

The
LAST DISCOURSES
of OUR LORD

Readings for every
Day of Lent

Dr. A. G. MORTIMER

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The Last Discourses of our Lord.

THE LAST DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD.

ARRANGED AS
READINGS FOR THE FORTY DAYS OF LENT.

BY THE REV.

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"THE CHURCH'S LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR," ETC.

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TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
OZI WILLIAM WHITAKER, D.D., LL.D.,
BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA,
IN MEMORY OF TWELVE YEARS WORK
IN HIS DIOCESE,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS INSCRIBED
WITH AFFECTIONATE RESPECT.

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Preface.

AMONG the most sublime utterances of our Blessed Lord, would be placed, by the majority of Christians, His last Discourses. These were delivered partly in the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem and partly in some place on the way to Gethsemane. They are recorded by S. John in his Gospel, and are addressed to the eleven faithful apostles, and they constitute at once Christ's farewell and His final revelation to them.

The pathetic occasion on which they were spoken, and the sublime character of the subjects of which they treat, endow these Discourses with a profound and unique interest for every Christian, and yet they rarely form the subject of addresses, and among our devotional works I know of only one in which they are treated with any fulness, namely, "The Upper Chamber," by the Rev. Father Benson,

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❧ Preface.

S.S.J.E., which forms two volumes of the series entitled "The Final Passover." I read carefully the other volumes of this Series some ten years ago, but omitted these two, intending to take them up on another occasion. I, however, forgot them until my attention was called to them a few weeks ago, after this book was in the printer's hands. I regret, therefore, that I have not had the advantage of consulting them.

I am acquainted with many Commentaries, and the best known works on the Passion, but the only one which I have used with any frequency in this book is Bishop Westcott's Commentary on S. John; and my indebtedness to this, as to other works of the same author, is very great indeed.

These addresses were originally given as Meditations in S. Mark's, Philadelphia, last Lent. They were taken down as delivered by a stenographer, from whose notes they are reproduced. I have, however, rearranged them in forty portions, so as to furnish devotional readings or subjects for meditation for the forty days of Lent.

I have drawn attention to the most important variations in the text, and to inaccurate and

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inadequate translations. Beyond this, my plan has been simply to take the Words of our Lord paragraph by paragraph, explaining them and applying them, according to my ability, to the practical needs of Christians in our day.

In putting forth these addresses I have gratefully to acknowledge, as on a former occasion, the encouragement and assistance of Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, of New York. Together with the two volumes on the Passion, they form a somewhat complete, practical and devotional study of the last hours of our Blessed Lord's life. Mr. Gerry has thought that such a series of works may be helpful to the large class of persons whose occupation prohibits them from attending addresses, except in the evening, on week days in Lent. They may also, perhaps, be useful for daily readings at Lenten Services.

A. G. M.

S. Mark's, Philadelphia,
All Saints, 1904.

The
Last Discourses of Our Lord.

I.

Ash Wednesday.

THE DEPARTURE OF JUDAS.

S. JOHN XIII. 31, 32.

“Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.”



OUR Lord's last Words to the world which He died to save were spoken from the pulpit of the Cross, but His last discourses to the disciples whom He had trained to carry on His work seem to have been spoken immediately after the institution of the Holy Eucharist, partly in the upper chamber, partly on the way to Gethsemane, or perhaps on the way to the Temple where His final prayer of self-consecration was uttered.

2; Ash Wednesday.

The Words from the Cross consist of seven short sentences embodying great principles. The discourses, on the other hand, constitute the longest unbroken utterances of our Blessed Lord. In them He announces to His disciples the sad news of His departure from them, reveals to them the purposes and issues of that departure, and prepares them to expect and to receive that further gift of the Holy Ghost, through Whose power they were to accomplish the work for which their Master had trained them.

The associations which gather around these discourses are most solemn, whether we regard them from the point of view of the occasion on which they were uttered—just after the celebration of the first Eucharist, just after the Apostles had made their first communion; or whether we regard them from the point of view of their subject matter—their Lord's departure, and its consequences.

These discourses stand alone among the utterances of Christ, not only because of their length—we have noticed that they constitute the longest unbroken utterances of our Lord, which have come down to us in the Gospels—but still more on account of the sublimity of their subject matter, and of a certain deep and affectionate pathos which pervades them throughout, and which may be traced to the sadness

The Departure of Judas. 50

of the impending separation which the Divine Master announces to His disciples.

That our Lord's words on this occasion sank most deeply into the minds of His hearers, there can be no doubt. Indeed, this is evident, from the fulness and vividness with which they are recorded by the Apostle most capable of understanding them, the Apostle of Love, who, after meditating upon them during a long lifetime, handed them down to the Church as one of her most precious treasures, to be pondered over and studied by every devout Christian. Surely, we shall make no mistake if we devote some part of each day this Lent to their prayerful consideration. And may that Holy Spirit, who enabled S. John so perfectly to record these teachings of our Lord, unfold their meaning to us, guiding us, according to Christ's gracious promise, into the fulness of truth in our meditation upon His words.

The discourses begin with the departure of Judas from the upper chamber, that is, with the thirty-first verse of the thirteenth chapter of S. John; and they continue without break, or with but one slight break to the end of the sixteenth chapter; and then conclude with our Lord's prayer of consecration in the seventeenth chapter.

The departure of Judas was a crisis in our Lord's

☩ Ash Wednesday.

Passion. It marked His victory; for it was the moment when the element of evil in the apostolic company was expelled. And that element of evil represented by Judas went forth to work out its own malicious purpose in betraying Jesus Christ into the hands of His enemies. We must keep this in mind, in order that we may understand the words with which our Lord begins His discourse, "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him: and God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straight-way glorify Him."

We must observe that these words are spoken of the relation of the Son of Man to God, not of the Son of God to the Father. That is to say, they are spoken in reference to our Lord's human nature. Man in Christ has glorified God by entire fulfilment of His Will; and therefore God can now glorify the Son of man by taking His glorified humanity from henceforth into perfect fellowship with Himself. Thus, we read, that S. Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."*

The act of self-sacrifice, even unto death, and therefore the conquest of death, is, you will notice,

* Acts vii. 55.

The Departure of Judas. 50

spoken of as past, even though it had not yet occurred; because, in dismissing Judas to do his work, our Lord accepted the issues of that work. The departure of Judas, with Christ's consent, was the decisive act by which the Passion was accepted, by which Christ perfectly fulfilled God's Will.

Our Lord came into the world, not only to die for man, but to live for man, to live a life of perfect obedience and absolute dependence upon His Father's Will. In the beginning of His ministry He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work."* This was the motto of Christ's life. It had been prophesied of Him in the Psalms, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, that I should fulfil Thy will, O my God: I am content to do it."†

Man had fallen in Adam by disobedience to the revealed Will of God; and from Adam to Jesus Christ every child of man had fallen in the same way. Now One came, the Son of Man, the representative of humanity, the second Adam, Who was not only to die a death which should be a sacrifice for the sins of the world, but was to live a life which should make that death of sacrificial efficacy. It was not the mere act of dying to redeem mankind; it was that the Sufferer upon the

* S. John iv. 34.

† Psalm xl. 9, 10.

→ Ash Wednesday.

Cross had perfectly fulfilled His Father's Will, had perfectly glorified God, even in accepting the sorrows of the Passion, the humiliation and death upon the Cross—it was the sinlessness, the perfect obedience of the Victim, which gave to the Sacrifice its efficacy. Others might have died, and died willingly ; but their death would not have availed, even for themselves, as a sacrifice, because their life was marred by sin. But Christ was the Lamb without blemish ; His whole life was absolutely perfect—not one thought, not one word, not one act, which was not in absolute conformity to His Father's Will.

And therefore, in dismissing Judas to accomplish his traitorous purpose, our Lord accepted what He knew was involved in the departure of Judas, and was able to turn to the Father and say these words, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him ; and God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."

If we ask the question of such deep importance to us all, Why were we created ? there are many ways in which we may answer it ; but one certainly is, To glorify God. This is the true purpose, the highest end, the final cause, of our creation. And therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, in accepting God's purpose that He should die for the sins of the world, is able

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to say, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

To what extent do we make this the end of our life? How far do we live for the glory of God? Most men make the glory of *self* the great object of their life. Their happiness is great when something occurs to glorify *them*, when they win the praise of men, not when they glorify God. What interest we take in the favourable criticisms which others make upon our words or actions! How delighted we are when we read in some newspaper a tribute to our cleverness, or popularity, or generosity!

We are delighted, not because we deserve praise, but because we have obtained it. Very possibly we know that we do not deserve it, that our cleverness was not altogether original, that our popularity was not deserved, that our generosity was not unselfish. But we do not stop to think of these things; we are happy because we have won the approbation of the world, because we have obtained glory for ourselves, even though, perhaps, we despise the organ which praises us, and are well aware that its opinions are of little value. How pleased we are when someone tells us of the flattering words which someone else has spoken concerning us, not because we value that person's judgment, but because we like to be admired and glorified.

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How different it was with our Blessed Lord! He realised that the full purpose of man's life was to glorify God; and therefore He accepted a life of humiliation, and died amid the execrations of the mob. But He is able to say, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He teaches us, by this, that man's true glory is to do God's Will, to accomplish God's work, and so to fulfil the purpose for which he was created. We all know how worthless is the world's praise, how ill bestowed; and yet, how many of us crave it, and, to obtain it, descend to the use of means which our conscience tells us are altogether unworthy.

We have said that the departure of Judas marked a crisis in our Lord's Passion, that it was the moment when the element of evil in the Apostolic company was expelled; and that this expulsion involved for our Blessed Lord those sorrows of the Passion which culminated in the Sacrifice of the Cross.

So in our own lives, any great effort which leads to the expulsion of evil, marks a crisis, and often involves a sacrifice. We cannot drive out the evil which is within us, without painful effort; nor can we give up the evil which is without us in the world, without making some sacrifice. But until we do this in obedience to God's call, surrendering perhaps something which is very attractive in this world, but

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which, for us, is incompatible with perfect obedience to God's Will, there can be no real progress in the spiritual life. The expulsion of evil must come first, the breaking off from what is wrong; and then will follow the unfolding and development of the powers of the soul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And this will result in the growth of Christian virtues, and the manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; in short, in the formation of a Christ-like character; and by this we glorify God, and are glorified, not by man, but by God.

II.

First Thursday in Lent.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT.

S. JOHN XIII. 33-35.

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”



OUR Lord Jesus Christ, having uttered the joyous burst of praise at the departure of Judas, which we considered yesterday, now turns to His disciples and says, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.”

“Little children.” The exact word (*τεκνία*) occurs

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here only in the Gospels, though it is found six times, and perhaps a seventh time, in the Epistles of S. John,* and once (probably) in S. Paul.† It is an expression of deep affection, of solicitude for those who are yet immature and need protection and care, and to whom a great sorrow and trial is shortly to come, in their Master's departure. This sad news He reveals to them when He says, "Yet a little while I am with you,"—only a few more hours. And then He goes on to add, "Ye shall seek Me." He does not say, as He said to the Jews, "Ye shall seek Me, and ye shall not find Me:"‡ but, as He said to the Jews on another occasion, "Ye shall seek Me whither I go, ye cannot come."|| They were to seek Him and find Him; nay, more, to be found of Him. But they could not go with Him where He was going; at least, not yet. So He says, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Naturally, they wanted to know why. It was because they were immature, little children, babes in Christ, that they were not yet ready to follow Him into the kingdom of His glory. And the season of bereavement, of sorrow, bitter as it was, was to be a season of spiritual growth, and especially a growth in that virtue, which is the

* Cf. I S. John ii. 1, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21.

† Gal. iv. 19.

‡ S. John vii. 34.

|| S. John viii. 21.

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greatest of all virtues, the most godlike—the virtue of love—that “charity which is the bond of perfectness,”* the bond by which the soul is united to God, Who is Love.

And so the Master gives to His little children a new commandment, to be the law of their life during the period of their waiting and development. He says, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

In what sense was this new? Not in the letter, for love had always been the principle of the decalogue; but new in its motive, and scope, and model. The old commandment was given from Sinai, and was summarised by the Law-giver, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”† The new commandment is associated with Calvary. It is a commandment of love, like the old, but enlarged in its motive, and scope, and model. The motive is the realisation of a new tie which binds Christians together as fellow-members of the Body of Christ in a new family, the Church, which is the Household of God.

Then the scope is changed. It is not merely

* Col. iii. 14.

† Levit. xix. 18.

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your neighbour whom you are to love, but all that great multitude who make up the family of Christ, in Whom "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female."*

And lastly, the model proposed is different. You are no longer to love your neighbour *as yourself*, but *as Christ loved you*. The model proposed is not self-love, but the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

We must observe, however, that there is a limitation. Our Blessed Lord is not speaking of that love which we should have for all men as common children of a heavenly Father, but that love which we should have for our fellow-Christians, those who, in addition to being children of God are members of Christ, and therefore bound to one another in the closest possible union, in the mystical Body of Christ our Lord. It is not, therefore, philanthropy towards our fellow-men in general that our Lord is inculcating, but love of the brethren, of those who are knit together in the bonds of love, because they are fellow-members of Christ's Body.

We must observe, too, that the character of the commandment is altogether new. Christians are

* Gal. iii. 28.

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to love one another, not merely as neighbours, not only as they love themselves, that is, with a love which is more or less selfish, but with the self-sacrificing love which Christ manifests to all. The selfish love might lead us to please our neighbour in things which were not for his edification. The self-sacrificing love would cause us to *edify* him in things which, perhaps, did not altogether *please* him.

We see that Christ proposes no one less than Himself as our Model. His love was practical and active. It was not merely a sentiment or feeling. It led Him to perform works of mercy, to minister to the sick, to sympathise with the sorrowful, to rejoice at the marriage in Cana, to weep at the grave of Lazarus; and finally, as He reminds His disciples in the next chapter, it led Him to lay down His life for the brethren.

Another point we must notice in regard to this new commandment is, that it was to be the outward sign of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." That this was realised and acted upon in the early days of Christian fervour we learn from one of the first writers of the Church, Tertullian, who tells us that the heathen, wondering at this mutual love of Christians, were in the habit

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of saying, "See how these Christians love one another."*

How rapidly Christianity grew and spread in those early days, in spite of opposition and persecution, perhaps because of them; but chiefly on account of the fulfilment of this new commandment of love. The world wondered at a religion which not only *proposed* mutual love as an ideal of human conduct, but actually enabled men to fulfil this law of love. And the secret of Christianity's growth was the power of this new commandment; just as in later times, and, alas! in our own days, the non-fulfilment of the law of mutual love is the principal cause of the weakness and decay of the Christian religion, resulting not only in the rending of Christ's body by innumerable schisms, but even in the Church itself, in that party spirit which is incompatible with the law of love.

Well may we lay this command of our Lord to heart. It comes to us with all the force of farewell words. We cannot heal the schisms of the Church, but we can, by our mutual love to one another, greatly diminish the bitterness of party spirit; for we can at least resolve to try to understand one another, and never to speak with

* Tertull., "Apolog.," c. 39.

» First Thursday in Lent.

unnecessary bitterness of those from whom we are conscientiously constrained to differ.

This is, of course, but a negative carrying out of the commandment. And we may all do more than this, by actively striving to minister to our brethren in need, recognising in each a member of Christ's flock, bound therefore to us by the ties of holiest love.

Some have thought that this new commandment refers to the institution of the Holy Eucharist, which was to be the sacrament of love. But the institution of a sacrament can scarcely be called a commandment. And yet there is an element of truth in the suggestion, since the Holy Eucharist is the special manifestation of Christ's love to us in supplying our soul's need, by giving us, as its food, His Body and Blood; and more, since every Eucharist is the memorial of that act of love by which, upon the Cross, our Lord gave His life for us, of that Sacrifice by which we are redeemed.

Rightly, then, has the Church appointed these words, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another," as the first antiphon to be sung during the ceremony of the feet-washing on Thursday in Holy Week, from whence, as you know, the day derives its name, Maundy Thursday; so that the anniversary of the institution of the

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Blessed Sacrament is always associated, by its name, with this new commandment which Christ gave to His disciples.

And surely this brings before us another reason why we should love one another, not only that we are members of Christ's one Body, the Church, but that we are fellow-partakers of that one Body in the Eucharistic feast. Not only are we incorporated into Him by baptism, but we feed on Him through Communion; so that, by being nourished with the same spiritual food, we are knit together in the closest relationships of life.

We are to love one another as Christ loved us, Who being in the form of God, was impelled by love for man in his perishing condition to take upon Him the form of a servant, and to become obedient unto the death of the Cross. From His throne in Heaven the Son of God beheld us in our need, and hastened to our succour, though to help us and save us cost Him all the humiliation of the Incarnation, all the sorrows of the Passion!

And if we would fulfil this new commandment, we must, according to our own measure, strive to hasten to the succour of those members of Christ's Body whom we see to be in distress, and whom we are able to aid, either in mind, by sympathy; in body, by ministering to their sickness; or in

↪ First Thursday in Lent.

estate, by supplying their wants. We must not grudge the trouble or pains this may involve; for we are to love our brethren, not with a selfish love, but with the self-sacrificing love with which Christ loved us.

III.

First Friday in Lent.

THE QUESTION OF S. PETER.

S. JOHN XIII. 36-38.

“Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.”



OUR Lord's announcement of His approaching departure leads to questions from four of His disciples, questions which reveal something of the character and spiritual comprehension of each of the questioners, and something of the difficulties which His words presented to their minds. The questioners were S. Peter, S. Thomas, S. Philip, and S. Jude, each of whom, taking up our Lord's

First Friday in Lent.

words, seeks further enlightenment as to their meaning.

S. Peter as usual is the first to speak, for we read that, "Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards. Peter saith unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake."

It was a natural question to ask, when S. Peter heard our Lord speak of His departure, but it showed a very imperfect comprehension on his part in regard to much of Christ's past teaching; for it probably implied that S. Peter, like most of the other disciples, looked forward to the setting up of a temporal kingdom in this world, with our Lord as the Messiah. It showed that S. Peter had not understood the revelation of the Passion, at which, indeed, he stumbled so badly, that his Master then said to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."*

Our Lord's answer to his question is not direct. It was an answer to what was passing in S. Peter's mind, rather than to S. Peter's words. The Apostle had asked, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" and Christ replied, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards."

* S. Matt. xvi. 23.

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From this it is evident that when S. Peter said, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" he was not moved so much by curiosity in regard to the place where our Lord was going, as by his desire to go with Him, to accompany Him. So that, without directly announcing the goal of His journey, our Lord warns S. Peter that he cannot follow Him now; though He comforts him with the assurance that he shall follow Him afterwards.

S. Peter could not follow Christ where He was going, to another world, at that time for many reasons. First of all, S. Peter was not spiritually prepared for his place in heaven; his own character had not yet been sufficiently disciplined and developed; his own faith which seemed to him so strong, was not even able to bear the shock of temptation in the high-priest's hall, where he denied his Master. He was not morally ready. But there was another reason—his work was not yet done; indeed, it had scarcely begun, that work for which his Master had been for three years training him, the work of preaching the Gospel, and organising the infant Church in the world. Before S. Peter could follow Christ to his reward, he must do his work; he must suffer; and, by suffering, be made perfect, that he might become one of the foundation stones of the City of God. How great was the work that S. Peter

✠ First Friday in Lent.

was to accomplish in this world before he won his crown!

But our Lord gives him a promise, "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards." And that promise, remember, was renewed to him after his denial, after his penitence, after his pardon; when, at the Lake of Galilee, our Lord told him the manner of death by which he should glorify his Master, and follow Him into the world beyond; for then He said to Peter, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." And S. John remarks, "This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God."*

"Whither goest Thou?" Many who have visited Rome will remember a little church, called the Chapel of the *Domine Quo Vadis*—"Lord, whither goest Thou?" It is associated with a legend of very early authority,† that when S. Peter was fleeing from Rome, from the Mamertine Prison, our Lord met him; and to his question, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" replied, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." S. Peter, from these words, under-

* S. John xxi. 18, 19.

† It is referred to by Origen in "Joann" xx. 12.

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stood that the hour of his own martyrdom had come ; and, returning to his prison at Rome, was shortly afterwards crucified, under Nero. The place where the meeting is said to have taken place is marked by the Chapel of the *Domine Quo Vadis*.

S. Peter says to our Lord, "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Here we recognise the impetuous nature which always desires to act at once, and frets at waiting. We cannot but admire the spirit that prompted these words. The tendency of the world in regard to unpleasant duty is, as a rule, not to act at once, but to put off as long as possible the disagreeable duty. But S. Peter, with his impulsive temperament, is not content with the promise, "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards," but asks, "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." He did not ask where our Lord was going, but he recognised from our Lord's words that He was going into some great peril, and at once offers to share the peril with Him, even though it should involve the sacrifice of his very life.

"I will lay down my life for Thy sake." He thought he had counted the cost when he said these words ; he believed that he could lay down his life for Christ before Christ had laid down His life for him. But later on he learned that it was only

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through Christ's Passion that his own martyrdom became possible.

He was to wait. How much has to be *learned* in periods of waiting ; how much, too, has to be *done* in those times of delay, that we may be able, when the opportunity offers, to embrace it, and to accomplish God's work. S. Peter was tested that very night in the high-priest's house ; the opportunity offered, but he was not ready. And so, alas ! he denied his Master from fear of a maid-servant. But afterwards when, in that period of long waiting, he had learned, by the things which he had suffered, and had come to experience the grace of Jesus Christ, he was able to lay down his life as a martyr. In the high-priest's house he did not even dare to confess Christ before a few soldiers and servants, but after the period of waiting and preparation he cheerfully went back to Rome, to suffer and to die for his Master.

What a lesson there is for us here !—that the periods of waiting in this world, when God does not seem to have anything very especial for us to do, must be used as periods of learning and of working. How many there are who say, "I do not know what my vocation is in life ; God has not shown me my work, and therefore I will do nothing, until He does call me."

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By such, when the call comes, the discovery is often made that they are not able to follow Him. They are like the foolish virgins, who, while professing to be waiting for Christ, when the cry was heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,"* discovered that, in their period of waiting, the oil in their lamps had become exhausted.

It is in times of waiting that we should be learning and labouring, striving to fashion and sharpen the instrument ourselves; so that, when God is ready to use it, the instrument may be found ready for His purpose.

If we take the lives of those who have accomplished the greatest work for God, we shall find that almost always they had to wait many, many years before the opportunity offered for carrying out what they felt to be their life's work. But we shall also discover that they did not spend these years in idleness; they spent them in prayer and the study of God's Word; so that when the moment came that the opportunity presented itself, the work was done with marvellous celerity and success, because they had been so long preparing themselves to do it.

To how many it is just the other way! They

* S. Matt. xxv. 6.

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waste the periods of waiting ; and when the time of work comes, they find that they have so blunted their spiritual perceptions and ruined their natural gifts, that they are no longer *able* to do the work which God puts before them ; not because they are not willing to do it, but because they have lost, they have forfeited, the power to do it. “Thou canst not follow Me now ; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.”

IV.

First Saturday in Lent.

THE TRAINING OF S. PETER.

S. JOHN XIII. 38.

“Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.”



OUR Lord's repetition of S. Peter's exact words, "Thy life for Me wilt thou lay down?" has a deep pathos. It is as though He accepted the essential truth of S. Peter's generous assertion, while He pointed out the impossibility of its fulfilment at that time. He tells S. Peter he will have an opportunity that very night of proving himself, not by dying for his Master, but by confessing that he is a disciple. An opportunity? Nay, three opportunities; and that in every case he shall not only lamentably fail

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to confess his Master, but shall shamefully deny Him !

There are few episodes in the Gospels more full of instruction than this ; for, from the example of S. Peter, we learn that real strength is to be measured, not by generous impulses, but by the recognition of two fundamental truths—our own natural weakness and inability, and God's unceasing love.

As a great ascetic writer teaches,* the foundation of all spiritual life must be laid in distrust of self and perfect trust in God. S. Peter learned these truths by the experience of the three years spent with our Blessed Lord, and they were not entirely grasped by him until the last disastrous fall which our Lord here foretells—his threefold denial. Then S. Peter fully learned his own weakness ; and from the look of Jesus, which won him back to penitence, and the words of Jesus after His Resurrection, he learned the infinite and unchanging love of God.

With S. Peter, the generous impulse was always present ; but, through over-confidence in self, it only led to humiliation and failure. We may notice three instances especially : when S. Peter saw our Lord walking upon the sea, he did not hesitate to say, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the

* Cf. Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat."

The Training of S. Peter.

water." And when Jesus said, "Come," he cast himself upon the water, and walked upon the very waves. But, alas! he looked for a moment away from Christ, and observed that the wind was boisterous, and the waves threatening, and his faith began to fail, and he began to sink. He cried, "Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"* There S. Peter learned the instability of his own faith, and the constancy of Christ's love. His hand was outstretched to save him the moment he began to sink.

The second instance follows immediately upon S. Peter's great confession of Christ's Divinity. To the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"† the Apostles gave various answers; but S. Peter was the first and only one to say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."‡ Our Lord praises him for this great confession, and gives him a glorious promise and privilege. And yet we read only a few verses further on in the chapter, that when Christ proceeded to tell S. Peter of His Passion, the Apostle stumbled at it, "and began to rebuke Him, saying, be it far from Thee, Lord: this

* Cf. S. Matt. xiv. 28-34.

† S. Matt. xvi. 13.

‡ S. Matt. xvi. 16.

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shall not be unto Thee." But Christ "turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto Me ; for thou mindest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

S. Peter's third great fall was in the high-priest's palace, and it took place after our Lord's warning : "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice."

S. Peter, knowing that some great peril threatened his Master, had said : "Lord, . . . I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Christ tells him that before the night is past he will have learned his own weakness. It will not be a question of laying down his life, but only an acknowledgment of his discipleship. S. Peter thinks that this is impossible—"Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." But he learns with bitter shame that his Master knows him better than he knows himself ; that his own boasted strength, apart from Christ's grace, is utter weakness. And this knowledge for ever destroys his self-confidence, and establishes the conviction of his own natural weakness. Thus he learns to distrust himself ; but he learns more—to trust Christ ; for, when he had so shamefully denied his Master thrice, we read that "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the

* Cf. S. Matt. xvi. 21-24.

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word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”*

What was there in that look of Jesus which pierced S. Peter's heart, and recalled him to penitence? It is worth while noticing carefully the exact word which S. Luke uses (*ἐνέβλεψεν*). The verb compounded with the preposition (*ἐν*), signifies, not merely to look upon a person, but to look with a swift, penetrating glance. So that it implies that our Lord looked S. Peter through and through, and read his very heart.

It is not a little suggestive that this same word is used of the look which our Lord cast upon S. Peter the first time He met him, when He said to him, “Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas.”† The look recalled our Lord's warning (this S. Luke tells us). But may it not also have recalled that first meeting with his Master, when He uttered the glorious promise, “Thou shalt be called Cephas”—the rock? As S. Peter pondered upon his sin, what memories must have flooded his mind—the glorious promise, the shameful failure, but also the unwearied love of his Master !

On Easter Day, we know that our Lord appeared to S. Peter, although we are not told what passed

* S. Luke xxii. 61, 62.

† S. John i. 42.

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between them ; for a veil is drawn over the intercourse of the penitent soul with the great Absolver. But later, by the Lake of Galilee, we learn that S. Peter was fully restored to his pastorate. After that he is a different man ; he has learned the two great truths—to distrust himself and to trust God. With the exception of the incident at Antioch, recorded in the Epistle to the Galatians, there is no further trace of weakness in S. Peter.

I said that this episode is full of instruction for us all ; for we all alike have to learn by experience these two fundamental truths of the spiritual life. We have to learn them where S. Peter learned them—in the school of temptation. And until we have learned them, we, like S. Peter, shall be constantly liable to find our most generous impulses leading us to shameful failure.

V.

First Monday in Lent.

THE MANY MANSIONS OF THE
FATHER'S HOUSE.

S. JOHN XIV. 1-3.

“Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.”



THE question of S. Thomas, which follows that of S. Peter, is introduced by, and arises out of, the section with which the fourteenth chapter of S. John begins, “Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”

There had been much to fill the disciples' hearts with sorrow and alarm ; not only the announcement

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of their Master's departure, but the warning of the treachery of Judas—"One of you shall betray Me;"* and of the weakness of S. Peter—"Thou shalt deny Me."† There was much to fill their minds with terror. So now, in the touching words with which this chapter opens, our Lord consoles His disciples—"Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

It is difficult to decide the correct translation of the latter part of this verse. The two verbs "believe" in the Greek are precisely the same. They may be either in the indicative or the imperative mood. So that the translation may be either, "Ye believe in God, and ye believe in Me;" or it may be, "Believe in God, and believe in Me." The rendering in our Bible is unfortunate, in that it translates the first verb as indicative, and the other as imperative. Probably the best scholars agree that both should be imperative—"Believe in God, and believe in Me also."

Thus you will see the reason why they were not to be troubled. "Let not your heart be troubled." Why? Believe in God, and believe in Me also. Why should you not be troubled? Because you believe in God. This means something much more than a mere intellectual acceptance of the fact of God's existence.

* S. John xiii. 21.

† S. Matt. xxvi. 34.

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It implies that faith in God which issues in perfect trust in Him. The preposition (*εις*) which S. John uses with the verb signifies, or rather suggests, a complete transference of trust of oneself to another. Believe in God; that is, put all your trust in Him. If you do, you will not be troubled.

Belief in God! and what does this imply? As I have said, not merely a belief in God's existence, but some realisation of God's character, a belief in His attributes of Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Love. If we believe in God's Omniscience, we realise that He knows our necessities and troubles before we ask, and our ignorance in asking. If we believe in His Omnipotence, we know that He can help us in all our troubles, that no difficulties are too great for Him. And if we believe in His Love, that He loves us; then we shall be sure, not merely that He can help us to the uttermost, but that He *will* help us as is best for us. Believe, then, in God, and you will not be troubled.

And then our Lord goes on to say, "Believe also in Me." The exact repetition of the phrase implies that Christ is what the Father is—God. Believe in God, and believe in Me. And surely this was the reason why their hearts were not to be troubled, either by the news of His departure, or the warning of the treachery of Judas, or of the denial of S.

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Peter ; for, if Christ be God, He can comfort, console, and help them in all their trials.

Then our Lord goes on to say, "In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you ; for I go to prepare a place for you."

Throughout these last discourses of our Blessed Lord we observe the prominence of the word "Father ;" and that God, as our Father, is set before us as the goal of life. Jesus says, "I go unto the Father."* And He invites us to come to the Father, through Him—"No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."† So here He says, "In My Father's house are many mansions."

The word translated "mansion" (*μονή*) occurs only twice in the New Testament, both times in this chapter—in this verse, and again in the twenty-third verse, where our Lord, speaking of His Father, says, "We will come . . . and make our abode (*μονήν*) with Him."‡ The word "abode" in the latter verse is the same word which is here translated "mansion." Now, what precisely does the word mean? The word "mansions" is itself taken from the Latin translation (*mansiones*), and adequately represents the Greek. It literally means the stopping-places by the roadside where travellers on a journey found rest and refreshment. Hence, there are bound up

* St. John xiv. 28. † S. John xiv. 6. ‡ S. John xiv. 23.

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with it two ideas—repose and progress. They were places where the traveller reposed for the night, in order that he might have strength for a fresh effort in his journey the next day. The fact that our Blessed Lord is speaking of mansions in heaven has led some to draw the inference that in heaven our life will be one of progress ; at least, the word used suggests this inference.

