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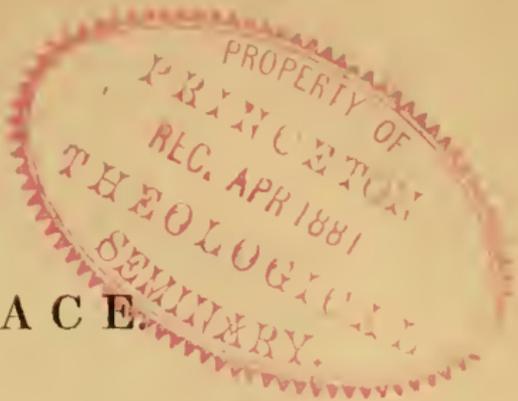
THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE SACRAMENTS,
AS EXHIBITED IN SEVERAL TREATISES,
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P R E F A C E

I HAVE, frequently, been asked to publish, in a separate form, Mr. Knox's Treatise on the Doctrine of Baptism, &c., and that on the Use and Import of the Eucharistic Symbols. With that request I comply willingly. In reprinting them, I have given them exactly as they stand in the Volumes of which, originally, they formed part: and, with them, I republish every thing by which they were at first accompanied. The prefatory Letter and Postscript, though avowedly imperfect sketches, still accompany the more finished Treatise on the Eucharist; and the second tract on

Baptism (substantially one with the first), which was given in an Appendix, forms still an Appendix here.

I need assign no reasons why I, as an Editor, abstain from all tampering, in the way even of verbal alterations, with the avowedly unfinished Writings of Mr. Knox.

JAMES J. HORNBY.

WINWICK, April 21, 1838.

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THE DOCTRINE
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THE SACRAMENTS.

THE DOCTRINE RESPECTING BAPTISM HELD BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

AMONGST the various subjects which have occupied the thoughts of religious men, in this age of controversy, none has excited more attention than the doctrine of Baptism, as maintained by the Church of England.

It is agreed, on all hands, that, according to our church, baptism is a sacrament of most important significancy; and that, considered as an external ordinance, it is the outward and visible sign of those inward and spiritual blessings, the possession of which ensures everlasting salvation: but the great point of debate has been, in what manner the external ordinance, and the inward blessing, are connected with each other.

Many have contended, that the ordinance and the blessing are not necessarily, nor even ordinarily, concurrent; and that, when they are con-

current, it is not in consequence of any divine virtue attached to the external sacrament; but because its administration has been accompanied with a special exercise of faith and devotion.

Others have maintained, that the outward ordinance and the internal blessing are so far from being separable, that, in point of fact, they are the same thing; or, as it is usually expressed, that baptism is regeneration.

It may not be useless to inquire, whether the true doctrine of the Church of England, when attentively examined, will be found to accord with either of these theories; and whether it may not be clearly shewn to be materially and practically different from both the one and the other.

I begin with considering the latter theory; because, if it be erroneous, the error implies simple mistake, rather than predilection for some contrary notion. They who maintain that baptism is regeneration, are not actuated by zeal for any consequent doctrine. They may, therefore, be regarded rather as wishing to ascertain what the doctrine of the Church of England is, than to bend that doctrine to their own special purpose. Consequently, it may be hoped that, if those theorists be proved in error, they will at least feel no displeasure at the attempt to disabuse them.

It must, then, be granted in the first instance, that the language of many ancient writers appears to countenance the assertion, that baptism is regeneration. But it is necessary to inquire, in what sense the term baptism was used, in the early ages of the Church. It will be found that, in those times, the outward rite was contemplated as unlikely to be solicited, except by qualified recipients. The phraseology of the Catholic Church, on this subject, was formed when Christianity had attractions only for the sincere; when to assume the Christian profession, was to hazard every thing from which human nature recoils. In such circumstances, a disposition to receive the supernatural grace, as well as the external sign, was reckoned upon with moral certainty; and therefore, in common language, to be baptized, and to be regenerated, became synonymous expressions.

That it was in this view only, that the visible sign and the invisible grace of baptism were occasionally united in language, is proved by the fact, that, in certain instances, their disunion is expressly acknowledged. Thus, for example, St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, instructs his catechumens that Simon Magus, though baptized, was not enlightened by the Holy Spirit; that his body,

indeed, descended into the font, but that he was not buried and raised again with Christ.* Thus, also, Origen tells his hearers, that not all who have been baptized with water, were baptized with the Holy Spirit; nor, on the contrary, were all the catechumens destitute of that spirit; for "I find," says he, "in Holy Scripture, some catechumens accounted worthy of the Holy Spirit, and others, after baptism, unworthy of the gifts of the Spirit." He goes on to adduce Cornelius, as an instance of the Holy Spirit being given before baptism, and Simon Magus, as having been baptized, yet refused the gift of the Spirit.† St. Augustin, too, similarly observes respecting Cornelius, that, in his case, sanctification by the Holy Spirit went before, and the sacrament of regeneration was added afterward.‡

It follows then, that, in the judgment of the ancient Church, the outward sacrament, and the inward blessing, were by no means considered as inseparably united, much less as identical; that they were concurrent only in such cases as offered

* St. Cyril. Hier. Præf. ad Cat. § a.

† Lardner on Origen. He quotes the Bened. Edit. vol. ii. p. 280.

‡ St. August. de Baptismo, Cont. Donat., Edit. Bened. t. ix. p. 140.

no obstruction to the entrance of the Holy Spirit : which fact, however, was generally relied upon in those early times.

That the Church of England, in her doctrine of baptism, has strictly adhered to the ancient principles, might be largely shewn ; but a single reference will be sufficient. When the revisors of 1661 were urged by the non-conformists, not to insist on the recognition of every infant as “regenerate,” their answer was, “Seeing that God’s sacraments have their effects, when the receiver doth not, ponere obicem, put any bar against them, which children cannot do, we may say, in faith, of every child that is baptized, that he is regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit.”

Nothing more, therefore, is necessary to shew that when, by regeneration, is understood the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, it cannot, according to the Church of England, be said, simply and without a proviso, that baptism is regeneration ; for if this proposition were true, it must be always true, and could not depend upon any condition. Whereas, according to those from whose hands we receive our present formulary, the inwardly regenerating efficacy of baptism does depend on a condition ; because, in their judgment, a bar may exist to prevent baptism from

being, in the best and happiest sense, regeneration. I say, in the best and happiest sense, because there may be another notion of regeneration, beside that which is inward and spiritual, the identity of which with baptism there is no necessity to dispute. The non-conformists themselves acknowledged (in the conference at the Savoy, in 1661,) that “baptism, as an outward ordinance, is our visible, sacramental regeneration;” but, as such, it must be regarded, as making a change in the receiver’s circumstances, whether there be, or be not, a change in his mind or heart. He has contracted relations which are indelible, and which tend, according as they are improved or abused, to infinite advantage or to infinite calamity. It is well known, that to revolutions of a like nature in common life, Greek writers have applied the term *παλιγγενεσία* (regeneration); and Cicero, though writing in another language, employs this very word to describe the change made in his circumstances, by his recall from exile.* In such a relative and external sense, therefore, regeneration may fairly be considered as inseparable from baptism; and, most probably, it was on this ground, not less than on that of charitable hope, that the language of early times,

* Epist. ad Attic. vi. 6.

respecting baptism, was still retained, when the proofs of a sincere reception had become more questionable.

Nor was it solely on the authority of Josephus, of Philo, or of Cicero, that this external or relative notion of regeneration was adopted. Our Redeemer himself might be thought to have countenanced it, by the expression "born of water." As it was his divine purpose to establish an outward and visible kingdom upon earth, as well as one which was internal and invisible, the entrance of each individual into that external and visible kingdom, by an external and visible initiation, was, in its place and proportion, as necessary to his design, as initiation into the internal and invisible kingdom, by the inward operation of the Divine Spirit. In order, therefore, to mark this twofold necessity in the strongest manner, the all-wise Saviour annexes the same idea to the outward as to the inward transaction; making the being born of water, as well as being born of the Spirit, indispensable to admission into his mystical kingdom.

It never can be thought, that, when our Lord spoke thus, he meant to give like importance to the outward sacrament as to the internal grace; still less, that he has countenanced the confounding of the one with the other. The distinct

agencies which the words imply, namely, the ministry of man, and the operation of the Eternal Spirit, make it impossible either to equalise or confound these two indispensable requisites to the full Christian character. But, on the other hand, our Lord's words do appear to recognise a sacramental regeneration, as well as an internal and spiritual regeneration; and, consequently, to authorise the application of the term in the former sense, whatever may be the ground of its applicability in the latter.

It cannot be doubted that the Church of England had this extended use of the term regeneration in view, when in speaking of the inward blessing of baptism, distinctly from the outward ordinance, she employs the expression, "spiritual regeneration." There would clearly have been no need of the additional epithet, if the word regeneration admitted only of an inward and spiritual meaning; while, at the same time, we are certain, that in drawing up the formula of baptism, the expressions, as well as sentiments, of the earlier Church were continually kept in view, in order that whatever had been uninterruptedly and universally received, should be, if not distinctly recognised, at least not contradicted.

On the whole, then, it would appear, that it is

not contrary either to the language of the early Church, or of our Lord himself, and also that it is at least indirectly sanctioned by the Church of England, to say, in a certain sense, that baptism is regeneration; that is, when by regeneration is merely meant the relative and circumstantial change implied in becoming a member of Christ's visible Church, and a professing subject of his mystical kingdom.

But, if regeneration be understood in a deeper and more inward sense, if it be taken for that "spiritual regeneration," which has been just referred to, then it will be necessary to inquire, whether it be possible to maintain, on any ground of rational consistency, that baptism is, in that sense, regeneration.

Baptism is sometimes used comprehensively, for the entire sacrament, including not only the outward and visible sign, but the inward and spiritual grace. At other times it is used distinctly for the outward ordinance, which it is always within human competency to administer. We have an example of the comprehensive use of the term baptism, in the beginning of the Catechism, when the catechumen is made to say, that in baptism he was "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the king-

dom of heaven." We have also an instance of its more limited application, in that passage of the baptismal service which has been more than once adverted to, where the minister prays for the infant, that he, "coming to God's holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration:" the reception of the outward ordinance here is a matter of human certainty, while the inward and spiritual grace is implored from above.

Now, if we take baptism in the comprehensive sense, it cannot be identified with spiritual regeneration, because a whole cannot be identified with one of its parts. If we take baptism in the more limited sense, the proposition in question becomes still more inadmissible, inasmuch as it is impossible that the outward and visible sign should be the inward and spiritual grace. The words of the baptismal service, therefore, which have been just quoted, are of themselves sufficient to fix the sense of the Church of England, on the particular point now before us. According to those words, "spiritual regeneration" is not identical with the ordinance of baptism, but is the effect of a heavenly influence on the mind and heart, which, it is confidently trusted, will be communicated, in

and through that ordinance, to all susceptible receivers.

How consistent it was, thus to distinguish the inward and spiritual blessing, from the outward and visible sign, will be seen with greater clearness, by attending to the effects ascribed to the grace of baptism in every part of the service. This grace, it will be observed, is represented throughout as an effective principle, which, in proportion as it is possessed, regulates affection, temper, and conduct. It is a character given to the inner man, which, if retained, must manifest itself by corresponding results, and which cannot co-exist with the predominance of sin. These characteristics of spiritual regeneration are essentially implied in its union with "remission of sins." Bondage to sins, and remission of sins, are perfectly incompatible with each other. The slave of sin must be under the guilt of sin. So soon, therefore, as the baptized person habitually yields to temptation, he loses "the remission of his sins," in whatever sense we understand the expression; and if remission of sins be lost, spiritual regeneration, which involves remission of sins, must be lost also.

Now, as this forfeiture is undeniably incurred by numberless persons who had been baptized, it

follows of necessity, that to have been baptized, and to be spiritually regenerated, are two distinct and separable descriptions; the former of which, we may readily believe, can never be lost by the person who has once received it; whereas, the very nature of the latter so evinces it to be perishable, that to deny it to be perishable, is to rob it of its essential character. Spiritual regeneration would be any thing but spiritual, if it could be retained by a willing votary of the world, the flesh, or the Devil.

The truth of this position will appear yet more clearly, if we attend to the insignificant import of particular expressions. We are instructed, that to be spiritually regenerated, implies the commencing death of "all carnal affections," and the commencing life of "all things belonging to the Spirit." The spiritually regenerated person receives "the fulness of God's grace," not that in due time he may enter amongst, but that he may "ever remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children." He is, accordingly, regarded as God's own child by adoption; as dead to sin, as alive to righteousness, and as buried with Christ in his death. There would, in truth, be no consistency in the term, "spiritual regeneration," if it did not comprehend these

particulars, either in its essence, or in its consequences; but spiritual regeneration, thus explained, can never be confounded with the mere reception of baptism, or with the indissoluble relation to Christ's visible kingdom, which that reception involves. The baptized person never can become unbaptized; but he who has been made dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness, may again become dead to righteousness, and alive to sin; that is, he may, through unfaithfulness, lose the blessing of "spiritual regeneration." For this, as expanded in the tenour of the baptismal service, could not consist, for one hour, with the decided predominance of moral evil. To be dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness, is, in point of fact, the essence of spiritual regeneration: therefore, when sin is deliberately yielded to, spiritual regeneration is lost.

The 16th Article brings this point, if it were possible, to a still clearer conclusion. Its design is to censure the Novatians, who held, "that, when baptismal grace was once forfeited, there remained no place for repentance." In contradiction to this error, the article asserts, that "not every deadly sin, willingly committed after baptism, is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable; that after we have received the

Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and, by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend our lives.”

These words are the more worthy of attention, because, in no other instance, is either the connexion or the distinction between the outward sign and the inward grace of baptism, more clearly propounded. In the commencing words, the inward grace of the sacrament is regarded as, in some sense, a thing of course; for the term, deadly sin (as invariably used by theologians), implies an antecedent life of grace in the soul, which an act of presumptuous sin cannot but extinguish; and the words which follow not only proceed on the same supposition, but they give the strongest idea of the initial life of grace, conferred through baptism, that could be expressed in language. “After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin.”

As in the first sentence, then, we had the connexion between the outward ordinance and the inward grace,—in these latter expressions they are no less clearly distinguished. We have done, as it were, with the outward ordinance; it served its important purpose, and is never again to be repeated. Our attention is, therefore, now con-

fined to the grace which it conveyed; and this, we are here distinctly told, is as perishable as baptism itself is indelible.

“Receiving the Holy Ghost,” and “grace given,” are obviously different terms for the same idea, with which “spiritual regeneration,” also, must be considered as identical. To prove this identity, would be a waste of words, as the three expressions have, self-evidently, the same meaning. To assert, therefore, that we may depart from “grace given,” is to teach that we may banish from our hearts that Holy Spirit which we had once received, and lose the “spiritual regeneration” of which we had been possessed; for nothing more unreasonable could be imagined, than that, when we depart from God’s grace, we should retain God’s Holy Spirit; or that, when the Holy Spirit had gone from us, spiritual regeneration, which is the result of his presence and vital influence, should still remain.

The distinction which is thus established between having been baptised, and continuing spiritually regenerate, is, however, not left to be discovered by examination, but is, in truth, inculcated on every catechumen within the pale of our establishment. Few members of the Church of England, it may be hoped, have forgotten

these weighty words, — “ I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation ; and I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.”

That the state of salvation, in this passage of the Catechism, means precisely the same thing as spiritual regeneration in the baptismal service, is too obvious to require argument. The point which demands attention is, that this state of salvation is here represented as a blessing which may be lost. “ I pray unto God,” says the catechumen, “ to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same.” There would be neither need, nor room for this petition, if continuance in the state of salvation were a matter of absolute certainty ; as, on the other hand, to pray for divine grace, that we may continue in this state, intimates both how this state is to be preserved, and that it is worth preserving.

To pray for “ continuance in the same ” state, would be a presumptuous and dangerous measure, if that state did not imply a pledge of everlasting safety. If it were only a state of salvability, and not strictly of salvation, the use of God’s grace would have been, not to continue in the same state to the end, but so to improve it as

to be advanced to a better. This state of salvation, therefore, can be no other than that which theologians have called the state of grace; a state which, we are already taught, may be "departed from;" which we are here instructed can be preserved, by exercising, with fidelity, the grace we have received, and imploring the throne of grace continually for fresh supplies; but which, if so preserved, will infallibly terminate in everlasting peace.

Enough, I conceive, has now been said to explain the distinction made by the Church of England, between baptism, as an indelible badge of the Christian profession, and the retention of that inward grace, or spiritual regeneration, which this holy sacrament is intended to convey. But it would seem that something further is pressed upon us, by the passages which have been adduced; namely, the importance of keeping this distinction continually in view. It is impossible not to see, that, in the judgment of the church, the inward grace of baptism, really possessed, and effectually exercised, is, itself, the prime blessing of the Gospel; and the pledge, as well as principle, of all spiritual benefits, which we are authorised to expect, or bound to pursue. Nothing less would be found to be the concur-

rent import of all that might be quoted from the Common Prayer Book on the subject; and it will be obvious, that, in every instance, the most substantial results are supposed to follow, both in heart and life.

The assertion, therefore, that all these energetic representations are to be resolved into the one simple fact of being baptised, either convicts the Church of England of having involved a point, the plainest and simplest that could occupy discourse, in disproportioned figure, and gratuitous mystery; or it convicts those who make the assertion, of deliberately suppressing, as far as in them lies, an entire head of the established doctrines; which, if not strangely nugatory as they would represent it, must be of unspeakable importance. From the evidence which has been stated, it may be judged, which of the two suppositions is the more reasonable; and it will remain for those, who, by way of defending the church, have placed themselves within the horns of such a dilemma, to reflect dispassionately, whether the rejection of their theory is not demanded, at once by their fidelity as churchmen, and their consistency as theologians.

For, in addition to what has been observed, it ought also to be considered, whether they, who,

to raise the value of baptism, would identify it with regeneration, do not really accomplish the work of their antagonists more effectually than they do it themselves. Even these latter allow, that the outward and visible sign is sometimes accompanied by an inward and spiritual grace. But, if it were true that spiritual regeneration is nothing else but baptism, would there, in truth, be any such thing at all as inward and spiritual grace? If this be any thing, it must be distinguishable from the mere ministerial act which it is conceived to accompany: if it be not distinguishable from that act, theoretically or practically, it is nothing. Is not this, then, another instance of extremes running into each other? Of that which is intended to be the extreme of orthodoxy, sinking, in point of fact, into the extreme of Socinianism?

On the whole, if the church be permitted to speak for herself, does she not clearly assert, that there is, indeed, an inward and spiritual grace, which baptism, as a sign, betokens, and, as a means, is intended to convey; that this grace, when really possessed, must have a proportionate influence, both on the inward and outward man; and that, where no such influence exists, however certainly the grace of spiritual regeneration may

have been possessed, it is now possessed no longer?

I now proceed to consider the remaining question, namely, to what extent the Church of England maintains the concurrence of the inward and spiritual grace with the external sacrament of baptism.

It may, then, in the first place, be safely asserted, that where the sacrament of baptism is administered to adults, the Church of England holds the concurrence of the inward grace to be no other than conditional. We learn from the Catechism, that, in order to the effectual reception of baptism, adults must be qualified by repentance and faith. These preliminaries, it is said, are "required of persons to be baptised." Therefore, if what is "required" be wanting, it is a necessary consequence, that the defaulters should not receive the blessing communicated to qualified subjects.

This result is inevitable; not only on equitable grounds, but because such adults as are impenitent and faithless, are morally incapable of an inward and spiritual blessing. Where the faculties are in exercise, sin, if not hated, must be loved; and righteousness, if not desired, must be disliked and depreciated. Full-grown human

nature cannot remain, for one moment, in a state of moral neutrality.

The question, therefore, is narrowed to the case of infant receivers; and the point to be settled is, do all infants, who are baptised, infallibly participate in the inward and spiritual grace, which the sacrament of baptism is intended to convey?

In ascertaining the judgment of the Church of England on this important subject, we must attend only to her own authoritative decisions. It is a well-known fact, that divines of the Church of England have, in this particular instance, shewn singular disagreement. Divine may be so quoted against divine, as perfectly to neutralise this kind of evidence. The unadulterated records of the church herself can alone yield rational proof of what the church actually believes on this much debated point.

Let us, then, examine, in the first place, the language of the form for the public baptism of infants. It was evidently intended to make this service an authentic vehicle of instruction respecting the sacred rite with which it is connected; to ascertain its import is, consequently, to learn, in the most direct and certain manner,

what the Church of England believes on the subject of infant baptism.

Now, can it be disputed, that, in every prayer to God, and in every address to the assistants, the inward and spiritual effect of this sacrament on the infant receiver, is relied upon as a result, not of mere probability, but of absolute and infallible certainty? .

As an irrefragable ground for this confidence, an appeal is made to that remarkable account in the Gospel, of our Lord's receiving the little children which were brought to him; and, in perfect assurance that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the sponsors are encouraged not to doubt, but earnestly to believe, that he will likewise favourably receive the infant which they present; "that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom."

What it is to be embraced in the arms of divine mercy, is explained in the next exhortation, by recapitulating the chief matter of the preceding petitions. "Ye have prayed," it is said, "that the Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive this child, to release him of his sins, to sanctify

him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life." And the same ideas are expanded, with new force and clearness, in a following prayer, where it is implored, "that the old Adam in the child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him; that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him."

Some of these expressions have been already adduced, for the purpose of shewing, that the spiritual grace of baptism, which includes such real and substantial results, cannot be confounded with the mere reception of the external rite. But every expression, in the baptismal service, which bespeaks the belief of an inward and spiritual grace, distinct from the outward sign, proves equally, that, in the judgment of our church, infant receivers of baptism are, without exception, partakers of that grace, inasmuch as it is to children universally, who are brought to the baptismal font, that those expressions are to be applied.

Nor can it, by any possibility, be objected, that this application is meant to be prospective, and therefore conditional. There are, indeed,

expressions which can no otherwise be understood, because they necessarily include the idea of future free agency. But, that the inward and spiritual grace itself, comprehending every benefit and blessing of the Christian covenant that infancy can receive, is reckoned upon as immediate and infallible, appears from the language used in the sequel of the service; which not only expresses reliance on present communication, but, at length, solemnly thanks God for its being actually made.

Reliance on present communication is expressed in the prayer, "Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin." These words contemplate an actual operation of divine power, through the appointed instrument, wherever there is no bar in the subject. They imply a heavenly influence to unite itself with the water, and to make the ablution of the body effectual, through divine concurrence, to the purification of the soul. Doubtless this hope might be expressed, without assurance of its fulfilment; and it is thus expressed, with no verbal difference, in the baptism of adults. But the conclusive certainty, with which "the mystical washing away of sin" is relied upon, in the case of infants, will be per-

ceived, when it is known, that the very persons,* who have been already quoted, as asserting the regeneration of every baptised infant, because an infant could oppose no bar to God's grace, were also the inserters of that particular petition, which we are now considering. The sense, therefore, in which it was meant to be understood, respecting infants, is indisputable; and, so understood, it fixes the same meaning on the subsequent petition, — “And grant that this child, now to be baptised, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children.”

But, if even this decisive evidence were wanting, the language of the thanksgiving which follows the act of baptising, would prove that the Church of England had, at all times, held the outward sign to be, to infants, the vehicle of the inward and spiritual grace. On this sole ground, could “heartly thanks” be given to the Father of mercies, for having regenerated the baptised infant with his Holy Spirit, and for having received him for his own child by adoption; and on the same principle only, could he be declared a “partaker of the death of Christ.” These words have been

• The Revisers in 1661.

already quoted against those who, by asserting that baptism is regeneration, would resolve the inward and spiritual grace into the mere reception of the outward sign ; and if they are conclusive on this point, they equally establish the spiritual regeneration of every duly baptised infant ; because, to every such child, they unequivocally and solemnly ascribe that inward and spiritual blessing.

Not to admit the truth of this observation, would be deeply to assail, either the good sense, or the integrity of those who drew up our established forms ; for, had they contemplated nothing in baptism but an incorporation into the visible church, and had they merely entertained a charitable hope that the baptised infant would, in God's good time, become the subject of saving grace, it would have been an easy thing to find terms apt and natural for their purpose. But, instead of this, they have used the strongest expressions by which it would be possible to describe the effectual influence of God's Holy Spirit on the inner man. To have employed such expressions, therefore, in any other than their obvious and only rational sense, would have been to involve the Church of England in a gratuitous trifling with the holiest things, which might have been thought

more likely to incur an anathema than to draw down blessing. It would, in truth, be hard to say, which was greater, the profaneness, or the folly, of so strange a proceeding.

If these arguments could be strengthened, they would derive additional force from the remarkable variation of language which is found in the thanksgiving after the baptism of adults. It is true that these, also, in the address to the assistants, are pronounced regenerate: and not so to esteem them in human judgment, thus coming of their own accord to the baptismal font, would ill accord with that charity which hopeth all things. Besides, there might, probably, also have been a view to that extrinsic import of the term regenerate, which has already been sufficiently noticed.

But the fact which deserves observation is, that God is not thanked (as in the case of infants) for having regenerated them by his Holy Spirit, or for having made them his own children by adoption; nor is one word said of their death to sin, or of their participation in the death of Christ. All this, doubtless, is to be hoped concerning them. But it would have been an excess of presumption to tell the Searcher of hearts, that effects were positively produced, when, in order to such effects,

the adult receiver of baptism must possess qualifications of which God alone could take cognisance. It is well known that this service was first introduced by the revisers in 1661; who have been already quoted, as refusing to admit any intimation of doubt respecting the spiritual regeneration of baptised infants, because, in their case, no bar could be opposed to the saving grace of God. Where, therefore, notwithstanding all that charity could hope, a bar might, by possibility, be opposed, consistency forbade the admission of any positive or conclusive expression.

But there is a striking instance of this just distinction between infants and adults in the early part of the baptismal service, which must not be overlooked. In the exhortation after the passage from St. Mark's gospel, which is introduced in the baptism of infants, it is said without reserve,—“Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that he (the Lord Jesus Christ) will likewise favourably receive this present infant,” and “that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy.” Whereas, in the baptism of adults, in the exhortation which follows the passage of scripture used in their case, namely, our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, in the 3d chapter of St. John, the corresponding sentence is thus qualified:—

“Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will favourably receive these present persons, truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith.” The limited language, in this instance, proves, that the language respecting baptised infants would not have been left absolute, if it had not been felt to be the just expression of what the Church of England believed upon the subject.

In addition to every other evidence, an appeal, on this point, might be made, to the entire spirit and tenour of the baptismal service. It is obviously on certain theological grounds, that the communication of internal grace to all infants, in baptism, can alone be disputed. It is taken for granted, by a well known class of theologians, that, since the fall of Adam, the human race has been under a superincumbent curse; which they do not regard as, in the very first instance, removed, by the gracious intervention of the second Adam, and, for his sake, succeeded by an equally universal covenant of mercy (a truth deducible from the first promise,—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head”*), but it is their

* It seems as if what St. Paul teaches on this subject (Rom. v.) was unaccountably overlooked. He tells us

opinion, that the general malediction remains the same as ever, except so far as it is removed from individuals, whom God is pleased to choose as the objects of his favour. As, therefore, it would be contradictory to this theory, to suppose the divine mercy actually extended to every baptised infant; so, on the principle of God's unrestricted benignity to every child of Adam, there could be no rational ground for doubting, that, in such an institution as the sacrament of baptism, the outward sign should, in the case of infants, be uniformly accompanied by an inward and spiritual grace. Now, whoever reads the baptismal service for children with attention, will perceive, that there is not, in any part of it, the slightest intimation, even of the first principles by which the stern theology now alluded to is supported. The one sole evil which the service contemplates is,

(ver. 14) that Adam was "a type of him that was to come;" he says (ver. 15) that the free gift is "much more" than commensurate to the primeval offence; and (ver. 18) he makes this important conclusion, that as by one offence "all men" have incurred a liability to condemnation, so, by one righteousness, "all men" are endued with a capability of attaining "justification of life." Let him that can, draw any other meaning out of the original words.

the hereditary taint naturally communicated from the vitiated parent of mankind to the whole human race. It is most justly assumed that this inherent corruption, if left uncorrected, would necessarily obstruct the divine complacency; but it is no less expressly taken for granted, that, as it exists in infants, it excites, instead of impeding, the divine benevolence. There is not, from first to last, the remotest hint of a universal malediction, a general condemnation on account of a broken law, the removal of which, from each favoured individual, must constitute the first effectual exercise of saving mercy. It is, accordingly, not the guilt, but the "innocency" of children, in the sight of God, which is reckoned upon: innocency, not as opposed to that "fault and corruption of nature," which can be corrected only by divine grace; but, innocency, as opposed to every thing which could obstruct, or even lessen, the divine philanthropy.

With respect to the inward evil, which is to be counteracted by the grace of baptism, the strongest expressions are used: but it is to this point that they are confined. It is said, "Wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church:" that is (allowing

each term its proper force), “so work upon this child by thy saving power, as to remove from him whatever could offend thy infinite purity.” Thus only can we understand the being delivered from God’s wrath, through sanctifying influence communicated from himself. In one of the exhortations to the sponsors, it is said,—“Ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive ‘this child,’ to release him of his sins,” &c. But in what sense to release him? A foregoing petition, which is evidently referred to, gives the answer:—“We call upon thee for this infant, that he, coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.” This important passage, which has been already repeatedly adverted to, explains, that “to release the infant of his sins,” is to deliver him from the thralldom and pollution of his corrupted nature; this being evidently the “remission of sins,” which is to be obtained through spiritual regeneration; whereas, it is clear that, on the principles of those rigid theologians, that removal of malediction, which they regard as remission or forgiveness, must, in the order of nature, precede the gift of the sanctifying Spirit; such a gift being the strongest possible evidence of paternal kindness and mercy already in operation.

As, therefore, it is the very gift which the Church of England, in the baptismal service, at once, and in the first instance, implores; so is the blessing asked, and the communication relied upon, as if no imaginable bar was in the way of its accomplishment, and as if that accomplishment was infallibly assured, by the memorable words of incarnate Deity, respecting little children, which had been recited from the Gospel. Accordingly, proceeding on this immutable ground, every expression in the entire form bespeaks cheerfulness and certainty. It is, as if the spirit of the divine transaction, on which it so specially founds itself, were transfused into every part of it; and as if the God of love was relied upon, at the impulse of a benevolence congenial to his own.

It is felt, that little children, as such, are invited into his kingdom. It is believed, that here, as elsewhere, he is no respecter of persons; and that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To his goodness, therefore, every infant candidate for baptism is unreservedly committed; and, in the confidence that in that goodness there is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning," as soon as the appointed vehicle of blessing has been duly applied, the communication of that

blessing is rested in, with unqualified confidence, and grateful acknowledgment.

The baptismal service has been sufficiently remarked upon. But a passage, already quoted from the Catechism, again demands attention, as expressly recognising the spiritual regeneration of every baptised infant. After what has been observed, it need not be proved that to be “made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” is to be spiritually regenerated; and it has been shewn, that the state of salvation, constituted by those privileges, means a state, not of salvability only, but of efficacious grace, and, if retained to the end, of everlasting security. The point, then, at this time to be attended to, is, that the Church of England makes every youthful catechumen thank God for this invaluable blessing, and implore grace, not that thereby spiritual regeneration may be effected, but that, as being already possessed, it may never after be forfeited. That such language should be universally enjoined, would be presumptuous and absurd on any other supposition, but that of saving grace being universally communicated to baptised infants, and of its being still retained, through God’s blessing on parental care and instruction. Undoubtedly, this

latter reckoning is made only with charitable hope ; the liability to fall from this state being, in the words themselves, most impressively intimated : but it is such a hope as bespeaks infallible certainty of what the catechumen had once possessed, and must, consequently, still possess, except there had been a fall into deadly sin, through departure “from grace given.” This, also, it will be observed, is exactly the principle on which the Church of England proceeds, in the subsequent solemnity of confirmation. Here, as in baptism, obviously in the same sense, and almost in the same words, “Almighty God” is addressed as having vouchsafed to “regenerate” the persons to be confirmed, not only “by water,” but “by the Holy Ghost,” and as having “given them forgiveness of all their sins.” A more absolute and unreserved recognition could not be expressed in words ; and it would be impossible to maintain either its religious fitness, or its rational consistency, if the spiritual regeneration of infants, universally, in baptism, were not admitted.

It may, perhaps, be objected to the conclusiveness of this remark, that the adult receivers of baptism are, according to the Church of England, to receive confirmation in the same form of words, although in their case there can be no

positive certainty that the terms are applicable; how, then, it may be asked, can the same unvaried expressions have a conditional import in the one case, and an absolute import in the other? I answer, that there would be force in this objection, if those who composed the order of confirmation had either intended, or foreseen, that use of it, on which the objection is founded. But it was impossible that adult receivers of baptism should have been in their thoughts, when they themselves made no provision for such a case. It has been already mentioned, that the form for baptising such as are of riper years, originated with the revision in 1661; and on examining the form for confirming, it will be found to correspond to the case of those alone who had been baptised in infancy. In the preface, with which it commences, the time of receiving confirmation is expressly adjusted to this end, that "children, being now come to the years of discretion, may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in their baptism."

Accordingly, the persons who present themselves, are solemnly required to renew the promise, which was made in their name at their

baptism; and to assume, in their own persons, all which was then undertaken for them by their godfathers and godmothers; which words, be it observed, are so exclusively applicable to those baptised in infancy, that they cannot, without gross inconsistency, be made use of in the case of those who were baptised in riper years. For it will be found, that, in the form drawn up by the revisers for that purpose, the engagements are made, not by the godfathers and godmothers, but by the parties themselves. Such persons, therefore, cannot, with truth or reason, say, that they renew the promise made in their names, and ratify and confirm the same in their own persons; inasmuch as, in baptism, they acted in their own persons, and the promise was made by themselves, not by others for them.

