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* The "Plea for the Middle Classes" was the document which led to the foundation of the large groups of "Woodard Schools" which now (1884) include 3 in Sussex (Dancing, Horst-Pierpoint & Horsham) 1 in Staffs. (Denstone) 1 in Shropsh. (Ellesmere, dependent on Denstone) 1 in Somerset. (Taunton) & 1 I think in Yorkshire. J.G.T.

> to a Plea for the Middle Classes by W. Woodard.

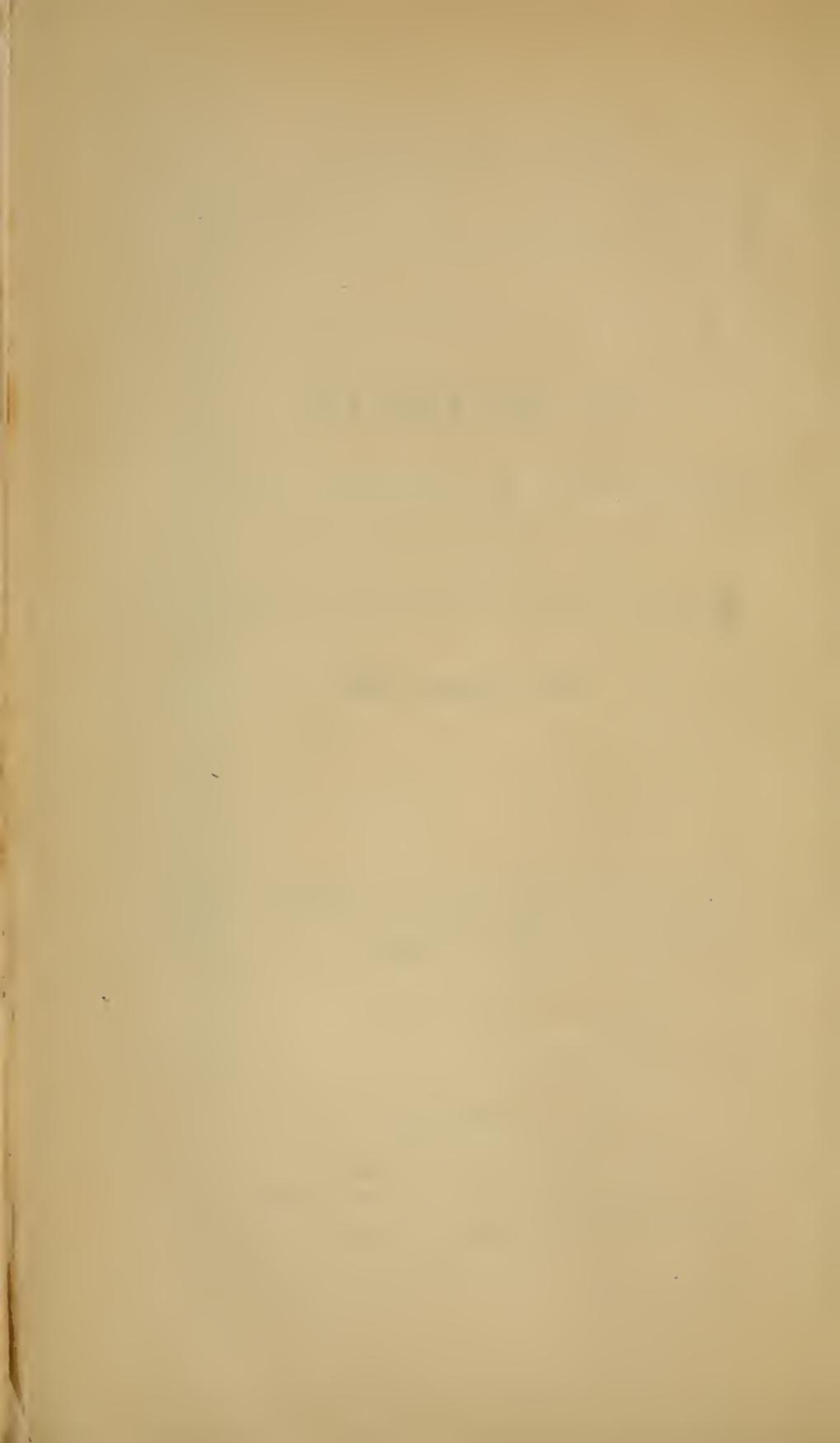
THE EUCHARIST
A SACRAMENT AND A SACRIFICE.

