nations the same fundamental rite, namely, the rite of oblation, which is, as it were, the body of prayer. By prayer, man adores God as the principle of all existence, the author and preserver of all beings, from whom every living soul receives grace to renew and repair its strength. This great act of adoration was everywhere represented exteriorly by the oblation of the things necessary for the life of the body : an oblation by which they also were referred to God, as to their principle. As man, by the very act of prayer, recognised that God, the principle of life, is the absolute master and supreme Lord of all creatures, so the destruction of the material elements offered to the Deity, indicated that every creature holds its existence under the supreme dominion of the Creator, who can preserve or withdraw the gift as he pleases. For this reason, the ordinary matter of the oblation, consisted in those things which serve as food for man, and particularly in bread and wine, the daily and universal food, the expressive symbol of this spiritual nourishment, of

which the soul has always and everywhere felt the necessity. Thus oblation was the sensible consummation of prayer ; it may be denominated the prayer of the senses, as prayer itself is the oblation of the soul. Mere invocation, separated from it, appeared imperfect ; and, though they could not in every case be united, they were deemed not less intimately connected in their origin.

Prayer, considered in its essence, has a relation to the order of creation. In invoking the divine aid, we implore a continuation of the creative action, of which oblation is the perpetual memorial. These symbols are destined to awaken the remembrance of it, as if God, in teaching the first men the worship which they were to transmit to their posterity, had said to them “ Do this in memory of me, and each time that you shall offer these emblems of life you shall announce the living God, who created and preserves all things.” Though human nature had not been originally vitiated, prayer would have been the basis of terrestrial worship, because, arising from the essential connexion which exists between the creature and the Creator, it is a law for all intelli-

gences. If God is essentially good and happy, his creatures cannot be happy but by freely attaching themselves to him who is the supreme good. Happiness, the reward of virtue, is their common condition. But to merit they must combat. Virtue which perfects their being, is the effort by which they conquer the obstacles opposed to its developement. Hence, the activity of all finite intelligence being exhausted in the unceasing struggle against these opposing limits, it requires continually to repair and renew its strength at the source of life, in the same manner as the plant must extract from the bosom of the earth the sap of each day, in order to triumph over the rigour of the seasons which impedes the developement of its vegetation. Thus prayer, in its essence, is but the sincere acknowledgment of this continual want, the humble desire of this perpetual assistance, and the confession of an indigence that hopes. If the most perfect of the created spirits, even he who shines at the head of the celestial hierarchy, believed that he could exist independently even for a moment, by that alone he would offer to himself a sacrilegious adoration ; and, as the elevation to which he aspired had not humility

for its basis, he would fall instantly precipitated by pride : whilst the last of those spirits, exiled in the depths of this *valley of tears*, as in the catacombs of creation, if he *hath regulated in his heart the order of his elevation*, by *ascending from virtue to virtue*,* might soar on the wing of humble prayer towards the God of gods, and, without ever attaining his greatness, would approach him unceasingly. *This poor man cried and the Lord heard him*,† this is the language of all creation.

Ever since time came forth from the womb of eternity, prayer has been commensurate with the limits of creation, because wherever God has placed intelligent beings capable of serving him, there are to be found weakness and hope : supplications and acts of thanksgiving respond from sphere to sphere, and the vast universe becomes a great temple. How delightful the reflection that these forms of prayer

* *Beatus vir cujus est auxelium abste ; ascensiones in corde suo disposuit, in valle iacoymarum, in loco quem posuit Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator, ibunt de vertute in virtutem : videbitur Deus deovum in Sion.*—Psal. lxxxiii, v. 67.

† *Iste pauper clamavit, et Dominus exaudivit eum.*—Psal. xxxiii, v. 7.

which are lisped in childhood, and which we ourselves repeat without comprehending all their sense and force, are but the translation, into terrestrial language, of the universal hymn which, from every point of space and time, swells towards the God of eternity.

But, if there be a means of salvation analagous to the condition of all intelligences, does not the condition of fallen man demand a particular remedy, corresponding to the corruption of his nature? Does not the wreck of his being demand a saving hand? Yes, it is the aspiration of his broken heart. But this indefinite sentiment, which still leaves him in darkness, tends only to make that want more sensible. Light is to be sought elsewhere; what does tradition proclaim on this point? It tells us that man wants, not only aid to uphold, but also an expiation to purify him, and that prayer without sacrifice is insufficient.

The idea that man could not be saved but by the substitution of a victim, was as general as the idea of God himself, and apparently more general than the practice of simple prayer; for certain tribes have been discovered, in whose worship no trace of vocal prayer

could be found, but who, in immolating victims prayed by action.

If we ascend to the most remote antiquity, we shall find this faith already in possession of the world. Genesis, which, considered as a mere historical document, offers to us so simple and so touching a picture of the primitive faith and manners, represents it as prevailing even among the children of Adam, of Noah, of Abraham, and in a word among all the elder branches of the human family, or, as the *Vedah* has it, *all the great Predecessors*. It is now generally admitted that the collection of dogmas and rites, which ancient India presents to the contemplation of modern science, included, in its voluminous details, the belief in one great sacrifice ; and, as the different trains of thought were only considered as the rays of a circle that had religion for its centre, this doctrine of expiation appeared to embody itself, under different forms, in their political constitution, legislation, philosophy, and even in the usages of domestic life. It appeared, among certain primitive nations, at a period prior to all the other monuments of their religious belief. In examining

the radical characters of the most ancient writing extant, we would be tempted to believe that those who first used them had no worship, if, among the signs which relate to the physical necessities, one was not discovered that directly refers to religion, and this sign was that of sacrifice.* The Persian cosmogony says that the ancestors of the human race, Meschia and Meschiane, after being seduced by the author of evil, immolated a lamb, a portion of which was received into heaven.† Thus the solemn sacrifice was always deemed the most august act, containing, in an eminent degree, the virtue of all the other parts of worship. An idea not less universal is accurately represented, though under a different form, by this ancient Chinese sentence:—"The recital of all the pieces of Che-King is not equivalent to a single oblation; the oblation is much inferior to the acceptance; the acceptance is inferior to the worship offered on the mountains; and all combined are infinitely beneath the sacrifice offered to Chang-ty by the son of Heaven."‡

* Vide the memoirs of Abel Remusat, tom. 11, p. 37.

† Bouen-Dehesch, Tom. 11 of Zend-Avesta, p. 379.

‡ Life of Confucius, Tom. xii. Memoirs by the Missionaries of Pekin, page 209.

This great idea of expiation, realized in sacrifice, embodies itself under a form that contrasts as much with oblation, the expression of simple prayer, as the state of the human race subject to sin and death contrasts with the primitive state of innocence and immortality. A worship sombre as justice itself succeeded the peaceful worship, which would have been always that of man, had he remained faithful to the order established by the *first love*.* In the oblation we see the symbols of life: in the sacrifice, the living being is condemned, and its death is the figure of another death. The flesh, separated from the blood, is the awful emblem of the idea concealed in this mysterious action. What relation could exist between the immolation of an animal and the remission of sins—this was a mystery to man. Did the vile blood of the victims, that fell beneath the sacred knife, possess the virtue of purifying the conscience? Never did such an absurdity prevail in the world. But mankind firmly believed in what was represented by these sacrifices. All they knew was that they were the types of a divine mystery of

* Dante.

justice and grace ; and the voice of hope arose, during four thousand years, from the depths of that mystery which futurity was to unveil.

The deists, in demonstrating that the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice cannot be established by mere reasoning, prove what is attested by tradition, namely, that this faith has not originated in human conception. The more clearly they establish that the principle of these dogmas cannot be found either in the sphere of experience, or in that of reasoning, the more evident it becomes that a belief in dogmas as ancient, and as widely diffused as mankind, could not have existed, if they had not been primitively revealed ; so that the insoluble difficulties against the purely rational theory of these dogmas, have infinite force in establishing the divine origin of that faith. If worship, the expression of these general tenets, be only a vain phantasmagoria, these tenets themselves must be an eternal chimera, and, in the midst of this universal dream, I should like to know, how those who reject belief in sacrifice could prove to a consistent mind that it ought to believe in God.

CHAPTER II.

Ancient Communion.

The study of antiquity leads from every point to this truth, that there existed on the earth but one religion, of which the local forms were originally but emanations more or less pure. Besides the striking uniformity of these systems of belief, certain fundamental rites, extraordinary in their nature, and yet common to all, render this unity of origin visible through the space of six thousand years, and the more so as we can find nothing in the constitution of the human mind, that can explain this constant universality. Among these rites, one of the most remarkable is communion, which was always the consummation of the offering and sacrifice.

Struck by the similarity of the Jewish rites with those of other nations, certain philosophers and theologians deduced, from this as well as from many other points, consequences diametrically opposed. The former inferred that the Jews borrowed their worship from the Gentiles; the latter, that the Gentile worship was only an imitation of the ceremonies established by Moses. But it is absurd to imagine a secondary derivation, when the very antiquity of these customs, which are found from the first ages to have been established among the more ancient nations, supposes a common derivation, prior to the formation of particular societies. We gather this even from the book of Genesis. "It is no longer doubtful among us, says Pelisson, that all false religions have been derived from the true one, and that the sacrifices of paganism have originated in those enjoined on the first men, of which Abel and Cain afford us an example; sacrifices which were but the figure and the type of a great sacrifice in which God was to immolate himself for us. The flesh of victims was eaten throughout the world; in all nations the

sacrifice which terminated in this way, was regarded as a solemn feast of man with God; hence it occurs that we find very frequently, in the old pagan poets, the banquet of Jupiter, and the viands of Neptune, used to signify the victims which were eaten after they had been immolated in honor of these false divinities; and though the Jews had holocausts, that is sacrifices in which the victim was entirely consumed in honor of the Deity, they were accompanied by the offering of a cake, so that in these sacrifices there might be something of which man could partake." *

The theology of India has associated this traditional rite to its vast conceptions. "All nourishment is deemed to be a sacrifice. The nourishment of the body is emblematic of that of the soul, viz. the holy truth,—the celestial manna. Wherefore food was to be taken with devotion, in a state of sweet recollection, the soul free from terrestrial cares and absorbed in the delights of an innocent joy. Thus religion gave laws even to festivals. We communicate with the divinity through the

* Treatise on the Eucharist, page 182—Paris 1694,

medium of the oblation presented to it. It is only on consecrated food that the Hindoo lives. He has a horror of all animal food, that has not been offered to the Divinity. Such are, in substance, the fundamental principles of the doctrine regarding sacrifices in India." * To cite but an example, one of the most celebrated sacrifices, which consisted in the immolation of a lamb, was accompanied by a prayer, in which these words were repeated aloud: *When shall the Saviour be born?* This symbolical ceremony terminated by partaking of the flesh of the victim, and so sacred was the character of this participation, that the law which bound the Bramins to perpetual abstinence, yielded to that superior law which prescribed communion. † We find a similar custom among the Egyptians, who eat, in their principal sacrifices, the flesh of animals which on other occasions they held in abhorrence. Herodotus, who remarks this apparent contradiction, says that he had learned the reason of it; but, in

* The Catholic by Baron D'Eckstein.

† Letters of the Abbé. P. Bouchet to Huet, Tom. xi of edifying, Letters p. 21.

order that he might not profane the secrets which had been confided to him, he veils it in a religious silence. *

In the ancient mysteries of Mithras, which finally prevailed through a considerable portion of the Roman Empire, St. Justin† and Tertullian‡ inform us, that bread and a vessel full of water, over which a mysterious form of prayer was recited, were placed before the initiated; and this species of consecration was also followed by communion. § We learn from the Zends books, that a similar ceremony was deemed an essential part of the Persian worship. The offerings of bread, meat, and fruit, in which the priest and people participated at the end of the sacred ceremony, were designated by the name of Miedz. It would be difficult to imagine any thing more solemn than the prayers and benedictions which preceded and followed this rite.¶ The holy spirits supposed to preside over the different parts of the universe and the conduct of men, as well as the souls of the just,

* Hist of Herodotus, Lib. 11. † Apology.

‡ Prescriptions, c. 40. § Vide note 11. ¶ Vide note 111.

from the Father of the human race down to *Sosioch*, a name which the Zends books give to the expected Redeemer, were all invoked for that oblation. And, as the *reversibility* of merit was universally believed, a special prayer is contained in the same books, by which the priest, according to his private intention, applied the benefit of that holy action to other men. Purity was deemed a necessary disposition for participating in the oblation. The liturgy proclaimed: "The pure ordain the oblation, the pure ministers have performed it, and the pure partake of it." Then the Celebrant said to his attendant: "Man of the law, eat this Miezd, and perform this action with purity." The Zends books extol its efficacy in pompous terms. Ormusd, who *from the beginning dwelleth in increated light*, had instituted and celebrated the Miezd with the celestial spirits in his splendid mansion. To this ceremony the religion of the Persians adds another, emblematic of the same idea, and to which it attaches the same importance. The great Ormusd, in the beginning, created the tree of life. That symbolical tree, called *Hom*, grows in

waters of a pure and vivifying source which flows from the throne of Ormusd himself. It banishes death, it will effect the resurrection, and impart life to the blessed. They consecrate it by a form of prayer similar to that of the Miedz; and elevating they invoke it, because it *exalts piety and science*. After having extracted the juice, which is received in a sacred cup, they drink it, for it is said, that *whosoever shall drink this juice shall not die*. Thus the two principal ceremonies of worship, so closely united, are also linked with the mystical idea of a communion which consists in being nourished by sacred bread, and in drinking what the Zend Avesta terms the *liquor of life*.*

Among the Chinese the same rite presents itself in the sacrifices of an inferior order offered to the souls of the just, as may be seen in that which is celebrated in honor of Confucius. The priest after having buried in the earth the blood of the victim, offers to Confucius a vessel full of wine which he

* Zend-Avesta, Vendidad Sadé, Tom. 1, part II, passim.

immediately pours on a man of straw, and addresses this prayer to the tablet: "Your virtues, O Confucius, are excellent and admirable. Your doctrine teaches Kings how to rule. The offerings which we present to you are pure. May your spirit descend on us; may it enlighten us by its presence." After the prayer, all the assistants kneel, and remain in that posture for some time. The priest himself, after having washed his hands, also kneels: then the voices and musical instruments steal upon the ear. He takes from the hands of one of the assistants a basin in which there is a piece of silk, elevating with both hands he offers it to Confucius. He performs a like ceremony with a vessel full of wine. Whilst they burn the piece of silk on a pan set apart for that use, the Celebrant recites a prayer similar to the preceding. After many reverences, he takes again in his hands the vessel full of wine, and recites another prayer addressed to the spirit of Confucius. Then he says: *Drink the wine of happiness and joy.* He commands them to kneel. Whilst he says, *Drink the wine of joy*, the Celebrant drinks the wine

that is in the vessel presented to him. He offers to Confucius the flesh of the victims, which are afterwards distributed among the assistants. Each was persuaded that, by such a participation, he became entitled to the favour of Confucius.”*

The worship of the Greeks and Romans is too well known to require that we should enter into any details on this subject. It is generally admitted that besides the custom of feeding on the flesh of the victims, the former used, in their sacrifices, cakes made of fine flour and honey; the latter, a paste made of fine flour and salt, which they called *immolatio*, to this were added libations of wine, which were not poured on the head of the victims till the celebrant and assistants had received a portion of them.

In the solemn sacrifice which the Celts offered at the beginning of every year, the three most ancient Druids carried, one bread, the other a vessel full of water, and the third an ivory hand representing justice. After some prayers, the

* Parallel of Religions. Tom. 1, page 420.

high-priest burned a little of the bread, poured on the altar some drops of wine, offered the bread and wine in sacrifice, and then distributed them to the assistants.*

The Germans,† Scandinavians,‡ and Finns,§ conformed to the universal rite; and it appears that the practice of pagan communion was preserved, down to the end of the sixteenth century, in Sama-gotia, as well as in several parts of Lithuania. Ismaelism has preserved a sacrifice commemorative of that of Abraham, which it celebrates with great magnificence: and in this festival, the most solemn of all, the mysterious ceremony, on which the consummation of the sacrifice depends, is also observed, though one of its circumstances is contrary to the prohibitions of the Koran. ¶

As to the Americans, we shall only cite the example of the two great nations, Mexico and Peru, which may be termed the east of the new world. “The

* Parallel of Religions, Tom. i, Part II, Page 80.

† Vide note iv.

‡ Suhr, odin Tom iii, P. 181.

§ Vide research on the ancient Finns.

¶ Vide note v.

article of communion has been most clearly recorded by all their writers. It was practiced in Mexico especially; where the priests made a statue from the dough of Indian corn which was afterwards baked. This was the representative of their idol. On a certain day of the year it was exposed, with much ceremony, to the veneration of the faithful, and no one dared to absent himself from the temple. It was carried about in procession, and when it was borne back to the temple, the Papa broke, and the priest distributed it to the people, *who eat of it, and believed themselves sanctified* by such a participation. We see the same rite diffused among many of the ancient nations of our hemisphere.

But we cannot omit alluding to another rite of the Peruvian priests. They offered in sacrifice bread made of Indian corn together with a vinous liquor extracted from it. They commenced by eating this bread, then, dipping one of their fingers in the liquor, and raising their eyes to heaven, they made an aspersion in the air, with the liquid they had on their finger: and having done this they drank

in honor of the Sun. It is not improbable that this bread and this vinous substance, were made of the Indian corn which grew in the gardens of the temples, and which was esteemed sacred. However this may be, it is certain that this bread and wine were made by the consecrated virgins. The bread was called Cancu, and the liquor Aca, and were never used save in the great festivals of Rayami and Cittua.*

This fundamental rite completes the unity of primitive worship, the scheme of which then becomes fully developed. According to the universal belief, God, who, in the beginning, was personally present to man, continued to be so only by grace to fallen man. But how was a participation in divine grace to be effected? By prayer accompanied with oblation, and in virtue of an expiation prefigured by sacrifice. But even this union had an exterior form which consisted in the participation of the food consecrated by oblation, and the flesh of victims. Thus a communion in

* American Letters of Carlé, Tom. 1, Pages 154 and 155.

grace, at the same time spiritual and corporal, invisible in its essence, and visibly manifested, such was the centre to which the leading tenets of all nations tended, such the point of reunion—the vital principle of universal worship.*

It would be impossible to understand this primitive worship, without viewing each part in relation to the whole. This order of mystical ideas typified by corporal communion, was connected with a deep religious symbolism, according to which all the elements of the material were only the representatives of the invisible world. An immense colossal spiritualism rises before us; even in the first ages of the world. Originating in the dogmas of tradition it shewed itself in all the ancient systems of the human race. At the epoch subsequent to the deluge, we see for example, in India, the ruins of a primitive science perfectly spiritual in its essence. These indeed are only ruins; but yet they are nobler than our creations. Dimly seen through the vista of former ages, these intellectual pyramids would

* Vide Note VI.

appear by their enormous proportions to overshadow the systems of modern invention. Spirituality was then the primitive state: it bore the venerable character of age when materialism received its birth. If man had been but the creature of mere sensation, it would have been impossible, judging by all the known laws of the human mind, that, in the interval which separates the period of which we now speak, from that which the traditions of all nations point out as the birth of our species, he could have raised himself, from a state scarcely superior to that of apes, to a spiritualism which embraced the universe, and disposed in harmonious and corresponding Cycles the various orders of ideas. With these facts before us, do you suppose that man, abandoned to himself, a wandering savage, commenced his career by spirituality? Such an hypothesis is an evident absurdity. Look at the savages, who are already in a more favourable position from being born in a sort of society, and receiving there, some degree of education: though initiated, by the language they are taught, in some general spiritual ideas, they remain, in every other respect, the slaves

of the grossest materialism. The animal stupidity from which they cannot free themselves by their own energy, furnishes an irrefragable argument against this fanciful philosophy, not less contrary, in other respects, to the necessary progress of the human mind. For, as Hume remarks, it would be absurd that, in the intellectual order, man should have invented palaces before cottages. Two things are then certain: man commenced by spiritualism, and man, excluded from all communication with other intelligences, would have commenced by materialism. Hence arises the necessity of a primitive revelation, which indeed would be the most philosophical conception, even though it had not been the universal belief.* The more deeply we shall examine the character of the ancient world, viewing it in relation with the established laws of the human mind, the more this great truth will become evident. The truly catholic philosophy, to which at the present day all the labours of the learned are contributing, sometimes unconsciously, will in developing itself, scatter to the winds, the

* Vide note vii

sterile dust of abstractions, and exhibit the ancient faith crowned with all the rays of science. Already the science even of the infidel school, astonished at its own discoveries, which overthrow at the same time the fanciful theories of idiology and materialism, has begun to suspect *that there are more things between heaven and earth than its philosophy has dreamed of.* *

* Shakspeare.

CHAPTER III.

Developement of the Primitive Religion—personal presence of the Deity—Christian Communion.

Though the primitive religion recognised, as we have seen, a certain intercourse between God and man, yet the human race aspired to a more perfect union. The recollection of an original society still more perfect had been preserved, and the same tradition had perpetuated the hope, that a more endearing union would be established by the Saviour universally expected. Thus the belief of a God, present only by grace, could never satisfy the yearning desire of man for a closer union with his Creator. It was partly to the energy of this desire that idolatry owed its existence ; for every vicious practice is but the perversion of a sentiment originally good, as

error, according to the remark of Bossuet, is but the abuse of truth. Hence the consecration of statues that the Divinity might reside corporally therein; hence the strong propensity to theurgy, so violent in all the pagan nations, hence also the disposition to recognise in illustrious personages some incarnate divinity. This divine instinct shewed itself, in every part of the universe, under various forms, and the public worship, even in the superstitious practices amalgamated with it, was to a certain degree the prophetic yearning of mankind, seeking every where a personal presence of the divinity.

Jesus Christ appears, the aspirations of the moral world are at length satisfied, its expectations realized. This faith in the *real presence* was immediately productive of two remarkable effects, bearing on the point before us, the one in the bosom of christianity itself, the other in the pagan world. Among the christians, the universal rage for divination, sorcery, and magical rites, ceased on a sudden. It was not only the external practices that gave way before the rigorous laws of the Church, but even the propensity, till then so furious and indomitable, was stilled in

the human heart, and was succeeded by a profound calm, indicating that a great want had been satisfied. Beyond the pale of the Church, the same belief reacted on pagan philosophy. The latter perceiving that christianity, in announcing the personal presence of the Deity, had satisfied the perpetual desire of mankind, recognised the necessity, in order to maintain some sway over the mind, of promising a similar boon. But as by the most elaborate abstractions, it could have produced nothing better than an abstract Deity, and as in truth it had produced nothing real but incertitude and doubt, it now assumed a perfectly new character. From rational which it had been, it became mystical and theurgical; and the famous school of Alexandria, at that time the nursery of pagan philosophy, could only oppose to the mysteries of the Gospel a sort of theological alchymy, which vanished, like a vision of the night, before the ascendancy of the ancient faith fully displayed in the glories of Christianity.

The superiority of the Christian religion properly so called over the primitive religion, consists principally in uniting us more closely with the Deity. God

could not communicate with man without imparting a more intimate knowledge of himself; hence the developement of truth. He could not impart this intimate knowledge of himself without being loved more perfectly; hence again the developement of the law of love, and of all morality, fully comprehended in the precept of charity. It followed then as a necessary consequence, that religious worship should receive the degree of perfection suited to it. If the most august act of the Christian worship was only a memorial of the Saviour's death, as the most solemn sacrifice of the ancient worship was its emblem, if the one announced but the mere remembrance, as the other expressed but the hope, the two would constitute but mere figures, the one of the past, the other of the future, but both equally void; so that Religion having been developed in all its other parts, and that developement being a consequence of the real presence of the Deity, had *religious worship* alone remained in its primitive state of imperfection, it would have stopped short of the reality. The momentous event, which constitutes the difference of the two Epochs, is necessarily the arch-stone of a

new order, all the parts of which should be proportionably superior, as they relate to the corresponding parts of the preceding order, which was only the model; and whereas the incarnation is the substantial union of the divine and human nature, however mysterious to our feeble intelligence as yet in its infancy, it was natural that the worship, determined by that fundamental fact, should be the medium of a union with God, less perfect than it will be when the shades of faith shall have given place to the unclouded vision of truth itself, but as close as it can be in this enigmatical world, where man is less susceptible of light than of love.