The inference therefore to be made, from the use of the same words, in confirming both classes of the baptised, is really no other than this, that the revisers, in leaving the unaltered form to be used for adult receivers of baptism, were strangely inadvertent. We may easily conceive, that the incongruity to the case of adults might have escaped notice; but it is impossible to conceive, that, if it had, been adverted to, it would have remained uncorrected. The inconsistency is so

palpable, that it could not have been suffered to remain. They who were so careful to adapt the service of baptism to the case of adults, would not have been less careful, had the thought occurred, in the case of confirmation; least of all, would they have left a dissonance, which their own new baptismal service had occasioned, and which a few alterations in the confirmation service, to be used where necessary, would easily have removed.

It is not necessary to shew that such an oversight in the revisers cannot affect either the clearness or the conclusiveness of the confirmation service, as it was drawn up by the reformers, and stands unaltered in the Common-Prayer Book.

Having thus, as I conceive, sufficiently proved, that, in the judgment of the Church of England, the spiritual grace of baptism is communicated, in that ordinance, to all infant receivers, I wish again to draw attention to an important result of all which has been said, inasmuch as, though already repeatedly intimated, it cannot, for practical purposes, be too much kept in view; namely, that, in whatever light this early blessing has been placed before us,—whether as the mystical washing away of sin, sanctification by the Holy

Spirit, remission of sins by spiritual regeneration, enrolment among God's faithful and elect children, a death unto sin, a being buried with Christ in his death, reception of the Holy Ghost, grace given, or simply as a state of salvation, to be continued in, through that grace, unto the end,—it can, from its obvious nature, remain only in minds where it is in some measure yielded to and cherished: but that, where, on the contrary, it is resisted and repelled, or, in the language of the article already quoted, "departed from," there, as long as such unfaithfulness continues, the spiritual blessing conveyed in baptism is actually (though, through the tender mercy of God, not irrecoverably) forfeited and lost.

The expressions just recited could have no rational meaning; they would be, to use St. Peter's language, "great swelling words of vanity," if, notwithstanding their apparent significance, they, in point of fact, denoted nothing which made any sensible difference in moral character, or which notified itself, by any correspondent result, in the mind or conduct of the possessor.

But, on the other hand, let these terms be understood in their natural import, and then nothing less can be concluded, than that a vital

germ of all virtuous dispositions, and pious affections, is implanted in the mind of the baptised infant; a germ, however, which, it is not intimated, will grow up of itself; but which, it is relied upon, will expand, under that auxiliary culture which the Divine order has made indispensable, if not blighted in its opening by that perverseness, which, on the supposition of free agency, must necessarily be incidental.

However conceivable, then, it is, that such a pregnant principle of good should remain, at once undeveloped and uninjured, during the period of infancy and childish weakness (as conceivable as that any other mental capability should equally exist, and equally lie dormant), it certainly cannot be thought that that holy and heavenly tendency, which baptismal grace, as explained by the Church of England, necessarily implies, should continue to be possessed, when the time has arrived for reason and conscience to do their duty; and when, instead of being listened to, they are resisted and trampled on. If this principle be sincerely, however weakly, obeyed and guarded, there can be no doubt of its continuance, and there will be every hope of its advancement: but, if it be grossly and obstinately resisted, its extinction must ensue. It would be as reasonable

to maintain, that he, who was once possessed of piety and righteousness, must still possess them, after having apostatised into irreligion and profligacy, as to assert, that spiritual regeneration, as explained by the Church of England, should continue, after spiritual and animal wickedness has become predominant in the heart and life.

The deeply practical sense in which the Church of England holds this conclusion, is discernible in different parts of her devotional formulary. Though she evidently wishes, as far as possible, to consider her children in the state of grace, she repeatedly reminds them, that they may, too probably, have "departed from grace given," and, consequently, be in a state of deadly sin.

The Church particularly impresses this awful warning in every repetition of the litany, by interceding with God, distinctly, for such as are in the state of grace; for such as are in a state of deadly sin; and also for such as form an intermediate class; that is, who have either not entirely lapsed, or, rather, if lapsed and in part recovered, are not yet completely and conscientiously reinstated.

The words of the petition are in every churchman's memory; the comprehensive and weighty

meaning may not have been as generally adverted to.

“ That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand, and to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall.”

The least attention will shew that there could not have been a clearer or more practical classification. Those who stand, are obviously the settled subjects of the state of grace ; that is, they live habitually in the fear and love of God, in the spirit of true devotion, and in constant watchfulness against the world, the flesh, and the devil. They, therefore, through divine grace, rise superior to every gross temptation ; and from day to day enjoy, in the secret of their hearts, that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

It is impossible to attach a lower sense to so significant a term ; a thousand words could not describe more conclusively the state in which the church wishes her faithful children to be kept, and to which she is anxious that all penitents should be restored, and all wanderers should return. The vague and frigid theory which contents itself with a regeneration, implying, not salvation, but mere salvability, imperceptible when possessed, and too unsubstantial to be for-

feited, has no place here. They who stand, in contradistinction to those who are weak-hearted, and in opposition to those who fall, cannot be confounded with such as fluctuate between sin and repentance, and derive all their comfort, not from consciousness of the Redeemer's effectual grace within them, but from abstract reliance on what he did for them in the days of his flesh.

Doubtless the Church of England never loses sight of the merits of our blessed Saviour; but she confides in them, not as a substitute for internal grace, but as an infallible security that this grace will be freely communicated to all who cordially ask it; that it will be amply given, in proportion to faithful improvement, and more urgent exigence; and that, to those who substantially retain it, those unallowed offences, which arise from the original frailty, that remains, says the IXth article, "even in them that are regenerated," but which imply weakness, rather than wickedness, will not be imputed to our condemnation.

The Church of England, therefore, does the truest honour, both to the mercy of God and to the merits of our Redeemer, by specifying a sure evidence in the heart and conduct, that we are actual objects of mercy, and that Christ's merits

have availed in our behalf; namely, our “standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free.”

By this characteristic, whether retained from baptism, or recovered through repentance and conversion, our church recognises living members of Christ’s mystical body; and deeming all such to be in the path, which, if not deserted, leads infallibly to life eternal, she merely prays for their advancement and confirmation: “that it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand.”

The import of this brief, but significant supplication, will be best learned from a former part of the same comprehensive formula. They who stand, are obviously those who possess the blessing implored in that preceding petition;—“that it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments.” To pray, therefore, that such may be strengthened, is to express, in one word, the matter of the next following petition;—“that it may please thee to give unto all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.”

To increase in grace, and to be strengthened

in grace, are evidently the same thing; and, in proportion as this blessing is realised, God's word will be heard with meekness; that is, will be submitted to without reserve; it will be received with pure affection; the mixture of love and dread, which was indispensable to "babes in Christ," will give place to that perfect love which casteth out fear: and the exertions which were then necessary to preserve a good conscience, will be at once rewarded and superseded by a spontaneous harvest of spiritual virtues, duty having become delight, and goodness a second nature.

But the church, in attending to those who are her glory, forgets not the feeble portion of her flock, nor even the wanderers from her fold. For the first, she implores "comfort and help;" as if their hope needed to be brightened, as well as their resolution to be established. The terms are chosen with deliberate appropriation. They shew that those religious solitudes, which are too often resolved into fanaticism, or morbid melancholy, were, to the pious compilers of our litany, an object of wise provision, as well as of charitable commiseration.

For the unhappy persons who are last mentioned, there could be but one appropriate

petition : that God would be pleased “ to raise up them that fall.” The significancy of these terms hardly admits of elucidation. Their contrast with the first clause, puts their meaning out of question. For if to stand, is to be in the state of grace ; to fall, is to forfeit that state ; or, in other words, if to stand, is to enjoy freedom from deadly sin ; to fall, is to come under its dominion. In both these views, the blessing and the calamity are directly opposite to each other ; and, in point of fact, both views unite in one. To stand, is to be supported by divine grace ; and, by that means, habitually to conquer deadly sin : to fall, is to depart from divine grace, and to incur the guilt and bondage of deadly sin.

The strict agreement of this language with that of the article which has been so often referred to, cannot escape notice. If the term “ fall,” in the litany, needed to be explained, the expression in the article of “ departing from grace given, and falling into sin,” affords a comment, alike clear and instructive. In this latter instance, it has been already seen that the case primarily contemplated, is a fall from the “ grace given” in baptism. Falling, therefore, from this initiatory blessing, must, in the first instance, have been meant in the litany ; though the

petition obviously comprehends all who have fallen from a state of grace, whether conferred through baptism, or recovered through repentance.

There is a farther correspondence between these two formulas, which deserves attention. The article goes on to say, that, after having fallen, we may, “by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives;” implying, that they who have fallen into deadly sin, are incapable of rising again by any mere exertions of their own. In consonance, therefore, with this important intimation, the litany brings the case of such persons before Omnipotent Goodness: — “that it may please thee to raise up them that fall.” But here, also, the article throws an instructive light upon the petition, by reminding us, that though, after our fall from the state of grace, we cannot rise again by any power of our own, yet, that neither will God raise us up, without our own co-operation. While, therefore, the prayer in the litany implores simply that grace, which the article intimates to be indispensable, the language of the latter formula conveys an admonition, that he who desires to be raised by divine power, must, himself, make every effort to rise; and consequently, that, when he feels any movement drawing him to better things, he should instantly

embrace the opportunity, and cherish the gracious influence, lest, through despising the goodness of God, which would lead him to repentance, he should be given over to a reprobate mind, and become, as it were, "twice dead; plucked up by the roots."

On the whole, from the entire petition, viewed in connexion with the article, it cannot but be concluded, that, in the judgment of the Church of England, every baptised individual must be in one of three states: a state of grace, in which deadly sin is habitually and successfully repelled; a state of sin, in which, grace having been departed from, and temptation yielded to, moral evil has become predominant; or, a state of distressing and dangerous imbecility, from which there is urgent need to emerge, lest, as it may already imply some departure from the state of grace, it may end in an absolute fall into the state of sin. It is also obvious, that, in the view of the church, they who stand, are equally those who have retained the grace of baptism, or who have recovered it by repentance; and that they who fall into deadly sin, not only forfeit that grace, but must have departed from it, before they could have so fallen. To these conclusions, I say, we are necessarily brought; and

their infallible certainty is additionally evinced by this circumstance, that the Church of England, both in the article and in the litany, has simply adopted those theological terms, which, through all ages of the Catholic Church, had been understood in the same unvaried meaning; and which, even at this day, the Church of Rome retains, in a sense radically the same with that in which they were used by our reformers.

There is another of our public devotional forms, which, I conceive, will be found closely connected with the present subject; though this connexion does not seem to have been generally observed: I mean, the prayer of confession, in the commencement of the daily service.

It is not to be doubted, that this impressive form awakens sentiments of sincere humiliation in many an individual. But it may be questioned, whether it can be joined in “with the understanding,” as well as “with the spirit;” — or whether the exact ideas, which the words were meant to convey, can be intelligently conceived, — except the doctrine of the church, concerning the two states, of grace, and of deadly sin, be known and kept in remembrance.

The acknowledgments of aggravated deviation, with which the confession commences, may

probably have, by many, been thought to refer to the early lapse of our nature, and the degeneracy which has ensued. But the import of the expressions is so distinctly practical, that they must be considered as describing the actual conduct of those who adopt them. These, then, it is implied, were once in the ways of God, since they could not have erred and strayed from ways in which they had never been : nor would they resemble “lost sheep,” had they never, in any respect, been “the sheep of God’s pasture.” That such is the intended meaning, is confirmed, by the petition which is afterwards offered up ; “Restore thou them that are penitent.” A prayer for restoration, implies a former possession of the state, which it is the object to regain. But it cannot be the state from which our first parents fell, because restoration to paradisaical innocence and happiness forms no part of the promises here relied upon. It can, in fact, be no other than the state of grace, to which God is entreated to restore the penitent ; and why the thing prayed for is restoration, rather than simple admission, however difficult to explain, if considered unconnectedly, becomes manifest at once, on adverting to the views of the church respecting the grace of baptism.

But it is worthy of attention, with what wise consideration this confession is adapted at once to a general and to a special purpose. It doubtless supposes a lapse from baptismal grace, at one time or other, to be much too common a case; and, therefore, its expressions, from the commencement, are most strictly, though not exclusively, applicable to that humiliating consciousness. Still, however, the case of those who are actually in a lapsed state, is distinctly attended to, with a change of language which cannot have escaped observation: "Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults; restore thou them that are penitent." The substitution of "them" for "us," implies, that all present are not comprehended in these petitions; for had such universality been intended, there would have been no ground for passing from the first person to the third. And there is, besides, in the words themselves, a twofold classification, marking an important difference in the spiritual state of those whom it includes. They who are prayed for in the third person, are such, in general, as, having sooner or later wandered from the way of righteousness, are not yet recovered, yet are become sensible of their wretchedness, and desire, like the prodigal, to return to their

father's house. These, then, may be in one or other of two states: they may be beginning to repent, and to see the evil of their ways, or they may have a deep feeling of that evil, and be in a state of cordial contrition. An appropriate prayer, therefore, is made for each: for those who are beginning to repent, it is asked that they may be *spared*, evidently that they may have time to become completely penitent; while for those who are really penitent, the petition is that they may be *restored*, that is, as was already observed, that they may again be placed in that state of grace, which they had forfeited by presumptuous transgression.

As it is impossible to dispute the deep and practical significancy of these discriminating expressions; so neither can we overlook the solicitude, which the injunction of their daily use implies, that they who join in them should exercise continual self-examination, and rest their spiritual safety on nothing but the conscious possession of the effectual grace of Christ, and the consequent "answer of a good conscience towards God." To be restored, can mean nothing else than to be, through divine goodness, repossessed of this blessing, after having lost it by falling into sin: and what is thus seriously and solemnly im-

plored for those, who are supposed to be not only really but sensibly in need, must itself be a substantive and sensible benefit. It can, consistently, be nothing less, than a reinstatement in that remission of sins, sanctification by the Holy Ghost, and conformity to Christ in his death, of which the grace of baptism had been, according to the Church of England, the seminal communication.

The small proportion, however, which these two sentences of the confession bear to the whole, would seem to intimate the charitable hope of the church, that her children were, for the most part, in happier circumstances ; and that, however humbly they were bound to acknowledge past deviations, they might, in general, be regarded as restored to the state of grace, if it had ever been absolutely lost. That such a supposition would be theoretically reasonable, however imperfectly realised in practice, appears from the tenor of the form, its purpose being to assist, as a means, in raising the whole of each congregation to a state in which they shall be qualified to please and honour God by their present offering of praise and prayer, and to proceed, thenceforth, in a pure and holy life. But this would be a groundless reckoning, if the spiritual infidelities

which are deplored were always to continue, and the restoration which is solicited were never to be effected. It must in reason be allowed, that while this prime blessing is asked specially for those who need it, it is asked, not only in humble confidence of its being granted, but also in the cheerful hope, that, when granted, it will never after be forfeited, but, on the contrary, grow into that maturity of Christian virtue, which, in the baptismal service, is described as “crucifying the old man, and utterly abolishing the whole body of sin.”

As this high and holy pursuit is equally the vocation of all,—of those recently, or long since restored, as well as those who are seeking to be so, and not least, of those happy few, whose failures, though real, and, therefore, to be acknowledged and lamented, had not been such as wholly* to eradicate the seed of spiritual life which they had once received, in the concluding part of the prayer as relating to this general ob-

* It seems as if, in drawing up the general confession, our church maintained the opinion expressed by St. Augustin :—“*Paucissimi sunt tantæ felicitatis, ut, ab ipsa in eunte adolescentia, nulla damnabilia peccata committant.*” Extremely few, indeed, are so greatly blessed, as never, from their earliest youth, to be guilty of deadly sin.

ject, the use of the third person is dropped, and all unite in asking for themselves, in common, what it is impossible for any one individual to be more interested in than another.

To what has been remarked respecting the discriminating language in this prayer, it may possibly be objected, that the most self-abasing expression in the whole, "there is no health in us," is used as descriptive of all. But this sentence cannot have a meaning which would be at war with the leading object of the prayer, and would stamp the entire form with self-contradiction. It is obvious that the humiliation, in the former part, is not expressed merely for its own sake, but to lay a ground for the petitions which succeed. The chief matter of these is, that God would restore the penitent, and make that restoration permanent. But it would be absurd in the extreme to pray for restoration to spiritual health, and for consequent uniformity of Christian temper and conduct, if such spiritual health could never be possessed, and, of course, such temper and conduct never be realised.

It, therefore, becomes necessary to inquire, whether the acknowledgment, that "there is no health in us," will not admit of a more consistent interpretation? If, then, we observe in what

sense the word health was used, when applied to a spiritual purpose, at the same time, and, in effect, by the same persons, we shall find that it expresses the source, rather than the matter, of internal soundness and comfort. Thus, in the prayer-book translation of the 62d Psalm, it is said, "In God is my health;" and in both translations of the 67th Psalm, God's mercy and blessing, and the light of his countenance, are implored for the church, in order that "God's way may be known upon earth, his saving health unto all nations." It is also worthy of being remarked, that in the 42d and 43d Psalms, the Psalmist is made to call God the "help of his countenance," by the earlier translators; and "the health of his countenance," by the later.

Having, then, these applications of the term "health" for our warrant, and the tenour of the entire confession for our guide, there is just ground that we should understand this acknowledgment in the sense given to it by a well-known commentator,* above a century ago: "The penitent," he says, "humbly acknowledgeth that

* Thomas Comber, D.D. Dean of Durham. The same sense has been given to the words by Archbishop Secker and others, though with some admission of the more popular interpretation.

there is no health; that is, as the word doth often signify in Scripture, no salvation or means of health, among the sons of men. We can destroy ourselves, but ‘in God is our help.’ Hos. xiii. 9. ‘For no man can deliver himself, nor his brother.’ Psalm xlix. 7. ‘Salvation alone belongeth unto the Lord.’” Psalm iii. 8.

I have only to add, that this meaning specially agrees with the structure of the following sentence, which, it will be observed, is connected with the foregoing sentence by the adversative conjunction; a form of speech which would much more naturally follow an acknowledgment of utter helplessness, than of utter corruption.

LETTER TO JOHN S. HARFORD, ESQ. PREFATORY TO THE TREATISE ON THE EUCHARIST.

MY DEAR MR. HARFORD,

July 19, 1826.

YOUR most acceptable letter, of the 11th of May, found me actually engaged in a reply to your query, in a former letter, respecting the sense in which I supposed the term ἕμαθον to contain a notion of philosophy: and I also wished to explain more fully, in what respect I conceived it to differ from the latter word, μεμύνημαι. I began my letter as soon as I was free from some indispensable matters which had occupied me; but the subject you have last brought before me, calls, I think, for more immediate attention; and I, therefore, hasten to give you the best information of which I am capable.

But I must not proceed without first thanking you cordially for obtaining me the sight of the Bishop of ——'s letter. I am deeply gratified by the approbation it contains, the spirit of it being such as I could alone seriously value. I return it, with many thanks to Sir Thomas Acland for parting with it. It strengthens my

purpose (God willing) of prefixing an introductory preface to my tract, and giving it to the public. *When* I may be able, however, (from another engagement which hangs upon me), I cannot conjecture; as I advance with such a snail's pace in every thing.

The subject to which you turn my attention, I am scarcely qualified to write upon; as I have never actually examined the volumes of the Fathers respecting it. The truth is, I was so completely satisfied with the quotations which I had met in trustworthy writers of later times, that I felt, as I thought, no necessity for going further.

The impression on my mind has been, that the ancient writers of the Church were agreed, in ascribing to the consecrated elements in the Eucharist an unutterable and efficacious mystery, in virtue of our Saviour's words of institution, by which he had made those elements, when consecrated after his example, the vehicles of his saving and sanctifying power; and, in that respect, the permanent representatives of his incarnate person. But, notwithstanding this exalted estimate of the Eucharist, the notion of a literal transubstantiation, such as was subsequently introduced into the Western Church, would appear never to have entered into their mind.

I am brought to this conclusion, by the obvious fact, that those early writers always recognise the continuance, after consecration, of the same natural substances, notwithstanding the heavenly properties with which they have become invested. I need not point out to you the radical difference between this theory and that of transubstantiation. The latter notion, you know, supposes that the substances of bread and wine exist no longer ; that their outside form alone continues, and serves as a veil for the flesh and blood, into which, through consecration, they have been transmuted. That such is the strict import of transubstantiation, appears from the remarkable words of even the politic Bossuet :—“ Comme il désiroit exercer notre foi dans ce mystère, et en même temps nous ôter l'horreur de manger sa chair, et de boire son sang, en leur propre espèce, il étoit convenable qu'il nous les donnât, enveloppés sous une espèce étrangère.” —Exposition de la Doctrine, &c. § x.*

I need not tell you, that nothing like this

* Since He desired to exercise our faith in the mystery, and, at the same time, to spare us the shock of eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, in their proper form, it was fitting that He should give us them under a different form.

has ever been found in the Fathers. Some few of them seem to have supposed, that the sacramental elements were so sublimated, by the divine purpose to which they served, that they were not liable to the entire process undergone by common aliments; but, as Cyril of Jerusalem expresses it (*Mystic Catechis. v.*), are distributed through the whole substance of the communicant, for the good of body and soul: and where I find this quotation, I am also informed, that some early writer, preserved in Chrysostom's volumes, and 'St. John Damascene, held the same opinion.

But, even this fanciful notion implies, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not then known; as, if entertained, it would have left no room for such a supposition. That superstitious views of the Christian mysteries should more and more prevail, in proportion as the Roman Empire became involved in intellectual darkness, was too natural; and, therefore, it is the more remarkable that the real tenet of transubstantiation should not have been propounded, until about the year 820, or 830.

It is very satisfactory, that this doctrinal revolution is sufficiently acknowledged by all Roman Catholic writers. They tell us, that Paschasius

Radbertus, a monk of the abbey of Corbey, in the diocess of Amiens, was its promulgator. The words of Card. Bellarmine (now lying before me), are, “*Hic auctor primus fuit qui serio et copiose scripsit de veritate corporis et sanguinis Domini in Eucharistiâ.*”* And it is remarked by L’Avocat, with the candour which distinguishes him, in his *Dictionnaire Historique Portatif*, that “*Ce traité fit grand bruit du tems de Charles le Chauve;*” and he adds this remarkable fact, that, though Paschasius had, in the meantime, been made abbot, the disputes which his book occasioned, “*jointes à quelques brouilleries qu’on lui suscita, le portèrent à se démettre de son abbaie.*”†

But the most interesting circumstance in this conjuncture was, that Paschasius’s book had not long appeared, when it received a luminous and powerful answer. A monk of the same monastery, Bertram or Ratram by name, was required,

* He was the first author who wrote on the reality of the Body and Blood in the Sacrament, earnestly, and at large.

† This Treatise made a great noise in the time of Charles the Bald; and, combined with certain vexatious annoyances which were stirred against him, induced him to resign his abbacy.

by the above-mentioned Charles the Bald, to state what he thought respecting Paschasius's doctrine. His being thus called upon, shews Bertram to have been regarded as an eminent divine in his day. He obeyed the call; and his work happily remains to us unimpaired and unadulterated. It is admirably written for that time, and manifests the author's close consideration, and deeply digested knowledge, of the subject.

Paschasius had maintained two positions, which he thus expressed: "Although, in the sacrament, there be the figure of bread and wine, yet we must believe it, after consecration, to be nothing else but the body and blood of Christ:" and the more clearly to convey his meaning, he proceeds, "and to say something yet more wonderful, it is no other flesh than that which was born of Mary, suffered on the cross, and rose again from the grave." Accordingly two questions were proposed to Bertram. 1st, Whether "Quod in Ecclesiâ ore fidelium sumitur, Corpus et Sanguis Christi in mysterio fiat, an in veritate?"* 2d, "Utrum ipsum Corpus sit quod

* Whether the Body and Blood of Christ, which is in the Church received by the mouths of the Faithful, be such, in a mystery, or in Truth?

de Mariâ natum est, et passum, mortuum et sepultum, quodque resurgens, et cœlos ascendens, ad dextram Patris consisteat?"* These two points, therefore, form the subject of Bertram's discourse: he first shews, from the nature and import of the institution, that the Eucharist contains not the physical verity, but the spiritual mystery, of our Saviour's body and blood; and then proceeds to expose the utter absurdity of imagining that the natural body, and the eucharistical body, are one and the same. In this second part of his work, he strongly supports himself by quotations from St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Isidore, Fulgentius, and, above all, from St. Augustin; and, from this concurrent evidence, triumphantly establishes his agreement with the judgment of the Catholic church.

I cannot but regard this little work as a signal link in the mysterious chain of Providence. When it pleased the wisdom of Heaven to permit the introduction of that monstrous novelty, transubstantiation, it was of infinite importance that provision should have been made for exposing

* Whether it be the same Body which was born of Mary, and suffered, died, and was buried, and, rising again, and ascending into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father?

the fabricated error, and ascertaining the Catholic truth, in some direct and unfallacious way, so soon as minds should arise fitted for such an investigation. I suppose it would be impossible to imagine a more adequate expedient for such a purpose, than the powerful protest, and perspicuous memorial, of Bertram, so imperatively required, and so opportunely furnished. That it should have had little effect at the time, was but natural, considering the general state of the Western Church. What St. Peter says of the ancient prophets, that, "not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto us;" so, in a certain sense, may be said of Bertram's treatise. Still, it cannot be doubted, that, even in those days of darkness, the rallying point thus afforded to such as desired to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths (Jer. vi. 16), was by no means neglected. Of this we have an interesting proof, in the Saxon Homily for Easter, which is inserted in the 2d volume of Fox's Acts and Monuments; and which is said to have been translated into that language, from the Latin, about the year 970, by Ælfric, Abbot of Malmsbury. This curious discourse, though, in its present form, more than a century later than Bertram's book,

not only maintains the same doctrine, but, in most of its leading passages is strictly copied from Bertram. It seems, however, that, after the tenth century, the new opinion became predominant; until, at length, in the fourth council of Lateran (1215), under Innocent the Third, it was formally adopted, as the established doctrine of the church; and, to prevent the possibility of evading its grossest sense, it was designated by the new term of transubstantiation; in order that there might be a convenient verbal test for detecting heretics at once, without the trouble of discussion.

An English translator of Bertram, who has also given the original, and prefixed a very useful preliminary discourse, thus summarily describes his author's view:—"Ratramnus determines, that the words of our Saviour, in the institution of the holy Eucharist, are not to be taken properly, but figuratively; and that the consecrated elements, orally received by the faithful, are not the true body of Christ, but the figure and sacrament of it; though not mere empty figures, or naked signs, void of all efficacy; but such as, through the blessing annexed to our Saviour's institution, and the powerful operation of the spirit of Christ, working in and by those sacred

figures, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ." That you may judge of the fairness of this statement, I will give you one passage from Bertram himself:—"In Sacramento Corporis et Sanguinis Domini, quicquid exterius sumitur, ad corporis refectionem aptatur. Verbum autem Dei, qui est panis invisibilis, invisibiliter in illo existens Sacramento, invisibiliter, participatione sui, fidelium mentes vivificando pascit."*

The Reformation naturally brought this long neglected tract to light; and several editions of it were printed in Cologne, Basle, Geneva, and elsewhere. The Protestants triumphed in being able to produce such a refutation of the claim to antiquity set up by their opponents: and to these latter it seemed, at first, the readiest expedient to reject Bertram's book as spurious, and got up for the occasion. But they were beaten off this ground by indubitable proofs of its authenticity. Copies of it were found to exist, of a date far anterior to the Reformation,

* In the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, whatsoever is outwardly received, serves only for the refreshment of the body. But the Word of God, who is the invisible bread, being invisibly in the Sacrament, doth, in an invisible manner, nourish and quicken the souls of the faithful, by their partaking thereof.

and where none but Roman Catholics could have had access. At length it was republished by themselves; and, to the honour of its editor, in an unadulterated form; accompanied, however, with every possible ingenious effort to prove its Roman Catholic orthodoxy. “Cet ouvrage,” says l’Avocat, “parut d’abord favorable à l’erreur des Protestants, sur la réalité du corps de J. C. dans l’Euchariste; ce qui porta plusieurs savans à le regarder comme un livre hérétique et supposé. Mais le Père Mabillon en montra clairement, dans la suite, l’authenticité. M. Boileau, Docteur de Sorbonne, qui en a donné une excellente édition, en Latin et en François, prouve que l’ouvrage est orthodoxe.”* The honesty of this last position I doubt not; as to its correctness, impartial common sense will determine.

It is remarkable, however, that Bellarmine

* This work appeared at first to favour the error of the Protestants, concerning the real presence of the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; a circumstance which induced many learned men to regard the book as heretical and supposititious. But Father Mabillon, subsequently, established its authenticity beyond dispute. M. Boileau, Doctor of the Sorbonne, who gave an excellent edition of it in Latin and French, proves that the work is orthodox.

(whose estimate of Paschasius's work I have already quoted) was so far from accounting Bertram's treatise to be orthodox, that he has not deigned to give its author a place amongst his "Scriptores Ecclesiastici;"* though, in remarking on the works of St. Augustin, he expressly refers to Bertram's book for evidence, that a particular tract was written, not by St. Augustin, but by Fulgentius. But it is still more worthy of notice, that, to lessen the authority of Bertram's work, and to add strength to that of Paschasius, Bellarmine (it would seem knowingly) misrepresents fact, by stating, that Paschasius's tract was written to oppose the new doctrine of Bertram, instead of Bertram's treatise being written to repel the innovation of Paschasius. After the words which I transcribed above, he adds, "contra Bertramum Presbyterum, qui fuit ex primis qui eam (veritatem corporis et sanguinis, &c.) in dubium revocarent."† I give you this curious misrepresentation as I find it, because it seems, itself, to

* A small volume, containing an enumeration, and brief characters, of all Catholic writers: its title is, "De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis."

† Against Bertram, a priest, who was one of the first that called the reality of the body and blood in question.

speak a volume. I lament to find it in Bellarmine; as, in his early days, at least, he was a pious man. Unfortunately, the Roman Catholic religion does not inspire, though it does not always destroy, a love of truth.

L'Avocat, on the other hand, being far above such wretched subterfuges, states the matter as it was: "Ce traité," says he (that of Paschasius), "fit grand bruit, &c.; et Bertram, autrement, Ratramme, et quelques autres, écrivèrent contre Paschase Radbert."*

I advise you to get Bertram's tract (which I shall have occasion to return to before I end my letter); but I could greatly wish you to have, also, Mons. L'Arroque's History of the Eucharist. A very satisfactory translation of this work, published in London, 1684, lies now before me; and I suppose you could easily procure it from sellers of old books. It is not a book to be read from beginning to end; but the "Table of Chapters" will lead you to what is worthy of attention. The author cannot be suspected of any ultra-Catholic prejudice, being himself a French Protestant; yet he seems so

* This treatise made a great noise; and Bertram, or Ratram, and some others, wrote against Paschasius Radbertus.

honestly intent on telling the truth, and nothing but the truth, as to raise a high idea both of the weight of his evidence, and of his own upright disposition.

He enters, at large, into the very point on which you wish for satisfaction. A large part of his work is occupied in examining and ascertaining what the ancient Fathers thought on the subject of the Eucharist; and it seems to me, that the inquiry could not have been pursued with stricter attention, or with more Christian candour.

As you may not at once find L'Arroque, I will give you an extract from his preface; which, at the same time, shews the spirit with which he prosecuted his subject, and the impression left upon his mind, by his close and extensive investigation.

“The first thing to be done,” he says, “when we set about reading the monuments, which we still enjoy, of ecclesiastical antiquity, is, well to examine ourselves to see whether we be free from all kinds of pre-occupation. For, provided we bring unto this study nothing of our own, but attention, and a sincere desire of knowing the truth, we shall gather fruits full of consolation and joy; and we shall doubtless discover

what has been the belief of those ancient doctors upon the point which we examine. Secondly, great heed must be taken not to separate what God hath joined together; I mean, the nature and the matter of the symbols, from their efficacy, and from their virtue, in their lawful use: for then, these things are inseparable, although they be different one from another; for the nature of bread and wine is one thing, and the grace and virtue which the consecration addeth to their nature is another thing; and therefore it is, that the holy Fathers speak not so honourably of the sacrament, when they consider the substance of the symbols, as when they regard their efficacy and virtue. And, indeed, when they have a design to represent this efficacy, they make use of the loftiest and most magnificent expressions to raise the dignity of this mystery, and to make us conceive a grand idea of it."

I think you will consider this last remark, in particular, as applying to the matter which you wish to have cleared up; but, that you may more fully understand L'Arroque's meaning, I must transcribe what he says elsewhere, in the same preface, respecting the exact notion of the eucharistical mystery entertained by the ancient Fathers. His words are: "And, indeed, not to

leave their doctrine exposed unto the strokes of calumny, they declare, that if the Eucharist be a figure, and an image, it is not a bare figure, or an image, without operation; but a figure, an image, and a sacrament, replenished with all the virtue, and all the efficacy, of the body and blood of our blessed Saviour; clothed, if it may be so said, with the majesty of his person; and accompanied, in the lawful celebration, with all the fruits, and with all the benefits, of his death and sufferings."

To these extracts from L'Arroque's preface, I cannot help adding the twofold conclusion which he deduces (part ii. chap. 3) from a copious induction of passages most directly bearing upon the subject.

"From all these considerations of the holy Fathers, which we have alleged, there result two doctrines from their writings, both which have been their foundation for the virtue and efficacy which they attribute unto the Sacrament: the first is, that they regard it as a sacrament which not only barely signifies, but which also exhibits and communicates unto the believing soul the thing which it signifies; I mean the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The second doctrine which results from the hypothesis of the Fathers

is, that, considering that the death of Christ is the cause of our life, which life consists in the sanctification of our souls, by means whereof we have communion with God, which is the lively fountain of life (and, therefore, before conversion we are said to be dead), they have attributed unto the sacrament the virtue of sanctifying and quickening us."

