

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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# LECTURES FOR BOYS.

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BY  
THE VERY REV.  
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“Sinite parvulos venire ad Me.



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# LECTURES FOR BOYS.

## THE STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

ONE of the good habits which ought to be acquired at College is a taste for reading the Sacred Scriptures ; for, from that taste there will spring up in the heart a desire to make a profound study of them, when the mind being more mature and better trained, shall be able to derive from them all the incalculable benefits which they are able to impart. To stimulate your zeal for the acquisition of so profitable a habit, it will be enough, for the present, to put before you a few general notions of the excellence of the Holy Book, and at the same time to give you a clear idea of the Church's attitude towards it.

Looking at the Holy Bible from a merely literary point of view, there is, we may safely say, no monument of human genius that can be compared with it. The excellences of every species of eloquence are scattered over its pages, as the stars are strewn like gold dust over the vault of heaven. If you are in search of sublime ideas, what can surpass the pictures which it gives of God's majesty, drawn by the hand of the great Lawgiver, by the patient Job, by the Prophet Baruch? If you are charmed by wealth of imagery, what poet, what orator has of them a more teeming treasury than Israel's illustrious warrior-king? Do you seek for models of a pathos which will melt the heart, of a vehemence which will fire the blood, of an irresistible logic which will compel the assent of the most stubbornly opposed intelligence? You will find all these in the writings of the various authors who have contributed their golden thoughts to enrich its inspired pages. These pages have in them a charm which enchants, a force

which breaks down all opposition, a keenness which reaches to the division of even the soul and the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

To those who thirst after a knowledge of eternal things, they will teach the dogmas of our holy faith; to those who are troubled by the mysteries which, in that faith, meet them at well-nigh every step, they will offer an explanation which ought to satisfy the most fastidious; to those who are fighting against the propensities of fallen nature, they will furnish a code of morals which could have been drawn up only by a divine intelligence; while those who are looking for weapons with which to stop the onslaught of furious vices, will find in them an armoury stocked with warlike implements of heavenly temper, flashing terror into the hearts of their invisible foes. In no work devised by the brain of man, does virtue speak so sweet a language. In none does wisdom give expression to its thoughts with a grandeur so overpowering, with a simplicity so attractive to the human heart.

No one can fill himself with the spirit of this Holy Book, without both feeling and becoming a better man; for its pages inspire a love for the authors, a love which impels us to put in practice the precepts which the authors teach. Every age, every condition, every state will there discover examples which speak with most persuasive voice, and call for imitation. The holy personages whose deeds it recounts, incite us to piety towards God. The father is taught paternal tenderness; the child, filial affection; the family, mutual love. Those who are afflicted with the sorrows and the misfortunes of life, find a powerful motive for resignation when they read of the patience of Job, of Jeremias, and of the other great Saints on whom the hand of the Lord pressed with a weight compared with which their own petty miseries seem as light as air. The natural avarice of men's hearts is tempered, and their hardness is softened when they behold the noble generosity of Abraham in dealing with Lot, and of Joseph in the treatment of his brethren. The poor are strengthened to bear their poverty, and to endure their hard labours, when they

<sup>1</sup> See La Harpe, *L'Écriture Sainte*.

consider the simplicity and the wearisome toil so cheerfully borne by the Patriarchs of old time.

These are only a few of the excellences of the Sacred Scripture. But these are all outshone by the fact that its words are not the words of man, they are the words of God, using men as His mouthpiece to express unto us His thoughts and His wishes. He inspired them to write, and gave them the matter which they were to impart to us for our utility and salvation. Therefore, since its words are God's words, there is given to it as a title, *the Book* or *Bible*, as being God's work. Being the work of God, we naturally find in it the remedy for all our ills. When it sets before us the history of saintly men who fell away from the holiness which they had previously acquired by long years of patient striving, their misfortune is a startling lesson for us to look well unto ourselves; for, if these cedars of Libanus have fallen before the storm of evil which burst upon them, what may we, who compared with them are but lowly shrubs, what may we expect, unless aided and upheld by the arm of God? When it tells us of others, who from being great sinners, at last, through the assistance of divine grace, attained an eminent degree of sanctity, this happy event is to the lowliest of us a trumpet-call never to despair of conquering both our enemies and ourselves.

Another incitement to the study of this Sacred Book, is the happy effect which springs from a devout and careful perusal of its pages. This effect is twofold in its character: it enlightens and instructs the intelligence; it withdraws the affections or the will from clinging to a corrupt world. By so doing, it carries the soul to the love of God, a love which manifests itself by a careful observance of His law, an observance which secures for us the end for which God called us into being. It is for this reason that some of the greatest doctors of the Church are so earnest in their exhortations to the faithful under their charge, to devote themselves to the devout and assiduous study of its pages. They would exempt no one from the duty of so doing, provided always that these disciples pursue this study under the guidance of competent teachers. The intricate entanglements of the law must not

withdraw the advocate from his Bible ; the absorbing interest of business must not take away the merchant from its pages ; the care of a family must be no excuse for a father or a mother for not poring over its lessons of divine wisdom. Therefore, they consider it to be as necessary for these children of the world, in the midst of the cares of their busy life, as it is for those bands of religious men and women whose days are given up to meditation and to other exercises of piety.

But while setting forth in glowing colours the many excellences of the Sacred Book, and insisting with so great earnestness upon the daily study of its heavenly lessons, they are careful to point out that the benefits resulting from its perusal will be reaped only by those who apply to it with the requisite dispositions. For the Scriptures must be read in the same spirit as that in which they were written, otherwise they will not give forth the wealth that is hidden under the letter. These treasures were consigned to the protecting covering of that letter, by men who, with humility, respect, and docility listened to the voice of God inspiring them to write. Therefore, those who desire to profit by that which they have left for our instruction, must with the same dispositions, approach the study of God's Book. They must be full of respect for it ; they must humbly peruse its pages, as scholars who desire to learn, not as masters who may presume to criticise and to pass sentence ; they must have in their hearts a docile spirit which will reverently listen to that voice which from its pages God will cause to speak unto their souls. To those who shall thus read and study the Sacred Scriptures, the divine Book will, as St. Jerome tells us, "be as a field enamelled with celestial flowers, or as a diamond flashing forth various lights while we hold its facets to the sun".<sup>1</sup>

Having the heart filled with the right dispositions for the reception of truth, through the guidance of the Sacred Scriptures, our next care must be to have a suitable method in our study of them. We find this method ready to our hands in that document which St. Jerome drew up for that band of

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Principiam Virg*: In Ps. xlv.



holy women, whom he inspired with so great a love of the Bible that, to all intents and purposes, they scarcely ever laid it aside. He advises all students of the Sacred Text, to begin with the Book of Psalms, in which the royal Prophet pours forth his joys and his sorrows, his tears and his sighs, inasmuch as these sacred lyrics give expression to all the needs of the human heart. After the Psalms, the student should instruct himself unto eternal life by the wisdom of the Proverbs. Then will follow the Book of Ecclesiastes, which will teach him to make but little account of the gaudy baubles offered to him by the world. In the Book of Job, which should succeed to Ecclesiastes, he will have set before his mind's eye the most brilliant examples of virtue, and particularly of patience in affliction. After this preparatory study, he may next pass on to the Book of the Gospels, which should be the daily subject of his devout meditations.

When thoroughly conversant with the Gospels, he should fill his mind with the history of the infant Church. This history he will find in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus enriched with a store of heavenly learning, he may next proceed to the reading of the Prophets, the Heptateuch or Books of Moses, the Book of Kings, Paralipomenon, Esdras, and Esther. When his soul has, as it were, been steeped in their spirit, he may, with the advice of his spiritual father, and under his guidance, read the Canticle of Canticles, for then he will easily grasp its spiritual meaning, and will suffer no harm from its imagery which seems to speak of only an earthly love. Lastly, he will now be able to gather priceless lessons of spirituality from the various Epistles written by the great Apostles, Epistles in which is compressed the very marrow of all that the Scriptures teach the human soul.

Having thus stirred up in your hearts a desire to study and to know the Book of books, by setting before you its unparalleled excellence, the spirit in which it should be read, and the method to be followed in the reading of it, we may now, in conclusion, devote a few words to a refutation of the calumnies uttered against the Church, for her supposed hostility to the Holy Book.

The opponents of the Church are taught to believe that she has studiously closed the Bible against her children, locked it up from their use, and forbidden its translation into the vulgar tongue. Nothing can be more untrue than are these assertions. The Church loves and reverences the Bible as the Word of God ; and because she looks upon it as His Word, she has ever guarded it with the most jealous care. She most earnestly recommends the reading of its divine message to the devout and reverential study of her children. But while so doing, she most peremptorily forbids the interpretation of it by any one who may wish to support his own conceits by its authoritative teaching. She is the divinely appointed interpreter of its meaning, and, consequently, she will not surrender her mission to another. Far from keeping it a sealed book not to be opened by her children, she commissioned, by the voice of her Supreme Pastor, one of the profoundest Biblical scholars of his own or of any other age, to make for her a translation on which she has set her seal.<sup>1</sup> So great is her desire that the people should have its stores of spiritual wisdom within easy reach for their daily use, that she sanctioned the translation of it into the vulgar tongue.

The non-Catholic world is told over and over again that Luther, in 1537, first undertook this gigantic task, and that he accomplished it in defiance of the Holy See, which dreaded an open Bible for the people at large. But what is the real truth of the case ? It is that the Holy See, long before Luther's time had both encouraged and authorised translations for the use of her children. In France, L  febvre d'Etaples published a translation of the Bible fully fourteen years before Luther produced his. In Germany, translations of the Bible had appeared in the years 1477, 1483, 1490 and 1518. Italy, as early as 795, had its translation made by Jacopo de Voraigue, while England possessed one in the days of Venerable Bede. At Venice, a Camaldulose monk, Nicolo Malerbi produced in 1421 a version of the Bible, which was nine times reprinted

<sup>1</sup> Pope Damasus ordered St. Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin.

during the fifteenth century, and twenty-nine times during the century which followed.

From these facts it will be seen what truth there is in the assertion that the Church is opposed to the reading of the Bible. What she is with good reason opposed to, is that the most sacred of books should be treated with even less reverence than is shown to those of pagan authors, and should be left to the tender mercy of men who would not scruple to falsify its pages in order to favour their own heretical opinions, and who, if they did translate its oracles, would dare to attribute to them their own interpretation. To guard her children against these men and their works, she has over and over again prohibited them from using any versions which were not sanctioned by her own approval.

Therefore, we most earnestly commend to your study the text of the Sacred Scriptures. Look upon it, as it truly is, as the word of God. Approach to the perusal of it with the most profound respect, with the deepest humility. Bring to the study of it a heart ready to carry into effect the lessons which it inculcates. When difficulties present themselves, look for guidance to that Church which is its guardian and its interpreter. Then it will be as a lamp to your feet in the darksome paths of life, as a staff in your hands in the steep and rugged way of salvation, as a trusty guide to the home whither you are journeying, as a key to unlock the golden gates, and throw open to you the land flowing with milk and honey, a land in which you will find that Christ of Whom its every page doth speak by type, by figure, by prophecy, till it manifests to you, in the Gospels, their fulfilment in the person of your Lord and Master Whose life and doctrine it so luminously sets forth before your eyes.

## TRADITION.

SCRIPTURE is the written word of God, and, therefore, it is deservedly looked upon as a rule for guiding our belief or faith. But, as every one admits, or, at least, must admit if he gives

to the matter his serious consideration, there are many truths not written in the Sacred Books, truths received from the living voice of Christ, and faithfully transmitted to us. This collection or body of unwritten truths, whether remaining unwritten, or, in the course of ages, partly committed to writing, and consequently to be found in liturgical books, in the Acts of Councils, in the works of the Fathers, and the like sources, is called "Tradition". It is in this twofold sense that we shall use the word in the present Lecture.

The existence of this method for transmitting truth, that is to say, by Tradition, is evident both under the old, and under the new dispensation. For fully 2000 years, the Patriarchs in this way handed down from generation to generation the primitive revelation made to the human family. Christ and His Apostles, without the aid of any book to second their efforts, preached and taught unto men the truths of Christianity. But while freely admitting, under both dispensations, the existence of Tradition, and its use in propagating dogmatic truth, men are divided in their opinions as to the precise degree of authority which ought to be assigned to it. The Catholic Church attributes to it as great an authority as it grants to the Sacred Books themselves; non-Catholics, however, confine Tradition within the narrowest limits, some of them going so far as utterly to discard it. Hence, the Catholic has for his guide, two rules of faith—Scripture and Tradition; while the non-Catholic emphatically proclaims that there is only one, namely the Sacred Scripture.

It will, therefore, be our aim during this Lecture to prove the necessity for Tradition, as well as for Scripture, to be our rule of faith.

(1) Any one who studies the Holy Gospels will see, at a glance, that they present to us only a digest of the principal facts of Our Lord's life, and that His chief discourses are but meagre summaries of what He actually delivered to the people. One of the Evangelists, the beloved disciple St. John, has not left us to deduce this conclusion from our own observation, but at the end of his Gospel he has expressly called our attention to it: "There are," he says, "many other

things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written".<sup>1</sup>

These actions of Jesus were not merely the miracles which He performed, but the discourses which He addressed to the people; for it would be irrational to suppose that the brief analyses of them which we have in the Gospel, are the complete orations and instructions which He gave to His densely packed and deeply interested audiences. Moreover, in the Acts, written by St. Luke, that Evangelist tells us that during the forty days which elapsed between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Jesus spoke with the Apostles and the disciples concerning the Kingdom of God. Now, by this kingdom the Fathers understand the Church founded by Christ; and they teach us that these instructions concerning it, given by Christ to His Apostles, taught them all that pertained to its government and administration. Those among the Fathers who take this kingdom to mean "the heavenly Jerusalem," affirm that these discourses had reference to the means of winning that glorious prize. Certain others, combining both these views, maintain that His words were about both kingdoms, the Kingdom of the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven, which latter is to be entered through the ministrations and the aid afforded by the Church.

Important as these precious words undoubtedly are, there is scarcely a vestige of them to be found in the Gospel. Though not consigned to its faithful guardianship, they were intended by Our Lord to be the guiding principles which were to shape the doctrine and the policy of the Apostles and of those who should succeed them in the instruction and the government of the Church. Therefore, it is evident that the Redeemer willed that very many things should be believed, and many more reduced to practice, the details of which were never committed to writing. Consequently, it logically follows that, having so ordained, He must have also willed the assemblage of unwritten precepts and dogmas, to be the rule of

<sup>1</sup> St. John, xxi. 25.

our faith, equally with that which, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Evangelists intrusted to the custody of the written word. From this fact springs the divine authority of what we call "Tradition".

Hence, we find St. Paul giving to each of these sources of divine teaching an equal authority or claim upon the dutiful obedience of his converts. Writing to the Thessalonians,<sup>1</sup> he exhorts them to remain firm in faith, and to observe the *traditions* which they had received either by word of mouth or by the letters which he had sent to them. Therefore, according to him, Scripture and Tradition constitute the two rules which were to regulate both their faith and their morals. He congratulates the Corinthians, for having kept inviolate the *traditions* and the precepts which he had given to them. In several other passages of his writings, he refers his neophytes to Tradition, and gives them to understand that he had not by writing explained everything to them. That which he had taught the faithful, he took special care to impress also upon the pastors set over them. This provident foresight we may plainly see in the words which he wrote to his disciple Timothy: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience. . . . Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee." "The things which thou hast *heard* from me, before many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also."<sup>2</sup>

In both these citations we see the great Apostle impressing upon his flock and upon the shepherds of that flock a tradition distinct from the written word, to be unto them, together with that word, their rule of faith.

The beloved disciple, in his third Epistle, suffers us to catch a glimpse of his method of teaching, a method precisely similar to that employed by St. Paul. He tells Gaius that he had many things to write to him, but that he would not communicate them by pen and ink: "hoping speedily to

<sup>1</sup> Thess. ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 10, 14; 2 Tim. ii. 2.

see thee, we will speak face to face". He gives expression to the same truth in his second Epistle, directed to the Lady Electa : " Having more things to write unto you, I would not by paper and ink ; for I hope that I shall be with you and speak face to face, that your joy may be full ".

This method of procedure in the teaching of the faith has been noted and commented upon by the Fathers in their voluminous writings. Let that which St. John Chrysostom says upon this subject suffice as a specimen of their ideas with respect to Tradition. Explaining the passage already cited from the Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says: " This text clearly proves to us that the Apostles, in their writings, have not left to us all the doctrine which they taught. They have transmitted to us many things which they did not write, but to which, nevertheless, we owe an equal faith. Such is the tradition. Ask nothing further."

(2) While studiously and even vehemently repudiating Tradition as a rule of faith, the opponents of the Catholic Church are, nevertheless, compelled to use, and they do actually use it, in teaching several points of doctrine, affecting vital matters of faith and morals. What, for instance, is more important for them than the inspiration of the Sacred Books, which they proclaim to be their sole rule of faith? They hold without the shadow of a doubt that they are divinely inspired. But how do they know this? On what authority do they base their belief? Among Biblical scholars it is a well-known fact that there were many other books claiming to be the Gospel. Such, for instance, were the Gospels of St. Thomas and of St. Bartholomew. Yet these books were excluded from the Canon as having no title to inspiration. Why were they not admitted? The Bible does not tell us. It does not give any list of books which have been always regarded as of divine origin. Thus, the important dogma which proclaims the inspiration of the Sacred Books, a dogma which is one of the corner-stones of our religious faith, is known to us, and is held by us, only through the Tradition of the Church.

Again, what is more important for salvation than admission, by Baptism, into the fold of the Church? Christ Himself has

declared that the gates of heaven shall be for ever closed against those who have not been cleansed in its saving waters. This is an awe-inspiring truth, if we take into consideration the vast number of those who die before reaching an age when the knowledge of this rite and of its importance can be grasped by the intelligence. God has mercifully not required the use of reason for the reception of this indispensable Sacrament. Infants may be taken to the Sacred Font. Their Baptism is valid; it will save their immortal souls. But how do we know this? Nowhere in the Bible is any such statement made. Nowhere in that Sacred Book is it written, that they are the subjects of this life-giving Sacrament. All the evidence therein contained is quite on the other side, and seems to point only to adults who, having the full use of reason, are able to know the value of the rite. Yet, the great bulk of non-Catholics maintain, as strongly as does the Catholic Church, that infant baptism is valid and necessary for salvation. Nevertheless its validity is known to us only through the constant Tradition of the Church, and it is upon this Tradition that non-Catholics, who reject Tradition as a rule of faith, rest their belief, since no other authority exists to give a sanction to their belief or to their practice.

Furthermore, we may say, without fear of contradiction, that nowhere is the precept of sanctifying Sunday observed with greater rigidity than it is in those countries which have separated themselves from the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. But while asserting this, we are able with equal certainty to say, that nowhere throughout the whole range of scriptural teaching, can there be discovered any precept for its observance. There are, no doubt, to be found here and there in the Acts of the Apostles passages which indicate that the early Christians were accustomed to meet together on that day, in order to pray and to partake of the Holy Eucharist. Also, in the Old Testament there is the positive precept of keeping holy, not the Sunday which is the first day of the week, but the Sabbath or Saturday which is the last. Therefore, we may with justice ask, by what authority this precept of the law has been set aside and another substituted in its



stead, appointing a different day for the accomplishment of the important duty of offering public worship to God? The Scriptures do not tell us. We are obliged to have recourse to Tradition to discover a sanction for so great, so important a departure from the enactments of the old law.

Again, there is mentioned in the Gospel a very striking ceremony instituted by Christ, and performed by Him on the day before He suffered the death of the Cross. He knelt before each of the Apostles in turn, and did for them all the menial office of a servant, by washing their feet. In imitation of the act which He had just completed, He bade them do for one another that which they had seen Him do. This practice, thus so solemnly instituted and ordered by the express command of Christ, is now no longer observed among Christians, that is to say, it is not any longer a general practice, nor is it considered to have any binding force upon the conscience. But how do we know that it has ceased to be obligatory? How do we know that Christ's words concerning it are not to be taken literally; that it is not a sacrament, as it appears to be; that it is not even a counsel? We are forced to depend for our authority concerning this matter upon that Tradition which is rejected with so much scorn by so many non-Catholics.

Once more, how is it that Christians, if it so pleases them, now partake of the blood of animals and feed upon flesh that has been strangled, doing so in direct opposition to a canon of the first Council of Jerusalem, a canon formulated by the Apostles themselves in the solemn words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us"? We know that it is not binding, and that they never meant it to be binding, but to be only a temporary ordinance. Not by any written document do we know this, but by the faithful voice of Tradition.

It is through the light and the guidance furnished to us by the same authority that we are able, while reading the Sacred Text, to distinguish precepts which are only of counsel from those which are of positive command, though both may be couched in language precisely similar, and ordered in a manner equally peremptory.

Therefore, from what we have said, it is evident that we must admit Tradition as well as Scripture to be our rule of faith. If we reject it, then, in order to be consistent in principle and in action, we must reject Scripture also ; for it is Scripture that authorises Tradition, and it is Tradition that, from age to age, has handed down to us the Sacred Books as inspired and of divine origin.

(3) It may, of course, be urged, and it is urged, as an argument against Tradition, that we cannot be certain of its apostolicity. This objection, however, falls to the ground, when we put any tradition claiming to be of apostolic origin to the test by which every such tradition is tried. Has this or that tradition been taught either by the whole Church, or for so long a period that no one is able to point out a time when it did not form part of the teaching of the Church? If any tradition can bear this test, then we may without hesitation ascribe it to an apostolic source, the fountain head of which is Christ. For it is utterly impossible that the vast body of Christian people scattered throughout the world, separated from one another by interminable tracts of country and by tempestuous seas, without intercourse, brought up under systems of education so diverse, differing from one another in manners, customs, and race, differing we might say in every other respect, save in religion, it is impossible, we say, that they should nevertheless be found agreeing with one another in teaching and in believing the same doctrine, unless that doctrine had come down to them from the same source, that is to say, from Christ.

Also, it is equally impossible that, during the lapse of ages, this Tradition should have become corrupt. For any doctrine that has been generally believed, and any practice that has been in general use throughout so long a period of time, could not be altered or corrupted, without at once stirring up among those who either held that doctrine, or observed that practice, so great a revolt that some traces of the commotion caused thereby would be visible in their history and in their public monuments.

It is, therefore, contrary to common sense to say or to suppose,

that any traditions which vitally affect either faith or morals could be corrupted or altered, without, at the same time, having left some trace of the protest or the revolt that would, in consequence of the novelty introduced, have been made by those by whom the introduction of any such novelty, or of any such alteration, would have been regarded as a detestable heresy. Consequently, we are able easily to discern, first, what traditions are of apostolic origin, and what are not ; secondly, we are able to be certain that traditions which are of apostolic origin cannot in the course of time be altered or corrupted.

Hence, we are able, with the Catholic Church, to rely with infallible certainty upon her two rules of faith—the Sacred Books of the Holy Scripture which manifestly teach the use of Tradition, and Tradition, without which we should not know that these Books are inspired, that is to say, are of divine origin.

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

As the Church depends for her rule of faith not only on God's unwritten word, which is to be found in Tradition—taken in the sense in which we employed it in the preceding Lecture—but on the written word of the Sacred Books themselves, it will be necessary to prove that the various documents of which these Books are composed, really belong to the authors who are said to have penned them. When a book or a document is truly the production of the author to whom it is assigned, that book or that document is said to be *authentic*. This is the quality which we claim for the Sacred Volume ; it is truly the work of those men to whom it has been attributed. For a Christian, and particularly for a Catholic, it is a sufficient proof of this fact, to adduce the constant and universal belief of the Church. But this is not enough for non-believers, nor for the opponents of the Catholic Church. They not only question the title of these authors to the Books which are said to have been written by them, but, going a step farther, they maintain that these Books are the productions of men

who lived many ages after their supposed authors had been laid to rest in the tomb.

To uphold or support a proposition so novel and so startling to Christian ears, they must, of course, have at least some show of reason or argument, and that argument may be briefly stated thus: These Books, which the Christian Church styles the Sacred Scriptures, were not known to pagan antiquity; the knowledge of them was confined to the Jews who lived under what is called the "old dispensation," and to the Christians who lived under what is now called "the new". Had these Books been as ancient as they are claimed to be, they would, of a certainty, have been diffused among the surrounding nations, so that traces of their existence would have been found in the classical works of the ancients. Moreover, as it is upon the principles laid down in these Books, that both Jews and Christians have built up a system of dogma revolting to reason, and a code of morals opposed to the instincts of human nature, they would, had they been in existence, have made a stir among the learned of the time, and have provoked hostile criticism. But of the one or of the other not a vestige is to be found in antiquity. Therefore, these Books which are said to have been in existence for so long a period of time, are of comparatively recent date, and, consequently, they are not the productions of those who are said to have written them. Even should they prove to be what they pretend to be, how are we to know that they have not been altered, or mutilated, or interpolated, and therefore made useless as a basis for the faith of mankind?

(1) We may begin our answer to these objections by pointing out, in a general sort of way, that a people's history, and particularly that a people's sacred books are usually not to be looked for in the archives of the nations that are external to them. These precious documents are generally preserved with most religious care among the people themselves. If their non-existence among the nations foreign to them were applied as a test of the authenticity of the sacred books of more recent peoples, how would it fare with the Koran, or the books of Confucius, or of Zoroaster? Before these latter

were introduced into Europe, what trace of them do we find among the classical writings of our own nation? We may say, then, that if these works were as little known among ourselves as the Hebrew books were among the ancients, their claim to authenticity rests upon as unsound a basis as, according to the objection, our Bible does, and to them also must be denied that which we claim for the Sacred Text.

Therefore, setting aside this objection against the authenticity of the Bible as a frivolous one, we may now ask our opponents what possible interest the Jews could have had in fabricating these Sacred Books, on the authority of which their religion is built? Did it in any way advance their temporal interests to be under the yoke of that religion, a yoke which not only proved most galling to their human nature, but made them positively odious to the nations with whom they came in contact? So far were they from wishing to be subject to the stern discipline which that religion imposed upon them, that they endeavoured no fewer than ten times to escape from it, and adopt the easy rule of the heathen religions followed by the people around them. Therefore, it is irrational to suppose that, after accepting rigorous enactments from the hands of Moses, they would afterwards go to the trouble of fabricating books to rivet more closely, more indissolubly, on their limbs the chains which restricted their liberty. No; they believed their religion to be divine, and, consequently, they had no occasion to forge for it titles to command their obedience. Besides, it is a fact admitted on all sides, that both the civil and the religious legislation of the Jews were built upon the Books of Moses, which Books were written long before the other Books which together with them form the Bible. These latter works are of such a nature that they presuppose, by the very matter of which they treat, the Books of Moses, for they uphold, and, where such a proceeding is necessary, supplement the teaching of the great Lawgiver. Therefore, not one of the later Books of the Bible could be falsified without thereby contradicting the teaching of those which had preceded it. The fraud would,

consequently, have been detected at once, and punished with the utmost severity.

(2) The same argument will hold good for the Christian writings of the New Testament. The members who constituted the body of the early Church were converts from Paganism or from Judaism. They were, consequently, detested by those from whom they had separated themselves. As the Jews under the rule of Moses had received from him the dogmas of their faith, so did these early Christians receive their religion from the lips of the Apostles. They accepted their teaching, they believed in their divine mission, and, as a natural consequence, in the divinity of the faith which they had embraced. Is it, then, to be believed that the vast bodies of Christians dispersed throughout the Roman Empire combined together to fabricate the New Testament, and thus incur the guilt of a fraud which their faith emphatically condemned? If even one of these bodies had attempted to do so, or if even one individual from among any of the Christian communities had essayed to palm off upon his brethren any such document, is it credible that his fraud would have escaped detection? No; the attempt would have failed utterly and hopelessly. The fraud would have been at once discovered, and the perpetrator of it expelled from communion with his fellow Christians.

With respect to the assertion that the authors of classical antiquity are absolutely silent concerning the Sacred Books of the Jews, and the equally sacred writings of the Christians, it is of so sweeping a character as at once to arouse suspicion. How any scholar could have made it, is a matter of surprise; for, so far is it from being well founded, that any one who takes the trouble to turn over the pages of the pagan classical writers will find that reference to these Sacred Books is not by any means rare in such of their works as have come down to us. In a learned treatise written by Duvoisin, entitled "*The Authority of the Mosaic Books Established*," he cites a considerable number of Egyptian, Greek, and Latin authors, whose works give ample evidence of their exact knowledge of Moses and of his legislative acts.

Of these testimonies it will be enough to adduce but two or three, to prove beyond a doubt that the ancients were not so utterly ignorant of these writings as they are said to have been. Diodorus Siculus, in the first book of his history, speaks of Moses "who left to the Jews laws which he pretended to have received from God". In a fragment of the same history, quoted by Photius Bibliothecarius, we read "that this same Moses headed a colony which he led out of Egypt, that he divided his people into twelve tribes, forbade them to worship idols, and prescribed for them a religion and a way of life totally different from those of other nations". Strabo, in the sixteenth book of his history, speaks of him in almost similar terms. From the way in which Tacitus, in the fifth book of his history, describes the origin of the Jewish nation, we detect a very considerable and accurate acquaintance with the historical books of the great Jewish legislator. Even in the *Satires* of Juvenal, we find traces of his knowledge of these inspired documents, for he speaks of the reverence in which they were held by the Jews, mentions their hatred of every other species of worship different from their own, ridicules their Sabbath, their rite of circumcision, and their abstinence from swine's flesh. It is evident, also, that the rhetorician Longinus had a certain amount of knowledge of the Jewish writings, for he gives a specimen of the sublime drawn from the Book of Genesis. When the Hebrew writings were translated into Greek, they became more widely known, and as soon as the Hebrew text also had been diffused among the pagan nations, writers were able to compare the Greek translations with the original, and to see how faithful and exact had been the Greek rendering.

Hence we see not only that the Sacred Books of the Jews were known among the nations that surrounded them, but from the exact correspondence of the translation with the original, that they had not in any way been falsified or corrupted. The very nature of these Books rendered any such falsification impossible, for their preservation in all their pristine purity deeply interested the whole Jewish nation. In them were preserved the monuments of their history. On

them were built their creed and their morality, their customs and their laws. Any attempt on their part to interpolate them, to corrupt them, would have brought upon them the wrath of the whole nation. Had the priests dared to commit any such profanation, the particular families, and the tribes who had in their possession copies of the Holy Books, would have been the first to raise a cry against the awful sacrilege. The schism which took place in the nation, on the secession of the ten tribes, rendered any such proceeding on the part of the priests doubly difficult. That event practically divided the Jews into two peoples, most bitterly hostile to each other. Each of them possessed the Sacred Books, so that any change, any falsification of the text would at once have been made known and would have been severely dealt with. When at last the scourge of war scattered them as exiles among the nations of the earth, any complicity in a conspiracy to alter the Sacred Books became utterly impossible. Therefore, these Books are authentic, that is to say, they are really and truly the works of those to whom they are ascribed.