“In My Father’s house are many mansions.” There will be room for all there. He is about to tell them how they will be treated in this world ; that they will be driven out of the synagogues ; that they will be outcasts among their own nation ; but, He says, there will be plenty of room for all in heaven. When S. Mary and S. Joseph came to Bethlehem, to be enrolled in the census, they found that there was no room in the inn. But in heaven there is no such danger ; there will be room for all.

“If it were not so, I would have told you ; (for) I go to prepare a place for you.” The best manuscripts give us the word “for,” which is not in our Bibles. It makes the sentence much clearer. It is as though our Lord would say, I have not withheld from you the sorrowful news of My departure ; and therefore I would not hesitate to tell you even sadder news, if it were necessary. But now I tell

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you joyful news—that there are many mansions in My Father's house, and that I go to prepare a place for you.

This, indeed, is the bright side of Christ's departure. If He does not go to make preparation for us, we cannot follow. The disciples, doubtless, would have wished Him to have stayed with them on this earth; but He tells them that, in going before to prepare a place for them in heaven, He affords them both the possibility and opportunity of following where He has gone before.

In the next verse He says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and I will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." From these words we learn that our Lord's departure is the condition of His return. His visible separation from them is necessary as the condition of His real union with them, through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The Christian, after Pentecost, is nearer to Christ than the Apostles were before the Passion. They were near to Him locally. They could see Him, and hear Him, and touch Him, with their bodily senses; but there was no real spiritual union between Him and them. After the coming of the Holy Ghost they were to be incorporated into Christ, to become living members of His Body. So that, in this sense,

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His departure was necessary as the condition of His return to them through a more intimate union than at that time they could conceive of.

Our rendering, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself," is not quite correct. It should be, "I am coming again, and I will receive you unto Myself." The first verb is in the present tense ; the second, in the future. Thus the Greek brings out the fact that our Lord is constantly coming. Though in this passage He is referring, primarily, to His last coming at the end of the world, we must not limit His coming to that ; for Christ comes to the world, to the Church, and to each individual Christian, continually. He came to them at His Resurrection ; He came again at Pentecost, through the operation of the Holy Ghost ; He comes to each sinner at the moment of conversion ; He comes to us in every Communion ; He comes to us in our daily study of His Word, if we read it prayerfully. And lastly, He comes to us at the moment of death and at the Day of Judgment. And all these comings are comprehended in those words, "I am coming again."

But while the Greek present implies, not a mere act, but a state—that Christ is constantly coming—the future can only be referred to one occasion, "I will receive you unto Myself," that is, at the moment

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of death, when He calls us away from this world of sorrow and sin, and takes us to be with Him.

“That where I am, ye may be also.” Where Christ is, there is Paradise. So He said to the penitent robber on the cross, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”* Thou shalt be with Me; therefore, thou shalt be in Paradise. After His Ascension, Paradise was heaven; for, as we profess in our Creed, “He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”

Our Lord’s glorified humanity is not ubiquitous. Locally, it is now only in one place, at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Sacramentally, supra-locally, His humanity is present in the Blessed Sacrament. But we have no reason to suppose that it is present with the souls in the Intermediate State. His divinity is there, as everywhere, but not His Humanity.

So in these words our Lord assures us that after we have left this world of sin, and passed through a state of purification, we shall be with Him, where He is reigning with all the saints.

* S. Luke xxiii. 43.

VI.

First Tuesday in Lent.

THE QUESTION OF S. THOMAS.

S. JOHN XIV. 4-6.

“And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”



OUR Blessed Lord, consoling His disciples in their grief at His departure, tells them that He goes to prepare a place for them in His Father's house ; that where He is, they may be with Him ; that He is coming again, and will receive them unto Himself. And then He adds, “Whither I go, ye know the way ;” for this is the correct reading, and not, as we find in our Bible, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

Our Lord meant to remind them that He had so

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often told them of the way by which they were to follow Him, that they ought to know it well. It was to be a way of suffering and of sacrifice, the way of the Holy Cross; for how many times He had warned them that no one could be His disciple, who did not take up his cross and follow Him. "Whither I go," He says, "ye know the way." I am going to My Father in heaven; His house, in which are the many mansions, is My goal; and the way by which I must reach it is the way of suffering, the way of self-sacrifice and love.

At this point S. Thomas interrupts, and says, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how know we the way?" (the word "can" is not found in the best text). It is most interesting to observe that the questions asked by the different Apostles are in strict accord with what we know of their temperament and spiritual character. S. Peter's question, "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake,"* is precisely the utterance which might be expected from one of his sanguine, impulsive nature. So, too, we shall find that the interruption of S. Thomas is just what might be expected from a man of his natural temperament and spiritual development.

S. Thomas is a very distinct type of character

* S. John xiii, 37.

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among our Lord's disciples. He represents the anxious, intellectual seeker after truth, who has an almost morbid fear of things he cannot grasp, and a tendency to despondency, but with a real love for his Master. He will not allow himself to be carried by enthusiasm to say that he believes more than he does believe.

We have an instance of this in connection with our Lord's visit to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead. When the news came that Lazarus was sick, we read that Christ "abode two days still in the same place where He was. Then after that, saith He to His disciples, let us go into Judæa again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?" After answering this question, Christ said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples thought that He spoke of taking of rest in sleep; but our Lord told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. And S. Thomas was the first to say, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."*

If we examine these words of S. Thomas in connection with their context, we shall observe that they manifest the same characteristics which led S. Thomas to interrupt our Lord with the remark:

* Cf. S. John xi. 6-17.

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“Lord, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how know we the way ?” and after His Resurrection to refuse to believe the testimony of his fellow-disciples, that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

We may notice, in regard to the death of Lazarus, that S. Thomas keeps strictly within the limits of that which he *knew*. He knew two things, the death of Lazarus and the hostility of the Jews. Jesus had invited His disciples to go with Him, saying that He was going to awaken Lazarus out of sleep ; that is, to raise him from the dead. About the raising from the dead, S. Thomas says nothing ; but about the hostility of the Jews, he realises that this probably meant death to his Master and to those who were with Him.

S. Thomas was no coward. He truly loved his Master. Therefore he said, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” He did not shrink from suffering with his Lord, but he would not commit himself to expressing a hope which he did not really possess, that Lazarus would be raised from the dead, and that his Master would escape the hostility of the Jews. S. Thomas will die for the love which he has, the love of Jesus Christ, but he will not pretend to the faith which he has not. To follow Christ where He goes, is the duty of His disciples, even though his Master goes into danger. Therefore S. Thomas

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says, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

In the third passage in S. John's Gospel, in which S. Thomas is introduced to us, we find him deliberately rejecting the testimony of his fellow-disciples concerning Christ's Resurrection, and saying, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."* S. Thomas refuses human testimony, though it was the testimony of so many of his friends, and demands the evidence of his own senses—the senses of sight and touch. Jesus, in consideration of his natural difficulty of faith, offers him the evidence for which he asks, but adds, reproachfully, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."†

Altogether, we may consider S. Thomas as a type of one who loved Christ, and was faithful to Christ, but who saw intellectual difficulties at every step, and was too honest to pretend that he did not see them. Very probably S. Thomas looked for the establishment of Christ's Messianic kingdom on earth; so that, when our Lord spoke of His departure, S. Thomas said, in effect: All we know is, that Thou

* S. John xx. 25.

† S. John xx. 29.

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art going to leave us ; for that Thou hast told us ; but whither Thou art going we know not. Wilt Thou go to the dispersed among the Gentiles? Art Thou going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Thou hast told us that Thou art to be “lifted up;” but how is this exaltation to take place? Thou hast told us that Thou art going ; but whither art Thou going, and by what way ?

To some like S. Thomas, inclined to find the difficulties in revelation, rather than to see, as others do, its positive truth, the objections of S. Thomas may seem reasonable, and our Lord’s answer may appear to be wanting in directness. But this is only because they are so occupied with the superficial form of the answer that they fail to grasp its comprehensive significance ; for when our Lord replies, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also : from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him,” He not only answers the question of S. Thomas, but does more—answers the difficulty which is really contained in the question.

The statement of S. Thomas was twofold : We do not know whither Thou art going ; how can we know the way? We do not know the goal, or end, of Thy journey. How, then, can we know the way

The Question of S. Thomas. 90

by which it is to be reached? Incidentally, and yet most clearly, our Lord, in the second part of the verse, states the Goal, or End, of His journey. It is the Father—"No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." They ought to have known this; for He had already told them, "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you."* But it was of more real importance that they should know the *way* by which they were to follow Him, not immediately, but afterwards; the way which was to bring them to those many mansions, the way which was to bring them to that goal of life—itself the true end for which they had been created.

As we have said, our Lord did reveal the end, or goal. And yet, this was not the important question, since faith must be content to follow step by step where it is led, and to wait until the goal is reached, and the end is revealed.

"Lead, kindly Light; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

S. Thomas was unwilling to take the one step, unless he could see where it was to lead him, unless he could know the far-off end.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The

* S. John xiv. 2.

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three terms here are not co-ordinate. The latter two are the unfolding, or explication of the first. "I am the Way," signifies that Christ is the means, or way, by which all are to come to the Father. And He is the means, or way, *because* He is the Truth and the Life.

Among the types of Christ in the Old Testament, few are more prominent than the Ark of the Covenant, which contained, as we are told, three things—the Rod of Aaron, which blossomed; the Tables of the Law, on which God had written the Ten Commandments; and the Pot of Manna.*

The Rod typifies Christ as the Way, the staff for the journey of life, the staff of discipline. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me."† The Tables of the Law, which God gave from Sinai, symbolise Christ as the Truth, the eternal Truth, which is to guide us in all our actions; of which Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . . I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (fill out, or complete)."[‡]

And the Pot of Manna represents Christ as the

* Cf. Heb. ix. 4; Ex. xvi. 33, 34; Numb. xvii. 10; Ex. xxv. 16; Deut. x. 5.

† Psalm xxiii. 4.

‡ S. Matt. v. 17.

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Life; for He said, "I am the bread of life;" and again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."*

After Christ's answer, S. Thomas remains silent; perhaps, in order that he may ponder over and reflect upon our Lord's words.

* S. John vi. 35-51.

VII.

Second Wednesday in Lent.

CHRIST AS THE WAY.

S. JOHN XIV. 6.

“ Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”



THOMAS asked to know whither his Master was going. Christ replies, that the important matter is to know the *way* by which they may attain to the end or goal of their journey ; although He does repeat what He had told them before, that the End is the Father—His Father and their Father. And of this He reminds them again in the message which He sends to them on Easter morning, by S. Mary Magdalene, “ I am ascending unto My Father, and your Father ; and to My God, and your God.”*

* S. John xx. 17.

Christ as the Way.

He is the only Way by which the goal can be reached. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by" (through) "Me." He is the Way by which God and man are united; by which earth and Heaven are joined; by which time and eternity are bridged.

Christianity differs from all other religions, especially in this; that it demands faith in a Person, and not merely in a system of teaching. In this Christianity stands absolutely alone, that it requires faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

When S. Paul was preaching to the Athenians on Areopagus, we are told that he preached unto them "Jesus, and the resurrection."* He preached to them, not a system of philosophy, not a code of morals, but faith in a living Person, Jesus, Who had risen from the dead.

He is the Way to the *knowledge* of God. No man can come to know God, but through knowing Christ; as He says, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also."† He is the Way to the knowledge of God, not only because He *teaches* us about God, but because He reveals the Father in Himself. As He afterwards said to S. Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."‡

* Acts xvii. 18. † S. John xiv. 7. ‡ S. John xiv. 9.

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Hence, it is not enough to study the *words* of Christ, important though that may be. We must study Christ Himself; we must come to know Him if we are to know His Father, if we are to know God.

One of the passions most deeply implanted in human nature is the passion of curiosity, the thirst for knowledge. We strive to gratify it from the first hours of our conscious existence. And as the child grows into the man, if that thirst be not destroyed by sin, it will impel the intellect into new fields of investigation, until at last it leads the mind to the knowledge of God in Christ.

Each man should be like the pearl merchant in the parable, "seeking goodly pearls;"* seeking them in many regions of knowledge, in many kingdoms of nature; finding, with joy, pearls of truth, and yet always feeling that there is something more, something beyond; until he learns at last that the one Pearl of great price, without which the heart of man can never rest satisfied, is the knowledge of God; and finds this knowledge, finally, in Christ, Who is the only Way by which a man can come to the Father.

But man has not only an intellect, and therefore the passion of curiosity, the desire for knowledge.

* Cf. S. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

Christ as the Way. 50

He has also a heart, and therefore the passion of love, the desire to possess, and to be possessed by, the object of his love. It is not enough for a man to know God, or, rather, to know that there is a God; it is not sufficient for a man to know *about* God, he must know by experience something of God's character and attributes. Man craves to love God, to possess God, to be possessed by God; in a word, man desires, above all things, union with God. And as Christ is the Way to the knowledge of God, so is He the only Way by which a man may attain to union with God, and this in a two-fold manner.

(1) Man craves to be united with God, but recognises, as the insuperable obstacle to that union, his own sin. He is alienated from God by sin, and he realises that it is only by the removal of his sin that he can be made one with God. And Christ comes to pay the penalty of sin, to expiate it, to reconcile God and man, to atone for sin, and so to make God and man at one again. Christ, then, is the Way to the union with God, through His Passion on the Cross, by which He took away the sins of the world, by which He removed the obstacle to man's approach to God.

(2) This, however, is not all. It is only the negative part of the work of union, the taking away

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of the sin which alienated man from God, the removal of the hindrance to his union with God. There is something more, something greater. By sacramental incorporation into Christ, through Baptism, that union is begun ; and by feeding upon Christ, especially in the Holy Eucharist, the union grows, and is perfected. And so, in this way also, the second great passion of man's nature is satisfied ; and, through Christ, man is enabled to love God, to possess God, and to be possessed by Him.

But yet again Christ is the Way, because He is our Example. S. Peter teaches us that we become "partakers of the divine nature."* That is, of course, through Baptism ; so that, having become "partakers of the divine nature" (that is, being "in Christ"), we may follow the example of His perfect manhood, we may become *godlike*, not only in nature, but in character.

Hence, at every step, Christ is the Way ; for He is not only the Means by which we approach the Father, but the Example, by following Whom we become Christ-like, and therefore godlike. "Follow Me," He said ; and this command implies something more than enrolling ourselves under His

* 2 S. Peter i. 4.

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banner. It means following His example, walking in the *Way*.

S. Paul tells us that, if any man is "in Christ," he is a new creature;* and further says, that the effect of our being "in Christ," or baptised, ought to be manifested by our walking in "newness of life."†

Every day, then, of our journey heavenward we find Christ is the Way, the Way by which we are to advance, slowly but surely, to the End, the Father, where He Himself waits for us, that He may present us to the Father as redeemed by His precious blood, made partakers of His divine nature, moulded in character after the example of His holy life, and so meet to be the children of God throughout eternity.

* Cf. 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Rom. vi. 4.

VIII.

Second Thursday in Lent.

CHRIST AS THE TRUTH.

S. JOHN XIV. 6.

“ Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”



AS we have already observed, Christ is the Way, *because* He is the Truth and the Life. Let us consider each of these attributes separately.

He is the Truth, first and in the most absolute sense, because He is Eternal Truth, God. Truth with Him, therefore, is not a gift acquired or bestowed, but is His essential character ; for God's so-called attributes differ from those of man, in that they are all essential to God. God is Truth, and Mercy, and Love. He does not merely possess

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these characteristics in such a way that we could conceive of His being without them ; they are His essential being.

Christ, therefore, does not say, what I teach you is true, but I am the Truth ; because He does not say, believe in My teachings, but, believe in Me. He demands faith in His Person, not only in His doctrine. But, not only is He Himself the Truth, but the purpose of His life was to bear witness to truth. At that great moment when He stood before the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate, and was asked by him the question, " Art Thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest it, because I am a king. To this end have I been born, and for this purpose am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."*

How faithfully He bore witness to truth, how fearlessly He died for truth, the Gospels teach us ; and in the book of Revelation His title, twice repeated, is " the faithful witness," † " the faithful and true witness." ‡

If we are to follow the example of Christ, surely we must be witnesses to truth. This must be the great end and purpose of our lives. And yet, how many there are who either think that truth is very

* S. John xviii. 37. † Rev. i. 5. ‡ Rev. iii. 14.

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unimportant, or that truth is unattainable. Some devote their lives to the investigation of truths of secondary importance, of mere phenomena, about the real cause of which they are content to be ignorant. They spend their time in studying individual facts, and drawing from them unimportant generalisations. But the supreme truth regarding our own nature, regarding the character of God, and His purposes for us, the truth which relates not only to time but to eternity—in regard to this truth they are satisfied to know nothing!

Some, it is true, will contend that nothing can be known of these things, that God has never given to man any revelation. For such we can only have great pity. To Christians they seem like the blind mole, who is content with his burrow in the earth. The mole is content, because he *cannot* see, and has no cravings for anything which he does not possess. But the intellect of man can never be content with such an answer; for the very passion of curiosity, which impels man to seek an answer to the great questions of his soul's life, assures man that He who implanted that passion in him intends it to be satisfied in the revelation of His Son Jesus Christ, Who is the Truth.

Yes, Jesus Christ is the Truth, because He is the revelation of God to the world. All truth is

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in God, and all truth is revealed to us in Christ; for in Him is summed up all that is eternal and absolute in the changing phenomena of finite being. He is the revelation of the Father; and this, not so much on account of what he tells us in His teachings of the Father's character, as that He reveals the Father's character in His own life, manifesting those attributes of God, which it is most important that we should know. So, in the next verse Christ says, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

There was but one way in which man could ever come to know God, and that was through the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us;"* and from the study of His life and the knowledge of His Person, we come to know God's character.

We learn God's purposes of love in Christ's sacrifice upon the Cross; His goodness and mercy, in the actions of His life; and God's power, in His victory over sin and death. In proportion as we know Christ, we shall know the Father. There is no other Way by which we can come to the Father, but through Christ.

We have referred to the thirst of the soul for

* S. John i. 14.

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truth as an evidence that truth must be attainable ; for it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of the existence of an appetite for which there is no possibility of satisfaction. Hunger connotes the existence of food ; thirst of drink ; and so on with every appetite of our nature.

Why, then, should the religious appetite be the only exception, the thirst for God alone be without any means by which it may be satisfied ? He Who made man, and implanted in man the various appetites of his nature, also supplied man with the means of gratifying each one. Why, then, should He have implanted in man that craving to know the mystery of His Being, that thirst for truth, which is so noticeable in every soul, if He never intended to gratify it ?

The history of philosophy is the history of man's attempt to solve the riddle of his existence, by his own unaided intellect, and without recourse to revelation. And what is the history of philosophy ? The history of various systems, each of which undertook to solve the problem of man's life ; the history of great minds who have turned all the powers of their intellect upon the greatest of all subjects, and after years of laborious thought have cried, "Eureka !" and have given to the world a system of philosophy ; who have gathered around

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them disciples, and have founded schools, and have passed away! And another great mind has come, and picked to pieces their system, has pointed out its fallacies, and proposed another system as a substitute for it. And the world has accepted this, until some one else has treated it in the same manner, and swept it aside. Each, perhaps, has contributed some elements of truth which have remained, as truth always does remain, but they have only been a few grains amid bushels of chaff.

If there is one thing which the history of philosophy teaches us, surely it is that philosophy can never lead man to absolute truth; that the human mind, unaided, is doomed to wander in the schools of philosophy, chasing the phantom which always eludes its grasp! The very fact that systems of philosophy are always changing, that no *one* has ever lasted, ought to be, one would think, sufficient to prevent any man from resting in them.

But turn from philosophy to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and what a contrast we behold! Nearly two thousand years have passed since it was given to the world, the most profound minds of every age have been occupied in its study; and with what result? Not one of its doctrines

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has been changed or proved to be untrue. Men, by prayer and study have come to understand it better, and to find in it, with the changing difficulties of centuries, the solution of all life's problems.

He Who said, "I am the truth," also said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."* In the knowledge of Him can be quenched the thirst of our soul for truth; but that knowledge must be acquired gradually, and involves labour. The disciples, who had been with our Lord some three years, had not all come to know Him in the same measure. It is true, they had not then the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, as we have. But some of them had come to know Him better than others; S. Peter and S. John, better than S. Thomas and S. Philip.

If we are to attain the truth, we must seek after it; we must be like the "merchant man, seeking goodly pearls."† He found many, but he was not satisfied till he found the one pearl of great price. Then he was content to sell all that he had, that he might possess it. This parable is the history of many a great soul; it portrays the experience of many a mighty intellect. It is the epitome, for instance, of the life of S. Augustine, who, seeking

* S. John vii. 37.

† Cf. S. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

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after truth, passed through many forms of error and partial truth, until at last he attained unto the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and then bore witness to the fact that in Him he found the Truth which satisfied his whole nature. His well-known words sum up the experience of almost every great soul, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee."*

* S. Aug. "Confess. ;" Migne, P. L. xxxii., col. 661.

IX.

Second Friday in Lent.

CHRIST AS THE LIFE.

S. JOHN XIV. 6.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”



CHRIST is not only the Truth, but the Life. As He is the Truth because He is God; so is He the Life because He is God. “As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.”* He is the Life because He is God, and because God is the only self-existent Being. Every other living creature derives its life from some other life. God alone is underived; God alone is self-existent; God alone is Life.

But God, in His infinite love, has given to us, His

* S. John v. 26.

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creatures, to have life, to have even eternal life, though that life is not underived like the life of God ; for we read that, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ."* And our Lord says, "I am the resurrection, and the life ;"† and, speaking of His sheep, says, "I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."‡

What a mystery life is in all its phases : physical life—the life of the body, the life which is interrupted by physical death ; mental life—the life of the intellect, which is not interrupted by death ; spiritual life—the life of the soul, which also is eternal !

Who can tell us what life is, except that it is the gift of God ; that it comes from Him Who is Life ; that it depends upon Him for its conservation and continuance ? In other words, that our life of body, and mind, and soul, is an *effect*, of which God is the continuous cause. But there is a link between the effect and its cause, a condition which God imposed when He gave, first, the gift of life ; a condition, upon the fulfilment of which not only the continuance, but the perfection of life in all its phases, depends, the condition of food.

The fact that we must *eat* to live, is one of the universal facts of the world's life. The tiniest

* Rom. vi. 23. † S. John xi. 25. ‡ S. John x. 28.

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vegetable, as well as the largest animal, can retain the gift of life but for a few days, unless it fulfil the God-imposed condition, that it *eat*. And this condition applies, not only to the life of the body, but to the life of the mind and of the soul. All are effects, of which God is the Cause, and in each case food is the link between the Cause and effect, the link which cannot be ignored without the forfeiture of life.

Not only does the body starve without food, but the mind also. Food, surely, we may say, is something taken from without, and assimilated by us through certain processes of digestion. The mind of the infant unfolds and develops by feeding upon the outer world, by investigating the sights and sounds around it. After awhile it makes more rapid progress by feeding upon the experiences of others. If a child were shut up in a room where it never saw or heard anything of the outer world, its intellectual life would be dwarfed, it could be scarcely called intellectual life at all. So, too, is it with the soul; it has need of food, and that food is the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

As we have seen, our Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am the resurrection, and the life;" and, speaking of those who believed on Him—"I give unto them eternal life." And we find that He most emphatically

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connects this gift of life with feeding upon His Body He says, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

We shall observe here that our Lord confines the gift of life to those who feed on His flesh; that He actually asserts that those who do not eat His flesh have no life in them. And He further associates the resurrection of the dead and eternal life with this feeding upon His flesh.

But we may approach this subject from quite another point of view. The fact that we must eat to live, is such a commonplace in life, that in our familiarity with it we often fail to realise what an enormous factor food is, not only in the physical life of man, but in his moral and spiritual well-being. It teaches man many lessons which he needs to learn; and it not only *teaches*, but *enforces* its lessons. Indeed, we may assert that food is the principal natural instrument in man's progress in this life, the

* S. John vi. 51, 53, 54.

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chief agent for making him what God purposes man to be. Almost every step forward in his development, physical and moral, may be traced to some law of food.

But it stops not with its work upon man as an individual ; it deals with him as a social being, and impels him continually on the road to civilisation. But more still, it helps to develop his moral being, and guides his spiritual appetites towards God. Indeed, it is not too much to say, as we study the laws of food in relation to man, that the condition, that every one must eat to live, was imposed by God as a means of preparing man for the great gift of eternal life, and the joys of union with God in Heaven. Let us briefly examine some of these laws.

Food teaches man that he is dependent ; dependent upon his fellow-man, and still more upon God. It absolutely contradicts and forbids the dream of independence which is so dear to man's pride. Man cannot live without food for one day, without beginning to suffer the pangs of hunger ; he cannot live thus for one week, without endangering his life ; and to obtain the food he eats he is dependent on others—on those who employ him, and so furnish him with the means of purchasing food, and on those who work for him, and so provide him with the food

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he purchases. Left alone in his primeval condition, man doubtless procured food for himself; but now he has become quite dependent upon his fellow-men. And still more is he dependent upon God, Who gives or withholds the rain and the sunshine, upon which the blessings of harvest depend.

Again, food teaches man the necessity of labour; he must work if he is to eat; and, if, by the accident of wealth, he is dispensed from the need of actually working himself, his very wealth represents the accumulation of the work of others. Without labour man cannot eat, and therefore cannot live.

At this point we may notice the effect of food upon man's mental development; for all labour-saving devices which are the result of man's intellectual ingenuity can be ultimately traced back to expedients for producing more easily the necessities of life, which may be summed up under the head of food.

But we may also notice the influence of food in the social sphere. The common meal becomes the symbol of union, and binds man to his fellow-man in the ties of alliance and friendship. And when the meal partakes of a religious character, it is the means of man's union with God—looked upon as a sacrifice, it removes the obstacles to union with

☞ Second Friday in Lent.

God caused by sin ; and, regarded as a Sacrament, it becomes the instrument by which man is brought into closest communion with God.

These are but a few of the lines along which we may trace the work food accomplishes in making man what God would have him to be ; and all these lines meet in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, Who is the Bread of life and the Food of man. Food taught man the law of dependence upon his fellow-man and upon God. And surely this was the great lesson of the life of Jesus Christ, Who said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work ;"* Who taught absolute dependence upon God, and also enjoined subjection to those in authority in this world. The dream of independence finds no support in our Lord's teaching ; on the contrary, its keynote is, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."†

Food taught man the necessity of labour ; and the Son of God came into the world as a labouring Man, rising early, and late taking rest, saying, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work."‡

Food, too, had its effect upon man as a social

* S. John iv. 34. † S. Luke xiv. 11. ‡ S. John ix. 4.

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being, becoming the bond of union with his fellow-man, and the instrument of sacrifice and communion with God. And our Lord Jesus Christ, above all, came to teach men that they are brethren, to bind them together in the bonds of love. And further, He came to be the *Sacrifice* Which should take away the sin of the world, and should make God and man at one. And in the *Sacrament* of the Eucharist He not only becomes the Food of man's soul, but the Means by which man is united to God.

All the laws, therefore, of food seem to have prepared the human race for this great revelation of God in Jesus Christ, that He is the Life of man, and that this Life is imparted to man by feeding upon His flesh.


X.

Second Saturday in Lent.

S. PHILIP'S REQUEST.

S. JOHN XIV. 7-11.

“ If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also : and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me : or else believe Me for the very works' sake.”

“  If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.”

Before we consider the application of this verse we must notice the difference between the two verbs

S. Philip's Request. 56

translated by "to know." "If ye had known Me" (*ἐγνώκετε*). The word used here means, to know a thing by observation. It is as though our Lord had said, If you had used your opportunities during the three years which you have lived with Me, you would have come to know Me from what you have seen and heard of Me, in such a way that you would have "known My Father also."

But here we have a different verb (*ᾔδειτε*), which signifies, to know a thing by reflection. There are certain things which we come to know by the exercise of our senses. There are others which we know by reflection. Our Lord says: If ye had come to know Me by observation during My life, ye would have known, by reflection, My Father; for ye would have seen Him manifested in Me.

This verse concludes our Lord's answer to the question of S. Thomas. S. Thomas, however, is silent, apparently because he desired to ponder over and reflect upon Christ's words. But here S. Philip takes up the conversation and asks, as though the request had been suggested by what our Lord had just said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

S. Philip, in spiritual comprehension, seems to have been the slowest and dullest among the apostles; for, while the objection of S. Thomas

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is the objection of a thoughtful man, the request of S. Philip is based upon a merely superficial apprehension of our Lord's teaching. He takes up our Lord's last words, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him," and says, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it suffices us." Instead of spiritual sight, he asks for bodily sight, not considering how impossible was his request.

If we look back to the beginning of S. Philip's spiritual life, we shall find the same characteristics manifested. He was one of the first five disciples whom Jesus called, as S. John records in the first chapter of his Gospel. Of these five, two came to Christ of their own volition or seeking; two were brought to Him by their friends. S. Philip stands alone among the five as the one who had to be sought by Christ. We read that, Jesus "findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me."* He has to be sought, and found, and commanded to follow Him; and then he obeys. He had probably had the same teaching as the others in the school of S. John Baptist; so that, like them, he was prepared to receive Christ; and having accepted His call, he brings his friend Nathanael to our Lord.

* S. John i. 43.

S. Philip's Request. 50

In his conversation with Nathanael we, however, recognise the same dulness in the blunders which he makes about Christ's Person. He says to Nathanael, "We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* Nathanael objects, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The prophets to whom Philip referred had foretold that the Messiah should come from Bethlehem.

S. Philip makes two blunders. Our Lord was not, in a true sense, Jesus of Nazareth; and He was not the Son of Joseph. It is true, that He dwelt at Nazareth after His return from Egypt, and so was often spoken of by the common people as "Jesus of Nazareth."

But if Philip referred to the prophets, he ought to have remembered that *they* spoke of One Who should come from Bethlehem. And then, too, Jesus was not the Son of Joseph; He was the Son of Mary, by the operation the Holy Ghost.

S. Philip is brought before us in the Gospels in two other passages, which do not, however, throw any special light upon his character. But the circumstances of his call, and of his bringing his friend Nathanael to Christ, suggest very much the type of spiritual character which is manifested in

* S. John i. 45.

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the request, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

S. Philip's difficulty is not unbelief, so much as spiritual dulness; for the very request, "Shew us the Father," implies the belief that Christ could show them the Father; but also exposes his want of spiritual preception in supposing that the Father could be seen with bodily eyes.

Our Blessed Lord's reply is full of deepest pathos and reproach, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" Here the word "to know" is to know by observation. Have you witnessed My life so long, and learned nothing from it? Have you listened to My words so often, and forgotten what they taught? "I and the Father are one." "The Father is in Me, and I in Him."* "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" not because he hath seen the Father in His absolute Being, but because he hath seen God revealed in the Fatherly relation, revealed as Father; for in Christ, as S. Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Colossians, "dwelleth all the plentitude of the Godhead bodilywise."†

In this reproach of our Lord to S. Philip we have a most important spiritual distinction brought before us, perhaps the most important in the whole spiritual

* S. John x. 30; 38. † Col. ii. 9.

S. Philip's Request. 50

life—the difference between knowing Christ, and knowing *about* Christ. S. Philip had followed our Lord for some three years. He knew a great deal about Him; he knew what He had said; He knew what He had done—the works of wonder, the words of love; but, somehow, he had not come to know Christ.