The evidences which he produces to shew that the Fathers had not the remotest thought of transubstantiation, are so numerous, and so connected in their import with the context, that I cannot attempt to select specimens, especially as I hope you will soon possess the book yourself. I need therefore only observe further, that, while L'Arroque seems himself to have cordially concurred with the Fathers in their views of the Eucharist; and while, in the sequel of his work, he faithfully and circumstantially relates the rise of the new doctrine, and gives Bertram all his just credit; he does not seem to have sufficiently adverted to the fact, that Bertram did not maintain what has since become the popular doctrine of Protestants; but that he embodied, in a compendious form, that primitive temperament of truth, from which too many Protestants have as much deviated on one side, as the followers

of Paschasius have done on the other. L'Arroque appears, strangely enough, to suppose that Protestants, generally, think as he himself thinks; whereas, it seems, he might have found it a fact, that even the early opposers of Paschasius were not, in every instance, of the same judgment with Bertram. One writer in particular, Johannes Scotus Erigena, is represented as having taught "quod sacramentum Altaris, non verum Corpus et verus Sanguis sit Domini, sed tantum memoria veri Corporis et Sanguinis ejus;"* and I should think that the celebrated Berengarius, who lived in the next century, agreed, not with Bertram, but with Johannes Scotus Erigena; inasmuch as he owned himself a disciple of the latter, but never once mentioned Bertram: a silence no otherwise to be accounted for, considering Bertram's notoriety, than by supposing that Berengarius did not concur in the doctrine which Bertram had contended for. The probability is, that while Bertram resisted an ag-

* That the Sacrament of the Altar is not the very Body and very Blood of the Lord, but only a remembrance of His very Body and Blood.¹

¹ A quotation in the Introduction to the English edition of Bertram, p. 58.

gressive error in the very spirit which, in later times, has distinguished the Church of England,— I mean that of consulting, next to the Holy Scriptures, the clear and decided current of Christian antiquity,—J. Scotus Erigena, and Berengarius,* preferred, on the same principle by which, since that time, all sectaries have been actuated, to rest exclusively on Holy Scripture, interpreted by the light of their own minds.

I am thus brought to the point, on account of which I meant to return to Bertram ; I mean the providential link which his book appears to form in the history of our English Church. Such a testimony against a doctrinal excess, which formed one of the main topics of dispute, delivered at so critical a juncture, by so respectable an authority, could not have been regarded with indifference by the first Protestants on the continent, what-

* The case of Berengarius has been recorded by all writers of Ecclesiastical History. The ardour with which he promulgated his doctrine subjected him to the censure of the ruling powers ; and, after having infused a leaven which spread through thousands, he is said himself to have recanted. L'Arroque seems to consider the persons now called Vaudois, as having derived their origin from the secession caused by the zeal of Berengarius.

ever might be their own specific opinions. But, in England, Bertram was not merely valued as an ally, he was looked up to by the wise and excellent Ridley as his master ; not, however, as teaching him any very long-lost truth, but as opening to his mind an undelusive vista, through which the uniform agreement of the Church, for eight hundred years, appeared to him in the most direct opposition to the modern dogma of transubstantiation. The light which Ridley thus received, he speedily communicated to Cranmer ; and the doctrine of Bertram was, accordingly, embodied in the first reformed Communion service of 1548. But stability not being an ingredient in Cranmer's mental character, which was also defective, it should seem, in that taste and elevation of spirit which qualified Ridley for appreciating the Catholic tradition which Bertram presented to his view, the poor Archbishop soon swerved from his teacher, and embraced the frigid notions of certain continental divines ; under whose guidance the Communion service was remodified, as far as was deemed expedient, in conformity to Cranmer's new views. No doubt this change was permitted for wise purposes ; but I rejoice to think that, at length, a time came for a far wiser and happier revision.

That Ridley deeply lamented the new notions and measures of Cranmer, his words, in a letter to one of his former chaplains (which I have quoted in my tract on the Eucharist), give ground to conclude, because they can apply to nothing else. “You have,” he says, “known me long indeed; in the which time it hath chanced me, as you say, to mislike some things. It is true, I grant; for sudden changes, without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love.”

In fact, Ridley must have been affected, as he states, by the altered Communion service; because we know from himself, that his adherence to Bertram remained unshaken to the last. His own words, with which he concludes one of his defences at Oxford, are the best evidence of his cordial perseverance in the Catholic principles which he had so deliberately adopted. After having appealed to more than twelve ancient writers, he thus proceeds:—“Here, right worshipful Mr. Prolocutor, and ye, the rest of the Commissioners, it may please you to understand, that I do not lean to those things only which I have written in my former answers and confirmations; but that I have also, for the proof of that I have spoken, whatsoever Bertram (a man

learned, of sound and upright judgment, and ever counted a Catholic for these seven hundred years, until this our age) hath written. This treatise, whosoever shall read and weigh, considering the time of the writer, his learning, godliness of life, the allegation of the ancient Fathers, and his manifold and most grounded arguments, I cannot doubtless but much marvel, if he have any fear of God at all, how he can, with good conscience, speak against him in this matter of the Sacrament. This Bertram was the first that pulled me by the ear, and that first brought me from the common error of the Romish Church, and caused me to search more diligently and exactly, both the Scriptures, and writings of the old ecclesiastical Fathers, concerning this matter. And this I protest, before the face of God, who knoweth I lie not in the things I now speak."

On another occasion, in the same disputation, we find, if possible, a still more express avowal of Ridley's perfect concurrence with Bertram, in the very notion in which Cranmer had appeared to desert him. "Finally," says Ridley, "with Bertram, I confess, that Christ's body is in the sacrament in this respect, namely, as he writeth, because there is in it the spirit of Christ; that is, the power of his word, which not only feedeth

the soul, but also cleanseth it." Had, however, these declarations of Ridley remained to us only as historical records, their weight, at this day, would be little more than that of respectable individual authority. But, though the venerable bishop had lost his influence with his friends, before he fell into the hands of his enemies; and though his care to preserve Catholicity in the Church of England was, apparently, made fruitless; the temporary depression of the English reformation, under Mary, not only stopped the possible advance to yet further deviations, but left time for the revival of Ridley's principles, in a certain degree, from the very accession of Elizabeth, and thenceforth in an increasing number of susceptible minds, until at length, after another season of depression from sectarian ascendancy, the spirit of Ridley's doctrine was wonderfully infused into that very form from which Cranmer had sought to exclude it; and which, considering the yet unsettled state of the public mind (just after the Restoration), the revisers thought it safer to reanimate than to remodel.

Of this judicious management our present Communion service is the inestimable result. When I compare it with the original form, I

could wish a greater nearness (though I do not dispute that some questionable matters were prudently omitted); but, on a comparison with the service as it stood before the revision, I regard our present service with sincere pleasure; and no little wonder at the chain of preparatory events which led to that important result. Had the first Prayer-book of Edward, short-lived as it was, not existed, there would have been no impressive example of a more excellent way; but yet, a recurrence to that long antiquated form, at once, and in the first instance, might have been less likely to be thought of, and more difficult in practice. Happily, however, it had been already recurred to, in preparing the Prayer-book for Scotland, in 1637; and, though the measure failed in its primary purpose, it afforded a most convenient model for the revisers, in 1661, as far as they could follow it with safety. To have done so avowedly, or even observedly, might have raised an outcry, and defeated their whole design;—the Scottish Prayer-book being regarded as the immediate source of the civil war. Except in one remarkable instance, which I will notice, they, therefore, adopted merely the rubrics which the Scottish Prayer-book afforded them. I cannot doubt

that, had they felt themselves at liberty, they would have gone further, and that the Scottish Communion service would have been followed throughout; but, as it is, it will be seen, on a comparison of the former service, as it was before the revision, with the service now in use, that, by means of the rubrics, a new character was given to the celebration of the Eucharist, which substantially reimbued it with the spirit of Bertram, and restored it to the ground on which it had at first been placed.

The instance in which the revisers did more than merely introduce rubrics, was probably chosen, not only as most urgently requiring a change, but also as being least likely to awaken captious observation. In other instances, Cranmer had been content to effect his purpose by omissions (except in his new form of delivering the elements); but in the place now referred to, namely, in the exhortation giving notice of the Sacrament, he had so palpably displaced the doctrine of Bertram and Ridley, and substituted, in its stead, his own new view of the Eucharist, as to create a necessity for making this formula correspond with the revised service, by altering it after the original in the first Prayer-book of Edward.

In that formulary, the exhortation invited communicants in the following terms: "Wherefore our duty is to come to these holy mysteries with most hearty thanks to be given to Almighty God for his infinite mercy and benefits given and bestowed upon us, his unworthy servants, for whom he hath not only given his body to death, but also does vouchsafe in a sacrament and mystery to give us his said body and blood to feed upon spiritually."

I need not point out to you how expressly the doctrine of Bertram is recognised in this last sentence. Where, therefore, that doctrine was to be expunged, the corresponding sentence in the notification of the Sacrament was thus modified: "Our duty is to render to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, most hearty thanks, for that he hath given his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance, as it is declared unto us, as well by God's word, as by the holy sacraments of his body and blood."

I think you see at once the amount of this alteration. The spiritual blessing is, in these latter words, as solicitously separated from the outward and visible signs, as it had been, in the former words, expressly combined with them: and, to leave no possible room for supposing the

Eucharist a divinely appointed medium of "grace and heavenly benediction," it is distinctly represented as a mere declaratory symbol. If it could be doubted on what principle the Communion service was reconstructed by Cranmer, the single sentence now referred to would decide the question.

But observe, I pray you, how emphatically the revisers have restored what Cranmer had rejected; yet with as much retention as possible of the former language. "Wherefore it is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that he hath given his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance *in* that holy Sacrament."

As Cranmer, then, by his version of this single passage, manifested the principle which governed all his circumstantial modifications; so, I conceive, the revisers, by restoring, and even, in some sort, strengthening the significant terms used in the first English Prayer-book, have thrown a light, not to be mistaken, on all the other particulars by which our present Communion service is distinguished from what it was before the revision.

I have dwelt upon the history of the Eucharist

in the Church of England, not in compliance with my own predilection, strong as that may be; but because, laying all circumstances together, I impartially consider our Church as the exclusive providential conservatory of ancient Catholic faith and ancient Catholic piety. This deep conviction (for I can use no weaker words) would require a volume to do it justice; but I would hope, that even the sketch which I have given will, in one instance at least, support its probability. That Bertram should have been raised, as it were, to bear such a testimony at so critical a conjuncture, was very wonderful. That, in the stormy season of the Reformation, when the revulsion from old extremes teemed with so many new extremes, our Ridley should have been led to embrace the temperament of Bertram, and to embody it in the first Liturgy, was even yet more wonderful. And that, when this transcript of primitive doctrine was swept away by a whelming tide of new notions, and seemed to have perished for ever, the life and substance of it should, after the lapse of more than a century, be so strangely revived and established (strangely, I say, considering all the predisposing and facilitating circumstances), is, surely, the most surprising thing of all. The

happy result undoubtedly is, that our Church has thus been made, in one most important instance, a faithful exemplar of the purest Christian antiquity; and I trust that, by being such, in a degree and manner peculiar to herself, she will yet, in the good time of Providence, become a rallying point for safe escape from all religious errors and extravagances, on the one side and on the other.

Having thus given you my general view of the subject you bring before me, I turn to your quotation from Justin Martyr; who, I conceive, may be much more easily acquitted of holding transubstantiation, than of being unaccountably obscure.

That a literal transubstantiation was not in his thoughts, appears from his declaring the *εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν* to be that, *ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες, κατὰ μεταβολὴν, τρέφονται ἡμῶν.** This acknowledged identity of the aliment which has been consecrated, with that which, through the natural process of transmutation, becomes the nourishment of our bodies, cannot consist with the notion of the modern Church of Rome, as

* The food which has been blessed...by means of which our blood and flesh are strengthened in the course of the changes [of assimilation].—Apol. § 66.

(no doubt correctly) stated by Bossuet. “La Foi,” says he, “attentive à la parole de Celui, qui fait tout ce qui lui plaît dans le ciel et dans la terre, ne reconnoit plus ici d’autre substance que celle qui est désignée par cette même parole ; c’est-à-dire, le propre corps, et le propre sang, de Jésus-Christ, auxquels le pain et le vin sont changés : c’est ce qu’on appelle transubstantiation.”*

Had the idea conveyed in these words been present to the mind of Justin, he would naturally have chosen some verb expressive of the miraculous transmutation which he was supposing. But, on the contrary, he uses the substantive verb *εἶναι* (to be) ; as if simply to state the purpose to which the consecrated aliment served, without intimating any other change, except that of being made spiritually efficacious, *δι' εὐχῆς λόγου*.† At the same time, I must acknowledge,

* Faith, giving heed to the word of Him, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and in earth, perceives no longer here any other substance than that which is designated by that word ; namely, the very body, and the very blood, of Jesus Christ, into which the bread and wine have been changed. This is what is meant by the term transubstantiation.

† By means of a prayer, in language which was used by him.

that it is easier to ascertain what Justin Martyr did not mean, than what he precisely did mean; and I think, with you, that it was a strange method of informing heathens respecting Christianity. This consideration might almost lead to a doubt, whether we have the passage exactly as Justin left it. I should think it a possible thing, that ancient manuscripts were tampered with after the fourth Council of Lateran; though, from the mere darkness of the passage, I should rather imagine, that some word, fixing the import of the position, “ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι,”* had been omitted by some early transcriber.

Should you find in Irenæus expressions appearing to favour transubstantiation, you will, of course, consider that, except in a few preserved passages, you have him only in a very poor Latin translation. But I presume you will meet other passages which prove him not to have held any such tenet. For example, the following passage is quoted by L'Arroque: “We preach, in the Eucharist, the communion and unity of the flesh and spirit; for as the bread, which is of the earth,

* Have we been taught that [the food which has been blessed] is both the body and blood of Jesus, who was made flesh.

receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but is the Sacrament composed of two things, the one terrestrial, the other celestial ; so, also, our bodies are no more corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection." I need hardly say, that I transcribe this quotation from L'Arroque, simply for the sake of its perfect contrariety to the doctrine of the Church of Rome. Irenæus's notion of the Sacrament conveying a principle of immortality* to the body may be right or wrong, (though it was by no means singular, and is quoted with respect, even in the Homily of the Sacrament.) What I rest in, is the explicit declaration, that the bread, after consecration, though no longer common bread, still retains its terrestrial nature, along with its new celestial property ; and I think I may add, that the assertion is expressed so distinctly, as to imply a moral impossibility of Irenæus having ever spoken otherwise.

I cannot, however, omit a very remarkable evidence in support of the non-existence of transubstantiation, until it was devised by Paschasius, and established in that otherwise ever-memorable council. The authority I have to produce, is that of the very respectable Cuthbert Tonstal,

* I am not sure, however, that such is his meaning ; but the idea was certainly entertained.

the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Durham. A tract written by him, in the reign of Edward VI., *De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis Domini in Eucharistiâ*, lies now before me, in which, while I find him maintaining that all Catholic Christians, from the beginning, believed concerning the Eucharist, “quod vere ibi, et realiter, Corpus Christi continetur,”* I meet an equally express admission, that the modus of our Saviour’s presence in that Holy Sacrament was unfixed, until the fourth Council of Lateran; insomuch, that Luther’s doctrine (“modus quem Lutherus secutus videtur”) would, before that period, have been as orthodox as any other. And, accordingly, while he refers (I presume) to that very passage in Justin Martyr, for proof that “nusquam quisquam Catholicus, ad baptismum admissus, dubitavit de præsentia in Eucharistiæ sacramento,” he adds, “cæterum quo modo panis, qui ante consecrationem erat communis, ineffabili Spiritus sanctificatione transiret in corpus ejus, veterum doctissimi quique inscrutabile existimaverunt.”†

* That the body of Christ is verily and indeed contained therein.

† Never did any member of the Catholic church, who had been admitted to baptism, doubt the real presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist. * * * But, as

That this statement acknowledges Transubstantiation to have been yet unthought of, is plain from the very terms ; but it is plainer still, from the supposition which Tostal makes of two other possible measures, even while insisting that, “*quia Ecclesia columna est veritatis, firmum ejus omnino observetur judicium ;*” which two measures he thus expresses : “*An satius fuisset curiosis omnibus imposuisse silentium, ne scrutarentur modum quo id fieret, sicut fecerunt prisci illi qui inscrutabilia quærere non tentabant ; an vero potius de modo quo id fieret curiosum quemque suæ relinquere conjecturæ, sicut liberum fuit ante illud concilium, modo veritatem corporis et sanguinis Domini in Eucharistia esse fateretur, quæ fuit ab initio ipsi ecclesiæ fides.*”*

touching the manner in which that, which, before consecration, was common bread, was changed, by the unspeakable sanctification of the Spirit, into his body, all the most learned men of Christian antiquity held it to be no subject of lawful inquiry.

* * * because the Church is the Pillar of Truth, heed ought, by all means, to be given to her decided judgment. * * * Whether it had been better to have enjoined silence on all curious people, so that they should not examine the mode in which the change took place, after the example of those primitive men, who did not attempt to investigate matters which were above their

and others like it, are no more than what Tonal must have said and thought; and what is of far greater weight, positions of a similar kind have been admitted, in a sound sense, even by our wise and temperate Ridley. But whatever we may think of such expressions, as understood by Tonal, I conceive his admissions are weighty and decisive. The acknowledgment, that there was unrestrained freedom of opinion respecting the mode of our Saviour's presence in the Eucharist, until that same council; and that then, and not before, the definite doctrine of Transubstantiation was authoritatively imposed upon all, is an express avowal of innovation; and, by consequence, a direct and conclusive testimony to the simpler and purer belief of the ancient Church.

I must now leave you to ascertain for yourself what precisely that belief was; my limited reading admitting only of an endeavour to shew you what it was not. I cannot, however, conclude, without giving two extracts, one from Dr. Thomas Jack-

examination; or, to leave every curious man to his own conjecture, as to the mode, according to the freedom which had existed before that council, so that he did but acknowledge the verity of the body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist, which was the belief of the Church from the beginning.

son, the other from Bishop Overall, both divines of the first eminence in their day ; that you may have it in your power to judge whether the ancient Fathers say any thing substantially different from what those judicious and sober-minded men considered to be the doctrine of the Church of England.

“When we say,” says Dr. Jackson, “that Christ is really present in the Sacrament, our meaning is, that, as God, he is present, in an extraordinary manner ; after such a manner as he was present (before his incarnation) in his sanctuary, the ark of his covenant ; and, by the power of his Godhead, thus extraordinarily present, he diffuseth the virtue or operation of his human nature for the vivification of those who” (he means rightly) “receive the sacramental pledges.”

Dr. Overall was Regius Professor in the University of Cambridge ; and having, in some public disputation, so expressed himself respecting the Eucharist, as to excite jealousy in the minds of his puritanical hearers, he thought it necessary explicitly to declare what he believed on the subject. His words are as follow :—

“In Sacramento Eucharistiæ, sive Cœna Dominica, Christi Corpus et Sanguinem, totumque

adeo Christum vere quidem adesse ; et vere a nobis participari, vereque conjungi cum signis sacramentalibus, ut cum signis non solum significativis, sed etiam exhibitivis ; ita ut in recte dato et accepto pane, detur et accipiatur Corpus Christi ; dato et accepto vino, detur et accipiatur Sanguis Christi, totusque adeo Christus in sacramenti communiōe communicetur.”* Probably, had Overall lived before the tenth century, he would have thought he had sufficiently stated his belief in the above expressions ; but, placed as he was in other circumstances, it was expedient for him, not only to maintain ancient truth, but to protest against erroneous innovation ; he therefore added these words :—

“ Sed non modo corporali, crasso, terreno ; per transubstantiationem, vel consubstantiationem, similiave rationis humanæ commenta, sed modo

* * * that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, or the Lord’s Supper, the body and blood of Christ, and therefore the whole of Christ, is verily and indeed present, and is verily partaken by us, and verily combined with the sacramental signs, as being not only significative, but exhibitory ; so that in the bread duly given and received, the body of Christ is given and received ; in the wine given and received, the blood of Christ is given and received ; and thus there is a communion of the whole of Christ, in the communion of the sacrament.

mystico, cœlesti, ac spirituali, ut recte in articulis nostris præscriptum est.”*

I have not adverted to your candid admission (which I need not tell you gave me very real pleasure), that Justin Martyr’s expressions, and those of other Fathers, appear to support my view of the sacrament. Such, certainly, has been my own deep persuasion; and you have now some of the grounds on which that persuasion has rested. In the little treatise, however, I did not think it prudent to introduce a subject, of which I could not have made use without greatly enlarging my plan. I therefore deemed it best not to look beyond the Church of England; reserving the other subject for a preliminary discourse, in the event of actual publication. After all, I assure you, I could not have written with satisfaction to myself, if I had not been convinced, that, on the point in question, the Church of England, and the Fathers, were faithful followers, and true expositors, of our blessed Saviour, and of St. Paul.

Ever yours,

ALEX. KNOX.

July 19, 1826.

* Yet not in any bodily, gross, earthly manner, as by transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, or any like devices of human reason; but in a mystical, heavenly, and spiritual manner, as is rightly laid down in our articles.

TREATISE ON THE USE AND IMPORT OF
THE EUCHARISTIC SYMBOLS.

As the great body of Christians, who, three centuries ago, rejected the Romish yoke, differ generally from the Church of Rome on the subject of the Eucharist; so do they also, among themselves, maintain certain specific differences respecting the design and import of that sacred institution.

The principal point of controversy appears to turn upon this question:—*Is the blessing, to be expected in the Eucharist by qualified receivers, a mere communication of the ordinary grace of God, obtained in the same purely inward and mental manner as in other exercises of devotion?—or, Is there, in this holy sacrament, a peculiar effluence of supernatural grace, mysteriously united with the consecrated symbols, so as to make them the vehicles of heavenly benediction to the capable communicant?*

The maintainers of the former of these views have, doubtless, explained themselves with much

verbal difference ; and, in the earlier times of the Reformation, with not a little obscurity. But their great point of agreement seems to have consisted in their separating the sacramental blessing, in whatever manner they defined it, from the sacramental symbols ; and regarding the spiritual part of the transaction, as exclusively within the mind of the receiver.

Of this way of thinking were, most probably, all the Helvetic Reformers. Calvin, though accustomed to use strong language respecting the Eucharist, must still be understood to have connected the grace of the Eucharist with the commemorating act, but in no manner with the symbols. And Bucer, who was invited into England, in the reign of Edward VI., to give counsel in further changes which were meditated in the lately established English Liturgy, was clearly and zealously of the same opinion.

Our justly celebrated Ridley, in his rejection of Roman Catholic excesses, had been led to take a different view, and, no less clearly, to connect the grace communicated in the Eucharist with the received symbols. His influence, there is reason to believe, had predominated, in the first reformation of the Liturgy ; inasmuch as, in every part of the Communion Service, the idea of a blessing,

strictly through the consecrated elements, is impressively conveyed. But, by the advice of Bucer, the first service, after a year or two, was remodified; and the idea of combination of grace with the symbols, had not, in the former service, been more carefully intimated, than it appeared afterward to be studiously excluded.*

In this alteration, Ridley obviously could not concur, though conscientious prudence restrained him from actual opposition. Most probably, it was with particular reference to this very matter, that he acknowledged, in a letter to a former chaplain, written during his confinement, that, in the recent times, it "had chanced him to dislike some things; for," he adds, "sudden changes, without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love."† Besides, in the very last period of his

* And yet, after all, the exclusion was not complete. Probably, Cranmer did not wish to carry his changes as far as would have been necessary for this purpose. The original doctrine, therefore, still remained, by the most obvious implication, in the commencing sentences of the exhortation, "Dearly beloved in the Lord," &c. in which Ridley's view of the Holy Eucharist appears to be conveyed, if not as expressly, yet as substantially, and with as much simple sublimity, as it could be in human language.

† Ridley's *Life of Ridley*, p. 578.

life, he declared his own belief, that, in the Eucharist, "what was before common bread, is now made a lively representation of Christ's body; and that it is not only a figure, but effectuously representeth his body: such a sacramental mutation," he says, "I grant to be in the bread and wine; which, truly, is no small change; but such a change as no mortal man can make, but only the omnipotency of Christ's word."*

But it is remarkable, that, notwithstanding the change in the Communion Service, those passages of the lately formed Articles, in which the old doctrine was substantially conveyed, still remained unaltered. Undoubtedly it would have been expunged in every instance, had divine Providence allowed time for the accomplishment of all that was then meditated. But whatever were the intentions of Cranmer, they were speedily made abortive, by the death of Edward VI.

It must be observed, however, that the changes in the Communion Service, made at the suggestion of Bucer, implied the omission of the former doctrine, rather than the substitution of an opposite doctrine in its stead. The only direct intimation of Bucer's theory, was given in the

* Wordsworth, vol. iii. p. 237. Ridley's Life of Ridley, p. 20.

altered form of delivering the symbols. In the first English Service, the two commencing sentences of the present forms stood alone; in the altered service, the two present latter sentences stood alone, as substitutes for the two former. On the accession of Elizabeth, however, the two original sentences were restored; but prefixed to the two latter, as we still have them. Thus, in a certain degree, the doctrine of Ridley was again recognised, inasmuch as it is clearly intimated in the replaced words, which must have been restored for the very sake of that intimation; while the subjoined words, which conveyed an opposite sense as substitutes, cannot be thus understood, when merely an addition. They express a truth, but not the whole truth. When they stood as substitutes, they appeared to convey the *only* true notion, and especially to exclude that idea which the former words had suggested.

This reinstatement of the significant words, which, for so many ages, had been used in the Christian Church, had (together with the unaltered Articles already adverted to) a stronger influence on the minds of the succeeding Clergy, in favour of Ridley's doctrine, than its studied omission, in the rest of the Communion Service, could have against it. Various evidences of this

fact might be adduced ; but the most conclusive proof is afforded by the Prayer-book for the Scottish Church, in the year 1637. In the Communion Service of that formulary, the first Prayer-book of King Edward was substantially followed, and Ridley's doctrine, in consequence, avowedly maintained. Had that measure succeeded in Scotland, there can be little doubt that a like recurrence to the earlier principles of our Reformation would have taken place in England. But every such project was frustrated, and the entire design defeated, by the civil war which so speedily ensued. The Scottish Service-book, however, had its eventual use, in affording material guidance to the revisers of the English Prayer-book, after the Restoration. The object, then, evidently was, to reinfuse the spirit of Ridley's doctrine into the Communion Service. But political reasons required this purpose to be effected, not avowedly, but by significant intimations ; that is, by Rubrics, enjoining certain things to be done which had not been directed in the unrevised form ; but which being now deliberately introduced after so long an omission, had a far greater force than if they had remained from the beginning ; while, on an attentive, and still more on a comparative, examination of them,

their meaning will appear irresistible. Thus, without adding one word to the service itself, (a restraint which we may believe they would gladly not have felt, as their following the Scottish Prayer-book so much, bespeaks a wish to have followed it still more completely), the revisers effected a kind of revolution in our Communion Service, which, quiet as it was, has probably been as deep in its operation on the feelings of the devout, as it will be found decisive in its import to the intelligent mind.

I have stated these particulars, as tending to illustrate the ground on which I ascribe the doctrine of Ridley to the existing Church of England; but, to evince this fact more fully, it will be necessary to adduce the instances already alluded to, in which the original view of the Reformed Church of England had remained unaltered.

The 25th Article of the Church treats expressly “of the Sacraments:” and it declares them to “be not only badges, or tokens, of Christian’s men’s profession, but rather certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and of God’s good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only

quicken, but strengthen and confirm, our faith in him."

I conceive Ridley's doctrine of the Eucharist could scarcely be expressed with greater simplicity or strength, than in these words. The Sacraments are said to be *effectual signs of grace*, for this reason, *because, by them, God works invisibly in us*; that is, the visible signs are the means, or instruments, by which God performs his invisible work on our minds and hearts. There is an import in the expression, *works invisibly*, which deserves attention. It implies that the divine operation, through the visible signs, is not the less real or direct, because imperceptible to our bodily senses. An explanation of this mysterious transaction is, of course, not attempted; but the instrumentality of the visible signs is, evidently, made the very essence of a Sacrament.

In the 28th Article, which treats specially of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are the following words: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." This position was, no doubt, made in contradiction to the gross doctrine of a literal transubstantiation; but it rejects that error, not by a mere negation, but

by also laying down the strict truth of the case. "The body of Christ" is not said, in a general way, to be *received*, but to be *given, taken, and eaten*; as if there was a solicitude, in correcting the abuses of the Sacrament, explicitly to maintain the union between the heavenly and spiritual blessing, and the outward and visible sign. *This, is given* by the minister, and *taken* by the communicant. To use these precise expressions, therefore, respecting "the body of Christ," is, by clearest implication, to combine that "heavenly and spiritual blessing" with the *given* and *taken* symbol.

The same notion will be found equally recognised, in the 29th Article: "Of the wicked, which eat not the body of Christ, in the use of the Lord's Supper."

"The wicked," says the Article, "and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustin saith), the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ; but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign, and sacrament, of so great a thing."

It need not be shewn how superfluous and inapposite the terms of this negation would be, if

no conjunction of the spiritual blessing with the visible signs had been contemplated. It is the idea of such a conjunction only, which could make it necessary to assert, that, although the wicked pressed the Sacrament visibly with their teeth, they, nevertheless, did not partake of the invisible blessing. But, in truth, to apply the term *Sacrament*, to the visible sign, to give that denomination to the consecrated symbols, rather than to the act of commemorating or communicating, would intimate, if even nothing more were said, that those visible symbols were regarded, as the divinely constituted means, or vehicles, of the invisible blessing.

When such definite expressions of doctrine as have now been adduced, had been, through divine Providence, preserved unaltered, it is not extraordinary, that the views of Ridley should have still remained prevalent, notwithstanding the omission of them in the Communion Service. It seems, in fact, that they gained strength through time; as, in the reign of James I., it was thought expedient to introduce them into the catechetical instruction of children.

In the addition then made to the Catechism, a Sacrament is defined, as an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto

us; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." The outward and visible sign, in the Lord's Supper, is stated to be "bread and wine, which the Lord has commanded to be received;" and the inward part, or thing signified, is "the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful," in that Sacrament.

Here it is, in the first place, distinctly taught, that the outward and visible sign in a Sacrament, is the means whereby we receive the inward and spiritual grace; and we are to observe, that the term *inward* does not, in this instance, mark a quality of that grace, as operating in us (however, in that sense also, justly applicable), but as existing, in some mysterious manner, in the Sacrament itself; for it is of *this*, that the spiritual grace is declared to be the "*inward part*;" evidently implying, that, through the divine power, the visible signs become, for our spiritual benefit, supernaturally endued with invisible virtue.

This virtue, in the Lord's Supper, is declared to be, "the body and blood of Christ;" that is, in the sublime and heavenly sense, in which our Saviour himself speaks of his flesh and blood, in

the 6th chapter of St. John. These are said to be, "verily and indeed taken and received," by all faithful communicants. The strength of this language has been universally felt; and, to some, it has appeared ambiguous. But it should always be kept in view, that the mysterious matter thus spoken of, had already been described, as an "inward and *spiritual* grace:" and was, therefore, to be understood no otherwise than in that spiritual manner of which our Lord himself has given the example. But it was thought right, expressly to notify, that this divine communication, by being *spiritual*, was not on that account the less *real*; that, in fact, it was a *substantive communication* from the adorable person of our Redeemer, quickening us with his divine vitality, strengthening us with his strength, and enriching us, in proportion to our faithfulness, with all the graces which were in him.

And as such solicitude was felt to assert the divine nature and potency of this heavenly grace, so was there no less attention to omit nothing which might impress its combination with the symbols. "The body and blood of Christ," therefore, are declared to be "*taken*," as well as "received, by the faithful." The latter word would have been sufficient, had it been intended

to leave at large the manner of communication. The former word consequently was used for the very purpose of suggesting that manner; for (as was remarked on the 28th Article) the word "*taken*," clearly refers to the "given" symbol, and thus intimates the mysterious connexion between the visible signs and the invisible blessing.

I have adduced, and remarked upon, the above passages in the authoritative forms of our Church, not only from due respect to their weight, but because I thought I could not better elucidate the matter in discussion, than by endeavouring to explain the views of the Church of England concerning it. I add nothing to what I have already remarked, respecting the modifications of the Communion Service, effected by the revisers, in 1661; because their insertions could neither be appreciated, nor clearly understood, except by comparing the service, as it had stood before, with the revised form.

I have also dwelt more particularly on the evidences of what our Church maintains on this subject, because, during the last hundred years, another view has been taken, even by some who supported the general idea, of grace concurring in the sacramental act, against Bishop Hoadley

and his followers; and who were accounted, in other respects, champions of orthodoxy.

The most conspicuous of this class, was the celebrated Dr. Waterland; who, in his work on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,* while he zealously argues for grace from heaven, as concomitant to the act, seems little less anxious to repel the notion of any mysterious connexion of that grace with the symbols. It is remarkable, that he takes Cranmer as, on this point, the genuine interpreter of the Church of England; and, though Ridley's very different sentiments must have been well known to him, he passes them over in a sort of shuffling manner, as if he did not like to meddle with them. The characteristic coldness of Waterland might very naturally have made him prefer the more general and indefinite notion; but knowingly to keep back the judgment of such a man as Ridley, was not doing complete justice, either to the subject, or to the reader.

A still later writer, of at least equal weight and celebrity (Bishop Horsley), may, however, be adduced, as strictly agreeing with Ridley. In one of his charges to the clergy of Rochester

* P. 257.

we find the following passage: "But the frequency of the celebration will be of little use, unless your people are well instructed in the nature and use of this most holy and mysterious ordinance. If they are suffered to consider it as nothing more than a rite of simple commemoration of Christ's death, a mere external form of thanksgiving on the part of the receiver, they will never come to it with due reverence. You will instruct them, therefore, in the true notion of a sacrament; that the sacraments are not only signs of grace, but means of the grace signified, the *matter of the sacrament* being by Christ's appointment, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, *the vehicle of grace* to the believer's soul."

But, however clearly the Church of England and her most celebrated divines may have spoken, it will still be asked, Whether the doctrine itself can be shewn to correspond with the analogy of the divine proceedings, and to be supported by the language of the Holy Scripture?

The question respecting the correspondence of this doctrine with the general analogy of the divine proceedings, must be answered by referring, first, to the most signal exercises of divine power, for man's benefit, in the Old Testament; and,

next, to such instances of the divine conduct, in the New Testament, as may be fairly thought to accord, in their general nature, with the case in question.