Such has been at all times the belief of the universal Church, a belief founded on the words of Christ himself—that he was and would be always present to the regenerated world even to the consummation of time, though in an invisible manner—and that such a permanent presence constituted the vital principle of christianity. It does not enter into our present plan to demonstrate the perpetuity of Catholic tradition; this is indeed the less necessary as it is no longer contested by all consistent protestants, who

have been forced, by the principle of mental independence, to represent to themselves that variation and change of belief is one of the essential characteristics of the true religion, and to reject catholicity merely because its fundamental principle is to believe what has been always and every where believed. But, if the rule of faith, the great preservative of dogmas, is immutably one, the dogmas considered in themselves present the same grand character of unity, particularly in every part that relates to the divine presence.

Mankind believed that God was present by grace : but what is grace ? It is an aid given man enabling him to regain the state in which he was created, renovating, because it relates to fallen man, and consequently purely gratuitous. It is in another point of view, a continuation of the creative action. Since the incarnation of the Word, the Church has believed in the real presence of Christ ; but what is the real presence, but the incarnation perpetuated ? The dogma of the Eucharist is as naturally and intimately connected with the order of ideas which is based on the Incarnation, as is the dogma of grace with the more general order of ideas, though funda-

mentally the same, which has for its basis the restoration of rational beings according to the primitive plan of the creation. It is uniformly a belief in the actual presence of the Deity, but under two different modes, having the same mutual relation as the two fundamental facts by which they are determined ; for the real presence is to the mere divine action, or grace, precisely what the Incarnation is to the will of assisting fallen man. The generative term of the union of God with man having changed, the fruits are different ; but, in both cases, the proportion is preserved. Thus all the mysteries of love are interwoven with each other, or rather they are the progressive accomplishment of the same merciful design, of which the eucharistic union is the last terrestrial compliment : how beautiful the harmony which presents, under so magnificent an aspect, to the reason of man, this mystery which is also the tenet of his heart, being the purest and sweetest of his consolations.

The error of those who reject the real presence is, in relation to christianity fully developed, what the system of the ancient Philosophers, who denied the

dogma of grace, was to primitive christianity: an error which the Pelagians sought to combine with christian ideas. By creation, said the former, we receive from God all that constitutes man, what necessity for a new divine action? By the union of the Word with human nature, said the latter, we received all that constitutes the christian, what necessity for a new union with God? The first did not understand that man stood in need of a communion in divine grace to maintain the life of the soul, or to practice the *primeval law*. The second are still ignorant that a communion in the divine substance of the incarnate Word, is necessary to possess the *plenitude* of life, and to attain the high perfection of the evangelical Law, which is the *end and consummation* of the former. But when they suppose that, in recognising the necessity whether of grace, or of the eucharistic communion, injury is done the Creator or Redeemer, they forget that the Eucharistic communion is the means by which the permanent incarnation is individualized in every christian, as grace is the means by which the divine permanent power operates in a particular

manner in every man, and thus, so far from detracting from the creative power, or from the renovating influence of the incarnation, nothing is better fitted to give a more exalted notion of them, than this continual want of participating in them, as nothing is more capable to inspire us with a lively sentiment of the infinite love they reveal, than this inexhaustible communication of both one and the other. Hence the beautiful expression of Bourdaloue, rigourously true with respect to grace, but supereminently so with respect to the Eucharist, or grace by excellence: *God exalts himself by this infinite condescension.*

The analogies which have been just noticed show how Protestantism, in setting out with a denial of the catholic dogma of the Eucharist, has proceeded step by step, to reject the dogma of grace, the foundation of all religion; and this progress of Protestantism confirms in turn the accuracy of these analogies. For the history of doctrines is by no means a vain phenomenon. Their external connexion shadows forth the internal association of ideas, and gives a palpable form to their logic. The three leaders of the reform-

ation marshaled against catholic *mysticism*, assail each from his ground, the belief in the sacrament of love. Luther mutilates and denaturalizes it; Calvin, by veiling under equivocal expressions the substance of his doctrine, annihilates it. Less cunning, but more enterprising, Zuinglius lifts the veil. The first effect of their common doctrine was that the Reformation exhibited a worship divested of sacrifice, and was thus placed without the pale of Religion, such as it has been conceived in all ages. Shortly, by a natural consequence, Socinianism, following up the work of destruction, assailed the dogma of the real presence, in the incarnation itself, as well as the fundamental idea of sacrifice by attacking the redemption. Though ancient Protestantism had struggled some time against the ascendancy of socinian doctrines, the latter however have prevailed. Save in the old liturgies, they are to be met with in all the writings of the reformers. Faith in prayer and grace, the last link that binds man to God, still survived amid the wreck of these crumbling doctrines. But the rationalists of Germany* betray a

* Among others, Eberhard, Tunkeim, Spalding, Veigscheider, &c.

marked tendency to hold up this belief as a ridiculous superstition, irreconcilable with the laws of nature. Thus, as the reformation advances, the living worship retires, a desert expands around it, and, in this moral waste where all the sources of love are dried up, prayer, even prayer, which springs up wherever a particle of faith remains, withers and dies beneath the blighting influence of Rationalism.

One of the most celebrated doctors of ancient Protestantism demanded what connexion could exist between faith in the real presence and faith in prayer. He took credit to himself that he could not understand it, and indeed what is it these men have understood? The history of their own doctrine fully developed confounds their presumptuous ignorance. It shows that the germ of Catholic *mysticism* exists in faith in prayer. In truth, whoever admits that a simple act of the human will effects a change in the spiritual or material order of the universe, and that God obeys the voice of man, he makes a most profoundly mystical act of faith, as it bears a relation to an order of things entirely beyond the sphere of his

* Larrogue—Hist. of the Euch. p. 41.

reasoning and sensation; and hence he is inconsistent, if, retaining a belief on this point, he refuses it on any other, under the pretext that it transcends the sphere of his senses or the conception of his reason. Here then we have one of the causes that will make Protestantism disappear as a religion, at a period which cannot be very remote. Its destiny impels it, with an irresistible force, to resolve itself into pure rationalism, for, if the reason of each individual is absolute, it ought admit nothing but what it clearly conceives. Rationalism, in turn, will abolish faith in prayer, because it is essentially indemonstrable. Now, prayer once destroyed, form if you can the notion of a religion ?

Catholicism, on the contrary, maintains its belief in the real presence and communion in the substance of the Word made flesh, by an act of faith essentially similar to that by which the presence of God through his action, and communion in grace by means of prayer have been at all times believed. Catholicism also maintains, in virtue of the same principle, the faith of all ages in divine communications, rendered more perfect by the effects of the incarnation. To reject

the Catholic doctrine, either we must discard the faith of antiquity, by denying that God was present to man in a particular manner, conformable to his nature, that is to say, in a human manner, or we must suppose that this union of God with man, which has ever been the foundation of religion, was not designed to be perfected ; in other words, that the ancient worship was not designed to give place to a more excellent one ; which inference would be directly opposed to the primitive traditions, that were the very vehicles of this faith in a future developement.

Christianity, in another and not less fundamental point, has realized the general expectation. The ancient worship prophetically shadowed forth, as we have seen, that a great atonement was at hand, and though the notion of it was somewhat confused, yet its essential traits naturally showed themselves in the general belief. Its symbolical rites however various were mutually connected only by the mysterious relation they bore to it, as the different shades cast by a body form but one and the same shadow. The regenerating sacrifice, from which all other sacrifices derive their value, ought to bear that impress of

unity which characterizes God himself, to whom every creature is indebted for existence. What does Christianity proclaim on this point? "For there is one God, and one mediator of God and man, * the man Christ Jesus. For by one oblation he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."† Again this expiation ought to be universal, for, according to the faith of the human race, God opens not to one only but to all nations the bosom of his mercy. What is the doctrine of Christianity on this subject? "Christ died for all,‡ for there is no respect of persons with God."§ But if the all powerful efficacy of this sacrifice was to pervade every place, it was but a natural consequence that the hope of pardon emanating from it should be limited only by the consummation of time. God never commanded man to despair, and the abandoned are no longer of this world. Never,

* Unus enim Deus, unus et mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus. Epist. ad Timott., cap. ii, c. 5.

† Una enim oblatione consummavit in sempiternum sanctificatos. Epist. ad Hebr. cap. x. v. 14.

‡ Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, 2d Epist. ad Corinth. cap. v., v. 15.

§ Non est enim acceptio personarum apud Deum, Ad Rom, cap. 11, v. 2.

at any period of time, not even when the gulph of iniquity opened widest and deepest, was it believed that divine mercy had stopped in its course, like to a river which loses itself in an abyss ; and as this sacrifice the presentiment of which was so universal, proved for mankind the inexhaustible source of grace, so it was meet that this expiation should be the means of salvation both for those who had expected by faith its exterior realization, as well as for those who were destined to know its accomplishment. Such was the necessary consequence of the primitive symbol, Christianity proclaimed it. " All these died according to faith, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and saluting them, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Finally, the sacrifice being destined to satisfy infinite justice, and the merits of all creatures bearing no proportion to that infinite satisfaction, it was necessary that the victim should be both divine and human ; human to suffer, divine to satisfy. Thus

*Juxta fidem defuncti sunt omnes isti, non acceptis reprobationibus sed a longe eas aspicientes, et salutantes et confitentes quia peregrini et hospites sunt super tenum. Ad Heb. cap. 11, v. 13.

the belief in a man-God, of which very many striking traces are found in antiquity, was comprehended, though imperfectly, in the general desire of an efficacious expiation. * This mystery, hidden in the bosom of all ages, was unveiled by Christianity. "For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth,† and upholding all things by the word of his power."‡ Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not; but a body thou hast fitted to me; holocausts for sin did not please thee; then said I, behold I come; making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things on earth and the things in heaven. §

When Christianity proclaimed the consummation of the one, universal, perpetual, eminently holy and divine Sacrifice, not an accent of surprise was heard throughout the world; as if mankind recognized in this

* Vide note 8.

† Omnia per ipsum et en ipso creata sunt.—Ad. Coloss., cap. 1., v. 16.

‡ Portansque omnia verbo virtutis suse.—Ad. Heb., cap. 1, v. 3.

§ Ingrediens mundum, dixit, hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi: holocaustomata pro peccato non tibi placuesunt: tune dixi: Ecce venio.—ad Heb. ii, 5.

dogma its recollections and its hopes. In the same way as the idea of God, or a necessary being, accounts for the existence of all other beings, so does the notion of the Christian sacrifice account for all the ancient ones. It explains to us how man hoped he might be saved by the substitution of a victim ; why the world believed, previously to its having been proclaimed by St. Paul, that without the effusion of blood there was no remission of sin ; why the animals mystically devoted should be pure ; why by an error fatal indeed, but bearing the impress of the truth which it abused, human sacrifice could appear necessary ; why all these expiations were deemed insufficient ; finally why mankind, doomed to die, sought even in the bosom of death salvation and life. The cross of the Saviour has solved all these astonishing problems ; it explains the faith of mankind, as the existence of God explains the world.

Catholicism, in accordance with the tradition of all ages, admits that sacrifice is the supreme act of adoration, but that religious worship having ceased to be merely emblematical, since Christ substituted reality for figure, this rite, ever existing, has become

and shall continue to the end the very form of the eternal sacrifice. And as all the rays of universal worship are seen to converge in sacrifice, so in the Christian sacrifice, the different parts of worship substantially reunited, are all raised to the highest degree of perfection. The primitive worship of mankind was based on prayer. It still continues to be the basis of Christian worship ; but when the priest, who is a mortal and a sinner, presents to God the petitions of his brethren assembled around the altar, it is not man who prays, it is the invisible and eternal Pontiff " always living to make intercession for us ; holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* Who, uniting our supplications to his, as he united our nature to his, gives a divine efficacy to the humble supplications of our misery. Oblation also constituted a part of the universal and ancient worship ; it still exists under the same form, and in bread and wine are offered up the first fruits of the viands on which we subsist. But in the far more spiritual worship of Christianity there only remains a mystical veil of

* Ad. Heb. chap. vii., v. 26.

these material elements suited to our present condition, through which the divine Word imparts himself to us, the eternal bread which nourishes our souls languishing for the ever living truth, the celestial drink which begins to slake within us the infinite thirst of love. The immolation of typical victims was the most solemn act of primitive worship ; immolation yet remains ; but, the reign of figures having ceased on Calvary, Christ himself is the victim. The *theandric* flesh and blood are present under separate signs, in memory of his death, and at the same time under the form of bread and wine, the emblems of life, because life was restored to us by his death. The elements of oblation and those of the bloody sacrifice, of which the former were the memorial of creation, the latter the image of redemption, and which were always separate in the primitive worship, are united and identified in the Christian sacrifice, because redemption is creation repaired. Finally the different parts of the ancient worship tended to a communion in the grace of God, represented by the participation of the food consecrated by oblation, and in the flesh of victims. The

consummation of the Christian worship is an act of the same nature, but of a superior order constituted by the incarnation which has ennobled all religion. Christian communion is not a mere participation in grace, but in the very substance of the man-God, becoming incarnate in each of us, in order to purify and nourish our souls. It is the union with God raised, if it may be so said, to the highest degree that can be attained within the limits of the present order; beyond this is heaven. For if in the union of the divine substance with ours, God proportionably changed our intelligence into his, and our will into his love, "We would see him face to face," we would love him with a love proportioned to that unclouded vision : heaven is nothing else than that. Let us wait a little, the transfiguration is fast approaching. This terrestrial life is but the infancy of man. As the child inhales the streams of life, and by natural instinct cleaves the maternal bosom, before it has opened its eyes to the light of day, thus man is nourished at the bosom of God before he can behold him face to face. Such is the universal order of Providence ; for the union of intelligence and will

is invariably preceded by a substantial union. But shortly the child knows the authors of his being as he is known by them, and becomes identified with them in affection. Thus when we shall have passed from this world as from a cradle, the union, commenced on the earth shall be consummated in heaven, and God, penetrating all our being, by his power, his light, and his love, shall be in us and we in him, according to the plenitude of his attributes and the capabilities of our nature.

The eucharistic communion is something intermediate between the union with the Deity granted to the just of old in this land of banishment, and that which the saints enjoy in the celestial City. More highly favoured than the former, we participate not only in grace, but in the substance of the incarnate Word, as the saints in heaven. But less happy than the latter, as yet we only see God through a veil, or *enigmatically* according to St. Paul. In this respect we are in the state of the ancient just, which is the condition of all men, during their sojourn in this world of shades and images, which is only relieved by a darkling day according to the remark of the

ancients. A union with the Divinity has ever been the principle of love ; but it has been developed in different degrees. Without losing the character of uniformity, it has more profoundly penetrated human nature, since the incarnation which has established between God and man more intimate communications ; as in the same way, without injury to this uniformity it will receive a boundless expansion, when the bonds which fetter it here below shall have fallen at the portals of the heavenly country. Thus the divine work is progressing to its accomplishment : all the developements which religion receive here below are but the transition from the temporal to the eternal order.

CHAPTER IV.

The idea of the Eucharist according to Catholic Doctrine.

Catholicism is the universal belief, not in an abstract, but in a real and effective presence of God with man. God is really present to our intelligence by his word, of which general tradition is but the prolonged echo through the vast space of ages. He is really present to our will by grace, of which external worship is the permanent organ. Hence, through the medium of man's free concurrence, arises a union with God, who is the ultimate object of his existence, as well as that of all beings. Going forth from God to people the universe, he recalls them into the infinite bosom of his eternity, to be *all in all*: such, according to the belief of antiquity, were the last words of creation.

The spirits that departed from the pale of primitive Catholicism followed two different directions. The one setting out with the idea of God, and, endeavouring to discover the secret of creation, conceived a union of each individual being with God, similar to that which exists between modification and the substance modified ; thus making man one of the innumerable forms of the Divinity. The other restricting themselves to man, sought to find in him the reason of all ; but as a contingent and limited being does not contain within itself the reason of any thing, not even of its own existence, these entirely lost sight of the truth, and scepticism was the result of their feeble researches. Such are the two extreme points to which the rationalism of antiquity, whether in India or Greece, conducted. With the sceptic, man was but the shadow of a being, with the pantheist, he was the supreme being. From these two doctrines emanated two corresponding orders of sentiments. Scepticism, which, in annihilating intelligence, suffers only an animal activity to exist, plunged man into a sensual life, whilst ideal pantheism absorbed even the senses themselves in the delirium of perpetual ecstasy.

Equally remote from these absurdities, primitive Catholicism sustained during four thousand years the reason and the heart of man, by faith in a union with God, which, without degrading, admonished him of his weakness, and, without inspiring an equality, fixed him in the place which eternal order had assigned him. Bereft of that guiding faith, this anxious and feeble creature, hurried along on the waves of time, would have inevitably perished on one or other of these rocks—*pride or despair*. It is particularly since the preaching of the Gospel that the salutary influence of this leading dogma of Catholicism, the genuine polar star of mankind, has been more clearly seen and deeply felt.

Christ is the truth personally residing among men. Cotemporary with Christ, the Church which received from his lips the eternal word, but clothed in human language, unceasingly communicates, under the same relative and limited form, the infinite Word to mortal intelligences, until passing from this region they become united to him in a more perfect world. How could this tradition of the Word have been even for a single instant suspended? Could the Church in some

day-dream have imagined that word to be eternal which was but of yesterday, or could she ever have said : I will announce what I have not learned ? Is it not notorious that she has always inexorably cast from her bosom every innovator who, substituting for common tradition his own ideas, sought, instead of transmitting truth to create it? In hearing the Church, the faithful then hears Christ himself, who speaks to them as really as he did to his disciples seated around him on the Mount of Beatitudes. For the essence of the word is not the material sound that is borne on the wind, but that internal sound which vibrates in the heart, that expression always the same, which, though repeated by a thousand voices, invariably awakens the same thought, as an image reflected by an hundred mirrors is always the same image. Catholic tradition, ever preserving inviolable the primitive sense of Scripture, is not a word which stands alone, or independently of the word of Christ ; no it is the permanent vibration of his word through every point of space and time.

But Christ is not merely the creative light of all

intelligences ; he has other relations with the posterity of Adam, a degenerate and dying tribe of this great and immortal society of spirits. “ *The word was made flesh*” to heal by this regenerating union the carnal fever of the soul, the innate source of all our woes, and to wash in his blood the wounds of humanity. Thus the Church, in receiving from Christ the word which enlightens, received also from him the divine remedy, which she distributes to her children as she imparts to them the light of his word. The Word made flesh resides in the midst of them, always full of truth and grace. As formerly the crowd of infirm pressed on his steps to be healed by the virtue that emanated from him, so do the faithful at present labouring under the same malady hidden within them, approach with an humble faith to a participation of this divine remedy.

What strikes the senses is the particular form under which the celestial element is veiled to communicate itself to the faithful, as the sounds which strike the ear attentive to the voice of the Church are only the sensible form, under which the divine Word penetrates each intelligence. What is truly substantial

in these two communions, is Christ enlightening by his word, and healing by his efficacious presence ; the only immutable reality amid this perpetual change of forms by which he comes within the changing condition of our being, in order to raise us to the participation of his incorruptible being.

Such is the vital principle of Catholicism. Here is the source of that power which it exercises on man, and which is universally recognised by its enemies. It sways him with all the force of the human presence of the Divinity. Separated from a faith in love, this belief would crush the soul. When contemplating the abyss of the heavens, a vague impression of immensity suddenly strikes the soul, and we fancy that there passes before our eyes the shadow of the Infinite Being, our imagination is stilled with stupor, and even our reason shudders. What would be our sensation were we to find ourselves immediately in connexion with the Eternal, the immense, the great Unknown, ignorant whether it be love or hatred that lies buried in the mysterious depths of infinity ? Thus, as tradition was weakened, faith in grace was also enervated, as may be perceived among many of

the Pagan nations. An overwhelming fear of the Deity was manifested by rites, the very recollection of which carries terror to the soul. We cannot easily form to ourselves an idea of these terrific creeds. Cradled from its birth in the fond embrace of Christianity, our soul has been inebriated with the confidence which she inspires. Hope, bearing the cross, walks before us singing on the path of life. A heavenly interpreter, she explains these mysterious figures of clemency which religion shows at every step, and stern justice itself is presented beneath the veil of mercy. The spiritual world, all resplendant with the emblems of the eternal union, is but the reflected glory of Christ, residing in the midst of men to satiate them with truth and love: so that this powerful faith in the human presence of the Divinity overawes our weak nature but in order to console and strengthen it. By the same force with which it might overwhelm, it exalts it, and communicates to it, if we may so speak, by all the power it exercises on it, an impulse of ascension towards the superior world, where, in the unveiled presence of the Deity, intelligence and love will expand without an effort.

Protestantism which has rejected this magnificent gift is the absence of Christ, as Deism is, in a more general order of ideas, the absence of the Divinity. With the Bible in his hand, the Protestant fancies that he communicates with the living Truth ; but is it on the material form of the words, or on their real sense that this communication depends ? And whereas it is the reason of each Protestant that determines for him the sense of the Bible, how can this ever varying reason be a transmission of the reason eternally unchangeable ? How can so many interpretations that destroy one another be an emanation of the substantial Word, which like God himself, bears the character of unity ? There is between them that vast space which separates illusion from immutable reality. You imagine that you enjoy the immediate presence of the sun of intelligences, and nothing is present to you, save the shadows of your own mind. Deifying your thoughts, you believe that you converse freely with the Word, whilst you are separated from it by the profound abyss which pride has interposed. The Protestants resemble an unhappy wanderer on the deep, who

mistakes for the paternal shore those hills of mist, which are capriciously raised and destroyed by the winds. But the illusion soon vanishes. The fantastical horizon which surrounds them changes every instant: their inconstant opinions come into collision, separate, scatter, and suddenly reveal to them the waves of boundless scepticism. Hence the anguish of those who desirous of faith, but weak in will, are bound to Protestantism by temporal ties. They behold with terror the agitations of an unlimited scepticism which assail it on every side.* This spectacle, so afflicting to every Christian heart, hurries them into the opposite extreme. The propensity to illuminism, which has been found at every period among this class of Protestants, augments and strengthens in proportion as rationalism destroys the little faith which the reformation has preserved.† In this exaltation they seek an asylum against doubt. In effect every Protestant is placed in this dilemma: if he do not believe himself infallible, he has no certainty for his faith, if he

* *Cunctæque profundum pontum adspectabant flentes.*

† Vide note ix.

believe himself infallible, each of his judgments must appear to him a ray of the increated intelligence. He ought, according to the remark of Bossuet *deem all his thoughts to be emanations of the Deity*; an intellectual pantheism which directly leads to the other.