A SERMON,
PREACHED AT BIRCH CHURCH,
ON SUNDAY, THE 5th OF JULY, 1846,
BEING THE SUNDAY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
The Consecration.

BY
WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D.,
VICAR OF LEEDS.

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1847.



TO
THE REVEREND
GEORGE HENRY GREVILLE ANSON, M. A.
INCUMBENT OF BIRCH,
THIS SERMON,
PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST
OF HIMSELF AND HIS CHURCHWARDENS
IS INSCRIBED
BY
HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND
THE AUTHOR.



S E R M O N.

I PETER II. 5.

"YE ALSO, AS LIVELY STONES, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE,
AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES,
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST."

By those who believe in the fundamental verities of the Christian Religion, the act of solemn worship which is about to take place, in the celebration, for the first time in this Sanctuary, of the Holy Eucharist, will be regarded as a deed far more sacred, and far more important than the ceremony of Wednesday last.

For the first time, the peculiar act of Christian worship is here to be performed. Heathens may pray, and worldlings may hear; but Christians, and true Christians only, can partake of these holy mysteries. What to them is a mystery, a sacrament, and a sacrifice, is to others only a ceremony, which they are guilty by their presence of profaning.

If, then, I were to regard only the circumstances to which I have alluded, a discourse upon the Holy Eucharist would be appropriate on this occasion; but it becomes more so, when I am informed by that beloved Pastor, whom God in His mercy has sent to minister among you, that there are several here present, who having lately received the grace of Confirmation, will communicate this day for the first time. My young friends, may the good God be with you, now, and ever:

may you continue to be regular and frequent communicants, and learn so to depend upon God as to seek every week that grace, for the want of which so many souls are languishing among us.

Let me place before you this blessed ordinance as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice :—God the Blessed Spirit be with me, to send my words to the hearts of the converted, that they may receive edification ; and may He restrain the unconverted, the Pharisee, or the Sadducee, if such be present, from profanation and blasphemy : yea, rather may He graciously hear our prayers this day, and turn their hearts unto the Lord.

In a Sacrament God gives something to us : by a Sacrifice we give something to God.

Let us, then, first consider what God gives to us in the Holy Communion.

It was at that solemn hour, when our God Incarnate was preparing to offer Himself an atonement for the sins of the world upon the cross, that He, even the Lord Jesus Christ, instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And when He took the bread and brake it, He said, “Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you :” and so of the cup, “Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.”

Now, it cannot fail to strike you, that these words addressed without explanation to the Apostles at the institution of the Lord's Supper, needed an explanation ; and doubtless would have received one, had not a previous discourse, which our Lord had held with these same Apostles, been sufficient for the purpose. I allude to the discourse of our Lord, recorded in the 6th chapter of St. John's Gospel.

There our Lord declares in the 27th verse, that there is sustenance provided for the immortal soul as

well as for the mortal body, or rather for the whole immortal man ; and that He, the Son of Man, had, in this His character of the Messiah, power to supply us with it, as He was sealed or appointed by God the Father for that purpose. After some colloquy with the unbelieving Jews, we find our blessed Lord, in the 33rd verse, advancing a step, and not only asserting that there is food of an eternal maintenance provided by Him, but affirming that "the bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world." Not only had Christ this Bread, this spiritual sustenance to give, but that spiritual sustenance was His very Self ; and this He more distinctly says in the 35th verse, "I am the Bread of Life ; he that cometh to me," hungering after that Bread, "shall never hunger," his hunger shall be appeased ; "and he that believeth in me," believeth that I am this spiritual sustenance, "shall never thirst." It is not meant, of course, that the disciples of Christ should have no appetite for this spiritual food ; what is meant is, that coming unto Christ as their sustenance, their hunger and thirst should be appeased, and of hunger and thirst they should not die.