With respect to the Old Testament, I believe it may be asserted, that wherever a divine benefit, or blessing, whether to individuals, or to the whole people, was of such a nature, as suitably to admit the intervention of a sensible instrument, or medium,—something bearing that character, in itself, perhaps, of the humblest nature, was almost uniformly employed. To particularise the various instances, would be to transcribe a large portion of the sacred history. It may be sufficient to adduce some of the most striking examples.

It is, in the first place, worthy of remark, that, in this precise way, even innocent man in Paradise was to enjoy the blessing of immortality. Instead of possessing this privilege as an inherent property, he was to derive its continuance from eating the fruit of a particular tree; and, accordingly, when, through disobedience, the threatened mortality was incurred, the sentence was executed by an exclusion from that tree. It must not be omitted, that, from the earliest ages of the Christian Church, it has been usual to regard the

tree of life, in Eden, as a significant type of the Eucharist; and, in admitting this correspondence, the idea of a similar mysterious efficacy, in the eucharistical symbols, for sustaining spiritual life and immortality, was naturally, if not necessarily, implied.

At a subsequent period, when, in the great progressive scheme of divine beneficence, Moses was commissioned to work miracles, he was not directed to perform them merely by a word. The shepherd's rod, which, at the moment of the divine call, he had in his hand, was, from thence, to be, not only the ensign, but the instrument, of the power with which he was endued. "Thou shalt take this rod," said Jehovah, "in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." We accordingly find it afterward denominated *the rod of God*; and the numerous instances in which it was used, are so many exemplifications of Omnipotence acting through a material medium. There was a profound fitness in this mode of proceeding, else it would not have been adopted. It obviously gave a palpability to the divine interposition, which accommodated it, with peculiar aptitude, to the complex nature of man; while the simplicity of the means evinced the unseen agency by which the effect was accomplished.

We may also observe, that not only where miraculous acts were to be performed, but even where settled purposes were to be notified, and habitual impressions produced, sensible expedients were equally employed. Thus, to give sustenance, through the bodily senses, to the faith and devotion of the heart, the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, accompanied the children of Israel through the wilderness; and thus, when that miraculous token of the divine presence ceased to appear, the ark of the covenant, to which it had been used to attach itself, and which was thereby sealed as the perpetual symbol of God's special residence, became the point of inexpressible attraction to every true Israelite, as the place where God was infallibly to be found, and from whence mercy and goodness were sure to flow forth upon every faithful worshipper.

The depth of this feeling might be illustrated by numerous examples. The care which God was pleased to take for its confirmation and continuance, at the consecration of Solomon's temple, by the reappearance of the same divine cloud attaching itself to the same ark, in proof that the same presence would reside in the new mansion, unspeakably evinced the value of such a support

to faith, and such an excitement to devotion. Its actual influence on minds the most capable of appreciating it, is manifested in the case of Daniel ; who so venerated and loved even the desolated spot which had been thus distinguished, that, in defiance of the king of Babylon's edict, he persevered in praying, as he had been wont, three times a day, "his windows being open, in his chamber, toward Jerusalem."

It will hardly be said, that the eyes of pious Israelites were directed to the ark, as the pledge and symbol of providential, rather than of strictly spiritual, blessings. An expectation of these latter is continually expressed in the devotional language of the Old Testament ; and it is every where evident, that, in the inmost concerns of the heart, access to God was facilitated, reliance on God strengthened, and fixedness and concentration of mind secured and heightened, by the settled assurance of his specially present Majesty.

But it particularly pertains to the main question to remark, that amongst extraordinary effects produced in the Old Testament times, through material instruments, those of a strictly mental and spiritual nature are not wholly wanting. One instance, at least, of this kind, is found in the impression on the mind of Elisha, through the

touch of Elijah's mantle. Elijah had been directed to appoint Elisha his successor in the prophetic office. It may therefore be concluded, that the general dispositions of the latter fitted him for such a distinction ; but he himself seems, at the moment, to have had no apprehension of what awaited him, as he was busily occupied in agricultural labour ; but as soon as Elijah cast his mantle upon him, he is drawn, as if by irresistible attraction ; and only wishes to have time for bidding his father's house farewell. The prophet, probably, had been led to throw his mantle by a special impulse, and scarcely foresaw the fulness of the result ; for he answers, as if in some surprise, " Go back again, for what have I done unto thee ? " But it is remarkable, that that very mantle becomes, again, the pledge and symbol of divine blessing to Elisha. He had asked that a double portion of his master's spirit should rest upon him ; and the fall of Elijah's mantle, while the prophet himself was carried up to heaven, appears to have been regarded by Elisha, as notifying the success of his petition. In addition to what he himself had felt, he had seen Elijah divide the waters of Jordan, by smiting them with that very mantle ; and as if to satisfy himself, that, in possessing the visible pledge, he pos-

sessed also the mysterious power, we see him smiting the same waters with the same mantle, with the solemn and successful appeal,—“Where is the Lord God of Elijah?”

Were the above instances to be contemplated by themselves, it might perhaps be thought, that such accommodation to man’s animal nature belonged rather to the Jewish dispensation than to the spirituality of the Gospel. But this notion would be disproved at once by the slightest attention to the actual conduct, both of our Lord, and his Apostles.

It was right, and perhaps necessary, that when the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among men, he should manifest his divine prerogative, of simply commanding nature, and being instantly obeyed. He accordingly, on some occasions, merely spoke, and the effect immediately followed. Thus, he healed the centurion’s servant, and the nobleman’s son, who was sick at Capernaum. Thus, he stilled the tempest; and thus, also, he raised Lazarus from the tomb. But, ordinarily, he was pleased to act otherwise. He made use of some visible sign; and often transmitted the divine virtue, which dwelt in him, through a material medium. He laid his hands on those who applied; or he permitted them to

touch "the hem of his garment, and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole." Once, he touched the tongue of a dumb man with his spittle. At another time, he made clay by spitting on the ground, and put it on the eyes of a blind man, whom he sent (for the obvious purpose of notoriety) to wash it off in the pool of Siloam.

Nor was it only where corporeal blessings were conveyed, that our Lord was pleased to use a visible sign. When children were brought to him, not to be healed, but simply to receive his divine benediction, we read that he laid his hands upon them. And in that most signal instance, when, after his resurrection, he solemnly established his Apostles in their exalted office, we are told, that "he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

With reference to the particular subject under consideration, this last instance appears worthy of peculiar attention. The period of types and shadows was now clearly over, and the dispensation of "Grace and Truth" had substantially begun. We may humbly conclude, therefore, that our Lord would do nothing at this time, which was not strictly congenial with all that was to follow. Yet at this moment of immutable

precedent, he employs the same method of impressive accommodation to man's animal nature. In an instance the most important and vital, he communicates inward and spiritual grace, through an outward sign and a corporeal medium. His breath, as man, is made the vehicle of that Spirit, which, even as man, he had possessed without measure. It was the last and best blessing which his Apostles were to receive from his bodily presence; and may be justly regarded as their first strict and proper animation with the inward and spiritual life; the first fulfilment of that promise, so lately made to them respecting the Divine Paraclete, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Here, therefore (it would seem), no less really than on the day of Pentecost, the words of his forerunner were verified, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost." On that day they received new powers: the fire which our Lord came to send upon the earth, was then *visibly* kindled; but it was at that former time, when our Lord "breathed upon them," and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that they really became *new creatures*: for how else shall we account for those clearer apprehensions of the new dispensation, which their choice of a successor to Judas, and their deep and unremitting intensity

in prayer, prove them to have possessed, previously to their last signal endowment "with power from on high?"

I have enlarged on that remarkable act of our Redeemer, in his final intercourse with his Apostles on earth, not merely because it may be thought in the highest degree pertinent to my present subject, but because its powerful influence, as manifested in so immediate a change of character, has, as far as I know, been hitherto not sufficiently adverted to.

That the Apostles, from this and other divine evidences, were, in their own minds, impressed with the suitable transmission of inward and spiritual blessings, through outward and visible signs, appears from their own subsequent practice. As their divine Master, in breathing on them, had made them partakers of that Spirit which was in him; so, when it became their part, as his ministers, to communicate, in measure, the same heavenly gift to others, they conferred this blessing by the imposition of their hands; and it is expressly testified, that "through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given."

It is remarkable, that this practice of the Apostles is stated, without any explanatory ob-

servation ; obviously, because such a proceeding, however wonderful in itself, was in such complete accordance with all of a like nature which had been done formerly, that there was no more room, before-hand, for questioning its fitness, than there was possibility, afterward, of disputing its efficacy.

Enough being now said, in the way of preliminary remark ; it may be proper, in considering the subject itself, to begin with this natural question,— In what light were our Lord's Apostles most likely to contemplate the institution of the holy Eucharist, under all the impressions which we must suppose to have possessed their minds ?

Our Lord's discourse, in the 6th chapter of St. John, could not but be present to their thoughts ; for the Holy Spirit was to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever had been said unto them. Those deeply significant words, " He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me : " these words, I say, could not but associate themselves, in the minds of the Apostles, with the strictly corresponding language used at

the institution of the eucharistic Sacrament ; and it would be not merely natural, but inevitable for them to explain our Lord's words on the one occasion by what he had so emphatically spoken on the other.

In that memorable discourse, he had clearly intimated that his death was to make provision for that divine nutriment, which he was to furnish from himself. "The bread from heaven," said he, "is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." When, therefore, just before his entrance on the great concluding scene, he took bread, and having blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you," it was impossible not to connect these words, and this act, with the corresponding expressions uttered at Capernaum. When they saw that last Paschal supper (in itself a type of the Redeemer) formed into a new ordinance, in which the acts of eating and drinking were to have an import, and the aliments fed upon to bear a denomination, identical with the terms of that former announcement ; what could be their conclusion, but that not only the ordinance generally, but the specific acts and aliments so distinguished, were to be instru-

mentally conducive to that divine benefit with which they were thus intimately conjoined.

I must venture to add, that in proportion to their high apprehensions of the blessings to be conferred, the more disposed would they be to recognise the entire fitness of such means of conveyance. It has been seen, that their minds were habituated to the transmission of such influences as were strictly supernatural and heavenly, through sensible and material vehicles. But what influence could they have conceived, more supernatural, or more heavenly, than such a communication of himself, as their divine Master had warranted them to expect? The terms in which that assurance had been given, were so definite, so distinctive, and so reiterated, as to require an adequate construction, and to convey a substantive idea; and our Lord, after using them, was pleased, emphatically, to attest their high and holy import, by declaring, "the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The promise, therefore, of our Lord's flesh and blood to be to them meat indeed, and drink indeed, to be the spiritual and eternal life of their souls, by virtue of which he should dwell in them

and they in him, and they should live by him as he lived by the Father, — this promise, I say, could not, consistently with the terms in which it is expressed, be understood to mean any thing less than an inconceivable, but most real, emanation from his divine person, in which there would be the same exercise of his divine power, for the animation and sustenance of the soul, as when divine virtue had gone out of him for the healing of the body. I conceive they could have given no other interpretation than this to our Lord's prospective assurances. In the appointment, therefore, of visible symbols to be instrumentally effective in conveying the promised blessing, they would see nothing but that which, according to all their experience, was suitable and proportionate. They would, moreover, perceive, that a twofold communication, the flesh and blood of the Redeemer, was provided for by a twofold medium ; the lowliness of which evinced only the more, the power of the invisible agent, while, in such an operation, it would not appear unfitting, that bread, the prime nourishment of human life, and wine, the prime cherisher of human weakness, should be the material instruments of this heavenly purpose.

I do not mean to say, that such thoughts were

likely to have occurred, at that hour, when the sacrament of the Eucharist was first instituted. At no time were the Apostles less competent to have discovered the weighty import of our Lord's expressions. Probably, in the depth of that sorrow which had filled their hearts, they did not recollect the particular discourse by which alone his language could have been fully explained. But, afterwards, when the promise was fulfilled, that all things which they had heard should be brought to their remembrance, the connexion between the discourse at Capernaum and the eucharistic institution, would impress itself on them, in all its clearness and importance; and may it not be presumed, that the more they considered the subject, the greater reason would they perceive for acknowledging the divine goodness and wisdom, not only in the transcendent nature of the blessing thus entailed upon the church, but also in the choice of such an appropriate provision for its stated and perpetual communication?

It would be obvious to them, that if the sacrament of the Eucharist had been ordained merely as a commemorative celebration,—that is, if our Redeemer had said nothing more, than, “Do this in remembrance of me,” its institution would

have implied rather the injunction of a permanent duty, than the pledge and means of a permanent blessing. In that view, it might have afforded an occasion for the more solemn expression of Christian gratitude, or the renewal of Christian obligation; but it could not be thought to give the prospect of any special spiritual benefit, beyond what might be found in an equally ardent exercise of devotion on any other religious occasion. The ordinary grace of God might have been relied upon for co-operation in such an effort of the mind to think more closely on the love of their dying Lord, or to feel it more deeply; but, as it should seem, only as equal efforts would be assisted, in the common acts of pious supplication. Yet still, on this ground, it might not have been easy to account satisfactorily for introducing, into a simple commemoration, any outward or visible part. The merely natural effect of the eucharistic signs on the external senses, would hardly explain their adoption in a religion in which rites and ceremonies were so professedly to give place to spiritual worship; and it would be still more difficult to conceive, how the eating and drinking of those visible symbols should be an essential co-ingredient in the exercise of a purely commemorative devotion.

But, in ascribing to the eucharistic symbols the instrumental effectiveness with which the significant word of their Divine Master had appeared to invest them, the Apostles would see, in that institution, a provision for their spiritual consolation and benefit, in which all their pre-existing habits of mind were consulted, and all their mental and moral exigencies richly supplied. The nature of the eucharistic Sacrament was clearly such as to have in it no other virtue than what flowed into it from Him by whom it was instituted. The eating of bread, and drinking of wine, had, in itself, neither conduciveness, nor any obvious congeniality, to a spiritual purpose. It could, therefore, have only that precise import which our Redeemer was pleased to give to it; namely, that it was a visible method appointed by him, of spiritually eating his flesh, and spiritually drinking his blood; and that it must accordingly derive its spiritual efficacy from the concomitancy of his omnipotent power. The Eucharist, when thus regarded, would be, to the disciples of our Lord, such a pledge as was given them in no other instance, of their living by his life, being strong through his strength, and growing in grace by a vital effluence from himself.

The means otherwise afforded them of build-

ing themselves up in their most holy faith, they would, doubtless, value and improve. But, in this superadded provision, there was a source of satisfaction peculiar to itself. In all other exercises of religion the mind was to contribute its own exertions, and, though subordinately, yet directly, to minister to its own benefit or comfort. In the eucharistic institution alone, human co-operation could have no share in the effect, because the medium employed could communicate influence or blessing only through the direct operation of Almighty Power. It was not to be questioned, that, in every instance in which spiritual benefit was conferred, the goodness of God was to be regarded as its supreme source. But where the rational powers of man intervened, whether those of the recipient himself, or of any human helper of his faith, the sensible advantage would seem, more or less, to resemble the blessings of nature and providence, which are apparently the result of general laws. It might, therefore, have appeared as reasonable as it was gracious, that, for the perpetual comfort and assurance of the church, in the highest and noblest instance in which divine blessing was to be conferred, the supreme source of that blessing should condescend to be its direct and immediate dis-

penser ; and should prove himself to be such, by employing means of communication which, venerable and impressive as they should become, by being made, not merely the instruments of his power, but the effectual representatives of himself,* would be not only weak, but fruitless, in any other hands than his own.

If we may believe these views to have presented themselves to the minds of the Apostles, we must also suppose them to have been heightened in their effect, as far as that was possible, by the pre-existing habits already adverted to.

It must be remembered that the Jewish religion was not wholly typical ; on the contrary, it contained much which was naturally and intrinsically attractive and endearing. Above all, the special presence of God in his holy temple, held a place in the mind of every pious Jew, for which nothing but a full equivalent could compensate. We are to observe, that there was nothing in that presence except the limitation to one exclusive spot, which savoured of an imperfect dispensation. It was not to the infancy of human nature, but to human nature itself, that this instance of divine condescension was engaging. That presence had,

* "He that eateth *me*, even he shall live by *me*."—*John*, vi. 57.

indeed, for ages, been as much a matter of faith, as the glory of God in heaven; but it was not the less apprehended as an invaluable and delightful reality. This it was which made the Mount Sion attractive to every devout Israelite; which induced the inspired Anna not to depart from the temple; which detained the child Jesus when Mary and Joseph had departed from Jerusalem;* and which afterwards roused his holy zeal to an intensity never manifested on any other occasion.

Had nothing parallel to that grace and glory of the Old dispensation been retained in the New, a want might have been felt which all its other benefits would not have supplied; but, in the Eucharist, as seen in the light of our blessed Saviour's words, there was the imperishable pledge of an equally glorious, but far more gracious presence;—a presence, not confined to a single spot, but to be realised, in our Lord's appointed way, wherever his word should be received, and his church established; a presence, not merely to be approached with confidence of being heard and

* It would seem that our Lord's answer to his mother and Joseph, St. Luke, ii. 49, might most fitly be rendered, "Why is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in the house of my Father?"

mercifully regarded, but with which an incomparably nearer communion was to be vouchsafed, and from which, an inexpressibly more efficacious influence was to be communicated, than, in the former dispensation, could even have been conceived.

All, therefore, and far more than all, that the ark of the covenant had been to pious Israelites, the sacrament of the Eucharist must, on the grounds which have been stated, have appeared to the Apostles and their initiated disciples. Our Lord's assurance to them, in general terms, had been, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world:" and a still more consolatory promise had been given, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The eucharistic institution, understood as has been stated, would necessarily imply the most substantial fulfilment of those comprehensive declarations. However otherwise the great head of the church should be present with his members, he must then be specially present with them when he gave them spiritual life and nourishment from himself.

In the very idea of such a communication there was something so sublime and heavenly, that the more it was dwelt upon, the more it would fill

the mind with all the impressive results to which it led. And it might not be too much to say, that the pillar of cloud or of fire could not have been to the senses of the Israelites a surer token of the special presence of Jehovah, than the consecrated symbols in the Eucharist were, to the minds of the Apostles and their fellow-Christians, of an equally special, and much more endearing and effective, presence of the incarnate Word. In this ordinance they would see a mercy-seat as sensibly established as in the former dispensation ; but with far nobler hopes and better promises : and in the light of our Lord's infallible words, it would place before their mental eye a Shechinah as real as that which had visibly possessed itself of the Holy of Holies, at the dedication of Solomon's temple. In witnessing our Lord's institution of the Eucharist, and his divinely significant consecration of its symbols, they had seen and heard what was far more than equivalent to that earlier manifestation. They would rely on the faithfulness of their omnipotent Lord, at all times, and in every instance, to verify his own words, by making the eucharistic elements to be *effectually* what he had named them : and, in this assurance, they would contemplate him as not less graciously

and influentially present in those holy mysteries, than he had been personally present in those interviews with which he had favoured them before ascending to his throne of glory in the heavens.

I have thus ventured to suppose, as matter of moral certainty, the estimate of the Eucharist which would be made by the Apostles under the mere guidance of our Saviour's expressions. But I am ready to acknowledge, that the force of this argument may not be felt to imply actual demonstration, and that its success will be in proportion only to a certain mental pre-disposition. Many will, doubtless, still ask, If these things are so, why has not this view of the Eucharist been expressly given in Holy Scripture? If such had been the judgment of the Apostles, might we not expect to find an explicit declaration of it in some part of the Apostolic writings?

This question would be reasonable; but the answer is easy; since, through the wisdom of Heaven, St. Paul has been led, by certain irregularities among the Corinthians, so to speak of the Eucharist in his first epistle to that church, as to place the Apostolic doctrine beyond possibility of doubt.

It appears, that many members of the Corinthian church had defiled their Christian purity, by participating in feasts celebrated in heathen temples, and consisting of viands which had been offered at the shrine of idols. Of this practice, as might well be supposed, St. Paul speaks with horror; but it is very remarkable, that, in his expostulation, he dwells neither on the sanctity inherent in the Christian character generally, nor on the spiritual privileges and blessings so often the subject of his discourse: instead of this, he urges his charge on the single ground, that the mysterious sanctity of the Lord's Supper was grossly and dangerously profaned by any intermixture, in its recipients, with the table and the cup of demons.

The Apostle commences by adducing the case of the ancient Israelites, whose special relation to God he so describes, as to evince the close analogy between their peculiar circumstances and those of Christians generally, in point of characteristic distinctions, and of the Corinthian Christians particularly, in point of crime and punishment.

The analogy in characteristic distinctions, he thus intimates: "They" (the Israelites) "were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the

sea ; and they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them ; and that rock was Christ.”

It need not be remarked, that, in this exordium, St. Paul, with all the skill of a master in discourse, lays a ground for making the holy Eucharist his theme. But does he not do more than this ? Does he not, even already, intimate the specific view which *he* took of that ordinance, and in which he meant to represent it ? The Israelites, he would have it understood, resembled Christians, in having been sustained with spiritual meat and spiritual drink ; that is, evidently, with meat and drink which had, in their nature and substance, something supernatural and divine. But what, by consequence, does this pointed parallel imply respecting its Christian counterpart ? It was, surely, far from St. Paul's thoughts to give to the type the greater, and to the antitype the lesser glory. It follows, therefore, that in so designating the sustenance of the Israelites, he intended to convey, even beforehand, a like idea of the eucharistic symbols : these, he implies, are also spiritual meat, and spiritual drink ; that is, have in them a transcendent quality, similarly supernatural and divine.

After an enumeration of instances in which the Israelites had signally transgressed, and were as signally corrected, the Apostle enters directly upon his subject; and, in the first place, appeals to the settled belief of Christians, universally, respecting the nature of the Lord's Supper: "The cup of blessing," says he, "which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

This interrogatory form deserves particular notice; it implies that there was, already, such unanimous consent in the Christian church respecting the nature and import of the Lord's Supper, as to make it necessary only to take for granted the matter of that belief. Let, then, the terms of the Apostle, thus deliberately and decisively applied, be attentively weighed: he does not give a general estimate of the Eucharist, as being the most important and appropriate act of Christian devotion; but he distinctly and emphatically specifies the mysterious character and efficacy which the material elements of bread and wine acquired by their consecration to the holy purpose for which they were appointed.

In a word, according to the Apostle, and that universal belief to which he appeals, the com-
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morative celebration of the Eucharist, as a devotional act, is not that which makes it peculiarly beneficial and venerable; but it is so, because, in this ordinance, the aliments which Christ has appointed, become, through his designation and blessing, the direct vehicles of his own divine influences, to capable receivers. Nothing short of this notion would accord with the ascribing of spiritual virtue, specially, to each visible sign; and, what is still more, to each, not as becoming efficacious, through *the act of receiving*, but as endued with efficacy, through *the act of consecration*.

For, we must observe, it is not “the cup of blessing which we *drink*,” nor “the bread which we *eat*,” that are declared to be the communion of the blood, and the communion of the body, of Christ; but it is said, “the cup of blessing which we *ble*ss, and the bread which we *break*;” clearly indicating, that the eucharistic elements, when once solemnly sanctified according to our Lord’s appointment, are to be regarded as being in an inexplicable, but deeply awful manner, the receptacles of that heavenly virtue, which his divine power qualifies them to convey. On such a subject, it would be presumptuous to indulge in any hypothetic speculation. But it would be still

more blamable, and at least as prejudicial, not to allow to the Apostle's words all their due import; especially as those very words contain the only direct definition of the Eucharist in the sacred writings.

If the language of St. Paul could need elucidation, it might be strictly compared with the several expressions of our Lord, already adverted to; but these must, of themselves, recur, and at once fix the unequivocal, however mysterious, import, of *the communion of his body*, and *the communion of his blood*. In this accumulated light, it must be felt impossible that the thing signified should be disproportioned to the force of the expression; and the conclusion, on the whole, must inevitably appear to be, that as our Lord had taught his followers to expect, from his divine person, such influences of his body and of his blood, as should be, not figurative or illusive, but substantive and vital; and as, in his institution of the Eucharist, he constituted the consecrated bread and wine the virtual representatives of his body and blood, and, by consequence, the effective vehicles of their influences to all capable partakers, — so, what our Lord had thus declared, and thus established, is comprehensively contained, and, as if solely countersigned, in

the clear and authoritative recognition of his Apostle.

But even this emphatical passage is only a part of what St. Paul has delivered on the subject of the Eucharist. As, in the wisdom of God, it was on this occasion alone to be directly the theme of discourse; so, accordingly, the Apostle seems anxious to leave nothing unsaid, that could illustrate the doctrine, or enforce the consequent duty. Having, therefore, by his interrogatory appeal, called attention to the profound and awful nature of the Eucharist, he proceeds to argue, from the case of Jewish sacrifices, with what cautious veneration this Christian mystery ought to be treated. "Consider Israel, after the flesh," he says; and asks—"Were not they, who ate of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?" The argument is brief, but the inference cannot be mistaken. The Apostle clearly implies, that the same kind of sanctity, which had been ascribed to things offered on God's altar, under the old law, was now to be ascribed to the eucharistic symbols. That sanctity, he intimates to have been given to the Jewish sacrifices, by the altar on which they had been offered; according to our Lord's declaration, that it is "the altar which sanctifieth the gift:" and *such* he conceives to

have been the communication of sanctity to the matter of the sacrifice, that the partakers in the one participated also in the other. Such, then, he would have it understood, was strictly in its kind, however more spiritual in its purpose, the sanctity derived by the eucharistic symbols from their high designation, and through them, conveyed unto the persons of those who partook of them.

That this was, distinctly, St. Paul's meaning, is confirmed by the design which he had in view; namely, that those Corinthians, who had frequented idolatrous banquets, might be awakened to a full sense, not only of the gross profaneness, but also of the personal danger, of their conduct. On this particular point he proceeds to enlarge. Even already, however, he has said enough to shew, that, in his judgment, a divinely effective virtue became, through consecration, mysteriously united with the eucharistic symbols; and was, through them, communicated beneficially to capable receivers; and, as it should seem, in some such awful manner, to *every* receiver, as to make his contact with any unholy thing, a matter not less of peril to himself than of insult to the majesty of Heaven.

In continuing his expostulation, the Apostle

retains the idea of sacrificial communicative influence; and applies it to that criminal intermixture, which it was his immediate object to reprobate. "The things," says he, "which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I would not that ye should be communicants of demons."* Such, therefore, is his deduction, merely from the contrariety between sacrifices to God and sacrifices to demons. But the particular subject of which the Apostle was treating, called for yet stronger denouncement; he, therefore, immediately adds, — "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"

The strength of these expressions is remarkable. It seems as if they were intended to convey all possible awfulness of admonition: "Ye *cannot*" do it, says the Apostle, as if he meant to pronounce, that there was some provision in the invisible world, as certain in its operation as

* As before, in the 18th verse, the Israelites, by eating the sacrifice, were *κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστήριου* (partakers of the altar), so, in the 20th verse, the Corinthians, by eating idol sacrifices, are *κοινωνοὶ τῶν δαιμόνων* (communicants of demons).

the laws of nature, in readiness to avenge such profanation; to which mysterious vengeance they would infallibly expose themselves, should they neglect his warning. But on what does he rest the certainty of that result? Not on the moral contrariety of the two acts, however real or extreme, but strictly on the opposite import and effectiveness of the two cups, and of the two tables, as being respectively the mediums of communion with the Lord, and of communion with demons.

It is, in fact, the profane and unnatural mixture of things the most sacred with things the most unhalloved, in this visible world (and that, in their own persons), with which St. Paul charges the Corinthians; and, as if he himself was struck with inexpressible horror at the outrage to Omnipotence itself, which such enormity involved, he gives his feelings vent, in an appeal to all that was impressible in human nature, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"

It was not possible to add greater weight to all that he had spoken, than by this interrogatory. The Jewish high-priest could not have given a more terrible warning to some daring intruder into the Holy of Holies. The words are awful;

they are as pregnant in meaning, as they are resistless in force. They attest the feeling with which St. Paul had spoken, and guard his words against even the possibility of a figurative construction. And here, for the time, he drops the subject; perhaps, that an interval for reflection on all he had just said, and especially on his last most awful expostulation, might the better prepare the minds of those to whom he wrote, for what was yet to come.

He had, in fact, another enormity to complain of, and for that purpose he reserves what is, most strictly, the sequel of his former discourse. He had ended, in the first instance, with the judgments of God, as matter of awful apprehension. From this point he proceeds, when, in the next chapter, he brings his second charge against them, respecting the Eucharist; namely, that of treating it with disrespect, in the very act of celebration. In his animadversions on this flagrant violation of Christian duty, he appeals to their own experience, for frequent verifications, even already, of that tremendous menace, by which he had, as it were, riveted and sealed his preceding remonstrance.

That he may the more surely gain his purpose, he first lays the strongest possible ground, by

reciting the record of the eucharistic institution, not only as received by him from the report of his brethren, but as directly made known by divine revelation to himself. After repeating those quick and powerful words, which had given imperishable dignity and virtue to that bread, and that cup, as implying the shewing forth of the Redeemer's death, as well as (what had been before dwelt upon) the communion of his body and blood, he thus proceeds in his admonition :—
“ Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

I have quoted this passage at large, that I may call attention to the closeness with which the Apostle adheres to the idea of the distinct and specific elements, rather than to the general act of commemoration or communion. There is a kind of physiognomy in language, by which we seem to see, as well as understand, the mind of the writer. Thus, in the passage now transcribed, we not only receive the instruction intended to be

conveyed, but, in the precision of the terms, the strictness with which they are adhered to, and the energy with which they are applied, we have, as it were, the very stamp and signature of St. Paul's own mind and heart. Not only, from first to last, does he keep the eucharistic elements in his view, but he says nothing which does not expressly refer to them. Thus, as the crime is eating or drinking unworthily, so the punishment is the *eating and drinking* of judgment (that is, of bodily infliction); as if the very receiving of those holy things into the human person, when defiled by polluting contact, or desecrated by actual irreverence, produced, of itself (like the Ark of the Covenant when profanely treated), the calamity or destruction of the offender. Again, the desecrating irreverence is stated to arise from not discerning *the Lord's Body*; that is, from approaching the sacramental symbols without due discrimination of their transcendent quality. In this awful designation of the matter of the Sacrament, the Apostle seems to have thought his subject carried to its height. What more, in truth, could even St. Paul have added, either for the correction of the Corinthians, or for the instruction of all succeeding Christians?

He, therefore, merely strengthens what he has

said, by referring to those divine judgments which had been already inflicted. "For this cause," says he, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The Corinthians themselves had, probably, been suffering these calamities, without adverting to their actual source. But this awful explanation would, at once, lead them to compare their crime and punishment with those signal cases of a like nature, recorded in Holy Scripture ; with that, for example, of Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire on God's altar ; with that of the Philistines, who brought the ark into the house of Dagon ; with that of the Bethshemites, whose profane curiosity led them to look into the ark, and who became the victims of their own presumption ; and with that of Uzzah, who drew his own instant death from the ark by an inconsiderate touch. They must, at once, have seen and acknowledged, that what was just and necessary in those ancient instances of divine chastisement, must be accounted equally just and necessary in the case then existing ; since every reason that could be conceived for fencing the symbols of divine presence and power, under the Old Testament, must hold good for an equal fencing of similar symbols, under the New Testament. It could not, for one moment,

be imagined, that either the altar, or the ark of the Lord, should be guarded by more terrible majesty, than that which, on equally divine authority, was to be “discerned” as “the Lord’s Body.”

But does not the awful warning, respecting “eating or drinking unworthily,” intimate, by parity of reason, or rather on a still surer ground, the divine potency of the elements to all qualified receivers? For, if to eat or drink unworthily, is to eat and drink divine malediction; then, no less surely, to eat and drink worthily, is to eat and drink divine benediction. It is evidently, according to St. Paul, the mysterious sanctity of the thing unworthily received, which makes it the vehicle of vengeance to him by whom it is profaned. But, if the sacred symbols be thus endued with a supernatural influence to avenge their abuse, they must possess a like supernatural influence where they are duly and reverently received, to benefit and bless the receiver. In fact, we must conclude, that it is their being divinely fitted to bless, which alone could give them an avenging power, when profaned; and, consequently, that the Apostle, in adding this last distinct and emphatical declaration, confirms all that he had said before, and puts the Christian

doctrine of the Eucharist beyond the possibility of question.

To understand the mysterious term of the Lord's Body in any such gross sense as has been fancied in the Church of Rome, would be to overlook our Redeemer's expressions, already in part quoted: "It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

But let us not, therefore, rush into an opposite extreme; nor treat the words of an inspired Apostle as we would not treat those of any common intelligent writer. Let us observe, that every expression St. Paul uses, tends, as it were, more and more, to invest the sacramental symbols with an ineffable measure of derivative dignity and instrumental virtue. He gives no shadow of pretext for any carnal interpretation; but he says all that could be said, to make us regard "that bread and that cup," not only as the visible pledge, but the effective organ of a vital communication from the invisible, but then specially operative, and therefore specially present, Redeemer. For he alone it is, who could make those symbols to be, in virtue and efficacy, his body and blood.

In thus explaining the Sacrament of the

Eucharist, the Apostle most truly tells us a mystery; but a mystery which (as has been observed) the first Christians were prepared, by every divine analogy, to receive; and which could scarcely need vindication in these latter times, if the zeal of contending Christians did not so generally neglect all truth, even of Holy Scripture itself, which does not directly serve as a weapon against the error, real or supposed, which they are anxious to refute, or as a support to the particular theory which it is their purpose to maintain.

On this account chiefly, rather than because laboured elucidation was at all necessary, have I dwelt so long on the Apostle's expressions. I have not wished to add any thing to their strength, much less to turn them from their intended aim. I have merely been anxious, by the minutest attention, and the most sober consideration, to elicit from them their precise and entire meaning; especially as it has pleased the divine wisdom, that these passages of the 10th and 11th chapters of the First Corinthians should be the sole instance in which the doctrine of the Eucharist is *infallibly* stated and explained.