A similar alternative is produced with regard to the sentiments of the heart; for, owing to the unity of the human soul, the laws of intelligence and love are parallel. If the reason of each individual needs an exterior invariable rule, in order that it may not succumb to doubt, which is the consciousness of its own weakness, the heart too, particularly in the order of divine things, requires an exterior principle of love that may continually act upon it, to save it from its own inconstancy, its strong inclination to the earth, and its liability to become weary even of God himself. Hence it is that this perfect piety, exclusively peculiar to christian ages, has been developed under the empire of faith in the permanent presence of God *whose delight is to dwell with the children of men*. In Protestantism the soul of man is deprived of this daily, and if it may be so said, this fond

communion, with him who is spirit and life. But as it feels the want of these frequent communications to maintain piety at the height to which it has been raised by christianity, they are obliged, when they aspire to this spiritual life, to substitute for catholic faith in the real presence the dazzling fanaticism of inspiration. Then all the movements of the heart are a divine impulse, each respiration of the soul a communion, each affection is Christ himself. This mysticism, which in reality is but a sentimental pantheism, is also a sort of internal theurgy, differing from the ancient idolatrous theurgy in as much as it is purely spiritual, for christianity has spiritualized every thing, even error itself. But this fanaticism consecrates in principle every folly as well as every passion; and the history of protestantism has demonstrated its results. On the other hand if their reason recoils at it, then feeling the impotence of attaining to that sublime christian piety, for the acquisition of which their heart, deprived of every exterior principle of love, finds not within itself the necessary conditions, they regard it as an idle dream, and falling into indifference on this point, the life of

the senses resumes its empire over the life of the soul which becomes extinct. This two-fold tendency in the sentimental, corresponds to that which protestantism has presented in the logical order: for the fanaticism of inspiration is like the illuminism of the heart, and indifference is but the scepticism of the will. Just as man inclines to one or the other side, he meets, as we have seen, with pantheism or inanity. Protestantism must inevitably end by splitting into two classes: the one of mystical illuminati, tormented by a sort of monomania; the other of sceptical and indifferent rationalists, with whom there will remain but the shadow of man, of that being who lives on truth and love. The majority of its followers, unable to support these excesses, will return in crowds to the Church, and this salutary movement has already commenced. Children of the holy City, look towards the desert; do you not see that vast crowd of intelligences which have traversed it in the sweat of their brow, and who press to the gate of the habitable city? Urbem orant. They seek that to which all the powers of reason and of the heart forcibly impel them, and which she alone can impart to them. For she alone,

possessing the secret of creation, which is neither the separation of man from God, nor his identity with him, *unites* even on the earth, in the most intimate manner, the finite to the infinite being by the principle of faith and of love.

The various considerations at which we have glanced may be comprised in this formula. "Every system of religion exclusive of the real presence, is, by that degeneracy, in a greater degree inferior to Catholicism, than Catholicism in its present state, is to the religion of heaven;" since that is but the eternal consummation of the union entered on here below.

To express this great law of the moral world, the allegorical genius of antiquity would fix this inscription at the beginning of the road which leads to where Protestantism has nearly arrived. "The empire of death, where the father of gods and men never descends, sinks in the night of chaos a distance twice as great as the space embraced by the look of mortals, when, from the earth where God placed them, they raise their eyes to ethereal Olympus.*

* Bis patet in preceps tantum, tenditque sub umbras.

Quantum ad ætherum cali suspectus Olympum.—Virg. En. l. vi.

The essence of true Christianity being every day more clearly perceived, in proportion as the ephemeral Christianity of sectarians wastes and disappears, the moment is approaching when reason shall see, almost face to face, this capital truth viz., that the perpetual presence of the regenerating Word, under the emblems of a divine remedy, is the vital principle of Christianity in its relation with the heart of man, as the permanent presence of the Word, the eternal light, which the Church, interpreter of the divine Word, imparts to every man under the veil of human language, is the fundamental principle of Christianity in its connexions with intelligence. This admirable unity of the divine plan did not escape the pious author, who without an effort discovered the most sublime truths, because he contemplated all with an humble and a pure look. “For in this life, says he, I find there are two things especially necessary for me, without which this miserable life would be insupportable. Whilst I am kept in the prison of this body, I acknowledge myself to need two things viz., food and light.

Thou hast therefore given to me, weak as I am, thy

sacred body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and thou hast set thy word as a lamp to my feet. Without these two things I could not well live ; for the word of God is the light of my soul, and thy sacrament is the bread of life.* Thus Christianity, as a whole, is but a great charity bestowed on a great misery. This is the secret of its unity : it is one by its merciful proportion to all our faults. At the sight of this touching harmony, reflection must give place to a hymn, and reason prostrate adores in silence.

* Imitation of Christ, liv. iv., chap. 11.

CHAPTER V.

The Eucharist viewed in relation to the religious wants of the soul.

There are two wants in human nature which Religion alone can satisfy ; the one, that of the practical, the other, that of the interior life. By the name of practical life, I do not mean that activity which is limited to the world of the senses, but that course of conduct which is connected with the moral order, as presented to us here below in the visible creation. For this temporary social state, comprised between the cradle and the grave, subsists, in a moral point of view, only in the continual application of the most sublime truths to gross and transitory phenomena. What, for instance, is a cup of water ? A means to purchase the possession of

God himself, if you choose to apply it by giving it to a poor man. Human life is composed of small actions which accomplish great duties. Man labours on the same material as the animal, but to produce a divine work. Shut up amid the dust of our terrestrial laboratory, we impress the features of the Deity on our clay ; we fashion, if I may so say, the image of the eternal beauty. Woe to every doctrine that would not lead man energetically and continually to this humble—practical life, on which society is based. Such a proud spiritualism would include the principle of universal dissolution ; for, according to the primitive belief, the intelligences, superior to man, are the ministers of God even in the government of the physical order, nay the Eternal himself did not disdain to mould the material element.

But this practical life does not fill up the vast capacity of the human soul, nor exhaust all its activity. Whilst continually entering, to discharge our present obligations, into this narrow world of sensations which is common to us with animals, the soul ever preserves a secret consciousness, and as

it were a second view of another existence. Swayed by the instinct of futurity, she aspires to a state where the true, the good, the beautiful, freed from this gross alloy, will present themselves to her embrace under purer forms. Now, as soon as an intelligent being has an idea of a more perfect state, it ardently desires, without departing from the situation to which it is bound, to realize a transition from the one to the other ; for nothing is abrupt or defective in the harmonious developement of beings. Hence that order of sentiments which composes the mystical life, an expression too frequently misunderstood, and which in reality signifies but a natural instinct of the soul, since it shews itself on all the points of the circle where sentiment is displayed. In fact who does not know that in the arts, in love, glory, heroism, man finds himself pursuing beyond all realities this ideal infinity whose extent is restrained and whose purity is tarnished by the positive order ; why then suppress these aspirations in Religion alone, which has the closest affinity with the end of his creation ? Why not seek for his entire being, what he aspires to in all its emanations ? Why not prepare

for his destiny by a previous essay, like one who composes the prologue for a poem, or who prepares the prelude which precedes a concert? To destroy this lofty instinct, would be to fetter all the powers of the soul, for the religious sentiment eminently embraces all others; it would be to mutilate our being in its nobler part. The most abject materialism alone could embrace this state of degradation! Man indeed would be but the perfection of a mere animal, were he not the embryo of a celestial spirit. This order of sentiments is to a certain degree common to all men profoundly religious, for it is but the reflection of faith in the heart. The poor peasant, who, listening to the exhortation of his pastor, whom he may not fully comprehend, tells you that his soul feels the truth of the appeal, enters according to his manner into the mystical life, as the people with their lyric songs and poems enter after their manner into the ideal of poetry. But in proportion as we ascend the scale of humanity, this disposition manifests itself more forcibly, particularly in superior minds, in the hearts of the elect, from Confucius and Plato, to Fenelon and Vincent of Paul. The purer the flame, the

higher it mounts, and the master spirits in order to support this mystical life are obliged to wing their way more frequently into that tranquil region, where they breathe the air of a more divine world.

The two wants to which we have alluded must be satisfied that whatever is good and beautiful in human nature may have its free expansion. Suppress every trace of the mystical life, and you arrive at the brutal activity of the London populace. Suppress the esteem and taste of the practical life, and there remains but the senseless quietism of the Indian Priest. Every religious system which alters, in a single point, one of these essential modes of our being, approximates, in a greater or less degree, to one or other of these two species of degradation. The perfection of man depends on their simultaneous developement: the one restrains the soul within the present, the other impels it towards the future order, and as this star of the moral order, belongs to both worlds, it cannot accomplish its career but by the harmonious combination of this two-fold attraction.

It has been frequently remarked that, when Protestant mysticism does not present itself under

the form of fanaticism, it for the most part sinks into a religious melancholy. Besides the injuries it inflicts on the intellectual faculties, this malady, weakening by its effects the activity of the soul, proceeds to attack the generative principle of good works, and consequently the moral fecundity of man, whilst among the sects hostile to mysticism, this moral decay is replaced, as may be seen in the metropolis of Calvinism, by a fever for gold and all the sensual enjoyments of life. Protestantism is opposed to the alliance of the interior and social life; for, individualism in breaking the ties by which spirits are bound together, produces isolated forms of belief which in turn engender a solitary mysticism. The human mind under such circumstances seeks life within itself, for there also it seeks truth. The heart feeds with complacency on itself as reason idolizes itself, and, though rationalism and madness have each their distinctive traits, if you examine more closely you will find in both but the Proteus of egotism.

We invite every reflecting and philosophic mind, capable of applying the test of experience to the

influence of doctrines, to contrast, in this respect, the spirit of Protestantism with the genius of the Catholic religion, which has unceasingly produced a parallel developement of the interior and social life, so harmoniously combined, that the action and reaction is uniform and continual. This is not the place to sound the depths of a subject which in order to be fully treated, should embrace the moral history of humanity. Not to depart from the limits of our present subject, we shall simply remark how, among the causes that concur in establishing the peculiar character of Catholicism, the eucharistic faith holds the first rank. It is not only a principle eminently active in each of these two orders ; but as they tend to separate, because the wants to which they correspond crave to be satisfied at the cost of each other, this tenet is the powerful link which inseparably unites them. For if this mystery, which is itself but an initiation to the mysteries of a future life, impel the soul beyond the present order, on the other hand the disposition strictly necessary to approach it is the accomplishment of all the obligations of ordinary life, and

particularly of those which one might be most inclined to despise, and to consider most repulsive.

Extending its vivifying influence to the two extremities of the moral world, it reaches at the same time the most humble duties and the loftiest aspirations of the soul. This bread of angels, which has become the bread of man, imparts to the faithful a two-fold existence. Like Raphael, they may say to these indigent souls who can only beg, at the banquet of time, the gross food of voluptuousness and pride. "I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you but I use an invisible meat and drink which cannot be seen by man."* But the same action, which associates him with angels, reconducts him by the road of virtue into human society. For all is social in Catholicism, interwoven as it is with common tradition. It is for this reason that the most magnificent gift of divine love is confided, not to an individual, but to the Church. She alone is its depository, as she alone is the depository of eternal Truth. Before the holy of holies can be approached,

* Sed ego cibo invisibili, et potu quia hominibus videri non potest, utor.—Tob., chap. xii., v. 19.

the individual conscience is submitted to the power of religious society, in the person of one of its ministers who pronounces the sentence of grace. The sanctuary is thrown open, and Penitence freed from remorse, and Innocence assured of its purity by the judgment of authority go hand in hand, amid the public prayers, to seat themselves at the universal banquet of the just. Thus the faithful are not admitted to this intimate union with Christ but by drawing more closely the links which bind them to the Church, the common parent of all Christians ; and the greatest act of the mystical life is itself a great social action.

CHAPTER VI.

*Social Life,—The Priesthood. Public Worship.
Confession.*

It is by its priesthood only that religious society acts in the moral government of the world. This institution is associated with an order of ideas superior to that which ordinarily strikes the mind, ever prone to stop at exterior effects, instead of penetrating the essence of things. The priest is presented to the view of man under the endearing attributes of the father of the poor, the consoler of the afflicted, the confident of the weary and heavy-laden conscience. But this Halo of charity which is the necessary emanation of the sacerdotal character is not its perfect type. The fundamental idea of the priesthood was originally connected with that of Mediation.

As sacrifice united to prayer were the figures of the expiation solicited by the aspirations of the human race, so those who were deputed to offer them up became the special representatives of the invisible Mediator, the supreme and universal Pontiff of creation. Hence that character of minister of peace, Mediation being but the peace of heaven with earth; hence the many privations which the creeds of all nations exacted from the priest, for he ought to bear more than other mortals a closer resemblance to the great victim; hence that perpetual or temporary continence recommended him by antiquity, and which, in many places, was of strict obligation. Mankind every where, and at the periods most disgraced by licentiousness, recognized in perfect continence the *mens divinior* of sanctity. As poetry is a diviner eloquence, so chastity, which raises man above the senses, is as it were the sacred poetry of virtue. The social necessity, which interdicts to the generality of mankind the practice of this virtue, no more excludes it in the small number, than the necessity equally general of corporal labour destroys that other law of humanity, which to a small number

gives leisure to embody in song their lofty meditations. Mankind must have its *elite*. Let the sophist in his affected singularity pride himself on being insensible to the merit of chastity ; has he reason to glory at being divested of that perception of moral beauty common to the human race? Should his eye, on viewing the lily of the fields, the symbol of purity, be affected by sensations contrary to those commonly experienced, he would at once pronounce it diseased : does this vicious discordance change its character when it affects the moral sentiment—the vision of the soul ? When philosophy, even that of the material school, was forced to admit the fact that the “ notion of chastity being pleasing to God pervaded the Globe.”* Why did it not perceive that a moral phenomenon, so directly opposed to the propensities of man, from the very circumstance of its not being based on reasoning, must necessarily have had its source in a superior order. The general sentiment which supports and cherishes modesty, has ever connected with the work of the flesh a

* American Letters of Carle, note of the Translator, Tom I, page 119.

mysterious idea of pollution, an unaccountable sentiment, if it be not derived from a confused recollection of that original corruption which vitiated in man the very source of life. All the primitive traditions declared that the personage whom they announced as the future Redeemer of mankind was to be born of a Virgin. From this order of ideas arose the general disposition of imposing on priests, the substitutes of the Mediator, virginal continence and expiatory austerities; and if both have been mutually attracted by a sort of permanent affinity, to combine in the priesthood, it is because they had originated in a common source.

All these ideas, diffused through the universe, were the as yet imperfect elements of the sacerdotal character realized by catholicism, and which could not have been accomplished till the Saviour himself had exteriorly realized the eternal sacrifice. The catholic priesthood is constituted like that of the primitive religion, by the relation the priest bears to the Mediator, a relation much more sacred and august since its immediate object is, not a typical victim, but the person of Christ, who is

at the same time priest and victim. Theology defines the priesthood to be—the functions relative to the true body of Christ, and to his mystical body which is the Church. The different degrees of holiness attached to the minor orders, are determined by their connexion more or less direct with the Eucharist. The high and inviolable perfection of catholic celibacy is principally derived from the same cause. The Popes and Councils well knew that the conjugal state weakens the divine union which should exist between the pastor and his church, as well as his spiritual paternity, by placing elsewhere the centre of his affections and duties. They conceive that the priesthood ought to absorb the entire man. But, however strong this reason may be, sacerdotal purity springs from a higher source; and all tradition points out its primary cause in the *Tabernacle*. Thus the institution of ecclesiastical celibacy, though its developement required time, and though it suffered many modifications, is universal in its principle.* If the oriental churches were in this respect less severe than those more

* Vide Note xi.

immediately subject to the Papal influence, that relaxation confirms the rule ; for, though they did not impose it on all priests, of the second order who, according to their discipline, rarely celebrated the holy mysteries, they maintained it inviolable for Bishops.

But if the priest, associated to the oblation of the supreme sacrifice, must raise himself by an angelic purity above other men, he must also humble himself beneath them, in order to take upon him their misery, carry their crosses, and, renewing in his person the suffering marks of the adorable victim, as well as the image of his innocence, offer up with the incense of prayer the burning holocaust of charity. The mystic immolation of which he is the minister prescribes to him the immolation of himself. All tradition has unanimously concurred in drawing this consequence from the Eucharistic dogma. Would I could relate here the innumerable proofs of this logic of love. I can only pray its prejudiced adversaries to make it the subject of their serious meditation. I would vouch that, on such a review, no honest man, whatever his errors might

be, could have the melancholy hardihood to declaim against so amiable a faith. Did it not yet find place in his heart, at least he would learn to respect it. Is there not something divine in every benefit?

But wherever sacrifice ceases, the man remains and the priest disappears. Look at the Jews: no where did the priesthood strike deeper roots than among that people; no where was it surrounded by more veneration. What are at the present day the Rabbins, who have superseded the priests of that people now disinherited of all sacrifice? The anathema which pursues their degraded ministry, has been proclaimed by the mouths of Israelites. "*Their power, exclaim their own followers, can effect nothing * for the salvation of our souls.*" The same observation applies to protestantism. The ancient idea of the priesthood is one of the human ideas which it lost with sacrifice. The day on which the fire of the eternal holocaust was extinguished, beheld the divine mark effaced from the brow of its ministers. The opinion of the protestant public refuses them

* Jewish Consistories of France, by M. Siuger, page 32, Paris, 1820.

that pious respect, which all the people of the earth have attached to the sacerdotal character. It does not exact from them these superior virtues which catholicism imposes on its priesthood, and with great justice, for it would be unfair to expect a consequence when the principle had been destroyed. This equitable indulgence sometimes shews itself with great *naïveté*. I shall select an example out of many, and that within the pale of the English church, which however has preserved, better than the other sects, some faint resemblance of the priesthood. Dr. Burnet, relating the legal assassination of Charles 1st, admits that Bishop Juxon, who assisted him in his last moments, “performed his duty so dryly and so coldly, as to make little or no effort to infuse any lofty sentiments into the mind of his Royal master” yet the mitred historian asserts that he *did his duty as an honest man*.* Suppose that Abbé Edgeworth had acted like Juxon, could you conceive how a French prelate, writing the history of the revolution, would tell you that the

* Hist of the last revolutions of England, Tom. I, liv. 1.

confessor of the son of St. Lewis *did his duty as an honest man*, before that scaffold the foot of which was bathed with the blood of martyrs, and above which the heavens opened. Such a supposition would be revolting to the feelings of catholics, and in their eyes every priest who, in descending from the altar, possessed no other recommendation than that of being an honest man, would be a monster.

Now if we consider, on the one hand, that the catholic priesthood tends, by its constant and universal action, to lead men to the practice of duty, and, on the other, that the influence of the priesthood is proportioned to the veneration it inspires, we shall easily conceive how the Eucharist, of which the sacerdotal character, as understood in catholicism, is the sublime emanation, already exercises in this respect a prodigious power in establishing the reign of virtue on the earth. Catholicism moves the world in order to elevate it to heaven, the priesthood is its instrument, the real presence, its support.

All great influence, exercised on mankind, can only result from the combination of two different modes of action, for, in man as well as in all other

beings, we must distinguish what is general or common to the entire species, from what is purely individual. The public mode of action affects men collectively by addressing itself to human nature : but as it is differently modified in each of us, hence the necessity of an individual mode of action, corresponding to the individuality of every man. Catholicism combines, in a high degree, these two modes, for whilst by its public worship, it acts on the multitude, with unequalled energy, as is generally acknowledged, confession constitutes its mode of action proportioned to the different necessities of individuals, it is the secret organ which particularizes for each of the faithful, this spirit of life that animates the vast body of the Church.

The philosophers who have endeavoured to explain the origin of public worship have assigned every possible reason except the true one. The hypothesis of a primitive religion, invented by man, which is the basis of all their theories, has drawn them, by substituting abstractions for facts, from the sphere of real life on this as on many other points ; for every error originates in this elaborate absurdity.

They have done much to prove that public worship is useful, not suspecting that it is rigorously necessary. Religion having been originally traditional, and that tradition comprehending, besides the explanation of the truths primitively revealed, certain expiatory rites, which have been also regarded by all nations as of divine institution, can this common tradition be conceived without a common worship? It was not then a mere expediency on the part of Religion, but the essential condition of its existence. Thus, as soon as this two-fold basis of tradition is shaken, public worship totters and falls, as we see in the reformation : a thousand protestant voices have been raised to announce its ruin.* The protestant states of Germany have recently made great efforts to revive it : but does history present an example of a worship having been revived by police ordinances? A jewish rigidity on the most minute points is united, in the English system, with an epicuran effeminacy, which makes the devout class, under the most trifling pretext, dispense with the

* Vide, De Starck's work on the reunion of the different Christian communions.

religious duties prescribed by their liturgy. The *negative* part of their worship is maintained as a legal establishment, while the *positive* part crumbles to decay : this is the forerunner of death. Generally, in all the systems that reject tradition and the real presence, the ancient precept of regularly assisting, on the Lord's day, at the divine office, has lost its character of law, and at most is considered a council subject to the convenience of each individual. After all, why should it be necessary for a protestant to assist regularly at Church ? Has he not the Bible at home ? Does he not recognise in himself the right of interpreting it ? Why then should he address himself to the Deity by the lips of a minister ? In a system based on mental independence, why interpose a human agent between him and God ? His house ought to be his temple, as his reason is his priest. The marked tendency of Protestantism to concentrate itself in a domestic worship, will be the transition to a worship purely individual, the only one which indeed harmonizes with the logical principle of Protestantism. The same may be said of Deism, which reposes on a similar prin-

ciple, and which is the Protestantism of the primitive religion.

With Catholics, on the contrary, social worship is, as it formerly had been, an essential condition of Religion. They are obliged to assemble frequently in the temple, to find what can be found only there—the two-fold tradition of truth and of the mysteries of love. The real presence, the focus of public worship, vivifies it by its perpetual action, and raises it to the highest degree of sublimity that a terrestrial worship can attain. The magnificence of Catholicism which spiritualizes the senses themselves, and the repulsive nakedness of Calvinism, may be considered as two extreme points, between which are found divers liturgies more or less meager, in proportion as the doctrine they represent is more or less removed from the catholic mystery. All the ceremonies of the Church tend towards this centre of grace, as, in the temples raised by the genius of christianity, all the lines of architecture have a beautiful but subordinate relation to the sanctuary; this is the reason why the catholic worship, the expression of boundless love, as the physical world is the expres-

sion of infinite power, moves the heart as profoundly as the magnificence of nature impresses the understanding.

All is interwoven : the great moral causes act at a distance, and produce their effects even where the vulgar do not imagine their influence to reach. It is now sufficiently proved that mental derangement is far more frequent among a protestant than among a catholic population. This difference proceeds no doubt from the fact, that catholicism, in submitting individual to the general reason, upholds the conservative law of intelligence, whilst individualism, by isolating and abandoning man to himself without a preserving rule, places him in an unnatural position, which is a permanent source of disorder and extravagance. But this first cause resolves itself, if I may so speak, into many subordinate ones, each of which partially tends to the general result. The influence of catholic legislation merits, on this point, serious attention. Let us limit ourselves to one of its results. which will lead to the discovery of many others. As soon as a disposition to mental aberration is developed, it

impels man to retire from society in order that he may live to himself. The instinct of this frightful malady urges him to seek, in intellectual independence, the freedom of *delirium*. But, in general, the evil is not immediately consummated. In the gradual passage from perfect reason to settled insanity, man will be found to retain sufficient power over himself to resist the savage want of isolation, provided an active principle, and particularly the most active of all, the religious principle, excite him to return to society and thereby to common sense. The precept which strictly obliges the catholic to renew, at least once a week, by assisting at the public worship, the relation which binds him to God and man, rescues him from this fatal solitude, where his intellect would have been bewildered in order to place him in a society of reason, peace, and love. Conscience obliges him to become a man that he may remain a christian; and this act, frequently repeated, contributes more than is generally supposed to prevent or arrest the developement of madness.

The real presence, the basis of the public worship by which catholicism acts on men in the aggregate,

is not less intimately connected with the practice of confession, the organ through which it acts in a mode, corresponding to the various necessities of individuals.* On this point let us attend to an English Writer who, though catholic by conviction, was surprised by death within the pale of Protestantism, so true it is that God alone knows what passes in the depths of the human heart. “All nations, says lord Fitz-William,† have their religion and their laws; their religion to inculcate virtue and morality,—and their laws to punish crime. In this the Roman Catholic, as well as all other states, contemplate but the same object. But in the Roman Catholic Religion alone are to be found laws whose authority is far more imperious, and concerning which no individual can deceive himself, by any species of art or sophistry; laws calculated not only to inspire the love of virtue and morality, but which farther render it obligatory to practice them; laws which are not limited to the mere punishment of crime, but extend to its prevention.

* Vide, Note xii.

† Letters of Atticus, dedicated to Louis xviii, then in England.