There are many Christians who really desire to serve Christ faithfully, who, either from spiritual dulness, or from some other cause, are very much like S. Philip. They know a great deal *about* God; they have read the Gospels through again and again; they have read many books on our Lord's life; they have heard sermons, and lectures, and meditations. And in these various ways they have come to amass a great deal of information about Christ. They could answer almost any question which could be asked them in regard to our Lord's history. But they do not know Christ in the intimate knowledge of spiritual communion with Him; they do not know Him in the intimacy of spiritual friendship.

It sometimes happens that we have read a great deal about some great man, one of the world's heroes, who happens to be contemporary with us. We have read, perhaps, a great many biographies of this man; and we have formed our own mental picture of the man and of his character. We think

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we know him. But some day it comes to pass that we are introduced to him, and come to know him as a friend. And very often we find that all our conceptions of him are wrong. He is not a bit like what we thought he was.

So it is with Christ. Knowing *about* Christ, and knowing Christ, are very different things. We come to know about Christ by reading about Him. We come to *know* Him, chiefly in meditation, in prayer, and in communion. You get to know a man, not by reading about him, but by talking to him. An hour's conversation reveals more to you of the man, than reading many books about him.

So you get to know Christ through prayer, especially mental prayer, or meditation. And I suppose it is on this account, on account of its immense value, that Satan tries to discourage people so much in regard to meditation. He tries to make them satisfied with knowing about God, with reading books which are interesting, instead of going through the hard work of speaking to God in meditation, listening for His Voice; and so coming to know Him through personal intercourse.

Let us prayerfully consider Christ's reproach to S. Philip, and ask ourselves whether it applies to us—“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” How many years is

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it since we gave ourselves to Christ? Can we say, humbly but sincerely, that we have learned to know Him as the Lord of our Life, as our Master, and as our Friend?

XI.

Second Monday in Lent.

CHRIST'S ANSWER TO S. PHILIP.

S. JOHN XIV. 10-14.

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall He do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.”



If we examine our Lord's answer, we find it falls very clearly into three divisions: first, there is the reproach, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” then there is the dogmatic statement,

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“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ;” and finally, an indication of the lines of evidence which should have led S. Philip to a clearer apprehension of our Lord's person and teaching. Let us turn our attention to this last part of Christ's answer.

The difficulties which are brought before our Lord by different persons on different occasions, ought to be of special interest to us, inasmuch as they often call our attention to great principles which are in danger of being overlooked. Christ seldom meets a difficulty by a categorical yes or no ; but if His answer sometimes seems less direct, it is because it is more exhaustive, because our Lord answers not merely the verbal question, but unfolds principles which are involved in it.

In the case under our consideration Christ appeals to evidence of two kinds—objective and subjective. First, He points out that both His words and His works bear witness to His relation to the Father, and to His intimate communion with Him. He says, “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.”

Here He appeals to the objective evidence of His words and works. And He reminds S. Philip that

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He had often called their attention to the fact that neither His words nor His works were self-originated; that both alike proceeded from His relation to the Father. For instance, He had said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me;"* and, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father Which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."†

Then, in regard to His works, He had said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."‡ And in reference to both words and works, Christ had said, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."§

With these aids from Christ's own words, the Apostles ought to have been able to draw the inference of His relation to the Father, and of the fact that He in His own Person manifested to them the Father; as He said to S. Thomas, "If ye had

* S. John vii. 16. † S. John xii. 49. ‡ S. John v. 19.
§ S. John viii. 28, 29.

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known Me, ye should have known My Father also from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.”*

The same dogmatic statement which He makes in these words they could have reached themselves, if they had known Him as they ought to have known Him. His gracious words and wonderful works themselves bore witness of His communion with the Father.

To use an imperfect illustration, we are told of the Apostles S. Peter and S. John, who were ignorant and unlearned men, that when they were brought before the authorities of the Jewish Church, “they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”† That is to say, the Jewish authorities explained the marvellous power of their preaching, and the miracle which they had wrought in the Name of Jesus, by the fact that they had been with Jesus. They drew this inference from their words and actions, which would otherwise have been incomprehensible in unlettered and ignorant men; they saw that they were the effects of their communion with Christ.

So in the passage we are considering, though in a much higher sense, our Lord points to His own words and works as proving His communion with His Father, and as proving His Father's witness to

* S. John xiv. 7. † Acts iv. 13.

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Him. He says, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake." "Believe Me," He says; that is, have faith in Me, on account of My teaching; for I have taught you that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. But if you have not this faith, at least use your reason, and from the divinity of My works deduce the necessary divinity of My nature. Believe Me, because you know Me. Or, if you do not, use your intellect and ask yourselves, could any mere man have uttered the words; have done the miracles, that I have done?

Then our Lord passes from the objective evidence of his words and works to certain subjective evidence which was not at that time in their possession, but which He promises soon shall be theirs. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."

Christ turns from the objective manifestation of God—that is, His manifestation outside of themselves by teaching and miracles—to the subjective manifestation of God, the manifestation of God which they shall experience *in their own souls*, in the exercise of new powers to be committed to them. They had wondered at His gracious words, which reached the

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hearts and swayed the minds of the multitude. They had marvelled at His miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead. And He tells them, as an evidence of the truth of His mission, that they shall do greater works than these. And we know His promise was fulfilled. After Pentecost, their preaching did reach men's souls, and through the Name of their Master they were able to heal the sick and to raise the dead.

But in what sense were their works to be *greater* than their Master's? Not greater in kind, but greater in scope. The number of disciples who were gathered together in the upper chamber at Jerusalem after Christ's Ascension, as a result of His three years' preaching, was only some hundred and twenty; but the effect of S. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost is seen in the gathering into the Church of about three thousand souls! And the marvel of Christianity at its birth was its missionary power. In less than a generation it had spread almost throughout the then civilised world.

Our Lord has appealed to His works as an objective evidence of the truth of His mission, and now announces that the believer shall find in himself a subjective proof of its truth in the experience of a new power, greater even than that which His Master had manifested—the power of converting the world

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to Christ. And this was to follow as the result of His departure to His Father; for our Lord says, "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."

But here we may ask in what sense, precisely, these greater gifts to the Church were to be the result of Christ's going to His Father. He tells us—because He would send the Holy Ghost the Comforter; and because He would begin His work of intercession at the right hand of the Father.

Of the mission of the Holy Ghost He treats fully in the rest of His discourse. But first He refers to the effects of His intercession in the new power which should be attached to the prayer of the Christian. This we may consider more fully in the next section.

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THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER.

S. JOHN XIV. 13, 14.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.”



IN these words our Lord reveals the instrument by which His disciples are to do greater works than those which they had seen Him do. The instrument is prayer; not, however, mere prayer, but prayer in the Name, and therefore through the power, of Jesus Christ. All can pray to God as their Creator. The heathen can thus pray, and their prayers are heard. But the Christian prays, not merely to God as his Creator, but to God as his Father—his Father, because he is

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an adopted son of God, adopted through incorporation into Christ, a member of Christ, therefore a son of God. So he is taught to pray, "Our Father, Which art in heaven." Moreover, he can plead not only with God as a Father, but he can plead the merits, the infinite merits, of his great Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer with a Christian is something very different from prayer with a heathen. It is the prayer, not merely of the creature to his Creator, not only of a son to his Father; but prayer made in the Name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and adds to our prayer the plea of His merits, the power of His all-prevailing intercession.

In these discourses our Lord returns many times to the subject of prayer. But if we examine His words at this point we may pass over, with but a brief notice, the other references to it. First, we may observe in this passage the scope of prayer—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name;" how enormous! "Whatsoever!" You will say the scope is unlimited. But no; it is limited by the purpose of prayer—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." All prayer must have as its end the glorification of God through Jesus Christ. This, therefore, shuts out

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those things which are not for God's glory, and therefore not for our own real good.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name," that has God's glory as its end, "that will I do." People are often puzzled to know what they ought to pray for; sometimes, what they ought *not* to pray for. In regard to prayer, we may divide all things into three classes:

First, there are those things which we know are for God's glory and in accordance with God's Will; such, for instance, as all things which pertain to our spiritual growth and sanctification. For these we may pray, with the absolute certainty that they will be granted. For it is revealed to us that, "This is the Will of God, even your sanctification."* Everything connected with our spiritual life, with our growth in goodness, we can pray for without doubt. We know that God wills to give it to us, desires that we should pray for it. We have the assurance of Christ's own promise that our prayer will be granted, if we do not put an obstacle in the way by our sins.

Then, secondly, there is that large class of things about which we are quite sure that they are *not* for God's glory, not for our own good; as, for instance, when we want to have our own way, knowing that it is not the right way; when we desire success in some

* 1 Thess. iv. 3.

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undertaking, which is not right or honest. These things are excluded entirely from the scope of Christian prayer ; for they are not for God's glory.

Between these two divisions lies a third—that large class of things about which we are not sure whether they are according to God's Will or not ; success, for instance, in our undertakings in this world ; the restoration of health when we are sick ; the acquisition of wealth in business ; and many other things which may or may not be for God's glory and our own good. For these, therefore, we are to pray, with the proviso, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." We can pray to God to bless our undertakings in the world, the work we do, if we add, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." We can ask Him to restore us to health when we are sick, if we are sure that we are entirely resigned to His Will, believing that He knows what is best for us ; and therefore leaving ourselves in His hands, to suffer or to get well, as He deems best for us.

We learn, then, from this passage, first, the scope of Christian prayer—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name ;" secondly, its purpose—"that the Father may be glorified in the Son ;" and thirdly, what is, perhaps, most important of all, we are taught the channel of Christian prayer—"in My Name." That

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means, through My Person and character, through the merits of My Passion, through the power of My intercession; for the channel of Christian prayer is the merits of Christ. Therefore, we finish our prayers with the words, "through Jesus Christ."

It is in this that Christian prayer differs from all other prayer—that it pleads the Name which is above every name, the Name of Jesus! Others may base their prayers upon God's mercy, or upon His love. The Christian adds to this the all-prevailing plea of Christ's own promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." This plea is infinite in its power, as the merits of Christ are infinite.

We plead, by all that Christ did for us, all that He suffered for us; "By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation; by Thy Holy Nativity and Circumcision; by Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, Good Lord, deliver us. By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us."

And more still—not only by all that He did for us, all that He suffered for us upon earth, we plead what He is now doing for us in heaven—His continual intercession at the right hand of the Father, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. The

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Christian's prayer is of all-prevailing power ; because it flows through the channel of Christ's merits, it is made in the Name of Christ's Person.

In the sixteenth chapter our Lord repeats this promise—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." But there He adds, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled."*

You will observe that Christ Himself draws attention to the fact of the difference between Christian prayer and other prayer. He says, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in My Name*." The disciples had prayed ; they had asked, and had obtained, doubtless, many things from God ; but they had never used the all-prevailing plea, the Name of Christ. Henceforth their joy was to be fulfilled in prayer ; for they were to pray with an assurance based upon Christ's own words, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you."

We must not, however, forget that, while Christ is the Channel of Prayer, the Holy Ghost is the Agent of Prayer. Prayer—Christian prayer, at least—is His work in the soul ; as S. Paul teaches us, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit

* S. John xvi. 23, 24.

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Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

You will observe that S. Paul points out three ways in which the Holy Spirit is to help us in our prayers. He is to help us in the matter of prayer, to teach us what we should pray for. He is to help us in the manner of our prayer, to teach us to pray as we ought; to teach us how to pray. And then again, He is to make “intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Our Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father in heaven intercedes for us; and the Holy Ghost in our own soul, acting upon our spirit, with aspirations, and desires, and sighs, and groanings, which cannot find words to express themselves, intercedes also.

But here we must leave this inexhaustible subject, striving to learn from Christ’s own words some simple lessons in regard to the supreme duty of prayer.

* Rom. viii. 26.

XIII.

Third Wednesday in Lent.

LOVE.

S. JOHN XIV. 15.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”



THE thought of love follows the thought of faith. In our last meditation we saw that faith by the agency of prayer can work even greater things than those which Christ did upon earth. Here we are taught that love issues in works of devotion especially manifested in an obedience which shows itself in loving self-sacrifice.

Our translation has “keep my commandments,” but in the best manuscripts the verb is in the future, not in the imperative: it is *τηρήσητε* not *τηρήσατε*—If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.

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And this indeed is required by the relation of obedience to love. As our Lord implies, obedience is the necessary consequence of love. It is unnecessary to say, "If ye love Me, *keep* My commandments;" for if you love, you will obey. And this is what our Lord is pointing out in this passage that obedience is the proof of perfect love, and therefore that disobedience is an evidence of the imperfection of love. For it is absolutely impossible to love God and wilfully to disobey His commandments.

We may also notice that in the original the word translated "My" (*τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἐμὰς*) is emphatic. Indeed, we might render the passage, "ye will keep the commandments, which are in a special sense Mine." Our Lord is evidently referring to the Gospel, since the commandments given therein are especially His, in that they are characteristic of His teaching which love will lead us to carry out with scrupulous fidelity.

Love is the "antiphon" of these discourses. We find it enjoined in no less than seven distinct passages. In four, it is love directed towards God and associated with obedience,* as in the verse under our consideration; and in three it is love directed especially towards our

* S. John xiv. 15, 21, 23; xv. 9.

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neighbour.* In this verse obedience is set forth as the *consequence* of love. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." And similarly in verse 23, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." In verse 21, it is adduced as the *evidence* of love: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." In the next chapter, verse 9, obedience is shown to be the *preservative* of love: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love."

In all these passages it is love towards God of which Christ is speaking. In the other three instances in these discourses in which our Lord enjoins love it is the *fruit* of love towards God manifested in love towards our neighbour; and in two of them our Lord proposes, as the model of that love which He commands us to show towards our neighbour, nothing less than His own wondrous love towards us. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And again, "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you;" and here He adds, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends," thus adducing the supreme act of

* S. John xiii. 34 ; xv. 12, 17.

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love by which He redeemed the world as the pattern of that love which we should show to one another.

Our Lord Jesus Christ would therefore teach us that love is the true motive of all Christian life and of Christian obedience. It is the force, the principle, which is to regenerate the world by conquering sin. There are really only two great moral forces working in this world—the force of sin and the force of love. We can trace them from the very beginning making their way down the great stream of human history. We find them everywhere present, always in conflict and meeting for their supreme effort in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There we learn what, perhaps, we should not have found out by our own observation, that the force of love is stronger than that of sin. As we look upon this world, marred and ruined by sin, we might be led to suppose that sin was stronger than love, because it seems to be so much more universal, and so much more certain in its effects. Everywhere we see the marks of sin; not only in the prisons, and hospitals, and asylums, in which sin's victims are restrained or ministered to, but in almost every home, in almost every life, not only is sin present, but present to wreck all

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that is fairest, all that is truest, all that is best in man.

If we regard the world as a great battle-field in which the forces of sin and love are in ceaseless conflict, it would seem to the superficial observer that sin carried the warfare into every part of love's country, making prisoners everywhere. We see homes in which love reigns, homes of peace and happiness, but after a while sin finds entrance there, peace departs, happiness dies, the home is wrecked. This is the dark side of the picture, and it is true that the power of sin is enormous, that its captives are drawn from every class.

But is there not another side to the picture—a brighter one? We see bands of devoted men and women going down into the slums of our great cities to wage a hand-to-hand battle with sin. What is the motive that sends them there? What is the force which gives them courage to meet the foe, to persevere through long years in their work, to endure all sorts of hardships and ingratitude. The motive, the force is love! And if we see sin entering the homes of love and carrying off as prisoners those who dwell therein, we also behold the servants of love rescuing sin's prisoners, even those who have fallen most under its degrading power, and bringing them back in triumph to the obedience of love.

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Again, we behold men and women leaving not only their homes but their country, taking their lives in their hands and going as missionaries to the heathen, meeting the dangers of exposure, disease, and the violence and treachery of those under the dominion of false religions, who, under the influence of their native savagery, stop at no cruelty in their efforts to destroy missionaries bringing them the gospel of peace.

Again, we ask, what is the spirit which inspires these missionaries? What is the motive which leads them to abandon the comforts of civilisation, to face the dangers and difficulties of missionary work? What is the force which supports them through many years under the disappointments of almost fruitless effort. It is the love of souls which flows from the love of God. It is the carrying out of our Lord's command, "That ye love one another, *as* I have loved you."

There is, however, another way in which we may estimate the relative strength of these forces of sin and love. It is by tracing them each to their source, to their origin. If we do this we shall find that sin has its origin in the devil; it is diabolical in its very nature and source. But love, on the other hand, has its origin in God, since "God is Love;" so that its source and

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nature is divine. Sin is a tremendous force, and its author is a creature of enormous power, but not almighty, not infinite. Love, on the other hand, is of God, and God is almighty, God is infinite, God is supreme. So that if we trace the two forces to their origin, we shall be saved the mistake, so natural to one who simply observes them in their conflict around us—the mistake of thinking that sin is more powerful than love.

Again, we may investigate the relative power of these two forces, not only in a thousand petty engagements in the world about us to-day, but in their supreme effort, in their great duel on Calvary. There we see all the forces of sin marshalled and directed by their leader, Satan, in the attempt to crush out, in the Person of Jesus Christ, supreme goodness and supreme love. And what is the result? Sin can point to the dead Body of Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross, and can say, "See what I have done. I have killed the only perfect and sinless man. He came to set free from my power the human race. He came to redeem my slaves. He taught the Gospel of love. He lived a life of love, and now it is all over. There He hangs upon the cross, dead, killed by those whom He came to save. And it was I who incited them to do the deed, incited them to

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murder Him Who desired to be their Deliverer. Can you doubt my power? Which is stronger, sin or love?"

It is true that the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, His death upon the cross, is a witness to the power and malice of sin; but it is also a witness to the power of love. For the Christian beholding Christ upon the cross can reply to the challenge of the evil one, "Great is your power, but in compassing the death of Christ, you overreached yourself, and your power was shattered in the very act by which you thought you had gained the victory."

There is another point of view from which the death of Christ may be regarded. It is a manifestation of the greatness of love: "Greater love hath no man than this, That a man lay down his life for his friends." It was love that led the Son of God to become Incarnate, to endure all the ills which this sinful world could inflict upon him. It was love which took Him through the length and breadth of the land, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant. It was love which led Him to accept the return which an ungrateful world rendered Him for all these benefits. It was love which made Him willing to suffer and to die for man.

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All the cruelty, all the humiliations of the Passion, were but opportunities for manifesting the greatness of His love. The wounds which were inflicted upon the sacred Body of Jesus by the Roman scourges, were but so many gaping lips eloquent with the language of love. "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow," says the prophet, speaking in the Person of Christ, and from the greatness of My sorrow learn the greatness of My love.

It was love which led Him to suffer, not only the ignominies and cruelties of the Passion, but to die. "Greater love hath no man than this, That a man lay down his life for his friends." But love is stronger than death, and on the third day, Love arose triumphant from the dead. After forty days, Love ascended into heaven to reign there in His own Kingdom, and on earth still to sway by His Divine power the hearts and minds of His subjects. Sin could inflict death; but Jesus passed through the grave and gate of death and rose again, and "death hath now no more dominion over Him."

So it is now in this world, so will it always be while this world shall last, sin may persecute, may scourge, may crucify, may kill the body; but there is a world beyond, a kingdom of love

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in which sin shall be no more. And those who have been subjects of Jesus Christ in this life will bear witness through all eternity to the power of His love, that it was stronger than sin, stronger than death; that by it, that is, by letting it rule their lives, they conquer sin. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments," said our Lord to His disciples, and "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." If we keep these commandments we shall be doing Christ's work in this world, helping to redeem the world from sin, for Love is the regenerative force of Christian life.

XIV.

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THE COMFORTER.

S. JOHN XIV. 16.

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.”



BEFORE we consider the teaching in this verse, it will be worth our while to notice the word which is translated, or mis-translated, “pray.” It should be, “I will *ask* the Father,” not “*pray* the Father.” Prayer implies the entire subordination of the suppliant, and the immeasurable superiority of Him to Whom prayer is directed. But this is not the case with our Lord’s prayers, and so we find in the original a word used here which is never used of *our* prayers to God. The verb here is *ἐρωτᾶν*, and it is used in regard to prayer,

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only of petitions addressed to God by our Blessed Lord Himself. Wherever the prayers of the disciples are spoken of another word (*αἰτεῖν*) is used. The word *ἑρωτᾶν*, to ask, implies some sort of fellowship or equality between the person who asks and Him to Whom the request is addressed.

We find this word used in the Synoptic Gospels where the disciples ask our Lord to do things for them in the spirit of fellowship, not of prayer. But wherever the word is used of *prayer* in the Gospels, it is used only in regard to our Lord's prayers to His Father. He asks, not as we ask, realising our inferiority. He asks with a sense of divine fellowship, so He says, "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." You will notice that there is no sense of uncertainty as to whether the prayer will be granted. Christ says, I will ask, and the Father will give.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter." This title of the Holy Ghost occurs only in these discourses. We find it first in this verse, afterwards in the twenty-sixth verse of this chapter, in the twenty-sixth verse of the next chapter, and in the seventh verse of the sixteenth chapter. The word is only used in one other passage in the New Testament, and there it refers to our Lord Himself. For in his first

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Epistle, S. John says, "And if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins."*

Beautiful as the title "Comforter" is, and truly as it represents one great aspect of the work of the Holy Ghost, it is difficult to see how it can be regarded as a translation of the Greek *παράκλητος* in these passages, since the Greek word can only be passive, while the word Comforter is active in its signification. If we take the word Paraclete to pieces we find it is compounded of two words, *παρά* and *κλητός*, and that it means literally one who is called to your side to help you in some emergency or difficulty. The word *παράκλητος* is a forensic term, a legal term, generally applied to the advocate for the defence in a lawsuit, and thus it perfectly brings before us what the Holy Ghost is—a Divine Person, Who is called to our side to help us, to plead for us. As S. Paul says, "The Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."† The translation in S. John's Epistle, "the Advocate," is an accurate representation of the Greek, which "Comforter" is not.

Our Lord says, "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." We may notice

* 1 S. John ii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 26.

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the word "another," which implies that they had already had one Comforter, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and this S. John shows in the passage we have just quoted, where he says, "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Their Comforter, their Advocate, Christ, was about to depart, and He promises that another Comforter, another Advocate, should take His place, and by His operation bring back to them, under a new and more intimate relationship, their Lord and Master. For Christ goes on to say, "I will not leave you orphans or comfortless: I will come to you."

Since the title "The Comforter" brings before us a very important aspect of the work of the Holy Ghost in our souls, it may be well for us to dwell for a moment on the character of the comfort which he ministers. "Comforter," which is a Latin word, really means the strengthener, one who, by his words, encourages another, arousing in him the spirit of bravery or courage. We often use the word comfort in such a different sense that it is well to notice its true significance. We speak of the comforts of life or of home, even meaning its luxuries. But luxuries have an enervating rather than a stimulating effect upon us, whereas the derivation of the word

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“comfort,” signifies that which strengthens us, not that which enervates us.

The Holy Ghost ministers to us in our sorrows, bringing to us consolations of grace, and He does this chiefly in three ways:—

First, He enlightens our intellect, enabling us to see the true end and purpose of sorrow and adversity, that by it God’s Will is fulfilled in us, and that through adversity the various faculties of the soul are developed and character is moulded and formed for eternity. It was this illumination of his intellect by the Holy Ghost, which enabled S. Paul to say, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*

Then again the Holy Spirit strengthens our will by His grace, enabling us to endure our trials with patience, and teaching us the blessedness of this endurance according to the words of S. James, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.”† We must remember S. Paul’s words, that “God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make the way to escape,

* 1 Cor. iv. 17.

† S. James i. 12.

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that ye may be able to bear it."* The way to escape, of which he speaks, is evidently not escape from the trial, but from failure under trial; for the purpose for which this way of escape is given is that we may be able to bear the trial, that is, that we may be strong to endure patiently whatever testing God sends us. It is not getting rid of difficulties which perfects us in Christian life and character; but patient endurance of them, nay, even joyful endurance; because we realise the greatness of the work which they are intended to effect in us. As S. James says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."†

And, lastly, the Holy Ghost kindles our affections with love for God, so that we not merely endure our adversities and bear our cross, because we see that they are the means by which character is formed, and the latent possibilities of the soul developed; but because we love and trust God Who has sent them, and because we desire to show that love by accepting with trustful patience, whatever of affliction or adversity

* I Cor. x. 13.

† St. James i. 2-4.

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God wills us to bear. Thus the Christian endures his sufferings, not in a mere spirit of stoical courage, but with loving trustfulness, regarding them not as a mark of God's displeasure, but rather of God's love. For it is revealed, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* What true consolation there is in the thought that the Holy Spirit is always with us in our infirmities, strengthening us to bear our trials, teaching us to love the cross, encouraging us to persevere under adversity, until it has done its work in us, and God in His good providence removes it.

* Hebrews xii. 6.

XV.

Third Friday in Lent.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

S. JOHN XIV. 16, 17.

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of Truth ; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : but ye know Him ; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”



THE second title by which our Blessed Lord describes the Holy Ghost in this passage is “The Spirit of Truth,” and this title implies the distinct personality and true divinity of the Holy Ghost.

“The Spirit of Truth.” What does this mean? The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ, Who is the Truth, and He is to guide Christ’s children into all truth, as we are told in the next chapter.*

* S. John xv. 26.

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All truth is contained in the "deposit" of the Day of Pentecost. This was given to the Church at Pentecost potentially, and is the deposit over which S. Paul exhorts S. Timothy to keep guard.* And this deposit was "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," for which S. Jude, in his Epistle, exhorts us earnestly to contend.† While we must realise the perfection of this Pentecostal gift, that it contained in the germ all truth; so that there can be no new doctrines of the faith, we must also remember that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to unfold this truth according to the needs of different ages.

This unfolding, or development of the truth, is the special function of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Truth. Thus He supplies the wants of every age, bringing home to the mind of the Church truth which was contained in the revelation of Pentecost, truth which is enshrined in the words of Holy Scripture, but which has often remained unnoticed or imperfectly comprehended by the Church, until some need for it has arisen. Then the Holy Ghost has supplied that need by showing to the Church, not new truth, but some aspect of the original deposit which met the exigencies of the times. This, which we may see again and

* Cf. 1 S. Timothy vi. 20.

† Cf. S. Jude 3.

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again in Church history, is our assurance, that in all the difficulties of future ages, the Spirit of Truth will preserve the Church from error, and unfolding the Pentecostal revelation more and more, will guide the Church to the comprehension of all necessary truth.

There are many doctrines of the Church which illustrate this work of the Spirit of Truth. Doctrines, which were implicitly contained in the original deposit, of the faith, but which were not explicitly defined until need for them arose in the Church. Such, for instance, are the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, and of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are contained in Holy Scripture. They were implicitly held by the Apostolic Church. And yet we find that writers of the second and third centuries treat of them vaguely, and sometimes even inaccurately. But, when in the fourth and fifth centuries heretics arose who denied these doctrines, then the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost in her ecumenical councils, defined accurately what was the truth, and gave us the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the former by conciliar action, the latter by natural growth, but both under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of Truth.

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There are many other doctrines which have been unfolded from time to time; but we must bear in mind that every doctrine in its full growth is identical with the original revelation of the Day of Pentecost. Some persons have thought on this account that the doctrines of the Church have changed, but we must remember that there is a change which destroys, and a change which perfects, the identity of things. For instance, all growth is change, yet the oak of the forest has perfect identity with the acorn from which it sprang, and the change of ages, which has passed upon it, perfects its identity by unfolding its stateliness, and beauty, and strength. On the other hand all decay is change. When the branches of the oak droop, when the tree dies and falls into the dust, this stage is corruption.

By this rule we may test the doctrines of the Church in comparison with those of the heretics. For instance, as we have shown, we may trace this growth in the expression of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the Baptismal formula to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. This is growth, but absolute identity. So we may follow the doctrine of the Incarnation from the formula, "The Word became Flesh,"* to the full definitions

* S. John i. 49.

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of the ecumenical councils against Arians, Apollinarians, Nestorians, and Eutychians. So, too, with the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. Here again we have growth but identity.

If we test the same doctrines among schismatics and heretics, we find the doctrine of the Holy Trinity represented by a series of heresies, from Sabellius to Socinus, or we may trace the progress of the perversion of the doctrine of the Incarnation from Nestorius to Strauss, or of the Holy Eucharist from Luther to Zwinglius. Here is change indeed, but change in which identity is lost. The oak has mouldered and fallen to the ground.

That this is the teaching not of the Church alone, but also of Holy Scripture, we shall see if we read carefully the second chapter of the First Epistle of S. John. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth . . . But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."*

* 1 S. John ii. 20, 21, and 27.

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In these words, S. John, writing to the Church at the end of the first century, affirms :

(1) That it had already received the unction of the Spirit of Truth, and that, therefore, its members had no need to seek for knowledge elsewhere, because this unction enabled them to know all things; for it was the unction of the Holy Spirit.

(2) That they had no need of human teachers: "Ye need not that any man teach you."

(3) That this unction was absolute truth, that it is no lie; that is, it is not mixed with any falsehood, error, or doubt. This unction rested first on our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and from Him descends upon His Body which is the Church, and goes "down to the skirts of His clothing," that is, to the members who abide in the Church.

In regard to the character of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, our Lord in this passage teaches us three things :

(1) "He shall abide with you for ever." Christ's historical presence might at that time be measured by hours, He was soon to leave them; at the longest, from the beginning of His ministry, it was measured only by years. But the Holy Ghost comes that He may abide with the Church

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for ever. This is not a transient presence, but a continual presence, preserving the Church from all error, guiding her into all truth.

(2) It is, however, a presence which the world cannot apprehend: "Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him." With the world, lack of the capacity of sight made reception of the Holy Ghost impossible; with the disciples, on the other hand, His presence brought knowledge which gave them greater power of reception of the Holy Spirit. For Christ goes on to say: "But ye know Him: for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you."

We may ask how they had come to know the Holy Ghost when this was apparently the first time they had heard of Him. They had come to know Him through Christ, for in Christ the Spirit was always truly present, though not in His characteristic manifestation; just as Christ now is ever present with His Church through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Circumincession teaches us that where any one Person of the Holy Trinity is, there the Others are also. That whatever any one Person of the Holy Trinity does the Others share in that action. So the Holy Spirit was in Christ when Christ was in the world, just as Christ is

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present now through the operations of the Holy Spirit.

(3) "Dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "Dwelleth with you" (*παρ' ὑμῖν μένει*) might be more accurately rendered, "abideth by your side." And in these words we have brought before us an important theological doctrine. Before Pentecost the Holy Ghost was abiding close to them, as it were by their side, for He was the Spirit of Christ. But there was no *indwelling* of the Holy Ghost in man until Pentecost. We observe that our Lord, speaking of the Holy Ghost, says to the disciples, He abideth by your side (that is, before Pentecost), but He adds, "And He *shall be* in you," that is, in the near future, after Pentecost.

In the Old Testament the Holy Ghost was God's Agent, as He is now; but He worked in a different way. "He spake by the Prophets" the Creed tells us, but He did not dwell *in* them. His action upon them and upon others was but *transient*. Now in the Church and in the Christian soul it is permanent; there is an abiding presence. He is given to us that He may abide with us for ever.

XVI.

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CHRIST'S COMING THROUGH THE
HOLY GHOST.