But, perhaps, it may still be doubted, whether it be essential to the due estimation and bene-

ficial use of the Lord's supper, that the Apostle's expressions should be as literally interpreted as they have been in the preceding observations; and whether he may not be considered as, in some measure, employing a figurative mode of speech, to which it will not be unreasonable to give a proportionally qualified construction.

To this I would answer, that in every passage of Holy Scripture, as well as in that more immediately in view, it ought to be our first care to ascertain in what manner the divine speaker, or writer, means to be understood. If in a figurative manner, some key will assuredly be given us whereby to arrive at the simple and solid sense. This, perhaps, will be intimated in the very terms which are used, by the obvious impossibility of any other interpretation; or, at least, the context will afford such light, as to explain the import, if not also to illustrate the fitness, of the metaphorical expressions. It would be easy to produce examples; but the passage particularly before us, could, on no reasonable ground, be included in them; for I conceive it would be impossible to point out *one* strictly figurative term in the entire discourse.

A figurative term is that, which, by substituting some other term or terms, may be translated into plain language. But if the expressions of

St. Paul respecting the Eucharist be tried by this rule, their import, be it ever so mysterious, cannot be proved metaphorical. For instance, what plainer terms could we pretend to substitute for *the communion of the blood*, or *the communion of the body of the Lord*? Nay, the very term of *the Lord's body* is so used by him, as infinitely to transcend all attempts at adequate explication. When the Church of Christ is called his body, we see at once that it is a figure, from our acquaintance with the subject thus denominated. But when we read of the Lord's eucharistic body, we read of something not otherwise made known to us; and, therefore, cannot similarly resolve its import into a plainer notion; which will be no less the case with our Saviour's several expressions already adverted to. To weigh the consonant terms of our Lord and his Apostles with sobriety and humility, will be to feel, that they unitedly assure us of a heavenly and spiritual reality, divine in its source, infallible in its efficacy, inconceivably venerable in its nature and character, and no less dreadful in its profanation. What is said, therefore, on this subject, is not figurative, but it is mysterious and transcendental; because, obviously, the thing signified rises, not only above the language, but the conception of man. St. Paul had learned what he

delivers (he tells us) by revelation ; most probably when he was caught up into paradise, and heard “unspeakable words.” When, therefore, the Apostle speaks, as in the instance before us, of that which is heavenly and divine, we must, in reason, believe, that, however exalted his language, the matter of which he speaks is incomparably more exalted ; and that if we would do justice to him, to the subject, and to ourselves, we must understand his terms in the fulness of their import, as, even then, we shall only see by means of a glass, obscurely ; and therefore be liable, through the least aberration of our mental vision, either to see delusively, or not to see at all.

But may it not be apprehended, that the ascribing of such instrumental importance to the material elements of bread and wine, as the literal interpretation of St. Paul’s expression would imply, involves an inconsistency with that purely spiritual character, which is regarded as the great distinction of the gospel dispensation ?

To this it might with reason be answered, that, in forming our notions of the gospel dispensation, we are not to trust to any general conclusions, however plausible, but simply to its

own representations of itself. From these we shall learn, that, though the gospel is purely spiritual in its ends, the means which it employs are most wisely adapted and proportioned to the mixed nature of man. It is the exquisiteness of this accommodation which constitutes the most conclusive internal evidence, that the Author of Christianity needed not that any should testify to him of man, inasmuch as he knew what was in man. To a creature consisting, not of spirit only, but of soul and body also, how disproportionate would have been a scheme of moral improvement, much more of moral disenfranchisement, adapted exclusively to the highest portion of his nature!

But the fact is, that the gospel commenced in an accommodation to man's animal exigencies which was as admirable, as it was gracious; and which the hosts of heaven contemplated with delight and wonder. The incarnation of the co-eternal Son, through which St. John was enabled to declare, what he and his fellow-Apostles "had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the Word of life," was, in the first instance, so to consult human nature in its animal and sensitive capacity, as to give the strongest pledge,

that a dispensation, thus introduced, would, in every subordinate provision, manifest the same spirit, and operate on the same principle.

For could it be thought, that the first wonderful accommodation of Godhead to the sensitive apprehensions of man should be wholly temporary? and that, though that mystery of godliness was ever to be regarded as the vital source of all spiritual benefits and blessings, no continuance of this wise and gracious condescension should be manifested in the means, whereby its results were to be perpetuated, and made effectual?

May we not rather conclude, that, on the same wise and gracious consideration which induced the divine nature to enshrine itself in a human person, that, through that medium, there might be a more familiar, more impressive, and more engaging communication of God with man; it would be deemed by the divine wisdom and goodness most suitable to man's natural feelings and conceptions to convey to him the special influences of incarnate Deity, through a medium similarly adapted to his imagination and his senses? And when we believe (as, if we are Christians, we must believe), that he, who was God over all, united himself to so low a thing as

human flesh, in order to become the fountain of those influences, we surely need not question the credibility of his conveying those influences through any other work of his own hands which he saw it fit to appoint. When he had condescended to embody himself in our flesh, that he might, more conformably to the laws of our nature, give spiritual life to the world, and when he was establishing a perpetual ordinance, expressly to represent that primary mystery, and to subserve its purpose by instrumentally communicating its virtue; was it either unsuitable, or improbable, that the heavenly grace, to be thus communicated, should be, as it were, embodied in two of the purest and simplest provisions which, as Creator of the world, he had given for the sustenance of our animal life, and the refreshment of our animal weakness?

The expediency of such a method, as peculiarly fitted to impress the mind of man, is illustrated (as has been observed) by all the analogous instances already adverted to. In no case could the divine power itself have required any medium of operation; and, therefore, every thing of this kind must have been employed, in order to an easier apprehension, and a deeper

feeling, of the source from which the benefit proceeded. It was chiefly to give such an apprehension, and excite such a feeling, that miraculous works were wrought; and that end could not have been more infallibly secured, than by enduing with supernatural efficacy an instrumental means, which, in itself, was utterly inefficacious. It was obviously by no general law, that a benefit thus conferred had been accomplished; nor would it require any reasoning to establish the belief, that the virtue which had so wonderfully embodied itself in a material vehicle, could be no less than a real and substantive influence from the divine omnipotence.

Was it not then, if possible, still more requisite, that a like apprehension, and a like feeling, should be ensured, respecting the highest and holiest communication that had ever proceeded from God to man? Estimating the blessing conveyed in the Eucharist, by the united representation of our Lord, and of St. Paul, can we suppose, that any suitable means would be omitted of attesting to our reason and natural feelings the divinity of that blessing? And what could be more suitable, than that the same expedient which had been employed to impress human feeling with the sense of divine operation in so

many inferior instances, should be employed for the same necessary purpose, in the very highest instance in which man, while on this earth, was to be the subject of divine operation, and the receiver of supernatural blessings?

Instead, therefore, of questioning the literal import of St. Paul's expressions, shall we not rather recognise in that import, the uniformity of the divine proceedings? and the depth of that wisdom, which, not more for the humbling of the proud than for the consolation of the humble, continues, in the sublimest instance on this side of heaven, to make the weakness of the instrument an irrefragable evidence that the blessing received is directly and purely from himself? The assurance of this fact is invaluable; and it would be impossible to imagine any more suitable way in which assurance could have been given. It leaves to faith its entire exercise, inasmuch as no extraordinary impression is made, either on the external or the internal sense; but it exercises faith in the highest and happiest manner, by presenting to it an object, which, in its nature, and in its nearness, must be felt to unite heaven with earth, and God with man. Such is the reckoning which even reason must make, if the actual transmission of divine in-

fluence, through the elements, be once admitted. We, doubtless, *can* conceive heavenly influence to be communicated without any medium whatever; but we *cannot* conceive a spiritual influence, conveyed through such material mediums, to be any other than heavenly and divine.

But, in addition to what we may deduce from the general method of the divine proceedings, and from the reason of the case, do we not find by actual experience, that such an unequivocal pledge of divine operation was necessary, to preserve the belief of such operation "whole and undefiled," in the Christian church? The fact of strictly supernatural grace, though in itself so consolatory, is retained with difficulty in the sceptical mind of man. It has, accordingly, been modified in various ways by some persons, and boldly rejected by others. To establish, therefore, an ordinance, in the obvious aspect, and consistent import of which, the doctrine of strictly supernatural grace should ever have a divine attestation, was to perpetuate this most important point of faith in the surest and most practical manner. It provided for the close and candid Christian reasoner, imperishable premises, leading to the most certain conclusions; and

it afforded, to the simply devout, an instruction, through the senses to the mind, which would teach deeper things than language could convey ; and make an impression on the inmost feelings, of which their indistinct apprehension would neither abate the awfulness, nor substantially prevent the utility.

It is, on the contrary, to be remarked, that where the notion of the Lord's Supper has been such as to exclude the instrumental efficacy of the sacramental symbols, the ordinance itself has appeared to lose its interest and attractiveness. Of this fact we have decisive evidence, in a complaint made by the pious Doddridge, in one of his sermons to young persons, wherein he invites religious youth to early communion. "I have frequently found," he says, "and I believe it has been the experience of many of my brethren in the ministry, that young persons, not only of a very sober and regular conduct, but even those who have appeared most deeply impressed with the concerns of their souls, and experimentally acquainted, so far as we can judge, with regenerating grace, have, in many instances, shewn a strange coldness to this blessed institution; and we have known not a few, who have grown old in the neglect of it!" But whence this in-

difference, which the worthy Doddridge so candidly acknowledges, and so sincerely laments? Did it not arise from his and his brethren's view of the Lord's Supper, as a mere commemorative and covenanting transaction, in which grace was to be, as in other religious ordinances, exercised and improved, but no special communication of heavenly influence to be expected? Had the Eucharist been regarded as a divinely instituted conduit of supernatural grace, directly from its fountain, could such persons as Doddridge describes have been remiss in their attendance? In that case, would not their love and value of the Lord's Supper be in exact proportion to their love and value of religion itself? But whenever the strictly supernatural influence of the Eucharist is overlooked, or unacknowledged, (and such will naturally, if not necessarily, be the consequence of rejecting the mysterious designation of the symbols), attention to this Christian ordinance will be little more than gratuitous; a natural effect, perhaps, of Christian ardour, because it is matter of divine injunction. but not a necessary result of Christian sincerity. It is, in this view of it, merely a positive law of Christianity, acting exclusively upon the feelings of fear, of duty, or of gratitude. Contemplated

as the actual vehicle of Christ's own ineffable influences to the capable receiver, it becomes a matter of intrinsic interest; to neglect which, would be to neglect both present and everlasting salvation.

Besides, the sacred Eucharist, when thus conceived, becomes not only more attractive to the upright Christian, but also much more consolatory. When this holy ordinance is supposed to rise above the other means of grace, not by any appropriate influence of omnipotent power, but only by its more direct reference to the mercy and goodness of the dying Redeemer, the Christian, in partaking of it, can expect benefit in proportion only to the actual state of his devotional feelings. Let his confidence in the promised grace of Christ be ever so sincere, his hope of a fresh communication will rise or fall, with the conscious ardour, or the conscious coldness, of his affections. But these not being at human command, and seldom or never moving in exact proportion to the settled purposes of the heart, the consequence, on the whole, will naturally be, that when animating influences are most needed, they will be least expected. Whereas, if there be a persuasion, that divine grace is communicated in and through the

Sacrament, by a special exercise of divine power, it will follow that, not an inability to co-operate, but solely an incapacity to receive, will obstruct the communication.*

The importance of this distinction, I humbly conceive, will be felt by every one who has religiously inspected himself. In efforts of the heart to rise towards God, *to will* may be most sincerely present with us, when how to perform that which is good we find not. Even in an advanced stage of piety, there may be least power of mental exertion, when its sensible necessity is greatest: for instance, under infirmity of body or mind; or when some distressing event has caused what St. Peter calls

* It is not possible within such narrow limits as I have prescribed to myself, to guard the thought expressed in this paragraph, against the danger of misapprehension. To answer this purpose, I must have gone into something like digression, which would have perplexed the thread of my discourse. I will, therefore, merely observe, that I proceed upon a principle of the Catholic Church, rested in by the Revisers of our Liturgy in 1661, when conferring, previously, with the Non-conformist Divines, — namely, that “God’s sacraments have their effects, where the receiver doth not, *ponere obicem*, put any bar against them.”—Account of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of both Persuasions, &c. p. 99.

“ heaviness, through manifold temptations.” How comfortable, then, amid this “ weakness of our mortal nature,” to reflect, not only that God *can* internally aid and strengthen us by his own secret influences, independently of our active co-operation, but that he has assured us of this unspeakable blessing by such a permanent pledge and means of its accomplishment, as, by its very character and nature, supersedes all co-operation, and requires solely the faculty of reception. If only we are athirst, we have here a fountain of life to which we may indeed come without money, and without price; and which comes to us without any diluting intermixture, as immediately flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

But this view of the Lord's Supper not only ministers to encouragement, where encouragement is wanting, but it also serves to repress all spiritual pride, and undue self-gratulation. It is observable, that those sincere maintainers of God's effectual grace, who do not regard the Eucharist as the actual conduit of its conveyance, deem it necessary to guard the supposed possessors of that grace against robbing God of his honour by ascribing to themselves what they

owe to his bounty. And there can be no doubt, that such a false reckoning is much more than incidental, where the view is directed only to those means of grace, in which the human faculties so co-operate, as to make it impossible to draw a distinct line between what supervenient grace does in the transaction, and what man does for himself. But wherever the Eucharist is considered as the appropriate vehicle of the animating and strengthening grace of Christ to man, such cautions as those adverted to will hardly be requisite.

He who clearly and confidently expects to receive in "the cup of blessing which is blessed, the communion of Christ's blood," and in "the bread which is broken, the communion of Christ's body," will naturally and necessarily depreciate all that he could do for himself, in comparison with that transcendent communication. In the sublime simplicity of the eucharistic institution, the humble expectant of heavenly blessing is abstracted from all human agency of others, or of himself. The solemn words used from the earliest times in both the eastern and western churches, and, through the distinguishing providence of God, preserved in our own, "*Sursum corda,*" and the reply of the faithful, "*Habemus*

ad Dominum,"* speak the one common feeling, infallibly excited, by "discerning the Lord's body" in the consecrated symbols; and, by consequence, looking for the blessing exclusively from Him who makes those elements "the hiding of his power."† The mind, thus impressed, will feel no tendency to ascribe to itself the benefits it may have received. If spiritual life be consciously felt to gain strength and ascendancy, the fixed belief of a sacramental conveyance of that life, will, at once, increase the feeling of delight and of humility;—of delight, because the influences thus communicated are so purely from the Godhead itself, as to imply a real commencement, as well as certain pledge of everlasting beatitude;—of humility, because the direct and unmixed apprehension of the divine power and presence, which the discernment of the Lord's body in the symbols must imply, cannot but impress upon the mind of man such a sense of his own comparative baseness and nothingness, and inspire such an habitual and deep sobriety, as could not be conceived equally producible through any other existing means in this lower world.

* "Lift up your hearts! R. We lift them up unto the Lord."

† Habakkuk, iii. 4.

And as the lowliness thus infused is of the same nature with that of angels, and has in it no tendency to superstitious weakness, so the satisfaction which is enjoyed has no relation to enthusiastic illusion. This latter is always the offspring of a supposed distinguishing communication from God; a peculiar afflatus, as it is imagined, by the mere will of the Spirit; and not subject to be controlled, even by the clearest rules of Scripture. But however elevating the idea of the eucharistic intercourse with God, the mind is hereby raised to no giddy height; the elevation which must be experienced under a full apprehension of this divine provision, is as sober as it is sublime. The vouchsafement is neither personal nor partial, but extended to every capable member of the Christian Church; the apparatus is such, as to act neither on the sensitive nor the passionate feelings, but solely on the purest perceptions of the mind, and the soundest sensibilities of the heart: and the adorable agency itself has nothing in it akin to the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire; but, in this instance, operates as in the great economy of visible nature; with the same silence, as in causing the earth to vegetate, or the planets to move in their orbits through the heavens. Need

it then be said, that the glare of the meteor does not differ more from the light of the sun, than the transports of the enthusiast differ from those exalted apprehensions which deep views of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must naturally both awaken and sustain in every devout mind and heart?

I have already adverted to the mysterious communication which the Eucharist imparts, being a pledge of the same divine presence in and with the Christian Church, as the Jewish Church had enjoyed in the inner sanctuary of its Temple. But, on this particular point I must beg leave to offer a few additional observations.

I observed, that such a communication of divine influence as could be effected only by the omnipotent power of our Redeemer, must also, of necessity, imply his special and extraordinary presence; and I inferred, that the Apostles and their brethren would thus feel themselves amply compensated for that noblest of all Jewish privileges, the special residence of Jehovah in the midst of his people; inasmuch as in the eucharistic institution, estimated as our Lord himself had taught them, their mental eye would recognise a Shechinah as real as that which had

taken possession of the Holy of Holies at the dedication of the Temple built by Solomon.

To illustrate the importance of this particular consideration, may it not be remarked, that though the omnipresence of God is a most awful and momentous truth; yet, even in the best-disposed minds, the sense, merely, of this presence, however it must excite philosophical reverence, would scarcely awaken filial affection? Then only can we contemplate God as our father, when we have assurance that he regards us as his children; and that we are, distinctly and individually, within the gracious notice, under the direct influence, of our Almighty parent.

The patriarchs of old were, doubtless, firm in their belief of the divine omnipresence.* But

* The degree and manner in which pious persons, under the Jewish dispensation, were impressed with the divine omnipresence, is admirably exemplified in the 139th Psalm. But the question is, Could that great truth have been either so practically felt, or so magnificently descanted on, except where the established fact of a special presence gave it animation and sustenance?

The prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings, viii.) also contains as sublime a recognition of the Divine omnipresence, as could be expressed in words (v. 27); and yet every subsequent portion of that noble

this alone would scarcely have supported them, when they "went forth, not knowing whither they went." Their supreme consolation arose from the persuasion, that the eye of God was especially upon them, and the hand of God directly and effectively with them; to which happy confidence they had been raised, by such manifestations of his special presence, repeatedly made to them, as were, at the time, a matter of unutterable comfort, and left behind them a "home-felt delight," and "sober certainty," which no earthly circumstances were sufficient to destroy.

In those instances, the awe of infinite Deity was necessarily felt; but this naturally overwhelming sentiment was softened into unutterable peace and joy by such undelusive demonstrations of the Friend and the Father. Hence, the very places where those manifestations had been made became dear to the patriarchs. To those memorable scenes they loved to return,

piece of devotional eloquence, gives evidence of the confidence and consolation which the devout king derived from the anticipation of a *specially present* God, who *thus*, in boundless mercy, adapted his infinitude to the apprehensions and affections of his limited and dependent creatures.

that they might there offer up their homage with excited recollection, deeper gratitude, and more sensible consolation.

The care which was taken to continue, to the posterity of the patriarchs, the same substantial demonstration of a specially present God, has been already dwelt upon; and nothing additional need be said, to shew that this exercise of divine condescension was carried to its utmost height, in the incarnation of the Eternal Word; all former tokens or evidences of the special presence of Jehovah, being, in comparison with the actual advent of Emmanuel, God with us, but preparatives and prelibations.

Taking, then, this long-continued, and, at length, consummated condescension of God to that nature which he had given to man, into our consideration, and keeping in view the entire sameness of human nature, under the Christian, as under the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations; can we imagine, that, when the Godhead had come nearest, and had most intimately familiarised itself with man, all substantive intercourse with our Emmanuel was thenceforward to cease; and that the highest dispensation should wholly want that natural satisfaction with which lower dispensations had been so signally fa-

voured, and which, while man possessed the same organisation of spirit, soul, and body, could never cease to be panted after, and virtually demanded?

That the Incarnate Word, after finishing the work of his humiliation, should no longer manifest himself to the external senses, was declared by himself to be expedient, as requisite to that spiritual course in which his disciples were, from that time, to proceed. But it was essential to this very design, that they should consider him as withdrawn from their bodily senses only; and that, as far as their exigencies required, he would still be as really present with them as in the days of his flesh.

But, to establish this assurance, some divine pledge was indispensable. Without some token, by which his special approach to them should be notified, and on their recurrence to which they might confide that he would be invisibly present with them, to aid and bless them, as effectually as if they saw him in the midst of them,—without such a provision, I say, the Christian dispensation would have had no adequate security against such vagueness of apprehension, and coldness of affection, as would have sunk it far below the level of Jewish devotion. The mind

of Christians, in that case, could have rationally contemplated only the divine *omnipresence*; and the piety of the intelligent and sober-minded could have been little better than a more definite and more firmly grounded natural religion. For those who had more reason than affection, such a system might have sufficed. But, if we may say it with due reverence, however the diffusive rays of Deity may not only afford light, but excite a degree of warmth in the spiritual, like those of the sun in the material world; still, in the one case, as in the other, it is not diffusion of rays, but the concentration of them, which produces a melting ardour.

That the apprehension merely of divine omnipresence should not be adequate to the mental exigencies of man, is the less to be doubted, as it would seem to be insufficient for maintaining the devotion even of higher intelligences. We read in the book of Job, that there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; and that there was another day when they did the same. Intimations of a like kind are numerous in the Old Testament; and if we attend to what is said in the Apocalypse, we shall find them still more abundant in the New. Doubtless, we can know but little

of these heavenly mysteries: still, the uniform fact of a special presence, in the invisible world, is indisputable; and would it not seem to be almost a self-evident truth, that finite minds, however exalted, can apprehend the Godhead with a satisfaction proportioned to their nature, only by means of a definite manifestation?

That this exigence is increased in man by his terrestrial nature, needs no proof: it is obvious that, in this world, the entire movement of things is adapted to that nature; and thus, our innate tendencies, and our external circumstances, unite to limit and modify our mental action, be the object of that action ever so exalted.

Accordingly, if we examine ourselves, we shall perceive, that, in whatever concerns us, we require definite matter of fact, on which to repose our minds, as much as we need some solid substance to support our bodies. It is of no essential moment through what species of evidence the matter of fact is notified to us, if only the notification have clear marks of authenticity. Hence, in human affairs, there is always more or less exercise of what may fairly be called faith; but always on an understood, or supposed ground of unequivocal reality.

That the various evidences of our divine religion, and particularly the Holy Scriptures, are most wisely and graciously adapted to these habits of the human mind, is indisputable. But whether the utmost plenitude of recorded testimony would meet all our mental exigencies, either as finite or as animalised beings, appears a matter of much less easy determination. It would rather seem, that to consult fully for our finite, and still more for our terrestrial nature, in addition to all other provisions, there would be need of some impressive and demonstrative pledge and token of the continued direct intercourse of the all-gracious Being with his human servants. Such a pledge and token would completely meet the demand of human nature for matter-of-fact assurance. And if the expediency of supplying that demand could not otherwise be proved, it might be inferred from what has been already adverted to; I mean, the striking tendency of those by whom the notion of any such pledge and token is rejected, either to think illusively of the direct intercourse of God with the human spirit, or else utterly to deny its reality.

But, in following the light of our Redeemer, and the guidance of his Apostle, do we not find,

in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, just such a pledge and token of the special presence and real influence of our God and Saviour, as at once meets the demand of our nature, and suits the high aim and intellectual spirit of the Christian dispensation? That life of faith, by which, as Christians, we gradually rise on the moral scale, would have been counteracted, had any impression been made on the senses; whereas, the absence of every such impression preserves, from delusive mixture, the moral evidence of reality; and fits the mind for the most sober perception of its practical influence. The great point, to which every circumstance in the institution bears witness, is, that the cup of blessing which is blessed, is the communion of the Lord's blood, and that the bread which is broken, is the communion of his body. But reason must pronounce, that earthly elements can serve so high and holy a purpose, only as instruments of the divine power; and in such an exercise of the divine power, the special presence of the Almighty agent, according to all our habits of thinking, is necessarily implied. In yielding to the force of St. Paul's first position, we are directly led to this impressive conclusion. And its unutterable

weight and interest must concur, with the infinite value of the communicated blessing, to deepen the effect upon every human feeling.

In this view, as often as we approach the table of the Lord we may account ourselves to have admission, in a manner beyond human conception, into the presence-chamber of the King Messiah. Under the full sense of this Christian privilege, we shall not need a Bethel, a Peniel, the Jewish Sanctuary, or even its Holy of Holies. In contemplating, with St. Paul, the mystery of the Eucharist, the Christian cannot but see, that in this sacred ordinance, especially and most eminently, "a new and living way" is opened for him (far above what was granted even to the Jewish high-priest), to "enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus."

Is it, then, too much to say, that the Eucharist, thus apprehended, makes the richest provision, which we could conceive to be made by any stated means in this lower world, for our spiritual sustenance and comfort? While, as a pledge and token of divine presence and influence, its authenticity never can be impaired,—its significance, to close and sober attention, never obscured,—its invisible mystery will be as wonderful, as impressive, and as inestimable, in its latest, as in its

earliest, celebration. The communion of the Lord's blood, and the communion of the Lord's body, must have, as terms, the same profound import,—as blessings, the same infinite value, yesterday, to day, and for ever. Let not, therefore, the simplicity of what is visible to our bodily sight, veil from our mental eye those invisible realities which are to us so consolatory, and in themselves so glorious. On the contrary, let us recognise the same spirit of meek majesty which veiled its transcendent brightness in the mystery of the incarnation, as still continuing the like gracious condescension in the mystery of the Eucharist; and let us joyfully and reverently approach to do homage to our King, who, in this his own peculiar institution, comes to diffuse benediction in his mystical Zion, with the same apparent lowliness as when, in conformity with the divine prediction, he entered his literal Jerusalem, “sitting upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”

I might now proceed, in the way of contrast, to remark more particularly on those views of the Lord's Supper which stand opposed to the explanation attempted in these pages. I might possibly shew, that, by rejecting the mysterious instrumentality of the symbols, and thereby re-

ducing the sacrament itself, externally, to a mere ceremony, and internally, to an act of common Christian devotion, besides the liberty thus taken with Holy Scripture, the eucharistic celebration at once loses all its proportioned hold (proportioned, I mean, to its high origin) on the natural reason as well as on the natural feelings, of man. But these would be, in some sort, controversial topics; and I trust the grounds on which the claims of the sacred Eucharist have been shewn to rest, do not need to be defended by such auxiliaries.

I might also pursue still further the line of observation which I have been following. I might speak of that general influence on the whole mass of professing Christians, which might be looked for from the doctrine of St. Paul, respecting the Lord's Supper, being literally received and adequately promulgated. I might shew, that, by this means, those who are yet insensible to the goodness and wisdom of God, manifested in the Gospel, would be obliged to recognise another of his divine attributes, before which the hardest heart must bow,—His almighty power,—as in direct and continued exercise, within the Christian sanctuary; and I might support the justness of this reckoning, by appealing to the

precise purpose for which St. Paul introduced those invaluable declarations, and the manner in which he enforces them. I might dwell upon the indescribable light and warmth, which all the other solemn services of religion would be felt to derive from such a central sphere of Divine presence and operation; and which would even make each hallowed roof to impress him who should come under it, with the feeling of Jacob at Bethel,—“How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!!”

But I forbear. I have said enough for my special purpose; and if it gives satisfaction in the quarter from whence the thought of examining the subject was received, the pleasure I have felt in the employment will be deeply enhanced by such a reward.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE TREATISE ON THE
EUCHARIST.

THERE are two points adverted to in the preceding observations, respecting which, I may be thought to have not sufficiently explained myself.

First, I have expressly intimated a specific difference between the general influences of the Holy Spirit on men's minds and hearts, and those peculiar influences, for the conveyance of which the sacrament of the Eucharist has been specially provided.

For this distinction, I conceive I have the clearest warrant of Holy Scripture. We learn, from both the New and Old Testament, that the influences of the Holy Spirit have been ever attendant on the revealed knowledge of God, with whatever degree of clearness, or fulness, the revelation was made. All true Christians agree, that those influences were always indispensable to the rectifying of man's moral nature; and, under the Jewish dispensation, we find David imploring

this heavenly blessing in as strong terms as if he had learned their necessity in the school of Christianity:—"Take not," said he, "thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and stablish me with thy free spirit." And we are as distinctly told, that the Holy Ghost was upon Simeon and Anna, as it is said, afterwards, of the Apostles themselves. And yet it is no less clearly asserted, that, in a certain peculiar and eminent sense, the Holy Ghost was not given until the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified; evidently implying, that, under the Gospel dispensation, the influences of the Divine Spirit would be so much more excellent and effective than any such influences which, till then, had been afforded, as to make those former operations seem to disappear from view, in comparison with the blessings to be conferred in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

That the communication of the Holy Spirit, to which this high distinction is given, did not consist in those miraculous powers with which, at the first, the special grace of the Gospel was so largely accompanied, is evident on many clear grounds. For example; those extraordinary powers were soon found to be but temporary; but the evangelical communication of the Holy

Spirit was expressly declared perpetual. "Repent," said St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, to the Jews, who were moved by his discourse, "and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This invaluable assurance was implied, even in the first express notification of such a proposed blessing to the Apostles. "I will pray the Father," says our Lord, "and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Nor is the comprehensiveness of this promise made doubtful, by its being addressed personally to the disciples alone, inasmuch as another analogous assurance, which is, in like manner, personally addressed to the Apostles only, must, from its unequivocal extension, be applied to all ages of the Church. "Go," said he, "and disciple all nations, &c.; and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It need scarcely be remarked, that the term "for ever," in the former case, if doubtful in itself, is made indubitable by this latter strictly equivalent, but still more unquestionable, expression.

I forbear to adduce further proof, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, in its high evangelical meaning, is always to be understood in a moral, and not in a miraculous sense, except by making one remark, which is too important to be omitted,—that the peculiar characters of this gift are inapplicable to even the highest possible miraculous powers. For the evangelic gift of the Holy Ghost is declared by St. Paul, to be the earnest of the everlasting inheritance; whereas, miraculous powers were so far from being such an earnest, that our Lord assures us, he will declare at the last day, to many who had possessed those powers, that he never knew them. We are moreover taught by St. Paul, that where the Holy Ghost has been given, the love of God is “shed abroad in the heart;” while the same Apostle elsewhere intimates, that the highest exercise of miraculous powers may be found where that divine affection is wanting.

What then is, in truth, that special gift of the Spirit which is represented as the peculiar distinction, as well as supreme blessing, of the Gospel dispensation? I conceive, that if we attentively examine the New Testament, we shall find abundant and concurrent evidence, that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is there

so emphatically dwelt upon, and so eminently designated, has direct and exclusive reference to the co-operative part, which the third person of the blessed Trinity has been pleased to take with the incarnate Word, in the work of man's spiritual redemption. It is, assuredly, far too profound a subject to be fathomed by our scanty intellect; but that which is written, is written for our instruction; and it is, therefore, no less our duty than our interest, to examine with humility and attention, what has been made known to us on this important point in the word of inspiration.

I conceive, that while the whole three persons of the blessed Trinity are uniformly represented, as taking a like gracious interest in the spiritual redemption of man, the actual accomplishment of the design is more directly referred to the distinct, yet concurrent agency, first, of the eternal Word, and secondly, of the co-eternal Spirit. I do not here enter into the inquiry respecting what preliminary measures might have been judged necessary to harmonise God's condescending goodness to man, with the general government of the intelligent universe. This profound subject, I conceive, is rather intimated than clearly revealed in the sacred volume. Of this, however,

we are sure, that whatever divine wisdom saw expedient, was perfectly accomplished ; and may we not reasonably think it was so accomplished, as to leave to us no other concern, than to secure to ourselves those benefits and blessings, which have been so graciously and so wonderfully provided for us ?

Of those benefits and blessings, the chief one is represented in Holy Scripture to be, the spiritual animation of our souls, by a divinely communicated influence ; of which the eternal Word, made flesh, is uniformly set forth as the directly communicative fountain. This mysterious provision for restoring the diseased nature of man, and replenishing it with the moral health and happiness for which it was created, was expressly promulgated by our Lord himself in his last discourse to his Apostles. Under the semblance of a vine and its branches, he instructed them in the nature of that spiritual union with him, and continual derivation of inward life and strength from him, by which they were to become qualified in this world for everlasting glory in that which was to come. In this last lesson, our Lord resolved into one vitalising principle, all the divine precepts and doctrines which he had delivered throughout his ministry on earth. He

thus taught them the source from whence, alone, they were to receive both the essential elements, and the genuine prelibations, of that immortal life, which he was then so wonderfully bringing to light by his Gospel.

That this leading truth was ever after kept in view by the Apostles, and was continually regarded by them as the very heart-pulse of Christian faith and practice, it would be easy to establish on the authority, not only of numberless passages in the epistolary part of the New Testament, but of the entire doctrinal tenour which harmoniously pervades and combines the whole Christian volume. It is on this account, that our incarnate Saviour is described as the second Adam, who was to be to us the fountain of a spiritual and heavenly nature, as the first Adam has been to us the fountain of an animal and earthly nature; and we are instructed, that, as by the fall of our earthly progenitor, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and thus one man was, to all, the source of corruption and mortality; so by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, a gift of righteousness is given to all who will receive it, which destroys the reign of sin, and is at once the earnest and the principle of a blessed immortality.

Such is the doctrine of St. Paul, in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans ; and in the 6th chapter he proceeds to shew, that, not only is our Lord personally a fountain of grace, but that, in his crucifixion, his death, and his resurrection, he opened, as it were, perennial springs of specific influence, which should ever exercise an assimilating virtue on the minds and hearts which would receive them. This mysterious truth is stated by the Apostle in the strongest terms of which human language is capable : to imbibe those influences, is, as he teaches, to have our old man, or the corrupt nature derived from our first parent, so crucified, that we shall no longer be its servants, or compelled to obey its motions ; and it is to be blessed with such a resurrection of the inner man, from the death of sin to a new life of righteousness, as gives power not only to practise every moral virtue, but also to exercise, by substantial anticipation, the affections of the heavenly state.

There is a depth in this subject which it would require much discourse to explore. But I believe I may confidently assert, that it is the leading subject in the New Testament ; and that, in the epistles of St. Paul, particularly, no portion of any length could be found in which it is not

recognised or referred to, as the one vital principle by which the whole Christian constitution, in its inward and spiritual import, is sustained and animated. It would be easy to adduce examples in support of this remark, but I believe its truth will be obvious to every intelligent and attentive reader.