These laws consist in the obligation which they impose on all Roman Catholics of communicating at least once a year ; in the veneration which they inculcate for that sacrament, and in the indispensable and rigorous preparation which they exact in order to receive it, or, in other words, in the belief of the real presence, confession, penance, absolution, and communion, on which they are based.

It may be truly said that in Roman Catholic States the entire economy of social order turns on this pivot. It is to this wonderful institution they owe their strength, their duration, their security, and their happiness : hence arises an incontestible principle, a sound maxim, which is the last link of that long chain of reasonings which I have just established, namely, *that it is impossible to frame any system of government whatsoever, which will be permanent and advantageous, unless it be founded on the Roman Catholic Religion.* Every other system is illusive.

The precepts which this Religion imposes on its children, and the restraints to which it subjects them, are so little known to the sectaries who assail

it, that indeed they can scarcely have any notion of them. Some through ignorance are blind to them, and others from prejudice treat them with ridicule. In order then to instruct the ignorant and undeceive the prejudiced, I must inform them that all Roman Catholics are obliged to communicate at least once a year, regard however being had to the state of their conscience. Previously to the receiving of this most august sacrament, before which the most courageous among them are seized with fear and trembling, they must all, without distinction or exception, confess their sins in the tribunal of penance; and no minister of that dreaded tribunal can permit them to approach the Holy Table, until they shall have purified their hearts by all the dispositions necessary for the purpose. Now those indispensable dispositions are contrition, the full and candid acknowledgment of all the faults of which they have been guilty, atonement for all injustices, restitution of all goods unlawfully acquired, pardon of all injuries, the abandonment of every criminal and scandalous connexion, and the eradication of envy, pride, hatred, avarice, ambition, dissi-

mulation, ingratitude, and every sentiment opposed to charity. Besides in that tribunal they must solemnly pledge themselves before God to avoid even the slightest faults, and to observe with a scrupulous exactitude all the sublime laws of the Gospel.

Whoever, as the Apostle says, would approach the holy table without these dispositions, and not discerning the body of Jesus Christ, would receive his own condemnation. Such is, and such has always been, during eighteen hundred years, the fundamental and immutable doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. And if it shall be objected that her children are wicked or perverse, notwithstanding the links wherewith she binds them, and the duties she imposes upon them, what shall we say of the man who is freed from these salutary restraints?

What security, what pledge is not exacted from every individual for the performance of his social duties; for the exercise of every virtue, integrity, benevolence, charity, mercy! Where shall we find anything similar to this? Here conscience is regulated before the tribunal of God himself, not before that of the world. Here the culprit is

his own accuser, but by no means his own judge. And whilst the christian of a different communion superficially examines himself, decides in his own cause, and indulgently absolves himself, the catholic christian is scrupulously examined by another, awaits his sentence from Heaven, and sighs after that consoling absolution which is accorded, refused, or deferred, in the name of the Most High. What an admirable means for establishing between men mutual confidence, and perfect harmony in the discharge of their duties !

To pronounce on all questions of general importance, it is both just and right that our reasonings be grounded on their general effects. Such is the course I have adopted. But so great, alas, is human frailty, that all Roman Catholics, I must admit, do not profit by the advantages afforded them. It is then the duty, as indeed it is the highest interest of a wise and vigilant government, to oppose any relaxation in the principles I have now developed. If in a Roman Catholic State no person swerved from their observance, the question would not be : which is the best government ? but rather in such a

government what necessity for other laws? perhaps, in such a case, all human laws would be as useless, and superfluous, as they are certainly ineffectual wherever the Roman Catholic Religion is not their basis." Lord Fitz-William, resuming his observations, reduces them to two social aphorisms which cannot be too profoundly meditated.

Virtue, justice, and morality, should constitute the basis of all governments.

It is impossible to establish virtue, justice, and morality, on any solid foundation, without the tribunal of penance, because that tribunal, the most formidable of all, takes cognizance of the conscience of man, and directs it in a manner more efficacious than any other; now that tribunal belongs exclusively to the Catholic Church.

It is impossible to establish the tribunal of penance without a belief in the real presence, that principal basis of catholic faith, because without that belief the sacrament of communion loses its dignity and value. Protestants approach the Holy Table without fear, for they receive only a sign commemorative of the body of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand Catholics approach it with dread, because they receive the very body of their Redeemer. Thus wherever this belief was destroyed the tribunal of penance ceased with it; confession became useless, as wherever this belief exists confession is essential. And this tribunal, which is necessarily established with it, renders imperative the exercise of virtue, justice, and morality. Therefore as I have already said *it is impossible to frame any permanent or advantageous system of government, which is not founded on the Roman Catholic Religion.*

Here then we have the solution of the most important of all questions, (next to that of the immortality of the soul,) that can be presented to the consideration of man, namely—Which is the best government? The more we study this question, the more we shall perceive that the doctrine of the real presence applies not only to governments, but to all human affairs, that like the diapason in music, it forms the concord of the entire, and becomes to the moral what the sun is to the physical world. *Illumians omnes homines*—St. John.

CHAPTER VII.

Catholic Charity.

If we contrast the nations who lived under the primitive religion with those who have received christianity fully developed, we shall immediately perceive that the sentiment of love has attained among the latter a superior degree, corresponding to a more perfect knowledge of the divine love. Eden revealed the goodness, but Calvary, the charity of God. From that hour man learned to love more perfectly.

Creation—by which God, without imparting himself to man, gave something from himself, was a magnificent boon of the infinite Being. Such was the type of ancient beneficence. Man learned to

share with his fellow man his superfluous goods, after the example of him who communicated to man, made to his likeness, a portion, and as it were, the superabundance of the inexhaustible riches of his own being. Hence the precept of charity ever remained associated in the tradition of all nations not excepting those in a state of barbarism, with the recollection of the supreme benefactor, the Father of the human family. "We all belong to the same family, said the chief of an American tribe, we are all the children of the great Spirit. When the white man put their foot for the first time on our lands, they were oppressed with hunger; they had no place where to prepare their beds, or light their fires; they were exhausted; they could do nothing for themselves. Our Fathers had pity on their distress, and willingly shared with them all that the great spirit had given his red children."*

For the same reason, the beneficence prescribed by the primitive religion did not attain a degree, superior to the practice of alms, and other works of

* *Memoirs of a Captive among the Indians of North America.*
London.

a similar nature. Where, in effect, could man have discovered the idea of a more perfect beneficence than that of which God had given him the example. But when the heavens opened, and *this great mystery of piety** *shone forth* in all its splendour, the horizon of charity expanded. In not limiting his bounty to partial benefits, as he had already done by creation, but becoming himself the gift he bestowed on man, God revealed an order of beneficence until then unknown. The mysterious veil, which shrouded from human intelligence the sight of the *Holy of holies*, or love in its absolute perfection, was rent asunder, and the world contemplated face to face, on the mountain of sacrifice, the living archetype of an infinite devotedness. Enlightened and animated by this revelation of love, human nature felt within itself the developement of a new sentiment. *The intelligence of the heart*, to use scriptural language, soared above its ancient limits, and man learned to love and serve his fellow

* Manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum, quod manifestatum est in carne. Epist. pr. ad Timoth. cap. iii. v. 16.

man, not merely at the expence of what he possessed, but even at the sacrifice of his repose, his health, and his life. We had seen, under the influence of the primitive religion, men immolate themselves for their parents, friends, and country, but none *for man*, considered only as a member of the human family. The perpetual miracle of christian charity is, to have raised even to devotedness this sentiment of beneficence which, under the primitive society, was the link that united the family of mankind in the bonds of affection. It transcends ancient beneficence as much as sacrifice does a mere act of kindness. In this particularly consists the regeneration of love. The beneficence that was limited to alms was charity in its infancy, as yet restrained by *the elements of this world*. It was at the foot of the cross it attained its maturity. From that moment, replenished with courage and life, it rejoices in the most painful labour, triumphs over all the repugnances of nature, faces death with a serene eye, and on its pale brow exhibits the halo of martyrdom.

Hence we see that protestant countries, which

deem the subscription list, the test of christian charity and reduce it to a mere question of arithmetic, have lost its genuine notion. The Saviour having *come, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law*, there is no doubt but the ancient and universal precept of almsgiving ought, not only exist, but be more generously observed by the nations which have felt, in any degree, the influence of christianity, and that such is the fact will appear in the most striking manner, by comparing Mahometanism, one of the most degraded among the christian sects, with the most distinguished of the Pagan nations. This sort of beneficence which is to be seen wherever the primitive religion has been known and practiced, ought also be found among protestant nations ; for, as long as the principle of mental independence has not produced its last results, it must necessarily preserve some common faith in these primitive truths, without which no society, be it even barbarous or corrupt, could exist. It is equally incontestible that the countries separated from catholic unity, among whom a true and modest beneficence is practiced, superior by its activity to that of ancient nations, are

precisely those where the mass of the people, less subject to the sceptical action of individual rationalism, have preserved, by virtue of a contrary principle, more positive faith in those christian dogmas which ancient protestantism had borrowed from the Catholic Church. But as the character which particularly distinguishes christian devotedness from primitive beneficence, does not merely consist in a greater multiplicity of good works of the same class, but rather in a new species of good works, the Church, the depository of genuine christianity, ought not only perpetuate this beneficence of the primitive times, of which the creative bounty was the model, but further she ought unceasingly produce that perfect charity whose type is found in the sacrifice of redemption.

The comparison of catholicism with protestantism presents, on this point, a remarkable phenomenon of the moral world, which attracted the attention of Voltaire. "The nations separated from the Roman communion have but *imperfectly imitated*, that generous charity" * by which the latter is charac-

terised. As the spirit of any church eminently shews itself in its clergy, let us compare with the catholic priesthood, I was about to say the priesthood—no, the ministry of the protestant communion. I readily admit all the traits of individual beneficence which may be quoted in its favour. One thing only I ask; shew me in that clergy, as a body, the spirit of sacrifice. I have not met with a single instance in their history, even at the period of their greatest religious fervour, to prove that they had received grace to brave pestilence in the discharge of the first of their duties. “In 1543 some ministers presented themselves to the council of Geneva, confessing that it was their duty to console those who were attacked by pestilence, but none of them having courage enough to do so, they prayed the council to pardon them their weakness, *God not having given them grace to encounter the danger with the necessary intrepidity*, with the exception of Mathew Geneston, who offered to go if the *lot* should fall on him” * How different the language which Cardinal Borromeo

* State Registeries of the Genevian Republic, from 1535 to 1792.

addressed to his clergy almost at the same time, and in similar circumstances. "The most tender care that the best of fathers can bestow on his children in this time of desolation, the Bishop should bestow on his people both by his zeal and his ministry, in order that other men, stimulated by his example, may embrace, all the works of christian charity. As to parish priests and all those who have charge of souls, far from them be the thought to deprive their flocks of the most trifling services, at a time when they are so essential to them. Let them take the fixed determination to brave them all with a good heart, even death itself, rather than abandon, in this utter destitution of all aid, the faithful confided to their care by Christ who purchased them with his blood."*

* *Tempore pestilentiae episcopus quaecumque pietatis officia a parente optimo filiis præstari afflictissimo illo tempore oporteat, ea studio et ministerio suo ita præstabit ut ad omnia caritatis christianæ opera cæteri homines inflammentur. Parochi autem, animarumve curatores, tantum abest ut necessario eo tempore populum cujus curam gerunt, aliquo modo destituant, ut fixa animi deliberatione sibi statuendum putent omnia prorsus, etiam mortis pericula, paratissimo animo subire, potius quam fideles Christi sanguine redemptos ac sibi præcipue in curam traditos in summa pene omnium adjumentorum necessitate deserere. Concil, mediol, v. part ii, cap. 4.*

Neither he, nor his priests, nor so many poor friars, at whom the *intrepid* pastors of Geneva were accustomed to sneer in safety, waited until the *lot should fall on them* to fly to the bed of pestilence. A parrallel instituted between the conduct of both clergy amid such frightful calamities would afford matter for a moral statistic replete with interest. At all periods, and even recently, when a contagious malady was devastating some cantons of Germany, where the two religious creeds came in contact, the same contrast was strikingly manifested : it attracted the notice of the public journals. In fact we find it to prevail every where : “compare the protestant missions to our missions : what an unspeakable difference in the spirit which forms them, the means by which they operate, the success with which they are respectively attended ! Where are the protestant ministers who sacrifice life in announcing to the American Savage or to the learned Chinese *the good tidings* of salvation ? England may, as long as she please, boast of her apostles at *Lancaster* and her bible societies ; she may, in pompous reports, describe the progress of agriculture among the Negroes, and

of the elementary sciences among the Hindoos; all these pitiful counting-house missions, whereof policy is the sole mover, as gold is the sole agent, only serve to demonstrate the incurable religious apathy of protestant societies, alive to interest alone, and whoever can distinguish a noble action, inspired by a sublime motive, from a proceeding dictated by mercenary calculation, must recognise, if he be sincere, how infinite the distance between the Bishop of Tabarca, who lately fell by the sword of persecution, in the midst of the flock gained to christianity by his courage and labours, and the Methodist missionary, whose prudent zeal conducts him only to places where his life is not exposed to danger, and who, according to a previous contract, is paid by the head for his converts.”* Transcending the limits of this world, the devotedness of our missionaries has embraced every species of suffering and death. They have been seen crowding the dungeons of Constantinople, expiring with the hymn of triumph on their lips beneath the tomahawk of the savage, and pouring

* *Melanges of the Abbé de la Mennais*, tom. 1, p. 366.

out in torrents on the Calvaries of Japan the blood of redemption which flowed in their veins. Name the desert, the rock of the ocean, unvisited by conquest or commerce, which has not been rendered glorious by the tomb of some martyr of Catholic Charity. And whilst the love which animates the Church would appear to be exhausted from so many losses, we perceive it, issuing from her bosom, in various forms, in these numerous religious congregations, whose members devoted body and soul to the service of suffering humanity, offer themselves up as a holocaust of charity ; a devotedness which is in many respects more touching than that of martyrdom. For if an effort of courage be necessary to sacrifice life, something still greater is required in order to support an entire life of sacrifice. A Protestant journal, wishing to cite the two heroes of Christian charity, selected among the Catholics Vincent of Paul, and among the Protestants, not a minister, what indeed is truly remarkable, but a worthy philanthropic traveller. A single trait will suffice to characterize these two men. The monument raised in Westminster Abbey to the memory of

Howard, represents him holding in his hand plans of beneficence on a roll of paper. The poor Catholic priest has recorded his, as God has stamped his power, in his works, and one of his creations is the heart of those virgins who are the heroic mothers of all the unfortunate.

What is the donation of some pieces of gold, which does not deprive the rich man of a single enjoyment, compared with the bestowal of one's self? Who is not struck by the difference between a subscriber to the Bible Societies and a sister of charity? The retiring modesty of Catholic devotedness serves but to increase its splendour. I appeal to the conscientious testimony of all for the fact, that, though Protestantism presents administrations of beneficence, we look in vain for the humble victims of charity wherever it prevails.

Let us now attend to the important truth which results from all these facts. Christian charity is superior to ancient beneficence. What is the source of this superiority? a more extensive manifestation of divine love. Catholic charity compared to Protestant beneficence, exhibits a similar superiority, which

consequently must have for its principle the true, and for the same reason, the genuine sentiment of this love. Protestant individualism, in impelling the mind to scepticism, gradually destroys charity together with faith; benevolence withers away as the light of *truth becomes extinguished*. This is the grand cause to which all others are subordinate. But this general explanation leaves another question to be solved. As this degradation manifested itself from the commencement of the reformation, it remains to inquire which, among the articles rejected by ancient Protestantism, is that whose destruction has specially contributed to alter, and extinguish that glowing christian charity which characterizes Catholicism. Ask the Church by what means she daily excites, revives, and nourishes this wonderful sentiment? Her only response will be, to point to the inscription which crowns the mysterious tabernacle; "*It is thus God has loved the world.*" When love is to be explained, whom will you believe, if not those who love.

To comprehend in its full extent the action of this principle of love, we should call to mind how it raises

to a superior degree of sanctity the duties of primitive beneficence, whilst it nourishes at the same time that spirit of sacrifice which is the peculiar character of Christianity. Charity does not enter into the human heart without a struggle, for there it finds an eternal opponent—pride, the first born of egotism, and the parent of hatred. The contempt of man for his fellow man produced the cruel theories of slavery, which existed among the degenerate nations of antiquity. But as soon as Christianity had stamped on the brow of all the seal of an august fraternity with him who is at the same time both man and God, these theories quickly disappeared. Nevertheless, as in reviving the sentiment of the dignity of human nature, it respected, in the inequality of conditions, one of the elements of our present social state, pride, abusing this necessary order for the purpose of reassuming some at least of its former enjoyments, endeavours to create a petty slavery even under the empire of love. The insolent disdain so often manifested for the poor, and the harsh treatment of servants, furnish the proof. But, as in raising human nature to a

union with the Divinity; Christ broke the degrading yoke that had so long pressed upon it, so by imparting himself to man in the holy communion, which in a certain sense deifies the Christian, he perpetually combats in our morals the very shadow of that ancient barbarism which still lingers among us. Never, indeed, did the dogma of fraternal equality receive a more sacred sanction. Its most expressive sign, consecrated by universal custom, is a participation of the same repast. Here, the great and the humble, the young and the old, the rich and the destitute, come together to the same table, as to a family feast, and this feast is—God himself. The beggar, who this evening is at your gate, on to-morrow will place himself by your side at the banquet of eternal life. Know you whence comes this poor servant who suffers so much from your imperious temper? He enters your house amid the reverence of angels; for he bears within him the God who shall judge you. Whoever will closely observe the character of the Christian nations will easily recognise this secret, but constant action, of faith in the real presence. It is to it we owe, at least in part, one of the most

beautiful traits of our manners :—the dignity of the servant, the notion and sentiment of which, some nations, particularly England and Geneva, would seem to have lost.

The poor man is a superior being in Christianity. His eminent dignity is one of the first articles of the symbol of charity. We blindly disdain his apparent lowliness : but what state more lowly, what more obscure, what comes nearer to annihilation, than that in which Jesus Christ presents himself to us ? He who has said "*This is my body, this is my blood,*" has also said "*As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me.*"* If our faith be not lively enough to recognise, under the rags of misery, the representation of the *Prince of the future world*, how shall it adore, under the meanest emblem, the majesty of the Master of the universe ? Each mark of contempt towards the poor contains a principle of infidelity and the germ of blasphemy. Let us penetrate more deeply the great mystery of faith : communion, unaccompanied by

* Amen dico vobis : quamdiu fecistis uni ex fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis—St. Matt. xxv. v. 40.

works of charity, would be like an unpropitious sacrifice interrupted by crime, a sacrifice without a thanksgiving. Offered up in the temple, it is terminated in the hovel of the poor, for there too dwells *the Son of Man*. The hymn of Mercy is the completion of the rite. These pious considerations, familiar to the faithful, daily produce acts of beneficence, that outnumber all the phrases of philosophers on the subject. Do you refuse to recognise the force of these sentiments, because they bear the impress of mysticism? But is not the marvellous influence which Christianity has exercised throughout the universe connected with ideas of the same order. What are the boasted achievements of *rational* beneficence, when contrasted for a moment with this *mystic* charity, which, during eighteen hundred years, holding its vigil above suffering humanity, affectionately turns its bed of sorrow? Ascend as high as you please into the regions of antiquity, and its records will inform you that all beneficent doctrines are based on mysticism. Viewed in this light mysticism has governed the world: its power dates from creation.

The benignant influence of the mysteries of love is particularly manifested in the pardon of injuries, that other miracle of Christianity. If, thanks to the healing art, the eye of man seeks the science of organization even in the bosom of death, why should we not find means for presenting to the eyes of the infidel the Christian soul, that he may there behold the organization of living charity? Let those who have experienced the troubles, and the remedies by which its tranquillity is restored, bear testimony to it. When the fire of revenge, raging in the inferior appetite, threatens to inflame the will, some drops of the blood of the Man-God extinguish it in its birth. I do not believe that any man who communicates with the necessary dispositions, if he should happen to discover, at that divine instant, even a shade of hatred until then latent in his heart, could endure the aspect of it. In addition to the authority of duty, so powerful at such a moment, and the voice of that blood which cries aloud for pardon, the state of the soul is then imperviable to any sentiment of hatred. There is within her too sweet a peace. The infidel can form no idea of

this order of sentiments ; but at least let him not blaspheme what he does not know, for indeed his doctrine will produce nothing similar. The precept which ordains the pardon of injuries, is the great mystery of Christian morality, as redemption is the great mystery of faith. All human metaphysics are essentially inadequate, I do not say to procure the accomplishment of this duty, but even simply to prove that it is a duty. The heart of man feels that to pardon is noble ? Granted, but does it not also feel that there is a grandeur in an undying vengeance ? Where will you find in mere *sentiment* the obligation of preferring one emotion to the other ? Do you appeal to reason ? unaided by faith, reason tells you that vengeance is but the exercise of the right of self defence. In vain will you torment yourself with the abstractions of idiology : the duty of pardoning injuries will ever remain a consequence without a principle. It is an inference that can be drawn from Christian principles alone. When the wisdom of antiquity had the boldness to *counsel* this virtue, it connected it with ideas of divine pardon which constituted the basis of the primitive

religion. On this subject the genius of all antiquity is imaged in the beautiful allegory of Homer "The gods who are our superiors in virtue, rank, and power, suffer themselves to be touched by compassion. When men offend them by their crimes, they avert the anger of these superior beings, by offering them with humble prayer, incense, vows, libations, and sacrifices. "*Prayers are the daughters of the great Jupiter :*" walking with a faltering step,—a furrowed brow,—downcast eye—and sidelong glances,*they constantly follow Injury*, which, with a bold and light step, easily precedes them, and pervades the earth in its course of ruin. *They come to repair the wrong which it has done.* These daughters of Jupiter are bountiful to him who respectfully receives them, and they graciously hear his petitions. If any person obstinately repel, or reject them, they supplicate Jupiter to send him Injury, that he may suffer condign punishment."*

Attend now to the Catholic doctrine. The pardon, which drew its being from the cross and which dwells in the tabernacle, waits not till prayer, with a downcast eye, comes to blot out the traces of the

* Iliad, chap. ix.

offence. As the God-Saviour opens his arms to guilty mortals, and makes the first advance to heal the wounds which in offending him they have inflicted on themselves : thus Pardon, the first born of Christ, and like him every where present, precedes the tardy supplications of repentance, and hastens to offer itself to the wrong-doer. Eternal as his Father, he embraces all ages, for him there is neither yesterday, nor to-morrow : yet in favour of man he has his days of benediction and his hours of grace. When the congregation of the devout assemble for the sacrifice at which the libation of the redeeming blood is made, he watches at the door of the temple, and says to all who enter, " If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."* All those who bring a fraternal heart enter with joy,

* Si ergo offers munus tuum ad altare, et ibi recordatus fueris quia frater tuus habet aliquid adversum te, relinque ibi munus tuum ante altare, et vade prius reconciliari fratri tuo, et tunc veniens offeres munus tuum. St. Matt. cap. v., v. 23, 24.

for they bring the grateful offering ; and, when they depart thence to their abode, he says to them ; Go in peace. But if, deceiving his vigilance, some of these false brethren, who secretly sacrifice to Hatred, the queen of hell, dare to advance where love only is admitted, he awaits them at their return. When they pass before him, with a gloomy brow and a heavy heart, he gives them remorse, as a brother, who pursues their steps every where. They are condemned to his scathing embraces. Who shall tell the pangs by which they are tortured ? We only know that a terrible sentence is recorded, in their own breasts, by all the blood which has redeemed the world.