It seemed strange to the Jews that the Man of Sorrows, rejected and despised, who stood before them should speak thus, and like Infidels in other ages, who condemn before they ascertain the purport of a mystery, they murmured. "The Jews murmured at him," as Infidels still murmur at the Church, "because he said, I am the Bread which came down from Heaven ; and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know, how is it then that he saith I came down from Heaven ?" But our Lord did not vouchsafe to explain Himself further to those who were perversely blind, whose hearts were hardened ; He merely repeated His assertion, "I am

that Bread of Life. Your Fathers did eat manna," which was only a type of this, the true Bread that cometh down from Heaven, "and are dead. This," alluding to Himself, "is the Bread that cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof" (or rather feed thereupon, for the original refers to a continuous act,) "and not die." And then, without explaining, advancing further in the revelation of His will, our Lord proceeds: "I am the living or life giving Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man shall eat of, "or feed upon" this Bread, he shall live for ever. And the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The Jews again strove among themselves. Like Infidels of a later age, instead of seeking to ascertain where so great a blessing was promised, how they might obtain it, they perplexed themselves with a very inferior question, as to how the thing promised could be accomplished. The Jews strove among themselves saying, "*How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?*" To satisfy a profane curiosity, suggested merely by the intellect and not proceeding from a heart desirous to know and do what is right—this was never our Lord's purpose. Our blessed Lord therefore only re-iterated His assertion in terms yet stronger and more unequivocal. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat, or feed upon, the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,*" or make His blood your drink, "*ye have no life, no spiritual life in you,*" or ye have not anything in you whereby to support your spiritual life. "*Whoso feedeth on my flesh and maketh my blood his drink, I will raise him up at the last day.* For my flesh is meat indeed," not like manna, a mere type of spiritual or heavenly food, "*and my blood is drink indeed.* He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the

living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

You perceive what is here required, a participation of Christ,—heavenly food which is Christ himself, as once crucified, who has now been glorified. It is not here said that Faith in Christ is the one thing needful, for although it is only by Faith that we can receive Christ, He being only received by the faithful, yet faith is not the *bread* but the *hand* by which we receive the bread. Faith in Christ crucified is the condition required, but the bread of life is the reward conferred upon that faith. Faith is the qualification, but the thing to be sought is the Body and Blood of Christ.

Such was the instruction which the Apostles had received ; and having received their instructions, it is easy to perceive how they would understand our Lord's words when He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; "This is my Body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of Me ;" and, likewise when He had taken the Cup, "Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me."

He had before told them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, and now He appointed the means by which this was to be done. His natural body was visibly before them at the time of the institution, they could not, therefore, have understood Him to mean that this was distributed to them, or that they in doing as He did hereafter, were to think of doing this ; they must also have remembered what our Lord, in the discourse already alluded to, had expressly said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ;" they could have regarded the bread and wine thus consecrated merely as instru-

ments, deeds of conveyance, by which, to persons duly qualified, that spiritual sustenance, which is Christ Himself, might be conveyed. This they would understand afterwards more clearly; for when our Lord declared, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," He connected the words with an allusion to His ascension: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"

We may now place the doctrine before you in another point of view. Man's misery consists in his alienation from God. Man can only be restored to happiness by re-union with God. But God cannot come into contact with an unholy thing. Therefore God created for Himself, in the womb of a pure Virgin, a body free from all taint of original corruption, a sinless, spotless body; and the second Person in the Godhead, by assuming this body, became Man also. He did not cease to be God, but He who was God from all eternity became Man, not forming thereby two Persons, but in His one Divine Person uniting the two natures. Thus being God *and* Man, he is the Mediator. It is as Man that He is Flesh and Blood, and it was by becoming Man that he made the Atonement; and it is as Man that we are to approach Him, we are to draw nigh to Him continually, and seek such a union with Him that He may dwell in us and we in Him. But He whom we approach as man is also God: if then we are one with Him, we are one with God. He thus is the Life of our souls. But how are we thus to unite ourselves to that Man who, being God also, is the Mediator through whom we are brought back unto union with God? When your hearts are prepared by penitence and faith, receive the Bread that is broken and the Cup which is blessed in the Holy Eucharist, and they, though remaining still in their substance bread and wine, shall be to you the