It must, however, be particularly observed, that in these divine energies and influences of the incarnate Word, the co-operation of the Holy Spirit is so expressly and uniformly stated to bear a part, as to make this a point of Christian faith ever to be kept in view. We are taught to regard the third person of the Trinity, not merely as the Spirit of God, but also as the Spirit of Christ; and to consider our participation of his influence, as the Spirit of Christ, to be the test of our true Christian character; for St. Paul declares, that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He also instructs us, that the filial spirit of Christianity, which constitutes its chief superiority to the dispensation which had preceded, proceeds from the Spirit of the Son of God being sent into our hearts, and raising our affections and our confidence toward God as our Father.

Thus, then, on the whole, are we taught, that the richest treasures of grace and virtue are provided for us, in the adorable person of our incarnate Saviour; and that, not only in virtue of his union with our nature, but of his being crucified, his dying, and his rising again: and that those treasures are communicated to our minds and hearts by the continued agency of the Holy Spirit, who, as it were, passes from the second Adam into all who aspire to a spiritual union with this ineffable source of a new and heavenly life; and makes them, at once, his own temple, and living members of the great head of the Church; to whom he unites them, in a vital, and (if they faithfully concur) a still advancing, and, at length, a beatific incorporation.

That this is a deeply mysterious doctrine, cannot be disputed. But it would seem impossible to read the New Testament with serious and candid attention, without perceiving, that the animating and strengthening influence of God manifest in the flesh, communicated to the inner man through the power of the Holy Ghost, is, in every instance, contemplated as the great blessing of the Gospel, through which, every duty may be performed, every trial sustained,

every want endured, and every seduction of earth purely and perfectly surmounted. This is, in truth, the great object to which the most stupendous exercise of miraculous powers was but subservient; and to make provision for which, the Lord of Glory lived on earth, died and rose again; and having ascended to heaven, sent another Comforter, to abide with his Church for ever.

In what respect, then, most eminently and supremely, was the Holy Ghost to be the Comforter of the Church? Not (as has been already intimated) by his miraculous endowments, inasmuch as these were no pledge of personal salvation; not by revealing things to come, nor even by giving a mouth and wisdom, which adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist: these operations of the Spirit were exerted on the intellectual powers, and had no necessary efficacy on the heart, which alone is the seat of true and solid comfort, as it is, in like manner, the lodging-place of all the worst enemies to our peace.

In what manner, then, can we conceive the Holy Spirit most effectually giving comfort to the heart? Is it not by his taking possession of it, under what we may venture to call His evan-

gelical character; that is, as the Spirit of Christ? Our Lord, in his last discourse, thus declares the high purpose of the divine Spirit's specially promised mission: "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." I scarcely need remark, that the "shewing," of which our Lord speaks, could not mean what was merely speculative; for, by such shewing, our Lord would not have been glorified. His glory is uniformly made to consist in the manifestation of his moral and spiritual influence. The "shewing," therefore, which our Saviour ascribes to the Holy Ghost, can be only an inward and spiritual notification of our Saviour's fulness of grace and truth, to the minds and hearts of his followers; an experimental "shewing;" such as to imply the participation and enjoyment of those mysterious blessings, with which our Lord enriches the faithful subjects of his spiritual kingdom.

As this operation, therefore, of the Holy Spirit, is, self-evidently, the noblest, and the most valuable, which can be conceived in this stage of our existence; so to this must we refer all that is said in the New Testament respecting that gift of the Holy Ghost which was to dis-

tinguish the Gospel dispensation. Whatever else may be included in that gift, or by whatever sensible demonstrations of Omnipotence it was to be verified or signalised, still we must conclude from the whole tenour of the New Testament, that the essence of that divine gift was spiritual and heavenly; and that it was to consist in the accomplishment, through the Spirit of God, in our inner man, of all that had been purposed and provided for in the incarnation and mysterious ministry of the Son of God. Nothing short of this could truly glorify the Redeemer, or constitute the sealing of "the spirit unto the day of redemption;" and thus only could Christians be so strengthened with might by the Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ should (as it were) dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they should be rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Such, then, being the special and peculiar blessing of the Gospel, it might be inferred on general grounds, if even direct evidence were wanting, that the peculiar rite of the Gospel must have a special relation and subserviency to that blessing. But the express designation of the holy Eucharist, by our Lord himself, as his own virtual body and blood, and St. Paul's ap-

peal to the received belief of the Church, that the blessed cup was the communion of the blood of Christ, and that the broken bread was the communion of the body of Christ, established beyond question, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to serve as the external and visible medium through which the disciples of Christ, in all ages, are to expect, through the co-operation of the Eternal Spirit, the divinely vivifying influences of his incarnate person, and the ineffable virtues of his crucifixion and death. The fact being undeniable, that there are, in the evangelic dispensation, such influences, and such virtues, and those influences and virtues being denominated by our Lord himself, his flesh, and his blood, we are obliged by the terms of St. Paul, and by the still stronger terms (if that be possible) of our Lord himself, to identify the internal grace and virtue of the Eucharist, with those quickening, strengthening, and purifying communications which are promised to Christians, as proceeding from the person and death of Christ, through the ever-co-operative agency of the Holy Ghost.

It can scarcely be doubted by any unprejudiced Christian, that the blessed Spirit has ever, in different measures, been imparting his

gracious influences to the minds of men ; and that, in every age and nation, it has been his work and his delight to foster every disposition, and to assist and sustain every honest effort to obey “ the law written in the heart.” In the patriarchal line, and afterward within the Jewish pale, we may conclude that He exerted an agency of a still more definite kind, specifically adapted, and advancingly proportioned, to the fit introduction of the Gospel dispensation. There is, besides, no just ground for supposing, that, even in these Christian times, there may not be much greater room for the exercise of those influences of the Divine Spirit which are inferior and preparatory, than of those influences which belong to the full establishment of Christ’s kingdom in the heart.

The divine influence, for example, which the Catholic Church has always believed to accompany the baptismal washing, where no bar was placed by the moral indisposedness of the subject, must, in infants especially, be regarded as proportioned to an initiatory, and not to a consummating purpose. It would seem, that our Lord’s idea of the merchantman, in the beautiful parable of the pearl, can be realised, only where infant baptism has been followed by a suitable

training in his nurture and discipline. But, even then, the commencing pursuit is that of goodly pearls, and not yet, distinctly and definitely, that of the pearl of great price. The less enlightened pursuit is clearly of that which is good; and therefore it is maintained under his influence from whom "every good gift" proceedeth. What, therefore, the Holy Spirit condescends to effect in that first Christian sacrament, must be considered, not as superseding, but as preparing for, those higher and fuller influences which confer God's most "perfect gift" on earth, and put the mind and heart into actual possession of the "pearl of great price."

Is it not, then, with this highest and fullest communication of divine grace, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been specifically connected by the very words of institution? It could have been no other than that highest and fullest communication of divine grace which our Lord has promised, and so emphatically dwelt upon, in the 6th chapter of St. John. When, therefore, he applies those very terms, which he had declared to be, in the highest degree, significant of spirit and of life, to those sanctified elements which he was pleased to appoint as sacramental symbols; and when he enjoins that

very eating and drinking which, in that discourse, he had pronounced indispensable, to be carried into act in a visible manner, but with such profoundly significant import, in this perpetuated institution, what can we conclude, but that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is eminently, and in a way of peculiar appropriation, the visible conduit, through which, by the invisible operation of Him who appointed it, is conveyed that special evangelical grace with which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have, conjointly, distinguished and blessed the Christian dispensation?

I rest in this conclusion with the greater confidence, inasmuch as it is in this light that the Church of England has regarded the eucharistic institution. It would be hardly possible to convey the notion which I have wished to express, more strictly, more fully, or more profoundly, than in those words in which our Church describes the benefit of worthily receiving the Lord's Supper. "Then," it says, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then, we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

The first thing remarkable in this passage is, the direct reference which is made to our Lord's

words in the 6th of St. John ; in the form of an express declaration, that the eating and drinking, there spoken of, are verified in the worthy reception of the eucharistic symbols. So far, therefore, as our Lord in that discourse described the highest and most appropriate benefit and blessing conferred through his incarnation, the sacramental bread and wine are, in the judgment of the Church of England, the vehicles through which that benefit and blessing is conveyed to qualified receivers.

But our Church does not only propound this holy mystery ; she proceeds to evince its reality and importance by declaring its results. " Then," she says, " we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

It would seem, indeed, that the three members of this sentence stand together in a graduated order. Spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood, is the effectual means of blessing ; to dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, is the substance of that blessing ; and to be one with Christ, and Christ with us, is its consummation and perfection. We are thus materially aided in ascertaining the import of the first position ; which must of necessity have been deemed such, as to warrant the second and

third. Let us consider, then, what that eating of Christ's flesh, and drinking of his blood, in and through the eucharistic symbols (with which our Church, strictly following our Lord's words of institution, combines the heavenly blessing), must be, in order to such real and divinely substantial results. Let us weigh the expressions by the strictest rule of verbal appreciation; and shall we find it possible to apply any other than the deepest and most practical meaning to our "dwelling in Christ, and Christ's dwelling in us?" It can amount to nothing less, than that we are made habitual possessors of that supernatural grace with the sufficiency of which St. Paul was comforted under his most afflicting infirmity of animal nature; and the divinity of which evinced itself, by the contrast of the strength which it infused, with the conscious weakness of the receiver.

Nothing less than this, I say, can be implied in those significant words; and if they comprehended nothing more, it would be impossible to reduce the benefit which they describe, to any unsubstantial generality. If we dwell in Christ, we must have some conscious evidence of our high and holy resting place; and our minds and hearts must rationally and satisfactorily feel, that

they are no longer captives to the world, the flesh, or the devil. To dwell in Christ, is to possess an effectual refuge from the strength of every possible temptation, and to have an un-failing resource in every trial, during our earthly pilgrimage, to which our mortal nature remains exposed. If we dwell in Christ, we no longer live in sin; we no longer cleave to the world; we are no longer the helpless victims of earthly vicissitudes; but amongst the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts are surely there fixed, where true joys are to be found. "In the world," said our Lord to his Apostles, "ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace." To dwell in Christ, therefore, is to enjoy this peace; the peace of a mind no longer distracted by unruly passions, no longer led astray by foolish and hurtful lusts; but preserved from inward, as well as outward deviations, by its adherence to its centre of rest and safety; and kept, as in a fortress, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

To have Christ dwelling in us, though necessarily consequent on our dwelling in Him, implies something still more excellent and happy. Our dwelling in Christ includes all that belongs to spiritual liberty and security. It is the per-

fect verification of what the Psalmist has declared: "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." But to have Christ dwelling in us, is to be made spiritually rich, as well as spiritually secure. He dwells in us only so far as he inspires us with the mind and tempers, the virtues and graces, of which He himself is the infinite fountain. "We saw his glory," says St. John, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" "and of his fulness have all we received, even grace for grace;" each particular grace which was in Him being specifically infused into the members of his mystical body. It is, then, by the infusion of this fulness, that Christ is said, in the New Testament, to dwell in his faithful disciples. This is that spiritual mystery, the riches of the glory of which, St. Paul was divinely commissioned to make known among the Gentiles; for nothing less than this would verify his sublime definition of it: "which is," says he, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

I am well aware, that I am giving to the language of our Church a far deeper sense than it may have been the common custom to apply

to it; but I believe that it is only from want of adequate consideration, that its weighty meaning could have been overlooked. It could not have been the intention of the Church, on any occasion, and least of all in this most solemn ordinance, to use vague or rhetorical expressions. It was doubtless, now eminently, her purpose, to "speak as the oracles of God;" and while she does not hesitate to place before her children the highest and holiest "things pertaining to the kingdom" of our Lord, she employs terms, which the entire tenour of the New Testament at once sanctions and explains. There is no support or resource which the Gospel, holds out to us, which is not included in our dwelling in Christ; there is no height of moral and spiritual excellence, to which it invites our aspiring, which is not comprehended in Christ's dwelling in us. But these blessings and graces, when most real and genuine, still admit of advancement; and that advancement being described by St. Paul, as the "growing up unto Him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ," our Church has terminated its statement of eucharistic blessings, in our being "one with Christ, and Christ with us."

Did these words stand alone, they would,

even then, scarcely admit of any other than an inward and spiritual meaning; but, as coming after, and connected with, those which precede them, that sense is indispensable. It must, moreover, be observed, that in these specific declarations of sacramental results, our Church repeats only, in substance, what had been pronounced by our Redeemer. "He," said Christ, "that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" and he immediately adds that still stronger and deeper declaration, which clearly suggested, and no less clearly supports, the third position: "We are one with Christ, and Christ with us." For such must be, indeed, our happy condition, when these words are fulfilled in us: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." To live spiritually by Christ, is, in the most important sense, to be one with him; we must therefore conclude, that in stating our unity with Christ, to be, as it were, the crowning result of a right reception of Christ in the eucharistic ordinance, our Church means, by this scriptural term, to designate, not only the reality, but the maturity of an inward and spiritual life, through that union with him, which he himself has illus-

trated, by that of the branches of a vine with the main stem, by which they are sustained and nourished.

That it is the maturity of the spiritual life which those last words of the passage are meant to express, appears from this consideration; that nothing more exalted is conceivable than the notion which is here conveyed. It is for some great and glorious purpose, that Christ would bless us with that mysterious intercommunication, which He has described, as our dwelling in him, and his dwelling in us. And no imaginable result of this divine vouchsafement could be either more glorious, or more natural, than our inner man being so imbued with the influences of incarnate Godhead, as to make us, in every movement of heart and life, of the same mind and spirit with our Divine Head. On the other hand, can any thing short of such an assimilation, realise our being one with him, and his being one with us, as a consequence of our dwelling in him, and his dwelling in us? The self-evident interiority of this antecedent blessing, obliges us to understand the consequent blessing in a like interior sense. And so understood, it presents to us a consummation of the evangelic process, which, doubtless, in itself, admits of still

higher and higher degrees of advancement; but beyond which, as to kind and nature, nothing of greater excellence can be conceived.

In fact, there is not a single high attainment of St. Paul himself, except those of a miraculous kind, which is not comprehended, in such union with the Divine Redeemer, as is here made to flow from right reception of the Eucharist. When that Apostle declares, that he was crucified with Christ, and that it was not he who lived, but Christ who lived within him; and when he elsewhere says, that, in every thing, and in all things, he was instructed (as his own Greek word, with singular significancy, imports, by an advancement, or initiation, into the inner mysteries of the Gospel,*) both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer want; in a word, to be able to do all things, through internal strength from his Redeemer;† he evidently does nothing more than exemplify, in instances the most exalted, and yet the most appropriate, his being “one with Christ, and Christ with him.”

In the remarkable passage, therefore, which has been adduced, and particularly in its con-

* Ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι μεύμηναι. Phil. iv. 12.

† Πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ. Phil. iv. 13.

cluding sentence, our Church not only declares her deep and comprehensive sense of the eucharistical blessing, but she also teaches all her children the high estimate which they are to make of their Christian vocation. She thus instructs them, that there is an invisible Christianity, to which their visible Christianity is merely subservient and instrumental; and that that invisible Christianity is strictly and perfectly what it was in the time of the Apostles, and even in the Apostles themselves; that it is that kingdom of heaven, which our Lord declares to be *within the soul*, and which St. Paul describes as righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, inconsistent and vain for any professed disciple of our Church, to plead for a formal, cold, and ineffective Christianity. This single passage confutes, and ought to silence, every such false brother. The verification of this one statement of internal beatitude, would not only raise the soul, infallibly, above the storms and tempests of this lower world, but would imply an anticipation of Paradise, a solid and undelusive commencement of the very heaven of heavens in the mind and heart.

For, be it well observed, that these expressions of our Church, interpreted, as they alone can be,

by the numerous passages which correspond to them in the New Testament, will be found to convey no intimation of any thing rapturous or visionary. A warm imagination, and want of wise guidance, have, doubtless, too often betrayed intentionally devout persons into passionate elevations of mind, and supposed unions with their Saviour, in which assurances seemed to be given them of divine favour and everlasting safety; though in a way as unintelligible to all others, as, it may be feared, it was hazardous to themselves. But our Church so raises the Christian ardour of her children, as by their very elevation to ensure their sobriety. The blessings which she places before them, are exclusively of a moral nature. It is in this way, only, that the scriptural expressions, of our dwelling in Christ, and of Christ's dwelling in us, of our being one with Christ, and Christ with us, are used in those divine oracles from whence they are taken. They who examine the New Testament attentively and candidly, must discover that an union with the incarnate Word, in spirit and temper, in heart and mind, is the glorious result to which all the beams of evangelical light converge, and in which they terminate: and it will equally be seen, in every part of our invaluable formulary, that the Church

of England has adhered to this divine guidance. Every aspiration which she excites, every exercise of mind in which she engages us, every depth of feeling which she aims at producing, every height of spiritual beatitude to which she invites and urges us, all is divinely moral. It is a moral faith in Christ, which, in her view, is our only path to safety and happiness; it is a moral love of God, which she deems the essence of our spiritual life; it is a moral maturity, the bringing forth, "the fruits of the Spirit," in which she places its present consummation. The result she thus looks for, the prize which she thus proposes, is, at once, the most sober and the most sublime: so sober, as to leave no room for the slightest mixture of visionary delusion; yet so sublime, as to evince to the mind and heart of the possessor, that the moral powers, the moral affections, and the moral enjoyments, which have grown up within him, are no more the effect of his own mere exertions, than the flowing of his blood is the effect of his continued volition.

While, therefore, the Church of England suggests no subject of solicitude, and proposes no object of pursuit, but such as are essentially moral—(all her divine philosophy being ultimately resolvable into that one brief, but most

comprehensive oracle : “ Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God ”) * she no less earnestly teaches, that, from the first to the last step of our Christian course, we can accomplish nothing effectually by our own power, but must obtain both the implantation and the increase of every pure principle, of every right temper, and of every spiritual affection, from the grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, infused into us by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The height of beatific purity and virtue, then, to which, as Christians, we are called to rise, and the influences from above, by which alone we can thus, by anticipation, dwell in God’s tabernacle, and rest upon his holy hill, are the two grand points to which all the devotional forms of our Church are directed. Concluding the *matter* of our true happiness to consist in a virtual, but vital commencement of our future heaven, and the indispensable means of that happiness not less

* Genuine disciples of the Church of England have expressed their strong persuasion, that this beatitude is not confined to heaven. “ If,” says the excellent Townson, “ the pure in heart have a promise, as of a congenial reward, that they shall hereafter see God, we may believe, that, in such measure as their hearts are pure, they will have a capacity for some anticipation of this blessed vision here on earth.” The sublimity of this thought is equalled only by its sobriety.

to consist in a really divine communication, our Church aims at forming us to such habits and feelings of devotion, as must imply a constant commerce of the heart with heaven, and a gradual approximation to its purity, its serenity, and its happiness, through fresh and fuller infusion of that eternal life, which God has given us in his Son.

Such, I say, is the uniform import and design of all our established services. Their object is to raise us to every thing for which we were created, which can make us well pleasing to God, acceptable to men, and happy in ourselves; substantially happy, even while in the body, with the assurance of unalloyed and consummate happiness hereafter. And for this exalted purpose, while every possible degree of fidelity and vigilance is to be exercised on our part, we are continually taught to look upward, and expect all increase of wisdom, fortitude, or virtue, from the boundless provision made for us in the mystery of redemption. Of this mystery, then, the Church considers the sacrament of the Eucharist, not only to be expressly and profoundly significant, but to constitute, in some sort, an instrumental organ. That grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which alone we can live, much more grow up and advance as Christians, is, according to our Church, eminently and pecu-

liarily conveyed to us, in and through this visible ordinance. As it is that special and appropriate grace of the Gospel, which she always has in view, that grace which raises every living member of Christ's kingdom above even Christ's distinguished forerunner; so is it this crowning blessing of the Gospel, this concentration of all its lights, and verification of its most precious promises, which she unites, indissolubly, with the right reception of the eucharistic symbols; "for then," says she, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

That our Church is supported by Holy Scripture, in this high estimate of the Eucharist, has already, I trust, been sufficiently shewn; nor need I again remark, that if nothing else but the appeal of St. Paul to the universal belief of the Christian church, could be added to our Lord's words, in the 6th chapter of St. John, an indisputable ground would be established for the view which our Church has thus solemnly, yet most simply, placed before us.

It may be right, however, to observe, that the fulness of blessing, which, in those comprehensive words, we are encouraged to expect, cannot

be understood as the result of a single reception of the Eucharist, be the disposition of the receiver ever so sincere and upright. It is, indeed, to be believed, that in every such instance, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood;" that is, we receive in this ordinance a measure, less or more, according to the divine adjustments, of that ineffable influence which it is appointed to convey. But the expressions of our dwelling in Christ, and Christ dwelling in us; still more, of our being one with Christ, and Christ with us, are evidently not an amplification of what is in the first sentence, but are descriptive of its invaluable results; and that, too, as I have endeavoured to shew, in terms so significant of advancement and consummation, as to comprehend the utmost heights of virtue and happiness, which a Christian can reach on this side of heaven. Besides, it is obvious, that, while the first of the three positions states a specific and definite act of the qualified communicant, including in it an equally definite, though, by us, inconceivable operation of divine goodness and power, the second and third positions no less clearly convey the idea of habitual and settled attainments; and such attainments, as must, severally, within themselves, imply different de-

grees of completeness and confirmation. It is true the Church does not stop, on that solemn occasion, to explain her sense of the scriptural language which she employs. Had she done so, she would inevitably have weakened its force, and, consequently, lessened its impressiveness. She left her meaning to be found in the tenour of those passages of the New Testament from which she derived the terms in which she speaks; and to be deduced from the very nature of the institution; I mean, from its being a rite not to be administered once only, like baptism, to each individual Christian, but, on the contrary, to be recurred to repeatedly, and continually, to the close of our pilgrimage on earth. This feature in the Eucharist, declares it to be intended for continued and increasing benefit; I say, increasing benefit, both because each right reception must add something to the character of the receiver, and, also, because that general rule must hold good in this particular instance: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." In order, therefore, to do adequate justice to the obvious purpose of this sacred ordinance, it was necessary to declare, not only its commencing, but its progressive, and, at length, consummate conduciveness to our spiritual

redemption. This our Church has accordingly attended to; and in the fewest, but most deeply weighed, and exquisitely applied words, she at once teaches the depth of blessing which has been, as it were, deposited for us in the sacred Eucharist, and the height of spiritual advancement and Christian maturity to which we may arrive by rightly availing ourselves of that wonderfully gracious provision. In a word, it is here placed in its justest light, and manifested in its full extent; so as to appear a true and perfect antitype of that mysterious ladder, which Jacob saw in his vision at Bethel, whose foot indeed was on the earth, but whose top reached to heaven.

I have thus endeavoured to explain the peculiar influences of divine grace which distinguish the Christian dispensation; and of which the Christian ordinance of the Eucharist appears designed, by its divine Author, to be the chief instrumental conduit. If, in this attempt, I have particularly dwelt on the view of this important subject which is given by the Church of England, it is because I was convinced I could in no other way so fully elucidate the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and the established sense of the ancient Catholic Church.

Another point, which may possibly need fur-

ther explanation, is, the peculiar comfort and confidence which I have supposed to arise from the thought, that, in the sacred Eucharist, we do not concur, as workers together with God ; but expect the blessing, directly and exclusively, from his own Almighty power.

This distinction of the Eucharist from all other means of grace (except the initiatory sacrament of baptism), I have already shewn to follow as a necessary result, from the actual instrumentality of the sacramental symbols. This mysterious fact being once allowed, we forthwith conceive the notion of a strictly divine and supernatural operation ; inasmuch as nothing but the divine power itself could convey spiritual virtue through such intrinsically weak instruments. We are thus led to feel, that the unseen agency is not only truly, but unmixedly divine ; and that, by consequence, it works its purpose, not on a co-operative, but on a passive subject ; I do not mean passive as to desire, or as to sincere endeavours to expel whatever might disqualify for so sacred a vouchsafement, but passive in the actual matter of reception ; in like manner as the Apostles were passive, when our Saviour breathed on them, and said, “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

I cannot but think, then, that, in the assured

prospect of a divine influence so directly and simply from God himself, there is matter of consolation, and motive for confidence, beyond what it would be reasonable to feel in any other act or exercise of devotion. Where we ourselves are to use exertion, in order to attain an end, we may very honestly endeavour to look beyond, and above, our own working, to the source of every good, as well as of every perfect gift. But those efforts will, probably, be much more sincere than successful; and the conscious weakness or languor of the meditating, or supplicating mind, will, in spite of every endeavour to the contrary, proportionally lessen the sense of benefit, and even the hope of a divine blessing. It is impossible to avoid this way of reckoning, in any act which is, in its nature, contributory to the wished-for purpose; and notwithstanding we expect the blessing to come from Him, "in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning," we cannot but apprehend, that the mental clouds and vapours, which we are unable to dispel, as well as the imperfect husbandry, which we feel we are exercising, may defraud us of our promised share in the quickening and maturing beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Such occasional hinderances to devotional

comfort, are not wholly to be surmounted by the deepest sincerity, nor even by a considerable growth in grace. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master; and if even the pure and holy mind of our Redeemer was so depressed by a preternatural disturbance of his animal frame, that it was necessary for an angel from heaven to afford him a proportioned supernatural assistance, it cannot be expected but that, even in the most advanced state of the Christian life, the mind should sometimes feel its own co-operation with God to be so feeble and inadequate, as to inspire an anxious wish that He would be pleased to infuse grace and strength into it, independently of its own exertions; and, directly and simply, work in it, of his own good pleasure, both to will and to do.

To this natural and inextinguishable appetite of the devout mind, nothing could more strictly or more perfectly correspond, than the institution of the Eucharist, as designated by our Redeemer, and explained by his Apostle. To that Apostle, in an hour of deep anxiety, on account of some oppressive infirmity in his animal frame, his divine Master gave this appropriate consolation, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." A more cheering

or animating assurance could not have been given than that contained in these words; and especially in the latter clause of the sentence; which, I conceive, contains in it that very notion of divine aid and blessing, which is so peculiarly needed to help our infirmity, and is so signally provided for, in a sacred ordinance, wherein, as I have endeavoured to shew, the nature of the means evinces the direct and exclusive agency of Omnipotence.

It was, specifically, the grace of Christ, which was to prove sufficient for St. Paul; it was his strength, the strength of God manifest in the flesh, which was to be made perfect in the Apostle's weakness. In how many various ways this promise was to be fulfilled, it is not for us to pronounce; but when the same blessed Apostle spoke, fourteen years after, of the communion of Christ's blood, and the communion of Christ's body, can we doubt that, in these significant terms, he essentially included, or rather, in the strongest manner possible, denoted that very communication of grace and strength from our Saviour, in which he himself had found such adequate support: and which, instead of being counteracted, was made more glorious, by the weakness of the receiver? What else than this could be meant, by the communion of Christ's

blood, and the communion of Christ's body? Surely, in such a communication of grace and strength, the divine words, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," would have their clear and perfect fulfilment, and it was no less evident, that in the sacred institution which was to give effect to those words, the divine strength signally accommodated itself to human weakness. As I have just observed, the gracious assurance given to St. Paul, and, through him, to all faithful Christians, might be verified in various other ways, as exigencies should require. But the sacrament of the Lord's Supper bore the special mark and signature of this very end and purpose. Its nature and character was such as to imply, that, in this means of grace, the good which was done, God would do it himself; and, by consequence, the co-operation of mind on the part of the receiver, which, in all the common means of edification, must be deemed indispensable, was, in the Eucharist, peculiarly and mysteriously superseded; and *capacity* the sole requisite for reception of the heavenly blessing.

Need I then say more to shew, how eminently and impressively, in this wonderful provision, the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness; and how appositely the weakness of the instru-

mental medium is fitted to console and satisfy the deepest and most depressing sense of weakness in the receiver? Does not the very aspect of such an ordinance, significant as it is of so gracious a purpose, and presenting so express a pledge of that purpose being accomplished, convey stronger and more direct consolation to the drooping spirit, than could be administered in any forms of speech? And, in its stated and continually recurring celebration,* are we not instructed that it is chiefly and peculiarly, by the pure and undiluted grace of Christ, thus from time to time communicated to us through his own direct operation, we are to live and grow as Christians; to receive supplies of divine strength, notwithstanding all our oppressing infirmities; and, if we honestly and assiduously improve the heavenly gift thus assured to us, to attain, at length, to the fulness of the Christian character, and to complete fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light?

But let it not be supposed, that in excluding all strict and proper co-operation of the communicant, in his reception of the eucharistic bless-

* The Eucharist, at the first, was celebrated every Lord's Day; and the fitness of this practice is still recognised, in various instances and manners, in the Latin, Greek, and Anglican churches.

ing, I wish to lessen the importance, or question the necessity, of due predisposition, in order to that reception. While the nature of the blessing evinces, not only the divine source from which it comes and the divine agency by which it is bestowed, but also its complete distinctness from all concurrent agency, except that which is outwardly ministerial, it no less implies a capacity of reception in him on whom it is conferred. It is a spiritual blessing ; and, therefore, not communicable to an oppositely disposed mind. We cannot co-operate in the divine act, because it is so purely divine as to exclude even subordinate co-agency ; but we may obstruct, or wholly resist its effect, by a positive unpreparedness for any such benefit. It is as true as it is consolatory, that our involuntary defects can be no obstacle to the divine Omnipotence ; but, where the grace of God is in no degree desired, and, still more, where there is an actual aversion to it, a communication of that peculiar grace which the Eucharist is intended to convey, would be inconceivable, if not morally impossible.

There must, evidently, be a spiritual appetite, in order to the apprehension, much more the reception, of a spiritual blessing. “ Blessed are they,” said our Saviour, “ who hunger and thirst

after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Their blessedness consists, we see, in their desire being satisfied : they could not be blessed, therefore, if that desire were wanting. This rule holds good, eminently, respecting the Lord's Supper. It is the most distinguished conduit of that heavenly grace, whereby the kingdom of God is established, advanced, and completed, in the mind and heart. But where no desire for this divine grace has been awakened, and no apprehension of its value and necessity is entertained, the provision made by our Redeemer for its conveyance can excite neither rational interest nor adequate reverence.

I precisely mean, however, where there is no such desire, and no such apprehension ; because it is certain, that, under deep obscurity of mental vision, there may be sincere aspirations of the inner man, the nature of which may be very indistinctly understood by the mind which forms them. In all such instances, therefore,—as there is safety in approaching, so we cannot doubt that there will be benefit in receiving, the eucharistic symbols. He who sincerely desires to serve God and to be possessed of Christian virtues, and who goes to the table of our Lord with a wish that he may thereby become more religious and

more virtuous, however dark his apprehension of the high and holy mystery which the sacrament of the Eucharist implies and exhibits, will not, we may well believe, go in vain to that ordinance, for this very reason, because the blessing which it instrumentally communicates, is so exclusively divine. Let there be only a capacity of receiving, and a desire, whether explicit or constructive, to receive influence from above, and, on the ground of a strictly divine operation, there is the most cheering certainty, that no sincere and upright individual will go empty away.

Thus, what was said of the type is no less true of the antitype, that he who gathered much, had nothing over, and he who gathered little, had no lack. As the bodily weakness of an Israelite, by this merciful supervention of divine power, even in the act of gathering, did not prevent his carrying away the portion of food convenient for him ; so, much more, where the very act of gathering is superseded by the unmixed fulness of divine operation, may a like result be confidently expected.

From this view, therefore, of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, we not only derive an encouragement with respect to ourselves, which, even in our most advanced state in this world,

may not be unnecessary, but we also learn to look with increased satisfaction on that occasional concourse of communicants, which is excited by the recurrence of our great Christian festivals. Reason unites with charity in assuring us, that a sincere religious intention actuates at least a great number of those who approach the Christian altar at those solemn seasons : and it is only on the plainest grounds that we can place a limit to this kindly calculation. May we not, then, humbly believe, that in proportion as there is an opening for it, the divine influence dispensed through that bread and that cup, enters into many an heart which is speculatively unconscious of the blessing it is receiving, and inspires it with holy desires, good counsels, and just works? The benefits thus conferred may as much escape human observation as the reserved seven thousand in Israel had escaped the observation of the prophet Elijah. But we may well be confident, that when the divine benignity has reserved to itself, in the Christian dispensation, a medium of benediction, simply and exclusively its own, the effect is as much beyond *man's* narrow reckoning, as God's ways are higher than man's ways, and his thoughts than man's thoughts.

Were no spiritual good done, in Christian

communities, but through human agency, the eternal interests of individuals would be poorly provided for, both as to the nature and extent of the benefits communicated; and it will accordingly be found, that, in proportion as human instruments are looked up to and trusted in, the best results are, in their character, mixed and superficial. The depths of the heart do not seem to be reached; the mind too often appears to support itself by theoretical consolations; and the frailties of animal and corrupted nature are combated and restrained, rather than conquered and expelled. But whenever God himself is directly and immediately resorted to, the effects, though, it may be, less perceptible by the eye of man, are of a deeper and more inward character, and imply much more of an entire transmutation. It is not a professional, but a radical religion, which is thus produced. There is, in such instances, no thought of profession, because it is a concern which lies wholly between the heart and its God.

To such a process, then, the provision of sacramental grace appears to be exquisitely adapted. It affords to the secret and unprofessing disciple, that immediate commerce with his God and Saviour which his heart desires, in the

simplest and sublimest way ; and while it makes him independent of those human aids which rise and fall and fluctuate with circumstances, it teaches him a dependence on the unseen source of his spiritual life and strength, which is as humble as it is stable. Both himself and his fellow-creatures appear to him as nothing, where God is so signally, and so graciously, all in all.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE DOCTRINE RESPECTING BAPTISM HELD BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE sacrament of Baptism, through the appointment of our blessed Saviour, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, conveys, to all susceptible receivers, not only the outward privileges of Christian communion, but the internal blessing of regenerating grace. This grace brings with it remission of sins ; it implies a radical commencement of spiritual life, and gives a title to the everlasting inheritance.