The eucharistic worship, which is the exterior and perpetual realization of an infinite devotedness, which by daily awakening it, nourishes with this sentiment, the memory, the heart, and even the senses of man, penetrates his entire being with the spirit of sacrifice. Self devotedness becomes an habitual sentiment. It is this which gives to charity perseverance and activity. For nothing can supersede the force of habit, and the heart, as well as the body,

has its habits. This action of the principle of love displays itself throughout the history of christianity, and presents to the observant eye a magnificent experience. We collect with a scrupulous curiosity the most minute details connected with the lives of celebrated authors; and very justly, for they are the notes of the history of genius. But how much nobler the subject, in as much as it is more closely linked with the happiness of humanity, to seek in the life, the words, and confidential outpourings of these wonder-workers of charity produced by catholicism, the secret of their incomparable devotedness. There it may be seen that, if the devotedness of Jesus Christ was its source, the communion of his body and of his blood was its daily nourishment, its remedy against the langour of nature, its vital principle which continually caused the pulse of charity to throb more quickly in the human heart. We shall give an illustration. The period comprised in the latter half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, beheld Francis Xavier, Francis of Sales, and Vincent of Paul, names every where in benediction, and which even humility

could not preserve from glory. This triumvirate, composed of different characters, is christian charity personified under its different attributes. Worn out by sacrifice, oppressed beneath the weight of the world he was converting, the heroic Apostle of the East, forgetting his fatigues, his sufferings and continual dangers, exclaims. "The severest pang of the missionary, is not to be able, in certain circumstances, to celebrate the holy mysteries, and to be deprived of the celestial bread which invigorates the human heart, and which is its only consolation amid the evils and contradictions of this life." * Let us now hear the angel of meekness: in tracing with an admirable naiveté the wonders that communion effects in the saints, he did not reflect that he was portraying himself. "They feel, says he, that Jesus Christ pervades their entire being. But what does the Saviour effect by this pervading influence? He purifies all, mortifies all, reforms all, causes the heart to glow with affection, gives light to the understanding, imparts new vigour to the breast, beams from the eyes,

* Letters of St. Francis of Xavier, Liv, cviii, anno 1552.

speaks with the tongue ; he becomes all in all : and then “ we live, not we, but Jesus Christ liveth in us.” * Would you wish now to learn from the mouth of Vincent of Paul what communion is ? “ When you have received the adorable body of Jesus Christ, do you not feel, said he to his priests, do you not feel, the divine fire burning in your breast ” ? † If, condemned to the galleys by human justice, in some reverie of fancy, I imagined that a perfect stranger, impelled by some unaccountable love for me, had come to take upon him my chains ; for the realization of such a day-dream, I must confess I would trust a little more to *the fire which burned* within the breast of Vincent of Paul, than to all the lights of philanthropy.

The philosophers who admire Catholic devotedness, resemble the Egyptians who bless the inundations of the Nile, whose source they know not. “ Perhaps there is nothing more noble, says Voltaire, than the

* Spiritual letters of St. Francis of Sales, liv. ii. cap. 48—Lyons 1634.

† Life of St. Vincent of Paul. By Louis Abelly, Tom. iii. p. 183.

sacrifice made by a delicate sex of beauty, youth, and frequently of high rank, to relieve that aggregate of human misery collected in our hospitals, the very sight of which is so humiliating to our pride and so revolting to our delicacy.”* The truth of this observation is undeniable; but why not proceed to an explanation of the cause? Do you imagine that these retreats are inaccessible to the storms of the moral world? that the human heart, which even pleasure fatigues, never sinks under sacrifice? When in the midst of these gloomy apartments, it cannot but occur to those devoted beings as they bend above the unknown sufferer that, instead of the brilliant society and the fond family which they left, and to whose delights a single word would restore them, they must bind up the wounds of strangers, listen to the shrieks of agony, and follow to the tomb the friendless corpse, not for a week, or a month, but for years—for ever: think you that their courage is never shaken at the sight of such a gloomy future? What then, it may be asked, sustains them in their weakness or preserves them from its influence? You know not: imitate the

* Vide Essay on Morals, c. 139.

example of those who wished to know it—interrogate themselves. Frequent communion, such is their unanimous response. But a truce to words: what will you give them in place of this mystery of love? If their devotedness is the very perfection of moral grandeur, why do you not undertake so glorious a work? Create for us, with your pompous maxims of beneficence, one Sister of Charity for a proof, *only one*,* we ask no more.

These reflections lead to a painful thought. Do these men who, since an ever to be deplored schism, are engaged by profession in combatting the faith of the Church, know what they are doing? Do they know that they are attacking a belief the most productive of every sort of beneficence, as it is that which supports in every part of the universe the spirit of devotedness and sacrifice? May he who was *meek and humble of heart*, despite of the haughty ingratitude of those whom he came to save, avert from our heart and lips every sentiment and expression of bitterness against those unhappy scorners of the most magnificent of his gifts. And how could we speak to them otherwise than with the language

* Vide Appendix.

of love! If this language existed not, it should be invented when speaking of the Eucharist. But at the same time a sorrow, rendered indignant at witnessing its deplorable effects, urges us to raise our voice against their unhallowed ministry. Deeply penetrated with this two-fold sentiment, we would not know how to express the mingled emotions of love and sorrow we feel for them, if we did not call to mind that word of Christ to the first despiser of the *mystery of faith*, that word so affectionate and so overwhelming. Friend whereto art thou come.*

* Amice, ad quid venisti? St Math. Chap. xxvi. v. 50.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Interior Life.

The mystical life is a moral phenomenon of all ages. The various religious treatises of antiquity contain theories of spirituality, which comprise the basis of this order of ideas, as it has been understood by all modern nations. But these theories are divided into two classes which are diametrically opposed. The one, founded on purely philosophical speculations, and principally on pantheism, tended to destroy the active principle in each man, that, by annihilating whatever is peculiar to the individual, he may be blended with the universal soul, and thus become absorbed in the Divinity. Diffused among a crowd of the oriental sects, this doctrine appears to have

originally come from India, and will be found developed together with the principle on which it is based and its demoralizing consequences, in one of the most ancient monuments of sanscrit literature. "He who knows" to use the language of Oupneck-hat, "that all things are the type of the Creator, that one's self and whatever appears to exist *is* the Creator; that the world *proceeds* from him, that he *is* the world, that it *exists* in him and *returns* to him; he who knows this and meditates on it, finds therein the repose of his soul; he is in peace. When the heart has renounced its desires and actions, it then directly tends to its principle, which is the universal soul; when it tends to its principle, it has no other will than that of the true being. It is the nature of the heart to be changed into what it desires; thus the soul becomes God or the world, according as its aspirations are directed to the one or the other. The impure heart is that which *has its desires*; the pure, that which *is divested of them*. The heart absorbed in the perfect being by reflecting that the universal soul exists, becomes that soul, and then its happiness is

ineffable: it knows that this soul resides within it. To be absorbed in God, as in a treasure that one has found, *to affirm nothing, to propose nothing, to say nothing: either I or me; to be without fear and without desire*, such is the mark of salvation, and of supreme happiness. To desire, is to die; not to desire, is to live. Whoever knows the universal being, whoever knows that his soul is the universal soul, becomes light; he is freed from all evil; he is learned without tiresome study; he is happy, he is immortal, he is God. The desire to do a pure work, the apprehension to do a bad one, trouble not the wise; for he knows that both the pure and bad works are God himself (who acts.) The truth is *there is neither production, decay, nor resurrection, neither contemplative, saved, nor salvation*: for the world is but a phantom; there is nothing real but the universal soul which shews itself under the appearance of the world." *

Though clad in the garb of enthusiasm, this doctrine presents a series of consequences, rigorously

* Vide Analysis of Oupneck-hat, by M. Lauguinais. Anquetil Duperron's latin translation may be also consulted.

deduced from pantheism. Errors analogous, in many respects, to this imaginary mysticism which dates an origin of three thousand years, have reproduced themselves, at different periods, in the bosom of christianity, though by an inverse order. For, whilst the Indian quietists derived their theories of spirituality from pantheism, the European quietists, grounding themselves on a mistaken notion of perfection, established, maxims that logically tended to the same point from which the others had set out. Their doctrine on the necessity of annihilating all individual operation of the understanding and of the will, cannot otherwise be conceived, than by supposing man to be a modification of the infinite substance: for if he be an intelligent creature distinct from God, as such he must be active; matter alone being inert; and further as a distinct intelligent being, he ought to enjoy an activity proper to himself. Thus many of those mystics, drawing from their system of *unification* the same consequences as the ancients, derived from it also, like them, the indifference of all actions, and absolute impeccability, identifying, in the same way, the will of man with

the will of God, the limited being with the infinite. Molinos, by the tendency of his system impelled to pantheism, announces it in terms so similar to those of Oupneck-hat, that one would be inclined to suspect, that the quietism of the seventeenth century was, like so many other systems, but the revival of the oriental doctrines.

The principle that contains this great error lurks in the writings, meritorious in other points, of some ascetic authors, who, being persons of true piety, would have rejected it had they perceived its consequences. The devotion they inculcate, instead of regulating the activity of the soul, tends only to weaken and destroy it. The germ of all pantheistical quietism is contained in this mistaken notion, as far remote from genuine catholic devotion, such as it has been understood in all ages, as being is from nonentity. Notwithstanding this error, these ancient sages who may be denominated, according to many of the holy Fathers, as the primitive christians, often gave admirable precepts of spirituality. Derived from traditionary faith, their theories, instead of destroying the *active principle*, aimed at its deve-

lopement, exciting man to perfect within himself, by a continual purification of his heart, the living image of the Deity. Such is also, but in a degree necessarily superior, the spirituality consecrated by christianity fully developed. It dilates and fertilizes the soul, as quietism paralyzes it by a mortal lethargy, for it substitutes for this passive pleasure, which constitutes the essence of false mysticism, the active principle—love, which is to the moral, what fire, its ancient emblem is to the physical world—the universal stimulant. It may be interesting to contrast with the pantheistical mysticism of Oupneck-hat the description of catholic devotion, given by an unknown author of a book translated almost into every language, the genuine christian Oupneck-hat, that contains the pure essence of the religion of love.

“Love is an excellent thing, a great good indeed : what alone maketh light all that is burthensome, and equally bears all that is unequal. For it carries a burthen without being burthened, and makes all that which is bitter, sweet and savoury. The love of Jesus is noble and generous, it spurs us on to do great things, and excites us to desire always that

which is most perfect. Love will tend upwards, and is not to be detained by things on earth. Love will be at liberty, and free from all wordly affection, lest its interior sight be hindered, lest it suffer itself to be entangled with any temporal interest, or cast down by losses. Nothing is sweeter than love; nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more generous, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth: for love proceeds from God, and cannot rest but in God, above all things created. The lover flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free and not held. He gives all for all, and has all in all; because he rests in one sovereign good above all, from whom all good flows and proceeds. He looks not at the gifts, but turns himself to the Giver above all goods. Love often knows no measure, but is inflamed above measure. Love feels no burthen, values no labours, would willingly do more than it can; complains not of impossibility, because it conceives that it may, and can do all things. It is able therefore to do anything, and it performs and effects many things; where he that loves not, faints and lies down. Love watches, and sleeping, slumbers not.

When weary, is not tired ; when straitened, is not constrained ; when frightened, is not disturbed ; but like a lively flame, and a torch all on fire, it mounts upwards ; and securely passes through all opposition. Whosoever loveth, knoweth the cry of this voice. Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand resigned to the will of his Beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. He that loveth, must willingly embrace all that is hard and bitter, for the sake of his Beloved, and never suffer himself to be turned away from him by any contrary occurrences whatsoever." *

This active christian devotion, which nothing wearies, and that pantheistical insensibility, which nothing can excite, are the forms, the latter of egotism that destroys, the former of the spirit of sacrifice which is the conservative principle of the moral order. For quietism, which would appear to aim at the annihilation of *self*, tends, on the contrary, to constitute it the centre of all things, and is at best but the ambition of a boundless egotism. On the contrary, in developing the activity of every

* Imitation of Christ, Liv. iii, c. 5.

individual, love, that lives only to embrace all, associates man to the action of the infinite being, emphatically so called—namely, the gift—and the sacrifice of self.

However, as error has no innate principle of support, pantheistical mysticism includes a great truth. The absorption of man in God is but the corruption of a primitive and eternal dogma—the union of God and man. In this point of view, there is something in the system which responds to the wants of human nature. It aspires to this union, it endeavours to free itself from the bonds which bind it to what is changeable and perishable, that it may cleave to the immutable reality, for it feels that there alone is to be found the repose of pure liberty. So far is catholicism from refusing to recognise these wants, that her consoling truths serve only to nourish and satisfy them. In promising man that one day, without divesting himself of his nature, he shall become one with God, it imparts to him, in this terrestrial union, the foretaste of a future union. The nature of this union is such, that in order to express it, it employs terms similar to those of the pantheistical

system, and to which usage alone, regulated according to the explanations of a severe orthodoxy, has attached a sense formally exclusive of that great error. It teaches that God, by communion, so imparts himself to us, that the substance of Christ is mingled with our substance to make of him and us but one; * that the result of this communion, is not merely a union of will, but of nature; † and that we

* Initiati dictis obsequantur, ut non solum per dilectionem, sed etiam reipsa, cum illa carne commisceamur; id quod efficitur per cibum quem ille dedit, volens nobis ostendere quanto erga nos ferveat amore. Propterea se nobis commiscuit et in unum corpus totum constituit, ut unum simus, quasi corpus junctum capiti. St. Joanes chris. hom. 46 in Matth.

† Est ergo innobis ipse per carnem, et sumus, in eo, dum secundum hoc quod nos sumus in Deo est. Quam autem in eo per sacramentum communicat æ carnis et sanguinis simus, ipse testatur, dicens: et hic mundus me jam non videt; vos autem me videtis, quoniam, ego vivo et vos vivitis; quoniam ego in Patre meo, et vos in me, et ego in vobis. Si voluntatis tantum unitatem intelligi vellet, cur gradum quemdam atque ordinem consummandæ unitatis exposuit; nisi, ut cum ille in Patre per naturam divinitatis esset, nos contra in eo per corporalem ejus nativitatem, et ille rursus in vobis per sacramentorum inesse mysterium crederetur? ac si perfecta per Mediatorem unitas doceretur, cum nobis in se manentibus ipse maneret in Patre, et in Patre manens maneret in nobis, et ita ad unitatem Patris proficeremus; cum qui in eo naturaliter secundum nativitatem inest, nos quoque in eo naturaliter inessemus, ipso in nobis naturaliter permanente. St. Hil. de Trin. Lib. viii, No. 13

are identified with him.* To express this unity, catholic faith does a happy violence to language, by imposing upon it an extraordinary syntax; the noble antithesis of "Saint Paul, I live, no not I," is eminently expressive of the eucharistic transformation. Catholocism also teaches that, as Christ gives himself to us by love, this union cannot be accomplished but in as much as through love we make him the offering of ourselves, and thus it eradicates the deep-rooted egotism of the pantheist. Two opposite systems of error have respectively failed to recognise an essential portion of human nature, viewed in relation to the point of which we now treat; the one, whose germ is found in the stoical notions, and which has been, by modern Jansenism and quietism, connected with other ideas, commands man to love God, even in the supposition that he shall be eternally separated from him: it condemns

* Quem ad modum enim si quis ceram ceræ conjunxerit, utique alteram in altera invicemque immeasse videbit: eodum quoque opinor modo, qui Salvatoris nostri Christi carnem sumit, æc ejus pretiosum sanguinem bibit, ut ipse ait, unum quiddam cum eo reperitur. St Cyril, In ev, St Joannes, c. 5, v, 56.

him to a hopeless and endless activity. The other, confounding man with God, and thereby concentrating all his energies in self destroys the principle of activity by destroying love. Catholocism combines the truths hidden in these contradictory errors. Uniting the want which impels us to look to God for peace and happiness, so essential to our nature, with that other want of activity by which alone nature is perfected, it corresponds at the same time to both, for it makes love, which is essentially active, the medium of a union with God. The reciprocal gift of God and Man, responding to each other—behold catholocism unveiled. This is the source—this the centre of every thing.

The love of man for God, such as Christianity has infused into the mind and heart, is a wonder which we cannot sufficiently admire. Its universality makes it appear natural, and yet it is nothing less than the result of a most profound and intimate change in our moral constitution. The human race, agitated a long time by the recollection of its fall, passed through the ordeal of a salutary fear to the delights of perfect love, in the same way as a man bowed

beneath the weight of crime arises the beloved of God. We cannot go from one extreme to the other but by regular grades of transition. The sentiment which, according to the laws of the human heart, should first develop itself in sinful man is that of terror. But terror would immediately beget despair, if hope did not at once present herself with a redeeming look, and sweetly lead him to the bosom of love. Such is the history of mankind ; for Providence governs the human family as an individual. Two sentiments divided the guilty heart of the children of Adam with regard to the God of holiness ; the fear of approaching him and the desire of being familiarly united to him. In the primitive religion, fear was the predominant sentiment. So deeply impressed was the worship of antiquity with it, that, when atheism endeavoured to explain the origin of religion, its first hypothesis was *that fear had made the gods*.* Not that hope had ever abandoned the earth. A promise had been made our first parents, which caused all antiquity to proclaim, with the ancient sages of China, *that when innocence perished, mercy*

* Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor.

appeared. * Nevertheless the original anathema, so vividly represented to the imagination by the show of those terrible rites that constituted the universal liturgy; made a deeper impression than that mysterious salvation, but dimly seen through the shadows of futurity. From this unquiet and troubled hope there arose, after a struggle a love tremulous as itself, and, during forty centuries, the heart of fallen man appeared more susceptible of fear than of confidence. The Gospel has, in the full force of the term, wrought a revolution in the human soul, by effecting a change in relation to the two sentiments that divided it: fear has ceded to love the empire of the heart. The *God of gods* having abased himself to such a degree as to become *our friend*, † *our brother*, ‡ *our servant*, § fallen humanity immediately

* Chinese Memoirs, Tom. 1, p. 108.

† Jam non dicam vos servos, quia servus neseit quid faciat dominus ejus. Vos autem dixi amicos quia omnia quaecumque audavi a Patre meo nota feci vobis.—St. Joannes, ch. xv. v. 15.

‡ Non confunditur fratres eos vocare.—Ep. ad. Heb. c. ii. v. ii.

§ Filius hominis non venit ministrari sed ministrare.—St. Matt. chap. xx., v. 28.

raised itself to a sort of familiarity with the Omnipotent, the idea of which was utterly unknown to the ancients, and which they would have deemed nothing less than sacrilege. This is the genuine and distinctive mark of Christian nations when compared with others ; but they do not all partake of it in the same degree. This sentiment has been visibly weakened among Protestants. And hence it is they deem the free and cheerful piety of Catholics an irreverence to the Deity. What is considered by them religious respect, is but a cold and gloomy reserve, which makes Christian piety retrograde towards the imperfection of the law of fear. Too many recollections of Sinai mingle with their worship of Calvary. If the difference which exists on this point between the ancients and moderns proceed from the familiarity established by Christ between man and God, the difference that exists between Catholic devotion and the frigid worship of Protestants is necessarily derived from an analogous principle, and supposes that Catholics are more familiarized with Christ himself. This indeed is the result of faith in the real presence or permanent incarnation which

draws us to Christ, as the incarnation itself made us approximate more closely to God. It is no longer to humanity in general, but to each human being that the Word unites itself. It not only enters into the limits of our common nature, but even into those of our personality: it in some measure deifies our essence, and christianises the selfish principle. The union which changes food into the substance of the body it nourishes, is the emblem of this incarnation in us. To seek a more intimate union would be to desire to be the man-God. Who does not perceive that a worship founded on such a mystery, must raise to the highest possible degree this sentiment of familiarity with God which is the basis of Christianity? In our admirable prayers for communion, the soul speaks to Jesus, as the spouse to her well beloved, and fear to her is but the modesty of confidence.

To form a correct idea of this mystery, viewed in this light, we must consider the order in which love is developed. It does not shew itself in a created being, till a superior being has lowered itself for the purpose of manifesting this sentiment to it. Such

is the invariable, the universal law, of which the idea is admirably expressed in those languages, in which the words, propensity and inclination are deemed synonymous with love. The child learns to love as he learns to speak. The tenderness of his parents awakens in his soul, as yet alive only to physical sensation, a superior order of affections till then unknown : his heart begins to throb at the smile of his mother. The general usage which obliges, in the conjugal state, man, or the strong being, first to manifest his love, originates in the same law which is not less visible in civil society. Fear is the first sentiment which power inspires. Should it desire love, it must commence by loving. This sentiment, like that of truth, is propagated from the high to the low, and this order which governs the present world, is equally developed in a more elevated sphere. Faith shews us numerous choirs of intelligent creatures, which lowering themselves towards us, anticipate our friendship by a celestial friendship, and which in admirable gradation form an immense hierarchy of love. It might be said that creation rests on an inclined plane, so that all creatures

appear to incline towards those beneath in order to love and to be loved by them, thus passing from one to the other, and as it were from hand to hand, down to the lowest rank—that flaming torch kindled in the highest heaven, and caught from the bosom of eternal love. The Apostle of charity, soaring on eagle wing to the first cause of this universal law, exclaims, *Let us love God, for he has loved us first.** He by whom all things were made: the Word of God, in creating myriads of intelligent beings, originally manifested to them his love under forms analogous to their nature, and consequently as various as the modifications of their being. By the very act of thus lowering himself to them, he must necessarily have appeared in a state of abasement, under a form of existence inferior to that which he has in the bosom of the Father. Thus, according to the philosophy of antiquity, creation was considered a sort of annihilation of the Divinity, as the beginning of a sacrifice whereof God himself was the victim. But follow up the progress of this divine abasement,

* *Diligamus Deum, quoniam, Deus prior delexit nos —*
Ep. St. Joannes, Cap. iv., v. 19.

whose boundless plan was marked out from all eternity by love itself. He whom God *begat before the morning star*, * *who is the splendour of his glory, the figure of his substance*, † in descending from his bosom, passed over the various orders of creation to arrive at the most remote region of intellectual life, at the extreme point where spiritual life ends, and blind existence commences. There he found man, who is kindred alike to angels and to brutes; the shadow of a Deity in the body of an animal. *And the word was made flesh*. Could he humble himself still more after having entered so deeply into the narrow proportions of a creature below whom no intelligent beings are found? His love desired a still more profound abasement. The God who concealed himself under the magnificent veil of nature, who shrouded himself in the obscure veil of humanity, entombs himself under the appearance of lowly matter, to be like it the food of man. There all disappears, even his human form; he is as if he were

* Ex utero ante luceferum genui te.—Psal. cix.

† Splendor gloriæ et figura substantiæ ejus.—Cap. ad Heb. c. 1, v. 3.

not, and, arrived at the ultimate point of abasement, he sinks into the bottomless abyss of our miseries.

For each degree of divine abasement, there is a divine developement of human nature : the latter ascending in love to God, in proportion as the former descends by charity to man. The ancient doxology *to the good and great God*, is the summary of the piety of the first times, but when he who governs us had become *the Emanuel, the God whose greatness* as Bossuet remarks is founded more on goodness than on power, he created in man a new heart. The sentiment of his love was more vivid than the recollection of his majesty, and Christianity, in preserving the sublimity of ancient language to describe the formidable power of *him who is*, has added nothing thereto, whilst it has formed with the elements of primitive language an idiom specially consecrated to the use of love. In this language taught by the Gospel, faith in the Eucharist has formed a magnificent and tender dialect, the exclusive property of the Catholic Church. Its type is found in a fragment of holy writ, bearing a peculiar character, namely, the Cantic of Canticles. As the Apocalypse which

exhibits to us the sublime figure of justice driving, from age to age, iniquity towards the abyss, forms by its terrific imagery a striking contrast with the serenity of the Gospel of mercy, so the Song of Solomon exhibits a difference not less remarkable with the austere majesty of the old Testament: It was the prophecy of a mystery of love which time was to unveil: and justly might it be called the Apocalypse of Christian charity. When Jesus Christ had consummated the mystery, the seals of this book were broken, its language understood, and its most impassioned figures naturally presented themselves to the pen of Catholic writers, as often as they endeavoured to express the ineffable nuptials which are accomplished in the communion. Protestant authors make comparatively little use of this sacred epithalamium, which appears to them a collection of hieroglyphics of which the key is lost.