(3) The authenticity of the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, rests upon a foundation no less firm and solid than that upon which the Old Testament is built. It is so unshaken, so incapable of being disturbed, that it has inspired the Christian community, and has ever inspired it with a veneration and a love for them in no way inferior to that felt by the Jews for their Sacred Books. The Tradition which has handed them down from age to age, and stamped upon them their authors' names, is such that its veracity cannot rationally be called in question. If we wish to test how impossible it would be for any error to have been committed in this respect, let us go back in spirit to the times in which these writers lived. During those years the letters to the several Churches written by St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, and the rest, and the Gospels penned by the Evangelists could not possibly have been attributed to any other authors than to those by whom they were composed. Had any attempt been made to attach to them the names of other men, the various communities to whom these letters were



addressed, and the people for whom the Gospels were drawn up, would have loudly protested against the act, and the fraud would have been laid bare.

It is absurd to suppose that these writings were given to the world after the death of their respective authors. Were we to admit any such hypothesis, we should be forced also to admit that the whole Christian body had entered into a conspiracy to commit a gigantic fraud; that the Bishops, the priests, and the faithful laity had agreed to palm off these Books upon a hostile world; and, that not one dissentient voice had been raised in protest against the contemplated deception. Such a conspiracy is an utter impossibility. For, if it ever had any existence, there must have been some very powerful motive to unite the members of it in so unholy a confederacy. What could that motive have been? Could it have been to propagate their principles? Certainly not; for one of the most elementary of these is to shun falsehood. Why, then, attempt to build upon a lie, a religion of truth; which loves truth; and most earnestly inculcates its practice? Therefore, both the supposition of this fraud and the motive assigned for it, are absurd.

As the Jews before them, in the case of Moses, believed in his divine mission, so also did the Christians believe in the divinity of Christ's mission. They accepted His doctrine; they died for it. That doctrine they received from His Apostles both by word of mouth and by writing penned by the very men who had been on terms of the utmost familiarity with the Lord; who had conversed with and who had been taught by Him; who had witnessed His miracles, and who had been instructed by Him after His resurrection from the dead.

It is evident, then, from what we have said, that the writings attributed by a constant and unvarying tradition to these founders of Christianity, are really and truly theirs. Their Books are consequently authentic. They contain the history of Christ's life; they set forth His doctrine such as the Apostles received it from His divine lips.

If it is urged that this history has been falsified, that this

doctrine has been corrupted, then those who put forward these contentions must be ready to affirm that the Christian community agreed to destroy the faith for which they willingly went to the scaffold, and agreed to destroy it, in order to propagate a lie.

If to all that we have said we add the testimony of opponents such as Celsus and Julian the Apostate, who bitterly attacked the Books of the New Testament, and who though decrying them, yet never supposed that they were not the works of those who were said to have written them; if we bear in mind the hosts of heretics who, though refuted by these writings, never cast a suspicion on their authenticity, but used them, as far as they were able, for the purpose of supporting their own errors, we may without hesitation claim for them that authenticity which the Church has ever claimed for them. They are really and truly the works of those whose names are affixed to them. They have been preserved with religious veneration from age to age, and, through the special providence of God, they are free from error—that is to say from all substantial error—for whatever errors may be found in them are only accidental, arising from the carelessness of copyists. These mistakes are merely verbal. They may easily be removed from the Sacred Pages. No vital errors which destroy faith and endanger salvation can be found in them.

### INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

IN a preceding Lecture, we called your attention to the fact that revealed religion, under the old and under the new dispensation, was both taught and practised before a single word of that divine revelation had been committed to writing. Consequently, the Sacred Books of both dispensations are later than the respective Churches which depend upon them for one of their rules of faith. It is, therefore, the teaching of the Church that we must have recourse to for the number of Books which constitute the Canon or list of Sacred Scripture, and for the guarantee of their inspiration. The Books ad-

mitted to a place upon this list, and enumerated by the Council of Trent, are identically the same as those which, from the first century of our era, were regarded as inspired, both by the African and by the Roman Church. The teaching of this latter, as to the character of these Books, is that they are the inspired word of God.

It will, therefore, be necessary for us, in as brief and popular a way as possible, to give you an idea of what is meant by "inspiration," in order that you may be able to understand the degree of authority which these Books possess as a teaching instrument in the hands of the Church, which is "the pillar and the ground of truth".

(1) Inspiration is defined to be : "that singular and special impulse of the Holy Spirit, moving the authors of the Sacred Books to write. His direction and presence govern the mind of the author, not suffering him to fall into error, and causing him to write only that which God wills him to write." From these words it is evident that four things are requisite for inspiration : the movement or impulse of the Holy Spirit ; the illumination of the mind, and the movement of the will to write ; the choice by the Holy Spirit of the matter to be written ; and, finally, his continuous assistance in the completion of the work. Also, it is equally evident that inspiration does not extend to each word that is written, nor to the choice of the words in which the matter is set forth, nor to their arrangement into sentences, but only to the *subject matter* itself. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that inspiration is not requisite for those things which the writer may know from other sources, whether historic or moral ; for, it is sufficient that God should be present with him, presiding over their selection, and securing for them immunity from even the slightest error. Mere negative assistance, on the part of the Holy Spirit, is not sufficient to constitute inspiration ; and, by negative assistance, we mean that aid which prevents the writer from falling into any error ; in addition to this, there must be the *impulse* to write, which impulse is given by the Holy Ghost. Hence, immunity from even slight errors regarding faith and morals, and from all

errors in matters pertaining to them—but not from errors in history, chronology and natural sciences—is not enough to constitute inspiration. Even if, from other sources, we knew by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that certain documents are truthfully written, that knowledge would not justify us in saying that these documents are inspired; for veracity is quite a different matter from inspiration. Furthermore, we must take notice that *revelation* is not required for inspiration. Revelation is the making known of something previously not known; but inspiration is a special impulse to write, which impulse comes from the Holy Spirit Who directs and governs the mind and the will of the writer, protecting him from all error, and suffering him to pen only that which God wills him to write.

With this clear notion of what inspiration means when applied to the Sacred Scriptures, we may now proceed to consider what the Church, the guardian and exponent of the Holy Books, teaches us with respect to them. On this subject of inspiration she has issued three dogmatic pronouncements, the last of which is nothing more than a confirmation of the two which preceded it. “The Roman Church,” says the Council of Florence, “maintains that one and the same God is the author of the Old and of the New Testament, that is to say, of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, because the holy men of both Testaments have spoken under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it accepts and venerates their Books.”<sup>1</sup> The Council of Trent<sup>2</sup> gave its assent to these words; and the Vatican Council<sup>3</sup> confirmed this teaching when it said: “The Church holds as sacred and canonical the Books of the Old and of the New Testament, not only because they contain a revelation which is without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and they have been handed down to us as such by the Church herself”. This doctrine the Church received from the Apostles, a doctrine

<sup>1</sup> *Decret. in Jacobit.*

<sup>2</sup> Sess. 4, *De Can. Script.*

<sup>3</sup> *Constit. Dei filius*, cap. 2.

upon which they so strongly insisted as to speak of it in their letters to the respective Churches to which they wrote.

St. Paul, when instructing his disciple Timothy, who from his very infancy had been conversant with the doctrine of the Old Testament, writes thus : " All Scripture, divinely inspired, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice ".<sup>1</sup> St. Peter's testimony confirms that of St. Paul, for he tells us that " prophecy came not by the will of man at any time ; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost ".<sup>2</sup> In these words both Apostles are speaking, it is true, of the Old Testament, to all the parts of which they ascribe the authority of inspiration ; but as the writers of the New Testament were impelled to their task, were guided and enlightened in it by the same Holy Spirit, that which is said of the Old must with equal truth and justice be said of the New. For, if St. Paul in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Romans could call the Old Testament " the Word of God," so may we attribute to the New Testament also that same title. Now, if the New Testament can be said to be " the Word of God," it is undoubtedly inspired. For, if a writer were merely assisted by the Holy Spirit, and preserved from error, he would give to us only his own words ; they would not be inspired, though in conformity with truth. Hence, if we may call the New Testament " the Word of God," we may with perfect truth say that it is inspired.

That this has been, from the very beginning, the Church's teaching concerning the Sacred Scriptures, is clearly proved to us by the epithets which both Councils and Fathers have ever applied to them. St. Augustine<sup>3</sup> calls them *divine*, and the sense in which he employs this word is manifest from the reason which he assigns for so styling them : " They are *divine*, because God has spoken either to the writers of them, or through them ".<sup>4</sup> St. Chrysostom says : " The Sacred Scriptures, written by the Holy Spirit, contain in themselves a great treasure ".<sup>5</sup> " The tongues and the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii., 16.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i., 21.

<sup>3</sup> *De Doct. Christiana*, cap. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, lib. 18, cap. 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Hom.* 3, In Genes.

sacred writers," says Theoderet, "were the pens of the Holy Spirit." <sup>1</sup> "Scripture is Almighty God's letter to His creature," says St. Gregory the Great,<sup>2</sup> and the third Council of Carthage proclaims them to be divine, a doctrine which it says that it has learnt from the Fathers.

If, from a merely rational point of view, we examine these Sacred Writings, their divine character will stand out prominently before the eyes of every impartial inquirer. Let any one once admit the truth of the facts which they narrate, and straightway the inspiration of these Books becomes incontestable. Take, for instance, the history of the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai. Is it a true narrative of what occurred? If it is, then that portion of Scripture is inspired, for the Spirit of God moved the author of it to write, and guarded him from error in what he wrote. Look, again, at the mission of Moses; that mission is proved to be divine by the numerous and miraculous signs which attest it to have come from God Himself. That mission, and the promise given by the Lord that He should put His words into the mouth of the great Lawgiver, are tantamount to saying that God inspired him. In each of the Books of the Old Testament we find similar facts which indicate inspiration.

Turn to the Books of the New Testament, and submit them to the same test. If we admit the truth of the facts narrated in them, the inspiration of the Books themselves follows as a natural consequence. Once grant that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and the first disciples, and we must admit that they were inspired by Him. Having admitted thus much, we cannot deny that the Books written by them are inspired; for the inspiration of the writer argues the inspiration of his book.

The very style of these documents is no slight proof of their inspiration. Whatever they unfold to us, is couched in language of marvellous simplicity. Candour and truth seem actually to breathe from the pages on which we gaze. The writers make no attempt to prove that which they tell us. Their facts are so

<sup>1</sup> *Praef.*, in *Psal.*

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.*, lib. 4, 31.

luminous with truth, that these need only to be stated in order to be believed and accepted, even when to the intelligence of man they seem to be beyond belief. Observe with what divine calmness the Evangelists record the sufferings and the death of their beloved Master, Jesus Christ, Whom they loved with so great an intensity as to be ready to lay down their lives for Him. There is no outcry against the inhumanity and the injustice of the Jews. There is no attempt to paint a picture of His torments. There is no effort to harrow the feelings or to enlist the sympathies of the reader. It is as if a child were recounting, with all simplicity and fidelity, that which happened before its own eyes. Men who were not inspired would have written a far different history. In the narrative of these inspired Apostles, we see the guiding hand of a Divine Author.

We see, then, from the teaching of the Church, which is the exponent of the Sacred Scripture and its faithful guardian, that these writings are the work of the Holy Spirit. From Him came the impulse. From Him came the illumination of the intelligence to know what to write. By Him were selected the events to be recorded. Under His guidance every error, no matter how slight, became impossible. Hence we have in our Sacred Books the work of God Himself. They are inspired as a whole ; they are inspired in all their parts ; for, if they were inspired in only some parts, that species of inspiration would be of no use to man. He would be unable to say what is, and what is not, inspired. Hence the Council of Trent, in declaring the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, anathematises any one who shall dare to affirm that they are not inspired both as a whole and in all their parts. Therefore, love this Sacred Book sent to you by God. Frequently read its pages. Make the lessons which it imparts the subject of your daily meditation. Above all things, try to avoid that which it condemns, and to practise that which it inculcates.

## VENERATION OF THE CROSS.

THE Cross on which Our divine Saviour paid for us the penalty due to our revolt against God, and by which He opened for us the gates of heaven, has always been held by His followers in the greatest reverence. Also, the images of it, representing His sacred body hanging thereon in agony, are objects of that inferior, relative worship which we offer to everything that has been in any way connected with His Passion. Let us, therefore, trace to its source, and defend against the sneers of non-Catholics, this holy and pious practice.

The Cross, as is well known, was originally an instrument of torture, employed as the most ignominious method of punishment for the worst and most degraded class of criminals. For this reason, the Jews were so eager to use it in the execution of Our divine Lord, since they wished to degrade Him in the eyes of men, and especially in the eyes of His own nation, for in their law it is written : " Accursed is he that hangeth on a tree ". But Christ so loved men, and so generously obeyed the decree of His eternal Father Who willed their redemption, that He did not recoil from any kind of death which should accomplish that purpose.

At a very early period of the Christian era, as early even as the apostolic age, this infamous gibbet began to be for Christ's followers a symbol of all that He had endured for them. Hence we find St. Paul saying : " God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ ". It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that from being an object of horror and of loathing, it soon began to be an object of veneration, a sign or symbol among the faithful, of their brotherhood with the Redeemer, and with those who believed in Him. By degrees, it became also a token by which they were able to know one another, and to distinguish friend from foe. Nevertheless, though glorying in and venerating that token, they did not, at first, even in the depths of the Catacombs, paint it upon the walls of their subterranean chapels, nor



set it up over the tombs of their departed brethren. Only in secret symbols, known to the initiated few, and studiously concealed from profane eyes, did they dare to represent this ignominious instrument of their Master's death. A fish,—the Greek letters of which (*ιχθυς*) signified to them Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour,—and depicted as hanging from a trident, is the nearest “presentment” that they ventured to make of their crucified Lord.

But brighter days were soon to dawn upon the infant Church. The violence of the persecuting storm gradually abated. Its thunders ceased to roll, its lightnings to flash and to kill. The will of heaven had decreed that a Christian Emperor should occupy the throne of the Cæsars, and extend his protecting shield over the flock of the Lord. From the banks of the Rhine, through Gaul and Italy, the great commander Constantine began his march towards imperial Rome, near which the tyrant Maxentius awaited his onset. Though not yet a Christian, he had in his heart, on setting forth upon this momentous expedition, called upon the true God to assist him in the struggle. As he drew nigh to Rome, and almost on the very eve of the battle on the issue of which hung the fate of the empire, God vouchsafed to him a glorious vision. As the day began to decline, there appeared to him and to the whole army a luminous Cross standing above the sun. In a vision during that same night, Christ holding a Cross appeared to him, and ordered him to have a representation of it made and carried before the army. The future Emperor obeyed the command thus miraculously given to him, and under the protection of this saving sign, defeated his adversary and triumphantly entered Rome. From that day, the Cross became for him a sacred symbol, and in the twentieth year of his reign, he issued a decree forbidding it to be used any more as an instrument of torture.

To testify his love and devotion to Jesus Christ, Whose religion he embraced, he determined, in His honour, to build at Jerusalem a magnificent temple. His holy mother, St. Helena, though eighty years of age, resolved to make a pilgrimage to the places sanctified by the death of Our Lord.

In the year A.D. 326 she went to Jerusalem, ordered the buildings erected by the pagans over the holy sepulchre to be pulled down, and the rubbish piled upon it to be removed. God rewarded her pious zeal, for when this work had made some progress, she discovered amid the earth with which pagan fanaticism had endeavoured to hide the burial-place of Christ, three crosses, the title which had been affixed to the Cross of Our Lord, and the nails by which He had been fastened to the disgraceful tree. As the title no longer distinguished the Cross of Jesus from those on which the thieves had paid the penalty of their crimes, the three crosses were carried to a woman who lay at the point of death. As soon as the Cross of Our Lord had touched her, the virtue of that saving wood at once restored her to perfect health. Thereupon St. Helena caused the main part of it to be encased in a silver shrine, and enthroned it in the church which her imperial son had erected (A.D. 335).

Thus the Cross, which formerly had been used as an infamous gibbet, became an object of the profoundest veneration. Men no longer held it in horror and detestation. It adorned the diadems of kings; it rewarded the bravery of heroic actions; it towered aloft over the proudest edifices of populous cities, an object of the deepest respect to all Christian peoples.

Against this honour paid to Our Lord's Cross, and to the representations of it usually found in Catholic churches and in Catholic homes, there has, from time to time, broken forth a storm of protest, of vituperation, and not unfrequently of a more tangible sort of persecution. Men sneer at us for venerating that which inflicted upon Christ the keenest agony, the most ignominious kind of death; for reverencing that which in their eyes is as little deserving of honour as are the horny fists that smote Him, the waters of Jordan that came in contact with His body, and the lips of Judas that gave the sign which betrayed Him to His enemies. However, these sneers are a very poor sort of argument against the worship which we pay to the Cross. We should, of course, regard the Cross of Our Lord with horror and aversion, if we considered only the ignominy and the pain which it caused Him. But these are

lost sight of when we turn our thoughts to the unfading glory which it reflects upon Him, and the eternal benefits which it procures for ourselves. It is with these ideas that our minds are filled when we venerate the Cross, and it is for these reasons that we pay to it our meed of relative worship.

Again, we should be logically forced to venerate the hands that struck Him, the traitorous lips that kissed Him, the thongs that rent His flesh, and the very stones on which His feet have trod, if our worship, veneration, and respect were given to the Cross simply and solely because of its material contact with the body of Our Lord ; but besides this material contact, there is a moral aspect under which we regard the Cross, an aspect which is not found in the hands that struck Our Lord, nor in any of the other instances brought forward by our opponents. This moral aspect is the fact that Our Lord made the Cross an implement by which He overcame the enemies of our salvation, "openly triumphing over them in His own person," for in that person "there was fastened to the Cross and blotted out, the handwriting of the decree that was against us."<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, no reason in the sneers which are heaped upon us for our veneration of the Cross. That veneration—that worship as it is called—is like our worship of the images and the paintings of the Saints ; it is a relative worship. It does not, as we have already said, centre upon the material object as a matter to be venerated, but passes either to Him of Whom it makes us think, or to God Who is the person that is glorified in His Saints. Our opponents themselves give to inanimate objects all the tokens of respect and affection that they would bestow upon the persons whom these inanimate objects represent, or to whom they have belonged. Their marks of love and respect, like our own, are given to the persons whom these inanimate things recall to their minds.

If then, there is nothing reprehensible in their action, there can be nothing blameworthy in ours. We simply do for an object which has been closely connected with the Passion of

<sup>1</sup> Coloss. ii. 14.

Jesus Christ, what they do for objects which have belonged to imperfect creatures. Now, though the word *adoration* is sometimes applied to the worship and the respect which we pay to the Cross, yet that expression need not scandalise any one who knows our doctrine. Adoration, in this case, simply means our profound respect, love, and veneration for Christ. If the words of the Church with regard to the Cross are objected to, words in which she says: "All hail! O Cross! our only hope! O adorable Cross!" our only answer must be, that in these expressions she either wishes us by the word *Cross*, to understand Christ Who died upon it for our redemption, or hints that through the merits of Christ we look for the fruit of the Cross, to wit, eternal salvation.

Thus, from what has been said, you will plainly see how it came to pass that men ceased to regard the Cross as a degrading instrument of punishment, and why we Catholics so lovingly venerate that symbol of our salvation. Therefore, always keep before your minds the reasons which we have given to you for your respect, love, and veneration for the Cross. Take care that you have the Cross in your houses. It is the Christian's standard; it is the summary of his belief; it is the foundation on which he builds his hopes of future bliss. The sight of it brings to his mind the price that has been paid for his soul, and, consequently, the worth of that soul. As he looks upon it, the ills of life become tolerable, and life itself does not appear to be so great a failure as an unbelieving generation would have us consider it to be. It does not seem so hard to be humble, to be chaste, to be forgiving, to be meek, when he gazes upon that figure hanging so patiently there, and remembers that the Incarnate God once so hung upon the accursed tree; and when the devil, or wicked men, or the fallen nature that is his inheritance stirs up within him the rebellious passions of that nature, one glance at the thorn-crowned head, at the transfixed hands and feet, at the open side of Him Who hangs thereon, will make him sternly crush down their revolt, and save himself from the misery and the dishonour of denying that glorious Master Who, for his sake, did not shrink from a death so cruel and so ignominious as that of the Cross.

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

HAVING in the preceding Lecture spoken about the veneration paid to the Cross, and to the images of it which are to be seen in almost every Catholic household, we will now address to you a few words on the sign of the Cross, a sign which is held in so great reverence among us. As you know so well, that sign is made by raising the right hand to the forehead, while saying : " In the name of the Father," bringing it down to the breast, while saying : " and of the Son," and then touching first the left and afterwards the right shoulder while saying : " and of the Holy Ghost ". " Amen " is said when the hands are joined before the breast. By thus tracing this symbol upon our persons, we make a profession of our faith in the unity of the divine nature, and in the trinity of persons. Also, we thereby testify our belief in the Passion and death of Our divine Lord, and in all the graces which they have procured for the human race.

The origin of the sign of the Cross may be traced back to apostolic times. Regarding the Cross as an accursed object, and any one who suffered death upon it as utterly degraded, the Jews had determined to put Our Lord to death upon this infamous gibbet. When they had accomplished their object, and thereby, as they thought, had for ever made Jesus an object of loathing to His own race, and of contempt to the Gentiles, they failed not to taunt His followers with the fact that He had died the death of a malefactor upon the accursed tree. Naturally enough, this would be one of the means employed by them to discredit belief in Him, and to annoy those who had embraced His doctrine. However, as Jesus chose the Cross to be the instrument of our salvation, it became a point of honour among His devoted servants to hold in esteem that very object by which His enemies had hoped to heap upon their beloved Master the insult and the scorn of His brethren. They would, therefore, glory in that which the Jews intended to be their disgrace. They would accept their gibes, and then make the sign of the Cross, as a confession of their faith and their loyalty.

This is the natural origin of the sign of the Cross. Hence, we are not surprised to find St. Paul glorying in the Cross of his Saviour, and in his energetic way saying: "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ". "I preach Christ crucified." "I judge myself to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ; and Him crucified."<sup>1</sup> We find, then, from the first century of the Christian era, that the practice of making the sign of the Cross both upon themselves and upon everything with which they came in contact, of making it at all times, in all places, and in even the most ordinary occurrences of their every-day life, had become among Christians, widespread and general. One of the earliest witnesses to this custom, is the great Tertullian, who, in the second century writing of the faithful, says: "In all our travels and movements, in our incoming and in our outgoing, when putting on our clothes or our shoes, at the bath, at table, in lighting our lamps, when lying or when sitting, in fact in whatever employment we chance to be occupied, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross."<sup>2</sup>

Laymen, no doubt, learned this custom from the ministers of the Church; for, in all the ceremonies of public worship, and particularly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, those who exercised the office of the priesthood, had, in virtue of an apostolic tradition, frequently to make use of this sacred sign. Of this fact St. Chrysostom gives us notable instances when he says: "Among us, all things are perfected by the sign of the Cross. If any one is to be regenerated, that is to say, baptised; or to be nourished with the mystic food; or to be ordained; or to be appointed to do anything whatever, this our symbol of victory is everywhere present. For this reason we are careful to inscribe it on our houses, walls, and doors, on our foreheads, and in our minds; for it is the sign of the salvation wrought for us, of the common freedom purchased for us, and of the goodness of God manifested to us."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Galat. vi. 14; 1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *De corona militis*, No. 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Homil.*, in Matt. liv.

In times of public danger, and in moments of grave personal peril, men were wont to use the saving sign of the Cross as a shield to protect both body and soul from impending evil. A curious instance of this is related by St. Gregory Naziansus, —an instance which is an indubitable proof of the practice of the time. He tells us that, on a certain occasion, Julian the Apostate, in company with a celebrated magician, went to visit a subterranean sanctuary in which there were shown to him certain diabolical illusions which filled his soul with terror. While thus affrighted, the renegade fled for protection to the Cross, and hastily signed himself with that protective armour which, in his early years, he had used against the deceits of the devil, and all his wicked host, thus calling to his aid Him Whom he had persecuted.<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to say, that from the earliest times devout men have made use of the sign of the Cross, as a protection against the evils which threaten the soul from the temptations of the devil. St. Epiphanius relates that he knew a certain woman who, being exposed to the danger of committing a grievous sin, “signed herself in the name of Christ, *for she was a Christian*”. Among other things, he mentions that in order to draw her from the path of virtue, those who were trying to compass her ruin had recourse to the use of magical arts; but the power of magic availed not against the name “Jesus,” and the sign of the Cross.<sup>2</sup>

St. Jerome writing to one of his correspondents, advises her to plant upon her forehead the banner of the Cross, as a protection against the attacks of the devil. To another he says: —“At every action, at every step, let thy hand make the sign of the Cross”. As means to repel the onslaught of the evil one, he recommends custody of the heart, and the all-powerful sign of the Cross. He says: “Keep the door of your heart shut, and frequently defend your forehead with the sign of the Cross, lest the exterminator of Egypt find in you some unguarded spot.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cont., Julian Orat., iii., tom. i.*

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Hæret., tom. i.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Eustoch., epist. xxii., tom i., epist. cxxx.*

St. Chrysostom so thoroughly believed in the efficacy of this sign for scattering the combined forces of the malignant spirits of hell, that in one of his sermons he says: "The Cross is better than countless diadems; for diadems adorn the brow, but the Cross protects the mind. It repels demons, heals the maladies of the soul, it is a weapon of adamantine strength, an impregnable wall, an impenetrable shield. It wards off not only the irruptions of barbarians and the incursions of hostile troops, but the serried phalanxes of pitiless demons."

But it was particularly at the dread moment when the terror of death had to be encountered and looked calmly in the face, that the sign of the Cross became, for our forefathers in the faith, a trusty buckler of defence, and inspired them with a confidence and a strength that are truly marvellous. St. Gregory of Nyssa, speaking on this subject, or rather when narrating the last moments of his saintly relative, tells us that just before her last breath she pronounced a splendid eulogy upon the power of the Cross. Raising her voice she exclaimed: "Thou, O God! hast given unto those who fear Thee a sign, the sign of the holy Cross for the destruction of the adversary and for the safeguard of our life. . . . While speaking these words, she formed upon her eyes, her mouth, and her heart, the sign or seal of the Cross."<sup>1</sup>

Not only in a Christian death, so peaceful and so free from terror as was that of this saintly lady, did this sign inspire courage, but in the deaths of those who had to face the horrors and the excruciating tortures of a public execution. St. Basil relates that the martyr Gordius, before enduring the tortures by which he won his crown, spoke words of great confidence, and after thus before men confessing Christ, his adorable Master, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and boldly advanced to meet his executioners.<sup>2</sup>

That blessed sign, so efficacious in inspiring courage into the hearts of those who have to face the terror of death, is not less efficacious in striking with panic fear the malignant

<sup>1</sup> *De Vita S. Macrinæ*, tom. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Hom. in Gordium Mart.*, tom., ii.



spirits who war against the souls of men. They flee before it, as they fled from the stroke of the Archangel's sword. Hence, we often read in the lives of the Saints, that the demons were unable to work their lying wonders for their worshippers, whenever any Christian who chanced to be present had made upon himself the sign of the Cross.

From all this we may conclude, that the practice of making the sign of the Cross began in the early days of Christianity, and that the Church in her very infancy made use of it in her Liturgy and in the administration of the Sacraments. Her faithful and obedient children, taught by her, employed it in times of danger, in the hour of temptation, in the agony of death, as well as in the ordinary avocations of their every-day life.

Therefore, reverence that sign which comes to us from so venerable a source. It is the Christian's standard, and it will be borne by Angels before the great Judge when He shall come at the last day to render to every man according to his works. Those who in this world have been ashamed of it, shall not stand under it on that day of whirlwind and of storm. Consequently, resolve ever to hold it in the highest esteem. Make it upon yourself openly, fearlessly, devoutly, as a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ, Who by it saved the world, drove out error, taught the truth, and opened for us the gates of heaven. Let the making of it excite your faith, strengthen your hope, and inflame your love for Him Who for your sake died upon the Cross. If you feel unwilling to obey Superiors, it will recall to your mind Him Who obeyed even unto death. If unchaste thoughts and desires lay hold of your soul, sign yourself with the Cross, and the unclean tempter will vanish as if smitten by the lightning of God. If you are impatient, it will speak to you of Him Who for three long hours of bitterest agony hung upon the Cross. Therefore, take it as your weapon of offence, as your shield of defence, and you will be victorious in every conflict, till at last Jesus Who conquered by the Cross, will put upon your brow the victor's crown in the kingdom of His Father.

## THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

HAVING in the two preceding Lectures treated of the veneration paid to the Cross, and of the pious practice of making upon ourselves that holy sign, we will now speak to you of that most popular devotion, the "Way of the Cross," or, as it is more commonly called, "the Stations of the Cross".

The word "Statio," or station, is a military term used by the Romans to designate the outpost thrown forwards to protect the entrance to a camp. In early times, the Christians applied the word to a minor fasting-day, on which the faithful were accustomed not to eat anything till after the "Hour of None," or about three o'clock in the afternoon. As prayer and fasting usually go hand in hand, the word later on, and particularly during the pontificate of Gregory the Great, came to mean not only a fasting-day, but a day on which the Pope with more than ordinary solemnity offered the Holy Sacrifice. Hence we find in the Missal certain days marked as occasions when the Holy Father held a "Statio," at some particular church.

At the present day, however, the word is used to designate the fourteen representations of the various incidents in Our Lord's Passion. Of these pictures the faithful make use, to bring vividly before their minds all the sufferings endured for us by Our Redeemer, from His condemnation in the hall of Pilate, till pious hands laid His lifeless body in the tomb.

Beginning with that most unjust sentence of death passed upon Him, they go on to contemplate Him carrying His Cross. He staggers along under its crushing weight till He falls to the earth, utterly exhausted. He is raised up, and pushed forwards. He then meets His most holy Mother whose unutterable sorrow only adds to His suffering. As the Jews feared that Our Lord would never reach Calvary, the soldiers lay hold of Simon of Cyrene, and compel him to carry the Cross after Our Lord.

Next there is represented to us the woman who, as Jesus toiled along, offered to Him a towel with which to wipe from

His face the sweat and blood which disfigured it. A second fall is the result of His increasing weakness, and the sight of this and of His other sufferings causes the pitiful women among the crowd to burst into tears of compassion, and openly bewail His sorrows. A third fall makes still more evident His great weakness.

At last, Calvary is reached, and as a preliminary to His execution, Christ is stripped of His garments. He is then stretched upon the Cross, and ignominiously nailed to it, like some noxious thing. After three hours of cruellest agony, His head falls forwards upon His chest, and He dies. The hands of faithful friends detach the lifeless body from its bed of torture, and reverently lay it in the arms of the Virgin Mother. Finally, they carry it to the rock-hewn tomb, roll against the entrance a great stone, and withdraw in sorrow, but in hope of the bright resurrection morn.