An adult receiver of baptism can be susceptible of the internal blessing, only by possessing congenial predispositions ; namely, repentance, whereby he forsakes sin, and faith, whereby he steadfastly believes (that is, unfeignedly embraces, and cordially aspires to) the promises of God made to him in that sacrament. The neces-

sity of being thus qualified is obvious ; because, in adults, without such predispositions, there is a positive indisposedness for the reception of any inward and spiritual blessing.

But, as an infant is as incapable of repelling divine grace, as of positively concurring in its reception, it is deducible from our blessed Saviour's language and actions respecting little children, from his receiving and blessing them expressly as little children, and declaring them, as such, to be fit subjects of his spiritual kingdom,—that all infants, regularly receiving the outward sign of baptism, partake infallibly of the inward and spiritual grace.

It is, accordingly, not to be doubted, that every infant, baptised as our Redeemer hath appointed, is, at the same time, regenerated by the Holy Spirit ; and received, by adoption, into the number of God's children, as well as incorporated into the visible Church. It is consequently to be believed, that in every such child, as far as in the nature of things is possible, there is an initial death of sin, and a seminal life of righteousness ; and that, as this commencing grace, if retained and exercised, will lead to the crucifying of the old man, and the abolition of the whole body of sin ; so, in case of death before commission of

actual sin, it ensures an entrance into our Redeemer's everlasting kingdom.

The state, therefore, into which baptism brings the infant receiver, is not merely an external aptitude, or a prospective capability; it is, on the contrary, to be concluded, that the child is now, in a strict and spiritual sense of the terms, "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven:" and, accordingly, every catechumen, on the charitable supposition that baptismal grace has not yet been forfeited, is taught, not only to thank God for the state of salvation into which he has been brought, but to pray for grace, that he may continue therein unto the end; a petition which would be absurd, as well as presumptuous, if it were not strictly, and infallibly, a state of present and everlasting safety.

But in this deeply significant passage of the Catechism, we have the clearest intimation of a still farther truth, which demands the most serious consideration; namely, that if wilful and gross sin has been committed, this state of salvation has been lost. What is retained solely through divine grace, must, consequently, be lost by yielding to sin: for grace and sin are opposite in the nature of things; and the dominion of one is the subjugation of the other. To pray, therefore, to

God for his grace, in order to continuance in a state of salvation, is, at once, to imply that this state may be forfeited, and to shew the manner of its forfeiture. So long as we possess and exercise divine grace, we escape the corruption which is in this world through lust; but when lust hath conceived, (that is, when it is no longer effectually repressed by the ruling influence of grace), it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

And, doubtless, it was from a view of this scriptural truth, that in the Litany as well as in the 16th Article, we meet the significant term, "deadly sin." From the place this expression holds in the Litany, we perceive that it designates such a transgression of the divine law, as is, in its nature, gross and presumptuous; and by its use in the Article, we are taught the ground of its specific denomination; namely, because it destroys the life of grace which was given in baptism; and, without effectual repentance, leads to death eternal.

The passage in the Article now referred to, is, indeed, altogether, 'singularly pertinent to our present subject; because, perhaps, in no other instance is the doctrine of the Church of England, on this important point, either more fully or more compendiously conveyed. The error of the No-

vatians, who denied room for repentance to those who forfeited baptismal grace, is the object of censure; but the terms made use of, are such as to place the judgment of our Church, respecting the doctrine of baptism, beyond the possibility of question.

“Not every deadly sin,” says the Article, “willingly committed after baptism, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable: wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After they have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend our lives.”

In the first place, then, it is remarkable, that the very mode of intimating the error to be rejected, assumes the fact of baptism being ordinarily accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit. For it could be only on the supposition of the Holy Ghost being given in baptism, that sin after baptism could be so much as pretended to be sin against the Holy Ghost.

Had, therefore, the Church of England meant to differ from the ancient Church, respecting the doctrine of baptismal grace, something would have been said against the premises of the Nova-

tians, as well as against their conclusion : whereas, on the contrary, the Article expressly takes their premises for granted ; speaking throughout, on the supposition, that to be baptised, was ordinarily equivalent, in point of fact, with receiving the Holy Ghost ; and that to fall into sin after baptism, was, in effect, to depart from the grace which had been communicated in that sacrament.

The only limitation, therefore, which this general admission of baptismal regeneration will consistently bear, is that which is intimated in the 27th Article, where this blessing is confined to them that receive baptism *rightly* : a truth, it will be observed, applicable to adults only, and insisted on, respecting them, in every age of the Christian Church.*

But besides what the reason of the case teaches, —that, where there can be no *wrong* reception, if there be any reception at all, it must be *right* reception —all application to infants of what had been said in the body of the Article, is precluded by the words with which it ends :—“The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution

* Simon Magus, it has ever been said, ascended from the baptismal font as he entered.

of Christ." From which it follows, either that children, as such, were regarded infallibly right receivers, or were not meant to be included in the observation on right reception.

The doctrinal conclusiveness of the 16th Article, then, remaining unshaken, let us more closely examine the practical truth which it contains. The expression, "deadly sin committed after baptism," is itself, alone, replete with important meaning. "Deadly sin" could be committed only where, until then, there had been spiritual life. What had never been alive, could not suffer death. The term, therefore, necessarily supposes an antecedent possession of the saving grace of God, which, through want of faithfulness, had, like "the shield of Saul, been vilely cast away." Whence, then, came that life of grace which deadly sin extinguishes? Clearly from the instrumental efficacy of the laver of regeneration; otherwise, what would be the sense of "deadly sin committed after baptism?" These words necessarily imply, that baptism, through divine appointment and co-operation, confers the grace from which deadly sin departs, and the life which it destroys. The import of the expression is, if possible, still more indubitable, from the striking simplicity with which it is uttered. The belief of

the Catholic Church respecting baptismal grace, is not argued, nor even explained, but obviously taken for granted, as what no one could dream of disputing.

There is, however, a wise concern for practical clearness; and therefore, in the next two sentences, the calamity is described not only as a departure from grace given, but as a fall into sin. This expression is doubtless used to distinguish *the yielding to evil by which baptismal grace is lost*, from those daily faults which the most unfeigned sincerity cannot prevent; and to describe *that great offence* as an actual apostasy, whether temporary or final, from the way of God's commandments. That the word *fall*, is to be thus understood, appears from what immediately follows:—"And by the grace of God, we may rise again and amend our lives." For this implies, that he who has fallen in the sense here intended, has lost, through his fall, the power of rising again by any mere exertions of his own; and that, therefore, without a renewed communication of the grace from which he has departed, he must remain an impotent victim of moral thralldom and essential wretchedness.

Having thus simply followed the guidance of this comprehensive document, are we not led to

exactly the same view with that placed before us by the already quoted words in the third answer of the Catechism? Here, as there, we have the effect of baptism (when indisposedness in the receiver has not made it fruitless) in conferring on the baptised a state of grace and salvation; and, further, we have that expanded in the Article which was only intimated in the Catechism,—*the discontinuance of the state of salvation*, if divine grace be not effectually implored and faithfully exercised.

On these authorities, the subject might be allowed to rest. But it will not be uninteresting, and it cannot be uninstructional, to trace the same sentiments in other parts of our established formulary.

The baptismal service, from its nature, must be expected to assume doctrines, rather than to explain them. But, on examination, it will be found to contain very much which can be understood only in accordance with the passages adduced from the Catechism and the Articles.

For instance, in one of the introductory prayers there is a petition, that the child, coming to God's holy baptism, may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration. Hence, then, it follows, that the regeneration which baptism is expected

to confer, is not merely a change of circumstances, by which the baptised child stands in a new relation to God and to his Church; but that it also implies an inward blessing, which, so long as it is possessed, constitutes a state of grace and salvation. Less cannot be comprehended in a regeneration which is spiritual, and which brings with it remission of sins. These terms describe what is strictly compatible with infant innocency; and what Holy Scripture authorises us to conclude, may be retained, through God's blessing on parental care. But it needs no reasoning to shew, that he who departs from grace given, no longer retains spiritual regeneration; and that a fall into sin must be a forfeiture of remission.

“ It is, in fact, impossible to make any intelligible distinction between the spiritual regeneration which is prayed for in the baptismal office, and that grace of the communicated Spirit, from which, according to the 16th Article, deadly sin implies departure. Nor, again, can we conceive sin to continue remitted one moment longer than it is successfully escaped, or victoriously resisted. It would, perhaps, be found, that in the strictly evangelical notion of the term, remission of sin includes deliverance from the dominion of sin, no

less than from its guilt ; and that any other supposition would be absurd, and almost blasphemous. But that the Church of England judges thus, is unquestionable. In *her* devotions, to be forgiven, is to be loosed from the chain of sin ; pardon of sin is united with deliverance from its yoke, and identified with being cleansed from its pollution. Remission of sins, therefore, in the language of the Church of England, describes a blessing which they who have departed from grace, and fallen into sin, cannot possibly enjoy. And, therefore, though it be neither necessary, nor, perhaps, strictly correct, to say that, in those who repent of deadly sin and are restored to a state of grace, regeneration is repeated ; yet, in consistency, it must be held that, until they are so restored, their spiritual regeneration is radically interrupted ; and the state of grace and remission which baptism had conferred, supplanted by a state of moral thralldom and guilt, from which there is no escape but through recommunicated grace, and an effectual conversion.

That such are, deliberately and digestedly, the principles of the Church of England, might be shewn from the entire sequel of the baptismal office. The state of grace into which baptism introduces, is regarded throughout as the first

stage of a vital progress in all the Christian virtues. The child being considered as put into possession, seminally, of their essence, is expected, under the continued influence of Heaven, to grow up into their maturity ; and, at length, to become “steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity.” He is expressly declared to be so regenerated with the Holy Spirit, as to be dead to sin, alive unto righteousness, and buried with Christ in his death ; and it is concluded that if he lead the rest of his life according to this beginning, he will “crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin.” In a word, he is already held to be made partaker of the death of Christ ; and is consequently assured, if he persevere, of participating in his resurrection.

From these, therefore, as well as all the other expressions in this solemn service, it is most evident that the spiritual regeneration on which the Church of England confides, comprehends all the vital elements of a new and heavenly nature ; that, so far as in the nature of things is possible in an infant mind, it implies a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ; that consequently it involves, in embryo, all the principles of Christian virtue, ready to shew themselves, if

aided only by culture, and sheltered from the blight of evil example.

Shall we, then, ask whether, in the view of the Church of England, the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, which she herself has thus explained, still remains with each individual, whatever may be his subsequent moral conduct? Might we not as reasonably ask whether piety, righteousness, and sobriety, once possessed, remain with the possessor, whatever may be his subsequent moral conduct? For, according to the Church of England, the grace of baptism is the living germ of all pious affections and virtuous dispositions. During infancy and childish weakness, we can conceive such a principle to remain uninjured. But, when reason and conscience begin to act, this germ must either advance or decay; and its total suppression, is its virtual extinction. It can exist in an adult only in the sentiments and habits which it produces. Where, therefore, spiritual sentiments and habits have wholly ceased, it is not possible to suppose a continuance of spiritual life. That such, then, on the whole, is the settled doctrine of the Church of England, follows from her own deepest and most solemn references to the subject; to all which, the single use of the term deadly sin,

gives decisive confirmation ; as, in truth, it might of itself be deemed sufficient to set the question at rest.

It is, however, the practical import of the point, about which our Church is evidently most solicitous ; and, therefore, while she wishes, as far as possible, to consider her children in the state of grace, she never ceases to remind them that they may, too probably, have departed from grace given, and consequently be in a state of deadly sin. She particularly impresses this awful warning, in every repetition of the Litany, by distinctly interceding with God for those who are in a state of deadly sin ; and, also, for persons of an intermediate class, who have either not entirely lapsed, or, if lapsed and in part recovered, are not yet completely and consciously reinstated. The words of the petition are in every Churchman's memory : the comprehensive and weighty meaning may not have been as generally adverted to.

“ That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall.”

The least attention will shew, that there could not have been in words a clearer or more practical classification. Those who stand, are ob-

viously the settled subjects of the state of grace : that is, they live habitually in the fear and love of God ; in the spirit of true devotion ; and in constant watchfulness against the world, the flesh, and the devil : they, therefore, through divine grace, rise superior to every gross temptation ; and, from day to day, enjoy, in the secret of their heart, that “ peace of God which passeth all understanding.” It is impossible to attach any lower sense to so significant a term. A thousand words could not describe more forcibly the state in which the Church wishes her faithful children to be kept ; and to which she is anxious that both penitents and wanderers should be restored. The vague and frigid theory which contents itself with a regeneration implying not salvation, but mere salvability, imperceptible while possessed, and too unsubstantial to be forfeited, has evidently no place here. They who stand, in contradistinction to the weak-hearted, and in opposition to them that fall, cannot be confounded with such as fluctuate between sin and repentance, and derive all their comfort, not from consciousness of our Redeemer’s effectual grace, *within them*, but from abstract reliance on what he has done *for them*. Doubtless, the Church of England never loses sight of the merits of our blessed Saviour ;

but she confides in them, not as a substitute for internal grace, but as an infallible security that this grace will be freely communicated to all who cordially ask it ; that it will be more amply given in proportion to faithful improvement and greater exigence ; and that to those who substantially retain it, those unallowed offences which arise from the original frailty that remains, says the 9th Article, “ even in them that are regenerated ;” but which, implying weakness rather than wickedness, do not violate our allegiance to God, will not be imputed to our condemnation.

The Church of England, therefore, does the truest honour both to the mercy of God, and to the merits of our Redeemer, by specifying a sure evidence in the heart and conduct that we are actual objects of mercy, and that Christ’s merits have availed in our behalf ; namely, our standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free. By this characteristic, whether retained from baptism, or recovered through repentance and conversion, our Church recognises living members of Christ’s mystical body ; and deeming all such to possess the reality of spiritual life, and to be in the path which, if not deserted, leads infallibly to life eternal, she prays merely for their advancement and confirmation : “ That

it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand.”

The import of this brief but significant supplication, will be best learned from a former part of the same comprehensive formula. They who stand, are obviously those who possess the blessing implored in that preceding petition :—“ That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments.” To pray, therefore, that such may be strengthened, is to express, in one word, the matter of the next following petition :—“ That it may please thee to give unto all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.” To increase, and to be strengthened in grace, are evidently the same thing ; and, in proportion to this blessing, God’s word will be heard with meekness ; that is, will be submitted to without reserve : it will be received with pure affection ; the mixture of love and dread, which was indispensable in a lower state, will give place to that perfect love which casteth out fear ; and the exertions which were then necessary to preserve a good conscience, will be at once rewarded and superseded by a spontaneous harvest of spiritual virtues ;

duty having become delight, and goodness a second nature.

But the Church, in attending to those who are her glory, forgets not the feeble portion of the flock, nor even the wanderers from the fold. For the first, she implores "comfort and help," — as if their hope needed to be brightened, as well as their resolution to be established. The terms are evidently chosen with deliberate appropriation. They shew, that those religious solitudes which are too often resolved into fanaticism or morbid melancholy, were, to the pious compilers of our Litany, an object of wise provision, as well as charitable commiseration.

For the unhappy persons, who are last mentioned, there could be but one appropriate petition,—that God would be pleased "to raise up them that fall." The significancy of these expressions cannot be questioned: their contrast with the first clause, of itself, ascertains their meaning. If to stand, is to be in the state of grace; to fall, is to forfeit it: or, in other words, if to stand, is to enjoy freedom from deadly sin; to fall, is to come under its dominion. The blessing, and the calamity, are, in this twofold sense, contrary to each other. To stand, is to

be supported by divine grace, and, by that means, habitually to conquer deadly sin: to fall, is to depart from divine grace, and to incur the guilt and bondage of deadly sin. The strict agreement of this language with that of the Article need not be pointed out. In the mercy implored, there is a slight, and, indeed, but verbal difference. The Litany prays to God, “to raise up them that fall:” the Article says, that they “who fall into sin, may, by the grace of God, rise again, and amend their lives.” The truth is, that, *to rise* by divine grace, is *to be raised* by divine grace: for a fall into deadly sin, supposes spiritual death; and the dead cannot rise, except they are raised by Omnipotence. The variety of expression is, however, substantially instructive; for, while the term in the Litany teaches us, that, in repentance and conversion, we owe all efficacy to God; so, in the Article, we are instructed, that, in our reinstatement, we must be workers together with Him. On the whole, the Church, in beseeching God to raise up them that fall, expresses her deep sense of the calamity; but still, a confidence, that He, who is no respecter of persons, doth yet “devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.” And the Article, by describing the peni-

tent as rising, conveys an admonition, that, when those, who are dead in trespasses and sins, feel any animating touch from above, they should instantly embrace the opportunity, and cherish the gracious influence; lest, if they despise the goodness which would lead them to repentance, they should be given over to a reprobate mind, and become, as it were, “twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”

Before this petition of the Litany be parted with, it must be stated, that what was remarked respecting the language of the 16th Article, holds, if possible, still more strictly true in the instance before us; namely, that, though the terms employed are of the most general kind, not a word is said to explain this special application of them; but, on the contrary, their obvious significancy simply taken for granted.

We can account for this in one way only;—that the theological use of these two common verbs, to stand, and to fall, as descriptive of the two opposite states, of grace, and of deadly sin, was so universally known, as to require no explanatory observation. It simply follows, that the well-known ancient scheme of doctrine, which was solicitous to distinguish between these states, and dwelt upon this distinction, as of the deepest

practical importance, was unreservedly and cordially held by our reformers; and that, in all the leading ideas which this view necessarily involves, they thought it their wisest course to follow the guidance afforded them by the united luminaries of the ancient Catholic Church.

It will be unnecessary to refer, particularly, to more than one other of our stated forms; and it is as much for the sake of elucidating some important expressions which are in daily use, as in order to throw additional light on the subject under consideration.

That the General Confession, in our daily service, awakens sentiments of sincere humiliation in many an individual, is not to be doubted; but it may be questioned, whether it is possible to join in it with the understanding as well as with the spirit; whether, in truth, the most intelligent mind can conceive the exact ideas which the words are meant to convey, except the doctrine of the Church, respecting the two states, of grace, and deadly sin, be known, and kept in remembrance.

The acknowledgments of aggravated deviation, with which the Confession commences, may, probably, have been thought, by many, to refer to the early lapse of our nature, and the degeneracy

which ensued. But a single expression in the sequel requires a different interpretation of the whole. It is remarkable, that, after all have owned and lamented those infidelities, from which, in some degree or kind, even the most upright would scarcely presume to say they had been always exempt, there is a change from the first to the third person ; and two classes of characters are prayed for, as if they stood in special need of intercession. “ Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults ; restore thou them that are penitent.” It is the import of this latter petition, which clearly fixes the sense of what had preceded, and of what follows. A prayer for restoration implies, of necessity, a former possession of the state which it is the object to regain. This state, in the present instance, cannot be that from which our first parents fell ; because restoration of penitents to paradisaical innocence and happiness forms no part of the promises which are here relied upon. To what state, then, do we pray that penitents may be restored ? Can it be any other, than the state of grace which, in consequence of their early baptism, they had once infallibly possessed, but which they have forfeited by yielding to deadly sin ? If the words in question stood alone, they might be

almost unintelligible. But, when compared with the other forms which have been adduced, the meaning of this particular petition, of that also which immediately precedes it, and, indeed, of the entire Confession, becomes unquestionable. The scholastic distinction between attrition and contrition seems, even, to have been in view. They who confess their faults are considered as in the imperfect stage of *repentance*; and, therefore, God is entreated not to cut them off until their penitence has become cordial; when, for those who are thoroughly penitent, the congregation asks that reinstatement which is assured to such returning prodigals by the promises of the Gospel. In confidence that this supplication, so divinely authorised, will not be ineffectual, a concluding petition is offered up for all, that “they may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of God’s holy name:” in other words, that every member of the congregation, who has either retained, or recovered the saving grace of God, may so faithfully and perseveringly exercise it in the three great branches of Christian duty, to God, his neighbour, and himself, as uniformly to render himself (in the language of St. Paul) “well pleasing to God, and acceptable to men.”

I conceive enough has now been said to dispel all reasonable doubt of what the Church of England maintains respecting the infallible communication to infants of baptismal grace ; its loss by deadly sin ; and its possible recovery by repentance and conversion. I do not, for the present, ask on what ground these principles have been adopted. I speak to Church-of-England men whose object it is to ascertain *what* the formularies of that church have taught them to believe. There are, however, several practical consequences flowing so necessarily from the doctrinal views now stated, and bearing so directly on the religious welfare of each individual, that, were they not, however briefly, adverted to, the subject itself would have been brought forward to little, if any, valuable purpose.

In the first place, then, I would venture to observe, that the whole body of our public devotions, when attentively considered in the light of those first principles, will be found to speak a much more definite, and, at the same time, an incomparably weightier language, than is found in them by those who have overlooked this standard of interpretation.

For, if it was the entire belief of those who prepared our devotional formularies, that every

faithful Christian possesses inward grace ; which, in its essence, implies a love of God above all, and an habitual freedom from all such sins as would extinguish that love, as well as from all dispositions and tempers inconsistent with that love ; then necessarily, the spirit of the devotion would uniformly accord with this principle. The matter of those formularies would, by consequence, uniformly refer, either to the substance, the advance, the confirmation,—or, on the other hand, to the difficulties, the dangers, and the too possible declensions,—of that inward life, which, in the view of the compilers, would appear to demand the supreme care of teachers, and the deepest solicitude of every individual Christian. Let, then, the explanatory key, which is thus afforded, be actually applied to the stated prayers of the Church, and it will be seen at once, that scarcely a petition is offered, which does not recognise the state of grace, guard its substance, watch its stability, pursue its advancement, aspire to its maturity ; or, on the other hand, deprecate the state of sin, dread its return, resist its remains, shun its every possible approach, and seek, above all things, its complete subjugation.

This character will be found so strictly to belong to all our more ancient and original

Collects, as to make them liable to the charge of inflatedness and hyperbole, when explained in any less exalted, or less definite meaning. When, for example, they pronounce God's service to be perfect freedom; when they ask, each morning, that, during the day, there may be no fall into sin, no running into any kind of danger; when the blessings statedly implored, are, a peace which the world cannot give; a heart set to obey God's commandments; such a love of what God commands, and such a desire of what he promises, as will fix the heart *there*, where true joys are to be found; a love of God above all, poured into the heart from above; a pardon which cleanses from all sin; a peace which serves God with a quiet mind; an influence of the Holy Spirit which gives a right judgment in all things, and a constant joy in his holy comfort; a mind and heart which, as it were, ascend to heaven, and there continually dwell with Christ; a heart so cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as perfectly to love God, and worthily to magnify his holy name:—when, I say, such are the objects which are continually placed before us, as right to be asked, as reasonable to be expected, and as simply constituting the ordinary inheritance of the Christian; how could we understand these

elevated aims, if no state of mind were reckoned upon which implied their realisation? If they were always to be in prospect, and never attained, would it be possible to avert the charge of illusion from even our most admired and venerated forms? The expressions are so descriptive of real human feelings, and give such vivid representations of moral elevation and mental happiness, that if, after all, they had no fulfilment, and were but an unsubstantial, though bright vision, could it be denied, that the whole Church of England service was as palpable a deception as was ever, in any instance, imposed upon human credulity?

It might not be difficult to prove, that this would be but a natural deduction from the reasonings of some, who, in their zeal for baptismal regeneration, have paralysed the truth for which they contended, by never once mentioning that state of grace which is lost by deadly sin; and, on the contrary, by degrading the state of salvation, which our Catechism maintains, into a state of salvability, common to the pious and the profligate. As the scheme of these divines includes no standard by which the *power* of godliness may be distinguished from its mere *form*, and as it draws no discernible line between

the spiritually living and the spiritually dead, . . . as far as the influence of those persons extends, the blessings, implored in our prayers, are evidently not so much as pretended to. They are verbally recognised ; but, in point of fact, they have become obsolete ; not actually annulled, but as really in abeyance, as titles which have not found a claimant.

But this strange anomaly ceases, when once attention is given to the real doctrine of our Church respecting the grace of baptism. The state of salvation which this grace confers, and which, in the adult Christian, whether retained or recovered, implies habitual victory over all gross and deadly temptations, is, itself, in its lowest notion, the vital germ and virtual compendium of all those exalted attainments. The reality, therefore, of such a state of mind and heart as implies exemption from all presumptuous sin, once admitted, the spiritual blessings, implored in our Collects, become as likely and as congenial, as, before, they appeared improbable and unsuitable. He who is conscious of habitually overcoming all rebellious movements of his nature, through the power of divine grace, has a pledge in his own bosom for the sure eventual attainment of every further blessing

which our Lord has promised to his faithful people. The highest blessing which he is taught to ask from God differs in degree and circumstance only, not in substance or nature, from what he already consciously possesses. He learns, from the state of grace itself, from the frame of heart which it implies, the strength which it brings, and the protection which it affords, that, in order to reach the utmost object of its spiritual ambition, he need only grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour.

Another most important light, in which the distinction maintained by the Church of England, between the state of grace and the state of sin, may be regarded, is that of a sure and simple standard for self-examination.

Of all possible questions which a human being can put to himself, the weightiest beyond comparison, is, Whether he be at peace with God? If there were no sure criterion by which this inquiry might be satisfied, man, while a sojourner on earth, would be of all creatures the most miserable. Most suitably, then, to man's natural wishes, and with wisest attention to his present and everlasting security, has the Church, at once, afforded such a criterion, and exercised the

strictest care, that it should be, in every respect, sound and undelusive.

She has effected this purpose, by making the state of grace essentially to consist in habitual victory over all known and palpable sin, through the predominating influence of love to God above all things, sustained by earnest and unremitted prayer. In adopting this view, the Church of England has excluded fallacious speculation; and has subjected this momentous question to the same rules of practical common sense, which are relied upon in all the other important concerns of human life.

It is notorious, that, on this particular point, pious sincerity, when ignorant and impassioned, has become peculiarly perplexed and extravagant. With no subject, therefore, have religious adventurers been more occupied; and, in proportion to the offer of a briefer and more compendious method of setting the conscience at rest, has been, generally, the degree of popular attention and interest.

Where it has been thought expedient to combat these pretensions, the usual course, especially in latter years, has been not so much to expose the fallacy of the specific proposition, as to charge with presumption the pursuit, on whatever

ground, of such inward tranquillity. Man, it has been said, while in this lower world, is entitled to exercise only tremulous hope; and, in the exercise of his best endeavours, to commit himself to God's infinite mercy, and the merits of the Redeemer.

Had such theologians, however, examined more attentively the doctrines of that Church to which they generally belonged, they would have learned, that, in the view of the formularies they had subscribed, they were resisting one error by maintaining another; or, rather, that they were correcting an abuse of truth, by radically rejecting the important and naturally interesting truth which was thus abused. A little sober reflection, distinct from church authority, might have convinced them, that the temperate wisdom of the Church of England has provided a far better guard against all possible abuses, by, at once, maintaining a state of conscious peace with God, and defining the exclusive test by which that state can be authenticated.

Doubtless the Church of England trusts, unreservedly, in the mercy of God, and in the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but she trusts in them, not as substitutes for the effectual grace of Christ *within the soul*, but

as a ground and pledge, that the promise of its communication will infallibly be verified. She, accordingly, rests confident that to all infants brought to our Redeemer, in obedience to his invitation, this grace will be gratuitously given; and that from none who, after having lost this first grace, turns again, and sincerely implores it, will it ever be withheld.

Assuming, then, at once, the infallibility of the grant, and the efficacy of the grace when granted, the Church of England has deemed herself warranted to assert a sensible and matter-of-fact distinction, between those who have retained or recovered this grace, and those in whom it evidently appears to be wanting. In making, therefore, such a distinction, the Church holds out a rule by which every individual becomes bound by the very reason of the case to examine his own state toward God; and the obligation is increased by this important circumstance, that the rule itself is as simple as it is solid, — that, depending on no doctrinal theory, excluding all visionary fancy, it rests on a matter of fact, respecting which, in all ordinary cases, honesty and common sense are sufficient to determine.

For, let it be observed, that we are not taught to account ourselves in a state of grace,

because certain supposed truths of revelation have occupied our thoughts and engaged our confidence ; nor because, at some particular time, we were conscious of extraordinary religious emotions which seemed to mark a revolution in the inner man. Whatever, of this kind, individuals may have really, or even beneficially, felt, the Church of England takes a surer, as well as more practical ground, by merely putting us on the inquiry, whether we *now* possess such a vital principle of Christian piety, as engages us, habitually, to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and preserves us from all positive and palpable violations of the known law of God ? In such a predominant disposition of mind and heart, and such an uniform habit of life, the Church of England makes the state of grace to consist ; because nothing but the effectual grace of our Saviour Jesus Christ could thus raise fallen man above the frailty of his debilitated nature.

To propound such a rule, therefore, in a case where infinite happiness, or infinite misery, is the alternative, is virtually to enjoin its close and constant application on every individual who admits its conclusiveness. That the Church of England expects that it should be so applied, is evident, not only from the terms in which it is

more immediately delivered, but, also, from the whole strain and tenour of her devotional forms. In every prayer which she puts into the mouths of her members, she supposes them, either substantially possessed of this blessing, and earnest for advancement to still higher degrees of grace; or mourning under its conscious loss, and anxious for its recovery; or else in a state of weakness and uncertainty, through partial declension, or oppressive temptation.

The general course of life is, doubtless, the first matter of examination to which we are called by this reiterated, but concurrent instruction. If acts of known sin meet us at our entrance on this review; if we are conscious, that, in any instance, we are habitually led captive by appetite or passion, or by the corrupt maxims of the world; in one sense, we need go no further: the point is already decided against us; we are living in deadly sin. For, so long as the grace of Christ lives and rules in the heart, in the very nature of things, no gross sin can be committed, nor can any sin habitually predominate. If, therefore, any act of gross sin be committed, or if any sin whatever be habitually indulged or yielded to, there is either palpable evidence of a state of sin, or no evidence of a state of grace.

But were it possible, that the closest examination could detect no outward transgression ; still, according to our Church, we must look inward, and ascertain the conduct and character of our inward, no less than of our outward man. The mind, after all, is the great scene of action. We there, in a moral sense, often do more in an hour, than outwardly in weeks or months. Circumstances restrain outward conduct. We seldom can exactly do the thing we would ; decency, propriety, even selfish common sense, may supply externally the want of nobler motives : within, and there only, we are ourselves, we act wholly without disguise ; and, therefore, in that interior region alone can we have certain evidence, that we have escaped deadly sin, and are still in the state of grace. Our Redeemer has himself instructed us, that sin of the grossest kind may, in a moral sense, be as really committed in the heart, as in the external conduct. And even if this oracle had not been delivered, common sense might have led us to the same conclusion : for, where no want of will, but mere impossibility, withholds, the moral turpitude is strictly the same.

But the significant language of the Church of England suggests a further necessity for inward

self-inspection, on a point of at least equal moment, and certainly of deeper difficulty. The article already quoted, has this remarkable expression, that, after having received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin. Here, therefore, is implied, a previous state of evil, of a character essentially interior, and, perhaps, to be discerned by negative, rather than by any positive symptoms; namely, departure from grace given. This expression is obviously meant to indicate the root of the mischief. It marks a beginning which it was deeply wise to intimate; but of which, when intimated, our own reason instantly perceives the justness. There must be a failure in the internal disposition, before there can be a fault in the external conduct. It was only when Eve became persuaded, that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and a thing to be desired to make one wise, that she put forth her hand, and took of the tree, and did eat. Can we, then, sufficiently estimate the importance of the lesson which is conveyed to us in this analytic statement of our decline and fall? It is tantamount to that admonition in the sacred word, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

We shall not meet the charitable purpose of

our Church, if we do not examine what it is to depart from grace given. This inquiry leads us, not only into the deepest recesses of the heart, but, also, into those feelings of the spiritually regenerated mind, which, in the language of St. Paul, can be only spiritually discerned. We cannot know what it is to depart from grace, unless we first understand what grace is. But if we ourselves are competent to the inquiry, we need only open our Common Prayer, or recollect its daily forms, to discover, that grace, in our Church's notion of the term, is a divinely infused temper of mind, which fixes our affections on spiritual objects; which makes us feel those objects as realities; and thereby engages us in such a mental commerce and intercourse with the unseen world, as makes us superior to the fatal snares of earth, and inclines us not to indulge, but to mortify, our carnal appetites and passions.

If such be the nature of grace,—then, to depart from this grace, is to allow any abatement of this spiritual temper. If divine grace be prevalent, prayer will be continually resorted to, as that exercise of the mind in which spiritual objects are most nearly contemplated, and most

affectionately apprehended ; and vigilance against all those deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which would seduce the heart from heavenly objects and spiritual pursuits, will be unremittingly exercised. To neglect prayer, or to become cold in its exercise,—to be less jealous of the contagion of sin, or the force of temptation,—even to think with less interest on spiritual things, and with greater interest on earthly things,—to be less intent on growing in grace, and mortifying all evil and corrupt affections, and on becoming more and more conformed to the great Exemplar and living Head of the Church,—this is the commencement of departure from grace ; and, as all habits, once begun, have a growing tendency, if the progress be not stopped by timely repentance, and a recovery of what is called in Holy Scripture “the first love,” the result is certain:—they who depart from grace will fall into that rebellion against God, which implies death spiritual ; and, without timely conversion, will lead to death eternal.

What has been said may suffice to illustrate the necessity of that inward self-examination which our Church enjoins, in order to safety. It need hardly be added, that so to practise it, as

to be habitually satisfied respecting our state toward God, is no less indispensable to our comfort.

If to apprehend departure, in any degree, from grace given, be matter of just alarm; to be reasonably assured that we have not departed from it, is the only stable ground of internal peace. But we can possess this assurance, only so long as we consciously exercise love to God above all things; regard sin as the greatest possible evil; implore constant supplies of grace from Him who is its living fountain; and avoid every situation and circumstance which could damp this spirit, or obstruct these pursuits. So long as we retain this frame of mind,—and no longer,—can we reasonably rejoice in the safety of our state; or be sure that we have, in no degree, declined from our Christian calling. The vigilance, self-denial, guard of temper, and attention to every known duty, which are essential to perseverance, and still more to progress, are evident from the nature of the case, and need not be enlarged upon. Did our stability in this arduous course depend on our own uniformity of caution, or of resolution, how desperate were our conflict, and how infallible our failure! But, what sustains hope is, simply and

supremely, that it is a state of grace which we are called on to retain,—a state, the distinction of which consists in our being spiritually animated and inwardly sustained by our ever present God and Saviour ; if we only adhere to him with that honesty and truth of heart which no weakness need hinder ; and which we can lose the power of exerting, only by wilful neglect, and gratuitous yielding to temptation.