The difference between Catholicism and Protestant piety is marked in their prayers. Prayer is the accent of religion: it exhibits its heart, as the human voice reflects the shades of thought and feeling. The supplications of the ancient world were

the cry of a great misery to a great mercy. But with the prayer which we have learned from the lips of the Saviour a new order commenced. The Christian exposes his necessities to God : but it is not with these he begins : he first of all supplicates God on account of God himself. He desires that his name of Almighty Father, the principal and only cause of all that is, may be every where known and adored ; that his reign, the reign of his Word, the eternal King of the spiritual world, may come ; that heaven and earth, subject to his holy will, may be the sanctuary of his Spirit of love. It is only then, the Christian begins to supplicate for himself. In three words, he embraces all the wants of the present, past, and future—this, three-fold existence—the passing eternity of the creature. The *present* wants but a little bread, the bread of our *indigence*, according to the Syriac version, the material emblem of that food which is the *supersubstantial aliment*,* which alone appeases the hunger of the soul. *The past* has nothing to

* Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie.—
Vulg. St. Matt. cap. vi., v. 2.

ask for, save pardon, and to obtain it, the Christian must *pardon*. *In the future*, he has nothing to fear but himself. His prayer concludes like the universal petition of all ages and nations; for *deliverance from evil* in the design of infinite goodness, is the end of our creation. Though admirable in every word, the Lord's prayer is particularly distinguished from the forms of supplication inspired by the primitive religion, in this particular that the disciple of Christ, more occupied in his prayer with God than with himself, does not cry out with afflicted humanity, peace to men, until he has chaunted with the angels, Glory to God ! Compare the Catholic and Protestant prayers with this divine model, and, that the terms of comparison may be just, commence by retrenching from the last the prayers literally borrowed from the Catholic liturgy or formed on them ; there is no sincere Protestant who will not be impressed by the difference. However gross the prejudices that intervene, genuine devotion, whose ear is ever delicate, cannot fail to distinguish the true from the false accents of supplication. Whence

is it that so many Protestants envy the unction of Catholic prayers which sheds so much sweetness even on the sentiment of our wants, and lends to repentance almost the charm of innocence? Faith in the Eucharist, which, at every moment, powerfully excites confidence, love and the spirit of sacrifice constantly upholds prayer in the degree of perfection to which it has been raised by Christianity, whilst wherever this faith is altered or rejected, prayer necessarily retrogrades towards its primitive imperfection, a thing no longer tolerable, for, under the empire of religion fully developed, it is a grating discord, which disturbs the harmony of the whole. A striking comparison will serve to illustrate these observations. The Lutheran belief in the Eucharist is that which differs least from the Catholic, which latter has been entirely rejected by the Calvinists. The English system, though Calvinistic at bottom, oscilates between Wittenburg and Geneva, inasmuch as according to Burnet, it considers as indifferent the dogma of the corporal presence, so strenuously maintained, for the moment of communion, by the primitive Lutherans, but rejected with

such horror, as an impious tenet, by the fanaticism of the ancient Calvinists. Now it has been remarked that Lutheranism, notwithstanding the ferocious temper of its founder, presented from its very origin a milder character, in point of piety, when contrasted with the repulsive harshness of Calvinism though established by a man less violent. The character of the English system is intermediate : the Calvinists think it too devout ; the Lutherans, not sufficiently so. Hence the three principal fractions of Protestantism are distinguished by a corresponding relation to piety, as they recede from or approximate to the generative dogma of Catholic piety. I am far from supposing that the peculiar character of each of these sects has been determined by this cause alone ; but in order to account for the phenomenon, it should not be forgotten that the moral, as well as the physical world, has its affinities and combinations. This law, which may be demonstrated by the history of many ancient sects,* shewed itself in Jansenism, the last of modern heresies. One of the first effects of its anti-social

* Vide Appendix.

doctrine was to estrange from communion. The stern controvertist, who contended to the last for the rarity of grace, was naturally impelled by his sombre logic to publish the manifesto of his sect against *frequent* communion. Impervious to the mysteries of love, jansenistical devotion is cold and heartless. It stands self-convicted of *wanting* the *grace* of prayer.

The Eucharist is, in Catholicism, the centre of those pious communities known under the name of Congregations. They have existed, at all times, and places under ever-variable forms, for they are precisely destined to correspond to the moral wants of times and places. The outcry against these institutions considered in themselves argues at least a profound ignorance of human nature. As, besides the tenets common to all, there are various modes of conceiving them, every individual—country, and period, having its peculiar intelligence; in the same manner and for the same reason, besides that fund of piety which is common to all Christians, there are modes equally diversified *of feeling* religion. When a certain number of individuals agree in

their ideas and feelings, these analogous dispositions necessarily tend to associate, and for that purpose seek an exterior and appropriate form. This tendency produces in the intellectual order, schools of Christian philosophy; and, in the sentimental, congregations of piety. Their suppression would reduce piety to a geometrical equality, to a state of inactivity opposed to the laws of nature, which so far from impeding, stimulate the free and varied developement of individual power and energy. But those particular societies, by the very fact of having each its mode of life, would soon form as many different modes of worship, were they not based on those of general worship. This is what the Church does, in giving them the altar of sacrifice for a centre, and frequent communion as their first law. The eucharistic devotion, which is of general obligation, is to the particular forms of devotion which every individual may adopt what the symbol is to their different systems: it is both the foundation and the rule. Catholicism maintains, in point of piety as of government, something fixed and common, for such is, in every possible order of

things, the necessary support of all individual activity and existence ; variety in the midst of unity. Such is Catholicism—such is nature.

Frequent communion continually leads back the soul to itself. This sort of action, sensible at every period of the Church, is more perceptible in the middle ages. The interior of monasteries exhibited a vision of the angelic life amid the ferocity of a barbarous age. The religious orders which cultivated the soil of Europe still accomplished more, they reclaimed the moral waste of the soul. The Cenobites were obliged by their rule often to approach the sacred table. The Divine Word which alone resounded in the depths of their solitude, and which was prolonged in the silence of their meditations, daily reminded them of the perfection which a familiarity with the Holy of Holies demanded from them. This thought continually excited them to acquire the knowledge of their own hearts. They cultivated those with exceeding care, that they might carry to the most august as well as to the sweetest of all mysteries, the purest and the most delicate flower of human affection. The ascetic

works of that period are marked by an exquisite refinement of feeling. From the cloister it gradually made its way into the world, and, directing itself to other objects, inspired chivalry with that mysticism of love and honor, which has exercised such powerful influence on the manners and literature of the christian world. The asceticism of the middle age has handed down an inimitable work, to which Catholics, Protestants and philosophers, have agreed to pay the best tribute of admiration, viz. that of the heart. How wonderful that a small book of mysticism the production of such an age, should have imparted a deeper tone of reflection to the meditative genius of Leibnitz, and kindled almost to enthusiasm the cold temperament of Fontenelle! No person has ever read a page of the *Imitation*, particularly in the hour of affliction, *who did* not say in concluding : this reading has done me good. Next to the Bible this work is the *sovereign* friend of the soul. But where did the poor solitary who wrote it find that inexhaustible love? for never would he have written with so much power and sweetness had he not loved much. He solves the question for us himself. Every

line in his book on the sacrament is a commentary on the preceding ones.

All the relations which we have now considered present but imperfectly the influence of this principle of love : to understand it fully, we should feel it. Why should the infidel refuse to believe so many Christians as to their internal sentiments. Does not their conduct harmonise with their testimony ? Why then should he disdain to hear them ? Is there nothing beautiful but what strikes the senses ? Are the wonders of the heart to be despised as valueless, and, if marks of the Divinity exist any where, where shall they be sought for, if not in the inspiration of virtue ? As for my part I bow with deeper reverence to the accents that sanctify the soul, than to the voice of genius. Let us then listen to them in respectful silence. The Eucharist, they tell us, is an integral part of the two worlds, a temple placed on the boundaries of earth and heaven. *There* is effected a union between the types of the one and the realities of the other, and the communion is accomplished as if beneath the half-opened vestibule of the invisible sanctuary where the eternal union is

consummated. Whilst the senses are detained in the visible order, the soul feels the presence of the invisible ; it enters into it ; it partakes of its substance, like a man placed at the limits of this present material system, who, stretching forth his hand, grasps the boundaries of a higher world. There then passes within the soul what human language would fear to profane by expressing. To that confused murmur of the passions, which as yet agitates the faithful soul, like the last struggle of life, succeeds a profound peace. Shortly after, a commotion sweet as it is powerful, announces the presence of the Deity, and immediately holy desires, prayer, patience, and the spirit of sacrifice, often languid, are again revived. All that is divine within her kindles at the moment : the mental eye becomes purified and receives some rays of that light which is reflected from a brighter world. Emotions, which combine all that is touching in sentiment with all that is calm in reflection, attest the renewed harmony of the spirit and the senses. We may frequently feel on other occasions the joys of virtue ; here alone we are inebriated with all its delights. You would fondly wish to retain these

exquisite sensations, but your efforts are vain. They have been shed on the soul, but to imbue her with the sense of that word of happiness, the name of which belongs to a lost language, whose idiom spoken by the children of Adam contains but the wreck. But the more clearly the soul comprehends that word, the more deeply does she feel that it is not of this world. Until she shall have deposited at the portals of Heaven the burthen of terrestrial virtues, until the moment shall have arrived when she will be freed ever from hope, the joys of the captive soul will be marked by suffering. The pleasure of this world becomes insipid, its happiness a burthen, and, whoever is deeply versed in life must acknowledge, that the greatest miracle of communion is to render it tolerable. These raptures of love mingled with sorrow impart, at that solemn moment, a sublime expression to the countenance. That of joy is rarely so : because joy is so fugitive and false that it appears to give to the human figure a senseless and undignified expression. Sorrow, on the contrary, almost always ennobles the countenance. But the instinct of our primeval destiny, alarmed by the

contrast, seeks another dignity than that of sorrow. The true condition of man is the reparation of his misery, and his countenance never exhibits a nobler terrestrial aspect, than when he embodies the expression of that mystery of sorrow and grace, on receiving the impress of a divine joy in the abyss of his sufferings. Mark that christian who adores his Saviour within his soul: would you not say that if that mouth, closed by recollection, were to open, a voice would come forth, attempting, though in a plaintive tone the canticles of Heaven? It would blend the sighs of man with the rapture of an angelic spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

*The connexion of all the errors that destroy faith
in Divine Love.*

The order of the physical shadows forth the unity of the spiritual world. Each particular phenomenon is interwoven with more general phenomena, those with others, and thus till we arrive at the universal phenomenon which is the harmony of all particular facts. What we denominate particular truths are, in like manner, only glances more or less limited of the eternal and infinite truth. He who contemplates the material universe as the expression of a single law, can easily understand how the sole violation of that law in any given instance would include in principle

the destruction of the entire, and draw after it the total ruin of the system. In the same way, truth being essentially one, all negations finally tend to resolve themselves into one great negation, and there is no error that does not assail the substantial truth or God himself. Thus viewed every culpable error is a deicide. The rejection of the catholic doctrine respecting the Eucharist furnishes an example the more remarkable as it strikingly presents the close union of those consoling dogmas that vivify the human soul by the revelation of boundless love.

The first protestant controvertists who argued against this mystery of love unconsciously mooted a question of vast importance. Freed from scholastic subtleties on the essence of matter and spirit, now exploded from all great systems of philosophy, whether ideal or material, their difficulties arose from the impossibility of conceiving an union of the Infinite with man the finite being, according to the mode of communication which the Catholic dogma supposes. Let us attend to the consequence: the chain of error is about to unfold itself.

It is evident to all that the Deists only applied

the same logic to the fundamental mystery of christianity, in demanding how the increated, impassible, and infinite being could unite himself to our corruptible and mortal nature, in short, how the infinite being could unite himself to the finite, so as to form the Man-God.

But the question does not stop here; for it is equally clear that the Pantheists only generalize it, by asking in turn how the finite can co-exist with the Infinite being who embraces all. Hence the system of the absolute identity of all things: the finite are then but the simple modifications of the universal being.

Thus the question of the Protestants on the Eucharist, of the Deists on the Incarnation, and of the Pantheists on Creation, may be resolved into the single question, viz., that of the relation of the Infinite and finite beings, whereof Pantheism presents the general formula. It is for this reason it attracts all other systems, which sooner or later are absorbed by it, for it is the nature of the human mind not to stop at particular questions, but to ascend till it arrives to that which is the source of

all others. History indeed attests the prevalence of Pantheism compared to other systems of error. It is at the same time the point of departure and the ultimate goal of that philosophy which has broken the bonds of fraternity with faith. It was seen watching over its cradle in the East, and again we behold it at the decline of Grecian philosophy, which, consumed by doubt, buried itself in the school of Alexandria, beneath the ruins of Oriental pantheism. Our age presents a similar tendency: the philosophy of the eighteenth century, the offspring of Grecian philosophy, evidently recedes in Germany and France, before a more comprehensive philosophy, which is reviving Indian pantheism under modern forms. The mind of man, in estranging itself from God, cannot divest itself of that all-absorbing idea. Even in destroying it, he seeks after it and pursues its very shadow. After having refused to believe in a union of God with man, in his love, and even in his existence, when he sees himself separated from him, that unnatural solitude terrifies him—because the want of the Infinite being becomes a torment to him, and no sooner

has he *said in his heart: there is no God*, than his bewildered reason exclaims all is God.

Some perhaps will be astonished to find that protestant logic leads directly to this great error. And in truth the distance which separates the conceptions of Spinosa from the arguments of John Calvin and Theodore of Beze is very considerable. But if the necessary connexion of ideas be closely attended to, it will appear evident that the latter have only narrowed to the dimensions of their understanding that vast principle of error the development of which has been presented by the dutch Jew in colossal proportions.

But we must proceed still further, for the protestant objection, generalized in pantheism, is, at bottom, but the identical objection of the sceptics against all certitude. The reason of man is fallible, because it is finite; certitude is a participation in a reason essentially infallible, and consequently in the sovereign and infinite reason. In demanding then how the reason of man can be certain, they simply ask how finite can participate in infinite reason: a question evidently insoluble; and for the same reason

so are the corresponding questions of the Pantheist, the Deist, and the Protestant. They reject each one of the catholic truths on the same principle that the sceptic rejects all certitude. Scepticism is the refusal to believe, prior to demonstration the communion of the human soul in truth which is its necessary aliment. Is the perception of our reason on this point the primary motive of our belief? No, for every perception of reason supposes it. We believe it because nature impels us to it, and not because our intelligence explains it. But what is this blind instinct in the constitution of our nature? It implies that the principle of our existence, whatever it be, is not a bad principle that would consign us to be the miserable dupes of an universal illusion, but a principle essentially good, which creates within us the idea and the want of truth only for the purpose of satisfying the latter. Thus our belief in truth and goodness is simultaneous : the life of the soul commences in the same manner as it is developed, viz., by faith in love.

This brings us to consider in another point of view the error of the Protestants, and its connexion

with the errors destructive of faith in divine love. If the arrogant weakness of reason is offended with the mysteries of power, because by pointing out its limits they humble it ; there is also in the folds of the corrupted heart a secret aversion to the mysteries of love, because they render more visible by a striking contrast all the horror of its depravity. In the same way as reason when humbled arms itself with its own darkness to combat whatever it does not understand, thus the will of man seeks in its own corruption a frightful pretext to reject the prodigies of love which confound it. Why conceal it, we all carry within us this fatal disposition—the most terrific disorder of the human heart. This abyss has its degrees ; let us endeavour to sound their depths.

If God has condescended to so great an excess of tenderness as to dwell in us and we in him by the Eucharistic communion, why does such love suffer men to continue a prey to so many frightful disorders ? Let the Protestants interrogate themselves, and say if this be not the secret of their heart. But *lo !* another voice is heard : it rises from a more profound

part of the abyss, from that region where dwell the blasphemers of Christ. If God became man, why is man so depraved? God, say they, visited the world and changed it not! Descend still lower, hearken to that other voice which proclaims aloud the symbol of despair, in protesting that the universe is not governed by supreme benevolence, that the power of evil equals the power of good, and eternally disputes with it the empire of creation. Whence comes this desolating doctrine? On what is it based? On the very same principle. Under a God infinitely good, they exclaim, why should evil exist? Here ends *Faith* in infinite love: next to this—is the hell of Atheism.

Who would not tremble on contemplating the terrific fecundity of a single error? Protestant heterodoxy conceals the germ of that rash doubt, which gave rise to the blasphemies of manicheism against Providence, as well as the generative principle of Pantheism, which destroys the idea of God, by prostituting it to other beings. Whence come these astonishing connexions between doctrines apparently so remote? Let us penetrate still more deeply into this mystery

of error, and we shall find at the bottom of all these doubts, the one identical question which has not ceased to agitate the human race, since it heard these deceitful words :—*you will be like unto Gods knowing good and evil.*

Good, properly so called, is the Infinite Being. Evil, which is the privation of good, is, taken in its most general sense, a privation of being ; and in this sense every finite being is evil, inasmuch as it is finite. Thus, whether we ask with the Manicheans, how disorder, or the privation of good can exist under the empire of perfect goodness, or whether we ask, with the Pantheists, how the finite or the absence of being can co-exist with the infinite, we only pursue, in two different points of view, *that perfect knowledge of good and evil* which is the incommunicable attribute of the Infinite intelligence. This unlimited curiosity is the original sin of the human mind ; and hence the root of all these errors to use an expression of Paschal, draws its folds and windings from the depths of this abyss.

What a strange perversion of the human mind ! During six thousand years, it has sought on every

side the solution of this sombre problem, and each generation demands it in vain from those who have gone before it to the tomb. This in itself is a painful condition : but that reason should fatigue and exhaust itself in the attempt to infuse despair into the heart by wresting from it that belief which is its joy, its life ; this, alas, is the extreme of misery. Happy they who, relying, not on the changeable conceptions of their isolated reason, but on the immutable teaching of universal tradition which has transmitted to them the word of God, are devotedly attached to this vivifying word, and seek not, in the darkness of reason and corruption of the will, miserable arguments against the omnipotence of Divine charity. Fixed in the imperishable belief of the human race, they enjoy a profound repose. This repose of reason is not torpor or apathy. Though not exposed to restless agitation, these children of faith are by no means in bondage. Their faith ever aspires to intelligence. They know that the condition of man is to pass from simple belief to the unclouded vision, and, though this change cannot be perfectly accomplished but in the future order, they continually

aim at it in the present, and realize on that knowledge a faint reflection of the heavenly vision. Borne on the wing of faith, their reason pervades the universe to investigate the mysteries of life and death. It asks each creature the word of order which it received, each phenomenon represents to it a divine thought, and creation spreads before it as the transparent veil of the ever living truth. If shades mingle with these terrestrial lights, it knows how to wait with patience. It knows that the limits which arrest its progress will one day disappear. Such is the intelligence of the *believer*, in its developement, patient, because immortal, its look, always fixed on the horizon of eternity. The rays which it collects here below, the pale reflection of that glorious day for which they sigh, serve but to create within them a more ardent desire of unclouded brightness. But though they do not now perceive as they will then perceive, they love already as they will hereafter. This is the reason why they understand better the mysteries of *goodness* than those of power. When the solutions they receive do not fully satisfy them; their reason, purified by love, comprehends at least

the sense of that supreme solution. *It is thus God loved the world.**

* Sic enim Deus Dilexit mundum.—Evanglic St. Joannes c. iii., v. 16.

NOTES.

NOTE 1.

Though the primitive order of divine communications was impeded by this original crime.

All close observers of human nature have recognised that a tendency to evil prevails in man. To their remarks on this point may be added the sentiments of one of the most zealous amongst the partisans of material physiology. "The child is as yet ignorant of the enjoyment derivable from reflection, except those that he procures by artifice, which he is always prepared to substitute for force, whenever he comes into collision with another stronger than himself. This species of pleasure seems to possess more attractions for him than that of beneficence unless he discover in the latter means

to indulge his predominant faculties: thus he protects a child less strong than himself whom immediately after he will make the sport of his tyranny. In general, *he prefers evil to good*, because it ministers better to his vanity, and affords him greater commotion; an enjoyment which must be procured at any risk. It is for this reason he prides himself in breaking inanimate objects; for he finds therein the two-fold pleasure founded on the necessity of self-satisfaction, viz. that of destroying resistance and exciting the rage of rational creatures, which in his mind is nothing less than a victory that becomes a source of gratification to him, when he has escaped punishment by flight. The delight which he feels on beholding the torture of animals can be accounted for only on the same principle; that of his fellow creatures would be equally agreeable to him, were he not curbed by fear, for even then the principle of self-preservation begins to exercise its influence. Pity restrains him from time to time; but its development is scarcely perceptible in children of the male sex; it exists more frequently and is felt more deeply in females of a tender age. I grant that all

the acts of children do not bear this impress of depravity. The benevolent disposition which characterizes some in after life begins to shew itself anterior to reason ; but the majority is of the class already described. Strong children of the male sex who feel the necessity of exercising their strength in external movements, are more irresistibly born to the commission of evil. There are few who do not employ their force against the weaker class ; it is the first impulse of their nature, but when they are not born to be ferocious they are stopt by the tears of their victim, until by a fresh impulse they are excited to perpetrate a similar crime."* *The child prefers evil to good.* This indeed is a frightful enigma. Discover, if you can, an explanation preferable to that furnished by christianity. It is true it accounts for this problem of all ages and nations by a primitive mystery ; but this mystery, attested by general tradition, is itself the first fact of history, and has it not been rightly asserted that all our science consists in deriving our ignorance from its remotest source.

* Vide Treatise on irritation, by Dr. Broussais, p. 101, 1828.

NOTE II.

In the ancient mysteries of Mithra, which finally prevailed through a considerable portion of the Roman empire, St. Justin and Tertullian inform us that bread and a vessel full of water were placed before the initiated.

Tertullian says that the devil "whose principal study and business it is to corrupt the truth, strives to imitate in his idolatrous mysteries the holy ceremonies of the christian religion. The devil baptizes some, namely, his own disciples and adherents ; by washing, he promises the remission of sin, and if I yet remember, Mithra signs his soldiers on their foreheads : he celebrates the oblation of bread and introduces an image of the resurrection.

Diabolo scilicet, cujus sunt partes, intervertendi veritatem, qui ipsas quoque res sacramentorum divinorum, idolorum mysteriis emulatur. Tingit et ipse quosdam, utique credentes et

NOTE III.

It would be difficult to imagine any thing more solemn than the prayers and benedictions which preceded and followed this rite.

This part of the liturgy of Zoroastre, besides the information it affords us respecting the forms of ancient worship, is also in many other respects, a monument of the primitive faith which has been developed by christianity. We shall cite a few extracts.

THE INVOCATION.

O you, benign master, who reserve for men the reward which they merit, remunerate publicly, the

fideles suos : expositionem delictorum de lavacro repromittit, et si adhuc memini, Mithra signat illic in frontibus milites suos : celebrat et panis oblationem, et imaginem resurrectionis inducit (Tertull. de Præscript hæreticor. XL.)

supplicant who invokes you, may I be pure in this world and happy in the next, and may the soul of Sapetman Zoroastre, the pure Genius, those of all the servants of Ormusd, of all the military, of all the labourers, of all the artisans of the world, who have come for this Miezd, and to whom it has been acceptable, may they at my departure from life come to meet me at twelve hundred gams,* from Beheseth, the highest heaven, from the bright Gorotman, the seat of happiness. May they receive this miezd, and be always present to me, (when I pray) may my good works increase ! May the accursed source of sin and evil be banished for ever ! May the world be pure, the heavens excellent ! and finally may purity and holiness prevail ! May the souls be received in Gorotman."—Zend Avesta, tom. ii. ; jechts Sadés, Afrin des sept. Amschaspands, page 80.