deed of conveyance, and virtually, to all intents and purposes, that Body and Blood of Christ which they represent. Christ has now a spiritual Body, it is this Body which profiteth, the Spirit profiteth, that spiritual Body with which He has ascended; still a Body, —(and we are to bear ever in mind, that it is by being still the Son of Man that He acts as a Mediator,) but a spiritual Body, a glorified Body, with qualities very different from that body which He possessed in the time of His humiliation, as we may see from His intercourse with His disciples after His resurrection, but nevertheless the same Body in which He was crucified. In that Body He now sitteth at the right hand of Glory; but still He, the Lord Jesus, is really present here on earth wherever two or three are assembled in His name; much more therefore really present at this holy ordinance. The sun is placed in the firmament; yet there is a sense in which we say the sun shines upon earth; a sense in which the sun is more present at one time and place than in another. And so can we understand how Christ our Saviour, though sitting at the right hand of God, can be specially present in the Eucharist to convey Himself through the consecrated emblems of His body and blood to the hearts of His faithful people.

When He instituted this blessed sacrament, He anticipated the effects of His ascension, and imparted Himself spiritually to the souls of His apostles; and spiritually, though really, He has done so, and continues to do so to the faithful ever since.

And hence we see the first great object for which Christians come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Requiring spiritual food, they know that Christ only is that food; He only is the living bread; and they know also that the cup which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ, and the bread which

we break, the communion of the Body of Christ ; though it be bread that we eat, consecrated to be the symbol of Christ's Body broken, and though it be of the cup that we drink, yet through means of these, Christ communicates Himself to the souls of the faithful, and the faithful, participate of Christ. There is no transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ; for then they would cease to be symbols, and the whole rite would no longer be sacramental ; but as in the things of the world, the patent signed by the sovereign is the instrument by which a peerage is conveyed to a subject qualified to receive it, or as the title deeds are the forms through which an estate is conveyed to a purchaser,—(the illustrations are those of St. Bernard.)—so are the consecrated bread and the consecrated cup the means of conveyance to the soul, prepared by penitence and faith, of that great spiritual gift which in the Holy Sacrament we seek. And he that receives unworthily, incurs an awful penalty in so receiving. Why ? Because he has not faith to discern the Lord's Body.

Throughout what has been said you will observe that bread and wine, the Body and Blood, are always united : if we administer the bread, then, without the cup, the ordinance at which we minister may be edifying, but it is no longer that sacrament which Christ our Saviour instituted, and of which the Apostle speaks. I say this in passing, because in the Romish Church, since these things are so, the Holy Eucharist, the gospel ordinance, has ceased to be administered to the body of the people ; and to the loss of this sacrament may probably, or in part, be traced the gross errors and deceptions, and generally speaking the want of spirituality among the Romanists. In these days, it is necessary to note these things, since

ignorance is regarding too often the novelties of Romanism as primitive, and craft is concealing the superior advantages, which we, of a church canonically reformed, possess. The one fact, that it must be doubtful whether the Romish Church administers the holy sacrament at all, except to the clergy, would render communion with Rome a thing to be feared by those who take for their guide the Bible, as understood in the primitive church. But assuredly those persons have no right to complain of their error, who, baptized into a church distinguished from the Romish as in other things so especially in this, that in it the sacraments are duly administered, refuse to partake of this most Holy Sacrament.

I have now considered the first part of our subject; I have shewn how the Eucharist is a Sacrament, the means through which we receive a gift from God. I shall commence the second part of my subject by quoting the words of a judicious divine, who has treated fully of this divine ordinance, and has taken of it, perhaps, the lowest view which is consistent with orthodoxy. "That the Sacrament of the Eucharist," says Dr. Waterland, "in whole or in part, in a sense proper or improper, is a sacrifice of the Christian Church, is a point agreed upon among all knowing and sober Divines, Popish, Lutheran, or Reformed."

Now in what sense it is such it will be my object in the remaining portion of this discourse to point out.

When we offer a Sacrifice, I have already stated that a gift is presented unto the Lord; somewhat is offered to God.