In this way, devout souls, with meditation and prayer, pass from one representation to another, till the fourteen Stations of the Cross have been visited. This particular method of showing devotion to the sufferings and death of Our Lord, is of but comparatively recent date. But the custom of making what are in reality the various "Stations" of that way of sorrows, goes back to the days when men were living who themselves had followed Jesus to the scene of His death. We read that the Christians resident in Jerusalem were accustomed to visit, upon the way along which Jesus went, the various spots at which the incidents of His Passion had occurred, and there to meditate and pray, while calling to mind all that He had suffered. Even after the city had been taken by the Romans, and destroyed, the sites of the places where these incidents had occurred were not forgotten, but their exact positions were marked and handed down from generation to generation. Christians, in devout pilgrimage from various parts of the world, began to flock to these holy places, and with tears of sorrow to tread the path in which their Saviour had trodden, sprinkling it with His blood.

Then came the dark period when the Holy Land fell under the dominion of the infidel, a calamity which at last so stung

with shame and indignation the heart of Christendom, that kings and princes flew to arms, and, at the expenditure of immense treasures both of men and of money, wrested the sacred city from the sons of Mahomet. Then there arose over each of the well-known spots, stately monuments and costly buildings, by which men preserved for ever the memory of those sacred places in which the chief events of Christ's life and Passion had occurred.

At last, when owing to the duplicity and the treachery of the Greeks, the Holy City once again fell under Moslem sway, pilgrimages to these sacred shrines became, except in some rare instances, impossible for the great bulk of Christians.

Then the Franciscan Friars, in order to satisfy their devotion to the Passion of Christ, began to set up in their churches pictures of the various incidents in that piteous drama of our redemption, and to make the round of them, pausing before each for some minutes in silent meditation. In 1694, Pope Innocent XII. declared that the indulgences formerly gained by those who used to visit the Holy Places of Palestine, might now be gained by all Franciscans, and by those affiliated to their Order, if they devoutly made the Way of the Cross, that is to say, if they either passed from one of these pictures to another, or turned towards them, and meditated on the various stages of the story which these pictures so vividly set before their eyes. Benedict XIII., in 1726, extended this indulgence to all the faithful, and Clement XII., in 1731, granted the same privilege to those who made the Stations in churches not belonging to the Franciscans, provided that these Stations had, with the sanction of the Bishop, been erected by a Franciscan. In 1857, the English Bishops obtained permission from Rome to erect Stations of the Cross in all churches under their jurisdiction, provided that there were not in the neighbourhood any religious to whom this privilege belonged. These powers were, without any limitation, renewed in 1862, so that at present there is hardly a church or a chapel that does not possess its Stations of the Cross.



You will no doubt have noticed that nearly all the incidents represented by these Stations are recorded in the Holy Gospels. There are, however, six of these incidents which we have received, not from the words of the Sacred Text, but from Tradition. If you give to the matter a few moments' serious consideration, you will see that in these six there is nothing impossible, nothing incongruous, nothing that in any way puts a strain upon our faith. We are not called upon to believe them; and if we do not believe them, we do not sin against faith; nevertheless, any candid, fair-minded man who is a devout Christian, and given to meditation upon Our Lord's Passion, will feel no difficulty in accepting them as, at the very least, most probable, and as being most likely to have happened just as Tradition has reported them to us.

These incidents that are not mentioned by the Evangelists, are the three falls on the way to Calvary; Christ's meeting His holy Mother; the presentation to Him of a towel by the devout woman who is called Veronica; and the circumstance that when the disciples had detached from the Cross the body of their Lord, they laid it in the arms of His holy Mother.

Now, let us examine these incidents. In none of them is there any intrinsic improbability. On the contrary, a little reflection will convince us that they are most probable, and, from the circumstances of the case, only what we should naturally expect. First, with regard to Our Lord's three falls on the way to Calvary, there is nothing more likely than that they actually occurred. For, we must bear in mind that from the preceding Thursday evening He had had nothing to eat, and during the whole of the night He had been prevented by His captors from taking any rest. While in their hands He had been subjected to the most ruffianly treatment.

On the following day they hurried Him off to Pilate, and from the hall of that vacillating governor, to the court of the licentious Herod. After this prince had set Him at naught, mocked Him, and pronounced Him to be a fool, they dragged rather than conducted Him back to the hall of Pilate. There, by the permission of that unjust judge, they most cruelly scourged Him with the much-dreaded Roman *flagellum*, which

tore His flesh, and in places whipped it from His bones. They then pressed down upon His temples a crown of thorns, and, after sentence of death had been passed upon Him, dragged Him away to Calvary. From Pilate's hall to that place a considerable distance had to be traversed, Our Lord meanwhile bearing on His shoulders the enormous weight of His Cross.

Is it then at all unlikely that being exhausted by His long fast, His sleepless night, and the inhuman cruelty to which He had been subjected, His bodily strength should have failed Him ; that His head should have swam round with giddiness ; and that He should have fallen to the ground ? Besides, there is in this threefold fall a mysterious meaning. Man sins against God by yielding to the threefold concupiscence which withdraws him from his Maker—the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. Jesus, in the desert, resisted the temptations of this triple concupiscence ; but man succumbed to them ; therefore, Jesus would atone for man's transgressions by staggering under the weight of iniquity which they imposed upon Him, and by falling helpless to the earth as He toiled onwards to Calvary.

In His meeting with His sacred Mother, a meeting the record of which is handed down to us by pious Tradition, there is also nothing impossible, nothing improbable, but rather an incident which we should naturally expect, and which the Gospel gives us reason to expect. For the Sacred Text tells us that the Mother of Jesus stood beneath the Cross upon which her Divine Son slowly and painfully died in cruellest agony. Now, to have stood there she must have followed in His footsteps as He toiled along to the place of execution. She stood beneath the Cross, together with the beloved disciple. What more likely than that on the way to Calvary she should have seen her Son, that their eyes should have met, that Jesus should have wept well-nigh tears of blood for His Mother's grief, and that Mary's heart should have been pierced by that sword of sorrow foretold by Simeon, when she beheld her God, her Saviour, her Child thus so

barbarously treated, so shamefully outraged? This meeting, then, is only what we should naturally have expected. The early Christians would have known the precise spot at which it occurred; they marked it as one of the holy places to be visited; and thus, the Tradition both of its occurrence and of its position has come down to us.

Another Tradition, of which no record is found in the Gospel, is that a woman in the crowd, seeing Jesus covered with sweat, and with the blood which trickled down from His thorn-crowned head, came forwards, and holding out to Him a handkerchief, or a part of her white veil, allowed Him to wipe off the moisture, and thus somewhat relieve Himself of the inconvenience which it caused Him. This act of pity is also only what the words of the Evangelist would lead us to look for. He tells us that some pious women wept when they beheld the terrible suffering which Jesus endured, and the wretched plight to which the cruelty of His enemies had reduced Him. What marvel, then, if one of them stepped forwards as Our Lord halted near her, and raising the end of her flowing veil allowed Him therewith to wipe His face and leave upon it the impress of that face, now all moist with blood. The name of this pitiful woman is unknown, but grateful posterity has assigned to her the name Veronica—truthful likeness—because of the print of that face which we are told Our Lord deigned to leave upon the linen cloth with which she willed to do Him this kindness.

In connection with the taking down of Jesus from the Cross, an act performed so reverently by Joseph of Arimathea and by Nicodemus, there is a circumstance known to us by Tradition, but not mentioned in the Sacred Text. This, as well as the others already recorded, is, we repeat, only what we should naturally expect, and what is at the same time most likely to have occurred. The most holy Mother, as the Gospel relates, stood beneath the Cross on which her Divine Son had breathed His last. When the sacred limbs of that Son were detached from this rude bed of death, and the weeping disciples had lowered the lifeless body to the earth, what more natural than that they should deposit it in the arms of the

sorrowful Mother? Her bosom had been His first resting place on earth, and on that same bosom His head, when released from its thorny crown, would recline in His sleep of death.

These details, as we have said, are not to be found in the pages of Holy Writ; but we must remember that not all that Jesus either suffered or did has been recorded by the Evangelists. Many things happened to Him which only the hearts of faithful and loving disciples have treasured. Therefore, we may piously believe that the slightest incidents of the sacred Passion were thus gathered and preserved for our edification.

Let us, then, as we pass from one Station to another, devoutly meditate upon all the various stages of Christ's bitter Passion. In our past lives, we have, perhaps, by our oft-repeated, wilful sins, condemned Jesus to death as Pilate did. We must, therefore, repent of these and promise never again to repeat them. In imitation of Our Lord, we must take up our Cross, that is to say, God's yoke, and patiently and humbly, to the end of our lives, endeavour to carry it. If we should stumble and fall, we must like Jesus, arise and go onwards. If we have by our sins saddened both Him and His holy Mother, we must pray that the anguish which they experienced when they met upon the way to Calvary may help us to be truly contrite, and atone for our misdemeanours.

When we contemplate Simon of Cyrene carrying Our Lord's Cross, let us resolve never to be ashamed either of the Cross or of Jesus Christ. We must pray that the blood-stained image of Christ's holy face may be so indelibly impressed upon our minds, that in the hour of temptation it may stand between us and the enticements of sin, causing us by its expression of woe to turn away from them with shuddering horror. As we meditate upon His two other falls, our resolutions never to transgress the divine law must be redoubled in their ardour. Our Lord's words to the daughters of Jerusalem must stir us up to weep over our misdeeds and over His sorrows which were caused by them.

When we behold Him stripped of His garments, let us



sorrowfully call to mind our own most shameful deeds, which brought upon Him this ignominy, and humbly pray to be delivered from all false shame, conceit, and pride. Also, let us ask to be nailed with Christ to the Cross, so as never again to detach ourselves from His love and service. As we contemplate His lifeless body, hanging upon the instrument of our salvation, let us pray to die unto the world, and to live only unto God. Lastly, as we look upon the dead Christ laid to rest in the sepulchre, let us beseech our heavenly Father that our lives may be hidden with Christ in God, and that we may deserve to rise like Him, bright and radiant with glory, to meet our Judge.

Thus, by following His footsteps along this way of sorrows, our hearts will be filled with true contrition for all the evil that we have done, and with strong resolutions never again to yield to sin. Hence, the outcome of our devout contemplation upon the Stations of the Cross, will be a life filled with good works, which will be crowned by God with the reward of eternal life.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS<sup>1</sup>

### CHRIST CRUCIFIED, THE SUM OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN we take up a watch and look at the dial-plate, we see that it is marked out into various divisions of seconds, minutes, and hours, and that the hands, as they move round the circle, point out the time of the day or the night. If we open the case and look into the interior, we perceive that the movement of the hands is effected by a complex system of minute machinery. But if, pursuing our examination still farther, we inquire what that is which sets all this in motion, we discover

<sup>1</sup> In this and in the following Lectures on the "Teaching of the Cross," an attempt has been made to popularise Nicolas' "La Rédemption—Ses Enseignements," *Études Philosophiques sur le Christianisme*, tome iii., chap. i.

that it is the central spring. Now, in contemplating the face of the world, and comparing the appearance which it presents to us of mankind at the present day with mankind before the advent of Christianity, we cannot fail to see that the world of the present day is far better than was the world which knew not Christ. There is in it more justice, more uprightness, more purity of morals, more sanctity in the family life. This better state of things is, as it were, the face of the watch. Ask any fair-minded man to what we must attribute this improved condition of things, and he will unhesitatingly answer: "To the morality of the Gospel". Push your inquiry still farther, and he will reply: "The morality engendered by the Gospel rests upon the teaching of the Gospel," and the teaching of the Gospel centres in Christ crucified. He is the central spring of the whole Christian system. All its teaching is summed up in Christ crucified.

What, then, was the aim of God in setting up for the contemplation of man a crucified Christ? Why did He choose Him as an instrument, in preference to any other, for the instruction of man? The answer to these two questions will furnish us with abundant material for thought during the present Lecture.

In reply to the first question, we may say that God has set before the eyes of men a crucified Christ, in order to teach them the character of God, and, as a consequence of the knowledge thus imparted, to make them conform themselves to His likeness. In order thoroughly to understand this answer, we must reflect a little. Every one, we suppose, will admit that man was made for God, and that the soul of man is not, at present, in the state in which God intended it to be. That man was made for God, is evident from the fact that God is supreme. If He is supreme, then all men depend upon Him. This dependence of theirs upon Him, at once renders it impossible that they should, like Him, be the centre of their own being, finding their happiness within their own hearts. If they are not created by God to find their own beatitude in themselves, still less is it possible for them to find it in their fellow-men.

As for the other created things that surround them, their own experience, or the experience at least of other men upon whose veracity they can rely, has proved to them that they are totally inadequate to satisfy their craving for happiness, or to be the objects of their existence. Without a dissentient voice all these things proclaim aloud that they cannot fill up the void in man's heart.

Wealth can procure for him a great many things, but it cannot satisfy his thirst after perfect felicity which is the possession by the soul of its God. Sensual pleasures, may, for a time, dull the keen edge of this craving, but they cannot appease that devouring hunger. The pursuit of glory, may, for a season, divert man's attention from his true end, and thus cause him to forget his true happiness. He may succeed in even laying hold of the glittering crown with which it is wont to circle the brows of its votaries, but at his touch that crown crumbles into dust and leaves his hands empty. Power has for some natures a fascination which promises to satisfy all their needs. But in its train there follow cruel cares, embittering the chalice which promised to be a cup of unmixed pleasures. Even intellectual greatness, which is the highest, the noblest of these earthly goods, cannot give to the soul complete satisfaction. It still cries out for more and more. Vast fields of knowledge stretch out before its vision, boundless, illimitable. When the heights to which it aspired are climbed, Alps seem still to be piled upon Alps towering up into the sky. Intellectual greatness cannot satisfy the soul, because, like the soul itself, it is only a creature. The soul will be content with nothing short of God, for God has created it for Himself, and it can never rest till it reposes in Him.

If we grant all this, as we must, for experience has taught it, and experience, as we know so well, is a master from whom even fools learn wisdom, we cannot for a moment suppose that the soul is now in the state in which it left the hands of its beneficent Creator. For, at present, with all its illimitable longings and its discontent with everything short of God, it is yet so fickle and so feeble as to be turned aside from its

pursuit of Him by every insignificant trifle that flits across the horizon of its intelligence. The blame of this inconstancy is laid at the door of the fleshly envelope in which it is imprisoned. But the first man also was similarly circumstanced, and yet, as we are taught, he was so evenly balanced as to be able to keep under the control of his reason the lusts of the earthly portion of his being.

Now, however, that is to say after the fall, the link which existed between the flesh and the spirit, and maintained the balance of power, seems to have been snapped in twain by that fall, and ever since that catastrophe, the flesh has lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that at present man is a creature full of contradictions, of violent opposites. His nature is like a kingdom in which there is going on a sort of internecine struggle between two almost equally balanced parties. His flesh but too often prevails over his spiritual being. The rational part of him succumbs to the fleshly part, and thus the soul with all its glorious faculties is degraded and reduced to the vilest of slaveries. Therefore, Christianity if it pretends to be a religion, that is to say, a system which binds man to God, must be able to repair the broken link, must make the spirit superior to the flesh, and both thus amicably united, subject to God.

But how, it will be asked, can it effect this Herculean task? It can work this marvel by means of the lofty morality which it fearlessly teaches to the fallen nature of man. The laws which that morality enforces, put a bridle upon all the passions of the heart, not only upon those which manifest themselves by outward actions, but upon those which lie concealed within its most secret recesses. For the application of this stringent code there is requisite a motive power of extraordinary force, and this motive power is none other than the love of God. But to engender this love—which is an adhesion of the will to God—there is necessary a knowledge of God, for the will cannot love or adhere to that of which it is ignorant. Knowledge, however, reveals [to the blinded eyes of the will the qualities which beget love and stir up affection in the heart,

but the instrument or means which imparts this knowledge, is Christ crucified.

Therefore, the end which God had in view, in setting before the eyes of men Christ crucified, was to give to them this knowledge of God, and by giving it, to inflame their hearts with love for Him, which love would apply in their hearts the code of the moral law, and thus once again unite them with Him, and make them tend to Him as their last end, their supreme good.

But why choose this means or instrument, in preference to so many others which would have been so much more easy of application? This question leads us to the consideration of the second point which we proposed for discussion.

The choice of Christ crucified as an instrument for imparting this knowledge, and through this knowledge, for obtaining a powerful leverage upon the will of man, necessitates the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, His life of labour, and His ignominious death. It was an extraordinary choice, but the reason of it is not far to seek. It was chosen by God, because the other methods employed by Him, previously to the coming of Christ, were adapted to man in his state of innocence. These methods were suitable enough to effect man's union with God, when man was not so much under the influence of his passionate human nature as he was after the fall. In his fallen state, he was grievously wounded in every faculty. Consequently, he needed a remedy more powerful than was that which would have sufficed for him in his state of innocence. The evil gnawing at his spiritual life was great and extraordinary; therefore, the remedy destined to heal it must also be great and extraordinary, a remedy suitable to his altered condition.

In the state of innocence, God made Himself known to man by means of conscience, by the works of creation, and by revelation. For one whose senses are in complete subjection to reason, and whose passions are consequently under his control, and obedient to his guidance, these three means would be amply sufficient. Conscience is God's law written upon the tablets of the heart. Loud is its voice, and clear are its precepts, to

the ear of innocence. But when that voice has to speak against the voice of passion—that is to say—to the souls of men in a fallen state, its accents are drowned amid the shrill and discordant roar of passion's many voices. These unfortunately but too often prevail, and make for the soul a code of laws moulded upon the principle of self-gratification. Even with the best of men in a fallen state the most that conscience can do is to make itself felt by the idea of duty, and this idea, in itself so abstract, is one that for a heart so impassioned is very hard to grasp. Thus the check which it imposes is but as a thread binding the limbs of a giant. Therefore, conscience alone was inadequate for the purpose of reforming man.

Equally ineffectual was the check which the manifestation of God, by means of His works, was able to impose. The contemplation of these, would, doubtless, convey to a cultivated intelligence a certain knowledge of God. By a process of reasoning, that intelligence might acquire for itself some insight into His nature. It would show Him to man as a being of immense power, and of wisdom commensurate with His works; but that knowledge would not become practical. The conclusions which man might draw from it would not be such as he could carry with him into the conflict, and use as weapons against the wishes and the impulses of his nature. Passion speedily stifles the pleasing emotion engendered by such knowledge, particularly when that knowledge is directed against man's inmost self.

Even the primitive revelation vouchsafed to man in his state of innocence, failed to be practical, when he was in his fallen state. As the human family increased and left the cradle-lands in which God had at first brought it into existence, it carried away with it this manifestation of God, which had been vouchsafed to it. But the farther men went away from the fountain-head of their existence, the less clear became the knowledge of God's nature imparted to them by revelation, till at last only the wisest, the most highly cultured, were able to see in the muddy stream an image of the nature of God. Hence, the spectacle presented by the world on the

coming of the Christian revelation, may be summed up thus : "God was unknown to man ; man was unknown to himself ; and the ordinances of true religion were overthrown". The divine character had ceased to be the model of the human character. Man had so far forgotten the divine lineaments of God, that he hesitated not to invest Him with the lineaments of his own passions. Even paganism itself, by the voice of one of its poets, acknowledged that this hideous overthrow of right order had been brought about by ignorance of God :

Of all the ills that press on mortal man,  
His ignorance of God hath been the cause.<sup>1</sup>

In this state Christianity found man. It raised him from the abyss into which he had fallen, and brought him back to the state for which God had destined him. This marvellous revolution it effected by making known to him the character of God. For conveying to him this revelation, the Divine Wisdom employed a means well adapted to man's fallen state, and admirably suited for impressing upon the enfeebled vision of this lost creature the most striking features of that character. It did this in a visible and violent manner, because the desperate state of the creature required it. Conscience had failed to make itself heard in the cause of God. The voice of creation, which, in a thousand varied notes, sings of Him, had chanted His praises to a deafened ear, nay, to a well-nigh inanimate clod of earth. The truths unfolded by revelation had faded from man's memory. Its accents no longer reached his soul. Therefore, God made one last effort to imprint His character upon the mind and heart of man. He took to Himself a body like unto man's. He lived with him. He died for him. "Christ crucified" was the instrument of which God made use to open the blinded eyes of man, in order that he might look upon God and upon himself ; that he might see his own state and weep over it ; that he might see God and endeavour to mould himself into His likeness.

<sup>1</sup> Silvius Italicus, *Bellum Punicum*, iv.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS.

## CHRIST CRUCIFIED, REVEALS MAN UNTO HIMSELF.

OVER the entrance of the Temple at Delphi, the worshippers who came to consult the oracle and to offer sacrifice read these enigmatical words: "Know thyself". The letters stood out prominent before the eyes of all, as if to indicate that access to God must be begun by knowledge of self. The philosophers accordingly did their utmost to explain unto man what he is; but when they came to examine his nature, they discovered in it so much that is contradictory, that they arrived at very different conclusions concerning one who has so much that points to a divinity, so much that would rank him among the brute creation. The enigma thus presented to the human race for solution remained unsolved, till Christ appeared in the world and imparted to mankind the knowledge of which it was in search. Men were told to know themselves, as a first step to the knowledge of God; and Christ, hanging on the Cross, set before their eyes an image which revealed to them what they are.

How that crucified God effected this we are now about to inquire; but before we can fully appreciate His solution of the enigma, we must first give a glance at the attempts which the pagan world had already made to explain man unto himself.

Before the coming of Christ, two Schools of philosophy had tried to teach man what he is. The School of Zeno told him that he is a divinity; the School of Epicurus, that he is a brute beast. Like the knights in the fable, who looked at the shield from opposite sides, each of these Schools had arrived at its conclusion, in consequence of having from different standpoints considered the nature of man. Zeno looked at him upon his intellectual side, and constructed for himself an ideal man, a man such as he would be if he were to follow his spiritual aspirations—an intellectual being endowed with powers which made him capable of searching into truth; able to grasp it; to deduce from it other truths which would broaden and deepen even still more the intelligence with



which he was ennobled. His sentiments concerning him might be aptly expressed in the words of our own great poet : "What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving, how express and admirable ! in action, how like an Angel ! in apprehension, how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals !" <sup>1</sup>

For so lofty an estimate of his nature, man has certainly given considerable warrant. His intelligence has mastered the brute creation, made it his willing servant to till the earth and help him to draw from it that which will both feed and clothe him. It has taught him all the arts that adorn life. It submits all things to his searching scrutiny. It has enabled him to grasp the very lightning of heaven and make it the vehicle which, in the twinkling of an eye, carries his thoughts and his wishes to the ends of the earth. It has taught him to yoke together the two elements, fire and water, and make them labour for him with untiring muscle. Where its progress towards perfection will stay, it is difficult to determine. Yet, keen-sighted and far-reaching as it is, the human intelligence has not been able by its own light to show man unto himself and tell him what he is. Whenever it has directed its energies to explore in that direction, the result of its researches has been to lead him into the grossest errors concerning his being and its destiny.

Very different is the notion of man, given to us by the other School of philosophy. In the eyes of Epicurus, and of those who followed him, man is nothing more than an animal. The end of his existence, as far as they are able to discover it, might be expressed by the words : "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die". When man, following out the lessons of this School, had reduced its principles to practice, and pushed them to their utmost limits, where should we be able to find in him the divinity of which Zeno speaks ? We look for it in vain. We find nothing but a highly cultured brute beast. Self is with him the one object of life ; and

<sup>1</sup> Hamlet, act ii., scene 2.

those who followed this philosophy have truly likened themselves to swine. No trace of a divinity can be found in them. There is no nobility of feeling, no generosity of heart, no aspiration to anything that is higher than themselves. Instead of lofty sentiments, we find an absence of self-respect, a disregard for the sacred ties of family, no faith, no sense of the dignity of human nature. Brute passion holds supreme command, and unto it all else must yield. Therefore, it is no wonder that the School which from this standpoint undertakes to give its verdict upon the nature of man, considers it to be merely animal.

Its attempts to explain man unto himself proved an utter failure. To succeed in so great a task was reserved for Jesus Christ, and He accomplished that work from the gibbet of the Cross.

Lift up your eyes and look at Him as He hangs suspended there between heaven and earth. He has become, as it were, a worm and no man, the outcast of men, the reproach of the people. All the contumely, all the scorn, all the contempt that His enemies could heap upon Him, have been piled upon His head. Like some noxious creature, He is nailed to the Cross; He is crowned with thorns; His flesh is rent and torn; His eyes are dim with blood which has trickled into them from that crown of thorns which presses upon his brow like a circle of fire; His tongue is parched with devouring thirst. Before that God-man we cover our faces and cry aloud: "Behold the Man!"

Approach and listen attentively to what He will tell you of yourself. "You are not a divinity. You are not a brute beast. You are, in your moral nature, such as you see Me in my present condition. You have been wounded by the primal fall. Your flesh is in rebellion against your spiritual nature. The farther you receded from the cradle in which the primitive revelation was made to you, the more degraded did you become. Your soul is tied down to earthly things. Your intelligence is darkened by ignorance. Your will is enfeebled by passion. Your darkened intelligence gave to you a false religion and a false philosophy;

your enfeebled will made you cleave to the corrupt morality which these failed not to teach."

Therefore, from a moral point of view, man, when Christ came to redeem him, was in a condition similar to that in which, from a physical point of view, Christ Our Lord was, when He hung upon the Cross amid the darkness of the mysterious eclipse. In that piteous plight, He revealed man unto himself. "Know thyself," was the lesson which man was told to learn; and Christ, in His own person, taught him that lesson: "Behold the Man".

That lesson has upon him two salutary effects—it humbles, and it exalts him. It humbles him, because in Christ crucified he sees his own misery and helplessness. He feels that he has noble aspirations, but that he is unable to reach the height to which they urge him. He perceives that his nature is passionately inclined to evil, and that he is hurried on with a kind of animal impetuosity to gratify its instincts. All this fills him with confusion, humbles him, and causes him to acknowledge that he is a leper, a worm, and no man.

But while humbling him, it fails not also to exalt him. For it reminds him that as the divine nature was united with the humanity of Christ, in the ignominy of the Cross, it ceased not to be joined with it also in the glory of the resurrection. The face that was buffeted by the hands of sinners, is now shining with the effulgence of the divinity. The head that was crowned with thorns, is now circled with the unfading beauty of the deity. The body that was rent and torn by the degrading lash, is now immortal and impassible, "death shall no more have dominion over it".

So also will it be with man, if he apply the balsam of Christ's precious blood to his fallen nature, so sorely smitten by the plague of sin; if he nail his hands to the Cross, by observing the law of God; if he crown his head with thorns, by warding off from it all evil thoughts; if he crucify his whole nature, by subjecting it to the salutary discipline of mortification.

But Christ crucified does more than this. He reconciles those apparently contradictory teachings of pagan philosophy,

by extracting from each the germ of truth which both undoubtedly contained. Let us see how He effected this marvel.

In Christ crucified, there are two apparently contrary qualities, strength and weakness. In the garden of Gethsemane, we behold weakness. Christ was filled with fear. He recoiled from suffering and from death; He sweated blood; He sought for human aid and sympathy. But during the succeeding stages of His Passion, He manifested a divine strength. He was calm and dignified in the presence of His unjust judges; He was gentle under ruffianly treatment; He was silent when slanderously accused. Thus the two natures in Him, the divine and the human, shone out clear and distinct—strength in the divine nature, weakness in the human nature.

In man, also, the divine and the human element are shadowed forth by his own nature, and by God's grace. Of his own nature, he is an abyss of weakness; but, by God's grace, he is a pillar of strength. All the weakness belongs to the nature; all the strength to the grace of God. Thus, Christ crucified points out to man that he is neither a mere animal, nor yet a divinity, but a poor, weak creature, who has lost the dignity with which God invested him, and who must win it back by labour and self-sacrifice, aided by the grace of God. Such is the second lesson of the Cross.

It imparts to us the knowledge of ourselves, that thereby we may attain to the knowledge of God. It tells us that we are neither brute beasts nor divinities, but that by reason of original sin, and by the consequences that flow from it, we are in our moral nature such as was the body of Christ when He hung upon the ignominious Cross. We are weakened and wounded in every power and faculty. Our eyes are keen to search out evil, our feet swift to run to it, our hands ready to execute it, our hearts prone to revel in its fleeting pleasures. This is our weak side, and the contemplation of it ought to humble our proud hearts even to the dust before that God Who looks into them, and sees all their hideous corruption.

But we have also our strong side, made powerful by that Physician Who applies the healing balsam of His blood to

fortify our weakness. His thorn-crowned head purifies our thoughts; His eyes filled with blood, and closed in death, turn away our own from the search after vanity; His hands, so cruelly nailed to the saving wood, withhold ours from doing ill; His feet, so firmly fixed, keep ours from the ways of unrighteousness; His heart, cleft in twain, empties ours of all affection to that which is evil. In the prayerful contemplation of these wounds, lies our strength. The eyes that are fixed upon Christ crucified keep the whole man chained to the Cross, strong in the fixed resolve never to burst asunder the bonds of love that hold him there a willing prisoner.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS.

### CHRIST CRUCIFIED REVEALS TO US THE SANCTITY OF GOD.

AS we saw in the preceding Lecture, Christ crucified reveals to man a true idea of human nature, and points out to him the height from which he fell, by reason of the primal transgression. This, however, is neither the first, nor the most direct lesson of the Cross. We became what we are, by losing the knowledge of God. Therefore, to restore to us that knowledge must be the first teaching of the Cross. Some notion of the extent to which this knowledge had faded from the mind of the human family may be formed from the fact that the Egyptians could write over the doors of their temples these words concerning God: "I am all that has been, all that is, all that shall be; no mortal has ever been able *to lift My veil*". Philosophy with all its subtlety was unable to do it. To the question: "What is God?" it could give no satisfactory answer. Even at Athens, the home of philosophy, St. Paul found an altar "to the unknown God". He went thither, to lift the veil which hung over the face of God. In order to effect his purpose, "he preached [to the Athenians] Christ crucified". That bruised and bleeding figure gave to them, as it gives to us, the knowledge of God. It unfolds to our

eyes His sanctity, His wisdom, His power, His justice and His love.

Let us, however, for the present, narrow somewhat the field of our inquiry to this one proposition—Christ crucified unfolds to our view the scanty of God.

To reach the truth which it enunciates, it will be necessary for us to examine the method employed by God to make known to His chosen people this attribute of His divine nature; then to compare with it the method of which He made use, under the new dispensation, to impart to us that same truth. From this comparison it will become evident to us that Christ crucified lifts the veil which hung of old over the face of God; it will manifest to us His adorable sanctity.