*And as the reversibility of merit was universally believed : The communion of saints * * * **

O may power, grandeur, and victory be given by the aid and intercession of the celestial genii, to this

* A measure of nine feet

soul, may these favours be accorded to the spirit that I commemorate! May he obtain what I desire for him, who has presented pure oblations for the Miezd; who has given liberally for the Zour* in honor of the pure! May this person participate in the good works which I will perform in this world, in those that the just may perform! If he perform good works, and honour the celestial genii, may his prayers in this world, as a reward, reach the just Judge.—Ormud, and the Amas chaspands, † (Afrin du Gahanbar, page 81.)

THE CONVOCATION.

I invoke here the Szeds ‡ of heaven and of earth, the celestial Rauzgar, the pure genii, from Kaio-moots § down to Sosiosch, || the principle of good, replete with happiness and splendor. Those who are,

* Consecrated water.

† The celestial spirits of the first order. ‡ Angels.

§ The first man. || The expected Redeemer.

who have been, and who shall be; those who are born, or are not born in this province, or in another province; the men of this world, the women, the young men and maids, all those who have died *Behdinans*. * To commemorate all the pure genii, is a good work; I commemorate them, and I am convinced that by so doing, I shall perform a meritorious act. I invoke here all the souls, all the spirits of *Behdinans*.—(Afrin du Gahanbar, page 81.)

THE FINAL PRAYER AND BENEDICTION.

May you be always victorious by the Miedz offered to God; O pure, you who have come here with clean oblations, with old wine! May the throne, the seat of light, be finally given to you; may all your wishes be accomplished! May you be always far from Pectiare, i.e. the author of evil! May Mansrespand, the keeper of heaven, watch over you, and may all the pure of the seven Keschvars † assist

* Followers of the perfect law.

† The seven parts of the world.

you ; you Behdinans, who have come here with this Miezd. Until you shall have arrived at Gorotman, may you be pure, may you live long, and may my prayers in your regard be heard ! (Afrin de Zoroastre, page 94.)

NOTE 4.—THE GERMANS, &c.

This note may be seen fully explained in the Catholic, published June 1823.—page 369.

NOTE 5.

Though one of its circumstances is contrary to the prohibitions of the Koran. The eighteenth of March was the day called hayt corban, that is the feast of sacrifice, by which they understand the sacrifice of Abraham. The Arabians call it hayt-hesa, and the Turks be huc ba yram or great festival. It is also known by the name haytmura, or brilliant festival.

This festival is the principal and most solemn of the Mahometan religion.—(Travels in Persia, by Chardin, tom. ix., p. 6, Paris, 1811.) Though the blood has not been let, the victim is eaten; notwithstanding that it is opposed to the Mahometan law.—ii. *ibid*, p. 14.

NOTE 6.

A communion in grace, at the same time spiritual and corporal, &c.

The Catholic theory of the sacraments is but the developement and perfection of the primitive belief. In the same way as truth is communicated to man, by the medium of sensible signs or speech, so it was believed that grace was imparted to him by material symbols. In his treatise on *mysteries*, a strange collection of traditional truths and wild speculations, Jamblicus speaks rather remarkably of the fundamental idea of these mysteries, veiled in primitive faith and worship. It is true, it may be conjectured, that he added to the ancient theology which he was reviewing principles borrowed from Christian

theology ; but, even in this hypothesis, it is evident that he would not have done so, did he not deem the latter a developement of the former. “The due observance of the divine precepts and works, which surpass our intelligence, and the wonderful efficacy of the symbols and holy rites, known only to the Gods, procure for us the deific union. When we officiate, it is not by the power of our intelligence that the sacraments are effected, for in that case their action would proceed from us and be purely intellectual ; but, though we are ignorant as to the manner, in which they produce their effect the power of the gods, without being excited by our intelligence, recognizes of itself its own ineffable images.

Universal causes are not moved by particular effects ; it is for this reason that our intelligence does not principally determine the divine action. Nevertheless, intelligence, holy sentiments and purity, are required as a sort of accompanying cause. But it is the holy sacraments that principally excite the divine will ; thus the Deity is excited by itself, and does not receive its principle of action from any inferior or secondary cause.

Imagine not that the principle of their efficacy is to be found in us, or that they depend on the knowledge of the truth which is in our intelligence, neither do they become deceitful signs in consequence of the errors of our mind.—Iamblicus, on the Egyptian, Chaldean and Assyrian mysteries, page 220, Basilean, 1532.

NOTE VII.

Hence arises the necessity of a primitive revelation, which indeed would be the most philosophical conception, even though it had not been the universal belief.

The materialism of the eighteenth century, in rejecting primitive revelation, proclaimed that man was born in a state of barbarism, in the last degree of abasement. The absurdity of this hypothesis is all but admitted by the spiritual philosophy of the present age, which irresistibly impelled to adopt sounder notions, no longer dares to uphold those of the last century. The change which has been effec-

ted on this point claims peculiar notice, as it will lead the philosophers further, perhaps than they would wish. We shall give two instances, selected from opposite schools.

“It has been asked by a writer of the sentimental school if the savage state was the primitive condition of man.”

“Some philosophers of the eighteenth century responded with much levity in the affirmative.”

“All their religious and political systems set out from the hypothesis of a race primitively reduced to the brute condition, roaming in the forests and contending with one another for the acorn and the flesh of animals; but had such been the natural condition of man, by what means could he have emancipated himself from it?”

“Are not the reasonings by which he is supposed to have been induced to adopt the social system a begging of the question? Is it not evident that this is a vicious circle? Who does not perceive that every species of reasoning supposes the previous existence of a social state? Its advantage can be duly appreciated only by enjoyment. In this hypothesis

society would be the result of the developement of intelligence, whilst on the contrary the developement of intelligence is itself the result of Society."

"To invoke chance, is to substitute a word devoid of sense for a cause. Chance does not triumph over nature. Chance has not civilised beings of an inferior class, which, in the hypothesis of our philosophers, ought have also experienced some lucky accident." "To regard civilization as the gifts of strangers, is to leave the problem unsolved. You may point to masters instructing their disciples, but you cannot inform me who instructed the masters themselves, it is a chain suspended in the air. Besides it is notorious that savages repel civilization when presented to them." The nearer man is to a state of barbarism, the more stationary is he, the hordes that have been discovered at the boundaries of the earth have not made a single advance towards civilized life. The inhabitants of the coasts visited by Nearchus are at the present day what they were, two thousand years ago. These wanderers still continue to snatch a precarious subsistence from the sea. Their wealth consists in aquatic bones cast on

the shore. Want has not instructed, nor has misery enlightened them. Modern travellers have found them in the same state that they had been discovered by the Admiral of Alexander." "It is the same with the savages of antiquity described by Agatharcides and with those of our days of whom Bruce speaks. Surrounded by civilized nations, near the kingdom of Meroe, so celebrated for its priesthood, the equal in power as well as in science of the Egyptian priesthood, these hordes have continued down to this day in a state of barbarism. Some of them take shelter under trees, others lay snares for the Rhinoceros and Elephant, and subsist on their flesh. Others in fine collect the swarms of locusts which are driven by the winds into their deserts, or the remains of crocodiles and sea-horses, whilst the maladies described by Diodorus as arising from these impure aliments press as heavily to day on the descendants of those unhappy people as at any former period. Ages have past away and no change has been effected in their condition, no progress is discoverable among them, no invention has characterised their labour."

“Nor do we imagine that the savage state was that in which man found himself at his origin. It is not our intention to go back to the beginning of time and state how religion commenced, but merely by what means when it is in its rudest form, it can uphold itself and gradually arrive to perfection.”

“We are far from asserting that this rude form was the primitive one; we are not opposed to its being looked on as a deterioration.” (Religion viewed in its origin, its form and its developements, by M. Benjamin Constant, tome 1, p. 153—157.) If man was not born in a savage state, how could he have been born civilised? The author now cited very prudently, pauses at this question. He is *far from asserting* this, he is *not opposed* to that, he does not wish to say how, for in truth he is afraid.

Let us now attend to an advocate of rationalism.

“It was particularly during the first age of the world that this faculty of simple view, this fortuitous intelligence, so necessary to man in his primitive state of destitution, must have shewn itself with all its force. There must have been for him an *instan-*

taneous enlightenment, and if we may so speak, a *fiat lux* of thought, to impart to him a *sort of intuitive science*, which might supply experience by instinct, and reason by sentiment. Otherwise society, without those notions, on which its very existence is based, would totter and finally disappear! The child of a day, without tradition or acquired wisdom, how fearful would have been its state, had it been forced to frame for itself a system of philosophy suited to the urgency of the moment? To have positive principles of action, was the first law of its existence; it was worthy the divine wisdom, when forming it, to communicate them to it by prompt and special grace. It is for this reason that the Deity assumed the character of revealer after that of creator. Not that he took a body or became incarnate, every expression of this nature is, in our mind, a mere figure. He has neither voice nor language, his will is manifested only by symbols. It is as the Father of light, as author of all that *is* and all that *appears*, that he communicates himself to man. It is thus that revelation was made, at least it is in this sense we comprehend it.'; (Essay on the history of phi-

losophy in France for the sixteenth century, by M. Th. Damison, p. 387, 388.)

Reduced to plain and accurate terms, this poetry is the union of two contradictory ideas. The author admits that with the first man intelligence was born in some extraordinary manner, without admitting a corresponding cause. Were this phenomenon the result of the native faculties of man, the history of the human race should present similar ones. Now, what does it teach us? In the first place, it teaches us that, in the majority of men, intelligence proceeds from the aid of language which they are taught; in the second place, that the savage state, in which marks of a similar intellectual power should be perceptible, in proportion as it approximates to what is termed the primitive state, far from affording any, presents a series of opposite facts; and finally that the individuals who are shut out from all social instruction are by no means enlightened by *the power of nature* or the *phenomena of the universe*, and that they remain in a state of utter abasement, instead of this *fortuitous intelligence*, this *intuitive science*, this *fiat lux* of thought, with which the

imaginative genius of our author compliments the first men. Irreconcilable with the laws of the human mind manifested by universal experience, this hypothesis involves an absurd miracle, wrought without the intervention of a miraculous cause. To say that we are enlightened at times by ideas of whose origin we are ignorant, that, in certain circumstances which exalt the mind, some men are favoured with what is called sudden illuminations, and deduce therefrom the existence of an intuitive science anterior to every sort of instruction, this indeed is a strange abuse of language. All facts of this nature, viewed in themselves, suppose a combination of pre-existing notions, and are found only in minds already developed, furnished with ideas as well as expressions, and enjoying the means by which the social man exercises the faculty of thought, whilst, for the primitive man, intelligence itself was to be created. A question is not answered by examples sought in an order of things essentially opposite.

“To conclude—the materialism of the last century admitted that man was born in a state of barbarism.”

“The spiritual philosophy of our age admits more

or less distinctly that he was born intelligent and civilized."

"Did the materialism of the last century establish the hypothesis of primitive stupidity on facts? No: it maintained it as the necessary consequence flowing from its rejection of the primitive revelation proclaimed by Christianity.

Has the spiritual philosophy which succeeded it endeavoured to refute the arguments from which it inferred that man, deprived of all communion with a superior being, must necessarily have commenced by ignorance and brutalism? No—but, viewing this hypothesis on its own merits, it deemed it opposed to the laws of the existence both of man and society.

For these reasons all the researches of philosophers on this question may be reduced to the following syllogism. Every sort of external information being rejected, brutalism must have been the native state of mankind, but, this supposition is inadmissible, therefore, &c. The last century, and particularly one of its most eminent writers, Hume, established the first proposition on proofs.* The new spiritual school

* Which to some superficial minds appeared plausible.

contends for the second. Christianity fondly cherishes the consequence.

Philosophy can only emancipate itself from this circle of contradictions by solving the question already proposed by Fichte: namely "Who instructed the first men? for we have demonstrated that man stands in need of instruction. No man could have instructed them, whereas the difficulty is about the first men. They must then have been instructed by some intelligent being who was not man, until they were sufficiently enlightened to instruct one another.

(Vide the rights of nature.)

NOTE VIII.

Thus the belief in a man-God of which very many striking traces are found in antiquity, was comprehended, though imperfectly, in the general desire of an efficacious expiation.

According to y-king, one of the sacred books of the Chinese, *the holy One alone can offer a*

sacrifice pleasing to *Chang-Ty* i.e. the Lord of heaven. But what were the characteristics of the Holy One according to tradition? "It would not be difficult to prove from history that the ancients had ideas respecting the Messiah, which were directly derived from revelation, and clearly prove that the most remote antiquity was more favoured by God than many would appear to believe, affecting ignorance as to the writings of Vossius, Beurrier, Thomassin, Huet, Mourgues, and other learned men who, after the example of the holy Fathers, collected the remains of antiquity. It is a well known fact that Confucius declared that the *Holy One* by excellence was in the East; but is it known what the learned amongst the Chinese understood by the *Holy One*? *The name of holy, says Ouang-ky, is given to him who knows all, sees all, hears all. All his words are so many maxims; his example a rule of conduct. He unites within himself three orders of beings, possesses all good; he is all celestial and admirable.* The book, *Techao-sin Tou Hoci* says *The Holy one is so high and so profound that he is incomprehensible. He is the only one whose wisdom knows no limits,*

before him *futurity stands unveiled*. His charity embraces the universe, and like the spring-time vivifies it; all his words are efficacious. He is one with Tien (Heaven.) According to Lein-Hen the heart of Tien is in the bosom of the Holy One, and his maxims on his lips. The world cannot know Tien without the Holy one. The nations expect him, says Mong-Tse, as a declining plant expects the dew and rain. It may be asserted that all this can be understood of a wise man, such as Confucius, or of a great emperor, as Yao-Chan. But the following words which are found in the large commentary of Chou-King, can in no wise be understood but of a being superior to man. *The Tien is the invisible holy one; the Holy one is the Tien who became visible to teach men*. How is the language of Y-King on the Holy one to be understood? *This man is the Tien and the Tien is this man*. In what sense are we to regard the epithets, *divine man, celestial man, the most beautiful of men, the man by excellence, the wonderful man, the first-born amongst men?* How are we to interpret what has been said in various forms, and by so many authors,

viz., that he will renew the earth, that he will reform the public manners, expiate the crimes of the world, die in sorrow and opprobrium, and finally that he will throw open the heavens &c. Memoir of the Chinese. Tom. ix, p. 384.

NOTE IX.

The propensity to illuminism, which has been found at every period among this class of Protestants, augments and strengthens in proportion as rationalism destroys the little faith which the reformation has preserved.

In a work recently published on the state of the Protestant religion in Germany, Mr. Hugh James Rose, a minister of the English church, has forcibly pointed out this result of rationalism :—" The doctrines of the innovators must have shocked and afflicted all who as yet were sincerely attached to Christianity.

But as the churches of Germany wanted both a

common centre and a fixed doctrine, the friends of religion no where found a rallying point. Each one was obliged to adopt the plan of defence which appeared to him best calculated to uphold the good cause; and though many theologians, and especially Storr, displayed great zeal in the defence of the orthodox doctrine, it appears that the majority of those who are ranked among the antagonists of rationalism, fearing that they could not maintain the ancient system in its various parts, wisely judged that more evil than good would result from a continuation of the controversy. Owing to these apprehensions, many layed down the weapons of reason, took refuge in their own thoughts, and closing their eyes on the exterior world where every thing scandalized and afflicted them, they betook themselves to contemplation, in order to attain to a union with God, the immediate vision of the truths of faith, which has always been the end of mysticism. For when we presume too much on human reason, we generally end by despairing in it. This tendency to mysticism was kept up among the common people by various religious tracts, some of which were the

result of native talent, others imported into Germany.

The Protestant principle, generalized by philosophy and applied to the basis of human science, has been productive of similar results. If on the one hand, it begets by its peculiar action scepticism, on the other, it leads to mysticism the minds in which this *rational* destruction of faith is combined with the *want* of some sort of faith.

A similar tendency, continues Mr. Rose, resulted from the philosophy of the day for the higher orders. Three systems of philosophy have successively reigned in Germany, and even still they contend there for the empire of the mind. The two first, those of Kant and Fichte, are preparing the way for mysticism, at least inasmuch as they reject all objective proofs of religion, and substitute for them others more subjective. I do not mean to insinuate that it was the intention of these two philosophers to lead the mind to mysticism; but the principles established by them lead indirectly to it. In refusing to believe that human reason can establish the existence of God and the intellectual world, and admitting as the basis of these truths but a practical faith

rendered necessary by our moral constitution, Kant would have us seek truth only in the investigation of this practical principle which is said to be inherent to our nature.

Now who does not perceive that such an abstraction of the exterior world in the research of truth, presents a striking resemblance with the operations of mysticism which are equally internal. Besides, if reason has not the right to place an intelligent author over this beautiful spectacle of the heavens and the earth, imagination and sentiment will do it against reason, and that such an important truth should depend solely on their authority, would appear to me a further advance to mysticism. However if Kant states that we know nothing of God, at least he makes a distinction between God and the world. Fechte does not stop even here, for he says what we denominate Providence and moral order, has not an existence distinct from our moral nature. In whatever light we view the charge of atheism, preferred against the author of this doctrine, it is evident that such a system tends to mysticism, whereas he admits so intimate and essential a union of the soul

with God that it would be impossible to conceive the existence of God independent of our moral nature. But if mysticism is only a consequence more or less direct of the two first systems, it may be regarded as the basis of the third, viz. that of Schelling.

Though agreeing with Kant as to the impotence of reason, he rejects the consequence drawn by him, viz., that we have no knowledge of the intellectual world, and he maintains that we can arrive at that knowledge, not through the medium of reasoning, but by the shorter path of *intuition*. In his system God is the only existing being; he is both the unity and totality of all that exists: whatever is said to exist independently of him has no real existence; even we do not exist ourselves really. What is termed our individual, personal existence is but a mere phantom, for our reality results from our identity with God. This system, to which we have alluded only to point out its close relation to mysticism, representing God as the absolute being independently of whom nothing exists, and by the very fact teaching the identity of many things that appear to have a separate existence, cannot derive its proofs either from reason or the

senses, which, so far from favouring such a doctrine, proclaim the very contrary. It became necessary then to evoke a power which could raise us above the sphere of experience, a faculty calculated to transform into truth and reality what reason and the senses declared to be impossible and false. What is this power, this faculty? it is the *intuition* of the *absolute*, in other words, an imagination, soaring above the regions of poetical genius which in its inventions should never go beyond, what reason and the senses can admit, at least, as possible. In consequence of these principles, great importance was attached to whatever could nourish or excite the imagination, as well as to the impressions that might be produced from acting on the senses. There are some among the disciples of Schelling who bitterly lament the coldness of protestant worship, exhort the preachers to address themselves solely to the senses and imagination. Not a few authors of that school regret even the pomp of Paganism.

The Catholic religion has been also complimented ; many have openly given up Protestantism, whilst others desire to introduce a portion of the Catholic

ceremonies into the reformed worship. Some of the disciples of Schelling profess what may be termed an allegorical catholicism. They make use of a catholic nomenclature in the exposition of their master's system, as well as in speaking of the sacrifice and priesthood of the christian religion, but the sense they attach to these orthodox expressions bear no affinity whatsoever to their ordinary and natural signification. It is not however to be supposed that all the changes which have taken place with regard to religion in Germany, are to be ascribed to this philosophical mysticism. Many proselytes, in entering the pale of a church which, in the midst of her horrible corruptions,* has preserved

* The trite phrase the *horrible corruptions* of the Catholic Church does not, in the most remote degree, affect the general controversy such as it is at the present day. You admit that if the independance of individual reason were once established as a principle, the total ruin of Christianity would be the result. Then you must also admit that Christianity cannot uphold itself, but in virtue of the Catholic principle of *authority*, or you must invent some principle of belief which will be neither the Catholic or Protestant principle, and you will be good enough to mark the absurdity. If the thirty-nine articles of the English church are to be believed in virtue of private judgment, you revert to the system which you have

at least the form and principal doctrines of a true Church, seek there that peace which they had in vain sought amidst the interminable changes of the Protestant church of Germany, and by the successive rejection of all the truths of Christianity, (vide The Catholic Memorial, January 1829.)

NOTE X.

Thus the institutions of ecclesiastical celibacy, though its developement required time, and though it suffered many modifications, is universal in its principle.

The historical errors relative to the law of celibacy, which have been advanced by writers who were pre-disposed to speak too lightly of matters on which very probable they did not maturely reflect,

declared incompatible with the existence of Christianity. If on the contrary, the English church contends that they are to be adopted on her authority, she sports with human reason : whereas she owes her existence to the private judgment of the Reformers opposed to the authority of the Catholic church.

would fill a volume. We regret that the most recent example of this kind should have been furnished by Mr. Villemain in his course of lectures during the past year. "I shall with your leave make no reference to Gibbon, who tells us that the Bishops instituted priests, and thus indemnified themselves, by this spiritual generation for the celibacy that had been imposed upon them. Alas! how much more interesting would it not have been and no less philosophical to attend to what had occurred at the Council of Nice, to refer to the Bishops discussing the law of celibacy, and, in the midst of those rigorists, to point to that venerable old man, the martyr Paphnutios, one of the confessors of the Egyptian church, raising his voice, and warning them: (not to divest the human heart of all its affections.") Fifth lesson, May 1828, p. 33—Unfortunately for the *interesting* nature of this anecdote, it is anything but certain. The writers prior to Socrates, and particularly Rufinus, who in his ecclesiastical history is very copious in his details of that Council makes no mention of it. Socrates, lev. 1, c. xi, and after him Sozomene who has given the abridgement of his

works, are the only authors whose testimony can be appealed to. But there are very sufficient reasons for not crediting those authors. For, in the first place, among the Egyptian Bishops who assisted at the Council of Nice that of Paphnutios is not found, and yet according to Socrates he was Bishop of a city of the Thebaid. In the second place, they pretend that the Council, adopting the advice of Paphnutios, determined nothing on the article of celibacy; an assertion which is directly opposed to the third canon of that very Council. Their narrations is equally opposed to the testimony of more ancient authors such as St. Jerome,* St. Epiphanius, † who inform us that, according to the general discipline, married men, who had been received among the clergy, were obliged to observe continence from the very moment they began to exercise the sacred functions; that this law flourished wherever the canons of the church were attended to; and that, though in some places, relaxation had introduced

* *Libr. contr, Virgil, circa init---Apolog. pro libr. contra Jovinian, ad finem.*

† *Libr. contr. hæres ad finem.---Hæres 59.*

a contrary practice, the existence of the law could not be questioned. Besides, in the discourse which Socrates and Sozomene lend to Paphnutos, and which relates only to that particular class of ecclesiastics of which we have just spoken, there is not a syllable of the sentimental phrase against religious celibacy in general, which the fancy of M. Villemain has supplied.

NOTE XI.

The real presence, the basis of the public worship by which Catholicism acts on men in the aggregate is not less intimately connected with the practice of confession, the organ through which it acts in a mode corresponding to the various necessities of individuals.

As man is in a certain sense a two-fold being, the passions rarely succeed in their attempt to stifle the sentiment of justice. Protestantism, as every individual, has its two-fold self. The one which

declaims against confession may be recognized by its tone of bitterness and hatred. The other does reverence to this salutary institution, and the homage that it pays it, calm as reason, is betimes accompanied with an accent of sorrow and regret which imparts wonderful force to this cry of conscience. Luther could never summon up courage enough to annihilate the tribunal of penance; even in one of his last works, he thus expressed himself:—Before God we must acknowledge ourselves culpable of all our crimes, not excepting those which we cannot call to mind: but we are obliged to confess only those which we know and feel in our hearts.—(*Small Catechism.*)

The eleventh article of the confession of Augsburg teaches that “in the church we must obtain, and not suffer to fall into disuse the *particular* absolution, though it be not necessary to enumerate all our crimes and faults, seeing that such a thing is impossible.”