Hence the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is a sacrifice; for the death and sufferings of the God-man were offered to God as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; He made

His soul an offering for sin ; He bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, and He made peace by the Blood of the cross : in one word, Christ appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself, and as it is appointed unto man once to die,—so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.*

You will observe how strongly this is put, how forcibly it is reiterated in scripture, that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, that we were redeemed by His Blood, made nigh by the Blood of Christ. And in treating of the Eucharist sacrificially, we must, if we would act on the principles of the Church of England, bring the fact prominently forward, that there upon the cross, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. At the reformation of our Church, three hundred years ago, the statement of this article of our faith was introduced, parenthetically forced, as it were, into the prayer of consecration, as a kind of warning against a pernicious tenet of the Church of Rome upon this point. And in treating of this subject, since the Church of Rome still retains her false doctrine, we must, however unwilling to touch in the slightest degree upon controversy, just in passing, observe that the Church of England now protests against the notion that there is any repetition or continuation of that one fresh, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, in the Holy Eucharist.

The Romish Divines have taken occasion from the name of sacrifice given to the Eucharist, to tell us of a fresh immolation and death ; to attach to it an efficacy of its own and an independent merit, an efficacy and

* Isaiah liii. 5—15. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Heb. ix. 27.

merit independent of the one meritorious sacrifice of the Cross ; to make men place therein a confidence which cannot but be superstitious, whenever it refers not to the Cross of Christ. And now you see why they adhere so firmly to their false doctrine of transubstantiation ; they, in their error, represent themselves as offering up the Son of God substantially and really to the Father. And since they imagine that they do this by offering the consecrated bread and wine, they must maintain that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the very substance of our Lord Jesus Christ. "This kind of oblation," says Bishop Ridley, "standeth upon transubstantiation." And on this account it was that our Reformers were ready to die at the stake rather than admit an error fraught with such awful consequences, which indeed virtually sets aside the Cross of Christ. It was not with them, as it has been with modern puritans and infidels, a mere question as to the *mode* of Christ's presence in the Holy Communion : they did not deny the reality of His presence, which would do away with the reality of the sacrament ; what they denied was the particular notion of transubstantiation, not on account of any difficulty in believing it, but on account of its virtually setting aside and superseding the fundamental fact of our religion, the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction of the Cross. Both Romanists and Reformers perceived this ; on this doctrine really depends that doctrine of the Mass, in which it is supposed that the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is repeated ; to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation was virtually, then, to deny the chief peculiarity of the modern Church of Rome, and therefore the Romanists made the acceptance of their figment of transubstantiation a test, for refusing to take which, they sentenced their victims to death :

the Reformers of the Church of England *admitted* the soundness of the reasoning, and therefore, rather than take the test, they died.

The chief reference to the sacrifice of *the cross* belongs, according to the right doctrine, to the sacramental part of the Eucharist. The sacrifice of the cross is exhibited and represented before God and men, under the symbols of the bread and wine; and the bread and wine being duly consecrated, become to the worthy communicants, to all intents and purposes, virtually and interpretatively, the Body and Blood of that precious Lamb of God who was once, and once for all, offered upon the cross; and by partaking of them we become partakers of the one atoning Sacrifice. The grand sacrifice once offered is dispensed and communicated to individual believers in the Eucharist, by and through the consecrated symbols: but it is not repeated. Hence the Eucharist is regarded as a Feast upon that great sacrifice.

But while the Scriptures and the Fathers are, like our own Church, strong upon this point, they as frequently speak of *other* Sacrifices which Christians present as their *own* Sacrifices, the best they can give to God. It is a christian privilege to approach God with boldness, to offer Him gifts, and to know that what we humbly offer with faithful and grateful hearts He will graciously vouchsafe to accept. God gives us a property in certain things; what He has given He permits us to regard as our own, and out of what is, in this sense, our own, He permits us to make offerings to Him. Through the one atoning Sacrifice, the death of God our Saviour upon the cross, God is reconciled to man, and man, when justified by his faith in Christ, may draw nigh unto God as to a reconciled Father, who will accept gifts at our hands, not because He needs any thing at the hands of His creatures, but

because He is pleased by this token of gratitude on the part of His children. As we are pleased by marks of attention and affection on the part of our little ones, so is God well pleased by every indication of love evinced by His babes in Christ. Out of Christ it were presumption to approach God with any such intent: but through Christ we are permitted to bring our gifts, and in offering any thing to God we offer a sacrifice.