Still, however, it is not to be concluded, that the Church of England, in admonishing all to examine their state toward God, assumes, with certainty, that every upright man, without exception, will at once find in himself the evidences of spiritual life. The definite terms of which the Church makes use, imply, not only that this internal satisfaction should be sought, but that, wherever there is just ground, in the regular order of things, it will scarcely fail to be enjoyed. Exceptions to this general rule, however, are clearly allowed in the admission, already adverted to, that there may be weak-hearted Christians, who, though in some respect distinguishable from those who stand, are, nevertheless, by no means to be confounded with those who fall. The Church, in her tenderness, pities such characters, rather than blames them ;

but, in asking comfort, as well as help for them, she intimates, that jealousy respecting their state toward God is one chief part of their weakness. Most certainly, therefore, she does not deem such jealousy a stamp of condemnation. The physical frailty of the human mind is often, of itself, sufficient so to becloud the spiritual state, as to make the sincerest self-inspection, the wisest suggestions of others, and even the most conscientious vigilance, unavailable for comfort. With such cases, therefore, all that can be done, is what the Church actually does: they can be brought only before Almighty God. He can comfort and help, whether the evil be physical or moral; for, that it too often arises from moral causes is not to be disputed. Omissions, inadvertencies, irregularities of temper and tongue, dulness of spiritual feeling, and languor in devotion, must, even in the state of grace, be resisted with unremitting energy, else they will make lamentable inroads on both mind and conduct; and though they may not proceed so far as to extinguish the life of grace; or, though it may be some length of time before they produce that effect, they will blight its strength and darken its comfort. That no such cases ought to exist, is unquestionable: the prevalently

cheerful language of the Church would imply, that, in her judgment, there is no necessity for such cases existing; still, their frequent recurrence must be reckoned upon: and the Church of England has learned from her all-gracious Master, neither to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax;—expressions which would seem specifically to denote the two classes which we have been supposing: the bruised reed being a just emblem of the morbidly afflicted mind; while the smoking flax almost literally describes those in whom some better things may still remain, which yet are ready to die.

Although, therefore, the Church of England specifies the two states—of grace, and of deadly sin; and although by her standard of distinction, she makes obligatory upon all, to try themselves by this unequivocal test, and not to rest satisfied until they are rationally certain of their spiritual safety; yet she exercises a charitable caution respecting those intermediate shades of character of which God alone can be a judge; and, while she distinctly instructs them what they ought to be, she endeavours to make them such, not by terrific denouncement, but by so praying for them, as both to teach and encourage them to pray for themselves; on the principle that, as

far as truth and reason will permit, it is infinitely better to excite hope than despair; and to presume, that there is some remaining good to be exerted so long as the charity which hopeth all things, can, with any consistency, admit the supposition.

This last remark leads to the mention of a third result, which naturally arises from the doctrine of the Church of England respecting baptismal grace; namely, that teachers who adopt this sentiment will be led to address mixed congregations in a different manner from those who consider all persons unregenerate who have not passed through a distinct and sensible conversion.

He who entertains this latter persuasion will necessarily regard the great mass of an ordinary congregation as in no respect better (however they may be worse) than actual and acknowledged heathens. He will reckon them, with the few exceptions which his principles can allow his charity to make, as dead in trespasses and sins; unvisited, to the present moment, with any quickening influence from above. He will, therefore, deem it his first duty to urge upon them such topics as appear to him most conducive to awaken feeling in an insensible mind and heart. He will probably endeavour to convince them, that they are under positive con-

demnation and wrath, until, from a sense of spiritual danger, they explicitly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of perishing sinners: he will be apt to state this process, as of universal necessity, on the ground that, until salvation be thus insured, all are alike sinners in the sight of God; and he will, of course, exhort the great body of his hearers, as unreservedly as St. Peter exhorted the Jews on the day of Pentecost, to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out.

The genuine Church-of-England teacher will be disposed, by his principles, to pursue a more discriminative method. He will overlook no truth which the sacred word enjoins him to enforce; but, as he is certain that all who hear him were once in a state of grace; and as he is uncertain how many of them may still retain some unextinguished portion of that primary gift, he will be inclined, in the first place, rather to call forth what is good, than to denounce what is evil. He will reserve expostulation and menace, until he has tried the effect of invitation and encouragement, in the hope of exciting whatever may yet remain of conscientious tenderness, or of pious sensibility. He will confine this expectation within no narrow limits; be-

cause he will account those only positively graceless, of whom, on no rational ground, he can hold a more favourable opinion.

But it is to the young of his flock that he will look with peculiar interest, and more sanguine confidence. In proportion to the probability of their having not yet strayed from the fold, it will be his delight, as well as his anxiety, to guard their innocence; and to co-operate with their heavenly Father, in leading them onward in the way of salvation. With this view, he will dwell upon the paternal mind of God toward them; the grace which, having already visited them, is sure, in answer to their prayers, to flow forth upon them in still richer abundance; as also, the certain blessedness which awaits them, the sure enjoyment of an inward heaven here, as well as the assured prospects of an heaven of glory hereafter, if only, without hesitation or reserve, they obey that call, "My son, give me thy heart." A true divine of the Church of England will feel that, if he were not thus to carry the lambs of Christ's flock in his arms, he would both overlook the example of the chief Shepherd, and be wanting where the highest angels are employed as his assistants.

A Church-of-England teacher, therefore, will consider it as his vocation, to imitate the gentleness of our Redeemer, rather than the severity of the Baptist; and, in accordance with the entire tenour of our Lord's declarations, he will, primarily, represent God, not in the light of an angry sovereign, or avenging judge, but in that of an infinitely loving parent, to whom, at each moment, the heart which aspires to goodness, yet trembles under a sense of its own weakness, may have recourse with unreserved affiance. That such filial access to God belongs to all who have, in any effectual measure, retained their first grace, follows necessarily from the relation which the Church of England believes to be established in baptism. But, may we not assert, that the true Church-of-England teacher will hence be inspired with a peculiar tenderness, even to those whose lapse is most indubitable? Will he not continually admonish them, that it is their father's house from whence they have strayed? and, where he sees symptoms of sincere desire to regain the rest from which they had wandered, will he not delight to urge the case of the prodigal in the Gospel, as silencing every doubt, and solving every diffi-

culty ; as shewing, at once, the simplicity of the path, and the infallible certainty of a prompt and gracious reception ?

But, while the Church-of-England teacher is gentle, where it can be hoped that gentleness will avail, he is not less preserved by his principles from saying, " Peace, peace, where there is no peace ;" and from putting darkness for light, or light for darkness. The decisive standard which the Church of England has been shewn to afford to each individual for self-examination, becomes equally, and, if possible, still more imperatively, a rule for public instruction. If, as the Church of England teaches, there be indeed a state of grace, the marks of which are palpable, and the possession of which is the only means of peace with God and with ourselves here, and the only pledge of happiness hereafter ; then, nothing under Heaven can be so much the duty of a Church-of-England teacher, as to dwell upon this state ; to keep it continually in view ; to shew its value ; to unfold its advantages ; to induce those who possess it to advance in it more and more ; to urge those who possess it not, or who have no clear evidence of possessing it, to seek after it till they find it ; to exhort all to examine them-

selves, whether they be indeed in this state of salvation ; and whether they are to be reckoned among those who stand, those who are weak-hearted, or those who fall. The Church of England has given a weight to these topics, of which, consistently with her principles, it is impossible to deprive them ; and so, not to give them the same strict proportion of weight in public teaching, is, not only to neglect the most obvious duty, but to violate the most solemn obligation.

According to the Church of England, the state of grace and the state of sin are strictly equivalent with spiritual life and spiritual death. The very terms, therefore, which are used, supersede all reasoning on their importance. These are points which never can become obsolete. Placed as they are by our Church, they comprehend the heart-pulse of Christian doctrine. They are the true and only centre, where all the moral interests of man can be radically secured ; and from whence, alone, can proceed all the varieties of moral excellence which exalt the individual, enrich society, spread comfort through this life, or qualify for life eternal.

If there be indeed a state of grace, the essence of which consists in loving God above all things ;

and to which, exclusively, belongs the power of avoiding sin, and resisting temptation,—then, to recommend any virtue, or to enforce any duty, without either expressing or implying the antecedent necessity of being in the state of grace, in order to effectual eschewing of evil, or doing of good, is to commence a superstructure without a foundation; or to expect a separated, lifeless branch, to vegetate and fructify.

The genuine Church-of-England teacher, therefore, however ready to encourage, and however gentle in inviting, will, nevertheless, leave room for no fallacious conception respecting the state which alone brings present peace, and justifies hope for eternity. He will continually urge, that to attain this state, and advance in it, is, essentially, that one thing which our Lord declared needful; and that the criterion given by our Church, of exemption from deadly sin, is so intelligible, and so practical, as to leave without excuse those who suffer one day to pass without using diligence, in the truest sense, to make their calling and election sure. In estimating individual cases, he will be as far from depressing the sincere, as he will be from flattering the presumptuous. But, with the tenderest care not to wound any upright mind, he will explicitly declare what may and ought to be possessed; and

what, consequently, no individual Christian should rest without effectually and consciously possessing. Thus, therefore, the Church-of-England teacher will speak to the heart ; there will be an energy, an unction, an interiority in his instructions, which will penetrate the inner man, and touch the master-springs of human nature ; there will be a correspondence to innate feeling, which will interest the lowest and most illiterate ; and there will be a truth of philosophy, with which the highest minds once inspired with a love of good will delight to be occupied. It is, in fact, the philosophy of our Redeemer, vital and simple, as it proceeded from himself, that the Church of England, in concurrence with the Catholic Church in all ages, has embodied and enjoined.

When the Church represents the state of grace as the exclusive soil of genuine virtue, the only region of heartfelt peace and consolation, what is she, but the faithful reporter of that comprehensive oracle, “ Either make the tree good, and its fruit good ; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt : A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things ? ” The enlightened minister of the Church of England will,

therefore, feel that, in observing his special rule and in executing his peculiar trust, he is, in the simplest and most direct manner, echoing the voice of God manifest in the flesh: reflecting upon the minds of his hearers the uncoloured rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

After what has been already observed, much pains need not be taken to prove, that, while the Church-of-England teacher continually urges his hearers to examine their state toward God, and not to rest until they are assured of its soundness, he will suggest no fallacious rule of judging,—he will leave them to build on no precarious foundation. If spiritual safety is inseparable from a state of grace, which evinces itself by habitual exemption from all deadly sin, then spiritual consolation cannot be extracted from any kind of doctrinal belief, and need not be sought for from any illapsive communication. The state of salvation, which consists in victory over sin, must be discovered, not in doctrinal notions, nor in the strongest possible persuasion of external truth, but *in affections, tempers, and conduct*; and when these are accounted conclusive evidence, there will not be any wish to explore the records of heaven, in order to know whether a man's name is written in the book of life. The consciousness

of moral effects, which omnipotent grace only could accomplish, will as much supersede supposed intimations from Heaven, as it will rise infinitely above the comfort which the firmest and fullest persuasion of doctrinal truth could, of itself, possibly convey.

There is one other property of the true Church-of-England teacher, which will require some larger consideration. His views of a state of grace, of the evidence by which it is ascertained, and of the means by which it is preserved, will lead him to press upon his flock the necessity, not merely of habitually retaining, but of daily growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour.

If there be any who consider their everlasting salvation as unconditionally secured to them by our Saviour's death, and, consequently, as in no respect affected by the moral character of their own mind and heart, such possibly may enjoy a kind of mental comfort, independently of inward grace and habitual rectitude. But the Church of England so strictly identifies safety, as well as comfort, with the unequivocal possession of what she calls the state of salvation, and which she represents as preserved through communicated grace, and guarded by constant prayer, as to

make it imperative on her teachers to urge, not merely the faithful preservation, but the continual improvement of this state ; because, without constant efforts to improve, the state itself will not only be defective in point of evidence, but liable to be lost. For, not to aim at growth in grace, is, with moral certainty, to decline ; nor can the authentic properties of a state of grace be ascertained, except by their being kept in such lively exercise as must imply advancement.

In a word, the doctrine of the Church of England respecting the state of grace keeps ever in view that comprehensive maxim in the Proverbs, “ A good man is satisfied from himself.” But this satisfaction essentially implies a consciousness of spiritual health ; and spiritual health is wholly incompatible with spiritual languor ; it can, in the nature of things, be enjoyed only so long as, with St. Paul, “ We forget those things which are behind, and reach forward to those things which are before.”

The teacher, therefore, who is impressed with these views, will be solicitous to inspire his hearers, not only with conscientious vigilance, but with holy ambition. He will earnestly endeavour to convince them, that the state of grace is never to be stationary ; and that those “ deceits of the

world, the flesh, and the devil," which tend to impede its progress, can never be too carefully avoided, or too completely surmounted. To this end, it will be his object to keep his hearers in constant and cordial remembrance, that it is their express vocation (according to the very terms of their baptismal initiation), not only to "crucify the old man," but "utterly to abolish the whole body of sin."

The Church-of-England teacher will be both animated and aided in this high and holy service, by the bright exemplifications of full-grown Christian piety which everywhere occur in the established forms of devotion. And, in proportion as he himself imbibes the spirit of what continually passes through his lips, the more energetic will be his statements, and the more glowing his representations, of all that essentially tends to ennoble human character, to enlarge and elevate the mind, to purify and delight the heart.

This assertion is not made gratuitously. Its verification will be more or less found in every pious writer whose own mind and heart have been trained and moulded effectually (and, I must add, as to every vital principle, exclusively) within the sanctuary of the Established Church. It is, among moderns, the high distinction of this

invaluable class, that Christian virtue, in *their* delineation, exhibits a graceful dignity, a mellowed maturity, a delicacy of character, and an effulgence of aspect, which are felt, even on natural principles, to be inexpressibly venerable and lovely. That, in this instance, they are the truest followers of the scriptural archetype, might possibly not be difficult to shew. But, what cannot be questioned, is, that even the most upright and zealous of other denominations have been so far from presenting the same cheerful and luminous views, that, with the exception of a few individuals, they have uniformly described the most faithful Christian course as beset with depressing difficulties to the very end of life; as uncertain in its comfort, and certain, only, in its unceasing warfare, and eventual deliverance. With these honest followers of St. John the Baptist (may we not say?), rather than of the Redeemer, the conflict between mind and flesh, in the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, has been taken as the standard whereby the Christian is to measure his attainments and his prospects while a sojourner below.

The true Church-of-England teachers have, on the contrary, no less explicitly maintained, that as the work of righteousness is peace, so the

effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever; that inward corruption may, through the divine blessing on patient continuance in well-doing, be so effectually subdued, as to verify that promise in the evangelic prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee;" and that St. John's "perfect love," which casteth out fear, is no illusive hope, but an attainment, with which wise and indefatigable pursuit is sure to be compensated.

Perhaps it may not, at first sight, be apparent in what way the doctrine of our Church respecting baptismal grace tends to give these brighter and more exalted ideas of the Christian course. But a little consideration will shew, that settled comfort, and high advancement in religion, are as reasonably to be expected, where retention of early grace has kept the faculties unabused, the conscience tender, the imagination unsullied, and the heart pure; as, on the other hand, fierce inward conflicts, fluctuating frames of mind, and an imperfect victory over corruption, are but too natural, where evil habits had become established before the heart yielded to the influences of religion.

It is not pretended that this rule holds universally. The youthful votary may forfeit his ad-

vantages, by yielding to those temptations from which no child of Adam can be wholly exempt; and the adult convert may surmount his disadvantages, by his cordiality of concurrence with divine grace, and his affectionate zeal in improving it. But experience has shewn such cases to be exceptions only to a general law of moral nature. It will still be a matter of natural consequence, that the path should be pleasanter, and the progress greater, where evil habits are merely to be guarded against, than where they are to be subdued and expelled; and that the same capacities and tastes which, after having been abused, are ever ready to betray, — when kept pure from the beginning, will serve as aids to goodness, and instruments of happiness.

The same sacred writer who has said, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” has described “The path of the just to be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” That, in the application of this beautiful image, the sacred writer supposes an effectual compliance with that important precept, appears from the entire strain of the discourse with which the Book of Proverbs commences. The object is to guard and regulate the youthful mind; and it is to him who yields to this early discipline,

that a tranquil and happy life is insured ; it is to such an one, that wisdom's ways are to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

It would be unreasonable to suppose these truths more firmly founded under the law, than they are under the Gospel. But, is not such a thought precluded by those memorable words of our Redeemer, which have been already more than once adverted to : " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God ?" Is it not here implied, that our Saviour not only admits little children into his mystical kingdom, but considers them as fitted to be subjects of it with some peculiar advantage ? Can less than this be concluded, from the emphatic language which our Lord employs ; and which, whatever further truth it may intimate, cannot be denied to have literal reference to infants ? since, otherwise, it would not have served to account for the special graciousness with which the little children, then brought to him, were about to be received.

From these words, therefore, and this act of our Redeemer, must we not infer a settled solicitude, that, under the Gospel dispensation, children should, from their earliest years, be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ? And would not the turn of his expression seem

to imply, that he entertained this desire, not merely from that divine philanthropy which actuated all he did and said ; but, also, from his knowledge, that persons thus trained from infancy would be more capable of imbibing the entire and unmixed spirit of the Gospel, and, consequently, of eminently exemplifying the complete character of Christ's spiritual subjects ?

If this be granted, it will follow that, in the judgment of our Redeemer, adult converts, though infinitely provided for by his grace, and inexpressibly the objects of his mercy, were, notwithstanding, inadequate to substantiate all the sublime purposes of his mystical kingdom ; and that, to realise the extent of his design, he deemed it necessary to have, not only naturalised, but also native subjects ; not only such as should be his, by the sincerest attachment which a once alienated heart could feel, and a sense of infinite mercy might excite, but such as should be bound to him by a devotedness coeval with conscious thought growing with their growth, strengthening with their strength, involving every habit of their mind, every feeling of their heart, and every movement of their nature.

If it be allowable to exercise our thoughts on the probable reason for this special estimation of

infant discipleship, would they not seem almost to press upon us, in the defects ordinarily inseparable from the subjects of adult conversion? Where habits of sin have once been established, even the real predominance of divine grace will not necessarily imply pacification of the mind and heart: the appetites which were pampered, the passions which were yielded to, the irritable temper, the unbridled tongue, though they have ceased to rule, may long continue to torment; and to be, as it were, watching the first inadvertent moment, in order to regain their former dominion. In this case, the integrity which preserves safety will not, therefore, produce tranquillity. The inner man is like a besieged town, where pressure of danger leaves no room even for the hope of quiet enjoyment.

But, in addition to these homebred evils, the adult convert is too likely to view religion itself in such a light, as to be little less depressed by it, in one point of view, than he is comforted in another. We learn from our Redeemer himself, that as he has infinite attractions for minds which can feel their force, so he has inexpressible terrors for those who require to be subdued: that, to the latter, he is more terrible than Jonah to the Ninevites; to the former, more engaging

than Solomon to the Queen of the South. The case of the adult convert implies, almost of necessity, a deep apprehension of the terrors, and scarcely a capacity for feeling the attractions. His mind is occupied with his own need of deliverance from apprehended wrath and impending destruction ; and, to him, our Redeemer is interesting, not so much because he is the Sun of Righteousness, as because, for his sake, the most guilty may hope for forgiveness. Even the consolation, therefore, that such a one derives from the Gospel, has no necessary connexion with its internal excellences. These may remain unknown and unsuspected, at the very time when those negative, or, at least, lower blessings, with the need of which the adult convert had been predominantly impressed, are sincerely felt and gratefully acknowledged. The satisfaction, therefore, which, in this case, even a confidence of safety affords, is not absolute, but relative. The alarming views which first opened on the mind of the adult convert, are, with respect to himself, no longer a matter of terror. But the sources of dread appear, in themselves, the same as before. In the state of mind with which his religious life commenced, he had felt as a wanderer on the open plain amidst a fearful

storm. He has now the comfort of what he deems a secure shelter : but, abroad, he seems to himself to hear the tempest raging as violently as ever.

Although, therefore, the adult convert may very soon possess personal consolation, his entire apprehension of the divine economy will not produce cheerfulness. The dark and dreadful ideas which could not but arise in a morally depraved mind, on its first serious attention to religion ; and which fitly arose,—as, with respect to such a mind, founded in truth, as well as necessary, in the natural order of things, to subdue that depravity ;—those ideas, the adult convert will naturally continue to identify with the substance of evangelical religion ; and the consequence will be, that, whether he meditates within himself, or imparts his thoughts to others, his views of religion, though safe as to himself, and involving the substance of essential truth, will, nevertheless, be sombre and uninviting. They will belong to that species of religious institution, which our Lord compared to mourning and weeping, rather than to that which he illustrated by the figure of piping and dancing.

It cannot be necessary to shew more at large, that, however solidly qualified the adult convert

may be, for being employed, by Divine Providence, as the "salt of the earth," (that which, by its poignancy, excites the antecedently inert and sterile soil of the human heart,) he is very imperfectly prepared for serving as the light of the world, — (that which, by its beauty, its hilarity, and its sublimity, captivates even natural taste; and interests not only all the moral, but all the pleasurable, sensibilities of the mind, and of the heart). But a still more serious deficiency is too likely to arise from the limited nature of the motives by which adult converts, in the crisis of their change, are generally actuated. Fleeing from an evil, rather than pursuing a good; urged by a propulsive, instead of being drawn by an attractive power, they are anxious for security, rather than for happiness; they are intent on that which will avert infinite calamity; and, at best, only secondarily concerned for that which will confer infinite felicity. In such a case, therefore, there can be little doubt, but that faithful efforts will be made to pass the boundary which is thought to separate the state of safety from the state of danger; but can it be reckoned on, with like certainty, that, when the boundary is supposed to have been passed, there will be equally intense exertion to

leave first principles, and proceed onward toward perfection? It is the essential nature of propulsive motives to act most powerfully in the first instance; but to lose their force in proportion as they answer their purpose. Now, it is not denied to be possible, that the adult convert may so happily avail himself of the propulsion, which he feels in his commencement, as to be carried forward into the attractive sphere of pure spiritual good. But where this (it may be feared too rare) felicity does not occur, can much more be expected than that the adult will persevere in preserving the safety, which he conceives he has attained? that he will watch against all those enemies, which might again betray him into the danger from which he has emerged? but that, generally speaking (except so far as Divine Providence may be pleased to rouse him onward, by afflictive discipline), he will rest contented with his low attainments; and may, perhaps, suppose, that he would dishonour his Saviour, should he seek to be more amply "satisfied from himself?"

That the adult convert may possess certain special advantages, is readily granted. He becomes acquainted with the disenthraling power, and healing influence, of divine grace, to a degree, and in a manner, scarcely to be conceived

by such as had never experienced the bondage and the malady of predominant corruption. Our Lord himself has been pleased to illustrate this fact, in the equally instructive and beautiful parable of the prodigal. It may also be allowed, that, where the adult convert so improves his deliverance from the state of sin as to apply himself, with persevering zeal, to the pursuit of pure and positive good, his recollection of the mental distress which he has felt, and the abyss from which he has been rescued, will give a heightening, not only to the spiritual consolations which he enjoys, while on earth, but, probably, even to the pleasures "which are at God's right hand for evermore."

The recorded instances, however, of adult converts, who have manifested remarkable solicitude to come within the strictly attractive influences of the Gospel, are, comparatively, so few, that, if there were no other witnesses to be appealed to, the disproportion between the evangelic provision and the effects produced by it would be inexplicable. When the bright prospects, held out by our Lord and his apostles, were contemplated, on the one hand; and the almost concurrent tones of complaint or depression, from the most distinguished subjects of adult conversion, were

heard on the other,—what sentiment could more naturally be conceived, than that which was uttered by one of the wisest and worthiest modern teachers of the class of which we speak : “ We may do all this, (that is, all that he judged fitted to promote evangelic rectitude, in mind and heart,) and yet our comparative want of success, in begetting and educating the sons of glory, may demonstrate to us, that there is some more effectual way ? ”

But can, indeed, that way remain unknown, after so many ages of divine illumination ? Rather, is it not distinctly intimated, in our Redeemer’s signal predilection for infant votaries ? The import of his words, on that memorable occasion, has already been noticed ; but the more we view the entire transaction, in the light of subsequent events, the more cause shall we discover for admiring and adoring that wisdom, which, in its highest purposes, seems to make closest alliance with the settled principles of human nature. Thus, as Abraham was preferred to the rest of mankind, because it was foreknown that he would command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord ; so, when, in the fulness of time, the scheme of beneficence, which was begun in Abraham, was to be

extended to the world at large, we perceive exactly the same solicitude, as in the former case, for infant initiation. Need we ask the reason of this remarkable uniformity in the divine conduct? Because, in this way, alone, could the whole of human nature be brought under the influence of Heaven; and because under the Gospel, those, alone, who were effectually brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” could fully resemble Him, who had increased in wisdom as in stature, and in favour with God and man: in a word, because, in the nature of things, none others could be equally qualified to fulfil the higher purposes, or imbibe the purer influences, of the Gospel dispensation.

It is, in the first place, matter of immense advantage, that the choice of religion should be antecedent to every other choice, so that no pre-occupying rival should ever after dispute with it the throne of the heart. Throughout the whole of life, the first habits are the deepest. To this law of nature, we owe the existence of those filial and fraternal charities whence all the social virtues originate and take their tone: with these, the love of God, infinitely the highest of all the charities, should, at least, be coeval in time, in order that it be supreme in ascendancy. Hap-

pily, through the tender mercies of our God, the too general disregard of this law of nature has been kept within the remedial power of divine grace ; but, wherever it is disregarded, advantages are lost, for which, it is obvious, no subsequent re-adjustment can perfectly compensate.

It is, also, of no small moment, that the transcendent loveliness of religion should be unimpaired to the mind by any mixture of terrific, or otherwise revolting ideas. This mixture must ordinarily, more or less, exist in adult converts. The deepest dread, and the most alarming apprehensions, are scarcely separable from the first awakenings of a depraved mind and callous conscience. But he who has never rebelled against his God is not liable to the dismay involved in a "fearful looking for of judgment ;" nor can he know by experience the tortures of a self-accusing spirit. His awe of God will, doubtless, be profound ; his fear of incurring divine vengeance may be unutterable. But he differs from the adult convert in this material respect, that there is no torment in his fear, so long as he preserves his integrity ; whereas the adult convert must be the victim of tormenting fear, until he thinks he has some evidence that divine wrath is averted. The fear of the youthful votary is so far from

lessening inward satisfaction, that it is cherished as, at once, the means and the pledge of safety. The fear, on the contrary, with which adult conversion generally commences, would be more than human nature could support, if dawning rectitude did not bring with it some glimmering of hope, to allay the darkness which it is yet insufficient to dispel.

Thus, while the adult convert usually commences his course in the depth of mental gloom ; and often slowly, and sometimes, after all, imperfectly emerges ; the youthful disciple begins in light, and is not liable to darkness ; except his mind should become clouded by error, or his heart, in some degree, seduced by temptation. Instead, therefore, of being, in the first instance, occupied with such views of the Gospel as are thought fittest to relieve the mind from apprehensions of incumbent wrath, or impending destruction, he is supremely engaged with those representations which invite to happiness, and those provisions which, faithfully improved, ensure its attainment. He, accordingly, sees nothing to sadden, but every thing to cheer and animate his heart. He is fully aware of the evils which await him, should he swerve from the path of rectitude ; but he is still more sensibly im-

pressed with the blessings he already possesses, and the yet greater blessings which he sees before him. He does not dream of advancing without exertion: he knows that he must "keep his heart with all due diligence;" and even, occasionally, "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." But he is richly compensated, not only by the consciousness of having cordially and spontaneously chosen the better part, and by his power, through divine grace, of keeping himself so that the wicked one touches him not; but, also, by the indescribable union of natural with divine enjoyment, which must exist where every religious idea is replete with cheerfulness, and every mental association is imbued with religion.

In this case, therefore, and may we not add, as a general truth, in such a case only, does the aspect of practical Christianity shew itself as it really is; that is, infinitely attractive, and essentially delightful. To such a mind, it will appear, not only as the means of everlasting safety, but as the source of the truest and most exalted pleasures which can be enjoyed on earth; as that which offers to the unvitiated imagination, treasures of the sublime, the beautiful, and the admirable, which no range of thought could

anywhere else discover, or, of itself, so much as imagine; and, far more than this, as an object so fitted to engage and occupy the deepest and tenderest affections of the heart, as to make it consciously and ineffably be felt, as the very home of the soul, the element in which, in the most excellent sense, the spirit of man was made to “live, and move, and have its being.”

Amidst such views and feelings, there would, even on natural principles, be little liability, either to vacillate, or linger; and we may add, that, as it was observed respecting the propulsive power of apprehended evil that it diminishes, so it may as truly be said of the attractive power of good, that it increases in proportion to advancement. The continued progress, therefore, of the youthful votary, is as morally certain as the cloudless tranquillity of his path. As he seeks, not only good, but perfect gifts from the Father of lights, and as he, more and more, finds those gifts to be like the source from which they come, without variableness, or even shadow of turning, there is no intermingled circumstance to blunt his relish, no boundary to terminate his progress. To his winged spirit, death itself can scarcely seem to interrupt a course which has already been as a heaven upon earth; and the endless

continuance, and increasing bliss of which, is, itself, to constitute the heaven of heaven.

Such, then, being the advantage of having the softness of human nature bent and fashioned by the nurture of Christianity, instead of the indurated mind being broken by its force ; can we be in any danger of placing undue value on a scheme of Providence, which, in an age of unusual religious activity, seems almost exclusively to correspond to the one highest and noblest Christian purpose ? That few are availing themselves of this provision, that its true value is overlooked, not only by its enemies, but by its professing friends, does not alter the intrinsic truth of the case ; cannot invalidate the recorded and authenticated evidences, already afforded, of its unrivalled tendency ; nor shake the probability, that the fulness of its efficacy is reserved for a more advanced state of society, and a brighter period of our Lord's mystical kingdom.

The facts which cannot be confuted, are, that the Church of England, in her view of the baptismal regeneration of infants, understood as she herself has explained it, lays such a foundation for an entire life of religion ; for a choice of it, from joyful preference, rather than relentless necessity ; for continued culture of its noblest

principles ; for unbroken and unalloyed enjoyment of its purest and deepest pleasures ; and for growing attainment of its amplest benefits and richest blessings, as, it may be confidently asserted, cannot yet be paralleled in the Christian world. And further, that, notwithstanding the inadequate justice hitherto done to this peculiar feature of our establishment ; notwithstanding the comparatively low and limited degree in which this providential talent has been improved, or even exhibited, it will be found, on examination, (an examination which, if made with discernment, may be challenged without fear), that, to the influence of his doctrine, of the early grace which it has been the means of sustaining, and of the liberal and unclouded ideas and habits which it infused, we owe by far the most, and perhaps, indirectly, all the modern representations which we as yet possess, of healthful, dignified, serene, mature, and substantially joyful piety.

Will it be asked, in what manner the doctrine of the Church of England, respecting baptismal grace, tends to these exalted views ? Is it not obvious, that if such an early initiation into the spiritual discipline of the Gospel be, indeed, a part of the divine economy, this initiation, when

retained and improved, will, in the nature of things, imply a more radical engrafture, and more entire coalescence of the whole man, into the scheme and spirit of the Gospel, than could be reckoned upon from any converting process, at a subsequent season of life? The plan of redemption evidently does not violate, but consult, the laws of human nature. Although, therefore, it effectually provides for the conquest of the very worst mental and moral habits, it does not ordinarily extirpate them, as if they had never been. On the contrary, it leaves much to be done by the convert himself, toward maturing that rectitude of heart and life, the reinstatement of which, in principle and ruling tendency, constitutes true conversion. It is accordingly intimated, on every occasion in the New Testament, that to turn from a sinful to a religious course of life, is a business of difficulty, exertion, and the severest self-denial. It is described by Him, who best knew what was in man, as sometimes involving abnegations equivalent to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye: and we find St. Paul inculcating on those very persons, the reality of whose spiritual life he had just before, not only emphatically, but sublimely asserted,—that their former propensities must be surmounted by continued mortification.

To adult converts, therefore, however firm of purpose, and upright in heart, the paths of religion can hardly be, in the first instance, ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace. Their conflicts, on the contrary, are likely to be long, as well as painful; and it might be feared, that a religious life, thus circumstanced in its commencement and progress, though not destitute of consolations, nor devoid of solid inward peace, should nevertheless retain, perhaps to the end, a deep intermixture of awful apprehensions, and gloomy associations; since these not only attended the first steps of the amended course, but were themselves predominant motives in producing that amendment.

We may, perhaps, go still further, and assert, that all the sterner features of the Gospel have special reference to the case of adults; who, when once habituated to evil, could not be subdued without terrific denuncements, nor kept upright without rigid discipline. Those denuncements, therefore, and that discipline, when seen in their true light, can no otherwise be regarded, than as expressions of the tender mercy of God, who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Still, it is not less true, that these supplementary expedients, of

which the Gospel makes use, must, within the sphere of their influence, comparatively becloud the essential glories and beauties, of which the Gospel intrinsically consists; and that, on the whole, it is impossible that the mind which is thus wrought upon, though infinitely compensated in its way, and in its end, for all the terrors which it feels, and all the severities which it undergoes, should contemplate the Gospel scheme with that unmingled pleasure, embrace it with that pure complacency, or pursue its objects with that alacrity and intensity, which would be the natural and necessary result of a yet practically unvitiated mind and heart receiving, in all its tenderness and freshness, the purely attractive influences of the everlasting Gospel; the light of the glory of God, unimpaired and unclouded, in the face of Jesus Christ.

THE END.

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