Previously to the coming of Christ, when the service of God was a service of fear, He impressed upon His servants an idea of this attribute, by the imposition of certain rigorous ordinances which continually reminded them of their utter unworthiness to approach even the place in which He deigned to be present with them, or in which the symbols of His adoption of them as His peculiar people were religiously preserved. When the great lawgiver, Moses, drew nigh to see the burning bush which blazed without being consumed, he was checked in his advance, and ordered to uncover his feet, because the very ground upon which God deigned to manifest to him this marvel was holy. Again, when he went up into the mountain to confer with God, he was ordered first to purify himself. The people whom he led out of Egypt, when called to the foot of the mountain to hear the law proclaimed, not by the voice of God, but, as it is thought, by the voice of an Angel speaking in His person, were commanded also to purify themselves for the space of three days, though they were not summoned, as Moses was, to ascend into the cloud-covered heights. Even their flocks and herds were to be kept at a distance from it, least they should be slain by the thunderbolts of God. These orders were given that men might learn the awful holiness of the Lord, the vast difference between Him and them, their unworthiness even to appear in His sight.

However, under the new dispensation, which is the reality of that which was prefigured by the old, the method employed by God to manifest His sanctity is even more striking, and better adapted for making a deeper and more lasting impression, than was the one which preceded it. The time for figures having passed away, the reality at last appeared, the original of the picture entered upon the scene. Therefore, the divinely inspired Scripture makes Christ address in these words His eternal Father: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. . . . Then said I, Behold I come".<sup>1</sup> He Whom the sacrifices of the old law represented, He out of regard for Whose merits these sacrifices had power to please and to satisfy God, was come into this world, fitted with a body which He might immolate, to appease the wrath of God, to blot out the sins of the world, to restore man to the position whence he had fallen, and to invest him with the immortality to which he had forfeited all right. Christ the God-Man was come to suffer, to be our crucified Saviour.

Look upon Him, O man! and see how the veil drops, and you gaze for the first time upon the sanctity of God! What does that torn and bleeding form say to you concerning the essential attributes of God? It says, Almighty God is so holy that you cannot approach Him, unless you are first purified in the blood of the God-Man. He is so holy that no victim can adequately honour Him, unless it is as great and as holy as Himself. It says: "I am the Christ, the only-begotten of the Father. I am His equal in all perfection. With Him, I am one in truth. United to thy humanity, I offer Myself as man, to atone for man's sin and to restore him to the love of God.

From the greatness, the dignity, and the sanctity of the victim, judge of the sanctity of Him to Whom the sacrifice is offered. Judge of the holiness of Him Who would not suffer human nature to approach to Him, unless it were shrouded in and sanctified by the divinity of His Son.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 5.

He spoke with the Prophets, because they were types of that Son; He accepted their sacrifices, because these mirrored before His eyes the sacrifice of that Son; He endured them in His presence, because besides being types of the Messiah, they served to keep the image of Him before the people. Thus we see that Christ, in the abasement of the Cross, deeply impresses upon the minds of men a high idea of the awful sanctity of God.

That you may have a keener appreciation of this truth, it will be necessary to show you that Christ crucified pronounces upon the sanctity of God a judgment identical with that which the Godhead pronounces upon itself. To bring this statement out into the clearest possible light, we may lay down the well-known principle, that every being acts in accordance with its nature. Such as the nature is, such also will the acts of the nature be. We may truly say of it: "By its acts you shall know it". Thus, we judge what a man is, by that which he does. His deeds are the standard by which we take his measure. If he be a sharp, clear-headed man, whose mind powerfully conceives and energetically expresses its thoughts, he will in his acts give manifest signs of the mental vigour that is in him. Those acts will bear upon them the impress of the nature that has produced them. In like manner, we perceive that a man is slow, dull, heavy, from the fact that in what he does there is evident sign of the torpor of his intellect. The same means also furnish us with a standard by which to learn the nature of God. That nature, by its acts, pronounces upon itself a sentence which declares unto us what the nature is. Take, as an instance, its first great act with which we are acquainted, that is to say, the creation, which brought into existence this vast world. What is the judgment which that act pronounces concerning Him? The whole earth, and in a thousand voices, the firmament with its myriad stars, the deep with its multitudinous inhabitants, cry aloud and say of God: "Thou art omnipotent!"

What says that same gigantic work, when intelligent beings, looking into and examining the various parts of which it is composed, discover with delight that every part is governed



by certain fixed laws ; that as the earth's vast bulk whirls with incredible velocity round the flaming sun, it is held within its orbit by a force imparted to it by its Creator ; that its seasons succeed one another with unerring regularity ; that the night unfailingly follows after the day, renewing with balmy sleep the vigour of all ; that the tides ebb and flow ; that the ocean rolls not beyond its limits ; that the stars have their courses, their risings, and their settings ; in one word, that all things are maintained in being, and in their appointed places, by laws most admirably adapted to make them fulfil the office for which they were intended,—what we ask does all this say of God ? It says : “Thou art most wise !”

Then, when we look at man, the masterpiece of this material creation, the lord for whom this earthly palace was built,—when we look at his beautiful body, informed by his still more beautiful soul, like a priceless jewel enclosed in a golden casket, when we look at him, and know that he is left in the hands of his own counsel, that he has before him both life and death, that which is good and that which is evil, with perfect liberty to choose whichever shall please him, a liberty so untrammelled that God Himself will not force it, what do all these gifts of God say about Him the giver, but that “He is goodness and justice itself”.

Lastly, when God's love for man overflowed upon him, and the eternal Son of God, in the person Christ, united Himself with human nature, when God was thus joined with His own work, then that act proclaimed Him to be infinite.

Having revolved in our mind these lofty thoughts, by what attribute shall we best be able to sum up these various qualities of the Godhead ? By what term shall we be able to express the total of them all ? The word “All-Holy,” will do this for us ; and the means by which we are enabled to enunciate this of God, is Christ crucified. We thus form of God that judgment which He forms of Himself.

You may, perhaps, ask : “How do we form this judgment concerning God ?” I answer : We form it in this way. Our only approach to the Godhead is through Jesus Christ ; our

God's wisdom, then, manifested to the world by the sacrifice of the Cross, is the problem on which we are about to meditate.

No one can have failed to notice that, whenever men execute any work which does not come up to the level of their ideal conception of it, they either altogether cast it aside, or destroy it, and then begin afresh. The artist first forms for himself a model; he adds to it; he takes from it; he destroys it; and then begins again, till at last the ideal of his mind is satisfied. The author and the poet do the same. The mechanic also advances to perfection through a multitude of failures. They are men, imperfect beings, and consequently their works partake of their nature; they are full of flaws which mar their beauty and their excellence. It is not so with the works of God. He is the perfect Being, and His works partaking of His nature, are all good and perfect.

When, however, through the malice of men or of the devil, imperfection or evil is mixed up with them, God does not, like man, destroy and begin afresh, but by His almighty power, taking the work in its deformed state, He draws good out of that which has been made evil. This proceeding, on the part of God, is specially noticeable in the great work of our creation and redemption. For when Lucifer, by an act of his own free-will, had introduced evil into the first created work of God's hands with which we are acquainted, and had drawn into his rebellion millions of the heavenly hosts, God did not utterly destroy His first work, but out of it, though thus deformed, He drew the good of our creation; for, as the Fathers teach us, man was brought into being in order to fill up the void made in creation by the defection of the wicked angels.

But to man, as to the Angels, God in His infinite goodness gave the gift of free-will. Man was able, consequently, like them, either to forfeit or to preserve the dignity for which God had called him into being. Like the rebellious angels, he unhappily abused the power bestowed upon his nature. He cast off his allegiance to his Creator, and at once fell under the dominion of his lower nature. He disobeyed His

God, and, as a punishment, fell under the dominion of his own flesh. Forthwith there appeared within him, as it were, two men hostile to each other, the one dragging him forcibly to the gratification of his animal nature, the other urging him to follow the nobler aspirations of his spiritual being.

From this evil or marred work of His hands, God again drew good. He did not destroy the man whom He had created, nor yet so rigorously punish him as He had punished the apostate angels. Man's punishment was tempered with mercy, because his sin was not so spontaneous as theirs, and it had, moreover, been committed at their suggestion. He was not cast into hell; but the loss of divine grace subjected him to the war of the senses against the spirit, to toil and labour, to death and corruption. The work of God was indeed marred, but out of that work, thus made evil, God was to draw good. He formed a plan for man's redemption, and it is by considering how He surmounted the obstacles which stood in His way, and as it were hindered Him from carrying that plan into effect, that the wisdom of God is made manifest to us.

The first difficulty that opposed the design of God arose from the side of His infinite justice. Man can forgive his fellow-man without exacting from him any satisfaction, because with him justice is not absolute but only delegated, in the same way that power is not absolutely in the hands of the judges, but it is so in those of the Sovereign. God, however, being absolute justice, cannot pardon gratuitously, that is to say, without exacting some satisfaction; for, if He did so, He would be denying Himself. He must demand satisfaction, and satisfaction proportionate to the justice which claims it. But His justice being infinite, requires an infinite satisfaction. This is the difficulty on God's side of the question.

Now, let us look at the difficulty on the side of man. By transgressing the command of God, man became God's debtor, and to quit himself of his debt, he must make to God a complete satisfaction. But in the fallen state to which his sin reduced him, he was utterly without merit before God, and, consequently, he could offer Him nothing to appease His

works derive their merit from the fact that they are looked at by God, through Jesus Christ; our prayers are made worthy of His acceptance because they pass through Him; we might almost say that we ourselves have, in His eyes, a real existence only because we are represented by Jesus Christ; we offer Jesus Christ to His Father, and we adore the Father through Jesus Christ. By this act, we pronounce concerning God the judgment which He pronounces concerning Himself. We say to him: "Thou art All-Holy". We raise His divinity above everything else. We separate it from everything else, and thus we form upon God a judgment identical with that which He forms upon Himself.

Therefore, the Cross of Christ teaches us two lessons. In the first place, it points out to us the necessity for a mediator, or some one to stand between our fallen nature and the Godhead. For, from the fact that God requires one so holy, one equal to Himself, and, moreover, one clothed in our human nature to fill this office, we are given to understand how utterly impossible it would have been for us, without such a mediator, to have held any communication with our Creator. We are made to see, that God being infinite, and we so limited in every respect, there could not otherwise be any point of relation, any ground on which God and ourselves could meet. Consequently, we see the necessity for some one to step in between us, for some one who shall be, in a certain way, finite like ourselves—finite in His humanity, and yet infinite in His divinity.

In the next place, we learn from Christ crucified that only we Christians can divinely praise God, and have access to Him. What we have just said about there being no point of relation between that which is finite, and that which is infinite, and also about the necessity for a mediator, will suffice to show that we can have no access to God, unless we approach Him through Jesus Christ. That only Christians can divinely praise Him is evident; for, our homage being given to God—not directly, but through the mouth of Jesus Christ, equal to the God Whom we adore, and, at the same time, one with Him, that fact imparts to our homage a worth which of itself

it does not possess ; for, by being united with Christ's homage offered in His humanity, it is divinised.

If you bear in mind these deep and holy thoughts, each of you who are holy will endeavour to become still more holy. He who is, in a measure perfect, will strive to rise higher still in the scale of perfection. He will tend daily to become more like unto the Divine Model, Who wishes us to fashion our lives upon His own. You will thus at last be found worthy to mingle with those who ever stand before His throne, and ceaselessly proclaim this attribute of holiness. In the contemplation of it, your eternal repose, your never-ending happiness will consist.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS.

### CHRIST CRUCIFIED MANIFESTS THE WISDOM OF GOD.

To the polished, philosophical Greek who listened to St. Paul preaching "Christ crucified," the words of the Apostle seemed to be the height of folly. That the Divinity should have become man, and that as man, He should have condescended, for the sake of His fellow-men, to die the death of a common slave upon the ignominious Cross, amid the jeers of an infuriated rabble, ran counter to all his notions of what was right, and just, and fitting. But God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, nor are His ways man's ways. He seems, in His dealings with us, to select both ways and means of carrying out His purposes, quite at variance with that which we might naturally expect. When He wishes to accomplish some mighty work, He selects the weak things of the world, to carry it into effect. The things which to its pride and prudence seem lowly and foolish, these are the very instruments chosen by Him to carry out the purpose of His mind. This latter fact is, in no instance, more clearly exemplified, than in the method chosen by Him to reveal His wisdom to the world. This means was the death of Christ upon the Cross—to the Jews a source of scandal, to the Greeks an extreme of folly.

offended majesty, nothing that was worthy of being even favourably looked upon by God.

On the one hand, then, we have man incapable of winning his way back to favour, and on the other, God requiring a complete satisfaction; man asking for a full measure of mercy, God for a full measure of justice. How to satisfy both these demands was a problem which only God could solve. Let us follow Him in His solution of it, for by that solution His wisdom will be made to shine resplendent before our eyes.

Our faith teaches us that in God there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all three equal, yet only one God. To redeem man, the Son quits, if we may so speak, the bosom of the Father, and offers Himself as a victim to expiate man's sins. Being God, equal to the Father, His merits will be amply sufficient to pay the debt contracted by the human race. Thus, one difficulty is removed; but another yet remains. He is God, and, consequently, He cannot suffer. But atonement or satisfaction requires that the person satisfying should undergo an expiatory suffering of some kind or other. Of suffering, however, God is incapable; or if He could suffer, His sufferings being those of a nature totally different from man's nature, could be of no avail to man. For, as we can easily see, such must necessarily be the case: man would not understand these sufferings; he could not, therefore, know that atonement had been made; and being a free, intelligent creature, he cannot be saved unknown to himself. It must be with the co-operation of his own will. Moreover, God Himself would not accept a reparation altogether foreign to the nature of the fault committed by the guilty party. If, for instance, the fault has been one of pride, it must be atoned for by humiliation; if of rebellion, by obedience; if of the flesh, by works of mortification.

How then was it possible to remove these difficulties? They could be swept aside in this way: by the expiating victim being a Man-God, to suffer and to merit; man to suffer, and God to merit for the fallen race. This is the masterpiece of divine wisdom wrought by Jesus Christ upon the Cross, in the

work of redemption. Uniting in Himself the divine and the human nature, He has, on the one hand, all the rights of the justice of God, and on the other all the interests of guilty humanity. Thus equipped, He comes to execute the great work of expiating the sins of men, of redeeming them, and of restoring them to the height whence they had fallen.

He became man, to atone for their pride in wishing to become gods—for the attainment of this end was the tempting bait held up before their eyes by the Serpent: "Ye shall be as gods". But in assuming our humanity, how completely did He abase Himself! He did not take to Himself the nature of man in its state of maturity, but in its state of infantile weakness; He entered the world as do the very meanest of His creatures. As a helpless babe, He was carried in the arms of His Mother, and before the eyes of men, He grew and developed His powers as other children do. Till His thirtieth year, He lived in the greatest obscurity, hidden from the notice of men, in this way expiating our pride.

Man, however, by sinning, had willingly suffered his senses to revolt from God, and to gain the upper hand of his spiritual nature. Christ must, therefore, atone for this also. Consequently, the body which He assumed, was not, as some heretics have pretended, a body that was incapable of suffering, but one like unto ours, sensible to pain, and more keenly alive to it than ours are. All this, however, was but preparatory to His great work. Thus laden with our weaknesses and infirmities, but at the same time having the nature and the attributes of God, the Sacred Victim proceeds to consummate His sacrifice upon the Cross. On that Cross, man and God met, so to speak, to pass into each other. God descended to the lowest depth of human misery, while man by means of Christ elevated himself to the divine nature.

Behold now this twofold character of God and of man, in the great Victim Who presents Himself before you. His life has been a series of contradiction and of obstinate opposition on the part of the leaders of that people to whom His teaching was addressed. They envied Him; they calumniated Him; they poured out upon Him all the malignant hatred of their hearts.

At last they apprehended Him, and hurried Him from one tribunal to another, one judge treating Him as a fool, the other as an enthusiast whom a little wholesome correction might amend. Accordingly, He was handed over to the brutal treatment of the soldiery, who scourged Him as a malefactor, with a severity and a cruelty unparalleled in history. He had said : " I am a King " Whose kingdom, it is true, is not of this world ; and for this, their diabolical ingenuity discovered a new method of torture. They circled His head with a crown of thorns, which with savage exultation they smote down upon His sacred temples. When at last His enemies had prevailed upon the vacillating judge to condemn Him to death, they led Him off bearing upon His lacerated shoulders that which was to be the ignominious instrument of His death. Arrived at the place of execution, they cast Him down upon the Cross and nailed Him to it, as they would some noxious animal. Then they raised it aloft, that He might hang there in the sight of all the people, and while He was struggling in the agonies of death, they blasphemed Him, and derided Him.

You have looked upon the Man. Now behold the God ! When all these torments and ignominies were presented before His mental vision, as He knelt in agony in the garden, His mere human nature was horrified. It would have turned away from them. But the Divine Nature was there too, and it accepted the bitter chalice : " Not My will, but Thine be done ". That act, heroic, divine, persevered through the whole Passion. Each of its torments was met and endured with a superhuman courage, a courage not sustained by scorn of His enemies, but by a meekness that accepted each insult, each suffering, with an internal act of love and of solicitude for those who inflicted it upon Him.

Throughout the whole of that fearful drama, His goodness shone forth supreme. He forgot Himself and thought only of others. The tears of the holy women who wept as they beheld His swollen, disfigured face, His trickling blood, His tottering footsteps, called forth from Him words which plainly prove this : " Weep not," said He, " for Me, but for yourselves and for your children ". On the Cross He thought of His



Mother, He thought of us, He thought of His executioners He thought of the thief hanging by His side. His solicitude, His prayers were for them; of Himself He thought not. In this we see God! Covered and adorned with merits such as these, springing from the blood and the sufferings of a Man-God, our poor, worthless humanity can approach that God Whom it has offended. God can thus be reconciled to humanity, a fact which St. Paul has so truly and so wisely expressed in these well-known words: "God, indeed, was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself".<sup>1</sup>

Behold, then, the wisdom of God in the plan of redemption, drawing good out of evil. Man, by his creation, would, it is true, have enjoyed the possession of God; but whether he would ever have had the happiness and the dignity of having God united to his human nature is a very doubtful question. By this union, however, God has enabled man to do what man would never have been able to do if there had been no fall. For, suppose for a moment, that the Angels had not transgressed, and that man had not yielded to Lucifer's suggestion. In that contingency, both Angels and men would, indeed, have been able to honour and praise God; but it would have been with an honour and a praise as finite, as limited, as were the creatures who gave it. But now man can praise and honour God with an infinite honour, with an honour as great as God deserves, with an honour that will amply satisfy the Divine Nature, because he can present this honour to Him through Jesus Christ, God and Man. Thus it is that the action of God, in man's redemption, brings out clearly before our minds the infinite wisdom of Almighty God.

While you contemplate that wisdom, try to learn what, alas! it takes so long a time for us thoroughly to grasp, that great is the price that has been paid for our redemption, since Infinite Wisdom had to devise a means for effecting it. He had to assume our nature, to sacrifice the nature thus assumed, to give Himself wholly for us. Consequently, we must make

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19.

a firm resolve to respect our nature which has been sanctified by union with His ; to look upon our bodies as temples of the living God ; to bear God about in them ; to glorify Him in them. It would be a disgrace to our human nature, if after all that God has done for it, we should defile and ruin that which He came to cleanse and to save. We shall not be so ungrateful. Our hearts have too much generosity, too much real love for Him, to trample upon His benefits, and to despise His love. They will rather obey the Apostle's injunction, and because they have been redeemed at a great price, will become so many sanctuaries in which there will be erected an altar on which God shall sit as upon His throne. There He shall be glorified, there He shall remain till He shall call our souls away from this world of strife to taste of the fruits of His plenteous redemption.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED REVEALS TO US THE POWER OF GOD.

IF we were told to search among the works of God for that one of them which most loudly proclaims to us His almighty power, we should probably never think of selecting Christ crucified, because it would seem to us absurd to choose, as the standard for measuring God's power, that very work in which there is apparently nothing but weakness. Nevertheless, if we remember that God's thoughts are not men's thoughts, and that His ways are not men's way, that He selects the foolish things of this world to manifest His wisdom, and the weak things to show forth His power, we shall pause for a few moments before we reject as absurd that which may be so in appearance only. As He has chosen to manifest to us His wisdom by what appears to be folly, and His love by what appears to be inflexible severity, so also He may choose to manifest to us His power by what in our eyes appears to be the extreme of weakness. The illustrious Bossuet sees in

the death of Christ a great act of power ; and his thought is expressed by St. Paul in those well-known words : " Christ crucified—the power of God " .

As, then, the Apostle tells us that a crucified Christ manifests the almighty power of God, let us examine the problem, and see to what conclusion it will lead us.

It is a principle admitted among philosophers, that the works of any being manifest in a greater or in a less degree the nature of that being, that is to say, they bear upon them the stamp, the impress of the agent by whom they are produced. Thus, we see in the works of the inferior order of creation, evidence of the qualities with which God has endowed it. So is it also with man. We perceive in the works of his hand and of his brain the marks of the high gifts which characterise his nature. In the works of God also, the truth of this principle shines forth. When we read in Scripture that in the beginning He made heaven and earth, that His Spirit moved over the face of the chaotic mass, separating element from element, calling light into existence, peopling the firmament with stars, and the wide waste of waters with fishes, adorning the earth with verdure, filling the woods with beautiful living creatures, and tracing through the land a course for the fertilising waters, in all these acts or works we see and recognise the impress, the stamp of power, the works manifesting a nature which is all-powerful.

But wonderful as these works undoubtedly are, they do not astound us, because we say to ourselves : " These are the effects of an almighty hand ; it is only natural that they should bear upon them the mark of omnipotence " . Consequently, they are not for us so great a manifestation of power as is that displayed by Christ crucified. For, if God acts at all, it must be in an almighty manner, or at least in a manner that by men is esteemed to be so. Christ crucified, however, is not considered by superficial thinkers to be so great an act of power as are certain other of God's works, simply because at first sight it does not seem to be like those great, those mighty works with which our idea of God is ordinarily associated. But let any one reflect a little, and he will find that

Christ crucified is the most astounding manifestation of power that has ever been given by Almighty God.

To perform signal acts of power is for God a natural thing to do. It is as natural a thing for Him to execute them as it is for us to breathe. Consequently an idea of His almighty power will be brought more closely home to our intelligences, if we behold Him checking His nature, curbing it, preventing it from acting in accordance with those notions which we have formed of the Strong One by excellence. From this point of view, then, contemplate those manifestations of His omnipotence, and side by side with them, place the weaknesses of the Crucified.

Which is the more striking of these tests? Which of them more clearly makes known to us His almighty power? He said: "Let there be light". One after another He spoke those words of power, and, one after another, there sprang into existence all the various parts of this material world upon which we look, in which we live, and move, and have our being. Here we have God acting as God; He that is mighty doing that which is mighty. But now turn to that same God, to that same mighty One, and witness another prodigy. He stands as man, alone amid a crowd of men whose savage hearts are thirsting for His blood. He stands before a creature whom His hands have made. He hears the clamours that arise and the false accusations that are made against Him. The man who is sitting in judgment upon his God asks Him in amazement whether He will make any answer to all that they allege against Him. The Omnipotent remains silent: "*Jesus autem tacebat*". Here is a mastery over self that more feelingly brings home to our minds the infinite power of God, than the "*Fiat lux*" of the creation! For here is God, according to the bold expression of the Apostle, *emptying* Himself, and taking the form of a servant. In this form He crushes, He annihilates, so to speak, all His power, or rather He makes it enter into the service of His love, and thus manifests to us His omnipotence, under a form and in a manner which lead captive all hearts.

He allowed Himself to fear, and shuddered at the sight of

the ignominy and the suffering which filled to overflowing the chalice which He was to drain to its very dregs. He allowed Himself to be unmanned by the contemplation of it, to swoon away, to pray in His weakness that He might not be forced to drink it. What a power is here, that could thus subdue the All-powerful! He allowed Himself to be betrayed, to be apprehended, to be bound with cords, and led off like a malefactor. He allowed Himself to be derided, to be struck upon the face, to become a butt for the scorn and the clumsy ridicule of the impure Herod and of his licentious courtiers. He allowed His virginal flesh to be scourged, to be crucified, His life to be taken away, till at the end of the great work He cried aloud: "It is finished—*Consummatum est*". What omnipotence is here expressed! God dying by pain, Christ crucified, showing us, as St. Paul has said, the power of God: "*Dei virtutem*".

Look, from another point of view, at this manifestation of God's power. We all know, because it is a generally recognised fact, that the possession of power or ability usually conducts a man to greatness; and this greatness is itself nothing more than the homage and pre-eminence generally accorded to surpassing ability. Hence, we may form a very correct estimate of the quality of that power or ability, by the species of greatness which it secures for its possessor. We have, therefore, in our hands a standard by which to measure the power of God; for we can examine and see for ourselves to what species of greatness the power that we perceive in Christ conducted Him. There were before Him three species of greatness, to any of which, or to them all together, He might easily have aspired. These were material, intellectual, and moral greatness. Each of these corresponds to one or to another of the three powers, the physical, the mental, and the moral power. Which species of greatness did Christ choose for Himself? Which of them have men assigned to Him? If it is the highest of the three, then does Christ crucified most clearly show to us the power of God, which is of all other powers the greatest.

The lowest species of greatness, that which is looked upon as greatness merely through an infirmity of our nature, was completely rejected by Christ. He sought not for material greatness, though it might easily have been His. When the people in their enthusiastic admiration of Him, would have taken Him and made Him a king, He fled from them and hid Himself. His was not to be a greatness such as His people, with their gross carnal ideas had imagined for the long-expected Messiah. He was not to be a great captain who would deliver an oppressed people from their bondage. He was not to teach them how to wield the sword against their oppressors, and wipe out in blood the cruel wrongs and bitter tyranny of long years of subjection to a foreign yoke. He was not to lead them to triumph over and rule the nations of the earth. All this He might have done, had He been a mere man, had He sought after material greatness. But His kingdom was not of this world. He came to cast down pride ; to teach the ruler to be as the servant ; to teach men to be meek and humble of heart.

While rejecting material greatness, He did not seek intellectual greatness, though a greater than Solomon lay concealed beneath His lowly form. Far as it surpasses material greatness, by conferring a species of immortality upon its possessors, and easily as He might have had it, He nevertheless cast it from Him, lest the wisdom of this world should claim for itself some share in the glorious triumph of the folly of the Cross. For, what sage, what philosopher, what orator, what founder of a School that ever lived, could have had either a more numerous or a more devoted army of followers than Christ? Take up the Gospel narrative, and you will there find how the people flocked around Him in thousands, to hear the words that fell from His lips. They forgot their ordinary avocations ; they neglected to take their food ; they followed Him out into the desert, attracted, spell-bound, subdued by the witchery of His words, so that their testimony of Him was : " Never hath man spoken like this Man ". He had the power to lead men's hearts captive, to stir their blood, to fill them with undying love for

Himself. No adversary could find a vulnerable spot in His doctrine or in His practice. He could crumble their arguments as it were into dust, lay bare their cunning sophisms, and envelop them in the meshes in which they sought to entangle Him. Hence He might have stood alone in the arena of intellect, without a rival to dispute His supremacy. Yet He cast this glory from Him ; for there was yet one other species of greatness which He would find worthy of Himself ; which would testify of His power, that it is divine. This is *moral* greatness.

The sublimest philosopher of antiquity, the great Plato, formed for himself, in his picture of the just man, an ideal of this species of greatness. He never, in a concrete form, found the realisation of his musings, for such greatness belongs not to man, but to God, and to those whom God stamps with the impress of His Christ. When that Christ came into the world, He was the prototype of what the philosopher had dreamed. Plato had figured to himself a man full of justice, without pride, without ambition ; despising wealth, despising pleasure ; chaste, high-souled, loving, generous ; and all this, not because men loved and admired His character, but in spite of their hatred, their disdain, their insults, their abandonment, their derision. He looked for such a one among men, and he found him not. No human being had yet learnt from the spotless One, to look for no throne for his virtue except that of conscience, no witness of his heroism but the all-seeing eye of God.

Christ, the power of God came, and the greatness which He aspired to was that which alone is worthy of Him, a greatness which would manifest His power to man. He filled up the ideal of greatness shadowed forth by the philosopher. He surpassed it, and by His power attained to a moral greatness that can never be equalled by mortal man. He despised wealth, and pomp, and power. He became a servant, though He was Lord and Master of all. He was so spotlessly pure in life, that He challenged His bitterest enemies to point out in that life one single stain. He was meek and gentle, large-hearted, tender and compassionate to the weak and erring—"the bruised reed He did not break, the smoking flax He did not ex-

tinguish". When He was reviled, He did not revile ; when He was injured, He threatened not. Almost the last breath of His life was expended in a prayer for those who had crucified Him, and who stood around, jeering at Him in His death agony.

O Jesus ! O Master ! O Saviour ! who can worthily paint in poor, weak, human words a picture of Thy greatness, commensurate with Thy power, which is infinite ! We bow our heads before Thee in humble adoration, and pass on to one other consideration which will engrave upon our hearts the great fact that Thou, Our crucified Redeemer, even in Thy weakness and Thy misery, art, in very truth, the power of God.

That power of God is, perhaps, most ordinarily brought before us by the fact that this vast universe, with all that it contains, was drawn out of nothing by one act of the will of God. But there is another creation, as vast, as wonderful as the one that surrounds us, which also was called into existence by the same Almighty Being. This is the moral world, a world of virtue, of self-denial, of self-devotion, of high-souled Christian morality, which God brought into existence from the nothingness of the Cross of Christ. You will find, on reflection, that it will give you as lofty an idea of the power of God as does the creation of the material world in which we live.

Endeavour, then, to penetrate into this thought ; and try to estimate, by means of a contrast which the Holy Scripture presents to us, the power of God, displayed in this moral creation. In the Book of Machabees, the sacred writer thus sums up the career of Alexander : " After conquering King Darius, he fought many battles, took the strongholds of all, and slew the kings of the earth. He amassed boundless wealth, gathered together a great army, and made peoples and kings tributary to him. After this, he fell upon his bed and was about to die. Then he called together his great men, and divided among them his kingdoms. Alexander reigned twelve years, and he died."

Compare now, with this life, the life of Christ. He



was born of a humble Virgin, in the obscure village of Bethlehem. His foster father was a carpenter, who gained his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. The best years of His life were spent in the toil of an artisan's shop. He worked at the bench, as St. Joseph had done, probably under the command of others. At the age of thirty, He emerged from obscurity and began to teach, to start, as so many before Him had done, a School of thought and of action. Those whom He gathered round Him were not the powerful and the wise. They were men of the labouring classes,—virtuous it may be, but certainly ignorant and uncultured, as that class of men generally is. The great men of the time regarded Him as an innovator, an enthusiast, an airy day-dreamer, whose visionary scheme of morals would fall to the ground and come to naught.