Let us proceed to consider, then, what our sacrifices under the gospel are. And here I must premise that the gospel is a spiritual dispensation, and every thing we do must have a spiritual reference. Let us take for example alms-deeds as our first way of making a sacrifice to God: a sacrifice is something we do or give to God: Christ our God hath declared that what we do to the poor and afflicted in His name, He will regard as done unto Himself; therefore, the giving of alms is a sacrifice. On this principle, in writing to the Philippians, St. Paul, refering to true liberality towards himself, says, "I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."* "To do good and to communicate forget not," saith the same Apostle to the Hebrews, adding, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."† It was said even to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."‡

It is not the money which is the sacrifice; the money expended in almsgiving, is only the outward and visible sign by which the benevolent feeling is expressed: for money given to the poor grudgingly or of necessity, money for instance, such as the law of the land may require of us for the support of paupers,

* Phil. iv. 10.

† Heb. xiii. 16.

‡ Acts x. 5.

could never be regarded by any one in this point of view. It must be a freewill offering ; and although, where the benevolent feeling is, benevolent actions must be the result, we do not always conclude that, because a poor person is relieved, there must be generous feeling in him that administers the relief—other motives may give rise to the action. The real offering, then, to God is internal, spiritual : He accepts the deed, when the deed is done from the benevolent sentiment, which benevolent sentiment is the real offering.

And thus we see how in one way, at least, we can offer sacrifices acceptable to God,

From the Book of Revelation we learn that through the intercession of Christ, the prayers of the saints go up as an odour before God, the prayers of the saints ascend before God as the smoke of the incense.|| According to the Prophecy of Malachi, “From the rising up of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name with a pure offering.”§ All these are sacrificial terms, and denote, that, over and above the fact that prayer is the means by which we tell to our Heavenly Father our wants and ask for redress,—prayer is to be regarded in the light of a sacrifice. This is more apparent in praise and thanksgiving; for prayer has reference to ourselves, but praise and thanksgiving is a direct offering to God. Therefore saith the Apostle, “let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* Under this head comes our text particularly, although I apply it to the whole subject, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus

|| Rev. v. 8.

§ Malachi i. 2.

* Heb. xiii. 15.

Christ :" he is alluding here to the continual offering up of praise, which is the great employment of the Church. Again, the dedication of a contrite heart, sanctified by grace, is another offering which God will accept, for, in reference to the new covenant especially, the Holy Ghost saith, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."† Another Gospel sacrifice is the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies, "I beseech you," saith St. Paul to the Romans, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."‡"

Without entering further into detail, you see what we can do if we would offer sacrifices to God,—and all these sacrifices the communicant offers, when he takes part in the service of the Holy Eucharist. Alms are presented to God for the use of His poor : and as God is about to feast His people at His own table, by conveying an inward and spiritual grace through the outward and visible signs, an oblation is made to Him of bread and wine, to be consecrated for this purpose : these are visible indications on the part of the Church, of the readiness of God's people to do all that is requisite and necessary, as far as in them lies, for the relief of the distressed, and the establishment of true religion. We offer also our praises and thanksgivings, pleading the merits of Christ our Saviour ; and the priest, standing at the altar, in our name, offers our services to Almighty God, throughout the whole office, in effect, and in one place in these most solemn words ; "And here,"—even at Thy table, thus becoming an altar,—"here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

† Psalm xli. 17.

‡ Romans xii. 1.

Well then may a service which combines all kinds of Christian sacrifices be denominated, as it was in the first ages of the church, and still is, the great sacrifice of the Christian Church. But we may proceed yet further; it is the sacrifice of faith, and hope, and self-humiliation in commemorating the great sacrifice of the cross, and resting entirely upon it for all its efficacy: it is also the offering up by your pastor of true converts and sincere penitents, brought to God by his instrumentality,—a most affecting thought, on which St. Paul dwells more than once.* It is this—but it is more than this; “for we,” saith the Apostle, in reference to this holy ordinance, “being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.” The blessed Eucharist, therefore, is not merely the offering to God of this or that individual person, is not merely the offering to God of one single congregation; it is the presenting to God, as prepared to do, or to endure whatever He may see fit to appoint, the whole mystical body of Christ, Christ and His members; the Church militant and the Church triumphant, with their divine Head. Thou, O God, we seem to say, didst give thine only begotten Son for the salvation of the world; out of the world He has gathered His Church; and behold, the whole Church, visible and invisible, militant and triumphant, with Christ the Head of the Church, in that He is man as well as God, standeth before the throne of glory, ready, like the hosts of heaven, to do Thy will. Thou hast sacrificed Thyself for us, Thou hast given us grace to make an offering to Thee,—behold it, even all we have and all we are.