S. JOHN XIV. 18-20.

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.”



THIRD cause of consolation which our Lord sets before His disciples in this chapter is that after His departure, and through the gift of the Holy Ghost, He Himself will come to His disciples in a union more intimate than the fellowship which they had enjoyed with Him in His life on earth. He says, “I will not leave

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you comfortless : I will come to you." The word translated "comfortless" (*ὀρφανούς*) is really "orphans." "I will not leave you orphans." The very word which describes their sorrow confirms their sonship. When He departs for a brief space they will be like orphans. But even this shows their true relation to Christ, that they are His children, and He promises, "I will not leave you orphans : I will come to you : " or as we should read it, "I am coming to you," for the verb (*ἔρχομαι*) is in the present tense, not in the future. "I am continually coming to you and to the Church in all the work of the Holy Ghost ;" for all the great operations of the Holy Spirit in the Church are but the energies of the living and reigning Lord Jesus Christ, Who comes to us also as individuals through the work of the Holy Ghost in our own souls.

In how many ways does our Blessed Lord come to us through the work of the Holy Ghost in us ? He comes to us in the hour of prayer : we not only pray in His Name, that is through His merits, but with Him, in the realisation of His great intercession at the right hand of the Father. He comes to us at the time of meditation, when we are pondering upon the words in the Holy Gospel, which depict some scene in His life, or record His teaching. The sacred page glows under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and

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the actions and utterances of our Lord come to us with greater power probably than they exercised over the Apostles who heard them, but had not the Holy Spirit to bring them home to their souls.

He comes to us at the moment of temptation to help us by His grace to resist and to conquer—He Who once “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* He comes to us in the Holy Communion to give us strength to bear the burdens of life, to do the work to which we are called, to guide us in our difficulties that we may not only rejoice in our union with Him, but in the power of His grace may fulfil God's purposes for us, meeting with courage the obstacles which the world puts in our way.

He comes to us in our joys to show His interest in us. He comes to us in our sorrows to tell us of His sympathy for us. He comes to us in the days of sickness to teach us to bear with patience the discipline of ill health, and to unite our little sufferings to the great pains of His Passion.

Lastly, He comes to us in the hour of death to strengthen us for the last great struggle. If David could say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art

* Heb. iv. 15.

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with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me,”* how much more can we make these words our own as we pass through the valley of the shadow leaning upon our Beloved. As He has come to us in all the various vicissitudes of our life here, so He will take us to be with Him in that glorious life hereafter, where, if we have been faithful, we shall learn that our light affliction in this world has worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world beyond, in heaven itself.

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye see Me : because I live ye shall live also.” The world was to behold Him but a little while longer, for its followers deprived themselves of the power of seeing Him by their own act when they crucified Him. But even while they still behold Him, they only behold Him with that outward vision which could see but His natural life. His disciples, however, had another kind of vision, so that, although His death was to remove Him from their natural sight, it did not interfere with that spiritual vision through which they received manifestations of Himself, and, indeed, after Pentecost this power of spiritual vision, by which they received revelations of Christ, was to be immensely increased.

“The world seeth Me no more ; but ye see Me.”

* Psalm xxiii, 4.

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Ye see Me always. But He promises more than this: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Fellowship with Christ involved not only *sight* but *life*. Not only were they to receive revelations of Christ, but they were so to be made one with Christ through Baptism, so that, with S. Paul, they could say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."* And this incorporation is the work of the Holy Ghost. Made one with Christ in Baptism, that union grows and increases, as we feed upon Christ through meditation upon His words, and in the Holy Eucharist receive the very Body and Blood of Christ, so that we are able to live by His life.

"At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." "At that day." At what day? The day in which the new revelation is realised: the day which began at Pentecost, and lasts for the Church until Christ's return. But for the individual soul it is the day in which we realise the fulness of our fellowship with Christ through the operation of the Holy Ghost; it is the day of our intensest joy, the day of our spiritual awakening, the day when we realise we are Christ's, not merely in name, but in deed, the day in which we realise that we live, and yet not we, but Christ liveth in us.

* Gal. ii. 20.

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“At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father.” Then should they apprehend Christ’s union with Him Who is not only *the* Father, but *His* Father. That is to say, they should then realise the true relation of Christ to God the Father, and their relation to the Father through their union with Christ. This is what S. Paul means when he says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”* We are children of God, not only by creation, as all the heathen are God’s children, but we are children by adoption, that is, God is our Father because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and because we are incorporated into His Body and live with His Life.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” So we are taught that in order to know the Father, in order to see the Father (as S. Philip asked to see Him), we must have communion with Jesus Christ in

* Rom. viii. 14-18.

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His Humanity. But, on the other hand, in order to have the fullest and most intimate union with this Humanity, we must realise its exaltation into God, for only as Christ is in the Father is He able to be with us and in us, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

“He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” This verse must be compared with the fifteenth verse, of which it is the converse, “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.” There obedience is shown to be the consequence of love: “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.” Here obedience is shown to be the evidence of love: “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.”

But more, “and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father,” not merely in the sense and in the degree in which God loves the world at large, but in a peculiar and individual degree, as the father loves the child who is specially dear to him because he fulfils all his purposes and satisfies all his hopes. In other words, we shall be loved of the Father because we love Christ, Who is the superlative object of the Father's affection, the only begotten

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Son of God, and this love for Christ we prove by our obedience to His teachings.

But there is yet more, "And I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." The word "manifest" in this verse is emphatic and signifies a close revelation of Christ's Person. "He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father: and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." The word "manifest" implies that our Lord will make clear to those who love Him with this perfect love, His nature and character, in a union so intimate that it can only exist in the soul which has given itself up altogether to the love of Christ.


XVII.

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THE QUESTION OF S. JUDE.

S. JOHN XIV. 22-24.

“Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.”

“UDAS said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”

This Judas is the apostle who is brought before us in the lists of the apostles given by S. Matthew and S. Mark* under the name of Thaddaeus, and in that

* S. Matt. x. 3. S. Mark iii. 18.

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given by S. Luke as Judas the son (not the brother) of James.* We know absolutely nothing about him except that he asked this question of our Lord. Some have identified him with the S. Jude who wrote the Epistle. But that Judas was a *brother* not a *son* of James, and was one of our Lord's "brethren;" moreover it is extremely doubtful, or rather improbable, that any of our Lord's brethren were numbered among the twelve Apostles. We are so distinctly told in the Gospels "neither did His brethren believe in Him,"† that it seems impossible to suppose that they could have been among the Apostles. Since we know nothing about this S. Jude, except that he asked this question of our Lord, we are not able, as in the case of S. Peter and S. Thomas and S. Philip, to investigate his character and spiritual development.

He interrupts our Lord with a fourth question, and, as in the previous questions, Christ's answer clears up certain difficulties. S. Peter had asked, "Why cannot I follow Thee now?" and Christ had shown that none can follow Him into His Kingdom in Heaven until they have been prepared for it by following Him in obedience and suffering in His

* S. Luke vi. 16. Our version is wrong in inserting "brother" in this place.

† S. John vii. 5. Cf. also S. Mark iii. 21.

The Question of S. Jude. *Se*

Kingdom on earth. S. Thomas had asked, "We know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" and Jesus had revealed that He Himself was the Way: "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." S. Philip had said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," and our Lord had replied to him: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and then had gone on to show him how He Himself revealed the Father.

Now another disciple, S. Jude, asks a further question. "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The clause translated "how is it," etc. (*τί γέγονεν*) ought to be, "What has happened that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? What has happened to change Thy plans? Surely as Messiah Thou wouldest reveal Thy glory publicly to the world. For this the Jewish nation has long hoped. What then has happened to cause Thee to change these plans and to tell us that Thou art about to limit the revelation of Thy glory to us, Thy disciples?"

This is the idea which the question of S. Jude expresses, and we shall remember that a similar idea is contained in the words of His brethren to our Lord at an earlier period of His ministry, when they said to Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy

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disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things show Thyself to the world.”* As is so often the case, our Lord’s reply does not appear to be a direct answer to the question, although, if we study it carefully, we shall find that it is more than an answer, in that it indicates the true cause why Christ did not manifest His Messiahship at that time to the world.

The Jews were expecting a political Messiah, who should deliver them from foreign foes, from their Roman masters, and should make the nation glorious as it was in the time of Solomon, or rather, more glorious than it had ever been. There is little doubt that most of the Apostles shared in this expectation in spite of many warning utterances of Christ. Even after His resurrection we find that they asked Him, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”† They looked for the setting up of a temporal kingdom of great power and glory, and it was not until they had been enlightened by the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost that they were able to understand that Christ’s kingdom was not of this world, was not a temporal kingdom amongst the kingdoms of the earth, but was a

* S. John vii. 3, 4.

† Acts i. 6.

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universal kingdom over men's minds and souls, a spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of truth and righteousness.

But let us examine our Lord's answer, for it contains a very important declaration of the law of the progress of God's revelation to man. We see first the *condition* of this revelation, that it depends upon obedience resting upon personal love, and then the *mode* of this revelation, which is shown to be the operation of the Holy Ghost. For in verse twenty-six our Lord goes on to speak of the Holy Ghost, Who was to bring all things to their remembrance. To this is added a recapitulation of Christ's work for His people, both in Heaven and earth, with which the chapter concludes.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with Him.” The first clause is practically a repetition of verse fifteen, “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.” If a man love Me, he will keep My *word*, not *words*, for here the word referred to is the Gospel, containing, as it does, Christ's own commands. But to this He adds, not as in verse eighteen, “I will come to you” but “We will come,” My Father and I. Thus implying, of course, His true divinity.

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“We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” Here the thought carries us back to the first verse. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.”

We have already noticed that the word *μονή*, translated “mansions,” occurs only twice in the New Testament, both times in this chapter—in the first verse and in the present verse. “For We will make Our *abode* with him” is, if we are to retain the same translation of *μονή*, “We will make our *mansion* with him.”

Surely this introduces us to one of the deepest mysteries of Christian experience. Not only has Christ gone to prepare a place for us in the many mansions of His Father’s house, but if we, through love and obedience, prepare a place for God in our souls, He will come and take up His abode with us. This verse is paralleled by the passage in the Epistle to the Church of Laodicea: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him.”*

It is comparatively easy for us to conceive of Christ preparing a place for us in Heaven, but now He reveals to us that we need not wait for this, that if we will but prepare our hearts, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit will come and make Their

* Rev. iii. 20.

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abode in us ; so that we can have Heaven within us with all its joys, even though we are surrounded by the sorrows and struggles of the life of this world.

But this wonderful union of the soul with God, which is the climax of our Lord's revelation, has its condition. We must not forget it. The condition is obedience which springs from personal love. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words : and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." The capacity to receive Christ's revelation and the capacity to possess God's presence in the soul depends upon this loving obedience. Therefore, our Lord goes on to say, "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings ; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's Which sent Me."

This is the real answer to S. Jude's question, "What has happened that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" That which had happened was this, that the love of the disciples rendered them, even imperfect as they were—rendered *them* capable of receiving Christ's revelation ; while the lack of love on the part of the world rendered the world incapable of receiving it. The reason that Christ would manifest His glory to the disciples and not to the world, was that the world

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had no eyes to see, no capacity to receive it, and the want of sight and the want of capacity was to be traced back to the lack of love. Thus we are told that disobedience to Christ's words (that is, to the constituent parts of His one word, the Gospel) is, in fact, disobedience to God, manifesting Himself under the aspect of Love.

There are some, alas, who reject Christ's words, and yet profess to believe in God. Those, for instance, whom we call Unitarians. If we were to ask them what was their conception of God, they would probably reply, "God is Love," and yet they reject the one and only manifestation of perfect love in Jesus Christ, which the world has ever seen. When our Lord says, "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings: and the words which ye hear are not Mine, but the Father's, Which sent Me." He shows that those who love Him not, and keep not His commandments, cannot receive the full revelation of the Father—that in rejecting Christ's words, they are really rejecting God, manifested under His attribute of Love.


XVIII.

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CHRIST'S LEGACY TO HIS DISCIPLES.

S. JOHN XIV. 25-27.

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

N the last section our Lord revealed the *condition* on which the reception of revelation depends—obedience resting upon personal love, without which the capacity to receive revelation cannot exist. Now we are told of the *mode* of revelation. It is by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and in regard to this operation we

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are taught four things. (1) That the Holy Ghost is sent by the Father. (2) That He comes in Christ's name, character, and power. (3) That He comes to teach us all things; and (4) that He is to bring to our remembrance and to make clear to our understanding all that Christ taught His disciples.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you." "These things" refer to the consolations given by our Lord to His disciples in the previous part of the chapter, and they are put in antithesis to the "all things" which the Holy Ghost was to teach them. The earthly teaching of Christ was limited by the circumstances under which it was given, especially by the unenlightened character of the disciples before Pentecost. This teaching of Christ, however, was to be completed by being filled out and developed by the Holy Ghost in the Church.

"But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost." This is the only place in the Gospel in which we have the full emphatic title "the Holy Ghost." In our Bible we find the title several times in the Synoptic Gospels,* but the form in the original Greek is quite different. There it is, πνεῦμα ἅγιον,

* S. Matt. i. 18, 20; iii. 11; S. Mark i. 8; S. Luke iii. 16; S. John i. 33.

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without the article. Whereas here it is, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, signifying the Spirit, Which is the Holy Ghost. Our Lord in this passage, and again in the thirteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter, speaks of the Holy Ghost as the Teacher and Guide, Who is to lead them into all truth. As the latter passage is somewhat fuller in its treatment of this aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit, we shall pass over the present verse and consider it when we come to treat of the parallel passage.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” This is our Lord’s solemn farewell and last legacy to His disciples. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” And what sort of peace is this, of which our Lord speaks as *His* peace, and which He contrasts with the world’s peace. The peace which He gives, His own peace, is the result of struggle endured and victory won. The world’s peace, on the other hand, is generally the result of a compromise or truce with evil. The world’s peace is the absence of struggle, the shrinking from, rather than the meeting and overcoming of difficulties. “My peace I give unto you.” It will not save you, our Lord would tell us, from struggle and persecution and sorrow, but it is an

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interior peace which the world cannot give, and, thank God, cannot take away—a peace which is the result of the presence of the Prince of Peace within your souls.

Our Blessed Lord once told His Apostles of quite another sort of peace; for we read that He said to them, “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.”* The “strong man” in this passage is, of course, the Devil, his goods are the souls of men, and captivity to him is described as a sort of peace, the peace of the slave who has abandoned all hope of liberty and has accepted a degrading bondage. This is the peace of the world, the result of a compromise with evil, of a truce with the Devil, by which he is allowed to retain possession, or at least an abiding-place, in the soul of man. But the peace of which our Lord speaks as His legacy to His disciples is the very opposite to this.

“But (Christ goes on to say) when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” The “stronger” is Christ, Who sets free the captives of Satan, and, if they will, takes up His abode in their souls. This peace, as we have said, will not secure them any exemption

* S. Luke xi. 21.

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from the struggles of life : the evil spirit will come back again and again and endeavour to regain his entrance into the soul, to recapture those who have been freed from his power ; but the presence of Christ, the Prince of Peace, Who conquered the Evil One upon Calvary, is the assurance that, though the struggle be fierce and temptations many, the soul is absolutely safe so long as He is enthroned in it as King.

After our Lord's resurrection He came to His disciples with the greeting, "Peace be unto you." Thrice the greeting is given,* but never before the resurrection, although it is anticipated in the passage we are now considering. It was by the struggle of His Passion, by the conflict on the battle-field of Calvary, that Christ won the peace which He promised as His legacy, which He bestowed as His Easter gift. And surely the lesson we may learn is that we cannot have real peace without struggle, that it must be the result of victory.

The very laws of political science teach us this ; for nations now at peace have won their peace upon the battle-field, and in order to retain it keep themselves always prepared for war ; not that they desire war, but that preparation for it is the only

* S. John xx. 19, 21, and 26. Cf. S. Luke xxiv. 36.

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way of avoiding it. If then we are to appropriate to ourselves the peace which Christ offers us, we must fight the necessary battle, drive the foe out of our soul, the foe who has gained an entrance into our heart, and then, after we have invited the Prince of Peace to make His abode with us, after we have enthroned Him as our King, we must be always ready to fight for Him, always watching against the attacks by which the Evil One tries to drive Jesus from the soul and once more to make himself its master.

Now our Blessed Lord turns back and takes up the first words of the chapter, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." There is a wonderful sequence of thought in these last discourses which people often fail to discern. The chapter begins with the words, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And now having given to His disciples various reasons why they are not to be troubled, various causes of consolation, He reiterates the words, "Let not your heart be troubled." Why not? What has He said to console?

In this chapter of thirty-one verses we find no less than eight distinct causes of consolation which Christ sets before His disciples. He told them first of the many mansions in His Father's house which

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He was going to prepare for them ; that there was room enough for them all in Heaven. He told them next that He was Himself the Way to the Father, the Way by which they were to attain to the mansions of His house. Then He told them thirdly that in Him they could see the Father. Fourthly, He revealed to them that they were to carry on His work, and were even to do a greater work than He had done in the world. Fifthly, He promised them that He would send them another Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Sixthly, that the Holy Ghost, when He was come, should reveal to them Christ, as Christ Himself had revealed to them the Father. As a seventh cause of consolation He assured them that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would come and take up their abode in the obedient and loving heart. And lastly, He assures them that the result of this presence within them, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, would be a peace which the world could not give.

As we have read these chapters we have probably dwelt upon certain verses which were full of consolation, but perhaps have failed to discern how the whole chapter is filled with consolation for those who were grieved at the thought of their Master's departure ; and not for them only, but for all

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Christ's disciples. Many deep mysteries are treated of throughout the discourse, but through them all runs the golden thread of consolation.

It is not only that our Lord consoles the Apostles with loving words, which touch their hearts and heal the wounds which sorrow has inflicted, but that He shows them how much there is connected with His departure which is to be a blessing to them, and more than a blessing—a joy. He tells them that if they love Him they will rejoice at His departure, because it means the consummation of His work and His glorification as the Son of Man. But not only this, He reveals to them that their own joy will be great because by His glorification they will receive new gifts and powers, especially the gift of the Holy Ghost, through Whom He Himself will be restored to them in a closer and more intimate fellowship than that which they had enjoyed when He was upon earth.


XIX.

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UNSELFISH SORROW.

S. JOHN XIV. 28-31.

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so do I. Arise, let us go hence.”

“F ye loved Me, ye would rejoyce, because I said I go unto the Father.” Unselfish sorrow has in it an element of joy in the thought of the gain of another through our bereavement. Our Lord reminds His disciples that if they love Him, while they may sorrow at the thought of being parted from Him, they will rejoyce in the realisation of His exaltation, in the

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fact that His sufferings have come to an end, that His work is done, and that He is about to enter into His reward in the glory of the Father.

Surely this ought often to be a consolation to us when we are mourning for one who has been taken from us. Our sorrow may be deep, but it is sorrow for our own loss; and if we are unselfish in our sorrow, we shall rejoice in the gain of the friend we loved who has gone to the Father—that is, if he is one of the dead who died for Christ; for his work shall follow him, and we must rejoice that he rests from his labours. Of course, our predominant feeling will be sorrow, not joy; but it will be sorrow which is lightened by moments of joy as we think of the happiness of being with Christ in the kingdom of His love. And this idea is very strikingly expressed in the tense of the words translated, “ye would rejoice” (ἐχάρητε). In the Greek it is an aorist, and so implies a momentary feeling of joy, not a continual state. Their state of mind must, of course, be one of sorrow at His departure, and yet sorrow brightened with flashes of realisation of the happiness into which their Master was about to enter.

“For My Father is greater than I.” These words bring before us a very deep theological question, which we shall pass over, merely pointing

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out that the Father is not *essentially* greater than the Son, for the Son is of the same substance or essence as the Father, as we are taught in the Nicene Creed. The Father is not greater in *essence* but in *relation*, since in the relationship of Father and Son, the relationship of paternity is superior to that of sonship, since the son derives his being from the father not the father from the son. In the Godhead the Father is the *Source* possessing an underived essence, while in the Son the divine essence is communicated from the Father by eternal generation. This is the explanation of this mysterious passage given by the Greek fathers.

Western theologians, however, while recognising this as true, rather dwell upon the fact that at the time our Lord spoke, He was, as S. Paul says, "In the form of slave," and that He was, therefore, referring to the inferiority of His position as Man. This is best expressed in the Athanasian Creed: "Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood." The two views are, however, mutually complementary, and together tell us all that we can know of this mysterious subject.

"And now I have told you before it come to

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pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." "Now," that is at this crisis when your faith is about to be put to the test by My crucifixion. I tell you this in order that in that hour of trial ye may believe—that is, that your faith may not fail. I am telling you beforehand that I am going to the Father that your faith may be strengthened by the remembrance that I forewarned you of the trial through which you must pass.

"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Our Blessed Lord here, as in other places, clearly recognises the personality of the devil. He is the prince of this world, the ruler of those who are the children of the world. Our Lord points him out as the chief of all the subordinate evil spirits, and knows that the hour is approaching when, for the last time, he is to come to tempt, and so to test Him, as he tempts every man. It was not the first time that the devil had come to Him, for he came to Him in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, when after He had fasted forty days and forty nights he came to tempt Him. The devil came to Him many times throughout His life, and now comes for the last supreme effort in the trial of His Passion, and Death.

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He "hath nothing in Me." In these words our Lord bears witness to His own sinlessness. Satan might search Him through and through, might ply Him with every form of temptation; but he would find in Him nothing which he could claim as even a momentary yielding to evil—nothing of failure, nothing even of imperfection. Christ goes forth to the final duel with the prince of this world with calm confidence in regard to its result, with entire certainty of ultimate victory. He knows that the victory will involve great suffering, unspeakable humiliation, even an ignominious death, but its results will be the final conquest of the evil one, the setting free of his captives, the redemption of man.

"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." This was the secret of our Lord's whole life, the perfect fulfilment of His Father's will, the entire accomplishment of His Father's work, the carrying out of God's plans for man's redemption. Christ's was the one absolutely perfect human life lived in this world. In it He showed His love for His Father by keeping His Father's commandments, doing His Father's will at the very cost of life itself.

He points to this as the evidence by which the

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world may know His love of the Father. His was a life spent largely in waiting for His Father's call. Thirty years spent in obscurity at Nazareth, waiting until the hour should come when His Father should call Him forth to the work of His ministry, and throughout that ministry all things were done, without hurry, but without delay, in accordance with His Father's Will. In neither the triumphs nor sorrows of His life does He anticipate by one minute, the hour of His Father's purpose for Him. When His Blessed Mother at the marriage of Cana of Galilee told Him of the needs of the guests, saying, "They have no wine," His answer is, "Mine hour is not yet come," that is, the moment for working the miracle had not yet arrived, though apparently, almost immediately after, the time was fulfilled, and the miracle performed.

If we are to manifest our love for God, it must be by following the example of Christ in this, by realising that the true purpose of our life is to do God's Will and to accomplish God's work; for God has a work for each of us to do—a work which He reveals to us, not all at once, but gradually as life goes on. Sometimes we have to wait a long while for this revelation, and there is the danger that we may become impatient, and because we are tired

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of waiting for God's call, may throw ourselves into some work which is not the work which God meant us to do. We must learn from our Lord to tarry God's leisure, to put our trust in God to believe that at the right moment He will manifest to us His will.

As we have seen in the case of S. Peter, the time of waiting must not be a time of idleness, but a time of preparation, during which we are learning those things which we shall need to put in practice when God calls us to our work. What quietness and dignity this thought gives to every life. Life has a purpose—the purpose for which we were created—and our eternity depends upon the fulfilment of this purpose.

Life is not given us that we may drift aimlessly along, sometimes doing one thing, sometimes another, so that, when our years draw to a close, we wonder whether our life has been of any use to us, or to anyone else. Life is given us to love and to labour. Love without labour is enervating, and labour without love makes us hard, and bitter, and hopeless; for that which ennobleth labour and makes it a joy is that it should be done for one we love. Thus a husband works for his wife and children, so, only in a higher sense, the Christian works for God.

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Christ said, "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." We must say, "That the world may know that I love God—and it is part of my duty to show that I love God—I must keep His commandments, and accomplish the work which He has given me to do."

"Arise, let us go hence." Thus our Lord finishes the discourses in the Upper Chamber.

XX.

Fourth Thursday in Lent.

CHRIST THE VINE.

S. JOHN XV. 1.

“ I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.”



THE allegory of the Vine and the branches begins the second division of our Lord's discourses. In the first, which were spoken in the Upper Chamber, Christ comforts His apostles in regard to His departure, which He plainly reveals to them, and answers certain questions put to Him by S. Peter, S. Thomas, S. Philip, and S. Jude. These discourses close with the last words of the fourteenth chapter, "Arise, let us go hence." In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters He continues His discourses vouchsafing to them a revelation even more sublime

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leading them deeper and deeper into the mysteries of His union with them.

But where were these last discourses uttered? There are several views. First, the opinion that they were spoken in the same place, in the Upper Chamber; that when our Lord said, "Arise, let us go hence," the disciples arose from the couches on which they were reclining, but stood around Him in the room, bidding Him farewell and hearing His last words; so that it was still in the Upper Chamber that He delivered the discourses recorded in these chapters.

There are two objections to this view; one that it is quite inconsistent with the words, "Arise, let us go hence;" the other that it is inconceivable to suppose that the great High-Priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter could have been uttered while they were standing about the room.

A second view, which is original and modern, is suggested by Coleridge in his "Treatise on the Life of our Lord." He thinks that they adjourned to another chamber, which had been prepared for the celebration of the first Eucharist; that the institution of the Holy Eucharist took place at this point, and that the discourses and High-Priestly prayer followed after the First Communion of the apostles. Coleridge's theory is, however, so unnatural and

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forced that it is scarcely worth considering. It has been adopted by some few Roman theologians, but it is so evidently a theory constructed for an ulterior purpose, and not to meet the circumstances of the case that, like the first view, we may dismiss it.

There remains, therefore, a third opinion that our Lord uttered these discourses on the way to Gethsemane, probably in some place where a halt could be made. This halt seems necessary, because we cannot conceive of His speaking any of these sublime and solemn words as He was walking through the streets of the city, but there is no place on the western side of the city, in the descent to the Brook Cedron, so far as we can see, where He could have made this halt. The place is too public, and the eighteenth chapter of S. John, in telling us that they went over the Brook Cedron, seems to require that the discourses should have been delivered before they crossed the Cedron, and, therefore, before they entered Gethsemane.

It has been suggested* that after they left the Upper Chamber they made a final visit to the Temple, for Josephus† in his "Antiquities" tells us that during the festivals it was the custom of the

* By Bishop Westcott in his "Commentary on S. John."

† Joseph., "Ant.," xviii. 2, 2.

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priests to open the gates of the Temple at midnight, so that pilgrims could go in to make their devotions. Nothing could be more fitting than that our Blessed Lord should make a final visit to that place He loved so well, His Father's House, and that there in the Temple courts He should utter the prayer of consecration, in which He revealed the purpose of His work and the destiny of His Church.

But there is another argument for this visit to the Temple, for Josephus informs us* that on the gates of the Temple was wrought a magnificent golden vine, which was intended to typify the relation of God's chosen people to Himself. This vine was a type of Israel, as we learn from the prophet Isaiah,† and it seems quite probable that it supplied the imagery of our Lord's allegory of the vine, with which the discourse opens. Pointing the disciples to the familiar object upon the Temple gates, our Lord may have said, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman."

While we cannot claim for Bishop Westcott's view anything more than that it fulfils all the conditions of the problem, as no other theory does, yet we must be struck by the extraordinary fitness of the Temple to be the place in which our Lord uttered not only

* Joseph., "Ant.," xv. 11, 3, and Bell, "Jud.," v. 5, 4.

† Cf. Isaiah v. 1-8.

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His last discourse to His disciples, but also His great High-Priestly prayer. From the time when Araunah's threshing-floor was set apart by David as the site of God's Temple, priesthood and sacrifice had been confined in their association to that spot. Nowhere else could sacrifice be offered, nowhere else did the priests fulfil their sacerdotal functions.

There is, therefore, not only an appropriateness, but a wonderful suggestiveness in the thought that in the courts of God's house, which for so many centuries had been dedicated to His worship, and yet had been so often desecrated by imperfect service, the great High Priest of the New Covenant should perfectly fulfil the idea of priesthood, as the one Mediator between God and man ; and not only of priesthood, but of sacrifice, as the one Sacrifice by which the world was redeemed, and that He should there consecrate Himself as the Victim and Priest for all humanity.

Let us try to picture the scene. It is past midnight. The city is wrapt in slumber. The silver light of the Pascal moon penetrates the courts of the Temple, where a few pilgrims have found their way that they may join their presence, if not their voices, to those servants of the Lord of whom the Psalmist speaks, who "by night stand in the house

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of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of our God.”*

In some retired spot our Blessed Lord, alone with His disciples, utters His last discourses and bids farewell for ever to that House of His Father, in which, from His boyhood's days, He had so often worshipped. Alas, He knows that its glory was about to depart, that when the veil of that temple was rent, at the moment of His death, a more acceptable sacrifice would have been offered than those sacrifices which in so many thousands had been offered upon the altars of the Temple—“a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.” And He knows too that this sacrifice should live on, in an unbloody form, upon the altars of the Christian Church in the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist—that Eucharist, which, like the vine upon the Temple gates, was to symbolise the union between God and His chosen people, but, unlike the golden vine, was not only to *symbolise*, but to be the *means* by which that union was to be consummated.

“I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.” The construction in the Greek is very suggestive, it is, “I am the Vine, the true Vine.” The words,† “I am the Vine,” mark the

* Psalm cxxxv. 2.

† ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή.

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identification of Christ with the image ; the addition "the true Vine," implies the absolute fulfilment of the image in Him ; for Christ in His Person brings to complete fulfilment the vital relation of all parts to the whole—the conception of unity and multiplicity, of growth and yet identity, which are set forth in the image of the vine.

As we have said, the vine was the image of Israel, the image of that theocratic and sacramental community which had its centre in the Altar and Ark of testimony and the Holy Place. This was what the vine on the gates of the Temple symbolised, but, alas, the Jewish Church had never justified this image, had never fulfilled God's purposes for it. It had not been true to God's call, and so Christ puts Himself in the place of the Jewish Church when He says, "I am the true Vine." Israel failed to satisfy the images symbolised in the natural vine, He fulfils them perfectly in His Church.

The Old Covenant awakened a glorious hope in God's people, but the hope was never realised because of their disobedience. The New Covenant which was to be sealed with Christ's Blood, began, not with hope only, but with realisation. Christ says, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman," and in these words He shows how He fulfils perfectly all that was symbolised under the Old Covenant of God with Israel.

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To those who have studied the prophecies of Isaiah, this thought will be familiar, for the "Servant of Jehovah," who occupies so prominent a position in his writings, is in his earlier prophecies the Jewish nation, but becomes in the later the Messiah Himself. The Jewish nation was chosen to be God's servant in this world, it had a mission to mankind, but after ages of testing it failed altogether to fulfil this service for which God had raised it up, and God's purpose for Judaism passed into the work of Messiah, when Christ came to be the Saviour of the world.

So our Lord says, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman." I am the Vine, but "no man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him."* The care of God the Father for His Church is here touchingly brought before us under the figure of the husbandman. The Church is not merely the concern of Christ, or of the Holy Spirit, but God the Father is the Husbandman. It is by His Will that the disciplines and adversities are sent by which the Church is purged and purified. Christ's Body, the Church, is the object of the Father's special love and special care, though the Holy Ghost is the Agent by Whose operations the Father's purposes for the Church are effected.