The following passage is found in the Swedish liturgy, which was in use at the end of the sixteenth century, “When the rules prescribed for auricular

confession, fasting days, the impediments arising from consanguinity and affinity, and other similar traditions were abolished, so frightful was the libertinism which followed, that every individual, whatever might be asserted to the contrary, believed himself authorized to satisfy his passions instead of submitting to salutary counsel. If you exhort them to confess their sins, in order to test the sincerity of their conversion, to which alone absolution should be accorded, they reply that no person should be constrained. Do you counsel them to observe the fast, they indulge in all that gluttony can desire. Do you invite them to be present on certain days at the divine office, they answer that Christians are free to do every day what they please. If you endeavour to dissuade them from incest, they maintain that tradition is not more obligatory in the new than in the old Testament. According to the proverb, the horses run away with the rider, and the reins no longer govern the car. As it was the duty of our ancestors to combat superstition, so we ought to declare war against irreligion—that most fearful of all monsters. This war should be conducted with the

more care and precaution, as it is to be apprehended that the exterior of religion may finally disappear, and that the sacred ministry already despised by the Anabaptists and by those who reject the sacraments, may be so by the generality of the people, whilst each follows his own fancy whether for the administration or rejection of sacred things."

It is a well known fact that the Lutherans of Nuremberg supplicated Charles V. to re-establish among them *by an edict* the practice of confession. A similar request was made by the ministers of Strasburg, in a memorial presented by them to the *Magistrates* in 1670.

But notwithstanding the efforts which Lutheranism has made to retain the *forms* of confession, it has not been able to succeed in preserving the *spirit* which makes them effective. An institution so powerful can never be upheld unless it be based upon a principle of authority. With Catholics alone it is a power; with every other religion or sect it cannot be, and in reality is but a *form*.

I do not mean to assert that private absolution is not very useful remarks Calvin, on the contrary, as I have

already done in many passages of my works, I recommend it, provided it be free from and devoid of superstition." (Defens ii. ad Wesphtal, tom VIII. *Free confession* is a utopian scheme.

The English Church imitates as closely as possible the Catholic institution.

Then shall the minister examine whether he repent him (the sick person) truly of his sins, and be in charity with all the world. * * * * Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which, the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort :—

Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences : and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,—Amen.—(Vide the order for the Visitation of the sick—Book of Common Prayer, page 274. Printed by Eyre and Strahan, London, 1820.

Leibnitz has remarked with his usual sagacity the advantages of confession.—“ It must be acknowledged, says he, that this institution is worthy the divine wisdom ; and assuredly there is nothing more beautiful, nothing that has more claims on the gratitude of man than the Christian religion. The Chinese and Japanese were struck with admiration at it. In truth, the obligation of confessing one’s sins causes many to refrain from the commission of crime, particularly those who are not hardened therein ; it is a source of consolation to those who have fallen. It is for these reasons that I look on a pious, grave and prudent confessor, as an instrument in the hand of God for the salvation of souls ; for his counsels serve to regulate our affections, to enlighten us with respect to our faults, make us avoid the occasions of sin, restore what has been unlawfully procured, repair scandals, remove doubts, console the dejected, and finally to heal or at least mitigate all the maladies of the soul. If there is nothing to be prized more than a faithful friend, how inestimable the happiness to find one who is bound by all the reverence due to a divine Sacrament to

preserve inviolably the trust reposed in him, and to aid those who stand in need of his ministry !”— (System of Theology, page 271, Paris, 1819.)

In our days a Protestant Lady, the authoress of a German work, entitled *Mary or female piety*, expressed the desire which is secretly formed by many who are wearied from Protestantism, when she saith “What would I not give to be able to approach the tribunal of penance.”

The observations of a distinguished writer of the present day may be introduced here with great propriety, as they bear a close relation to the point in question.

It is true, we observed that the tone of intercourse in all societies which are not Catholic, wants meekness : but what we have to remark here is, that it wants mercy. The acute and frank Cardan makes a strange confession, “among my vices” said he, “I acknowledge one great and singular, that I never say anything more willingly than what will displease the hearers ; and in this I persevere knowingly and

willingly, though I am not ignorant how many enemies this alone gains for me, such is the force of nature joined to long custom."* Great he might well term it, but excepting among a people of faith, far from singular vice; for it is so essentially a disposition of our fallen nature, that nothing but the supernatural influence of Catholicism can effect a complete cure. When that has not been applied, every one,—the school boy,—the collegian,—the man of drawing-rooms,—the loungee in public places,—the young and old,—the noble and plebeian,—all are Cardens in that respect, and might truly make the same confession, if they had his honesty. Are you about to visit a country where Luther, or Calvin, or Cranmer, or Jewell, are the names in most repute? where there is no such thing heard of by youth or age as confession? that is, in short, where the mysteries and light of faith have been removed with the discipline of Rome? Then learn to stand constantly on your guard against malice, and the shrewdness of ill natured criticism, and the spirit which triumphs in humiliating others,

* Hieron, Cardan, *de vita propria*, cap. 13.

and in spoiling, by one cunningly devised blow, their day or hour of festivity. Lay aside the feeling of innocent freedom with which you had been accustomed to conduct yourself in those Catholic lands, where men were taught, from boyhood, in the words of St. Anthony, "that there was no greater impiety than causing grief of any kind to others" * where every one, young and old, rich and poor, looked and spoke as if he joyed in kindness, and were so averse to whatever could interrupt it, that as we read of Andrew Doria, he would desist from supporting his own cause, though convinced of its justice, rather than seem to seek praise by an obstinate disputation. † You are now with men of a different type, who have revived the old civilization. The spirited and burning retort is here thought, not merely by the openly profane, but by the grave and formal, too, as characteristic of a noble nature, and every one is ready to reply in the style of Plautus, to the unintentional offender." *Tu contumeliam alteri*

* Serm S. Antonii,

† Sigonii de Reb. Gest. and Doriæ, lib. ii.

facias, tibi non dicatur? Tam ego homo sum quam tu." (*Vide* More's *Catholici* or *Ages of Faith*—Book VII.)

The author now cited draws the following picture of a nation living under the influence of the Catholic Religion. It will be the more acceptable to the Reader, as it will serve to illustrate that portion of the sixth chapter, where the Abbe Gerbet introduces Lord Fitzwilliam, a Protestant, describing the action of Catholicism on Society.

Hence it was that men were so slow to discover scandals or to exaggerate offences. They did not look with scowling eyes at things which cause only mirth in heaven, they contemplated nature not as Manichacans, they loved God not with the dark narrow views of those in later times, who followed the sophist of Geneva, but as Catholics; that is, they loved the just Creator and merciful Redeemer, and therefore they loved all his creatures. They loved men as men, and men as Christians. Imitators of God, other Christs, they loved even those who

seemed forgetful of their Lord ; for he, from the depths of love's abyss, loves even those who love him not, loves them even contaminated and deformed not, indeed, to make them continue in that state but to render them beautiful."

" Why, O man," asks Marsilius Ficinus, " do you vituperate the world ? The world is most beautiful, framed by the best and most perfect reason, though to you, indeed it may be unclean and evil, because you are unclean and evil in a good world."* They considered, notwithstanding, all the abuses that existed, how much generosity, how much justice, how much fear, how much love, dominates in the life of men ; they marked the exquisite beauty and charm of universal order, from the sports of joyous youth upon the meadow on a summer's day, to the tranquil meditation of the aged between cloistered walls, faintly illumined by the dull lancet pane. Charity looked with the eyes of a painter at the different pursuits and characters of men, and apprehending thus drew a profit from all things that it saw. The expression of angel mildness in the little

sister, who hastens with her picture of the Madonna, to place it in her brother's boat before his departure, did not please it more than the fierce disdain of art observed in the rough figure of that brother, son of one of those christian fishermen, as old Albertus calls them, whose youthful countenance, all determined as it was, seemed ever on the point of relaxing into smiles. Charity saw a blessed martyr's spirit evinced in simple and low things; it saw the mind after God's own heart in those who, though trained up thus meanly, were innocent and holy, far beyond the trick of others; it saw constancy, courtesy, friendship, gentleness, all wildly but most sweetly growing in the illiterate children of the laborious poor, whom heretics teach men to regard with the disdain of pedants, or with a still more insulting pity; as if grace could not be theirs, merely, perhaps, because they put themselves in posture that divine nature hath suited to the words and affections of the generous.*

I said that charity was an art, in regard to the pleasure attending its exercise: and the remark is

* *Idiotæ contemp.* xix.

just also in many other respects ; for it rendered men, in regard to conversation, like skilful painters, by imparting to them that delicate tact which feels the necessity of omission as well as of creation ; which is evinced in softening down all, and covering over some things, casting a shade over objects of sharp brilliancy, and throwing a general, subdued, and gentle tone over the whole surface.

“Charity was not on the lips’ edge alone, but in the heart of men who continued faithful to the Church, and therefore no one feared malicious scrutiny within the dwelling of his neighbour. None there distrusted kindness, though not promised with an oath : for the will to bless could only fail through want of power, such mercy was in human breasts, you find this remarked incidentally by many of the ancient local historians. What a delightful picture does Ambrose Leo present of the state of society in his native city in the fifteenth century ? “In such harmony and friendship are the people of Nola educated,” saith he, “that such things as civil feuds and party contentions are wholly unknown to them. The only combats they behold are the mimic battles

of the youth, which take place annually before the beginning of lent, the noble and plebeian promiscuously joining, and which are terminated e're the setting sun, when all are friends again, relating their exploits to one another, or enduring their defeat with good humour. You will hardly find, elsewhere, so many pairs of friends as at Nola ; nor is it only between the inhabitants that friendships abound: they are equally prompt to embrace foreigners ; and to this they are inclined, not through any motive of gain, but simply from the joy which they derive from the idea alone and from the friendship." *

Such representations of society abound in the old writings. One ancient author, alluding to the kindness and charity of the people of Amalphi, says that throughout the whole territory one might imagine oneself inhabiting Paradise. It was the spirit of the blessed merciful, widely diffused and presiding over all movements of the social body, which produced that concord in the state, uniting together the vast multitude of institutions and combinations resulting

* Ambros Leo de Nola, lib i, c. 13, iii, 13, in *Thesaur Antiq. ital.* ix.

from Catholicism into one system of harmonious variety which seemed so admirable to the attentive observers of former times, that one who deserved to be ranked among them, John Babtist De Grossis, when writing the history of his native city, entitled it *Catanense Decachordum*,* as if a narrative of its manners and institutions, its calamities and its triumphs, would sound like the music of a lyre; as if each digression on a particular monastery, or church, or hospital, or confraternity of mercy, might be compared to a chord of that instrument, by the extension or contraction of which the modulation of sound would become sweeter. He strike these chords, and we hear of the faith and piety of his countrymen, of their ancient Nasilicas, in which are shrined the relics of St. Agatha. We hear of their solemn processions on the anniversaries of their martyrs, of the antiquity and beauty of their monasteries, of the sanctity and learning of the holy men within them, of the charity of abbots, of the love shown to the mendicant and all religious orders of seculars, whether priests or laics, and of their servi-

*Thesaur Antiq. Itali and Sicilise rom. x.

ces to the poor, of the devout women, the nuns and sisters of blessed charity, of the hermits in the groves adjoining, who had given all their possessions to the poor for the love of God, of the deplomas and gifts of munificent founders, of the confraternity of laics to serve Christ in the persons of the poor, of the hospitals and asylums for the miserable, of the colleges and schools of the purest esteem entertained for ancient families, whose highest nobility is derived from having so long deserved the love and admiration of their country, of the gifts of nature, of the works of art, to which the words of holy Jerome are so applicable, that things revolve in the same circle, that men should bear one another's burdens, and that the sweat of the dead should be the delight of the living, of the deep religious feeling with which they loved and defended their country, too well expressed in those few lines upon the shrine of the virgin martyr, the patron of their city—"ubi orta et passaregressa sum, quia nimis dilexi eam, et qui mecum habere non amat patriam, quese mea est, me odit,"—and by those inscribed over the city gates—"Noli offendere patriam Agathse"—the words, it is said, which

thrice presented themselves to the eyes of the Emperor Frederick II, in a book of prayer which fell into his hands while resolved upon levelling Catæna to the ground for its fidelity to the Roman Pontiff, and which filled him with such fear that he relinquished his cruel intentions, and withdrew. The chanter proceeds, and we hear of the palace of the senators, where the robed magistrates, the mitred fathers, the steel-clad heroes, and the illustrious citizens are represented in ancient paintings; we hear of their loyal fidelity to their princes, of the innocent names of their youth, of the sanctity of their great men, of the solicitude of their pastors, from St. Everius to Mortinus de Leon then living, whose charity forms the last tone.

Reader, do you not perceive how easy it was for this minstrel to fulfil what he promised, and how confidently he might predict that his book would resemble the music of a lyre, at one time perhaps causing tears, at another joy, but never awaking jealousy or envy, or other foul passions, or exciting any affections excepting those of a heart that seeks satiety in love? So it is with all such historic

representations of a Catholic state during ages of faith : they resembled harps, which you may strike boldly without fearing to conjure up a bad spirit, touch what chord you will. They form, in fact, a most sweet and earthly symphony, which, whether plaintive or joyous, is always sure to leave the souls of the listeners more tuned to reverence and pity, more loving and devoted—deeper imbued, in short, with the charity of heaven. More's *Catholici*, Book 7.

Perhaps there is nothing more noble, says Voltaire, than the sacrifice made by a delicate sex of beauty, youth, and frequently of high rank, to relieve that aggregate of human misery collected in our hospitals, the very sight of which is so humiliating to our pride and so revolting to our delicacy—Essay on morals, c. 139.

In citing Voltaire as an evidence to the exalted but practical benevolence of the Sisters of Charity, our Author adduces a testimony of the most unquestionable character to the merits of those heroic ladies:

emanating as it does, from one who is avowedly hostile to the spirit and institutions of christianity. That it is within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church alone, among all the societies which claim the name of christian, such devotedness is to be found, is a fact for which we have the same impartial evidence, quoted again by our Author, viz. "The nations separated from the Roman communion, have but imperfectly imitated that generous charity by which the latter is characterised."

But why refuse to hear the accredited ministers of religion. Do not their statements, regarding the facts and institutions of the Church with which they are associated, and of which they possess such an accurate knowledge, claim at least as much respect as those of the Historian marking the political events, and social condition of his country.

Let us attend then to Cardinal Maury explaining the constitutions of that order whose boundless charity could touch in his calmer and better moments the heart of the philosopher of Fernel. He speaks in presence of one of the most august assemblies in the world; and at the command of one whose virtue

exalted royalty itself, and who proved so nobly on the scaffold that the Religion which in the day of his prosperity made him the friend of the Philanthropist, as well as the father of the destitute, inspired him also with the meek but heroic fortitude of the martyr in the darkest scene of that historic tragedy of which he was the victim.

Examine well the injunctions which the Cardinal states to have been given by Vincent of Paul to his religious, and after the lapse of so many years, mark the zeal and fidelity with which they are fulfilled to the letter at the present day by the almost innumerable congregations of that heroic institute spread not only throughout Europe but America. And after such an examination and such a survey, turn then to the systems of beneficence dictated by Philanthropy, or by the societies separated from the Catholic communion, and contrasting both with the charity of the Redeemer as displayed in the great sacrifice of Calvary, meditate in silence on the inference which your heart cannot fail to suggest.

“During his pastoral life at Châtillon, he formed a charitable association of select persons to whom he

committed the poor and the distribution of alms. Such were the blessings with which heaven was pleased to crown his virtuous efforts, that each of his good works grew into a public establishment for Religion, and according to scriptural language—this little fountain grew into a very great river, and abounded into many waters. Est. c. xi, v. x.

The confraternity for the sick, founded by Vincent of Paul at Châtillon became the cradle of that invaluable establishment of the sisters of charity, whose services, be it spoken to the honor of Religion, our age reverences, and of whom even England in our own times has demanded colonies from France. No other duty but an unremitting exertion for the relief of suffering humanity is imposed upon them by their worthy Founder. You shall, it is thus he addresses them in the constitution of his order, you shall have no other monasteries than the dwellings of the poor, no other cloisters than the streets of towns and wards of hospitals, no other enclosure than obedience, no other veil than a holy modesty. My intention, he adds, is that you assist each infirm patient with the care of a tender mother for an only

son." The tender providence of his charity extended itself even to formally ordering them, "to cheer and exhilarate the sick if they are too much dejected by their sufferings."

That he might shield these humble servants of the poor against regrets which would render them useless by disgusting them with their state, this wise legislator, desirous of preserving in so heroic an institute an unabated ardour and zeal, does not admit them to profession until they have passed five entire years of probation, he then only permits them to engage themselves by vow for one year, anxious that each year should thus pass in the fervour of a continual noviceship, and that they should renew before God and man the merit of their first consecration. Encouraged by their success, Vincent of Paul generalizes the functions of these visible angels of Providence, and demands from them virtues in proportion to the public necessities, whilst he testified the esteem he cherished for them by placing them over all his works of charity. These daughters, worthy of so good a Father, animated by his spirit become the mother of the orphan, devote themselves

to the education of children, assist the sick, the widow, the aged and infirm, visit the prisoner, the galley slave, the bashful and retiring poor, and that of the various sufferings of humanity, not one should remain without its remedy ; they are to be found on the field of battle ministering consolation to the dying soldier. It is thus they incessantly struggle against all the disasters which arise from indigence, age or infirmity ; from the vices or crimes of their fellow mortals, counting the most exalted virtues of humanity among the ordinary actions of their state, and fulfilling with a holy joy those works of charity the most disgusting to nature, but the most honorable in the eyes of Religion, in the city as well as in the county, in the galleys as well as in the prisons, in the most obscure retreats of misery as well as in the public asylums of charity.

It was in the midst of the universal decay of religious orders that heaven, which visibly protects the daughters of Vincent Paul to interpose every where their touching innocence between his justice and human miseries, never ceased to multiply their establishments and their success throughout Europe.

It is the devoted family of Providence which diffuses itself through all parts to justify on the lips of the unhappy this sublime prayer, the depth of which man can feel and appreciate only in the hour of affliction, when he appeals to God through this tutelary adoption for peace and consolation—*Our Father, who art in Heaven.*

Yes, doubtless, children of affliction, you have a Father in heaven, since he is represented even on the earth by so many humane and heroic mothers.

Bless then for ever that benevolent spirit who in bequeathing to you their charitable succour again restored you to your divine affiliation. It is by the maternal solicitude of the virtuous daughters of Vincent of Paul whom he so justly styled the daughters of *Charity herself*, that you recognize the paternity of your God in receiving every day from their hands a portion of his inheritance. (Panegyric of St. Vincent of Paul—preached by Cardinal Maury by order and in presence of Louis XVI, in the Royal Chapel of Versailles—March 4, 1785.

After the gratifying account given by the Cardinal of the origin of this institute, as well as of its extensive and beneficent operation, the reader may not object to the portrait of Sister of Charity, as she exists in our own days and in our own country, by one of considerable celebrity in the literary world, and who lately devoted to religion, talents and acquirements of the first order.

THE SISTER OF CHARITY.

She once was a lady of honor and wealth,
Bright glow'd in her features the roses of health;
Her vesture was blended of silk and of gold,
And her motion shook perfume from every fold;
Joy revelled around her—love shone at her side,
And gay was her smile as the glance of a bride;
And light was her step in the mirth sounding hall,
When she heard of the daughters of Vincent de Paul.

She felt in her spirit the summons of grace,
That call'd her to live for the suffering race;
And, heedless of pleasure, of comfort, of home,
Rose quickly, like Mary, and answered, "I come."
She put from her person the trappings of pride,
And pass'd from her home with the joy of a bride,
Nor wept at the treshold as onward she moved—
For her heart was on fire in the cause it approved.

Lost ever to fashion—to vanity lost,
That beauty that once was the libertine's toast—
No more in the ball-room that figure we meet,
But gliding at dusk to the wretch's retreat.
Forgot in the halls is that high sounding name,
For the Sister of Charity blushes at fame :
Forgot are the claims of her riches and birth,
For she barters for heaven the glory of earth.

Those feet that to music could gracefully move,
Now bear her alone on the mission of love ;
Those hands, that once dangled the perfume and gem,
Are tending the helpless, or lifted for them ;
That voice that once echoed the song of the vain,
Now whispers relief to the bosom of pain ;
And the hair that was shining with diamond and pearl,
Is wet with the tears of the penitent girl.

Her down-bed a pallat—her trinket a bead—
Her lustre one taper, that serves her to read—
Her sculpture, the crucifix nailed by her bed,
Her paintings, one print of the thorn-crown'd head ;
Her cushion, the pavement that wearies her knees,
Her music, the psalm, or the sigh of disease ;
The delicate lady lives mortified there,
And the feast is forsaken for fasting and prayer.

Yet not to the service of heart and of mind,
Are the cares of that heaven-minded virgin confined :
Like him whom she loves to the mansions of grief,
She hastes with the tidings of joy and relief.
She strengthens the weary—she comforts the weak,
And soft is her voice in the ear of the sick ;
Where want and affliction on mortals attend,
The Sister of Charity there is a friend.

Unshrinking where pestilence scatters his breath,
Like an angel she moves 'mid the vapors of death ;
Where rings the long musket and flashes the sword,
Unfearing she walks, for she follows her Lord.
How sweetly she bends o'er each plague-tainted face,
With looks that are lighted with holiest grace ;
How kindly she dresses each suffering limb,
For she sees in the wounded the image of Him.

Behold her, ye wordly ! — behold her, ye vain,
Who shrink from the pathway of virtue and pain ;
Who yield up to pleasure your nights and your days,
Forgetful of service, forgetful of praise.
Ye lazy philosophers, self seeking men—
Ye fireside philanthropists, great at the pen,
How stands in the balance your eloquence weigh'd
With the life and the deeds of that high-born maid ?

APPENDIX II.

Hence the three principal fractions of Protestantism are distinguished by a corresponding relation to piety, as they recede from or approximate to the generative dogma of Catholic piety. This law, which may be demonstrated by the history of many ancient sects, shewed itself in Jansenism, the last of modern heresies.

“Of the want of real piety among the sects separated from the Church of Christ. The following apposite illustrations by the author of the Ages of Faith cannot fail to strike every candid mind.”

Notwithstanding vague and abstract professions, they have proceeded virtually to place the highest good in material prosperity, in the sciences, in the mechanical arts, which minister to temporal comfort and convenience. They never view the course of time and the affairs of empires from the height of

heavenly meditation, which despises the world to follow Christ ; a crucifix so far from being an epitome of their creed, is its refutation. Their maxims are drawn from the wisdom, or even the conventional caprice of the world ; the virtues which they praise are all such as the gentiles praised. The practical results of Christ's sermon on the beatitudes are either never spoken of, or else dismissed with contempt, as so many popish observances, or even perhaps as vestiges of Paganism, old oriental errors, utterly at variance with all enlightened views. Hence they are more conversant with Cicero than St. Augustin, with Horace than with the sacred poets of the Church. The author of the Imitation, if tried by their principles, has probably shown himself ignorant of every thing that a philosopher ought to know. By an involuntary impulse resulting from habit, they are every moment calling in question the very elements of the christian faith—every moment supposing that their own mind, as well as that of the person with whom they converse, is a *tabula rosa* ; as Evrard says of the Waldenses : “affirming nothing, but proposing every thing as a matter of

doubt, saying, thus we think, thus we imagine : it seems so to us, perhaps it is so :*” or else they are dogmatizing, and laying down maxims contrary to faith, with an air of knowing more than they choose to express, as if being withheld from speaking more strongly only by courteous forbearance ; as the Cathari are described by Pope Innocent III. “ Sub quadam humilitatis specie sui elationem animi palliantes.†

* Evrard, cont. Wsld. c. 13,

† Epist. ix. 135.

ERRATA.

Page 52, line 19, *for* "cleaves the maternal bosom," *read*
"cleaves to the maternal bosom."

— 83, last line, *for* "vide note xi," *read* "vide note x."

— 94, second last line, *for* "vide note xii," *read* "vide
note xi."