How glorious, how sublime; how overwhelmingly grand is the view thus taken of the distinguishing rite of Christian worship!

* Romans xv. 16; Philipp. ii. 17; compare Isaiah lvi. 20.

The one sacrifice of our God, once made upon the cross, gratefully commemorated, and in a figure exhibited before God, and men, and angels, as our only hope of salvation ; that one sacrifice applied to faithful hearts, so that they themselves may have grace to offer their spiritual sacrifices ; and the whole service a peace-offering, a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

But what the Church is to be and do as a whole, each member of the Church is to be and to do in himself,—as the Church, the mystical body of Christ, is devoted to God, so must each component part of that body be; or in the blessings vouchsafed to the body he can have no share.

Observe—unless you bear your part in this service, in the Holy Communion, you disobey Christ, and disobedient christians forfeit the grace they once received ; and yet in this service you cannot really take a part, unless you are prepared to offer yourself, your soul, and your body, a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto God. The *almost* christian may not he indeed approach this holy ordinance,—but will the *almost* christian be saved at the last day ? Answer this question at home and on your knees.

But you are unworthy to offer any sacrifice to God ? And who is *not* unworthy ? we can only receive this Holy Sacrament worthily by acknowledging, as we do in the communion office, that we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under the Lord's table. We must not confound our being *unworthy* to approach the Lord, with our receiving the Holy Communion *unworthily* ; for the two things are quite distinct. When we speak of receiving unworthily, we refer to the *motive* with which we receive, the *object* which we have in view. We are to receive the Holy Communion in obedience to our Lord's command, and

in order to obtain a spiritual blessing. If we approach the holy ordinance without regard to the divine commandment, and with a worldly, instead of a spiritual object, then we receive unworthily.

Some years ago, it was necessary for every person holding office under the government, to be professedly a member of the Church of England: made a member of the Church at Baptism, he could only prove that he continued to be a member of the same, by his receiving the holy communion: to be a communicant, therefore, was a necessary qualification for office. We can easily imagine what might take place under such circumstances, viz:—that men with infidel hearts, neither caring for Christ's commandment, nor seeking a spiritual gift, would come to the holy communion, merely to qualify themselves for some worldly appointment.—This was to receive unworthily.

In some places, the alms collected at the offertory are distributed among the communicants immediately after the service. We can here again imagine poor persons to attend, not out of respect to the command, or with a view to the divine blessing, but to have a share in the alms:—this too would be to receive unworthily.

A parent sometimes urges a son to receive the blessed Sacrament: that son is living in the habit of some known sin, but to oblige his parent, presents himself at the altar, his object being not to seek the grace, to the reception of which his sin is an impediment, but to win his parent's favour, or to prevent his supposing that he is guilty of an offence which he desires to conceal: this again would be to receive unworthily.

These illustrations will serve to shew what is meant by receiving unworthily, and will enable you to see that no one who, having been baptized into Christ, truly repents and unfeignedly believes the holy gospel, can

receive unworthily, however conscious of unworthiness he may be,—if he has recourse to the Holy Eucharist in obedience to Christ's commandment and to seek a blessing to his soul.

What is requisite in every one is, first that he shall have been admitted into Christ's Church, by holy Baptism; for this ordinance, the blessed Eucharist, belongs exclusively to christians: secondly, that he believes all the articles of the christian faith; and thirdly, that he is leading a moral life. Without faith we cannot receive the blessing, and an immoral life would repel the blessing when offered: without faith we are as a man would be, to whom food is offered when in the paroxysm of disease, he is unable to open his mouth to receive it; if leading an immoral life, we should be, as a man whose diseased stomach would nauseate the viands presented to it, however wholesome in themselves.