* S. John vi. 44.

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The word which is translated husbandman (*γεωργός*) implies more than its English equivalent suggests. It is not as in the parable of the fig tree in S. Luke* (*ἀμπελουργός*) the dresser of the vineyard, but the owner of the land as well. As members of Christ's Body we are citizens of the Kingdom of God, but not only citizens of the Kingdom, but by adoption children of the King; so that we can address Him as "Our Father, Which art in Heaven." The Kingdom is His. It is the Church of the living God, Who is Owner as well as Husbandman.

* S. Luke xiii. 7.


XXI.

Fourth Friday in Lent.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

S. JOHN XV. 2, 3.

“Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

“VERY branch in Me.” In these words the Christian is identified with Christ ; for the union between the soul and Christ is shown to be as close as the union between the branch and the vine which bears it. But at this point our attention is drawn to a possibility in spiritual experience which is often overlooked in the treatment of this allegory. All would say that there are two kinds of branches—fruitful branches and those that are withered.

This, however, is not the division which our Blessed

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Lord makes when He says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." He shows that it is possible to come into organic relation with the vine, with Christ, to be "in it," in Christ, a part of Christ, and yet to bring forth no fruit. It is possible to be baptised and to be a communicant, and perhaps not even to be separated from Christ by any mortal sin, and yet (because there is no effort of our own, no correspondence with grace) to live a life which is quite unfruitful, a life which is represented by those branches which are not withered, but which bear no fruit.

The unfruitful shoots seem often to be as strong and vigorous as those which bear fruit. They draw their nourishment from the same stock, they produce abundance of leaves; but as our Blessed Lord shows in the parable of the Fig tree, if they produce nothing but leaves they are worthless, and therefore are not allowed to cumber the vine. Christ says of them, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He (My Father, the Husbandman) taketh away."

S. Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians exhorts his readers to be careful that they receive not the grace of God *in vain*.* Our Lord is referring to this class of Christians, who *do* receive the grace of God, who *frequent* all the sacraments and means of

* Cf. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

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grace, but because they do not *use* the grace which they have received, receive it in vain. These represent the branches which the Father taketh away, and they are not to be confounded with the withered branches which are separated from the life of the vine and draw no nourishment from it because they are already dead, whose fate is considered in the sixth verse.

But there is another class of branches—those that are not only in Christ, but who by virtue of their union with Him, bring forth fruit. What does the Father do with these? “Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” How important it is that we should keep this teaching before us. It is not enough to be in Christ, to be a member of His Church through Baptism; it is not enough to be free from mortal sin, to have no hindrance to our union with Him, to the work of Christ in our souls. There must be a correspondence with this grace, a fruitfulness in our life.—And then the Father will send such disciplines into our life as may help us to bring forth more fruit.

Of the fruitful branches we are told that the Father purgeth them. The word rendered “purgeth” (*καθαίρει*) primarily signifies a cleansing by lustrations, a removal by washing of anything that could hinder the vine from bringing forth fruit. It also evidently

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signifies here pruning with a knife—not only the spraying of the vine to cleanse it from insects which might injure it, but pruning it; so that all the vital forces of the vine may go into production of fruit, and not merely into the production of useless branches and leaves.

Our Lord says to His disciples, “Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.” Here He applies the idea of cleansing contained in the word “purgeth.” The word “now” means “already.” The spiritual cleansing of the Apostles had been potentially completed, though it was not realised until the day of Pentecost. The Word by which they had been cleansed is of course the Gospel, the whole revelation of Christ which they had potentially received, and which the Holy Ghost was to bring home to their understandings.

But what is the fruit which the vine is to produce? It is evidently the fruit of a Christ-like life, for the branches of a vine do not bring forth fruit of their own, but the fruit of the vine. The good works which are done through the grace of Christ are really not so much our own good works as the work of Christ in us. Sometimes these fruits are spoken of as fruits of the Spirit, because, as our Lord teaches us in these discourses, it is the Holy Spirit which enables us to produce them.

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S. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians gives us a list of this fruit, which, while it does not include all the fruits of the Spirit, is well worthy of our study. He says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."* It will be very useful for us to take this list and look into our lives and see how far we are producing these fruits; in other words, to examine ourselves in regard to them. For if we are in Christ as fruit-bearing branches, the proof will be manifested in the fruit we are bringing forth.

If we examine S. Paul's list we shall find that these nine fruits fall into three divisions, corresponding to our three-fold duties towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves. He begins with the fruit of the Spirit towards God—love, joy, and peace. These are not the only fruits which we can bring forth in the fulfilment of our duty to God, but they are three very representative fruits.

Love is the first, the greatest of all Christian virtues, that without which no other virtue is of any value, that which, if we possess it in its fulness, will enable us sooner or later to produce all the other virtues. Then joy: there are many Christians who forget that joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit and seem to think the Christian life must be all sadness and gloom; but if we

* Gal. v. 22-23.

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are filled with the love of God we shall certainly rejoice, and our lives will be happy even though sometimes sorrowful. Then there is the virtue of peace. A life inspired with the love of God must be a life not only of joy but of peace, that peace which does not save us from the struggles of life, but which preserves in our souls an interior peace as the result of Christ's presence there. Have we this love and joy and peace in our life towards God?

In regard to our neighbour, S. Paul mentions three fruits—long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness. These too are not the only virtues which we must manifest towards our neighbour, but they are very important ones. Long-suffering! how impatient we often are with people because they are so slow and stupid, because they irritate us or do not understand us; yet how patient God is with us and what great cause we give Him for displeasure.

How many good resolutions we make and how few we keep, how many things we begin for the glory of God and how few we finish, how many faults we intend to conquer, yet how few we succeed in really eradicating. Yet God is patient with us, His long-suffering is wonderful. As we say in the penitential psalm against Auger, "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation: neither chasten me in Thy displeasure."* And again in another of the penitential

* Psalm vi. 1.

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psalms, "If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss : O Lord, who may abide it ? For there is mercy with Thee : therefore shalt Thou be feared."* We must strive to exercise the same long-suffering towards our neighbour which we pray God to show towards us.

Then gentleness and goodness : these are really active and passive sides of the same virtue, related to one another as benevolence is to beneficence. The word translated gentleness, *Χρηστότης*, is that kindly disposition towards others, that good will to all men, which we associate with the idea of a benevolent character. The word *ἀγαθοσύνη*, translated "goodness" on the other hand, is the active and practical carrying out of the spirit of benevolence in works of mercy—the ministering to the needs of those in sorrow or suffering. In our self-examination do we find these three virtues conspicuous in our relations with the world around us ? Are we patient with those who try us, do we show good will to all men, and are we striving so far as we have opportunity to relieve the needs of others with a Christ-like beneficence ?

And lastly in regard to ourselves, are we careful to exercise the virtues of faith, meekness, and temperance ? Faith in this passage does not mean faith towards God, but rather what we should speak of as

* Psalm cxxx. 3, 4.

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“fidelity,” a trustworthy character. Meekness is a virtue which of course we have to exercise towards others, but which we can regard as belonging to our duty to ourselves, in that we must cultivate a meek spirit ; for meekness has been defined as the conquest of passion. And then Temperance, which includes so many virtues, is really the virtue of self-control, of holding ourselves well in hand—a virtue which we have opportunities of practising every day of our lives in some form or other.

If we are bringing forth these fruits, the Father will purge us with the discipline of life that we may bring them forth in even greater abundance. Adversity is a great opportunity for the practice of all the Christian virtues, and of none more than these virtues which S. Paul speaks of as the fruit of the Spirit.

XXII.

Fourth Saturday in Lent.

THE FRUITS OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

S. JOHN XV. 4, 5.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without Me ye can do nothing.”



HERE are few images or figures which bring before us the reciprocal conditions of our union with Christ so perfectly as the image of the vine. Let us therefore examine it carefully.

“If ye abide in Me.” The abiding in Christ depends upon the *will* of the believer. It is not merely a negative result of our incorporation into Christ by baptism, it demands the effort of our

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own will for its continuance. We must abide in Him, not only He in us. There is, we see, a reciprocal "abiding." Christ wills to abide in us, and we must *will* to abide in Him. If we do not cling to Him by the exercise of our will we shall not long abide in Him.

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." The preposition which is translated by "of" (*ἀπό*) indicates the source of the fruit. The branch cannot bear fruit "of itself" as if it had vital forces of its own; the life by which it lives is the life of the whole vine, and it can only preserve its own life, as a branch, by preserving its relation to the vine.

The same mystery is taught us by S. Paul when he describes the Church of Christ under the figure of a "body and its members." The whole Church is the mystical Body of Christ, we are members of that body; and we can have no life *apart* from Christ. Different members have different functions, the eye is the organ of sight, the ear is the organ of hearing; but the eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear *apart* from the body. The life of the body is functionised in the eye for the purpose of sight, in the ear for the purpose of hearing; but at the moment of death, though the eye and the ear retain all their intricate

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parts, they can neither see nor hear, because they are separated from the life of the body.

We may carry the analogy a step further and show how the researches of science often help true faith. If we were to ask the scientist about the mystery of life, he would have to admit that it has escaped all the investigations of science. No one knows what life is. He would perhaps say, as some do, that, since each of the myriad cells of which the body is composed has its own life, the life of the body is the sum total of the life of all these cells. Further, he would have to admit, what is not inconsistent with this theory, that when the life of the whole body departs at the moment which we call death, the life of all the cells begins to decay and gradually dies also, not immediately, but very soon as corruption sets in, some cells living longer than others.

But how wonderfully this illustrates the dependence of our spiritual life upon union with Christ. We are each of us members of His one Body, living with His Life ; and so long as we abide in Him, and preserve our organic union with Him, we each live our true spiritual life, producing the fruits which are the result of our union with Christ.

But the moment we cease to abide in Him, the moment that we are separated from Him, our

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spiritual life begins to decay just as the life of each of the many cells of the body begins to fail when life is withdrawn from the whole body. The cell can only preserve its life by its relation to the whole body, it cannot live apart from the body, neither can we live, spiritually, apart from Christ. This is what our Lord teaches us in these words, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." In this passage the whole allegory is summed up and expressed with even greater definiteness. "Ye are the branches" states distinctly what had been assumed before. Christ had said, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away," but had not told us who the branches were. Now He says emphatically, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," and adds, "without Me ye can do nothing." This does *not* mean that without Christ's *aid* we can do nothing, as so many people suppose, and as our English translation implies. The Greek word translated "without" (*χωρίς*) means apart from, separated from; so that we might render it "apart from Me ye can do nothing." When once there

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is a separation between Christ and ourselves, when we have ceased to abide in Him, when the organic union has been interrupted we can do nothing. "Ye can do nothing." What does this signify? It means we can produce no fruit which the Father will recognise as the fruit of the vine, as Christian fruit.

If we are to understand this we must realise that the New Testament regards every man as living in this world in one of two distinct states—the state of nature or the state of grace. This is what S. Paul means when he speaks of the "natural" man and the "spiritual" man, and says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* And that "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

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dwell in you.”* By “flesh” and “spirit” in this passage S. Paul means man in his natural state, and man in his spiritual state.

Man in his natural state can produce natural virtues ; for Solon was prudent, Aristides was just, Leonidas exhibited the virtue of fortitude, and Socrates was temperate. These virtues are not without their value in our life as citizens of this world, but they have to be raised to a different plane if they are to be recognised by God as fruits of the true Vine, Christ.

The motive and end is different in the natural and in the Christian virtues. The motive in the Christian virtue is the love of God, its end the glory of God ; whereas the motive of the natural virtue is love of man, often love of self, and its end generally the glory of self. Man can live apart from Christ in a state of nature, producing natural fruits and looking for a reward in natural beatitude, that is in the happiness which belongs to a man in a state of nature. But this is not the happiness to which the Christian looks forward.

Our Lord emphatically tells Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Born again” (*ἄνωθεν*) may be translated “born from above ;” and lest there should be any

* Rom. viii. 5-9.

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doubt as to the *means* by which this new birth is to be attained, Christ adds, "Except a man be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

The whole teaching of the New Testament is quite consistent on this point. It takes its origin from these words of our Lord, and is recognised and developed especially in the writings of S. Paul and S. John. The happiness to which the Christian soul looks forward is to *see* God and to *dwell with* God in eternity, and this our Lord says can belong only to those who are "born from above," "born of water and Spirit."

Natural virtues are not to be despised; but Christ did not come into this world to live and die only that man might produce the natural virtues, which he had been able to produce before the Incarnation. Christ came to take us into union with Himself that we might produce the fruits of His life, the fruits of the true Vine, the Christian virtues, and that the practice of these virtues might prepare us for a life in heaven in which every faculty of our nature should find its beatitude—a life in which the intellect should attain to its highest powers in *seeing* God, and the soul should

* S. John iii. 3, 5, and 6.

The Fruits of Union with Christ. 90

find its supreme happiness in *loving* God. But this must depend absolutely upon our abiding in Christ ; for, as He tells us, “apart from Me ye can do nothing”—nothing, that is, which pertains to our life as Christians.

XXIII.

Fourth Monday in Lent.

THE RESULT OF SEPARATION FROM
CHRIST.

S. JOHN XV. 6-10.

“If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be My disciples. As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you : continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love ; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”



F a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” Hitherto Christ has spoken only of branches which maintain a vital union with Himself. These fall into two classes—those that bear fruit and those that do not bear fruit. The latter were taken away, the

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former were purged that they might bring forth more fruit. Now our Lord passes to the consideration of those who by their own wilful act, that is by mortal sin, have become separated from Him. The unfruitful branches are taken away, these, however, are cast forth, that is, cast out of the vineyard and become withered.

Here we have brought into sharpest contrast the consequences of union with Christ and of the loss of that union. Union with Christ results in the production of fruit, separation from Christ not only implies loss of the power of fruit bearing, but the rejection of the branch itself. It is cast forth and withered. For a while it may remain upon the vine, disfiguring it by its lifeless aspect ; but it will not be for long.

We must carefully observe that our Blessed Lord in this allegory distinctly recognises three classes of branches, representing three kinds of Christians :— those who abide in Him and produce fruit ; those who abide in Him, but do not produce fruit ; and those who neither abide in Him nor bear fruit. The fate of this last class is brought before us in the words we are considering. They are cast forth from the vineyard and withered. But more than this : “ men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

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The vine is the most productive of all trees, that is, it produces the greatest amount of fruit in proportion to its size. In passing through vineyards in a wine-producing country we cannot but be struck with the insignificant size of the vines which are so abundantly laden with grapes. We must not think of the vines which we see in hot-houses in England or trained against the walls of a house, but of the vineyards where grape-growing is the industry of the country.

One reason why these vines are kept so small is that all their strength may be put forth in producing fruit, because the grapes are the only things of value which the vine produces. The wood of the vine is quite valueless. There are many trees, like the walnut tree, which produce fruit, and the wood of which is also of great value. But it is not so with the vine, the withered branches are burned because they are worthless. S. Augustine has a beautiful saying in regard to this. "To the branch one of two things is fitting, either the vine or the fire."* The scene suggested by this verse is the withered and worthless branches of a great vineyard, gathered outside the vineyard, and burning, while the fruitful branches remain in the vine producing their luxuriant fruit.

* "Unum de duobus palmiti congruit, aut vitis aut ignis."

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But let us notice the suggestiveness of the words which describe the scene—"cast forth as a branch and withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Of the five verbs in this sentence the tenses of the first two, "cast forth" and "withered" (ἐβλήθη, ἐξηράνθη), are aorists, the last three (συνάγουσιν, βάλλουσιν, καίεται), "gather," "cast into the fire," and "are burned," are in the present tense. The "casting forth" and the "becoming withered" are definite acts, the result of a definite sin by which we separate ourselves from Christ. But the "being gathered together," the "being cast into the fire," and "being burned," are states which continue—at least so the Greek implies.

How true this is of spiritual experience. The action which severs our vital union with the vine will take but a short time to complete—one wilful deliberate act of mortal sin; but the burning to which our Lord refers, as continuing, is evidently not the punishment of eternity; for He says they are *being* cast into the fire and *being* burned. The verbs are present, not future; they refer not to something which will happen after the Day of Judgment, but to something which is taking place now, to something which happens in this life, and which continues.

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What is this? Surely it is that fiery furnace of temptation in which we all move. But this has no more power to injure those who are in Christ than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace had to injure the three holy children who walked in it unhurt. There was with them, as there is with us, the form of a fourth like unto the Son of God.* If we are in Christ temptation cannot hurt us. If we are not in Christ men gather us together. The word (*συνάγουσιν*) suggests the binding of the withered branches into bundles for the fire. So when the soul is separated from Christ its binding begins, a binding with the chains of sin, the soul is bound together with others, its companions in evil habits, and then bound hand and foot, so to speak, is cast into the fires of temptation.

What are the chains by which the sinner is bound? A collect of our Prayer Book tells us,—"tied and bound with the chains of our sins." Who forged those chains which bind the sinner? He forged them himself. Each separate link was some act of sin; these acts, repeated again and again, went to form a habit of sin; and we all know what it is to be tied and bound with the chains of evil habits. So strong they are that, though we make many efforts to get free, we

* Cf. Daniel iii. 19-26.

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cannot break them. They were not forged all at once, but very gradually. There was a time when it would have been easy to have broken the bad habit, but after perhaps years of indulgence our case seems hopeless. We know, however, that it is not hopeless, that there are no limits to the power of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, that if we come to Him with penitence one drop of His Blood can break those chains and set the sinner free; for we know that the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*

The phrase, "men bring them together," suggests especially the difficulty of freeing ourselves from evil companions who have tempted us. "If I could only get away from that one companion," says the sinner to himself; "but when I am with him all my good resolutions vanish, and I seem to be bound by chains which I cannot break." Perhaps his companion is saying the same to himself; each wishes to get free, neither has the strength to break away, and so both, bound together, go on burning in the furnace of temptation like the rejected branches in the fires outside the vineyard.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear

* Cf. 1 S. John i. 7.

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much fruit ; so shall ye be My disciples.” In these two verses are shown the blessings of union with Christ in prayer fulfilled and fruit produced, and we are reminded that the fruitfulness of the vine is the glory of the husbandman. Therefore, Christ says, “Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.”

Two great results of union with Christ are here brought before us—the glory of God is seen in the fruit we produce, and the answer to prayer is the evidence of our discipleship. Everyone can pray, even those who are not in a state of grace, but it is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much.* God hears the prayers of sinners, if it were not so we should indeed be hopeless. But still more does God grant the prayers of His saints, of those who are living the life of union through Jesus Christ.

“As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His Love.” Throughout all these discourses we find a sort of antiphon constantly recurring, an antiphon in which the relation of love to obedience is continually brought before us.

* Cf. S. James v. 16.

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“If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.”*
“He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love.”† Thus we are first taught that obedience is the *consequence* of love, then that it is the *evidence* of love, and lastly, that it is the *preservative* of love, that if we keep Christ’s commands we shall abide in His love. Love is the greatest and most godlike of the Christian virtues. The end and aim of every spiritual life must be to grow in love, and we learn that there is but one way to this—the path of obedience.

* S. John xiv. 15.

† S. John xiv. 21 ; xv. 10.

XXIV.

Fourth Tuesday in Lent.

THE JOY OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

S. JOHN XV. 11.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”



WITH this verse commences a fresh section of the discourse. After having treated of the union between Christ and the soul, as typified by the vine and the branches, and the fearful results of its forfeiture, our Lord Jesus Christ goes on to tell us of some of the issues of that union, some of its consequences to His disciples—consequences both joyful and sad. And first He speaks of the joy which is the fruit of their union with Him. He says, “These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

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What were these things which He had spoken unto them? They fall under two heads. He had told them of His departure—that surely could not fill them with anything but sorrow, except in so far as their love led them to rejoice that His work was accomplished, His glory won, and that He was going to His Father. Again He had told them of the various consolations which should sustain them under the sorrow of His departure. And finally He had revealed to them the privileges which should flow from their union with Him, and these last were the things which were to fill them with joy, and that joy was to be not only their own, but His joy also. He says, “These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you.” The words in the original for “My joy” (*ἡ Χαρὴ ἡ ἐμὴ*) are very emphatic. They remind us of the expression, “My peace I give unto you.” The joy which is Mine, the peace which is Mine, I give unto you. Not as a passing emotion but as a permanent possession.

“That My joy might remain with you.” In what characteristics did this joy differ from the world’s joy? (1) In permanence. The world’s joy never lasts. It is a tumultuous emotion which quickly passes away. Christian joy is a permanent possession, like Christian peace—the world cannot bestow it and the world cannot destroy it. S. Paul speaks

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of himself as rejoicing in tribulation. He says, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."*

(2) Again, it is the outcome of sorrow. In the next chapter Christ contrasts the joy of the disciples with that of the world. He says, "The world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."† Sorrow is the raw material of Christian joy, for it is, our Lord says, "turned into joy." How sad to have no sorrow which can be turned into joy.

This, too, is the teaching of the Psalmist. "He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed : shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him."‡

And it is referred to in the book of Revelation as one of the joys of heaven : "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away."§ How sad in that great day to have no tears for God to wipe away.

(3) But this joy is not only the outcome of sorrow, it gives us courage to bear our trials. As we read of our Lord Himself, "Who for the joy that

* 2 Cor. vii. 4.

† S. John xvi. 20.

‡ Psalm cxxvi. 6, Prayer Book Version.

§ Rev. xxi. 4.

The Joy of Union with Christ. So

was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”*

(4) And lastly, it is the result of self-sacrificing love. Such was the joy of our Lord to which we have just referred; such is the joy of His followers—the joy of suffering for love’s sake, for love of God and for love of those whom God loves. This, too, is the joy of missionary work for Christ.

We must, however, remember that joy is the second fruit of the Holy Ghost, and that our Lord not only spoke of His joy remaining in His disciples, but of their own joy being full. Most Christians admit, in theory at least, that love is an important virtue of Christian life, and lament perhaps their own want of charity; but few go on to realise that joy is just as much the fruit of the Holy Ghost as love is, and, while not equally important in Christian life, certainly ought to be found there. Love, joy, peace—these are the first three fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. How many of us speak of Christian life as though it were altogether a life of sorrow. And yet joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and no one can read the Epistles of S. Paul, for instance, without observing how large a place joy occupies in his life.

In these last discourses of our Blessed Lord, uttered as they were on the very threshold of His Passion,

* Heb. xii. 2.

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and filled with references to His departure, there is yet found again and again the note of joy. Not only in this passage, but in the next chapter, He promises that sorrow shall be turned into joy, that when they see Him again their heart shall rejoice, and that their joy no man taketh from them. That they are to pray, not only that they may receive what they ask for, but that their joy may be full. And He finishes the discourse with the words, "Be of good cheer (that is, rejoice), I have overcome the world."

But what is the special function of joy in the Christian life, the special office of this fruit of the Holy Spirit? A consideration of the Old Testament phrase, "the oil of joy,"* "the oil of gladness,"† will help us to answer this question. What is the function of oil? Among other things it saves friction; we pour oil into the wheels of a machine and it prevents the friction which would otherwise take place. Without oil the machine would soon tear itself to pieces, so to speak, through friction; but oil prevents this. So joy in spiritual life saves us from that friction which does so much to spoil all that is beautiful in life. If you go about rejoicing, happy in your union with Christ, glad to bear life's sorrows, to meet its tribulations in the thought that they are but the seeds of future joys, how little life's tribulations will be able to injure you,

* Isaiah lxi. 3.

† Psalm xlv. 7.

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how great will be your power to help others in their journey through life.

We all know how helpful a cheerful person is, one whose presence is like sunshine in the house, who, when things go wrong, instead of making them worse by bemoaning them, starts in at once to remedy them, if that is possible, or, if not, to set an example of bearing them cheerfully. Take two Christians, one who cultivates the spirit of joy and one who does not. The first will go through life so happily that temptations will lose half their force and trials, half their power to weary him. The other looks at the dark side of life, exaggerates its trials and difficulties, and gets out of every difficulty the greatest amount of friction possible. What he needs is to pour the oil of joy into the machinery of life, and, if he did, many things would be possible to him which he deems quite hopeless. Take a rusty piece of machinery, turn the crank, and the wheel moves with great difficulty, perhaps refuses to move at all. But pour oil upon the axle and begin to turn the wheel slowly. There will be some difficulty at first, but soon, as the oil is absorbed, the rust wears off and the machine does its work. It is a type of human life. Joy is that which lubricates life's machinery and makes it work easily.

A great writer on the spiritual life asks what is the first weapon with which to meet temptation,

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and answers cheerfulness. What, he says, is the second one? Again cheerfulness. But what is the third? Still cheerfulness, always cheerfulness. He pictures two children running along the road, one of them falls, and lays there crying till someone comes along and picks him up. The other also falls, but picks himself up and goes on his way. Those children are types of two classes—those who cultivate the spirit of joy and those who do not. The one after every fall wastes time and strength in useless lamentations; the other gathers himself together and with an act of contrition for the past, at once sets himself to do better in the present, and to be more careful in the future.

We must bear in mind, however, that joy is a *fruit* of the Holy Spirit, not a *gift*, that its production depends first upon our union with Christ, then upon our own efforts, our own endeavours, to bear life's trials, to meet life's temptations in the spirit of cheerfulness.

XXV.

Fifth Wednesday in Lent.

THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST.

S. JOHN XV. 12-15.

“This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”



HERE we have a repetition of the antiphon of these discourses—love and its consequence obedience. But not only is the *measure* of the love given here, as in the promulgation of the new commandment—“As I have loved you,” but lest there should be any mistake the *manner* in which this love is to be manifested is indicated in the tense

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of the verb "loved" (*ἠγάπησα*). It is an aorist, and therefore points to some distinct act of love, and that act is shown to be the supreme act of love by which Christ laid down His life for the world, for He says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And yet our Lord's act was even greater than this, for He laid down His life not only for His friends, but for His enemies, for those who murdered Him. And even those whom He honoured by the name of friends, how poorly they showed their friendship, for one betrayed Him, another denied Him, and all forsook Him in His hour of adversity.

He teaches us here that the measure of love is the sacrifice of life. He offered up His life for us upon the Cross through death, and if we are to love the brethren as He commands, we must offer up our life, not through death but through loving service.

S. John develops this thought very beautifully in his first Epistle, where he says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"*

* 1 S. John iii. 16, 17.

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There is a legend that in extreme old age S. John confined his preaching to his flock at Ephesus to one text—"Little children, love one another." Whether the legend is true or not there can be no doubt that his Epistle is but the development of that text, and that he learnt this sublime doctrine from the last discourses of his divine Master.

There is a very striking play upon the words translated "life" and "good" in the Greek of the above passage, which is lost in our translation. In the original both words mean life, but in a different sense. The first ($\psiυχ\eta$) signifies that physical life which S. John says we ought, if need be, to lay down for the brethren. The second ($\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma$) means the life which we live in this world, the life which is made up of what we say and do. This is the word we use when we describe the history of a man's life under the term "biography." S. John says we ought to lay down our very *life* for the brethren, and yet too often we grudge to spend our *means* in his service. He implies that there may be times when the actual sacrifice of life for others become a duty; the soldier realises this when he dies for his country. This may be exceptional, but for all of us, he says, as opportunity offers, there must be a readiness to employ time and means and strength in our neighbour's service.

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“Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” How precious is the privilege of friendship with one of the world’s great men! How much more precious to be a friend of Jesus Christ! a friend of God! One man stands out upon the pages of Old Testament history who won that title, Abraham the friend of God.* But all who are the disciples of Jesus Christ and show forth the evidence of love by obedience are His friends; for He says, “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants.” Literally, we may render it, “No longer (*οὐκέτι*) do I call you servants, that is slaves, but I call you friends (*φίλους*), that is objects of My love.”

The disciples of Christ, however, continued to call themselves His bondslaves. It is S. Paul’s favourite word to describe his relation to Christ, and not only S. Paul, but all alike retain this title. And why? Because it is included in the higher title of friends. Because they were His friends they loved to remind themselves and others that friendship with Jesus

* Cf. 2 Chron. xx. 7: Isaiah xli. 8; S. James ii. 23.

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Christ depends upon absolute obedience, upon the whole service of life. Christ had said, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Hence, while He also said, "No longer do I call you servants but friends," they went on styling themselves His bondslaves, and leaving it to Him to designate them by the nobler title of friends.

The mere slave is an instrument only for performing his lord's commands, but does not aspire to any knowledge of his lord's motives or purposes. He does what he is told without knowing the reason or the object of what he does. But the obedience of friends differs from servile obedience in this, that it is based on love and knowledge and sympathy. They obeyed because they loved Christ, because they knew Christ, because of their sympathy with His work, and, as He Himself points out, because He took them into His confidence and revealed to them the purposes of His work as His Father had revealed that work to Him. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you"—not all the mysteries of the Father's counsels, but all that it was fitting that man should know, all that Christ as Man had heard of the divine purposes. These counsels, for the Apostles and for us, are contained in the Divine Revelation,

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and our work under the guidance of the Holy Ghost is so to study them that we may work for God intelligently, not merely as bondslaves but as the friends of Jesus Christ.

Friendship implies privileges, but it involves also responsibilities. It would be difficult to exaggerate the privileges we have as the friends of God—the special revelations through the Holy Spirit in regard to the mysteries of our religion and to the purposes of God for us. But while we may dwell on these with thankfulness it may perhaps be even more helpful to us to consider the responsibilities which are involved in this relationship to Christ.

The first responsibility is love, to love Christ and to manifest that love by obedience to His commands, and especially by such love of the brethren as He indicates when He says, "Love one another as I have loved you." Of this we have already treated; we will pass, therefore, to the second condition demanded by friendship—loyalty. We must be loyal to Christ when others are disloyal, that is, we must be ready to confess Christ among those who show Him no allegiance. We must be prepared to proclaim ourselves His servants and His friends, when to do so will bring upon us ridicule or even persecution, and

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we must show our loyalty not only with our lips but in our lives, not only by proclaiming by words that we are friends of Jesus Christ, but by showing by our deeds our devotion to His services, by keeping His commandments, even when to do so involves the world's opposition.

And lastly, we must remember that as friends of Jesus Christ His interests must be our interests. What are the interests of Jesus Christ in this world? Perhaps they may be most briefly summed up as the interests of His Church, especially in missionary enterprise at home and abroad. How inconsistent it is of us to claim the title, friends of Christ, when we have no interest in the expansion of His kingdom upon earth. Everything that belongs to the well-being of Christ's Church ought to be of intensest interest to us. We should, therefore, read a great deal about the needs of the Church at home and abroad. We should strive by all means in our power to spread this information among others, to interest others in the Church's work, and to ask ourselves what we can do practically to further the Church's work.

We should begin perhaps in our own household, among our own friends. Could we help them to know more about the Church of Jesus

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Christ, to take more interest in her claims? Then in our own parish. What do we know of its needs? Are we doing our best to supply them according to our own ability, whether that be great or small? Are more workers needed in our parish, and is there something to be done which we could do? Then, further, the claims of our diocese, and of our own Communion. Are we really interested in Church news because the interests of Jesus Christ require that we should care for everything that pertains to the welfare of His kingdom? Do we take as much interest in Church news as we do in the world's news, of what is going on in politics or literature or social life?