Those who envied His acknowledged ability, and feared the influence which He acquired among the people, at last had Him arrested by the civil authority. He was tried, and condemned to death. He paid the extreme penalty of the law, by dying between two malefactors, on the disgraceful gibbet of the Cross. After that, He became the immortal King of heaven, of earth, and of all ages. His doctrine spread to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south. It spread, in spite of opposition the most bloody, the most determined, the best organised that men could devise. It spread, in spite of fire and of sword. It spread, in spite of the cunning and the policy of kings and of statesmen, till it filled the whole world, so that now, from the rising of the sun till the going down thereof, there is no land whence sacrifice in honour of the Crucified is not ascending before the throne of God.

No more striking expression of power could have been displayed by God than the power made manifest by Christ crucified. It made a man of low extraction, low at least in the eyes of the world, a man who had died a slave's death, the reformer of the world, its Saviour, its God. That which to the Jews was a rock of scandal, to the Greeks folly, is in very truth the manifestation of the power of God.

Therefore, whenever you kneel before an image of Christ crucified, with a contrite and humble heart kiss the hands and the feet that were so cruelly nailed to the wood of the Cross, and pray that the memory of His bitter Passion may bruise your heart with sorrow, and wean it from all affection to sin. Let that crucified image be your book from which to learn both your own nature and the nature of God: "*Ecce homo*—Behold the man." It contains in a compendious form the sum total of the teaching of the Gospel. That image shows you what you are. It reveals to you the infinite sanctity of God, Who required so august a Victim; His necessary, inflexible, inevitable justice, which exacted from that Victim the full amount of the debt owing to Him for the sins of the human race; His love, which constrained Him to give up His only begotten Son for its salvation; His wisdom, in devising a plan for the execution of His design, though insuperable difficulties stood in its way; and finally, His infinite power.

In moments of weakness and temptation, look upon that eloquent Cross of Christ. It will call back to your mind, one after another, each of these wonderful lessons. At the last dread moment of your mortal life, may your dying eyes rest upon the saving Cross. May it be your light to guide you through the portals of death, your joy to sustain you in that awful hour, your anchor of hope, by which you will hold fast to God. May He Who hung thereon and gave His life for you be for you throughout your whole life and for all eternity your Master, your King, your Lord.

## THE TEACHING OF THE CROSS.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED REVEALS TO US THE JUSTICE AND THE LOVE OF GOD.

IN this Lecture we shall learn from the Victim of Calvary two other attributes, which we purposely consider together, because they are, at the same time, made manifest to us. These are God's justice and God's love—attributes which to us appear

most diverse, but which Christ's sacrifice on the Cross presents to our minds united in one act. That sacrifice cries aloud to us: "God is infinitely *loving* and at the same time infinitely *just*". Let us, therefore, concentrate upon this proposition all the energy of our minds, that we may grasp its truth, and in order effectually to do so, let us once again fan into a bright and glowing flame the faith that is in us, while we steadfastly gaze upon the piteous spectacle which upon Calvary meets our eyes.

What does your faith say to you? It tells you what your bodily senses could never teach you—that the despised, disfigured, and dying Man Who hangs there upon that ignominious gibbet, is the only-begotten, supremely beloved Son of God, one with Him in substance, equal to Him in power and in majesty, in a word, God incarnate! As God, being innocent, pure, holy, He nevertheless condescended to take upon Himself the guilt of our fallen humanity, to carry our sins, to bear our sorrows and infirmities. Then the infinite justice of God struck Him for the sins of His people, till there was neither comeliness nor beauty in Him, till He became the most awe-inspiring spectacle of human suffering that the world has ever seen. This gives us a lofty idea of the justice of God, for it clearly sets before our eyes the qualities which characterise that dread attribute. It tells us, in language which no one can mistake, that His justice is necessary, inflexible, inevitable, and rigorous; for Christ, in spite of His innocence and sanctity did not disarm it; He had to bear the full weight of the blow which vindicated the insulted majesty of God. Such, in a few words, is the truth on which we are about to reflect.

In saying that the justice of God is *necessary*, we mean that it is an attribute without which our idea of God would be a false one. It is one of those that are essential to His nature, that must enter into the concept formed by our minds, when we utter the word God. For, by that word we mean the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the Creator of all that it contains, the Centre towards which all created things must tend. It follows from this that He must direct all these

things by laws adapted to their various natures, and to the various ends for which they were made. Those that are without the faculty of reason, He guides by laws which they have no power to transgress, but follow by a sort of blind instinct ; those, however, that are rational, He guides by laws which they either may or may not transgress, just as it shall seem good to them.

It follows, again, that being the Supreme Ruler of the universe, He must take care that His laws are observed, and, if they are transgressed, that the injury done thereby is duly rectified. This rectification of any wrong-doing is effected in the one or in the other of these two ways : either the guilty party repents, and by his repentance executes justice upon himself, thereby satisfying the justice of God, inasmuch as his acts are united with, and they derive their worth from the atoning sacrifice of the Cross ; or he does not repent, and, in consequence of not so doing, either sooner or later undergoes the penalty appointed by God.

This penalty or punishment is *necessary*, that is to say, God cannot suffer him to go scot-free, or pardon him without executing justice upon him. For the act of pardoning implies two parties—one who grants, and another who accepts pardon. To grant a pardon which is not accepted by repentance, would not be an act of justice, but of weakness ; it would be a defect which it would be impossible to conceive as existing in God ; it would be allowing wickedness to escape with impunity, and giving evil-doers encouragement to transgress still more ; it would be permitting man to find his felicity outside of God ; in other words, it would be a limitation of God's power. This is inadmissible in our notion of God. Therefore, the justice of God is necessary.

We shall still more clearly see the force of this conclusion, if we fix our eyes upon the Cross of Christ. There hangs One, Who to an infinite degree is spotless, full of all virtue and holiness. When He took upon Himself our human nature and the guilt of our human nature's transgression, He became, in the eyes of His Father, responsible for the whole race. Did that loving Father set aside the punishment due to our mis-

deeds, because He saw, standing in the place of the real culprits, His only-begotten Son, His consubstantial image? No; though that Son is the all-holy, the all-pure, the divine, He punished Him to satisfy His justice. He punished Him—not, indeed, as God, for that would be impossible—but as man, to whom the Godhead is hypostatically united. What more astounding proof can we have of the *necessity* for this justice? “God spared not His only-begotten Son!”

Besides being necessary, the justice of God is *inflexible* or unbending. Try to understand in what way it shows this, its unbending nature. Do we mean to assert that God’s justice may neither be averted nor appeased? No; that is not our meaning. By the inflexibility of divine justice, we would have you understand, that its demands must be satisfied in the one or in the other of these two ways—either by repentance or by punishment. If this is so, how came it to pass that Christ, Who repented and satisfied in our stead, Who by His repentance and satisfaction opened for us a source which will give efficacy to our repentance—how was it, we ask, that He did not escape the justice of God?

In this case, also, it is Christ crucified that brings out clearly before us the inflexible nature of the justice of God.

When man offends, and being touched with sorrow for his offence, sues for pardon and deprecates the anger of divine justice which is ready to strike him, God is appeased, because the sinful creature holds up before Him the terrible satisfaction which the all-holy One has offered for his sins, and thus God is, as it were, reminded of that abundantly sufficing atonement for the injury done to His justice by the transgression of man. But, with respect to the person of Christ, that inflexibility of God’s justice clearly manifests itself. His justice is necessary; the debt due to it must be paid by some one. Man is unable to pay it; for there is between him and God an infinite distance. Man’s works are not worthy to atone for even the slightest transgression. Therefore, a being equal to God must satisfy for him. When Christ, as that being, undertook to pay the penalty, He prayed, from the depths of His human nature that the chalice might

pass away. With His human will He besought God to set aside His justice, and not to punish; but at the same time He submitted Himself to the divine will. That divine will showed the inflexibility of its purpose. It willed that the chalice should not pass away, but that He should drain to the bitter dregs the vials of God's just indignation against sinful man.

Again; because God's justice is necessary and inflexible, it is also inevitable, there is no escape from it. To be convinced of this, we have but to cast a glance at Christ hanging on the Cross. If ever there was any one, who, out of a regard for his sanctity, deserved to be passed over untouched by the sword of justice, it was undoubtedly He Who is, by excellence, the Immaculate One. Upon Him there rested only the shadow of sin. His own will had placed Him in the position of those who were really guilty; and for having taken up that position, He had to feel the full weight of the blow which ought to have fallen upon them. If, then, God spared not His own beloved Son, how shall we hope to escape His justice? Whither shall we flee to avoid its stroke? In our folly, and in the frenzy of our passion, we hid ourselves from the light of day, as if we could thus effectually screen ourselves from the eyes of God. But whither can we go, to be beyond the reach of their far-seeing scrutiny? If we ascend to heaven, He is there. If we go down into the abyss, He is present. If we take wing early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there we shall find Him. If, then, we cannot escape from the sight of God, how shall we be able to screen ourselves from His justice, which *must* punish our sin? Escape is impossible! The hand of God will be upon us, for His justice is inevitable.

One glance more at your dying Saviour, and it will teach you that the justice of God is *rigorous*. We know that, no matter how heavy and severe that justice may be, it is always far short of that which our sins deserve. For, as the offence which we commit is offered to a God of infinite majesty, the punishment meted out to it ought, in a certain sense, to be infinite, in order adequately to chastise its guilt. But

God does not thus let fall upon us the full weight of His hand. Therefore, from the contemplation of your crucified Saviour, form unto yourselves some notion of the rigour of God's justice.

You look at Jesus Christ, and you see that there is not any sorrow like unto His sorrow. In Him you behold the extreme of all human suffering. The extreme of poverty—dying naked on the Cross, while the soldiers are casting lots for the only garment that He possesses. The extreme of bodily suffering—for He was beaten and bruised well-nigh out of all human semblance, till He had lost all beauty, all comeliness, for, from the top of His head to the sole of His foot there was no soundness in Him. The extreme of mental anguish—dying forsaken by His dearest friends—His mother, St. John, and the holy women excepted—whose grief added one other element of suffering and bitterness to His chalice of woe; forsaken by God and left without any interior consolation, so that in the anguish of His dereliction He gave utterance to that agonised cry which reveals to us this, His crowning sorrow.

Here, we behold God's justice in the punishment of sin, displayed in its most awe-inspiring colour: "For the sins of My people I have struck Him". Jesus is so holy, so innocent, so pure; yet, because He bears but the semblance of offence, He is smitten with an arm of almighty power. How necessary, how inflexible, how inevitable, how rigorous must that justice be which spared not the innocent Lamb of God!

Yes, my Jesus! Thy torn and bleeding body bears unmistakable witness to that dread attribute of God, before which we bow down in trembling adoration. Oh! make us fear to incur the risk of feeling its terrible stroke, and then the lesson which it has cost Thee so much to teach will not have been given in vain.

That lesson, we feel convinced, will make a lasting impression upon your minds, because the very object which teaches it brings prominently into view that other most attractive attribute of the divine nature, namely, its unspeakable *love*.

Though these words may seem at first sight a contradiction in terms, they are nevertheless most true—the justice of God, teaches us His unutterable love. Examine the matter for yourselves, and you will see its truth. The justice of God requires that the injury committed by man in rebelling against God should be repaired by an atonement. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, undertook to make that atonement, in order that man might not altogether fall away from his Maker, and bear the weight of an everlasting curse. By accepting His offer, and by inflicting upon Him the punishment due to our sins, God proved to us that He loves us as much as He loves His own Son.

Hence, St. John could say: “God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son for its redemption”. By so doing, He delivered Him up as the price due to His eternal justice. He thereby displayed the qualities of His justice. But does not that very justice show unto us His love? Is not that very act by which the justice is made known to us one which bears witness to His burning love? What earthly love can be compared with the love which the Eternal Father has for His co-equal Son? What intensity, what force of earthly love, can ever even shadow it forth? Earthly love at its best and most intense degree is but an image of the Eternal Father’s love for His Son. Nevertheless, great as is that love, He sacrificed Him for our sakes, and by that act showed forth the attribute of His love.

Again, Christ as God—one with the Father—when offered in sacrifice for our sins, “was offered because He willed it”. He willed it, because He could give us no greater proof of His love. Human love, as He Himself testifies, can give no surer token of its sincerity, its depths, its intensity, than by sacrificing for the object of its love the breath of life which God has given to man: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man should lay down his life for his friends”.<sup>1</sup> Yet, when any one carries his love to that extent, what does

<sup>1</sup> St. John xv. 13.



he sacrifice by giving up his life? He sacrifices only a few moments of it, for he is already doomed to die. But Christ, the Word, the source of life, could never die unless He voluntarily took upon Himself a nature that could give up life. Therefore, His act—the act of God—incontestably proves to us that God loves us with an intensity and a strength equal to His nature, that is to say, with an infinite love.

What is there that more clearly brings out this truth than the Cross? The fact of creation, great as it is, dwindles into insignificance when compared with it. To have been called into existence is a great boon. Greater still is the boon of having been called into existence for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. But greatest of all others is the boon by which these benefits, having been lost, are restored to us. Hence it is that no teaching has ever taken so fast a hold of the human heart as the teaching of redemption, by which this attribute of love has been made known to us. God, in the person of Jesus Christ, has more closely drawn to Himself our hearts of clay than as the great Almighty God, for in Jesus dying on the Cross we behold the God of goodness, the God of love.

Before I conclude, let me suggest to you a very practical reflection upon the subject which we have been considering. Incredible as it may seem to you, it is nevertheless but too true that there is scarcely any weapon employed by the devil with more subtlety, or with more skill, for the purpose of destroying souls than are the two attributes *justice* and *love*. We should imagine that in these he would find the two most formidable obstacles to his designs. Such, however, is not the case. For, just as God draws good out of evil, so the devil draws evil out of good. When he wishes to lure a soul from the path of duty, he bids it fear nothing, for God is exceedingly *good*, thus employing *love* as the bait which is to ensnare the unwary. But when God, by His trusty minister, remorse, knocks for admission at the door of the heart, he thrusts aside all thoughts of His goodness, and paints before the eyes of the affrighted sinner all the terrors of His necessary, inflexible, inevitable, rigorous justice.

By means of God's love, he draws the sinner into his toils ; by means of His justice, he effectually prevents him from breaking through them.

Therefore, what I would leave indelibly imprinted upon your minds, is the necessity for never allowing yourselves to fall into either of these extremes—of presumptuous confidence, or of foolish distrust. To prevent so dire a calamity, I most earnestly recommend you to bear in mind that while God is most bountiful, good, and loving, He is, at the same time, most rigorously just. This thought will hinder you either from presuming upon His love, or from morbidly contemplating His rigorous justice, and thus closing your hearts against the sunshine of His love.

### INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

IN reciting the Apostles' Creed, we every day of our lives make profession of our belief in the Communion of Saints, that is to say, in their power to know our wants, and, by their influence with God, to obtain from Him all that we ask. While firmly believing this, no Catholic would for a moment admit, that the graces which he receives in answer to his prayers come direct to him from the Saints whom he invokes. He knows very well that all favours and graces come from God only, Who is the fountain-head whence every good thing flows, the Saints being simply intercessors, acting as channels through which God condescends to bestow His gifts upon us. We need not seek their help unless we please to do so. We may go direct to God, Our Father, without asking for their intercession. Nevertheless, when we reflect upon our own unworthiness, and upon our many sins and offences against Him, we act wisely and well in calling upon His intimate friends and dearest children to cast into the scales, on our behalf, the weight of their influence with Him.

Therefore, let us endeavour to see how reasonable it is that we should do so, and, that we should not disdain a help so

powerful in obtaining from God the many graces of which we stand in need.

Even the most determined opponent of this invocation of Saints will not deny that we may pray for one another, and that God frequently gives to the prayers of His faithful servants, the favours that He will not grant to those who implore them for themselves. It is in consequence of this admission that even those who, on this point, bitterly oppose the doctrine of the Catholic Church, feel no difficulty in praying for their fellow-men. Consequently, the Sovereign of the realm is prayed for in all the services. Our rulers and our magistrates, our soldiers and our sailors, are not forgotten. The mother, as she bends over her sleeping infant, begs the blessing of God upon him. When children are going astray, how tearfully, how fervently do their parents importune heaven to turn them back from their evil courses into the straight path of God's commandments. How frequently, also, are these prayers heard, and how many a Monica is there who thus wins back to righteousness her erring Augustine!

There is no difficulty in believing in the efficacy of these prayers; there is no repugnance to the practice of intercession for one another. If any one were so stupidly ignorant as to call in question the lawfulness of it, men would at once take up their Bibles to confute him, and pour the light of truth into his darkened mind. Does not St. Paul beseech the Romans, "through Jesus Christ and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, to help him by their prayers to escape the hands of the Jewish unbelievers; to render the offering which he intended to carry to the poor of Jerusalem acceptable in their sight; and to secure for him the much-desired pleasure of visiting the Christians, in the imperial city itself"?<sup>1</sup> What does he ask from the Ephesians? That by their prayers and supplications they would obtain for him the power of forcible speech to make known the mystery of the Gospel, so that by the aid of God he might be bold to speak according as he ought?<sup>2</sup> Almost his last words to the Thessalonians

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. vi. 18.

express the pathetic wish that they would be mindful of him in their prayers.<sup>1</sup>

Why did he so earnestly desire the intercession of others? Because he, as well as the other Apostles, knew full well the mighty power over the divine bounty exercised by the united prayer of holy men. He, as well as they, had often read how God would not accept the prayers of Job's reprovers, and how He had ordered them to have recourse to His beloved servant, that their folly might be forgiven: "My wrath," he says to Eliphaz the Themanite, "is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends. . . . Take with you, therefore, seven oxen and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust; and My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you."<sup>2</sup> Also, they knew that the prayers of Abraham had turned away the divine anger from the house of Abimelech,<sup>3</sup> and that the intercession of Moses had secured victory for the children of Israel.

Now, if it is rational, beneficial, and lawful for us to pray for one another, why should any one think that it is irrational, or detrimental, or illegal to believe that the Saints pray for us, and by their intercession obtain for us that which, if left to ourselves, we should be unable to obtain? They are the beloved children of God; they have been victorious over His enemies; they have won their crowns, and, consequently, they are held by Him in the highest esteem. Therefore, He is naturally more inclined to listen to their words and to grant their petitions, than He is to attend to the cries of those who are still stained with the mire of their manifold transgressions.

But some one may, perhaps, assert that the invocation of Saints is irrational and useless, either because they are unable to know our wants, or because they are indifferent to our necessities and miseries. In face of the numerous proofs to the contrary, afforded by the pages of the Sacred Text, neither of the reasons assigned can be admitted as of any weight.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Job xlii. 7, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xx. 17.

The teaching of Holy Writ leads us to an altogether different conclusion.

From the words of Our divine Lord, we know that the repentance of the meanest sinner floods the courts of heaven with joy unutterable. The blessed Spirits who stand before the throne and bask in the sunshine of God's countenance are, through their contemplation of the Divinity, made cognisant of this fact, and they rejoice that one other lost sheep has been led back to the fold of the true Shepherd. It is evident, then, that they are aware of these occurrences, that they know the needs of us poor sinners, and knowing them, that they are most willing to relieve them.

Our reason points out to us that this is true. For, by the mere fact of dying, and passing out of this world of conflict, men do not lose their love for, nor their interest in, those who are still shrouded in the sulphurous smoke of the battle. The soul carries with it into the kingdom of Our Father all its affections purified, exalted, strengthened. Therefore, the love of a parent for his child, of a friend for his friend, is not smothered and extinguished by the heavy pall of death which enfolds his earthly tabernacle. Our Lord, in one of His Parables, puts this truth, as it seems to me, in a very clear light. He shows us that even the reprobate carry with them into the prison of hell, which they have built up for themselves by their evil deeds, a love for those who were dear to them on earth. The merciless glutton, who at the moment of his death fell into the inextinguishable fire of hell, looked up from the place of his torment and beheld Lazarus, whom he had neglected and despised, radiant with happiness amid the Saints in glory. Tortured by his burning thirst, he craved that he to whom the crumbs from his own sumptuous repast had been denied, might be suffered to come down and cool his tongue with but one drop of water. Eternal justice refused even that slender boon. Then the poor wretch, considering his own awful doom, and reflecting upon the evil courses pursued by his brethren, courses which should inevitably consign them to that abode of never-ending woe, once again lifted up his voice, and prayed that some one from among

the dead might be sent to warn them, and by his warning prevent them from sharing the dismal fate that had overtaken him. Now, if one in whose heart every spark of divine charity had been utterly extinguished, could yet, in that life beyond the grave, feel concern for those whom he had left behind in the world, surely it is not irrational to believe that the glorified Saints, inflamed as they are with burning love of God, should take a deep interest in, and be solicitous about, their brethren and their friends, and should exert all their influence to obtain for them a share in the heavenly joys with which their lives have been crowned!

Since, then, the Saints are able both to know our necessities and to feel an interest in our welfare, it is both rational and useful for us to have recourse to their intercession. By so doing, it is true that, in a certain sense, we make them our mediators with God. But that mediation in no way either interferes with, or derogates from, the mediation of Jesus Christ. Their mediation is but of a secondary character, that is to say, it is the mediation of intercession. Nothing that they obtain for us comes to us from themselves. All graces, all favours, flow to us from their only source—the Man-God, Christ Jesus.

As, then, the Saints are able both to know our wants, and to help us by their efficacious prayers, let us open the Bible and scan its pages, to see whether there are there recorded any instances of their merciful intervention on behalf of men.

In the prophecy of Zacharias we read that the Angel of the Lord prayed for Jerusalem, saying: "O Lord of Hosts! how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda, with which Thou hast been angry, this is now the seventieth year?"<sup>1</sup> In answer to this cry for mercy, God promised that the building line should be stretched out again upon Jerusalem, that good things should abound in the land, that the Lord should comfort Sion, and select the holy city for His abode.

<sup>1</sup> Zach. i. 12.

The Prophet Baruch relates, that upon the banks of the river Tigris, the Lord vouchsafed to him a glorious vision. In that vision he beheld a mighty Angel who told him that in prayer he had fought against the prince of the kingdom of the Persians, and that the Archangel Michael had aided him in his petition, so that his wishes in favour of the Jewish people were granted.

That invincible captain, Judas Machabeus, recounted to his soldiers a vision with which he had been favoured by God. That vision reveals to us how the Saints intercede for us with the Lord. During his sleep he saw Onias, who had been High Priest, and who from his earliest youth had led a saintly life, being notable among all the people for virtue, modesty and gentleness. His hands were uplifted in prayer, beseeching God to have mercy on the Jewish race. Then there appeared at his side another venerable figure, crowned with glory and environed with great beauty and majesty. This one he understood to be the Prophet Jeremias, of whom Onias said : " This is a lover of his brethren ; this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city ".<sup>1</sup>

In the Apocalypse, St. John tells us : " that the four living creatures and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the throne of the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints ".<sup>2</sup>

These prayers were not for themselves, for, being in possession of eternal beatitude, they had need of nothing. They were, therefore, poured out before the throne for their brethren upon earth. Also, we may add, that the prince of the Apostles by some interpreters is thought to hint at the prayers which he would pour out for the infant Church when he should stand in the presence of his Lord. He says : " I will do my endeavour, that after my decease also, you may often have whereby you may keep a memory of these things ".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Macc. xv. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. v. 8.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter i. 15.

From all this it is evident that the practice of the Catholic Church in calling upon the Angels, the Saints, and particularly upon the Immaculate Mother of God to help us by their intercessory prayer, is rational and beneficial to each of us. Therefore, while looking upon Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between us and God, and firmly believing that it is from Him only that all graces and blessings descend upon man, do not neglect to call to your aid those secondary mediators, who, because of their great merits and favour with God, are most acceptable to Him. By reason of our many transgressions and of our miserable service of Him, He may sometimes be unwilling to accept our petitions. But their impassioned prayers, joined with our own feeble and imperfect petitions, will win His favour in our behalf. As Moses prayed for the wayward and rebellious children of Israel, and time after time turned away from them the just indignation of God, so will their powerful intercession avert from us the anger which we have stirred up against ourselves by our manifold sins. They will incline Him to be merciful to us, and will win for us those graces and that special help which, with the blessing of Our heavenly Father, will enable us to fight on, till our contest shall be rewarded with the victor's crown in heaven.

### VENERATION OF RELICS.

THE transition from the veneration given to the Saints of God, to the veneration paid to their sacred relics, is easy and natural. For, if we love and honour any one, our love and our honour go out also to the things that belong to him. This is especially true with respect to the Saints. Hence it is that, whenever any of our fellow-men has attained to great eminence in literature or in art, in science or in religion, in war or in politics, the hero-worship inherent in our very nature finds expression in the respect and love with which we cover everything that has, in any way, been connected with his person, or with the pursuits in which his life has been spent.



Thus, the houses of Voltaire and of Shakespeare are visited by crowds of enthusiastic admirers ; the room in which Stevenson worked and studied attracts to it men who honour his mechanical genius ; the palette and brushes of Raphael, and the chisel and mallets of Michael Angelo, are objects of veneration to all lovers of art ; the patriotic look with pride upon the tombs of Nelson, Wellington, and Napoleon ; while the ink-horn of Luther is by some as highly prized as the head of St. Thomas is by students of philosophy and theology.

If we seek for the reason of this outpouring of men's love for the relics of the great, we shall find that it springs from the fact that the honour paid to these inanimate objects is *relative* ; it does not rest upon the material, worthless things ; it passes on ; it is referred to the men to whom these things once belonged. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church permits and encourages the veneration of her children for the relics of the Saints, in the hope that it may develop into the imitation of those who are thus held by them in such high esteem.

It will not, therefore, be out of place for us to dwell for a few moments upon the examples of this lawful and useful practice, examples which are to be found in abundance in the pages of the Sacred Book, and in the histories of the early centuries.

One of the most remarkable instances of the reverence paid to the relics of saintly men, is that recorded in the Book of Exodus, when Moses carried with him from Egypt the bones of the Patriarch Joseph. The great lawgiver acted thus, not merely to comply with the wish of that holy man who had prophesied the ultimate deliverance of Israel from the land of their sojourning, but to show honour to one whom all regarded as a great servant of God, and who, moreover, had been so highly favoured by Him.

Passing on to a much later age, we read with admiration and wonder the magnificent eulogiums pronounced by the inspired writer of Ecclesiasticus upon Josias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Joseph. These encomiums were written and were read

to the people, to set before them brilliant examples of virtue which they might imitate in their daily lives. Now, though the praise of the departed heroes of a nation is not a proof of the veneration for their relics, yet it serves to show us that, when nothing else of them remained, the people cherished their high repute and held in the deepest respect the places where their ashes had reposed. An incident recounted in the fourth Book of Kings would naturally lead them to venerate their sacred sepulchres, and pay to their sainted remains an inferior and relative kind of worship. A party of mourners happened to be on their way to bury one of their dead, when they were surprised by a band of rovers from Moab, and compelled to beat a hasty retreat. In order to escape with greater ease, they did not stay to bury the corpse ; they cast it into the tomb of Eliseus. As soon as the dead man had fallen upon the bones of the Prophet, God restored to him the breath of life. By this miracle, God manifested to the people that the virtue of sanctity had infused, even into the inanimate clay of one who had departed this life, the vivifying principle which could restore to another the breath of life. Hence, in a later chapter of the same Book, we find recorded an instance of the respect which had sprung up for the sainted dead. For when Josias, in his holy zeal, had determined to destroy the altars of the high places, and to defile them with the bones of the dead taken from the adjacent sepulchres, he looked round and beheld a striking monument. On asking his attendants whose bones reposed beneath, they replied that they were the remains of the man of God who had come out of Judea, and had foretold all these things that had come to pass. On learning this, he said to those around him : " Let him alone. Let no man disturb his bones."

This respect for sanctity, and this belief that mere contact with saintly men or with anything belonging to them, could impart to that contact and to even those inanimate, senseless, and otherwise worthless things, a power capable of healing all human maladies, were so ingrained in the minds of the people, that in the pages of Holy Writ, we have abundant proof of their belief in this respect. That belief induced a poor woman, wasted

away by a mortal disease, to touch Our Lord's garment as He passed by, and that touch healed her of her infirmity.

When Our Lord had ascended to heaven, His Apostles, as He had promised, began to work miracles even more marvellous than were those which He Himself performed, so that when the sick could not be brought into actual contact with St. Peter, they were laid in the streets, that his shadow, as he passed along, might fall upon them and might deliver them from the evils which afflicted them. In the case of St. Paul, this wonderful virtue of healing adhered to even the handkerchiefs, the aprons, and the other things that had touched his body.

When we read these accounts of the wonder-working powers imparted by God to the relics of His holy servants, we need not marvel if we find, among the Christians of the first centuries of the Church's history, a profound veneration for relics. In that history, we find the Christians of Smyrna showing their solicitude in gathering together the bones of St. Polycarp, that they might pay to them the veneration due to so holy a Bishop, and to so glorious a martyr. As that same historical record informs us, the bones of St. Ignatius were reverently gathered, and were regarded by the Church as a treasure of priceless worth.

As a matter of fact, this veneration for and this care of the relics of the martyrs were so well known to the pagan authorities that, as far at least as they were able, they took infinite pains to destroy these remains and to obliterate every trace of them. Accordingly, they made it a practice to mingle them with those of the gladiators, slain in the theatres during the public games; they exposed them to be devoured by wild beasts and by dogs; they cast them into the public sewers, and into the sea, that not a vestige of them might remain. Nevertheless, in spite of their rabid, persecuting zeal, the piety of the faithful eluded their iniquitous care. Some few remnants, at least, of the holy bodies were recovered, and over them the Christians raised either a modest tomb in the catacombs, or the more stately monuments which began to adorn the public churches, when the Christian emperors and rulers made possible this display of their deep veneration.

Then, too, began that wide distinction which they made between the remains of the ordinary Christian, and those of the men and the women who had died in the odour of sanctity. These latter were taken from their graves, and were either wrapped in costly coverings, or deposited in caskets of gold or of silver under the altars on which the priests offered the daily Sacrifice of the Mass. Then, too, the Liturgy began to bear testimony to the widespread devotion of the faithful to the relics of the Saints. The Church instituted feasts, on which the Holy Sacrifice was offered to God in honour of the Saints, to thank Him for the graces bestowed upon them, and to implore His aid to imitate them in their heroic exercise of charity. The people devoutly kissed their sacred remains, or the cruel implements with which their bodies had been tortured.

From these and innumerable other proofs which might easily be adduced, we see that veneration for the relics of the Saints has, from the earliest ages of the Church, been practised; that that veneration is relative, not resting upon senseless, inanimate objects, but passing on to God Who is wonderful in His Saints; that, consequently, there is in it nothing either superstitious or idolatrous, but, on the contrary, an incitement to love and to worship Him by a faithful imitation of all the lofty virtues which these, His devoted servants, practised during the days of their mortal career.