It is necessary to mention this, since people sometimes are induced to disobey their Saviour, because they conceive that some qualifications relating to their internal feelings are necessary. Fervent and glowing feelings are a blessing, and, when accompanied by consistent conduct, a blessing direct from God: but even to His most favoured servants, God does not at all times vouchsafe the blessing of fervour: and though fervour be a blessing much to be desired, it is never to be used as the test of our religious condition. We are to judge of our spiritual state by our works. Are we morally correct? If you make any molten image to worship it, according to what is stated in the Communion Service, you are cursed, and therefore you are not in a condition to communicate; the same is to be said of him who curseth father or mother, or who removeth his neighbour's land-mark; of him who maketh the blind to go out of his way, or perverteth the

judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow ; of him who smiteth his neighbour secretly, or committeth adultery ; who taketh reward to slay the innocent, or putteth his trust in man, and taketh man for his defence, and in his heart goeth from the Lord. All these curses relate, you will observe, to *moral* offences ; and who are they whom the express words of the Church warns not to come to the Holy Communion ? “ If any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of His word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or any other grievous *crime*, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table.”

If you are blasphemers or adulterers, or in envy, hatred, or malice, or any other grievous crime, you cannot love the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore you cannot, on a principle of love, obey his Commandment, and consequently you cannot properly receive the Holy Sacrament, and it is better not to receive it at all. But if you are not blasphemers nor adulterers, if you are *not* living in envy, hatred, malice, or any other grievous crime ; then what hinders you from keeping the commandment of God, the last affectionate injunction of your God, just before He laid down His life upon the cross for your sins ? If you are seeking to avoid other sins, seek to avoid this sin also, for “ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* All fears on the part of baptized persons, who are not leading immoral lives, are very sinful ; all such fears as § hall prevent them from doing what their Saviour has required them to do,—for such fears indicate a want of faith. Will you not trust that Blessed Person who said, “ This do in remembrance of me ?” Do you think that the Lord Jesus who died for your sins, would

* James ii. 10.

institute an ordinance and command its observance, not to a chosen few, but to all his followers, if there were danger to your souls in obeying? Your souls are in danger for not obeying,—in obedience there is safety.

“It is a solemn thing to receive the Holy Sacrament,” you will say, and God forbid that any should partake of the ordinance without admitting that it is a most solemn thing. Cherish this feeling; it is a right feeling; but if the thought of its being a solemn thing be carried so far as to prevent your obeying your Saviour and your God, then, that thought of yours, that it is a solemn thing, becomes a sinful thought, and must be overcome. A religious scruple, however, founded on a right feeling of reverence and fear to offend, if it be indulged so as to weaken the willing spirit of obedience, becomes sinful. It is a solemn thing to receive the Holy Communion, but the ordinance was appointed by a loving Saviour,—and that same Saviour, perfect man as well as perfect God, who died for your sins, rose again for your justification, and is even now at the right hand of Power interceding for you.

You are unworthy, but you are believers in Him; and by your faith you are justified, when with honest and true hearts you draw near to your heavenly Father in this or in any other ordinance. You are doing what only holy creatures are qualified to do; you are conscious that there is sin even in your holy things; but you are believers in Christ, and therefore God will impute holiness to you. Your faith will be accounted for righteousness. You shall be for Christ’s sake accounted righteous, that, approaching God through the appointed means, you may partake more largely of the Spirit of Christ, and so in the Lord become really righteous. It is thus that justification by faith, pro-

perly understood, is intended to prepare the way for sanctification.

Be this, then, the position of our souls, when we draw nigh unto God in the holy sacrament,—I am unworthy to do this great thing, but by my faith I continue to be what I was made at my baptism, a living member of Christ; and to me, as such, drawing nigh unto God, God will Himself draw nigh, permitting me to act in this regard, as if I were already what I am gradually becoming, a righteous creature, and imparting to me the grace, which in this blessed sacrament I seek, in such a degree as my soul is prepared to receive it.

Cling by faith to Jesus, and then fear not. He who instituted this ordinance, He, the loving Saviour, the God made man to be our Mediator, He the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, ever liveth to make intercession for us,—He who gave the commandment *This do in remembrance of me*, dwelleth *in us*, except we be reprobates. He is a God at hand, not a God afar off; and He will protect us, and guide us, and guard us, and bless us, wherever, and under whatever circumstances we seek to obey Him; He will come to us through His Sacrament, and when we are one with Him, we may offer a sacrifice acceptable to God, ourselves, our souls, and our bodies, all we have and all we are.

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