Yet further, we are members of the Church Catholic, and therefore ought to care deeply for all that affects the life of the whole body of Christians. We cannot work for every Communion, but we can pray, and especially pray that some day all may be one according to Christ's own prayer, that divisions may be healed, and misunderstandings removed, and that, without any sacrifice of truth, love may prevail and bring together those who are now separated though part of the same Body of Christ.

Then there is missionary work amongst the

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heathen. What an immense interest of Jesus Christ this is. Millions there are still to be converted to Christianity, millions who know nothing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of the salvation He won for all men, of the means of grace by which man is enabled to conquer sin.

This is perhaps the largest demand which friendship for Jesus Christ makes upon us, that we should make His interests our interests, the great interests of our lives. Let us examine how far we have failed in this and strive by His help to be more faithful in our friendship for the future.

XXVI.

Fifth Thursday in Lent.

THE LAW OF VOCATION.

S. JOHN XV. 16.

“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you.”



HIS section of the fifteenth chapter closes with these wonderful words so full of encouragement and consolation to us. The tenses of the verbs are aorists, not perfects, therefore it should be rendered, “Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you.” The Apostles did not choose Christ as their Master, He first chose them as His friends, and then He ordained them, that is, instituted them to a certain office and work as His apostles.

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In these words we are taught one of the most important lessons of Christian life—the principle of Vocation. Every Christian who thinks seriously has at some time or other asked with anxiety, “What is my vocation in life?” This is especially a question for the young, and yet how often it is either ignored or misunderstood. Everyone has a vocation in life, and it is of the utmost importance that each one should strive first to know what his vocation is, and then to walk worthy of it.

But what do we mean by vocation? A very large number of persons probably mean the state of life which *they* choose as their business or profession, and they choose it probably with regard only to worldly success or worldly enjoyment. But surely this is not the meaning of vocation. Vocation is a state of life to which we are called by God, not one which we choose for ourselves. Of course we must realise that God reveals to us our vocation largely through His providence, that is, through the environment in which He has placed us. Parents’ wishes, personal gifts and inclinations, all may be legitimate means of finding out what is God’s work for us, if only we start with the realisation that we want to find out what is God’s Will for us, and not merely to gratify our own ambitions.

Surely this is what we are taught by our Lord’s

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words to His apostles, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and ordained you"—to be My apostles. Very likely they thought that in following Christ they had made the choice, and so in a sense they had; for we can obey or disobey God's call, and in determining to obey we are choosing God. But before we can make that determination God must have chosen us, and spoken to our hearts through His preventing grace, thus enabling us to recognise His call, and to obey it.

How few, even of those who grow up in Christian homes, are brought up to consider vocation from this point of view. They are asked what they would like to be, what they would like to do, and while recognising, as we have done, that inclination is often a factor in deciding vocation, yet prayer that we may know God's Will for us should have the first place, and the end we must have in view in finding out our vocation must not be only worldly success but rather God's glory. God has a work for me to do, and there is a state of life in which I can best do that work. I must ask earnestly in prayer that God will show me what that state of life is, I must not decide upon it merely with a view to worldly ambition.

When we have in this way learnt what our vocation is, we must walk worthy of it, as S.

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Paul exhorts us,* and if at times we shrink from the responsibilities it involves, and are inclined to say that the work is too great for us, we have as our encouragement these words, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and ordained you" to this work. How great is the comfort through life of this revelation—if I have sought guidance in regard to my state in life, I need not afterwards fear that I have made a terrible mistake and that I am quite in the wrong place. There are many in this condition, but probably in most instances it is because they chose their vocation quite irrespective of God's guidance. They did not seek from Him humbly and earnestly a manifestation of His Will, they did not ask Him, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" They only considered what they wished to do, what would gratify their inclinations or ambitions in life, and so they found out, when it was too late, that they had made a mistake—a mistake which perhaps could not be rectified, and which spoilt their lives.

How different it is with those who have sought the guidance of God in the matter of vocation, and who can say, "I did not choose, but God called me to this work, and therefore, because He called me, He will give me the grace I need to accomplish it, the opportunities which are necessary for bringing it to a

* Cf. Eph. iv. 1.

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successful issue—successful in that it will be the fulfilment of God's Will.

We may observe that our Lord indicates four consequences of His choice and ordination. He says, "I ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you."

First they are *to go*. This implies the taking up of an independent and definite work. They are not to drift about, as so many do, without any real purpose, any definite work in life. There is something for each to do, and they are ordained that they may go and do it. If I do not know what my work is I ought to feel very anxious lest it should be my own fault that I do not know it, lest I should have shut my eyes to God's leading, closed my ears to the voice which would have guided me to the work which God ordained for me.

Secondly, they are to bring forth *fruit*. This is a most important and precious revelation. If we are doing the work which God has called us to do, that work is certain to be fruitful. We have Christ's own promise that it shall be. People often labour with energy at a work of their own choosing, but it ends in failure; because God's blessing does not rest upon it. But there can be

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no such thing as failure to one who is walking in the vocation to which God has called him, doing the work which God has given him. We have a very striking illustration of this in the miraculous draught of fishes which preceded the call of S. Peter. We read* that after our Lord had been teaching from S. Peter's boat, He said unto him, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." He had toiled all night and had taken nothing, but when he let down his net at the command of Jesus Christ, it was filled with fishes. There are many who toil all through the dark night of this life and find at the end that they have taken nothing—nothing, that is, which will follow them into the world to come. Life has been wasted, its opportunities lost, its true work left undone; because they have been working according to their own will, not according to the will of God. There are others whose lives do not seem to be particularly successful from this world's point of view, who

* Cf. S. Luke v. 1-11.

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when their net is drawn ashore at the last day will find it filled with fishes.

Thirdly, their fruit is to *remain*, "that your fruit should remain." There are many men whose names are known all over the world, who, after years of enormous effort, have amassed an immense amount of this world's fruits in the shape of wealth or popularity or power, but when they come to die none of that fruit will *remain* to them. Think of the millionaire who by his wealth one day controls the little world in which he lives, the next day he dies and whose is that wealth? It is no longer his, he cannot control one penny of it. He has not taken it with him. The fruit of all his labours is gone to others, nothing perhaps remains to him except the remorse of lost opportunities, of an ill-spent life. But to those, on the other hand, whose work has been done for God, and under His guidance, our Lord promises that their fruit shall remain. Their works do follow them into the world beyond, into eternity, to be their joy in God's kingdom in heaven.

Lastly, there is the promise, "That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you," the promise that in answer

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to prayer through Christ, all that is necessary for the fulfilment of vocation shall be given—wisdom to meet the difficulties of the work to which God has called us, strength to accomplish it, the grace of perseverance to the end. He who has called us will, in answer to our prayers, give us all that we need to enable us to obey His call and to do His work.

We must briefly notice the bearing of these words upon the vocation of the Apostles. Christ assures them that He chose them, and why? Surely, because He saw in each a special fitness for the apostolate. The apostles were of different temperaments, possessing different gifts, but each had that which was necessary to enable him to fulfil his vocation. One of the twelve was unfaithful to his vocation—Judas Iscariot—but his call was as true a call as was the vocation of the others, and from what we know of him, he seems to have possessed even greater natural gifts than his fellow apostles possessed. He was the only Judæan among them; the others were all Galilean peasants and fishermen. He was probably the only educated man, and possibly was a man of some means. He may have made greater sacrifices of this world's position and goods than the

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others made, when they obeyed Christ's call and followed Him as their Master.

There is no reason to suppose that he was not quite in earnest when he took up the yoke of Christ. He had a besetting sin, but so had all, and when he enrolled himself in the apostolic band and accepted the poverty which was their lot, he doubtless thought that he would be free from temptation to his besetting sin, which was covetousness; for inasmuch as following Christ involved poverty, he would have little temptation to covetousness. But because of his administrative ability he was chosen to bear the bag, to be the almoner of the apostolic college, and again had to handle money, and to face his besetting sin.

With a renewal of temptation we may be sure grace was given him to enable him to overcome the temptation. But he first yielded to his besetting sin of covetousness—he became a thief; and then apparently he lost his faith in Jesus Christ and lived untrue to his vocation. So he forfeited by his own act the apostolic office, and another S. Matthias, was raised up to do his work and to receive the reward, the crown that would have been his.

Judas is an awful example—not to the godless,

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but to religious people; the example of one who had a real call from Jesus Christ, who recognised his vocation and accepted it; but because he did not walk worthy of it, because he was not faithful in persevering in it, he lost his vocation, and with it lost his soul.

XXVII.

Fifth Friday in Lent.

THE WORLD'S HATRED.

S. JOHN XV. 17-21.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept My saying, they will keep your's also. But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake.”



IN the earlier part of the fifteenth chapter our Blessed Lord revealed to His disciples, under the image of the vine and its branches, the vital union which exists between Himself and the soul of the believer, pointing out, on the one hand, the consequences of the severance

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of this union, and on the other the blessings of its continuance. In the former case He draws attention to the worthlessness of the branches, their unfruitfulness, and their destruction by fire; in the latter He warns of the purging and pruning necessary that they may bring forth more abundant fruit, and promises three great privileges as the result of this union with Him—a special power in prayer, and the glorious titles of disciples and friends of Jesus Christ. At the seventeenth verse we are introduced to a new section, which extends to the seventh verse of the next chapter. In this section Christ tells of the consequences of His friendship as manifested in the world's treatment of those who love Him, and are His disciples and friends. He draws our attention to the dark side of the picture, and shows that in contrast to the joys and glories and privileges which pertain to those who love Him, there will be sorrows, trials, and persecutions, which arise from the world's hatred of Christ and His followers.

The seventeenth verse is often regarded as summing up the last section, but it really belongs to the next, to which it forms an introduction. The antiphon is repeated, "These things I command you, that ye love one another," and in sharpest contrast is put the result of obedience, as seen in

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the world's hatred of those who love God and love one another.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” What does Christ mean here by the “world” (ὁ κόσμος)? He means humanity apart from grace, man apart from Christ, the natural man as distinguished from the supernatural.

The world in which we live has its interests, its ambitions, its code of morals, its loves, and its hates. But our Blessed Lord describes it as diametrically opposed to Him, to His teaching, to His works, and to those who have enrolled themselves as His disciples and friends. The world can love with a certain sort of affection, for He says, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.” And the world can hate, and it hates those who are not its own, whose lives are a continual reproach to it, and whose allegiance is given, not to its claims, but to Christ. The words of Christ in this passage imply that it is impossible to belong to the world and to belong to Him, for He says, “Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

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He forewarns His disciples of the world's hate. He points out that it is only what they must expect, since it is but a repetition of the world's treatment of their Master. He shows that the immediate cause of this hatred will be their mutual love for one another, because that love testifies that they belong to Him, and also because this love witnesses against the world's supreme characteristic of utter selfishness, for the world's *love* is a selfish love. Our Lord says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." If ye were of the world, deriving your life from the world, finding in its praises your reward, in its customs your enjoyment and pleasure, the world would recognise you as belonging to it, and so would love you—not with that spiritual love which is implied in the use of the verb ἀγαπᾶν, which signifies a love founded upon the worthiness of its object, and upon an appreciation of the character of the one we love. The word ἐφίλει, used of the world's love, signifies natural love, the love of passion.

"If ye were of the world, the world would *love* his own," and that not because of the worthiness of those who belong to the world, but often for the very opposite reason, because in everything they accept the world's low standard, and so fulfil the

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claims which the world makes upon them. In the clause, "the world would love his own," we may notice the expression "his own" (τὸ ἴδιον). It is neuter, and signifies not a person, but a quality. The world does not love them as persons, as individuals, it only cares for those qualities in them which belong to it, and especially that quality of selfishness, which is the special characteristic of worldliness.

We may also observe that the fivefold repetition of the word "world" in this passage brings into very strong relief the antagonism that there must be between the world and those who love Christ. Christ goes on to say, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake." "Remember the word that I said unto you." We find this saying also in S. Matthew.* Persecution, we are told, is to be expected. If we are Christ-like we must expect to suffer as Christ did, to be treated as Christ was treated. If we are nominal Christians, but not Christ-like, the world will probably let us alone.

* S. Matt. x. 24.

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The thought by which our Lord would sustain His disciples under persecution is contained in the utterance, "These things will they do unto you for My Name's sake." All sufferings which you endure in the world because you are manifesting a Christ-like life are borne for Christ's sake. What a sustaining thought. He had said of Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Now He says to them, If ye love Me, ye must be ready to suffer for Me, and ye must recognise in your sufferings a glorious opportunity of showing your love. If in our time of trial we keep this thought steadfastly before us, that it is for Christ's sake that we endure the trial, it will rob our sufferings of all their bitterness and transmute them into glorious privileges. It was this thought which enabled the martyrs so gladly to suffer and die for Christ.

With what transparent honesty our Lord puts before His disciples the consequences of following Him—not only in this passage, but again and again throughout the Gospels does He call upon everyone who comes to Him to count the cost before they take up His yoke. To the man who proclaimed, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," He said, "Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath

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not where to lay His head.”* How many times, too, He said to His disciples, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”† And, “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.”‡

Our Blessed Master will allow none to enrol themselves under His banner before they realise what His service involves of suffering and self-denial. The reward, He tells them, is the greatest that the human heart can conceive of, but the journey to be traversed before the reward is won is by a narrow and strait and difficult path. Opposition must be encountered and persecution endured. They will go forth as disciples of love, and they will meet in return only hate. The world will hate them because they love Christ, and love one another.

Christ says, “*Remember* the word that I said unto you.” It ought to be a very real help to us in time of trouble to remember that our Master warned us to expect trial. S. Paul says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make the way to

* S. Luke xix. 57, 58. † S. Matt. xvi. 24. ‡ S. Luke xiv. 27.

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escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* Trial, testing, is common to all men, necessary for all, and especially for the Christian, but with the trial God will always send the way of escape, the means of grace by using which we may be able—not to get rid of the temptation, but to bear it; for it is by endurance of temptation that we win the crown of life.†

The hatred of the world of which Christ forewarns His disciples was very definite in its manifestation, for we read of it first as shown by the Jews, and then after the fall of Jerusalem we find it in the various persecutions of Christians under the Roman Empire. Now the world has lost some of its powers of persecution, but it has not lost its hatred of all who are Christ's. The form of its manifestation is more civilised, but the spirit is the same.

* 1 Cor. x. 13. † Cf. S. James i. 12 ; 2 Timothy iv. 8.

XXVIII.

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THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE.

S. JOHN XV. 21-25.

“But all these things will they do unto you for My Name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”



WE have seen that the immediate cause of the world’s hatred is the spirit of love manifested in a Christ-like life, but our Lord also ascribes this hatred to another cause—ignorance, “because they know not Him that ‘sent Me.’” All sin may be ultimately traced

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to ignorance, as our Lord shows us, when He prays for His murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."* Ignorance with regard to the intellect and perversion of the will are the two causes of sin, though ignorance is the primary cause.

Christ, when weeping over Jerusalem, said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes because thou *knewest* not the time of thy visitation."† Here He traces their rejection of His love to ignorance. On another occasion He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not*."‡ In this passage He points out that perversion of will prevented them from listening to His pleading with them.

However, to confine ourselves to the passage under our consideration, we shall observe that Christ very distinctly traces the cause of the world's hatred and rejection of Him to ignorance.

* S. Luke xxiii. 34.

† Cf. S. Luke xix. 41-44.

‡ S. Matt. xxiii. 37.

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“They know not Him that sent Me.” The Jews of our Lord’s day knew a great deal about God and His revelation to men. It was an intensely religious age. The leaders of the nation held their positions by virtue of their religious profession. They were: Pharisees or Sadducees, Scribes, Elders or Priests; and all these titles told either of their religious views or of their religious occupation.

The services of the Temple had probably never been performed with greater splendour, and the Temple itself as restored by Herod had attained to its greatest magnificence. Then the study of the letter of Holy Scripture was pursued with painstaking industry and passionate devotion. It had reached its highest development; there were volumes of traditional comments on the letter of Holy Scripture, but the spirit, alas, was neglected or forgotten.

The Jews then knew *about* God, about the Father Who had sent Christ, but they did not know Him, they did not apprehend His character, His attributes of love and mercy and truth. The ignorance to which our Lord refers was not a theological but a moral ignorance. Theology was recognised as the very queen of sciences in those day, but, alas, it was divorced from practical life.

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The positive enactments of Holy Scripture in regard to tithing, mint and anise and cummin* were strictly observed, and the ritual law in regard to the washing of pots and cups was rigidly enforced, but the weightier matters of the law, righteousness and truth and mercy, were sadly overlooked.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.” The complete parallelism of these two verses is very striking. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.” In the first our Lord points to His teachings as a testimony to His Person and mission, in the second He points to His works; and He shows that if the ignorance of those who persecuted Him had been the ignorance of those who had never come in contact with truth, it would have been excusable, but that it was ignorance persevered in in spite of the evidence of Christ's teachings and of His miracles and works of mercy.

* S. Matt. xxiii. 23.

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Their ignorance was wilful ignorance, and therefore it was sin, and sin which had no cloke, that is, no excuse. They had abundant evidence of the truth of Christ's claims, they even investigated some of the evidence, as in the case of the man born blind,* but though they were constrained to admit the facts, they absolutely refused to acknowledge the inference which the facts suggested. "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of the mouth of Christ,"† but they rejected His teachings. . They could not deny His many miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead, but they refused to acknowledge that He came from God. They shut their eyes to the truth ; they hated it, and as Christ says, in hating it, hated both Himself and His Father.

This was the result of their sin, and their sin was the result of wilful ignorance. Darkness hates light, it cannot endure it, because light disperses and destroys darkness. Sin hates goodness, because goodness is a constant reproach to the sinner. Error hates truth, because error is of the Evil One and truth is of God. How clearly our Lord points out the difference between ignorance which is a misfortune, and that ignorance which is wilful, and therefore without excuse, we see this when He pleads

* *Cf.* S. John ix. 13-34.

† *Cf.* S. Luke iv. 22.

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for His murderers, saying, "They know not what they do."

Then again, Christ points to the warnings of the prophets. Their own Scriptures not only prophesied of the coming of the Messiah, but of His rejection, and of the hatred with which He would be met. "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause." The Jews had everything: the evidence of our Lord's words and of His miraculous works; they had also the witness of their own Scriptures, but they would not believe, and therefore He holds them responsible for their unbelief.

There are many lessons which we may learn from this passage. What do we love? Light or darkness, goodness or evil, error or truth? Are we content with the theological knowledge of Christ, or do we strive to know Him as our Master and our Friend? Some may say, "How can I know whether I am right, whether what I believe is truth?" The answer is not so difficult as it seems. We can know by the guiding of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of Truth, and of Whom our Lord tells us that He shall guide the Church into all truth. There are many theological opinions about which there may be different views, but the essential truth into which the Holy Ghost has guided the Church

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can without much difficulty be recognised because it is held and taught by every part of the Church.

That parts of the Church may err in regard to theological opinion, is not inconsistent with God's promise. It is impossible that the whole Church can be led astray; so that wherever we find a truth taught by every part of the Church we may be sure of its authority; and we shall find upon investigation that this includes all essential truth, that the matters of theological speculation upon which different communions in the Church disagree do not touch the vital truths of the Christian creed.

We must pray to be delivered from prejudice, and, claiming Christ's promise, we must ask the Holy Ghost to guide us into all truth, and to this end diligently study that truth which comes to us with the authority of the Holy Catholic Church.

XXIX.

Fifth Monday in Lent.

THE ADVOCATE AS CHRIST'S WITNESS.

S. JOHN XV. 26, 27.

“But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.”



BEFORE we proceed to a consideration of the special teaching of this passage—that the Comforter or Advocate is to bear witness to Christ—it will be well to examine carefully its theological bearing upon the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. We must first notice the emphatic use in the Greek of the personal pronouns, that they are not contained in the verb, but that a separate personal pronoun is employed in referring both to Christ and to the Holy Ghost.

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In the clause, "When the Comforter is come Whom I will send unto you from the Father," our Lord uses the emphatic "I" (Ἐγώ), and its use involves a claim to divine power, to equality with the Father. For in a previous passage relating to the Holy Ghost Christ had said, "Whom the Father will send in My Name."* Now He says emphatically, "Whom *I* will send," claiming to do that which He had before ascribed to the Father.

Again, in the clause "He shall testify of Me," the personal pronoun (ἐκεῖνος) which is rendered "He" is masculine, but in the Greek the word for Spirit (πνεῦμα) is neuter, so that the concord in gender, between the pronoun and the noun to which it refers, is violated in order to bring out clearly the personality of the Holy Ghost.

We must further notice the expression "which proceedeth from the Father." It will carry our thoughts at once to the article of our Creed concerning the Holy Ghost—"Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;" an article of faith which, in its wording rather than its essential doctrine, separates the Eastern Church from the rest of Christendom.

The Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two origins, but

* S. John xiv. 26.

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as from one, not by two spirations, but by one spiration. He proceeds, therefore, by an act of the will; and as we have no name for this procession suggested by what occurs in man, and as the act of intellect by which the Father generates the Son is virtually distinct from the act of will by which the Father with the Son breathes forth the Holy Spirit, the general word "spiration" (breathing) is used for this procession of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Ghost (like the Son) is not distinct in essence from the Father from Whom He proceeds, this procession is called "immanent procession," for in Theology the word procession signifies the origination of one thing from another, but where the thing originated is not really distinct in essence from the principle which originated it, the procession is termed "immanent procession."

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *only*, as the Source, Fountain, or Beginning. He is the eternal love of the Father and the Son mutually breathed forth by them, and is, as it were, the bond of union in the Eternal Trinity.

In the Creed, as set forth by the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, the article to which we have referred reads, "Who proceedeth from the Father;" the words, "and the Son," having been added later and without conciliar authority. Hence they are

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rejected by the Eastern Church, which accuses the West of having altered the Creed by interpolating these words. The point of agreement in regard to the doctrine of the procession is that both Churches hold that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only as from the Source, Fountain, or Beginning, but that He proceeds *through* or *by* the Son.

Although the words "from the Son" crept into the Creed without adequate authority, the West cannot surrender them, now that they have become part of her recognised theology, without seeming to throw doubt upon the doctrine which they teach—that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son by mutual spiration, though from the Father only as the Source. But in its explanation of the manner of this procession the Western Theologians entirely accept the language of the Greek Fathers, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, through or by the Son, the difference therefore is one rather of words than of faith.

We may further point out that there are two Missions of the Holy Ghost—His eternal Mission by which He proceeds from the Father and the Son in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity, and His temporal Mission by which He proceeds from the Father and the Son to accomplish His work in the world. The question may be asked to which of

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these processions is our Lord referring in the passage under our consideration. "The Comforter . . . Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, Which proceedeth from the Father." There seems no doubt that Christ is referring to the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost. This is evident, first from the purpose of His Mission—to testify unto Christ in the world—and then also from the pronoun used in the phrase "from the Father" (*παρά*). This pronoun signifies from the side of a person, not like *ἀπό*, from a source.

With this explanation let us pass on to the consideration of the special function in the temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost to which our Lord draws attention—the work of witnessing to Christ. If we compare the twenty-sixth verse with that which precedes it, we shall see that the witness of the Holy Ghost is contrasted with the hatred of the world, which is the main subject of this section of our Lord's discourse.

Christ had traced this hatred to ignorance of the Father.* He had further shown that this ignorance was inexcusable, because the Jews had the testimony of their own Scriptures and prophets, which bore witness to the Messiah. These Scriptures and prophecies He had Himself so fulfilled as to leave

* Cf. ver. 21.

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no doubt in the mind of an unprejudiced Jew that He was the Messiah.

He now goes on to show that in the future the world should be still more without excuse, because the Holy Ghost should testify unto Him, which He has done through the marvellous works wrought in the Christian Church by His power. Not only did the miracles worked by the Apostles after the Day of Pentecost, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, bear witness to Him, but the world has before it a constant miracle in the existence of the Church of Christ as a perpetual testimony to the truth of His teachings and to the divinity of His Person. This testimony is not confined to the apostolic age, but in its fullest application is to be taken of the interpretation of Christ's life and work as given by the Holy Ghost through the teachings of the Church.

Not only was the Holy Ghost to bear this witness unto the world, but they themselves were also to bear witness. That is, they were to testify to what they had seen and heard *without* them—to the objective facts of the life and teachings of their Master. And they were also to testify to that which they had experienced *within* them—to the subjective experiences of their own soul's life.

The passage further points out their fitness to bear

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this testimony because they had been with Christ from the beginning, and so were peculiarly competent to give evidence of all that He had said and done in His historic life on earth. This injunction is repeated by our Lord just before His Ascension into Heaven, when He says to them, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

This command is handed on by the Apostles to us, and no duty can be more binding on us than that of bearing witness to the world of the truth of Christianity; but the witness which we can bear is not so much to the objective facts of our Lord's life, as to its subjective power manifested in our own lives, enabling us to show forth in a world, which hates the light and loves darkness, the brightness of a Christ-like life.

Our Blessed Lord in giving this command to His Apostles knew that it would be the most convincing evidence of the truth of His claims, that it would be the force by which the world should be won to Him. The evidence of the Apostles alone would have been powerless, but they were to bear witness in conjunction with the witness of the Holy Ghost. So it is

* Acts i. 8.

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now. It is not by the eloquence of preaching, nor the cogency of argument, it is not by the brilliancy of our learning or the attraction of worldly success that we are to win souls to Christ, but by the simple testimony of Christian lives lived under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

XXX.

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PERSECUTION THE RESULT OF THE
WORLD'S HATRED.

S. JOHN XVI. 1-4.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues ; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.”



AT this point we have a division of chapters, but there is no break in the discourse, for the first six verses of the sixteenth chapter belong to the section we have been considering—the section in which our Lord treats of the hatred of the world towards those who are united to Him, and are living with His Life, as the branches are united and live with the life of the vine. Christ

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has shown that the hatred of the world proceeds from ignorance of God, but that this ignorance is rendered inexcusable in the case of the Jews by the testimony of their own scriptures, and in that of the world at large, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ.

He now proceeds to foretell the issue of this hatred in persecution, which shall take the form, first, of excommunication, and shall then manifest itself in an attempt to extirpate His teaching by personal violence towards His followers, ending in the crime of murder on the part of their persecutors, and in the glories of martyrdom for those who are faithful to Him. Christ further shows that in its blindness the world shall hide its crime by the assumption of religious zeal, and shall think that in taking the lives of God's servants they are offering Him religious service.

These things Christ foretells in order that, when they come to pass, the Apostles may not be offended. While this is the only passage in S. John's Gospel in which the word "offended" is used, it occurs frequently in the synoptists, and it may be well, therefore, to examine its exact significance. The Greek word (*σκάνδαλα*) of which this is a Latinised equivalent, is derived from a noun which signified originally the spring or trigger of a trap for

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catching birds. Then it came to be applied to an obstacle put in a person's way to cause him to stumble or fall, so that, in this sense, a stumbling-block would be a good rendering of the word. In our verb "to scandalise" we have the actual Greek word used metaphorically, in somewhat the same sense as the word "offend" is here employed.

Our Lord further reveals that His purpose in foretelling the persecutions which await them is to forewarn them, lest they should stumble or fall when they actually occur. To be forewarned is to be forearmed; and nothing is more striking in the Gospels than the frequency and distinctness with which Christ forewarns His Apostles that those who follow Him must expect persecution, that they cannot be His disciples without taking up the cross of suffering. In this passage He tells them that one form of suffering will be persecution, caused by the hatred of the world towards all who show themselves to be His disciples by following in the steps of His life. Let us examine this revelation a little more in detail.

The form which persecution was first to take, our Lord tells them, would be excommunication—"They shall put you out of the synagogues." We know that this decision was reached by the Jewish Church after the miracle of the healing of the blind

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man recorded in S. John ix., where we read, "The Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."* And later we are told "they cast Him out," or excommunicated Him.†

Christ tells them, however, that persecution shall not stop at excommunication, that the time shall come when "whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Here our Lord not only foretells that martyrdom awaits them, but reveals to them the motives by which their adversaries shall seek to justify their cruelty; for He points out that the excuse will be religious zeal, that they shall think that they are doing God service in putting you to death. And we may notice that the word translated "service" (*λατρείαν*) signifies the highest act of religious worship—the worship which is due to God alone.

This prophecy has been fulfilled again and again in the history of the Church. For not only were our Lord's disciples persecuted by the Jews, and, as in the case of S. Stephen, S. James, and others, put to death by them; but they were persecuted by the Roman Emperors throughout three centuries, when the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church.

* S. John ix. 22.

† S. John v. 34.

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This, however, does not exhaust the prophecy, for Christians, alas, have put their fellow-Christians to death in vain attempts to extirpate what they deemed to be heresy, and have excused their cruelty by ascribing it to religious zeal. They *thought* that they were doing God service. Such was certainly the feeling of Mary, Queen of England, as she reluctantly signed the death-warrants presented to her by her ecclesiastical advisers, who thus attempted to stamp out rebellion against Romanism. Possibly the same excuse may have been made by her successor, Elizabeth, for the far greater number of persons put to death in her reign for their religious convictions. Such, doubtless, was the motive which led to the establishment of the Inquisition, whose cruelties, while they shock a more refined age, were undoubtedly in the first instance the outcome of religious zeal against heresy.

“All these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.” We may observe how emphatically our Blessed Lord traces the real cause of these cruelties to ignorance of the character of God—“They have not known the Father, nor Me;” and this ignorance is in Christians absolutely inexcusable. The heathen who does these things because he knows not God,

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can plead ignorance as an excuse, but the Christian who does them is inexcusable. For while he knows a great deal about God and God's revelation, he cannot know God Himself; for God is Love, and it is inconceivable that a God, Whose character is love, could justify cruelty, even for the purpose of enforcing orthodoxy.

Truth, to be of any value to a man, must be the result of intellectual or moral conviction, not of physical compulsion. To enforce a verbal acceptance of theological dogmas by threats of physical pain or death, can never result in either intellectual or moral conviction. At most it can but convert a heretic into a hypocrite, and that at the cost of employing measures which must always be abhorrent to a God of Love.

XXXI.

Sixth Wednesday in Lent.

THE EXPEDIENCY OF UNPLEASANT
TRUTHS.

S. JOHN XVI. 4-7.

“But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.”

“**B**UT these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.” These are important words; for they are applicable not only to the Apostles themselves in the troubles which were coming upon them, but to Christians of all ages, even to ourselves in the difficulties of life. For in the trials and temptations which come to us in our

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efforts to serve God and to keep His commandments, which come to us often just because we are striving to be faithful to His precepts, we shall find strength and help in the thought that our Lord warned us that we must expect just such difficulties, that He told us clearly that all who followed Him would be treated by the world as He was treated, that He called upon us to count the cost before we enrolled ourselves in His service, and to remember, when trial or suffering befell us, that He had warned us that this would be our lot.

S. Peter takes up and enforces this teaching when he says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy."* How often we forget this admonition, and think it very strange, and, perhaps, even unjust, that we should have to endure certain sorrows or sufferings—unjust, because we have always striven to serve God faithfully. And yet our Lord and His Apostles point out to us that this is precisely the reason why we must expect peculiar sufferings; for the world hates those who are Christ's, and persecutes them. And not only the

* 1 S. Peter iv. 12, 13.

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world, but he who is the Prince of this world, the devil, will bring peculiar temptations to bear upon those who are striving most earnestly to follow the steps of their Lord's life.