Therefore, in venerating the relics of the Saints, we do no more than is done by the most strenuous opponents of what is called "relic worship" for the belongings of the great writers, the great artists, the great politicians, and the great warriors of our country. To each and to all these they pay a degree of respect and reverence as great as is that paid by devout Catholics to the sacred remains of, and to the various objects belonging to, the canonised Saints of Holy Church. To these inanimate objects we do not offer prayer, or worship, or sacrifice; but we respect them, we reverence them, we give to them a place of honour in our churches. All this we do, because the Saints to whom they belonged are the heroes of the Church. They fought the battles of the Lord,

they gloriously triumphed over His enemies, they now reign with Him in the kingdom of His eternal beatitude. While basking in the sunshine of His countenance, we trust that they will pray for us who are still on the battle-field of life, covered with the dust, and enveloped in the smoke of the conflict, which for us has not yet ended in the glory and security of victory.

## VENERATION OF PICTURES AND OF IMAGES.

AFTER treating of the veneration paid by the Catholic Church to the Saints, to the sacred relics of their holy bodies, and to the various objects which either have belonged to them or which may have been used by them, we now turn to consider the respect and the homage which she both pays and teaches her children to pay to their statues and their pictures. These are to be found in our churches and in our homes. In our churches, crowds of devout men and women are to be seen kneeling before them. They set up lights before these sacred objects. They put crowns upon them. They strew sweet-smelling flowers before them. They give unto them what, to the casual and ignorant observer, appears to be an idolatrous worship.

But in the case of these pictures and statues, as well as of the Saints themselves and of their relics, this worship or homage is only relative. It is not given to the senseless things which on canvas or in wood represent the Saints, but to God, Who has manifested in His servants His own marvellous graces. That which we do for these holy servants of Our common Father, the most orthodox Protestant does for those who are dear to him. We find him religiously keeping in his house the portraits of his deceased parents ; he assigns to them an honoured place ; he kisses them ; he regards them as treasures ; and he would resent, as an affront offered to himself, any irreverence shown to them. To the cardboard on which these portraits are pasted, or to the wood, or the marble out of which they are made, he does not attach any

great value ; but, because these things represent to him the images of those whom he reveres and loves, they are precious in his sight, and he rightly considers that the veneration paid to them does not go to the materials out of which they are made, but to the beloved persons whom they represent. Such also is the homage which we pay to the Saints, whether they are presented to our eyes on canvas, or are embodied in costly wood, or in still more precious marble.

As, then, the lawfulness of having in our churches and in our homes these pictures and statues, as well as the usefulness of holding them in reverence, is called in question, it will be worth our while to establish both these points, for our own satisfaction and for the satisfaction of those who, in this matter, think differently from us.

One of the commonest and most general objections against the erection of statues and the hanging of pictures in our churches and in our homes, is taken from the wording of the first commandment as given in Exodus : "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing. . . . Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them." This passage is frequently brought forwards as an express command not to have any such images or any such likenesses either in our churches or in our houses. But it is evident from the words : "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them," that the prohibition regards only those images and pictures that are set up to be adored as gods. That they do not forbid the making or the having of others not so destined is manifest from the action of God Himself Who, when instructing Moses about the worship which the people were to pay to Him, ordered him to construct the Ark of the Covenant, and to make and erect two images of the Cherubim which He directed him to place, one on each side of the Propitiatory. Also, during the march through the desert, when the Israelites on account of their sins were punished by the plague of fiery serpents, their great leader received another order from God, to make the image of a serpent and to hang it up in a conspicuous place that the people might look upon it, and, by so doing, might be healed of the deadly wounds inflicted by the fangs of their tormentors.

It is evident, then, from these two facts, and from those of which we read in the account of the construction and adornment of Solomon's Temple, that the making and the setting up of images and pictures are actions upon which God has set no ban. All that He has interdicted is the worshipping of them as gods. Therefore, if there is no prohibition against the making of them, and if images and pictures were set up not only in the tabernacle but in the great Temple at Jerusalem, we may safely infer that the custom of having in our churches and in our homes the images and the pictures of the Saints is both lawful and useful.

May we not say that the Ark itself, which Moses placed in the tabernacle, and which Solomon afterwards removed to the Temple, was in a certain sense a graven thing, or at least the likeness of something upon the earth? Yet no one has ever ventured to reproach the Jews with idolatry, and with a violation of the first precept of the law for having had it in the sanctuary of their nation. They were not looked upon as transgressors of this command, though from many passages of Holy Writ it is clear that they held this symbol in the greatest veneration. Whenever God manifested His anger with His stubborn and rebellious children, Moses did not scruple to prostrate himself before it. When the people were defeated under Josue, that great captain rent his garments, and fell flat upon the ground before the Ark of the Lord, and remained in that suppliant posture until the evening, both he and all the ancients of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The royal Psalmist goes so far as to call upon all Israel to adore the symbol of God's presence. He says: "Exalt ye the Lord, and adore His footstool, for it is holy".<sup>2</sup> If any doubt existed concerning the reference of these words to the Ark, it is scattered to the winds when we read what the same holy Prophet says in another place: "Hear me, my brethren and my people; I had a thought to have built a house in which the Ark of the Lord and the footstool of our God might rest".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Josue vii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xcvi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Par. xxviii. 2.

Therefore, from these testimonies of Holy Writ, it is clear that we may lawfully have in our churches and in our houses both images and pictures of the great servants of God. Also, it is lawful, not only to have them, but to venerate them. For, if this respectful homage is to be withheld, what are we to think of the holy men who publicly paid, and who now actually pay, to them this inferior and relative worship? What are we to say of those who encouraged them to pay it? Surely their practice could not have been idolatrous, and therefore most reprehensible, otherwise God would not have so severely punished either the Bethsamites for their irreverence to the Ark, or Oza for his inconsiderate conduct in stretching forth his hand to prevent it from falling.

Before we quit this subject, we may reasonably be expected to show that the veneration paid to the images and the pictures of the Saints is useful. That it is useful will be evident, if we consider what a help these objects are to fix the mind upon God and upon holy things. To make use of them, for this purpose, is quite in accordance with the constitution of our mental being. For, we must remember that every idea formed by the mind is formed by the aid of mental pictures or images. It cannot exercise its faculty of thought without their assistance. Consequently, by setting up in our churches pictures and images of the Saints, we make it easy for those who meet there to worship God to concentrate their minds upon holy things, and to lift them up to the author of all good. These pictures and images are of great use to even those who are cultured, and who frequently exercise the faculty of thought. How much more helpful must they be to the rude and uncultured, to those also who are unable even to read? At a single glance they put before them the features of a Saint, or the facts of some incident, or of some miracle in Our Lord's life, all which afford them food for reflection, and impart necessary instruction. They lift up the thoughts from the material world into the world that is spiritual; they fix them upon God instead of upon creatures; they oftentimes inspire the soul with strong practical resolutions to do great things for Our Lord.



Therefore, because it is both lawful and useful to have and to venerate these memorials of the heroes of God's Church, do not fear to pay to them that inferior worship which has ever been sanctioned in the Old and in the New Testament. You do this in a variety of ways: you pray before them; you reverently kiss them; you light lamps before their shrines; you strew sweet-smelling flowers in their presence; you uncover the head when passing by them. In these and in various other acts by which you reverence the Saints of God, there is nothing wrong, nothing that Protestants do not do for those who are dear to them, and whom they desire to honour. They hang wreaths of flowers upon the statues of favourite statesmen; they salute the flag of the country; they are fiercely indignant with any one who should dare to show to it any disrespect; they kiss the portraits of their deceased friends and children; they do for these dumb, senseless effigies all that Catholics do for the pictures and the images of the Saints. Yet, while deeming themselves unworthy of reproach for acting thus, they are ready to anathematise us for acting in precisely the same way towards the effigies of God's greatest servants! Consequently, it is irrational for them to find fault with us for doing that which is permitted by the divine law, which is a praiseworthy instinct of our nature, and a powerful aid to help us to advance in the exercise of those virtues which have raised poor, weak mortals like ourselves to become the glorified citizens of the eternal kingdom.

## HOLY WATER.

IT is oftentimes objected against the Catholic Church that she has borrowed from the Jews, and even from the heathen nations, many of her rites and ceremonies. This is quite true; but while making this admission, our adversaries must remember that the rites and the ceremonies which she has drawn from these sources are only such as symbolise sentiments that are good and doctrines that are true. Being herself the pillar and the ground of truth, it is but natural

that she should attract to herself whatever is true in the world in which she labours for the victory of truth.

Her action, in this respect, is like that of a magnet. If we take a vessel and into it cast a handful of sawdust mingled with steel filings, and then apply the magnet, it will speedily draw to itself all that has an affinity with it, leaving behind that which has not. So it is with the Church. Whatever particle of truth she found scattered amid the falsehood and the rubbish of paganism, whatever is still true in the old dispensation that has passed away under the glow of her superior light, that she claims as her own, and feels no scruple in adapting it to her own purpose.

One of these symbolic rites common alike to Judaism and to paganism, is the use of water as an emblem of purity. It is, therefore, only fitting that we should put before you the origin of the use of "holy water"; the rite by which the Church sets it apart for her service; and the purpose for which she destines it.

We learn from the Sacred Scripture, that God Himself commanded Moses to make a brazen laver, to fill it with water, and to set it up between the tabernacle of the testimony and the altar. In this laver, both Aaron and his sons were ordered to wash their hands and their feet before entering the tabernacle of the testimony, and before approaching the altar to offer sacrifice. By this ordinance, Almighty God wished to point out to men the internal purity which He requires from all those who draw nigh to Him to pray or to offer up holocausts and victims of propitiation. That which He had made for the priests and the levites a strict command, the omission of which might entail the penalty of death, the people on their side adopted, being in the habit of washing their hands before they presumed to pray. It is doubtless in allusion to this custom that St. Paul says: "I will that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without anger and contention".<sup>1</sup> Also, in the Book of Numbers,<sup>2</sup> we find minute instructions given for the sprinkling of water, by way of purification.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xix.

As then, of its own nature, water is adapted for cleansing the impurities of the body, the use of it, in the symbolical manner here mentioned, is an excellent means for bringing home to the mind the necessity for purifying the soul by external acts of penance, and by internal acts of sorrow. Therefore, the Church took to herself this natural symbol which expresses a natural truth, and from the very beginning of her existence she has made use of it to remind her children of the cleanness of heart which God expects from them.

Tertullian, who wrote early in the third century, in the second chapter of his treatise on prayer, tells us that at the entrance of every Christian church the priests placed a vessel of water, in which the faithful washed their hands before entering the sacred edifice, that this act might call to their minds the internal purity required from them, by their profession of Christianity. But long before his time, this custom had already been in use. For as Labbe, in his *History of the Councils*, relates, there stood at the door of every place in which the Christians assembled for sacrifice and prayer a vessel containing water mingled with salt, previously blessed by the sacred ministers, and that on entering the door, each dipped his finger into it, and in the form of a cross sprinkled the water upon himself.

The water thus sanctified by the prayer of the Church, they also carried home with them, to be preserved in their houses, which favour Pope Alexander I. granted to them.

A further proof of the antiquity of this custom is afforded by a very ancient fresco in the catacombs of St. Agnes. This painting represents four figures, each carrying a vessel very similar in appearance to that now actually in use in our churches for the "Asperges". The first of these figures holds in his right hand an Asperges-brush, and he is in the act of sprinkling the blessed water. The others bear in their hands palm-branches. Thus, the custom of using blessed or holy water is traced back to apostolic times.

The rite by which water is set aside by the Church, for this spiritual purpose, is very beautiful and instructive. Usually, before the principal Mass on Sundays, the priest vested in

amice, alb, girdle and stole, and having before him the two elements—water and salt—proceeds to invoke upon them the benediction of the Church. For, remembering that all creatures came forth from the hand of God good, that they were destined for His glory and for man's benefit, but that man being corrupted by the devil, all things that depended upon him were also corrupted, and, consequently, as St. Paul says: "they groan and are in labour for their deliverance,"<sup>1</sup> the Church uses the power given to her by God to withdraw them from his evil influence, and to sanctify them "by the word of God and by prayer".<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the priest first *exorcises* the salt, that is to say, with an authoritative voice conjures and commands the evil spirit to take from it his power, and forbids him to use that creature for the hurt of man. He calls to mind the fact that the Prophet Eliscus caused salt to be cast into the vitiated waters of which the men of Jericho complained, that these waters might be healed of their bitterness. He prays that this salt may prove healthful to the bodies and to the souls of those who use it; that the wiles of Satan may not, in the places in which it is sprinkled, have any power to deceive; and that every unclean spirit may be banished thence.

Then turning to the element of water, he employs, with regard to it, that same power committed to him by Jesus Christ, and beseeches God that, wherever it is either sprinkled or preserved, the arch-enemy may by its power be thence expelled, his apostate angels scattered, diseases healed, moral uncleanness washed away, all pestilential vapours warded off, and whatever is hostile to the quiet and the well-being of God's people, banished from the abodes of His loyal servants. After these prayers, taking the salt in his hands, he pours it into the vessel of water, praying that wherever that water is sprinkled, it may by the almighty power of God be made efficacious for the accomplishment of all the afore-mentioned purposes.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 5.

From what has been said thus far, it is easy to see what is the purpose which the Church has in view in blessing water and distributing it among the faithful for use in their households. The two elements of which it is composed, are symbolical of the two desires nearest to her heart. Water cleanses the body from defilement, and salt is employed to preserve from corruption. The Church, then, by sprinkling her children with "blessed or holy water," wishes to remind them of that internal holiness or purity which she is ever striving to cultivate in their souls. After this they are to aspire with all the earnestness at their command. She would have them, whenever they make use of this blessed water, remember that by the Sacrament of Baptism they were washed clean from the defilement of original sin, and constituted temples of the living God. Hence the necessity for keeping free from the mire of sin that abode in which the Divinity delights to dwell. The body must be preserved in a state of purity; the thoughts must not busy themselves with anything that would stain them with dishonour; the desires must be withheld from fastening themselves upon any object that would contaminate them. Then, neither in word nor in act will there be anything blameworthy in the daily life of the Christian.

Furthermore, she wishes that her children should be so penetrated by divine grace, that it may act upon them as salt does upon bodies subjected to its influence. Hence, the salt that is mingled with the water is to remind them always to persevere in the state of grace, never for a moment to waver in their allegiance to God, but to go on steadily, holding fast to the divine law, and causing their whole being to be, as it were, permeated by the healthful bitterness of that continuous self-repression which wards off the corruption of sin.

Therefore, be careful always to have in your possession some of this water on which the blessing of God has been invoked by rites so touching and so full of instruction. Let not your use of it be thoughtless and mechanical, as unfortunately is but too often the case; for then it will lose the efficacy which otherwise it possesses to benefit your soul,

by stirring it up to fresh exertion in the service of God. Consequently, when you dip your fingers into it and sprinkle it upon yourself, think of the Baptism by which you have been made a child of God, a temple of the Holy Ghost, and a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. Think of the obligations which that great Sacrament has imposed upon you. These require you to be in the world, but not to be of the world; to renounce it; not to take delight in its gifts and its pomps; not to be entangled by its gilded snares; but to use it and all that it can give only in as far as they can help you to win for yourself the possession of God. They call upon you to wage an incessant war against your arch-enemy, the devil—not to listen to his suggestions, not to believe his lying promises, not to be won over by his specious arguments. They exact from you a promise to resist the fleshly instincts of your fallen nature, to turn away from the degrading pleasures which they offer to you, to subdue them, and to submit them to the rule of your reason and of the divine law.

With these thoughts in your mind, pray God, as the water falls upon your forehead, to give you a daily increasing love of purity which is the soul's most precious ornament, and ask Him, through the merits of that precious blood so plentifully poured out by Jesus Christ for your salvation, to purge from your white robe whatever stains may unhappily have dulled its brilliancy.

Before you retire to rest, sprinkle the blessed water both upon yourself and upon your couch, asking your heavenly Father so to defend you, that no illusions of the night may come to trouble your repose and fill your imagination with unseemly images. When you rise in the morning to begin the new day which God has given you, let it fall upon your brow as a heavenly dew to refresh you, and to prepare you for the duties which, during the fleeting hours, must be performed by you for the honour of God.

Before you go forth to your daily toil, whether of manual labour or of mental work, again let it fall upon you, and, as it were, consecrate to Our Lord whatever you shall be able to accomplish. Should evil present itself to your mind or to

your bodily senses, make use of this blessed water to extinguish the spark that is thus shot into your soul, and you will, by so doing, prevent a dangerous conflagration from breaking forth.

But it is especially when you are about to enter the house of God, either to pray or to assist at the dread Sacrifice, that you should carefully and religiously sign yourself with this striking reminder of what God requires from you. As you take the holy water, ask your Lord to sprinkle you with hyssop, to cleanse your heart, to remove from it whatever is displeasing to His all-holy eyes, and thus you will enter His sacred presence with those acceptable dispositions that are so fitting in a suppliant. Your mind will be calmed and delivered from distressing and distracting thoughts. Your soul will be attuned to the right pitch which is requisite for intercourse with your Maker. Then you will present yourself before Him as one who is conscious of his unworthiness. You will ask for pardon, for mercy, for grace ; and you will go forth from the divine audience chamber justified, enriched with the gifts of His bounty, carrying away with you His good will and His fatherly blessing.

## MONKS AND MONASTIC LIFE.

### *Part I.*

To the non-Catholic world, monks have been described as "gaunt, lifeless, dreamy, bloodless, dull-eyed, wretched beings, who drag out a miserable existence in their monastic enclosures ; gloomy, narrow-minded, half-crazed fanatics who have mistaken the purpose for which they came into the world ; whose life is a living death, whose days are purposeless and whose end is without honour". Before this formidable array of adjectives, those who know as little about monks and monastic life as they do about Sanscrit or about Egyptian hieroglyphics may well gasp with horror, but to the lips of those who have met and conversed with, and who have been familiar with them, they cannot but bring a smile of pity both

for those who have evolved from their own inner consciousness this frightful chimera, and for those who are silly enough to believe them. This phantasmagorical monk is as unreal a being as are the "bogies" with which, in the days of our infancy, our nurses were wont to frighten us into good behaviour.

Let us then sweep him aside, and put before our minds the real monk, that we may see whether the ideas concerning him put forwards by these foolish men have any foundation in fact, for, though in their eyes his life may seem to be a living death, we shall probably discover that it is a wise, active, useful life, filling the heart with present happiness, and taking away from death all its terror and its bitterness. In order to do this, we shall first have to get a few clear ideas concerning the purpose for which men are in this world, by laying down one or two principles which no sensible man can gainsay.

It will, we think, be admitted by all that the chief object of our existence in this world is the attainment of eternal happiness in the next, by diligently and faithfully serving God as long as we breathe the breath of life. No higher, no nobler destiny could have been devised for us by Our loving Father and Creator. But much as He loves us, He does not admit us to the possession of this beatitude without first putting our wills to the test, to see whether we are worthy of the crown prepared for us. It is, therefore, a condition without which that crown can never be ours, that we should not transgress the law of God, a law which exacts from us nothing that is not sanctioned by right reason. Consequently, the life which is so regulated as to be in exact accord with the requirements of God's ordinances, and to win eternal glory, is the wisest life, and he who strains every nerve and uses the safest means for leading it, is among those whom all will regard as a wise man. To live such a life, is the main business "of every one that cometh into this world". It is the one thing necessary, and therefore it ought to be the chief aim of all, of the highly cultured man of the world, whose days are passed in the transaction of affairs of national importance, as well as of the humblest artisan who wins his daily bread by the sweat of his brow.



To lead such a life is to walk in the way of God's commandments—a way which must be traversed by all.

But besides this, there is another and higher way in which comparatively few are called to walk. This is the way of the "counsels," a way in which more stern self-repression, more severance from ties of flesh and blood, and more renunciation of the things of the world are looked for, than in the less perfect way. Our Lord clearly spoke of this higher way, when upon a certain occasion there came to Him a young man who asked Him by what means he might secure for himself eternal life. Briefly and directly from the lips of Christ came the answer: "Keep the commandments". The young man asked Him to specify the particular precepts which he should observe. Our Lord then pointed out to him those which make men good citizens, honest, upright, God-fearing men of the world: "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; love thy neighbour as thyself". The young man then said to Him: "All these things have I observed from my youth; what more is wanting to me?" Jesus then pointed out to him a yet more perfect way: "If thou wilt be *perfect*"—that is to say, if thou wilt aspire after perfection and tend towards it—"go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me".

It is in this higher way that those whom we call "monks" aspire to walk. Therefore, if we admit that we are in the world to serve God and to win for ourselves the joys of heaven; if we admit that God wills some men to serve Him by a more complete abandonment of all things than He requires from the generality of mankind, we must confess that those who comply with His will are not unwise, not dreamy, not the half-crazed fanatics that the world would have us believe them to be. On the contrary, they are the chosen, the most generous servants of God, the really wise ones of the world.

Admitting, then, that there is a higher as well as a lower level in the spiritual life, and that only a few are called by God to walk in the more arduous of the two ways, we may define the monk who wishes to obey this call as one who, for

the love of God, gives up his worldly goods and the pleasures of the world; who renounces his own will and chooses to live in a community, bound by the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Now, while acknowledging in an abstract sort of way that those who do this are wise, and that in reality they have chosen the better part—as far at least as the future life is concerned—there are not a few who imagine that the men who are at the head of these monastic establishments, take advantage of the enthusiastic temperament of youth to entrap the piously inclined into a method of life which they afterwards abhor, but from which they are unable to escape. Is there any foundation whatever for such a notion as this? Let us see.

There will be some basis for it if we can detect in religious Superiors any eagerness to obtain recruits for the monastic army. What, then, is the actual state of the case? Let us suppose that a young man feels within himself that inward prompting of the Holy Spirit, urging him to follow Christ, as the Apostles did. Day by day the meaning of that voice which speaks to him makes itself more and more clear to his mind. He takes advice upon the project thus suggested to him, and at last, acting upon the counsel of others, determines to turn his back upon the world, and wholly devote himself to the service of God. He goes through the fiery ordeal of parting from those who are as dear to him as is life itself. He leaves father and mother, sisters and brothers, the sanctuary of home with all its holy associations, his bright prospects, his wealth, everything in fact that in the opinion of men makes life worth living. He presents himself before the Superior of a monastery, and asks to be admitted among the number of those who serve under him. He has undoubtedly given unmistakable proofs of great self-denial, of boundless generosity, by his abandonment of all that men hold most dear. Surely he will be accepted with joy, and will be at once admitted to the brotherhood for the sake of which he has made so great a sacrifice. Such, however, is not the case.

The men who founded the great Religious Orders were

far too wise to be guilty of any such precipitate action. They were men who had profoundly studied the human heart, not only in their own intimate intercourse with their fellow-men, but in a deep study of their own innermost being. They knew how easily men are deceived, how often they are impelled by some sudden impulse to undertake obligations which they are unable to fulfil. Hence they saw the necessity for making those who present themselves as candidates for monastic life, first sit calmly down to calculate the cost of such an undertaking, and see whether they are able to build up within themselves that edifice of holiness which God requires from all who wish to walk in that higher way, lest after having begun the good work, they should not be able to complete it, and thus bring upon themselves the derision of the cynical world. Hence, on this point, the wisely stern legislation of St. Benedict. "Let not," he says, "an easy entrance to religious life be given to any one, but first try the spirit by which he is led, to discover whether it is from God".<sup>1</sup>

In consequence of this ordinance, those who wish to make profession of monastic life, are made to pass through what is called a "novitiate". For a whole year they are kept apart from the community. Over them is placed a master whose sole duty it is to observe their conduct, and to find out whether the motive which has led them to the cloister is the love of God; whether they are eager for all that concerns His service; whether they are willing to obey and to suffer reproach. He continually puts before them all the austere practices by which they must advance towards God. Thrice during the course of the year, after having carefully read through and pondered upon the Rule, they are asked whether, notwithstanding all the difficulties which have been set before them, they are willing to take upon themselves the burden, and bear the yoke of monastic life.

If, in spite of all the hard and bitter things which they are purposely made to endure, they still persevere, they are, at the end of the year, admitted to take, for the space of

<sup>1</sup> *Regula*, cap. lviii.

three years, the three simple vows, which at the expiration of that time are taken for life, if the Superiors should think that the candidate has shown all the signs of a true vocation to the monastic calling.

From this it is evident how little ground there is for the notion that young men are entrapped into Religious Life, and are deceived by the glowing rhapsodies of interested and covetous parties. Their life, then, is a wise one, wisely and prudently undertaken, and when at last it is embraced as a profession that must endure until death, it is not that listless, aimless, dreamy kind of existence which bigoted and ignorant pamphleteers represent it to be.

What manner of life, then, do these monks lead when, after mature deliberation, they submit their necks to the yoke of monastic discipline? It is a life as different from the picture of it drawn by the enemies of the Catholic Religion, as the musings of a healthy man are from the delirious dreams of a fever-stricken patient. The one is a reality which may be seen and examined; the other is a phantasm evolved from a mind darkened by prejudice, and distorted by fanaticism.

Let us take a glance at the monk's life, such as it is in these our own days. Long before the world has awaked from its slumbers, long before many a poor labourer has arisen and gone forth to his daily toil, the monks are to be found seated in their monastic choirs, chanting the inspired Psalms of David, blessing and thanking God, praying to Him for a world which forgets Him in its mad pursuit of wealth and of pleasure. From the praise of God, and meditation upon His holy word, they go forth with clear heads and burning hearts to give themselves up to intellectual pursuits, that in after years they may serve the divine Master with greater fruit to the souls of men. They deepen, and broaden, and fertilise their minds, by close and profound study of philosophy and theology, that the knowledge which these sciences impart, and the mental training to which they subject those who devote themselves to them, may hereafter make them more efficient labourers in God's vineyard.

At last, when it seems good to those who in their eyes, hold

the place of God, they go forth and gird themselves for the work to which they shall appoint them, and for which they have prepared themselves in silence, in self-abnegation, and in humility. You may see them in the halls of our Colleges, instructing youth in that classical lore which is justly regarded as one of the most efficient implements for drawing out and developing the powers of the human intelligence. Besides imparting these lessons, you hear them teaching their pupils how to love God, to conquer corrupt nature, to practise virtue, and adding force to each of their precepts by the irresistible influence of their own example. If you enter the lecture halls of our foreign Universities, you will find the monk seated in the chair of doctrine, dispensing the principles of science, of philosophy, of history, of theology, to attentive scholars, who drink with avidity of the streams of knowledge flowing from his lips.

Again ; consider him as he plays his part upon the platform of a far different stage. This time you find him not in the cloister, not in the lecture-hall, not in the laboratory, but in the crowded thoroughfares of our great cities. At the voice of obedience, he has become a missionary carrying the last rites of the Church to the sick and the dying. Follow him to his church which has now become his cloister. You find him instructing little children ; strengthening the young in the paths of virtue ; reclaiming the fallen ; reconciling the sinner to his God. In a life such as this, where is the listlessness, the aimlessness of purpose, the dreaminess of which the ignorant so glibly speak ? They are not to be found. It is a life of activity, of hard work, of self-denial ; a life in which the mind thinks for God, the eyes watch for Him, the hand labours for Him, for that God, through love of Whom he left father and mother, home and kindred, wealth and worldly prospects, everything in fact that men hold most dear.

Such is the monk. Under altered circumstances, you will find in him a worthy successor of those heroic men who—while the barbarians were shivering beneath the stroke of their battle-axes the tottering fabric of the Roman Empire, sweeping like a whirlwind of devouring fire over decaying nations,

and ruthlessly swallowing up the accumulated treasures of centuries upon centuries—fled away from the crumbling world, taking with them well-nigh all the sound manhood left among the decadent races. In him you will meet a worthy descendant of those far-seeing men who, amid the direst confusion and the death-agony of an apparently expiring world, gathered together and took with them into the solitude of the mountain fastnesses the principles of law and of order. They carried with them and preserved for us the literature of the ancient world; they garnered under their roofs the shattered fragments of the arts and sciences; they protected and sheltered the wretched people whom the sword had spared. Round their first rude monastic settlements these latter came for shelter, and thus formed the nucleus of future towns and cities. When the storm of war had spent its fury, the monks went forth into the desolate land, and once again brought it under cultivation. They fearlessly encountered even the all-conquering barbarian, and by their sanctity subdued and civilised him. From them he learnt of God, and of the dread judgment to come. Under their tuition, he bowed his proud neck beneath the yoke of Christ, and became a faithful, loving son of Holy Church.

Of the heroic men who effected all this good, the monk of this present age is the lineal descendant. He bears their name, he is filled with their spirit. Yet the flippant, shallow, ignorant world dares to sneer at him, and to cover him with derision! The soft, luxurious, dilettante spirits of the day, lispingly pronounce his life to be a mistake, and consider his moral grandeur to be indefinitely beneath their own! As the illustrious Cardinal Newman has so pithily put it: "These men who talk so glibly, and write so finely, and sneer so ignorantly, owe it to these same monks that they are able to talk at all".

## MONKS AND MONASTIC LIFE.

*Part II.*

FROM what we have said, in the preceding Lecture, you have seen that the monk's life is not the foolish, aimless, purposeless existence that it is represented to be. Also, that those who have already made profession of that life are not by any means eager to admit others into it, or to entrap them into joining their society, by setting before their eyes glowing pictures of this exceptional calling.

We are now about to deal with another objection against those who wish to bury themselves in the cloister. Put in the words of our opponents, it may be stated thus: "Here," they say "is a young man in the flower of his age, willing to hide himself in the gloom of a monastery! Before him, there is the prospect of a bright, happy life. He has friends; he has a comfortable home; he has interest; the path to wealth and honour lies open before him. Yet he turns his back upon it all, and chooses a life of poverty, a life of toil; monotonous, by reason of its unvarying routine; insufferably dull, by reason of the austerities of rule; slavish, by reason of the subjection of his will to the whims and the caprices of a Superior." Put in short, all this means that the monk exchanges the happy life of the world for the unhappy existence of the cloister.

Let us now see whether there is any truth in this bold assertion: "The monk exchanges the happy life of the world for the unhappy existence of the cloister".

Is the world, then, the bright, happy paradise which these men would have us believe it to be? Is there nothing but delight in the cup of pleasure which it offers to our lips? Can this pleasure satisfy the heart by filling it with peace. Alas! no. In that world all is not gold that glitters. The smiling faces and the sparkling eyes on which we look do not indicate happiness. The frank, honest bearing does not always signify truth. The ready promise and the outstretched hand do not always mean friendship. Envy, selfishness, heart-

lessness, hypocrisy, and cruelty are to be found there. Look at the dim, care-worn faces that meet you as you walk the streets; consider the dismal toil of the poor; mark the incessant anxiety of business-men; take note of their reckless speculations; contrast the luxury of wealth with the ghastly poverty that creeps gaunt, pale and ragged along the public ways, and then tell me whether the world is a happy one? Is it, then, for this world, to love it, to serve it, to be of it, that you would have the young, generous, aspiring soul turn a deaf ear to the call of God, and make but a secondary thing of its eternal interests?

What can you give it as a prize for thus turning itself from God, and throwing itself into the arms of the world? Surely not happiness; for the world does not possess in its treasure-house that much-sought-for boon. Yet, it is after happiness—to win it—to possess it, that it is straining every nerve. It strives to clutch it, in its pleasures and in its toils; in its anxieties and in its greedy pursuit of gold; in its luxury, its pride, and its pomps. These are some of the ingredients out of which it mingles its so-called cup of delights, a cup in which it would have us believe there is no bitterness.

However, let each examine for himself. Suppose, then, that the world could give to its followers all the wealth for which they crave—would that enormous sum satisfy them? No; they would ever cry for more and more. If, failing in this respect, it were to drench their senses with every species of sensual pleasure, surely the heart of the worldling would at last be filled with that for which it craves? Alas! no! It would sicken of them, and find in them disgust, but not satiety. The very bodily senses, by which the flesh is able to taste pleasure, are dulled, and at last worn out by feeding upon that for which they cry in their mad hunger.

Or again, let the heart which is thirsting after content, and which has not been able to find it in the gross, fleshly delights of sense, take a loftier aim, and in the lust for power, strive to fill up the void within itself. When, after immense labour it has compassed all the objects of its ambition, that void is not filled. For there are always rivals who dispute



with it the pre-eminence. There are enemies who ever plot and scheme to snatch from its grasp the dearly won prize, so that the heart still continues to be torn with the pangs of inward discontent. An insatiate vulture seems to be rending it. Like a frail vessel upon the tempestuous billows of the ocean, there is for it no rest, no moment of repose.

From all this, it is evident that the world is not the terrestrial paradise that it is represented to be, and that the good things which it offers to its devoted followers have not in them the qualities which will give peace to the heart. It is very probable, then, that upon examination, the life of the cloister, chosen by the monk in preference to that of the world, will prove to be for him the happier of the two, and that, in the words of Our Lord, he has in reality "chosen the better part".

What is the object of that life, and what are the means employed by it to secure the possession of that object? The object of monastic life is the winning of that crown for which God created the human heart—the possession of God Himself. Those things which the world pursues instead of God, the monk knows full well ought to be so many helps to enable men to find Him. But owing to the perversity of human nature, the blinded soul rests in them as its ultimate end. Instead of making them so many steps to ascend unto its true end, it fastens upon them its affections, and by so doing makes of them so many hindrances instead of steps or helps to win the purpose for which God gave it being.

Seeing this, the monk deliberately sets aside these worldly good things and resolves not to use them. He makes this resolve, not because these things are evil, for he knows full well that in themselves they are not; but only because of their attractive power to turn him from his end. By his vow of poverty, he cuts off from himself that greed for wealth which but too often leads men to sacrifice their repose, nay, the very life of their souls, in order to amass the perishable dross with which they hope to purchase that peace for which they sigh in vain. By his vow of chastity, he binds himself to tame and bring into subjection by stern self-repression that wolfish hunger of the bodily senses for pleasure, a hunger, the grati-

fication of which rivets upon the soul the chains of a degrading slavery. By his vow of obedience, he keeps within due bounds that obstinate self-will which usually leads men into every species of excess and error.

Thus he removes from himself the disturbing elements which war against his peace, and, having removed them, he brings about by the aid of God's grace a truce among the enemies of his soul. When these are at rest, life is said to be happy ; for then the soul is able to pursue its true end, in which pursuit consists that milder sort of happiness possible in this world, a happiness which gives us a foretaste of that eternal felicity which floods the soul when it has at last obtained the end for which God created it.

Hence the Scripture,<sup>1</sup> speaking of those who like the monk turn away from what the world so highly prizes, in order to win this eternal beatitude, says : " To the eyes of the foolish they seem to die "—to lead in this world a living death—" but they are at peace," that is to say, they are happy, as far, at least, as men are able to be happy during this present life.

But that Inspired Word does not confine itself to this statement ; it goes on to tell us of another great advantage which makes the monastic life a foretaste of heaven, for it adds : " And the torment of death shall not touch them ". It is this torment that makes the lives of those who pursue everything else except God, unhappy lives. Death ever and anon draws between them and the sickly sunshine of earthly happiness, a dark pall which intercepts its rays, and enfolds them in the gloom of night. That gloom is ever threatening them, ever coming and casting its darkness upon their parties of pleasure. It admonishes them of the great throne of judgment, of the stern face of an angry Judge, of the night that is rapidly advancing to enshroud them in perpetual darkness.

This is the " torment " of death—a torment preceding that which is in store for those who have rejected God for the empty vanities of the world. No matter how dissipated and full of external business may be the life which they lead, there are

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. iii. 1.

moments and hours during which they are forced to look back upon the past. That past has unhappily been devoted to the service of the creature. To that creature the thoughts of their minds have gone forth, to it the love of their hearts has been consecrated, while God has been forgotten. He gave them talents which they have misspent ; He imposed laws which they have broken ; He created them to love and to serve Him ; they have loved only themselves, and have served only their own passions. Beyond the grave He awaits them. To Him they must go ; He, most holy, most just ; they, stained with innumerable sins and burdened with debts which they are unable to pay. With bands of iron and with hoops of brass they are tied down to the earth ; and to the gods which they have chosen for themselves they cling with the tenacity of habit now grown into a second nature. But these bands, so inextricably twined and fastened among the very fibres of their hearts, must be broken, and from them their heart-strings must be torn away. This is the torment of death, rending and torturing the servants of this world when it is said to them : " Arise, go forth ; time shall be no longer ".

From this the monk is saved, because he has burst asunder and freed himself from every tie that could bind him to the things of earth. Wealth has no attraction for him, nor pleasure, nor power. To him God has been all in all. He has been the object of his thoughts, the desire of his heart, the beloved of his soul. That God Whom he has so faithfully served will presently be his Judge. Why should he fear Him ? Has he not for His sake despised everything else ? Has he not, to the best of his ability, employed in His service the talents that were committed to his keeping ? Has he not diligently fulfilled all His commands ? Has he not paid to Him all his debt of dutiful homage and service ? Therefore, when the day of life is drawing to a close, and its light is paling before the never-declining sun of eternity, the dying monk looks calmly and peacefully upon the approach of death. He welcomes him as the gate-keeper who will throw open to him the golden portals of his Father's house, and as he is about to cross its threshold, he can cry aloud with joy and exulta-

tion : " O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? " In those last moments of his mortal life " he is at peace, and the torment of death shall not touch him " .

You see, then, that the monk's life is not the unhappy state of existence that the votaries of the world and ignorant opponents would make it out to be. It is in reality a life wisely chosen by those who feel called by God to embrace it, and though the number of these is small, yet their obedience to this call stands before the eyes of all as a very useful object-lesson. What does it teach them ? It teaches them that they are breathing the breath of life only for the purpose of serving God ; that they must set aside everything that would cause them to forget this all-important truth ; that they have to fight against and subdue the passions of corrupt nature ; and that in order to win this battle, they must deny themselves. Therefore, though you may not be called to embrace the monk's life, try to imitate his obedience, by your faithful observance of God's law ; his chastity, by purity in thought, in word, and in deed ; his poverty, by detachment from all your worldly possessions. Then, like him, you will hear from the lips of the great Judge : " Well done, good and faithful servant ! Thou hast fought the good fight ; thou hast run the course marked out for thee ; thou hast kept the faith. "

## THE HOUSE OF GOD.

WHEN the Patriarch Jacob fled from the rage of his infuriated brother Esau, he came towards evening to a suitable resting-place, just as the flaming Syrian sun sank in the west. Taking a stone for his pillow, he flung himself down upon the earth, with the grass for his couch and the sky for his canopy. As the darkness gathered round him, and one by one the stars came out in the firmament above his head, he pondered, no doubt, upon the chain of mysterious events which had made him a wandering fugitive and homeless wayfarer upon the face of the earth.

Gradually, as deep sleep stole over his senses, the scene upon which he had been gazing faded from his view. He no longer looked upon the plain, the distant hills, the deep azure of that star-lit eastern sky. All these had disappeared; but a wondrous vision had taken their place. Above his head there stretched up into the vault of heaven a broad, glittering pathway or ladder as it were of burnished gold. Upon it there appeared the glorious, resplendent forms of angelic Spirits ascending from earth to heaven, and descending from heaven to earth. The waving of their wings, and the bright effulgence of their garments, and the beauty of their forms filled him with ecstatic joy. But high above them all, more beautiful, more majestic, more glorious than them all, there stood the image of One like unto God, Who spoke to him words of promise, words which gladdened his heart, and filled it with the hope of inestimable blessings through the Mighty One Who should be born of his seed.

Suddenly had the vision come; as suddenly did it vanish, and he awoke. Above him hung the blue firmament, reddening with the first tinge of advancing dawn; before him stretched the plain; there, were the palm-trees, and beyond, the distant hills; but all the glory of the heavenly vision had faded away. Then, trembling with awe, because he had slept upon holy ground, and because he had been in the company of God and of His holy Angels, he exclaimed: "This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven".

With how great truth may you repeat these words concerning the chapel in which you so often assemble to pray, to receive the Sacraments, and to hear the word of God! God is in that place; it is His house; and, alas! through custom, you have come not to know that fact. Custom has dulled the brilliancy of your faith, and blunted its keenness. It will therefore be to your advantage to try to realise "how terrible is this place," inasmuch as it is the house of God, and the threshold of His eternal kingdom.

When from the outside world, with its ceaseless bustle and its daily round of absorbing duties, you pass into the solemn

stillness of the quiet chapel, it is as if you had been tossing about upon the stormy sea, and had suddenly been shot into the smooth water of some sheltered haven. There is a sudden hush ; the winds have fallen ; the waves have ceased to beat ; there is a great calm. You look around, and everything that meets your eye, speaks to you of God—the subdued light, the painted windows, the oaken stalls with their quaint carvings, the odour of incense impregnating the air, the lamp shining, and like the star of Bethlehem saying to you : “ God is here ”. Christ is present in the Holy Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, as truly, as really, as substantially, as the Christ Who opened the eyes of the blind, cleansed the lepers, called back Lazarus from the tomb, and stilled the tempest on the Galilean Sea. The same Christ is there that spoke as never man spoke before, that silenced the canting Pharisee, and put to shame the hypocritical Scribe. He Who came into the world to loose the captive’s bonds and to free all men from the slavery of the devil is there, held a prisoner by the chains of love. Therefore, this is a terrible place as being the house of God. Terrible it truly is, and yet how wonderful, if we call to mind the marvellous works which, in consequence of His abiding presence, must of necessity be carried on within its hallowed walls, for God, Who is never idle, is ever working within them.

Reflect and see what works He there carries into effect. Around us there are three widely different worlds. There is the physical world in which we live, and move, and earn our daily bread ; there is the moral world which is throned in the hearts of men ; and there is the political world which endeavours to govern the masses in their relation to one another, and to the country which claims them as her children. From the little round of the host, Jesus, the God-man, rules and guides to their various destinies these three great worlds.

The physical world was created by Him. He fashioned its vast bulk, and He now guides it in its career, as it silently whirls in space, accomplishing its appointed way. The laws which hold it together were framed by Him. They keep it at a due and measured distance from other and far vaster worlds,

with which, if it came into collision, hideous, irremediable ruin would be the consequence. His hands clothed it with verdure; His breath infused into it the germs of its life, dowering it with fruitfulness, making it a store-house whence countless multitudes draw their daily bread. By Him the mountains were uplifted; by Him the plains were outstretched like a vast table; at His nod, the fertilising rivers gushed forth, spreading like veins and arteries through its vast bulk, and carrying their life-giving streams to its remotest parts. Its seas and oceans were by Him prescribed their limits, beyond which they may not pass. He peopled them with living creatures, just as He filled the forests and the plains with others for the use and service of His most favoured creature, man, whom He destined to be the lord and master of this visible world. But He Himself rules that world, and rules it from the tabernacle where He abides through love of us.

In this physical world there is the great human race which He called into existence, and for which He daily, with a fatherly providence, supplies all that it needs. To that race, as to the inferior animal creation, He has given a law. Upon it He has imposed precepts to serve as its guides unto the supernatural end for which He brought it into being. The conformity of man with these precepts constitutes the moral world. In that moral world God is working as He is working in the physical world, and His work is to bring the stubborn will of man into dutiful obedience to His own, all-holy will. He has given to man an intelligence to know these precepts; a conscience to point out what is right and what is wrong; a will to embrace the good and to reject the evil. But that will is quite free. Yet, though free, it does not make man independent. God Himself could not create man independent, that is to say, constitute him the centre of his own being. Therefore, He made him as He made everything else, dependent upon Himself, to contribute as the rest of the creation does, to the honour and glory of the Creator. Consequently, because man is not independent of God, he is responsible to Him. Hence, the work of God in this moral world is to help man to carry out this law of his being. In

pursuance of this end He first, by the Sacrament of Baptism, makes him His child, blotting out the stain of the primal transgression, and giving him a title to eternal life. As the years advance, and the child begins to be able to discriminate between good and evil, and to be tossed to and fro by the rising tide of passion, God again interposes and breathes into him fresh strength, fresh power of resistance, by means of Confirmation, through which the Holy Spirit imparts force to withstand evil, and light to distinguish it from good. But should the devil prevail over him and drag him down into the mire of sin, even so God does not abandon him. He knocks at the door of conscience; He enters that sanctuary; He makes man himself enter it, and behold what he has done. When he thus perceives his sad state, and turning away from the sight with shame and horror, weeps over it bitter tears of sorrow, God is again by his side to minister help. He has at hand another Sacrament to undo the evil that has been committed. Penance comes with its saving streams of grace, to blot out the stain that has been incurred, to restore the treasure that has been lost.

Besides these advantages, the child of God has need of two other things with which every good parent is careful to provide his offspring. He needs education, and he needs food. The great Parent of us all is ever labouring to satisfy both these needs of His children. This work also He carries on within the walls of this chapel. Those who come here are instructed in all the truths of faith, and in all the mysteries of religion, by men who themselves have been trained under the eye of God for this very purpose. Here they dispense the word of God, which is as a keen, double-edged sword, cutting away what is detrimental to the spiritually intellectual development of the Christian, penetrating into the most hidden recesses of his soul, and flashing light into that abode where heretofore darkness reigned supreme. In their Father's house, there is set up also the table at which they are fed with the bread of life, that living bread which came down from heaven, that bread of which the God-Man has said: "Unless you eat of it, you shall have no life in you". Nourished with that super-



natural food, the Christian is strong as a giant to run his appointed course, valiant as a trained warrior to meet his spiritual foes, courageous as a lion to contend with them, and so powerful that the mightiest of the fallen angels compared with him is but as an infant.

Outside this moral world in which God is working from the silence and the obscurity of the tabernacle, though in reality it should be within it, and subject to its laws, lies what we may call the political world—composed of that body of men who rule their fellow-men in all that concerns them as citizens of the land of their birth. At first sight it seems that God has nothing whatever to do with this numerous and influential body. In the present age, at least, He is left out of its calculations and excluded from its councils. In some of its circles, the very idea of His existence is scouted as an exploded superstition. According to their notions, the great world in which they live, and which they vainly would rule according to their principles, had its origin from what they are pleased to term “cosmic gas”. The men who swarm upon its surface are nothing more than a nobler development of the ape. They have no soul, in our meaning of the word soul; and, consequently, there is awaiting them no future life. Over them there is no God. The world which is the theatre of their existence, is only a place out of which they have to win for themselves as much enjoyment as they can possibly obtain, by practically erasing from their thoughts and from their aims all hope of anything either higher or nobler beyond the grave. Hence, these political rulers madly rage against the Church which opposes them and gives the lie to their baseless theories. They persecute her ministers and her champions. As far as she is concerned, they conveniently drop their boasted love of justice and of liberty. For her there is no justice and no liberty! Therefore it is, that we have over and over again presented to our eyes the spectacle which a Roman governor exhibited to the gaze of the people under his sway. The robber Barabbas is received with acclamations and hailed with shouts of joy, while Christ is hurried away to die the disgraceful death of the Cross.

It seems, then, that in this portion of the world God has no work, and that He abandons it to itself, to dash itself against Him, and to shiver itself into that dust into which all must crumble that opposes Him. But this is not so. His hand is in it, and upon it. It is in it, to thwart the designs of the wicked; and upon it, to draw good out of their evil designs, which besides being evil are foolish, and, therefore, must of necessity come to naught; while God, to confound them, makes use of their wickedness to carry out His own designs. For a time He is patient with their follies, because these men quickly pass away, whereas He is eternal and can afford to wait. But though He waits, and though He is patient, He ceases not to work.

The over-zealous forget this, and from time to time querulously ask: "Why do these Gentiles so furiously rage, banding themselves together against the Lord and against His Christ? Why are they suffered to burst His bonds asunder; to be free; to be apparently irresponsible? Why are they allowed to succeed, to glory, to triumph in the ruin which their stupid folly is able to effect?" We answer: "They do not succeed! True, they seem to do so; but their success is only apparent, and only for a time. For, when the right moment, ordained by God, has come, He rouses Himself, as the Psalmist expresses it, like a man who has been slumbering. He scatters them and their works, as an impetuous wind scatters and sweeps before it chaff from the threshing floor. They disappear and go to their own place, accursed of the Lord."

Therefore, look into the records of the past, and therein you will read how in the political, as well as in the physical and in the moral world, God is carrying on His wondrous work from the silence and the obscurity of the tabernacle. The chapel, then, is "a terrible place," inasmuch as it is the house of God, the house in which the almighty Ruler performs all the marvellous works of which we have spoken.

But for us especially, there is another point of view from which we may consider it. It is, for those who use it as it ought to be used, the very threshold of God's eternal kingdom.

It is in the church where God dwells that the future citizen of heaven receives the freedom of the true Jerusalem, and obtains the passport which will open for him its golden gates. There, is to be found that sacred fountain, the waters of which, falling upon his head, wash away the stain on account of which those gates were fast closed against the posterity of Adam. True, the baptismal font is not to be found in a college-chapel; nevertheless we recall to your mind the fact of its presence in parish churches, that you may remember that in this respect the church is for her children the gate of heaven. In the church and in the college-chapel, too, you are enrolled among the number of Christ's soldiers who are sworn to fight His battles, and to do their utmost to enlarge His kingdom in the hearts of men; for there, the Holy Spirit of God is given to you, and His might is infused into your being; His armour is girded on your limbs, and His seal is set upon your brow.

If in the warfare which you thus undertake to wage, you should receive any hurt or any grievous wound, or if you should feel that some of the grime of the battle has disfigured your spiritual nature, you will find in the house of God a physician to heal your wounds, and to remove from you the stains of the conflict. That conflict will never altogether cease so long as you are in this world. For your life is a battle and a march. Therefore, you need a spiritual food to sustain you in your conflict and in your laborious onward course. That heavenly food is always awaiting you in the church. There, the table is ever spread. The weak must go to it to acquire strength; the strong to preserve the strength with which they are already endowed. God is there to dispense it to you. All that He asks from you, as conditions for admitting you to His board, are lively faith, sorrow for past infidelities, and a firm resolve never to lay down your arms, or to go over to His enemies.

If you possess these dispositions, He will clothe you in that white garment which will secure for you a place at His table, and from that table you will go forth with renewed strength to march forwards and overcome both His and your enemies.

Even when the battle is not actually raging, and when the march does not make its wearying labour so painfully felt, there are, nevertheless, other enemies that hang upon the flanks of Christ's army to worry and harass His faithful soldiers. You are marching through a vale of tears. The sorrow that is everywhere around you will not fail to find its way into your heart also. It will depress you, and the gloom of it will overshadow you like a black storm-cloud, blotting out all the sunshine of your life. Then it is that you will find in the church or in your college-chapel, which is the threshold of your eternal home, a gleam of that brightness which is for ever shining beyond the golden gates. Kneeling in the presence of your heavenly Father, you can pour out your sorrows into His sympathetic ear, and you will go away with all the darkness swept aside and God's sunshine illumining your path. By your side, as you kneel there, you will see the poor, the sorrowing, the heavily burdened, each like yourself finding in the church the gateway that leads to heaven, and receiving from the hands of the common Father courage to march on, in spite of innumerable difficulties. Not a tear drops from their eyes that He does not see; not a sigh breaks from their hearts that He does not hear. He lightens the burden of poverty, He sends bread to the hungry, He pours the balm of His consolation into the broken heart.

Thus do all the heavily burdened children of men find in the church a foretaste of the joy that awaits them beyond the grave. There, they receive that grace which helps them to win their crown. There, they wash from themselves every guilty stain that would exclude them from their inheritance. There, they receive the nuptial robe which entitles them to sit as guests at the banquet of their Lord. Therefore, in the church where God abides in the Holy Sacrament, they find the gate of heaven. Hence, you must love the Church which contains for your benefit so many priceless treasures. You must reverence it as the dwelling-place of God. You must, with the profoundest respect, enter its hallowed precincts. While you remain there, ever strive to conduct yourself in so devout a manner that those who look upon you will be made

to feel that they are in the presence of God, before Whom even the angelic hosts veil their faces and bow down in trembling adoration.

## THE PASSIONS.

BEFORE treating in particular of each of the capital or deadly sins, it will be to your advantage if we give you some idea of the "passions" in general; for, it is from the criminal indulgence of these passions, that the capital sins take their rise. You must know, then, that the sensitive appetite which is attracted by what is good or by what appears to be good, and is repelled by what is evil or by what appears to be evil, has in itself two forces: one which vehemently desires to possess the good presented to it, and the other which as vehemently repels whatever interposes to prevent it from obtaining possession of that good. Out of each of these forces there spring certain movements which are called into play, whenever there is represented to the sensitive appetite either good or evil, it matters not whether that good or that evil is real or only apparent. From that part of the sensitive appetite which thirsts after good, there are engendered the movements of love, desire, joy, hatred, abomination, and sadness; from that part which resists or repels whatever would prevent it from satisfying that thirst, there are begotten the movements of hope, audacity or daring, despair, fear, and anger.

These movements are called "passions"; because from the simple apprehension of any object, whether pleasing or displeasing, there is aroused in the sensitive appetite a something altogether indeliberate and purely passive, that is to say, suffered without any active concurrence or any consent of the will. This first movement of the passion is called its first act. Its second act is, when the intelligence adverts to this movement, and the will gives to it its assent. In themselves, the passions are not evil. It is only when the objects of them are evil that their movements clothe themselves with the

nature of that upon which they fasten. Consequently, it is only in their second act that they become either good or bad ; so that if the object which stirs the passion is an unlawful one, the action resulting from it is evil ; if it is a lawful one, it is good. The criminal or unlawful indulgence of the passions may be reduced to seven heads, which are called the capital or deadly sins. They are termed "capital" because each of them is a fertile source of other sins ; so that if one of them is admitted into the soul, it introduces with itself several others, if not all the rest.

These capital sins are : *pride*, which fills us with an inordinate love of ourselves, with an excessive desire to display before others whatever excellences we may possess, with a craving to exalt ourselves over them ; *covetousness*, or the love and the pursuit of wealth ; *lust*, which is a burning desire for the unlawful indulgence of the pleasures of the flesh ; *anger*, which enkindles the fires of resentment, vengeance, hatred ; *gluttony*, which fills the soul with the disorderly desire of eating and of drinking ; *envy*, which consumes us with grief at the prosperity of others ; *sloth*, which enervates and causes us to omit or to neglect our duties.

We have said that each of these is called a "capital sin," because it is the fruitful source of other evils ; for each of them, in order to satisfy its greed, must employ the means for compassing that end ; it must remove the obstacles which stand in the way ; and, it must prevent the evil consequences which may be the result of its indulgence. In the employment of these means, in the removal of these obstacles, and in the prevention of these consequences, the soul of the man who is swayed by passion is hurried into the commission of other evil acts, so that the gratification of one passion draws after it a train of other evils, and hence each of these deadly sins is deservedly named a capital vice or passion.

In order more clearly to see the truth of what we have said, let us take from the third Book of Kings an incident in the life of the impious Achab. Adjacent to his palace lay the pleasant vineyard of Naboth. He coveted this, and wished to possess it. At first this passion may have been quite lawful.

He may have desired to buy the vineyard, and to pay for it a reasonable price. But when its owner refused to sell it, the passion became one of covetousness, the unlawful wish to possess something which could not be his except by unjust means. Thus, in the case of Achab, covetousness became a root-passion. It entered his heart, but it did not enter alone.

Observe now, how together with itself, it introduced others to torture and enslave him. When Naboth emphatically refused to part with his inheritance, that refusal filled Achab with a hatred of him. He held him in abomination, because he would not suffer him to possess that for which his heart pined with so great vehemence. Full of sadness at the failure of his attempt to gain possession, and fuming with anger at being thus thwarted in his wishes, he determined to revenge upon this innocent man the fancied wrong which he had done him.

When his wicked queen learned the cause of his sadness, dejection, despair, she also allowed her passion to gain the upper hand. She resolved that her lord should have that for which he craved. Filled with all the daring necessary to carry out her design, she devised a plot to rid her husband of the hated obstacle which stood in his way, and prevented him from accomplishing that which he so much desired to do. Summoning into her presence the obsequious tools who, she knew would carry out her will, she concerted with them the means for the destruction of Naboth. At her instigation, these men accused the unsuspecting victim of her hate, of treason and of blasphemy; corrupt judges at once condemned him to death; and her willing slaves speedily carried the sentence into execution.

Achab, by admitting into his heart the passion of covetousness, admitted in its train, anger, hatred, revenge; and by assenting to his wife's impious design, incurred the guilt of injustice, perjury, and murder. Thus we see with how great truth each of these deadly sins is termed "capital," as being the prolific source of many other evils.

As we have already said, these passions when in their first

act, are not sins ; for, at this early stage the bait or enticement which stirs and attracts them to evil is, as it were, simply asking their acceptance, which is given only when the will, after being enlightened by the intellect, consents to embrace what is offered to the passion. Having done this, the passion enters its second act. If, in the first act of the passion, the will resists and struggles against the enticement held up before it, that struggle is meritorious, and no sin is committed ; but if it yields, and gives its consent, the guilt of sin is incurred. You will, therefore, perhaps, ask whether there are any circumstances which excuse the will from the guilt of the act which it commits, by yielding to the attraction exercised upon it by these forbidden fruits.

In the first place, we say, that ignorance of the evil contained in the act to which the passion leads, either considerably diminishes the gravity of the sin, or altogether does away with it. If the ignorance is of such a nature that the intelligence has not even a suspicion of any wrong in the act performed, there is no guilt or sin. But, if this ignorance is such that the person labouring under it ought to have known the precept prohibiting his act, it will not excuse him from the guilt of sin—of grave sin in a grave matter, and of light sin in matters that are not of much moment. For, the first obligation of any precept is that those whom it concerns should know it ; and hence that precept is violated, not only by the commission of any act contrary to it, but by the voluntary ignorance of its existence.

Nevertheless, if ignorance of this kind, blameworthy, perhaps, in its origin, should become invincible, from the fact that in the person labouring under it there is no advertence whatever to the evil of his past negligence, there is no sin in the evil act which he performs ; but the nature (*ratio*) of his guilt must be measured by the cause of his ignorance, not by the act which he performs. In this sense, then, ignorance diminishes the guilt of a sinful act.

In the next place, frailty or the violence of passion on the part of the sensitive appetite, may make less grave the sin to which it has impelled a man ; but it does not prevent that sin



from being grave, from the simple fact that reason, by exercising its power, can resist the violence of passion. However, all sins in which there are to be found complete advertence of the intellect and full consent of the will, are in three ways more grave than the sins which are the result of passion or frailty. In the first place, because sin consists chiefly in the assent of the will to that which is evil; consequently, the more a sinful act proceeds from the will only, the more it has of malice, and therefore the greater is its gravity in the sight of God. In the second place, when sins of this nature pass, as they speedily pass, into a habit, that habit being a permanent disposition, adds by that very fact to the gravity of the acts which result from it; for passion is a transitory act, and consequently its malice is not so grave as a long-continued series of acts. In the third place, sins of this nature show that the sinner is evilly disposed towards the end itself of his being—in other words, towards God; for the very principle of every evil action is an oblivion of Him Who is our last end, whereas in sins of frailty, or passion, or weakness, this end is only momentarily forgotten.

Having now acquired a general notion of the passions, the next thing to be done is to discover in what way we may most effectually curb their criminal tendency, and by so doing, convert them into sources of merit. The first step to be taken in this all-important duty, is to find out which of the passions holds in our hearts the chief place, or, in other words, to see which of them is our dominant passion. In each of us, this ruling evil has a very pronounced and positive existence. It is the cause of all our spiritual ills, the root of all our transgressions. In one man, it is envy; in another, it is pride; in another, it is lust, and so on. We ourselves, though conscious of our many shortcomings, are usually stone blind to the existence of this tap-root of all our other sins. Our neighbours are quick-sighted enough to see it, so that all the world is aware of its existence, while we remain in a state of ludicrous ignorance concerning that which is ruining our lives. "What a pity it is," they say, "that such a one is eaten up with envy, or with avarice, or with pride! But for the existence of that

grave fault, our friend would be a most lovable character ; for, if that were removed, all his good qualities would have a chance of expanding, of growing into perfection."

Hence the necessity for discovering this cause of all our ill. As it is so well known to those who are about us, one of the best means for making it equally well known to ourselves, is frankly to ask some discreet and courageous friend for a plain straightforward statement on this point. The confessor to whom we open the book of our conscience is, perhaps, in the best position to do this for us, and when once the knowledge of it has been put before us, the next step is humbly to confess that the vice upon which he has laid his finger is in reality our besetting sin. Having made this admission, all that we have to do is to pray for grace to combat it, and never to relax in our efforts, till we have fully mastered it, and ejected it from our hearts.

The next measure to be taken in the work of reforming our lives, is always to endeavour to supply the passions of our nature with their lawful objects, to furnish them with the food upon which God intended them to feed. "Hence, it is necessary so to regulate the love of our hearts that they will never fasten their affections upon the things which here below flatter the senses, but only upon virtue and upon God. Concupiscence or desire must not be suffered to go out to the goods either of soul or of body, except in so far as these goods are useful and helpful unto eternal salvation. The joy of the heart must be so regulated that it will be glad only in God, in His infinite perfections, and in whatever may advance the well-being of our neighbour.

Hatred must be directed against nothing but sin and whatever may lead to it. Aversion or the passion of abomination must be employed to turn away with disgust and horror only from sin and the occasions of it ; from bad company, and from evil or from dangerous conversations. Sorrow must be used to lament over our sins and the sins by which others offend Our good God. Hope must be turned, not to the fleeting good things of this world, but to those eternal joys which await us in the world to come.

Audacity or daring must be so regulated that, while it fills us with courage to undertake arduous things, and to encounter difficulties for God's sake, it will prevent us from trusting too much in our own strength, and too little in the omnipotence of God. Despair must be met, checked, and overcome, so that the soul may never abandon the hope of obtaining divine grace, eternal salvation, and the means by which these inestimable goods may be secured.