S. Peter exhorts us to rejoice, inasmuch as by these trials we are made partakers of Christ's sufferings; and what can be a greater privilege to the Christian than to share his Master's Cross? As we have already noticed, our Lord draws attention to the same privilege when He says, "All these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake."*

"And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." While Christ was with them He could comfort them and guide them, but now that He is about to leave them, He tells them of all the sorrows which shall befall them, in order that when they happen, His disciples may be prepared for them, and may not be overwhelmed as by unexpected trials. But Christ does more than this. He goes on to promise them another Comforter, Who, like Himself, and even more than Himself, shall comfort and guide them. These things He had not told them at the

* S. John xv. 21.

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beginning, because, while He was with them, He could help them to meet their difficulties as they arose. He now tells them of another Guide, Who shall never leave them, Who shall guide them into all truth and shall comfort them in all sorrows. The coming of this Comforter, however, depends on Christ's departure.

He says, "Now I go My way to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." Surely these are words of gentle reproof. They were so absorbed in their own sorrow at the thought of losing Him, that they did not stop to think or to ask how His departure would affect Himself. They knew He was leaving them; in the thought of their own loss they did not enquire concerning His gain. He was going to the Father Who had sent Him; He was going to prepare a place for them in the Father's house. Surely these words opened out wonderful possibilities in the great future beyond the grave; yet they were so occupied in their present grief, that they had little interest in what He said about the future.

"None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" But some may say, did not S. Peter and S. Thomas substantially ask this question. S. Peter used the

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very words, "Lord, whither goest Thou?"* and S. Thomas suggested this question when he said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, how know we the way?"† This is true; but if we examine what they said a little more carefully, we shall observe that they were both thinking of themselves, of our Lord's departure in relation to themselves, and that they were neither of them solicitous about their Master's future, except in so far as it affected themselves.

Christ's answer to S. Peter shows this, for He says, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." S. Peter's question, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" had for its motive S. Peter's intention to go with his Master; and similarly S. Thomas is more concerned with the fact that he is not clear about the way in which he himself is to walk, than he is in regard to the goal of his Master's journey. When, therefore, Christ says, "None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart," He is referring not so much to the verbal question, "Whither goest Thou?" as to the fact that their sorrow was so entirely selfish, that they were occupied exclusively in the consideration of the effect of their Master's departure upon their own lives.

* S. John xiii. 36. † S. John xiv. 5.

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“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away.” In these words we have a great practical lesson. Our Lord does not hesitate to tell them the truth, when it is expedient for them to know that truth, even though that knowledge is to fill their heart with sorrow. How often we shrink from telling other people unpleasant truths, which we ought to tell them, because we are afraid of displeasing them, or of causing them pain. Again, we do not like others to tell us unpleasant truths, because they hurt our vanity. But, alas, we are quite ready to speak unpleasant truths to gratify our malice against those whom we do not love, or perhaps even without this excuse, when we indulge in idle gossip.

How different was our Lord's rule. He says, “Although these things fill you with sorrow, nevertheless, I tell you the truth.” He told them what was unpleasant, because it was for their good. He did not hold back part of the truth, as people so often do, for fear of offending them, He told them the whole truth because it was important that they should know it, although it was hard for them to hear it. It was expedient for them that He should go away, in order that the Comforter might come unto them ; and instead of waiting for them to find this out for themselves, Christ tells them of it, tells

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them plainly, though it pains them to hear it, tells them not only that He is about to leave them, but that His departure, the very thought of which fills them with sorrow, is for their ultimate benefit.

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XXXII.

Sixth Thursday in Lent.

THE HOLY GHOST AND SIN.

S. JOHN XVI. 7, 8.

“It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”



IN these words our Lord not only tells His disciples why it is expedient that He should go away—that the Comforter may come unto them—but He reveals to them the purpose and work for which the Comforter shall come as it regards the world at large. Of course, we must bear in mind that the work of the Holy Ghost in the world is many-sided. He comes to bear witness to Christ ; He comes to guide the Church into all truth ; He comes to endow the

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Church with special powers of grace ; but His work upon the world and in the individual soul is summed up with great conciseness, and yet with sufficient fulness in the words, " He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Most persons probably read these words without adequately understanding them, certainly without realising that in them is contained an epitome of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man.

First we must point out that the word translated " reprove " (*ἐλέγξει*) ought to be convict. The word itself signifies to convince by argument, and so, in this case, to convict the world of sin. But what do we mean by convict? What is the full force of this word? It is a word of very wide meaning, for it implies, first an authoritative examination, and then someone who has a right to make the examination—as in a court of justice the court has authority to examine witnesses. It further implies unquestionable proof; in a court conviction cannot follow unless the crime has been proved. And lastly it implies the power to punish, for no court convicts a man of crime unless it can pass sentence upon that man.

If we apply this to the conviction of the world by the Holy Ghost we shall see that the term conviction involves such a conviction, that he who

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rejects it, rejects it with his eyes open and at his peril. And this is precisely what happens when an individual rejects the work and teaching of the Holy Ghost.

We cannot apply this to the heathen who know not God, nor to those nominal Christians who have never really come into contact with the work of the Holy Ghost, and whose rejection of Christ's claims upon them is not so much wilful, as from ignorance of the overwhelming force of those claims. We must refer it rather to those who have seen the light and turned from it, because they loved darkness better; who have seen the truth and rejected it, because its acceptance involved sacrifices which they were not prepared to make. But it refers also, thank God, to those who have seen and followed the guiding of the light, and have heard and obeyed the teachings of the truth.

The work of the Holy Ghost is put by our Lord under three categories or heads—sin, righteousness, and judgment. And this division is in a sense exhaustive, since sin, righteousness, and judgment are the cardinal elements in the determination of man's spiritual state in the world; for in them his *past*, his *present*, and his *future* are summed up. Man's *past* is summed up in the word "sin;" if the conviction of sin has led to its proper result

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in penitence, his *present* will be an intense striving for righteousness ; and this will enable him to look forward, with hope and confidence in the mercy of God, to the *future*, to the judgment which awaits all men.

Let us further consider these three states more in detail, and first the work of the Holy Ghost in convicting man of sin. The first work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul of man is its illumination. God's light shines in the soul revealing to man two things—his present condition—what he is ; and his future possibilities—what he may become by the help of God's grace. And this self-knowledge is the basis of all future growth in righteousness. We need to pray, "Lord, show me myself ; Lord, let me not deceive myself."

The first revelation of self to a sinner is indeed overwhelming. Long forgotten sins stand out clearly in the light of the Spirit of Truth, and the soul too often seems a chaos of conflicting passions and desires. We see good and noble purposes formed, but never carried into execution. We see grievous sins realised, feebly struggled against, and then constantly yielded to.

The Holy Ghost first brings home to man that he is a fallen creature, possessed of great possibilities of good or evil, but unable, by himself, to rise from sin

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to break its chains, to live the life of righteousness. So that he can express his conviction of sin in S. Paul's words, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

This is the first step in the work of the Holy Ghost in man's soul—to convict him of sin. We must first learn the possibilities of evil in us, and then the dangers which threaten us and our own absolute inability of ourselves to overcome this evil. After this we must realise that we are subject to the influence of one of two powers, of one of two spirits—the Spirit of good, the Holy Ghost, or the spirit of evil, the devil. We must recognise the fact that we are not, and that we never can be independent. Our will is free to choose which it will serve of these two masters, but serve it must, either enrolling itself in the service of God, which is perfect freedom, but not independence, or in the service of the devil, which is degrading bondage.

* Romans vii. 19-24.

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The Holy Ghost shall convict the world of sin. The world is always making mistakes about sin, taking erroneous views of it—that sin is a misfortune which cannot be avoided, or a disease which man has inherited. In either case it persuades itself that it is something which man cannot help, and for which, therefore, he is not really responsible. The world will not admit the *guilt* of sin.

Our Lord says that the Holy Ghost will convict the world “of sin because they believed not on Me.” Since Christ came into the world sin may be traced back to rejection of Him ; and it is this which the Holy Ghost brings home to the soul, that sin is practically the result of unbelief in Christ as the Son of God, unbelief in Christ as the Redeemer of man, unbelief in the power of His precious Blood to wash away sin. For the basis of repentance is faith. If you do not believe in the power of Christ’s precious Blood to cleanse you from all sin, you will never rightly repent of your sin. You may have remorse for it, you may regret it, but you will not repent of it.

The Holy Ghost shall convict the world “of sin, because they believed not on Me.” It is the work of God’s Spirit to bring this faith home to your soul, to make it not only an intellectual opinion, but a moral conviction, so that you may not merely believe in

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theory that Christ has made provision in His Church for the absolution and remission of your sins, but that the moral conviction of sin may lead you to use diligently the means which Christ has provided and appointed for its remission.

But not only does the Holy Ghost convict the soul of sin, it provides the remedy. For the Holy Ghost is the Agent in the Sacraments of the Church; by Baptism He applies the precious Blood of Christ to the remission of all sin both original and actual; and for post-baptismal sin through the absolution of the Church He restores the soul to the state of grace by the renewed application of the Blood of Christ.

The Holy Ghost convicts the world of rejecting Christ, of leaving unused His sacraments of grace, of refusing to see that sin is rebellion, lawlessness, of attributing sin to other and insufficient causes—to weakness or ignorance, instead of error in the intellect and perversion in the soul, and therefore the rejection alike of truth and righteousness. The Holy Ghost convicts the world of the erroneousness of its theories and brings home to the penitent a true conception of the malice of sin, a realisation of what sin is in God's sight, and so, lays in the sinner's soul the foundation of penitence.

XXXIII.

Sirth Friday in Lent.

THE HOLY GHOST AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

S. JOHN XVI. 8, 10.

“And when He is come, He will convict the world . . . of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more.”



WE have seen that the cardinal elements in the determination of man's spiritual state are three—sin, righteousness, and judgment; for in them his past, present, and future are severally summed up. We are told by our Lord, in the passage under our consideration, that the Holy Ghost has a special work to do in the human soul in regard to each of these. We have treated of His work in convicting the world of sin; we have, therefore, for our consideration to-day His work in convicting the world of righteousness.

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The first work of the Holy Ghost in the sinner's soul, as we have seen, is to reveal to it its true state, to bestow upon it the gift of self-knowledge, and, if he use it, the gift of penitence. This is strikingly brought before us in the parable of the woman and the ten pieces of silver,* which is indeed the great parable of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The woman begins her work by lighting a candle, which typifies the illumination of the soul by the Holy Ghost, the light of the candle revealing the condition of her house. She sees the dust of sin, the result, perhaps, of years of neglect. Then follows the diligent sweeping, which brings before us the work of penitence; and as this sweeping proceeds and the dust is removed, the piece of silver is discovered hidden away among the dust. The light shines upon it, and the silver piece responds to the light, reflecting it with metallic glitter.

At this point in the parable we reach the second stage of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul—the discovery of its innate possibilities of righteousness. Some have seen a striking analogy between the coin stamped with the image of the reigning sovereign and the soul impressed with the image of God, the Lord of all; but, beautiful as the analogy is, it can scarcely be pressed in this case, since

* Cf. S. Luke xv. 8-10.

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the word (*δραχμήν*) translated a "piece of silver" signifies the Greek drachma, which did not, like the Latin denarius, bear upon it the emperor's image and superscription, but was generally stamped with some device—an owl or tortoise, or the head of Minerva.

While we may not press the analogy, the fact is no less true that the soul of man bears impressed upon it the image of God; and it is the revelation of this, its intrinsic value because of its immense possibilities, which is the second stage of the work of the Holy Ghost in man's soul. The Holy Spirit not only reveals to the sinner what he is, but shows him what he may become if he will correspond with God's grace, diligently sweeping away the dust of sin through penitence, and earnestly striving to perfect the work of righteousness in his life.

But this, again, is the special work of the Holy Ghost, Who is the Sanctifier of the elect, and Who, after He has convicted the world of the need and possibility of righteousness, proceeds to the work of sanctification in the soul which surrenders itself to His guidance. But in what does this work consist?

First, in bringing home to the soul the righteousness of Christ as the only righteousness possible. Our Lord said of the Comforter, "He shall testify

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of Me," and again, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you."*

Then in the work of imparting to the soul this righteousness through incorporation with Christ by Baptism, and through feeding upon Him in the Holy Communion; for we must remember that the Holy Ghost is the Agent of all the Sacraments. The priest may pour water upon the child and say the words which Christ commanded, but it is the Holy Ghost Who regenerates that child. For, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."† The priest may consecrate the elements in the Holy Eucharist, but it is the Holy Ghost Who makes the Bread and Wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ. And yet again, if this righteousness should be lost by yielding to mortal sin, it is the Holy Ghost Who, working in the Sacrament of Penance, restores the soul to the state of grace.

"He will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." In these words our Lord associates righteousness with His Ascension; for the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ

* S. John xv. 26; xvi. 14.

† S. John iii. 5.

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placed righteousness in a new light, and brought it within the reach of every believer. Christ's Ascension, the consummation of His life and work, was the vindication of God's righteousness, of Christ's righteousness. And more, the exaltation of the Son of Man to the life of glory at the right hand of the Father in Heaven was necessary, as our Lord reminded His disciples, in order that He might send that Holy Spirit, Who should convict the world of righteousness, and sanctify all who should yield themselves to His gracious influence.

So S. Paul, quoting from the Psalmist,* says, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."† What were these gifts? First, the Holy Ghost; for Christ said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you."‡ Then the gifts of grace which the Holy Ghost brings to the soul.

Lastly, to encourage us in our pursuit of righteousness, there is the thought, the conviction, that since, and because of, Christ's Ascension there is reigning in Heaven glorified Humanity in the Person of the Son of God, the Lord of righteousness; and there comes to us from the throne of Heaven

* Psalm lxxviii. 18.

† Eph. iv. 8.

‡ John xvi. 7.

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this message, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.”*

* Rev. iii. 21.

XXXIV.

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THE HOLY GHOST AND JUDGMENT.

S. JOHN XVI. 8 and 11.

“And when He is come, He will convict the world . . . of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”



F man's past state has been one of sin, and his present condition ought to be a state of righteousness, there can be no doubt in the mind of the Christian that there awaits him in the future the Day of Judgment. And it is the work of the Holy Ghost to convince man of this, to bring it home to him, not merely as a dogma of faith to which his intellect gives assent, but as a tremendous moral fact which must influence the whole of life; for the teaching of S. Paul, that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that

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every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,"* is an essential dogma of a Christian's faith.

This is accomplished largely by arousing in man, or, if it be already aroused, deepening in him, a sense of responsibility, a conviction of the strictness of the account which he must give for his life here. A conviction that the day will come when he will have to render an account of his stewardship, when he will be accused by the accuser of the brethren, the devil himself, of wasting his Lord's goods, of misusing or not using the talents committed to him for the work of life in this world.

There is in every man the sense of responsibility; for this is one of the innate ideas implanted in man by God Who created him. If you were to stop an unbeliever in the street and ask him, "Are you a responsible being?" what would he answer? He would certainly say, "Yes; every man who is not deprived of the light of reason is a responsible being." He will say this; for there is in everyone an innate conviction, the voice of natural conscience, which brings home to him, more or less, a sense of responsibility.

But if you were to go on to ask, "To whom are you responsible?" you would not find the same

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

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universal agreement in the answer. The Christian, without hesitation, would say, "I am responsible to God;" the unbeliever might reply, "I am responsible to society, to my fellow-men, or, perhaps, to my own higher self. I am responsible to my conscience which, if I do wrong, reproaches me and pursues me with the accusations and pangs of remorse."

We shall not consider the unbeliever's answer further than to observe that it is quite inadequate, and is extorted from him only by the undeniable fact of the existence in every man of a sense of responsibility. Our Lord reveals to us that it is the work of the Holy Ghost to convince the world of judgment, that is, to enlighten the natural conscience in regard to this innate sense of responsibility, to be its guide and to teach it why it is responsible, in what way and to whom.

But first, what do we mean by this word "responsible"? Its derivation suggests that it means we must give an answer, when we are examined, concerning the thoughts, words, and actions of our life. We are responsible because God, Who created us, endowed us with the light of reason and with a sense of right and wrong, with a knowledge of good and evil. The lower animals and those unfortunate human beings who are bereft of reason, are not responsible because they have not the light of reason

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and the knowledge of right and wrong to guide them. There is an instinct in the lower animals which prevents them from doing things harmful to themselves, and leads them to choose what is best for their own limited life. Yet this instinct does not give them the power of *moral* choice. A dog may be trained to do certain things and to abstain from others, but the motive is remembrance of pleasure or pain, or fear of punishment; it is not a sense of right and wrong, not a knowledge of good and evil.

Again, we are responsible because there is a tribunal before which we must stand to give account of our life in this world. As S. Paul says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," and "and every one of us shall give account of himself to God."* It is the work then of the Holy Ghost to convince us of this tremendous fact which awaits us in the future, that there is a day of judgment when we must render our account to God, and to teach us now to prepare for that great day. This preparation should affect our daily lives, should lead us so to live "That we may have boldness in the day of judgment."†

The conviction that there is a day of judgment when we must give an account of our stewardship, will lead practically to great carefulness and watch-

* Rom. xiv. 10 and 12.

† 1 S. John iv. 17.

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fulness in our present lives. It will also kindle a great desire for accurate self-knowledge, and will impel us, therefore, to such steps as will enable us to advance in this important duty. But self-knowledge and watchfulness alike demand the practice of self-examination; for if we are to give an account we must keep an account, and self-examination is the means by which our account is kept.

Again, if we are to watch we must practice constant self-examination; for this is really what watchfulness means. The watchman on the walls of a beleaguered city is constantly examining or watching all that takes place without the city, in order that he may detect any covert approach of the enemy, and give the alarm to those within. The only way in which we can follow this example in regard to our spiritual life is by frequent examination of our thoughts and words and deeds, to see if temptation has been yielded to, and more, to find out precisely through what temptations the devil is striving to gain an entrance into our souls.

Then, too, self-examination is necessary in order that we may repair the breaches which have been made in our spiritual fortifications by our yielding to temptation. For self-examination reveals not only the temptations by which Satan is striving to overcome us, but the extent to which they have been

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consented to, and therefore the extent of the injury to the fortifications of our soul. This will lead, on the one hand, to penitence by which we remove the guilt of sin and heal its wounds, and on the other hand to efforts to acquire the opposite virtues. For penitence alone is but negative in its effects, the undoing of the injury done to our souls through sin, and it is only through the acquisition of Christian virtues, especially such as are of the very opposite character to our sins, that we can acquire strength and develop spiritual character.

In this work of self-examination we must carefully bear in mind that we have not only to give account of what we have done amiss, but also of what we have left undone, of the opportunities which we have neglected, of having wasted the goods committed to us. Our Blessed Lord in more than one of His parables warns us of this. In the Parable of the Talents and in the Parable of the Pounds, it was the man who had not used his one talent or pound who was cast into the outer darkness; and in the Parable of the Judgment Day, those on the left hand, who received the sentence of condemnation, were told that it was because they had left undone works of mercy, because they had failed to use opportunities of loving service to their fellow-men, that they were condemned.

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We must further notice that our Lord tells us that the Holy Ghost shall convict the world of judgment, because "the prince of this world is judged," or rather hath been judged ; for the tense is the perfect (*κέκριται*). The prince of this world, Satan, was judged on the Cross, when guilty man was redeemed, for the Cross was indeed the judgment seat of Christ, where the debt of sin was paid, the devil condemned, and man, through the merits of Christ, acquitted.

The devil, as his very name implies, comes before God as the accuser of man, but finds himself accused of man's fall, and condemned in the very act by which he thought to gain the victory, the act by which he strove to put to death the Son of God. As S. Ambrose has said, The wolf seized the Lamb of God in his jaws, but found his jaw broken on the Rock of Ages ; for Satan's power over man was broken by the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

The Cross of our Lord is the judgment throne not only for Satan, but for all men who come in contact with it ; for all men are judged by their relation to the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Sin was the cause of our Lord's Passion—our sins ; and we must say in the words of the great penitent, David, " Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God."* He

* Psalm li. 14.

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was thinking of his guilt with respect to the shedding of Uriah's Blood, we of our share in the shedding of the Blood of Christ by our sins.

We are judged by our relation to His Passion ; for that Blood which was shed upon the Cross either cries out against us for vengeance, or is poured upon us, cleansing us through penitence. Satan has been judged and condemned, and for him there is no further judgment ; we are being judged now. We are called upon to judge ourselves day by day ; for there is a tribunal of mercy before which we may even now give our account, and receive acquittal for our debts in preparation for that great day when all accounts will be rendered, and each will receive either acquittal or condemnation.

XXXV.

Monday in Holy Week.

THE HOLY GHOST OUR GUIDE.

S. JOHN XVI. 12-15.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine : therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.”



WE have spoken of the work of the Holy Ghost towards the world, and towards the individual soul in the world, as manifested in convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In the next section, which we are to consider to-day, our Lord turns to the work of the Holy Ghost in relation to the Church, to His work among those who have passed from sin unto

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righteousness, and are members of Christ's mystical Body, the Church. The office of the Paraclete is not confined to the conviction of the world ; He carries forward the work begun by Christ in the disciples, and, by guiding them into all the truth, He glorifies Christ, and inspires and directs the Church.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will show you things to come.” This is one of the most important passages, one of the most encouraging promises, in the Bible ; for it is upon this promise that the Church depends absolutely as the teacher of truth. Our Lord had laid down certain principles in His teaching, but One was needed to guide the Church in the application of those principles, One who could supply a divine commentary upon them, applying them, not only to the needs of individual life, but to those of the universal Church.

Especially was there need that the meaning of our Lord's Passion should be unfolded ; but this was not possible until the Resurrection and the Ascension and the life of glory which followed

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had made clear the significance of the Passion. It was the office of the Spirit of Truth, the Divine Paraclete, to reveal this and other necessary truths to the Church. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to reveal *new* truths to the Church, but to develop and unfold, and make clear the truths which our Lord had taught. For Christ tells us, "He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." And again, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

We have already treated of the work of the Spirit of Truth in regard to the dogmas of the Church. Let us to-day rather dwell upon His guidance in the study of Holy Scripture. We are meditating upon Christ's words to-day, as thousands of Christians of every age, since Christ uttered them, have meditated upon them. And it is a wonderful thought that we meditate upon them, *because* the Holy Ghost brings them home to us with ever new significance, according to the needs of our age, and indeed according to the needs of each individual soul.

To those who are familiar with the commentaries upon Holy Scripture which every age has contributed to the treasures of the Church, it is marvellous to see, as the centuries roll by, that the inspired

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words of Holy Writ are never exhausted. Each great writer or Father of the Church contributes some beautiful thought which has come to him through the guiding of the Holy Ghost. And yet the gold-mine of Holy Scripture can still be worked for more treasure; and indeed one of the most striking discoveries that we make is that each age finds in Holy Scripture just the treasure of truth which it needs to meet the difficulties of its own times.

There are some who approach Holy Scripture under the guidance of their own conceit, and apply to it merely the resources of their own unaided reason. Some of these have come to the conclusion, in our times, that most of the Bible is untrue. But those who approach its study, relying upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, find in it just the stores of truth which enable them to meet their own difficulties, to grapple with the problems of their own life. And yet what they find is not new truth. It was always there, waiting to be discovered by those who sought it under the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The discovery of the laws of electricity and their application has transformed the conditions of man's life in the world to-day, and has enabled him to harness the forces of nature to supply his needs;

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yet the force of electricity is no new force ; it has existed from the beginning, but its immense power and manifold application is only now being discovered by man. So in the spiritual world the Holy Ghost is guiding us to the discovery of new treasures in the inexhaustible mine of spiritual truth, treasures which will supply the needs and meet the difficulties of our own times.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” Why not? Chiefly for two reasons—because the Passion without the Resurrection and the life of glory, the sufferings of our Lord without the Holy Ghost to enable us to understand them, would indeed crush us. “Ye cannot *bear* them now.” The word translated “bear” (*βαρτάζειν*) suggests the bearing of the cross, and none could bear the Cross of Christ until the gift of the Holy Ghost should make clear the purpose of the Cross. Our Lord says, “Ye cannot bear them now,” and how soon they learnt the truth of this ; for they stumbled at our Lord’s Passion, they fell under that Cross, one denied Him, all forsook Him.

We cannot follow Christ in the power of mere natural courage. The apostles were not wanting in that gift—quite the contrary. S. Peter, when he was surrounded by the soldiers and the servants

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of the High Priest, could draw his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, though he was but one against a multitude. He was not wanting then in natural courage, and yet he denied his Master. If we are to bear the Cross, it must be through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, teaching us the relation of the Cross to the glories of eternity, teaching us the meaning of the Passion, as interpreted by the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the glorified life in Heaven.

But our Lord says, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," or rather into all the truth, for the words in the Greek imply truth in all its parts (*εις την αληθειαν παντα*). The order of the words is somewhat peculiar, and this very peculiarity of arrangement implies that the Holy Ghost was to guide them into complete understanding and sympathy with the Truth, Jesus Christ Himself.

We must notice that the words are not, as translated, "into all truth," but "into all *the* truth." The Holy Ghost was not to guide them into all truth, in which might be included scientific truth, mathematical truth, and the laws of the physical world, but into all the truth, that is, the truth of which our Lord had been speaking when He said, "I am the Truth." Those truths which

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concern His kingdom and Person and work, those truths upon the knowledge of which man's welfare and happiness depends.

There is not the slightest intimation that if the Church should be foolish enough to dogmatise in regard to science or mathematics, she would not make gross blunders, as the Roman Church did in the time of Galileo, but there is the promise that where she is concerned about the truth which is in Jesus, about God's revelation to man through Christ, she shall be guided by the Holy Ghost into that truth in all its parts.

We must observe, too, the force of the word "guide." "He will guide you." Christ is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. In that Way, in that Truth, in that Life, the Holy Ghost is the Guide. And that way leads to the Father, Whose House is in Heaven, and Who is the goal of every Christian life. The Holy Ghost is to be the guide, therefore we are not mere passive instruments, but living agents. Christ does not say the Holy Ghost shall *transport* you into all truth, or compel you to believe the truth; we can follow the Guide, or we can refuse to follow. There is room left for the working of our own intellect, for the exercise of our own will. If we do not follow the Guide, it is our own fault, but we are not compelled to follow.

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“For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. . . . He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” The test of the Holy Ghost’s teaching lies in the fact that His teaching is the perfect expression of the one will of God. There is no originality in the teaching of the Holy Ghost. He is to unfold God’s revelation, but if people turn away from revelation, which it is the work of the Holy Ghost to bring home to them, and look to the Spirit alone for illumination, they are likely to mistake their own tastes and their own prejudices for the truth. History shows us many instances of those who have ignored the fact that the work of the Holy Spirit is not to speak of Himself, but to take of the things of Christ, and show them to us. Such persons have fallen into all sorts of error, and even absurdity, from the time of Tertullian down to our own day, while claiming a special enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, and His operation is the operation of the one Will of the undivided unity. The message of the Holy Ghost is a complex message, but it is complete. Nothing is kept back which is made known to Him in the order of divine wisdom, and the order of that wisdom is the revelation which

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is contained in the great fact of the Incarnation, and its consequences—the Passion, the Church, and the Sacraments.

“He will show you things to come.” The Greek word (*τὰ ἐρχόμενα*) signifies that the Holy Ghost is to show you things that are coming, that He will reveal to you the future. The Holy Ghost, then, is to declare unto the Church the whole of Christianity, the constitution and economy of the Christian Church in this world and in the world to come. Too often we confine our thoughts of the Christian Church to the world in which we live, to the Church Militant, we forget that by far the greater part of the Church now is in the world beyond—either in the Church Expectant, or already enjoying the Beatific Vision of God in the Church Triumphant. And Christ tells us that the Holy Ghost is to reveal to us the future, that is, the interests of the Church in Heaven. And surely these interests ought to be to us matters of great solicitude.

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” It is very noticeable that the work of the Holy Ghost in relation to God the Son is presented as parallel to that of the Son in relation to the Father. The Son came to glorify the Father.—“I seek not Mine

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own glory.”* The work of the Son of God in the world was then to glorify His Father, and the work of the Holy Ghost in the world is to glorify the Son.

“He shall glorify Me,” and further, as we read in the opening verses of the next chapter, the work of the Father is also to glorify the Son. “Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.”† These passages are a striking testimony to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is quite impossible to understand them, or to accept them, without believing in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; for they are both an exhibition of the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and a very remarkable setting forth of their threefold Personality. What the Father does, the Son does; what the Son does, the Holy Ghost does. The undivided Will, the undivided operation, the oneness of purpose, of substance, is shown on the one side, and yet there are three distinct Persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

* S. John viii. 50.

† S. John xvii. 1.


XXXVI.

Tuesday in Holy Week.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGHT.

S. JOHN XVI. 16-19.

“A little while, and ye shall not see Me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see Me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me : and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see Me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me?”

“ LITTLE while, and ye shall not see Me.”

The best manuscripts read, “Ye shall see Me no more” (*οὐκέτι*). It is difficult for English readers to understand these words, because, unfortunately, the translators have used our verb “to

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see" to represent two quite different verbs with different meanings in the Greek. The first verb (*θεωρεῖτε*) in the clause, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me," refers to physical sight, and might be better rendered by the word "behold." The noun derived from it (*οἱ θεωροί*) signifies "the spectators," those who look on and behold; so that this clause might be paraphrased, "A little while, and ye shall behold Me no more with your physical eyes."

The second verb (*ὄψεσθε*) in the clause, "Again, a little while, and ye shall see Me," signifies also spiritual sight, spiritual perception or knowledge, so that we might paraphrase the whole passage, "A little while, and ye shall behold Me no more with your physical eyes, and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me—not with the eyes of the body, but through the power of the Holy Ghost."

But this "little while," what does it mean? It meant for the disciples, the period between our Lord's Passion and the Day of Pentecost. During that time, they neither beheld Him with the eyes of their body, nor saw Him with the eyes of their mind, except, indeed, when He chose to manifest Himself to them on certain occasions during the great Forty Days after Easter. But when the Holy Ghost was come, while they were no longer to *behold* Him physically, they were to *see* Him more clearly than

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they had ever seen Him before, with the eyes of the mind illuminated by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He had said to them, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him."* Here we have the same word "behold" (*θεωρεῖ*). We cannot behold the Holy Ghost, that is, we cannot see Him with physical sight, with our natural eyes. Therefore, as our Lord said the world cannot receive Him; for as a rule, the world will only believe in that of which it can receive physical demonstration.

So we find that some in the so-called Christian world speak of the Holy Ghost as an "Influence," but do not believe in Him as a real Person. Those who have the eyes of their mind enlightened by the Holy Ghost are able to believe in that which they cannot see, and of which there can be no physical demonstration, and to believe with a conviction which, in force, far surpasses the effects of any mere natural knowledge.

But this passage brings before us a very practical question in our spiritual life. Christ says, "Again, a little while, and ye shall see me," meaning that after the Day of Pentecost, the natural powers of the soul should be so quickened by the gift of the Holy Ghost, that we should be able to see Him through

* S. John xiv. 17.

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the exercise of spiritual vision, even more clearly than we can see things by physical sight. And He further points out that this shall be accomplished by the Holy Spirit, Who shall, He says, "Take of Mine and shall shew it unto you;"* for by this operation of the Holy Spirit He comes to them again, according to His promise, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you."†

Now we have to ask ourselves very seriously whether we are exercising this power of the Holy Ghost, whether we do *see* Christ with the eyes of our soul, see Him, that is, with the clearness and fulness which spiritual vision implies. The Holy Ghost, so our Lord tells us, is so to take of the things which are His, and declare them unto us, that Christ's Person, Christ's words, Christ's works may be even more clearly comprehended by us than they were by the disciples who walked with Him on earth. Can we say that this is true of our experience, that we do see and know Christ in this intimate and close manner? If we do not, it is because we are not using the gift of the Holy Spirit, because we are not exercising our faculty of spiritual perception.

But you may say, "How can I use this gift, how can I train this spiritual faculty?" In more ways than one; but chiefly in prayer and meditation, and by

* S. John xvi. 15.

† S. John xiv. 18.

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prayer I do not mean only asking God to give us those things which we need, but telling God of our love, of our trust, of our joy in communion with Him. It is, however, in the exercise of meditation that we train our spiritual perception best—in meditating upon the words of Christ until the sacred page seems to glow under the light of the Holy Spirit, and the words, which we have so often read, are seen to contain deeper truths than are manifest on the surface, truths, which meet the needs of our own individual souls, which satisfy the cravings of our spiritual nature.

Worldly people find it impossible to meditate upon Divine truth; impossible, because they have never developed the power of spiritual vision. They can meditate, and do meditate, upon the things of the world, but they have so accustomed themselves to the mere gas-light of the world, that the sunlight of God's presence confuses and blinds them, and in it they, therefore, see nothing. Many people too, who are not worldly, find it difficult to meditate, because meditation is a purely spiritual exercise, and their spiritual faculties are undeveloped.

Again, we may ask the question, How are we using the gift of spiritual sight in regard to the Holy Eucharist? Do we, as S. Paul says, discern the Lord's body therein? It is not enough to say,

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Of course I believe in the Real Presence. I believe that when our Lord said, "This is My Body, This is My Blood," He said what was absolutely true. We may believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and yet not discern His Body there. Let us go on to ask whether our belief is a mere intellectual assent to a theological doctrine, which appeals to our reason, or whether it is a spiritual power, by which we see Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of His love.

If we would see Him in meditation, if we would discern His Body in the Holy Eucharist, we must train our spiritual vision; for spiritual gifts, like intellectual gifts, have to be trained. If we are going to study languages, or literature, or science, we train our intellectual powers in that special direction. A man of science may not be a linguist, not only because he has not, as we should say, the gift of languages, but sometimes because he has never trained the gift, which, perhaps, he once had.

We read in the life of Charles Darwin that, in his early days, he was specially drawn by religion, and had some ideas of entering the ministry; also that he was very fond of music. However, he turned all his energies in the direction of science, and carefully trained his mind for scientific investigation. And in a letter that he wrote in later life to a friend, he

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remarks that he has entirely lost his fondness for music ; and we know that he quite gave up his religion. It would probably not be correct to say that this was *because* of his scientific knowledge ; for there are many great scientists who are devout Christians. It was rather because he allowed the religious faculty to become atrophied by disuse, while he trained the faculty of scientific observation to its highest excellence.

If we desire to see Christ, as He may be seen through the operation of the Holy Ghost in our souls, we must train our spiritual sight through the exercise of prayer and meditation, and then we shall realise a complete fulfilment of our Lord's promises, " I will come to you." " Again, a little while, and ye shall see Me."

XXXVII.

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SORROW TURNED INTO JOY.

S. JOHN XVI. 20-33.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs : but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in My Name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you : For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly,

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and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

E shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." This, of course, refers primarily to the sorrow of the Apostles at their Master's death, and to the joy of the world at the accomplishment of its wicked purpose. But in foretelling the sorrow that should come upon them, Christ also indicates the ultimate consequence of that sorrow—that it should be turned into joy—and He illustrates this from the sorrows of a woman in travail.

While the joy to which our Lord refers was, in the case of the Apostles, to issue from Christ's Resurrection and the life of power which should follow it, yet His promise is not exhausted by this fulfilment; for, as in so many of our Lord's utterances, we may trace the revelation of a great principle, that all sorrow, which is not caused directly by our own sin, is the raw material, so to speak, of future joy, if it be borne rightly, and in

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reliance upon the Holy Ghost. This, of course, does not refer to the selfish sorrow of the world, but to those sorrows of the Christian life which come to us with God's permission, as disciplines and trials, to prepare us for the joys of Heaven.

Indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that sorrow is one of the most precious things we have in this world, developing, as it does, sympathy and love for one another, faith and trust in God. The joys of this life are enhanced by the background of difficulty and suffering, out of which they emerge, and the joys of Heaven on their negative side will be largely the consciousness of freedom from the disappointments and dangers of the world.

The joy of pardoned sin in this life can be measured by the depth of sorrow, which our penitence produces in us, as the Psalmist teaches in that verse, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."* The harvest of joy seems here to be proportioned to the tears that are sown, and so we find among the joys of God's people in Heaven that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."†

"And your joy no man taketh from you." What a glorious promise. We know something of the joys of earth, of the world, of the intoxicating joys of pleasure, of worldly success; and we know, not as a

* Psalm cxxvi. 6. † Revelations xxi. 4.

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matter of faith, but of absolute experience, that these joys do not last. They are taken from us, and what is left behind is generally the bitter sting of remorse in remembrance of the very joy which seemed at the moment so transporting. But the joy of which our Lord speaks, the joy which is the fruit of godly sorrow, this joy abides, for no man can take it from us.

“In that day ye shall ask Me nothing.” That is, no question; for all will then be clear. They would not need their Master’s guidance then, for they would have the guidance of the Holy Ghost, Who should lead them into all truth.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have ask nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Here we have another repetition of the promise of special power in prayer, as the result of our Lord’s intercession in Heaven, and of the intercession of the Holy Ghost in the human soul. A special efficacy is attached to the prayers of those who are in union with Christ, and especially to the prayers of those who have tasted the cup of sorrow. “A broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise.”*

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs;

* Psalm li. 17.

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but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." Christ had taught them under images and parables, under the image of the vine, under the parable of the woman in travail. Now the Holy Ghost was to unfold these images, and through Him Christ was to speak plainly, and to declare clearly, the relations of God the Father to man.

"At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." "At that day." The day, that is, when we possess the Holy Spirit, and act in His strength and see by His light. In that day the fulness of knowledge will lead to the fulness of prayer, and our new relationship as sons by adoption, will constitute us in a special sense the objects of God's love.

"I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you"; (as though you had no direct claim upon the Father, and it was necessary that I should plead for you;) "for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me." The result of our incorporation into Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit, making us members of Christ and children of God, is freedom of access to the Father through Jesus Christ, and a special claim upon God's love; God

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becomes our Father in a new sense, and loves us with a Father's love, and this must be a great encouragement to us in prayer.

If we were to dwell a little more upon God's love for us, and worry ourselves less about our love for God, it would often be better for us in our spiritual life. Many persons complain, "My heart is so cold, I cannot love God. I want to love Him, but I am not able. What can I do?" The answer is that all do not love God in the same way, and that there is a very real love of God, which does not produce any sensible emotion in our heart, that our Lord made the evidence of love to consist in keeping God's commandments, not in feeling deep emotion.

But you ask, "What can I do?" Meditate upon God's love for you in creating you, in sending His Son to die for you, in watching over you through all the vicissitudes of life, in vouchsafing to you a knowledge of the Catholic Faith, in sending you many calls to repentance, in bestowing upon you privileges and gifts without number. Meditate upon God's love for you; that will help you to love God better. For love begets love. Many a person has learned to love another by learning how great was that other person's love for him or her. Dwell upon God's love for you; realise that, as incorporated into Christ, you are the object of God's love. Remember

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that you did not first love God, but that He loved you.* Dwell upon this and it will cause your love for God to burn up, and fill your heart and life with love.

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” In this passage we may notice in passing our Lord’s clear assertion of His unity of essence with the Father.

“His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.” This was the supreme confession of their faith before the Passion, and how was it elicited, to what may it be traced? “Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee.” Christ had interpreted their thoughts. They had been saying to one another, “What is this that He saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me.” Christ, Who had not heard their discussion, read their thoughts and answered them, “Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye

* Cf. 1 S. John iv. 10.

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shall see Me?" It was because our Lord read their thoughts and hearts that they were ready to confess that He came forth from God, for God alone can read the thoughts and hearts of men.

Christ's last words to them in these discourses are, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In these words our Lord accepts their act of faith. "Do ye now believe?" He means to say, "Yes, you do believe with all the power of your *natural* heart, but you have not yet received the Holy Ghost, and so your faith has a weakness which belongs to all natural faith, and then He clearly points out four things:—

(1) Their desertion of Him, the temporary failure of their faith. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." (2) Then, lest that revelation should overwhelm them with discouragement, He tells of their ultimate triumph, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace." Their failure will be only for

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a little while. He will rise again, and having won by His death and resurrection the great victory over evil, He will come to them again on Easter Day with the gift of peace—His peace; that is, the peace of those who possess Him, and who, in that possession, can face all the struggles of life with a courage born of the assurance of ultimate victory.

(3) But lest they should misunderstand the character of this peace which He would give them, He warns them, saying unto them, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." That is, although in the possession of peace and the assurance of victory, yet so long as they were in this world, there must be struggle and sorrow.

(4) But, He says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And because I have overcome it, when the Holy Spirit brings to you the power and grace which I have promised you, ye shall overcome it also. "Be of good cheer," for though, in the world, tribulation be your lot, the victory is secure. Abide in Me, and I will abide in you, and as I have overcome the world, ye too shall overcome it.


XXXVIII.

Maunday Thursday.

THE FATHER AND THE SON.

S. JOHN XVII. 1-5.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee : As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”

 HIS chapter stands absolutely alone and unapproachable in Holy Writ ; for it contains our Lord's High Priestly prayer, or, as it may be termed, His prayer of self-consecration. This prayer is indeed sublime ; for in it we are permitted to know something of

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the communion of our Lord Jesus Christ with His Father. We see His two natures, human and divine, so blended in one consciousness that, while preserving and displaying the prerogatives of both, we behold them united under the one Person of the Son of God.

We are often told that our Lord prayed, but never so fully as here what He said to the Father in His prayers. Now we have revealed to us in this chapter the very words of the great prayer of self-consecration, which our Lord uttered before He entered Gethsemane and His Passion began.

The prayer seems to have been uttered at midnight in the courts of the Temple. This point we have already discussed.* And that it was spoken aloud in the hearing of the disciples is evident both from the fact that S. John reports what our Lord said, and also because we read (in verse 13), "These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

The chapter begins with the passage, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said." "These words" refer to the discourses upon which we have been meditating

* Page 154.

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throughout this Lent. The prayer which follows the discourses falls into three very clear divisions, bringing before us (1) The relation of the Son to the Father (vv. 1-5); (2) The relation of the Son to the disciples (vv. 6-19); (3) The relation of the Son to His Church throughout all time (vv. 20-25).

The clause, "He lifted up His eyes to Heaven," which in the Greek is connected with the verb "Said," marks the new region to which our Lord's thoughts are turned, His sense of perfect fellowship with the spiritual world. As in the Seven Words from the Cross, the first three are spoken to man, and the last four addressed to His Father; so here, our Lord having uttered these long discourses, in which He gives His final instructions to His disciples, turns away from the things of earth, and addresses Himself in prayer to His Father in Heaven, allowing His disciples, for their comfort and edification, to hear what He says. The first word of the prayer is "Father," and it is the keynote of the first division of the prayer, which treats of the relation of the Son to the Father. We may notice that the prayer is not directly personal. Christ does not say "glorify Me," but "glorify Thy Son."

"Father, the hour is come." It is worthy of

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notice that in no fewer than six passages S. John refers to our Lord's "hour." S. John reveals to us a conception of our Lord's life and work in which all things are in accordance with the Father's Will and rigidly ordered as to time by that Will. At the Marriage of Cana of Galilee, when His mother says to Him, "They have no wine," Jesus replies, "Mine hour is not yet come."* Twice we are told that His enemies sought to take Him, but that "no man laid hands upon Him, because His hour was not yet come."† Again we read that before the Feast of the Passover, "Jesus knew that His hour was come."‡ To His Apostles our Lord says, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."§ And lastly, in His High Priestly prayer, He begins with the words, "Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son."

Nothing can be more clear from this than that Christ recognised God's Will, God's providence, as ruling precisely the order of His life. But not only has our Lord His hour, we have ours. God's providence orders our life, we cannot hurry things, we must wait till our hour is come ; wait, praying that, when it does come, we may recognise it

* S. John ii. 4. † S. John vii. 30 ; viii. 20. ‡ S. John xiii. 1.
§ S. John xii. 23.

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and seize the opportunity. How often we beat our wings, as it were, in vain against the prison bars, longing for the door to open; but we have to learn that the door of opportunity does not open till the moment ordered by God's Will.

We, who this Lent have been following Jesus Christ, must learn from Him this lesson before we go any further, that we must be patient and wait till our hour comes, that we cannot be saints at once, cannot conquer all our temptations in one battle, cannot accomplish all the work that God has for us to do by one effort, we must be patient, but we must also be watchful, that when the hour does come, it may find us ready to act.

"Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." This glorifying of the Son is the fuller manifestation of His true nature seen in the fact of His victory over death, and established by His Resurrection and Ascension. "Glorify Thy Son." How we shrink from suffering, and yet it is the only path to glory; for "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."*

Death, how dreadful it seems, and yet it is the gate which opens into the realms of glory. So Christ, standing upon the threshold of death—that

* 2 Tim. ii. 12.

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death, the issue of which was to be eternal life for us all—says, “Glorify Thy Son;” for “the hour is come.” How easy it is for us to say it, how difficult to realise it, that only through death can we pass to our true life. If we could make this world as happy as Heaven, we should not want the eternal life of Heaven.

This world is but the waiting-place. All tears and sorrows will end with the joy of serving Christ and with the sunshine of His Presence. For when death comes to those who have been waiting with full trust in Christ, waiting and working for Him, it will be but the opening of the prison door by which they pass into the glories of His Kingdom. Our Blessed Lord, after His Resurrection, told S. Peter by what manner of death He should die, and S. John’s comment on this is, “This spake He, signifying by what death He should *glorify* God.”

“As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.” The word translated “power” (*ἐξουσίαν*) signifies rather authority, and the verb is in the aorist, (*ἔδωκας*), so that a more accurate rendering would be “even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh.” The term “all flesh” describes mankind in its solidarity. Christ, as the Incarnate Son of God, exercises legitimate authority over all man-

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kind, as its true Head and Representative now reigning at the Right Hand of God. As the Son of Man, the second Adam, the representative Man, Christ is the sum of humanity, and, therefore, has authority and sovereignty over it.

“Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.” The words translated “as many as Thou hast given Him” are, in their original form, very remarkable.* Literally it is that “the whole of that which Thou hast given Him, to them should He give eternal life.” And we have a contrast between “all flesh” over which He has authority, and all “given Him,” that is, all the elect, who are drawn to Him by the Father, to whom He gives eternal life. For only those can come to Him whom the Father draws, and to these, who accept Him, He gives eternal life, and what this eternal life is, He explains in the next verse.

“And this is (the) life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.” (Literally, “that they know Thee and Whom Thou didst send.”) We learn from this verse, first that eternal life is the gift of Christ, it cannot be obtained otherwise; and

* πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ.

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secondly, that it consists in a knowledge of the Father, the only true God, Who is manifested and revealed by Christ and in Christ.

Here knowledge implies the apprehension of truth by the whole nature of man. We may know a great deal about God by studying revelation and theology, but that is not "the eternal life." The eternal life is a personal knowledge of God, which involves not only an intellectual apprehension and moral conviction, but the action of the whole nature upon that conviction, the appropriation of the knowledge so that it influences the whole life. This is the eternal life—to know God and Jesus Christ; for you cannot know God without knowing His Son, Jesus Christ, Who reveals Him.

"I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." The first two tenses are aorists (*ἐδόξασα, τελειώσας*), so that the translation should be, "I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work." The accomplishment of this work was the means by which Christ glorified the Father. But what was this work which the Father gave Him to do, and which He here claims to have accomplished? It was a life of unswerving obedience, of perfect love, which made His Death meritorious. There

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have been theologians in the past, who have looked upon the sacrifice of our Lord's death as an isolated act, as though it was the mere fact of His dying which redeemed the world.

Our Lord's sacrifice, however, was not only the act of death, but the sacrifice of the perfect life which culminated in death. It was the offering of the life of One Who had never disobeyed one of God's laws, never faltered in fulfilling one of His Father's commands, never swerved from the path of Divine Love. It was this which made the Life, offered on the Cross through death, efficacious for taking away the sins of the whole world. The life of love issued in the life of obedience, which was the consequence and evidence of His love. The Passion and Death were the climax of this obedience, and they are here spoken of as though already accomplished, because they were then accepted. The perfect Life was finished, the perfect work was done, and Christ stood, as it were, before the altar on which He was to be offered as a sacrifice.

There is, however, another point brought before us in this passage—a point of great importance, though sometimes overlooked. It is the entire absence of any sense of failure on the part of our Lord in regard to His work: He says, "I have

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finished," or, rather, "I have accomplished (τελειώσας) the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And on the Cross, just before He died, He again said, "It is finished" (τετέλεσται).*

Throughout our Lord's life we see the same consciousness of absolute power, the conviction that His work was progressing steadily to its appointed end. And yet, looked at from a mere human point of view, it seemed to be a failure, for all His disciples deserted Him and fled, and He was condemned to death. Humanly speaking, our Lord's life ended in failure, and yet, never for one moment, even in His darkest hour, did He utter one word which implied that His work was anything but a success.

And this consciousness of success amid apparent failure is, in itself, an indication of His Divinity, for no mere man could have said to the Father, "I have accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." S. Paul, when his life was drawing to a close, writing from his prison in Rome to S. Timothy, says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."† He says, "I have finished my *course*," not I have finished my work. "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith." He

* S. John xix. 30.

† 2 Timothy iv. 6, 7.

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could be thankful for what he had accomplished through the grace of God, but he was conscious of many failures in his work. Only Christ could say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Throughout this chapter the pronoun "I" is emphatic, and who is the "I"? There can be no doubt from the next verse, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." In these words our Lord claims, as He does again in the twenty-fourth verse, to have lived with God before the world came into being, claims eternal Sonship, claims to have possessed a glory which He laid aside when He became Man, and which, now that His work is accomplished, He is to reassume.

XXXIX.

Good Friday.


THE SON AND THE DISCIPLES.

S. JOHN XVII. 6-19.

“I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world : Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me ; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine ; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name : those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou

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shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

“ HAVE manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word.” Here the prayer passes into a new channel, and as our Lord had prayed for Himself, so now He prays for His disciples. The petition “glorify Me” becomes “sanctify them” and “keep them.” In this first verse we may notice a threefold declaration: (1) Of the relation of the disciples to Christ; (2) of their relation to the Father; and (3) of their own intrinsic worth. And each of these statements is a plea in favour of the petitions which follow, and together with them make a portrait of a true disciple.

First Christ says of them, “I have manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world.” The Father must draw them (out of the world) to Christ; for our Lord said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw Him.”*

* S. John vi. 44.

“I have manifested Thy Name.” What Name? We, who have been studying our Lord’s last discourses this Lent, can have no hesitation in answering this question; for we must have been struck by the fact that the one absorbing subject of the addresses is the revelation to the disciples, and through the disciples to the world, of God as *the Father*. The Name which Christ manifested to them was the name “Father.”

In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to His people under various names, the greatest of which was Jehovah, the Self-existent One. The revelation of God under the Name Jehovah to the Israelites was an immense advance in their knowledge of God; for they learned that He was not only their Creator, but that He was Himself Underived and Self-existent. In the New Testament, however, the advance in the knowledge of God is enormous when Christ reveals Him as the Father. The Father, that is, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and of all those who, by incorporation into Christ, have become His sons by adoption. From the philosophic conception of God as Underived and Self-existent, we pass to the tender and comforting revelation of God as “Our Father, Which art in Heaven.”

In this first declaration, then, Christ manifests

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their relation to Himself, in the next He shows their relation to the Father. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." They belonged to God, not merely as His creatures, like the rest of mankind; not merely as Israelites, like the rest of their race, but as Israelites indeed, who responded to God; and because they belonged to Him in a special sense through this response, they were given to His Son.

But, thirdly, our Lord reveals something of their own intrinsic worth, when He says, "And they have kept Thy word. What word? The whole revelation of Christ which we include under the name of the Gospel. They not merely heard this Gospel as others did, but they *kept* it. In the Parable of the Sower we are told of the seed falling on various kinds of ground, some by the wayside, some upon rock, some among thorns, but some upon good ground; and we read, "That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, *keep* it, and bring forth fruit with patience."* These keep the word of God as our Lord declares the Apostles had kept it.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and

* S. Luke viii. 15.

they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that thou didst send Me." All careful students of S. John's Gospel must have observed his habit of using certain emphatic words to emphasise the point of his argument. There are three such words in this passage, which together bring out the characteristics of faithfulness in the Apostles. They are the words "received," "known," and "believed." They *received* the words, that is, the revelation which Christ gave them ; and they *came to know* (ἐγνώσαν) by personal experience, and therefore with certainty, that I came out from Thee, and therefore *believed* that Thou didst send Me. The characteristics of the disciples are gathered up under two heads of knowledge and faith, both alike directed to the recognition of Christ and His Mission.

"I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine ; and I am glorified in them." I am praying for them ; the verb is in the present tense, and the "I" is emphatic. I am not praying for the world. The exclusion of the world from this particular prayer of Christ's is no limitation of the extent of His love for the world, but is the necessary consequence of the circumstance of the prayer. At this

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moment He is interceding exclusively for those who have been prepared by Him beforehand to continue His work. Later in the prayer He does pray for others, for those who should be brought to know Him through the instrumentality of the Apostles.

When He says, "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world," it does not mean at all that the salvation of the world is not dear to His heart, and ever in His thoughts; for on the Cross His arms were wide stretched for three long hours in intercession for the world. But here the intercession is for His disciples, and the declaration of the grounds upon which His prayer is urged, is followed by a statement of the circumstances which make it necessary.

Christ leaves the world, but the Apostles still remain. The Master must be separated from His scholars, for Christ goes to the Father, and so enters upon a new sphere of His mediatorial work in which His mode of action shall be changed; and so He prays, "Holy Father, keep through (in) Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are." The correct reading here is "Keep in Thine own Name." Christ had already said I have manifested Thy Name of Father to them, now keep them in that Holy Name, keep them in its power, help them to realise what

is implied in Thy Fatherhood, that they may be one, as We are. That is, that as children of the same Father, they may be like brethren who dwell together in unity.

“While I was with them in the world, I *kept* them in Thy Name. Those that Thou gavest Me I have *kept*, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” The two words translated “kept” in this passage are not exactly the same, the second signifying rather to keep watch over, to guard (ἐφύλαξα). While He was with them, our Lord preserved them and watched over them; now that He is leaving them He asks His Father to take them under His care.”

“And now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” In the clause “these things I speak in the world” we find additional evidence for the fact, implied by S. John’s record of this prayer, that it was spoken aloud for the encouragement and edification of the disciples that they might draw strength and joy from the words which they heard; for they heard their Master interceding for them, and committing them to the care of His Father. 310

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Then our Lord goes on to repeat, what He had already told them, that the world should hate them because they were not of the world, and He makes this a plea that His Father should keep them and preserve them from the world. Because Christ's followers are not of the world, their lives are a reproach to the world; the world's laws, the world's maxims, the world's fashions, and the world's ambitions, all are untrue; and because the Christian's life witnesses against these things, it is a reproach to the world, and awakens the world's hatred.

But Christ goes on to say, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We must remember here that the word translated "pray" (*ἑρωτῶ*), as in the fourteenth chapter, is used exclusively of our Lord's prayers to the Father, and might perhaps be better rendered by "ask," inasmuch as it implies fellowship and equality with the Father, rather than the inferiority of the suppliant.

Our Lord prays not that they should be taken out of the world, for then what hope would there be for the world? Their presence in the world was to be the leaven which was to leaven the world, the salt which was to preserve the world from corruption, the light set upon a hill to disperse the darkness, and to attract to it all that was good in the world. So

Christ says, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." There is little question but that the correct translation is "Keep them from the Evil One," the devil, who is the prince of the world.

Then comes the central petition of the prayer. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth," and this is repeated in the nineteenth verse, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." The word "sanctify" in these passages means to consecrate, and the instrument, as we see, by which the consecration is to be effected is truth.

This suggests to us in a very striking manner the real end and purpose of truth. If you were to ask a man of the world what was the purpose of truth, he would probably say that the end or purpose of truth was wisdom, that man investigates truth, in order that by its acquisition he may become wise. But if we were to ask the Christian, who has studied Christ's words, he will tell you that the end of truth is not wisdom, but holiness, sanctification; that the purpose of the investigation of truth is the development of character.

By truth here, of course, we do not mean merely investigating the secrets of nature or the principles

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of mathematics. A man may have discovered wonderful truths in the sphere of natural science, or made great progress in the study of mathematics, and this may be of use to him in his work in the world; but it will not affect his character in the slightest degree. The truth of which our Lord is speaking, is a truth which manifests its effects in the sanctification of life and in the development of character. "Sanctify them through Thy truth." This is the central petition of this section of the prayer. As Christ had prayed for Himself, "Father, glorify Thy Son," so He prays for the disciples, "Sanctify them through Thy truth."

"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Their mission was to be the same as His. They were to carry on His work. For their sakes Christ says, "I consecrate Myself, and this consecration was to be effected by His sacrifice on the Cross. The disciples too were to be consecrated through a knowledge of God's truth, which knowledge should lead them to follow Christ's example in consecrating themselves through sacrifice, that they might carry on His work in the world.

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THE SON AND THE CHURCH.

S. JOHN XVII. 20-26.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word ; That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as We are One : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me : for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee : but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it : that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”



IN each of the three divisions of our Lord's High Priestly prayer, there is a central petition which is, as it were, the keynote to that part of the prayer. As we have seen, in

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the first division it was, "Father, glorify Thy Son ;" in the second, "Sanctify them through Thy truth." In the third we shall observe not less clearly that it is the prayer, "That they all may be one," and this petition is repeated again and again four times. The prayer began with the concerns of Christ Himself, then passed to the special needs of His immediate disciples, and is now extended to embrace all those who, by the labours of the apostles, shall be brought into the body of Christ ; for these last verses are our Lord's great intercession for His Church.

He prays first for the unity of the Church, "That they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." And this is repeated in the next verse. Surely this prayer for unity, so dear to our Lord's heart, ought to be precious to the heart of every Christian. Even though for many centuries the unity of the Church has been broken, and there may now seem little prospect of any immediate answer to that prayer, yet we must go on praying it.

In the Liturgy of the Western Church, the Prayer for Unity is one of the three prayers which the priest says immediately before his own Communion.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Who saidst unto Thine Apostles, Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you ; regard not my sins, but

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the faith of Thy Church ; and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will, Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.”

This prayer has been adopted by the Society for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, as the prayer to be said daily by its members.

Our Blessed Lord not only prays for the unity of His Church, but indicates one great result of that unity. “That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” There is probably nothing which so hinders Christian work as the divisions and want of unity which are manifest among Christians themselves. When there is so much quarrelling and fighting amongst ourselves, how can we commend our cause to those who are not Christians, but whom we wish to win to Christ? If we are to convert the world, we must begin by striving for greater unity among the divided Churches of Christendom. And yet much as we desire union, earnestly as we ought to pray for it, we must not be willing to gain it at the expense of truth, or as the result of the compromise of truth.

There is a plan of union which some people of our own day propose, which would be quite disastrous to truth. It is that everyone should give up that which others object to, so that a residuum would be left, upon which all could unite. This residuum however

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would not be the truth which our Lord handed down to His Apostles. A better way to work for unity is to try to understand one another's position, to be willing to listen to other people's explanations of their views, and to approach the study of their position in a spirit of charity, earnestly striving to lay aside our own prejudices, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us into the truth.

We should find probably that a very large number of the differences which exist between Christians, and which lead to bitter controversy, are differences in regard to "terms" far more than in regard to "things." People associate with certain theological terms, doctrines which they rightly reject, and yet very often theologians do not use those terms at all in the sense in which their adversaries understand them. A real desire to understand one another, and to arrive at the truth, together with charity and earnest prayer, will do more to prepare the way for unity than either controversy or compromise.

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Having prayed for the unity of His Church, Christ asks two things—(1) That those who have been given Him, the Elect, may be with Him where

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He is, that is, in His kingdom in Heaven ; and (2) That they may behold His glory, and in beholding it may be partakers of that glory. This, of course, refers to the future of His Church in eternity, when all who have fought a good fight in the Church Militant, shall have attained to the glories of the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

He prays that they may be where He is, and to be with Christ is Heaven. The penitent robber upon the Cross said, "Lord, remember Me, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom," and Christ answered, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." That day our Lord went into the Intermediate State with the penitent thief, but His presence there transformed it into Heaven, into Paradise.

Since His Ascension, Christ's glorified Humanity is present nowhere except at the Right Hand of God ; so that at that time Heaven became Paradise. For S. John in his vision of heaven speaks of the "tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God,"* of which those, who overcome in the battle of life, are to eat as their reward ; and by this he certainly means Heaven, not the Intermediate State. And again S. Paul tells us that he was "caught up to the third Heaven," and "that he was caught up

* Revelations ii. 7.

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into Paradise,"* by which he certainly does not mean that he went to the place of departed spirits, but that he was caught up, as he says, into Heaven itself.

From these passages it is clear that in the Bible, Paradise is "to be with Christ," that before His Ascension, during the brief space in which He was with the departed spirits in Hades, He transformed Hades into Paradise; for where He is there is Paradise; but that after His Ascension, Paradise and Heaven are synonymous. This, too, is the teaching of the early Fathers of the Church, from Tertullian† to S. Gregory.

"O righteous Father, the world hath (did) not know Thee; but I have known (knew) Thee, and these have known (knew) that Thou hast (didst) sent Me. And I (have) declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast (didst) loved Me, may be in them and I in them." These are the last words of this sublime prayer. Six times we find in it the Name "Father." So the prayer begins, so it ends, and by the addition

* 2 Corinthians xii. 2 and 4.

† Tertullian is sometimes quoted on the other side, since he uses the term "Paradise" to describe the abode of the martyrs. But he explicitly excludes from his Paradise all other souls, and identifies Paradise with the altar in heaven, under which S. John saw the souls of the martyrs. Rev. vi. 9.

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of the word "righteous," our Lord appeals to the justice of God, for the word "righteous" means just.


He sums up the principal thoughts not only of His prayer, but of the discourses, in three statements:—(1) The world's ignorance of God as contrasted with the disciples' knowledge of Him. (2) Christ's work in declaring or making known to them God's Name of Father. And (3) the purpose of the revelation of that Name, that they may possess divine charity. "That the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them and I in them."

Throughout these chapters the antiphon has been love. The discourse begins with it, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another."* And as it begins so it ends. "I declared unto them Thy Name . . . that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me, may be in them and I in them." Ignorance of God renders this love impossible. We must know God, and know Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our Father in Heaven, if we are to love Him as we should. This is the purpose of our Lord's revelation, that we may know God as our Father, may love Him as His children, and that Christ may dwell in us.

LAUS DEO.

* S. John xiii. 34.

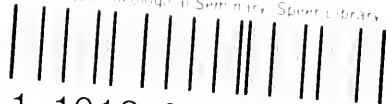
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