Fear of such things as hurt the body must never be suffered so to take possession of our hearts as to become a hindrance to us in the performance of our duty to God and to our fellow-men. Only the fear of such things as hurt the soul and imperil its eternal well-being should be admitted and cherished. Anger must be so evenly balanced that it will never go beyond just limits either in its desire of redress, or in its infliction of punishment.

"If the passions be thus carefully held in check by the superior or rational part of the soul, they will be purged—as far at least as it is possible to purge them in this world—of all those imperfections which prevent the soul from being clean and pleasing in God's sight, and then another step will have been made in the acquisition of purity of heart, and of a closer union with God."<sup>1</sup>

## PRIDE.

HAVING acquired, from the preceding Lecture, a general notion of the passions, we may now proceed to consider the vices which spring from a criminal indulgence of these same passions. When, for instance, the passion of love goes forth and immoderately fastens itself upon any excellence, whether real or imaginary, that a man sees in himself, that love degenerates into the passion of pride, which is said by Ecclesiasticus to be the beginning of all sin; for pride brought about the fall of the Angels, and afterwards the fall

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Religious Life*, chap. iv., sect. ii.

of man whom God created when the angelic host had rebelled against His authority. This passion, then, is an inordinate love of our own excellence. Looking at ourselves with eyes that are blind to our many weaknesses, shortcomings, and defects, but gifted with wondrous powers of magnifying anything that in us appears to be good and praiseworthy, we perceive that we possess certain gifts of nature, of fortune, or of grace—gifts which in our own esteem raise us high above our fellow-men. Perhaps we have an acute intelligence which makes the path of learning an easy one for us to tread ; or, we may have stored up a treasure of knowledge which makes us shine among the ignorant ; or, having nothing else to boast of, we may be endowed with great bodily strength and graced with a beauty of form which elicits the admiration of those among whom we live.

In addition to these advantages, fortune may have showered upon us her wealth, or the honour with which she crowns her favourites, or the power which both these advantages secure for their possessors. Or, again, instead of these blessings heaven may have dowered us with the far more precious gifts of virtue which circles our brows with spotless integrity, unimpeachable honesty and the various other favours which give us an empire over the hearts of our fellow-men.

All these are undoubtedly the gifts of God, to be attributed to Him as the source of all good, and to be employed for His greater honour and glory. But if, instead of so doing, any one ignores the source whence he has received these manifold blessings, and attributes them to himself, glorying in them as if they were his own, and as if he had evolved them from his own native worth, he is guilty of the sin of pride. That pride is said to be perfect, consummate, when the wretched creature so rests in himself and luxuriates in his fancied excellence, that utterly ignoring God, the source of all good and using His gifts for his own self-glorification, he is disposed gravely to transgress the law of God rather than acknowledge his indebtedness to his Creator for the manifold benefits with which He has enriched him.

Pride of this nature is always a deadly sin. But when it

has not in it the elements just mentioned, it is said to be imperfect. It is then usually only a venial sin, unless there is joined with it a grave injury to our neighbour, such as grievous contempt which would invest it with the guilt of a mortal sin.

Such then is pride from which all other sins are said to flow, since every sin is a separation of one's self from God, a revolt from Him, a rebellion against Him, a will not to be dependent upon Him, or to be subject to Him. Being a capital or root sin, there flow from it other sins upon which you must now fix your attention, for the hateful nature of these its offspring will enable you to obtain a clear idea of its malice, to fight more strenuously against it, and to prevent it from ever taking up its abode in your heart.

In the first place, then, any one who is dominated by the passion of pride will naturally desire that every one should have as high an idea of his many fancied excellences as he himself has. This desire he does not suffer to remain inefficacious. He takes means to have it realised, and with this end in view, he is careful to display his good qualities before the eyes of others that he may thus be known, esteemed, and praised by them.

Therefore, he leads an ostensibly holy life, that men may proclaim him to be devout ; he gives abundant alms, that they may consider him to be generous ; he devotes to philanthropic works his time, his talents, and his purse, that they may extol his public spirit ; if he is eloquent, he loses no opportunity of airing his views, that they may admire his facility of speech ; if he has a store of knowledge, a wealth of information, this is most liberally dispensed that they may be dazzled by his erudition ; if he has a noble ancestry, his pedigree is flaunted before their eyes that no one may be ignorant of it. In a word all his thoughts and all his actions are directed to one end—to be seen and admired by his fellow-men.

He is like the Pharisees of old, who did all their works for this purpose, that they might be seen by men ; not that the mere fact of so doing is in itself sinful, for there are occasions

when we are bound to act in such a way that men may see our good deeds, and seeing them, may glorify Our Father Who is in heaven, and through the magic force of example be led to imitate them. But to perform these good deeds without any regard to Him Who ought to be the centre towards which they should be directed, and to take to ourselves the glory resulting from them—in these acts consists the sinfulness of pride, for it is to deprive, as far as we are able to do so, the great God of that glory which He reserves to Himself, “and which He will not give to another”. For all such works there will be no reward, and hence the glory sought from them is termed vain or empty glory, the eldest daughter of pride.

The evil of pride does not stay here. Vainglory, which we have called the daughter of pride, is the parent of two children, who like herself owe their origin to that detestable vice. The vainglorious man, in his eagerness to win the empty glamour on which he feeds his passion, is not ashamed to become the panegyrist of his own excellences. If others will not proclaim them for him, he will himself proclaim them from the housetop. Hence, the proud man is usually an intolerable boaster. Boasting consists in parading his good qualities, his good actions, his achievements before others by means of vainglorious speech. Consequently, he makes himself the subject of his discourses, and he is never more eloquent than when publishing to an amused and oftentimes disgusted audience whatever may turn to his own exaltation.

Now, as it generally happens that a man of this stamp does not really possess the many good qualities of which he boasts, nor has ever performed the noble deeds on which he prides himself, nor achieved the brilliant successes by which he wishes to win renown ; and, furthermore, as he is often conscious that he is not what he pretends to be, but yet wishes that others may believe him to be that which he represents himself to be, he is not unfrequently led into the shameful vice of hypocrisy. He assumes the garb of that which in reality he is not. Though not virtuous, he yet wears the outward seeming of virtue ; though not charitable, he yet scatters his wealth broadcast, that he may seem to be so ; though not religious,

he yet performs the outward acts of piety. He is merely playing a part. He is therefore only an actor, that is to say he is a hypocrite.

Look again, and behold into what other vices this passion of pride leads him. It makes him not only vainglorious, boastful, and hypocritical, but ambitious. Having an exaggerated notion of his own excellence, he industriously seeks out a pedestal on which to enthrone it. His excellence must be honoured, and therefore he labours assiduously to win for himself that honour which he deems to be his due. This honour consists of certain dignities which are the rewards of merit, and after these he hankers with a hunger which is never satiated ; for having won for himself one of these, he will aspire to another, and to yet another. These dignities being set upon heights far above him, he is forced to ascend in order to grasp them ; therefore, he must rise higher and higher, he must distinguish himself daily more and more. But there are others who have worked and achieved much that calls for distinction and reward. They are his competitors, and sometimes they stand in his way to bar his ascent. Consequently, he must endeavour to push by them. What matters it to him that, in so doing, injustice is done unto deserving men? Let it be done! The commission of injustice, if it should come to even that, shall not stand in the way of his advancement. But injustice cannot be done openly. He will therefore employ underhand, dishonourable, discreditable means to compass his ends. He will stoop to base intrigue, to meanness ; he will cringe to those in power ; and, no matter how many others may suffer by his exaltation, or, over how many hearts he must trample in his steady march towards the object of his ambition, have it he will at any cost.

If, however, others equally ambitious of winning the same prize should succeed in grasping it, and should thus thwart him in his designs, his ambitious heart is filled with a deadly hatred of them. Like a rapacious vulture, this rends and tears him, but it cannot eat away the ambition that urges him on. He will succeed in spite of all opposition—a determina-

tion which leads him into another vice, for it fills him with presumption. The position of honour so intensely coveted by him, may require in its possessor abilities of which he is utterly destitute. Pride makes him think that he is equal to the discharge of all the duties of that position. If at last he should succeed in obtaining that for which he has so long striven in vain, he is guilty of mistakes which are gravely detrimental to others, since he has not the qualifications necessary for his office. What he is incapable of doing, he omits to do ; what he deems himself equal to perform, he mars by gross mistakes which not unfrequently lead to the destruction of others who are thus offered up as a holocaust on the altar of his ambition.

In order to keep up the state of the position into which he has forced his way, he is filled with a burning thirst for wealth. His revenue may not be sufficient to satisfy the demands made upon it. Nevertheless, money must be procured, and therefore he will suffer nothing to hinder him from procuring it. If deceit will serve his turn, he will employ it ; if dishonesty will fill his coffers, he will not stop at even that ; if cruelty to the poor will bring him gold, he will wade through their tears to grasp it. Self is his idol, and before that everything must bend the knee.

But men cannot be so easily brought to submit to this indignity. The number of the proud, like the number of fools, is infinite. The proud do not so readily pay to one another that obsequious court which each of them deems to be his due. Consequently, pride is the well-spring of wrath and resentment. The proud being always on the look out for that respect and attention which they regard as the homage due to their fancied excellence, are incessantly exposed to storms of ungovernable anger. For, whenever there appears to be the least want of that attention which they have come to consider as theirs by inalienable right, they are filled with wrath. Enmities between them and those who offend in this matter, are the natural consequence ; and, as these culprits are ordinarily men who are their competitors for honour, rank, and wealth, they feel for them the bitterest contempt.



They do their utmost to depreciate them, to decry them. They are jealous of them, if they should in reality and in truth be men of high merit, and they will leave nothing undone to lower them in the esteem of others.

One other outcome of pride, is inveterate obstinacy which leads to bitter altercations, endless disputes, and envenomed dissensions. From this side of pride, all parties, sects, and heresies that, from the beginning, have divided and scandalised the Church of God, have derived their origin. For obstinacy affects both the intelligence and the will. Having once formed his judgment and drawn his conclusions, the proud man adheres to them with a dogged sort of persistence which is proof against argument, and against even the dazzling light of truth. To others, no matter how learned and experienced they may be, he will not submit that judgment. If they are endowed with knowledge, his own science has as wide a range as theirs. If they can reason acutely, he can argue with a cogency greater still. Though vanquished, he will not yield. Though proved to be in error, plain, palpable, manifest, he will never admit his error. His will as well as his intelligence is strangely warped. He will acknowledge no authority. If that authority should attempt to assert its right to obedience, he resists it. If it should condemn him, he revolts against its sentence. To submit, is in his eyes a sign of weakness, a proof of incapacity.

Behold, then, the long train of detestable evils which pride draws after it : vainglory, boasting, hypocrisy, and ambition ; hatred of rivals, presumption, greed of wealth, contempt of others, jealousy, wrath, resentment, and, last of all, that obstinacy of intelligence and of will which closes a man's eyes to reason, and makes him, like a furious bull, rush headlong upon his opponents. Is it not, then, a detestable passion ? Is it not most hateful even unto men ? If so, how much more hateful must it be to God, Whom it attempts to thrust from His throne, and to rob of that glory which He will not share with another ? Therefore it is, that in the Holy Scripture, God is said to resist the proud. He seems to take delight in striking them down, in humbling them, in covering them

with dishonour, and in overwhelming them with disgrace. When they admit pride into their hearts, He withdraws from them; He leaves them exposed to the storms of temptation; He suffers them to fall into the most vile and disgraceful sins.

Therefore, having seen the hideous nature of this vice, be determined to keep it out of your heart, and for this purpose, ever bear in mind that whatever you possess in the way of natural or of supernatural gifts, is His property. These goods are lent to you for your use and advantage; but, having received them on this condition, you must not store up for yourself the glory resulting from them; that glory belongs to God. Humbly ask that good God to help you in this struggle against pride, and in the words of the great Apostle, frequently put to yourself the question: "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? and, if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?"

### COVETOUSNESS.

AFTER pride, the next vice that presents itself for our consideration is covetousness, which is an inordinate desire of wealth or of temporal goods. Whenever this greed for riches induces any one who is swayed by it to be grievously unjust to his neighbour, it becomes a deadly sin; but if it has no other effect than to check that liberality which is so pleasing a feature in a man's character, it does not usually exceed the guilt of a venial sin—though even this side of it easily becomes a deadly vice, whenever it so rivets the affections upon earthly possessions as altogether to close the eyes to the good things of eternity.

Now, you will perhaps wonder why we should address to you any words upon this vice which so rarely finds a place in a boy's heart. If you bear in mind that the tendency towards this, as well as towards the other vices, may be found in the soul of each of you, your wonder will cease. Moreover, if you remember that we do not speak to you about these

matters, because we think that you are under the thralldom of these passions, but only to prevent you from ever being enslaved by them, you will give to this subject, and to others of a similar nature, as much attention as you devote to subjects which more closely concern you.

Let us, then, study the passion of covetousness, that we may learn to detest it, and to oppose the very beginnings of it, whenever these manifest themselves in our conduct.

Men are usually guilty of covetousness in the one or in the other of these two ways, and sometimes in both: either with too great avidity they desire these temporal good things, or with too great an ardour they hold possession of them. The mere fact of possessing them, or of desiring and loving them, does not constitute covetousness. Wealth, like all other good things, is the gift of God, and consequently is good. There is, therefore, no prohibition against possessing it, or against desiring it, or against loving it. That which changes these affections into vices is an inordinate greed for wealth, which greed causes us to abuse that which God meant for our use and benefit. Hence, you must not suppose that the rich men of the world are more exposed to be the slaves of this vice than the poor. For, a poor man may be devoured by the passion of covetousness, while a man who is rolling in wealth may be quite free from its sway.

Consequently, Our Lord does not say: "Blessed are the poor," but, "Blessed are the poor in *spirit*," for a rich man may be quite detached from his wealth, and by that detachment deserve this high commendation, while one that is poor may be burnt up by the greed of it, and for that reason be reprobated by the Lover of poverty, though groaning under poverty's many miseries and privations. Nor is covetousness confined to those wretched beings whom the world brands as misers; who, though abounding with wealth, refuse themselves the necessaries of life—fire to warm their shivering members, clothes to cover their emaciated bodies, and food to sustain their lives. These are, without doubt, covetous, but covetousness is not confined to them.

It may, and it oftentimes does, co-exist with boundless

prodigality. For there are numbers of men who live in the greatest ease and luxury ; who are generous to a fault ; who scatter their gold broadcast ; yet they are the slaves of this passion. As a matter of fact, their prodigality serves only to increase their covetousness ; for, the more they spend, the greater need have they of wealth, and a more devouring greed do they experience for amassing it. Therefore, this passion is not confined to the few sordid wretches who gloat over their gold merely for gold's sake, denying themselves everything that makes life worth living ; it is on the contrary a widespread vice. For, but too many men choose to serve their imperious passions ; and, as the necessary means of satisfying them is the possession of wealth, these slaves crave for it with a greed which makes their hunger a vice. Some desire it in order to accomplish their ambitious designs ; some, to satisfy their vanity ; some, to indulge their luxurious taste ; all, in one way or in another, find in it the most effective implement for removing those obstacles which debar them from that which they love more than they love God.

What we have said thus far is necessary to fix in your minds the idea that covetousness is the inordinate, that is to say, the disorderly or immoderate desire of worldly wealth, no matter whether that desire is to hoard it as the miser does, or to scatter it abroad as the prodigal is wont to do. Therefore, having learnt the nature of this vice, you will be able more easily to understand in what its special malice consists. That malice lies in the fact, that covetousness is a species of idolatry. St. Paul calls it "a serving of idols,"<sup>1</sup> and if you examine the matter, you will find that he rightly so terms it. For the covetous man practically makes wealth his god, and offers to it the worship which he ought to give to God. The end of his existence is to acquire it ; it is his sovereign good ; and everything in his life is referred to it. He believes in it ; he hopes in it ; he loves it. For its sake he sacrifices everything ; he interrupts his repose, he endangers his health, he exposes his life to peril. If he gave to God the

<sup>1</sup> Col. iii. 5.

same devoted service that he gives to wealth, he would be perfect; for to make God the end of our being, to regard Him as our supreme good, to refer everything to Him, is to be perfect, as far, at least, as perfection is possible here below. It is to believe in Him, to hope in Him, to love Him. It is for His sake to give up all that to other men is most dear. It is to be a Saint. Therefore, since this passion of covetousness induces those who are under its tyrannous sway to do for wealth what their duty as Christians ought to make them do for God,<sup>9</sup> the pursuit of it and the service of it are truly what St. Paul terms "a service of idols".

Malice of this kind, having once taken possession of the heart, becomes the prolific germ of many other evils, the consideration of which will help you to obtain a still clearer notion of the detestable nature of covetousness. One of the first offshoots of covetousness—an offshoot which displays itself at a very early stage of its existence—is hardness of heart. It changes the heart into adamant, and renders it incapable of feeling for the necessities and the miseries of others. A covetous child will look with tearless eyes upon the poverty and direst want of the parents that gave him life, and tended him with loving care during the helpless days of infancy. A covetous parent will see without a pang his own flesh and blood growing up in penury, in ignorance, in vice, rather than expend upon their well-being a single coin of his much-loved wealth.

When the poor lift up their piteous cry, and hold out their trembling hands, and expose their emaciated limbs to a covetous man, in order to excite his compassion, their efforts are as vain as if they had appealed for help to a marble statue. Woe to the wretched debtor who with tears in his eyes craves for delay, or for a remission of the crushing burden which weighs him down. Vain is his appeal for mercy, or for time in which to repay the loan. Like the pitiless steward of the Gospel narrative, the covetous man will turn a deaf ear, and with the unfeeling words: "Pay what thou owest," will cast him into a dismal dungeon. The hungry wretches that crawl to his door, and ask for the crumbs of his luxurious table,

are sternly driven away. The naked who shiver in the winter blast are told to begone. Disease and death may be holding them in their grasp, but their sad plight stirs in him no sentiment of pity.

If, from those who have intimated to him their intention of making him the heir of their wealth, he expects a considerable increase to his idol, his ungenerous soul longs for their departure to another and better world, that he may the more speedily enjoy what they may have in store for him. He will not scruple to lay hands upon even that which is not his own, to win it by fraud, by falsehood, by force. Self is his centre, his god ; and wealth, in a certain sense, is allowed to hold that position, only because it ministers to that superior god whom he loves above everything else.

Therefore, he cares not for God, he respects not man, he spares neither child nor friend, and the most hopeless feature of his sad case is that his covetousness blinds his intelligence to such a degree, that he sees not that by thus acting he is offending God, and laying up for himself a treasure of wrath which like a storm-cloud will burst upon him, and sweep him into that dread prison-house whence he shall not go forth till he shall have paid the last farthing.

A vice so detestable, so prolific in evil, must therefore be most carefully guarded against. Hence, the necessity for vigilance to detect its first approaches towards the citadel of the heart. Like the other passions, or rather vices resulting from the indulgence of passion, it does not take that fortress by open assault. Its manœuvres are secret, insidious, not easily perceived. Ordinarily speaking, it insinuates itself under cover of a provident foresight for one's self and for one's family. Each of us has to care for his own well-being, and, when one is settled in life, there is the care for one's family also. This is far from being blameworthy. It is not forbidden by God's law, nay, it is one of the duties flowing from the provisions of that law. But, though good and worthy of commendation, this care must be looked to and prevented from degenerating into covetousness. If this is not done, the laudable care of providing for the future may

easily become a disorderly affection for wealth, a devouring greed to obtain possession of it, since wealth makes this world a pleasant enough place to live in, a sort of paradise which men are loth to quit for even the joys of heaven.

Moreover, when this care for the future has become a greed, a vice, it does not usually wear so frightful a look that men stand aghast at it. Lust, drunkenness, and other passions of that nature, are in themselves disgusting; they lead to terrible losses which nothing can repair; reputation, health, position, wealth are often by them swept away beyond the reach of recovery. But this vice, when means are at hand to satisfy it, does not inflict any such misfortunes. Health does not suffer, a man's position in society is even bettered by it, and his coffers are filled to overflowing. Hence, besides being insidious in its approach, it does not, when it presents itself for admission to the heart, wear the dress of passion or vice. Consequently, there is a greater necessity for being vigilant and ever on the alert to detect it.

In the next place, there must be joined to vigilance, an immediate and determined resistance. Covetousness must not be suffered to lay hold of the soul; for, whenever it does, it clings to it with a grasp so tenacious that only a miracle of grace can tear it away; while the consequences which follow from its hold upon the soul are so difficult to remedy, that they render this tearing away and expulsion almost impossible. I have said that the grasp of covetousness upon the soul is most tenacious, for it is an insatiable passion; the more food is ministered to it, the more it will have; it will never say enough! Other passions grow feeble as men advance in age; the very senses which cater for them wear out, and the passion dies a natural death. This passion, however, grows in strength, as its victim grows feeble with age. Men of eighty or of ninety years, who are barely able to crawl from place to place, whose hearing has gone, whose eyesight has failed, whose limbs are paralysed, are yet as much devoured by its fierce greed as they were in the vigour of their early manhood.

Look now at the consequences of this passion, consequences which render it so difficult to subdue. One of these is the

injustice of which its slaves are sometimes guilty. When death knocks at their door, they are called upon to repent. But in their case, repentance is not enough; they are obliged to repair the injury resulting from their sin, by restoring to the rightful owner their ill-gotten wealth. This, however, is loved by them as much as they love their life. To part with it, is like parting with their life's blood. Hence it is that some men will not make restitution, preferring to go before their God with all their iniquities upon their heads. Others, in the days of health and strength, when called upon to perform this act of justice, bluntly refuse. Though tortured by remorse and the dread of judgment, they either persevere in their refusal, or they put off from day to day the duty incumbent upon them, till at last death surprises them and finds them either unwilling or unable to do what justice so imperatively demands.

How truly, then, does St. Paul call this vice "the snare of the devil, the root of all evils, causing men to err from the faith, and entangling them in many sorrows".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we say once again, resist its very beginnings, never suffer it to lay hold of your soul, lest it should become your idol, the end of your existence, and, after involving you in many sins, should plunge you into that dread prison-house whence no man ever goes forth till he has paid the last farthing—that is to say—never so long as God shall be God.

## LUST.

AFTER pride and covetousness, the next vice that presents itself for our consideration is lust, which hurries along the road to destruction vast multitudes of unhappy worldlings, who have suffered themselves to be bound in its adamantine fetters. So great is the number of those who have entered upon that broad, precipitous way, that St. John, when speaking of the world, could say with truth: "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.



eyes, and the pride of life". The concupiscence of the flesh, by which he means the passion or vice of lust, is the inordinate appetite for the pleasures of carnal nature. Writing to the Ephesians, St. Paul intimates to them his wish that even the name of this detestable vice should not so much as be mentioned among them. If, then, we venture to speak to you concerning it, it will be in such a way as the Apostle would approve, and for a purpose which he would commend. Therefore, we will treat of it only in the abstract, and endeavour to point out to you in what especially its horrible deformity consists, that you may be filled with a loathing of it, and thus ever keep your feet from being entangled in its snares.

The deformity of lust consists in its horrible malice, by which it frustrates God's design in creating man as a being, who though carnal, like the animal creation around him, is yet spiritual and intelligent, like his elder brethren, the Angels. By calling into existence a being thus both spiritual and carnal, the Creator intended that his spiritual part should rule the carnal part, by making it conform to the laws of reason. Reason requires that the inferior should be subject to and should be under the control of the superior, and that both should be subject to God. But the passion of lust reverses this order, if it is ever suffered to gain the upper hand. It takes the reins of power from the spiritual part, and puts them into the grasp of the carnal part. In other words, it causes the body to domineer over and rule the soul.

The intelligence falls under its sway; the will obeys its dictates; and the result of this inversion of right order is the degradation of the spiritual part of man's being, till it becomes, if we may so speak, carnal or fleshly. For, the pleasures in which the body indulges in the gratification of lust so absorb the sensitive appetite, that the intelligence is made to think of, and the will to crave for the sensations which they afford, till the man becomes a bestial, besotted being, superior to the animal creation around him only in his greater ability to minister fuel to the raging fires that consume him.

In creating him, God made him to His own image and likeness, the similitude between the Creator and His creature being

in the soul, which the great God intended to spiritualise the inferior part, and thus eventually make it fit to live for ever in the company of the Angels and of Himself. But when lust grasps with its unclean hands this glorious creation of God, it so begrimes it with the mire of its own filthiness, that the image of God is horribly defaced, and rendered a revolting object to the eyes of God and of His holy Angels.

From this result of the sin of lust, it is easy to conceive how detestable it must be to Him. If we look for a convincing proof which will, perhaps, make His detestation of it stand out more clearly before our minds, we shall find it in the way in which He deals with fallen man. When Adam fell by pride and disobedience, God rebuked him and assigned to him his punishment, but without giving expression to any sentiment of the detestation with which He regarded his offence. Even when Cain stained the earth with his brother's blood, God did not, by any strong expression, evince His horror of the atrocious crime. But when in the course of time Adam's descendants had increased and multiplied upon the face of the earth, when they had receded more and more from the worship of the true God, and had turned themselves to serve idols and to gratify the lusts of their flesh, then the sacred writer gave expression, in these startling words to the utter abomination of the Lord for their filthy doings: "And the Lord being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart said: It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth. . . . I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

Why this inward sorrow and this determination to sweep the guilty race from the face of the earth? These words were uttered, to give us some idea of the abomination in which God holds the sin of lust. For, besides its special malice which aims at frustrating God's design, and at defacing in man's spiritual being God's holy image, it in a most horrible manner profanes man's body which St. Paul declares to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost".<sup>2</sup> Call to mind the sacred

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vi. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.

rites by which material buildings are consecrated to the worship of God. They are blessed by solemn prayers ; they are sprinkled with holy water ; they are anointed with holy oil. So, also, are our bodies which are destined to become the temples of the living God. At the sacred font, before the waters of regeneration are poured upon them, they are exorcised, that is to say, freed from the power of the devil. After the baptismal water has been poured upon them, they are cleansed from every stain of sin. They are then anointed with oil. Later on, the Holy Spirit is introduced into them, to strengthen them against the assaults of the Spirits of evil. Finally, the body of the Lord is given to them, to nourish them and to be their greatest treasure, so that in very deed they become the temples of the living God, God actually taking up in them His abode, and uniting Himself to them in a way more close and intimate than He did when He made the great Temple at Jerusalem the throne of His visible presence among men.

Now, as it would be a horrible sacrilege to be guilty of any impure act in the material temple dedicated to the service of God, so also is it a horrible sacrilege to be guilty of any thought, or of any word, or of any act that begrimes with the filth of lust this living temple, so solemnly set apart for God, to be the dwelling-place in which He abides, filling it with the glory and the sanctity of His presence.

These, then, are grave reasons, showing us the deformity of lust. Let us now endeavour to increase our horror of it, by seeking out others which will put that deformity in a still clearer light. One of these reasons is the severity with which He punishes lust. Looking upon His human creation, after it had given itself over to the service of lust, the horrible spectacle which it presented to His eyes filled Him with sorrow, and caused Him to repent of ever having called it into being—not that God can grieve or repent, but these words are employed by the sacred writer, to convey to our minds some idea of God's disgust and horror of sin. How, then, does He chastise this its wilful defection from Him? Not by imposing upon the transgressors of His laws labours, sorrow,

penitential acts, such as He imposed upon our first parents, but by the waters of a mighty deluge, which, with the exception of Noah and of those who were with him, swept from the face of the earth the unclean generation that had polluted it by their abominable crimes.

The privileged few, preserved on account of their innocence, in order to repopulate the world, in due time increased, multiplied, and filled the earth. But some of them, following the instincts of unregenerate nature, fell under the dominion of lust. They were guilty of abominations so detestable that the Scripture, to express the enormity of them, says: "the cry of them ascended before the throne of God," and provoked Him once again to manifest His horror of this particular kind of wickedness. The world's first offence, in this respect, He blotted out by a deluge of water; its second, by a deluge of fire rained down from heaven upon the Cities of the Plain.

When His own chosen people, whom He had led through the desert, and sustained by a daily miraculous interposition of providence, fell into this sin of lust, He did not spare them, but struck them with death, so that the bones of 20,000 of them were left in the desert through which the people were marching to the Promised Land. Even individual men did not escape His wrath, when they fell under the slavery of lust; they were visited with sharp and sudden chastisement, as we see in the case of David and of other offenders whose histories may be found in the pages of Holy Writ.

Another circumstance which will explain to us God's abhorrence of the vice of lust, is the fact that with regard to it no deliberate, wilful thought, or word, or act, or desire, however momentary, can be regarded as a slight offence; for, by that momentary act, or desire, or thought, or word, the whole soul embraces and gives itself up to this abominable evil. With regard to other transgressions of the divine law, parvity of matter is admitted, for the simple reason that the soul does not accept the whole evil forbidden by God's commands. Thus, a man may steal, or be angry, or detract his neighbour, or be proud, and yet not incur the guilt of a deadly sin.

But in the vice of lust, any deliberate or wilful act is a mortal offence against God. This is the teaching of the Decalogue itself; for it forbids the secret thoughts and desires of the soul, against purity, and attributes to them the guilt of the acts themselves about which the mind and the heart busy themselves. Christ Himself teaches this doctrine,<sup>1</sup> and St. Paul repeats it in his Epistle to the Ephesians.<sup>2</sup>

If we need anything further to convince us of God's sentiments towards it, these may be seen from another point of view, if we consider His love for the beautiful virtue which is opposed to the vice of lust. An unmistakable proof of this love, is His choice of a virgin to be the Mother of His Incarnate Son. To whom did He commit the guardianship of the two most beloved beings upon whom He looked down from His throne in heaven? He intrusted them to the keeping of the lowly St. Joseph, who like the immaculate Virgin, though in an inferior degree, was free from every stain. The Incarnate God—whom does He select from among the apostolic band chosen by Himself, to be the object of His special love? It is the youthful St. John, celebrated throughout the world for his virginal purity. As a mark of that love, He suffered him during His last supper to lean his head upon His own sacred bosom. When the other Apostles did not dare to ask Him who would betray Him, St. John ventured to do so, and received from Him the information for which the others were afraid to ask. To him He committed the care of His virginal Mother, putting him in His own place, and commanding him to be to her a loving son, when He Himself should have gone to the kingdom of His Father.

These, then, are some of the reasons which will enable you to see the horrible deformity of the sin of lust. It is not the amiable weakness that worldlings proclaim it to be, an instinct of our nature to be satisfied as we satisfy any of our other wants, but an abominable evil held in abhorrence by God, and punished by Him with appalling severity. Therefore, keep steadily before your minds the instances of that severity ad-

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. v. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v.

duced to show you His sentiments towards the vice of lust. Look upon it as an evil to be held by you in utter abhorrence. Flee from the danger of yielding to its seductive allurements. Shun it as you would shun a pestilence, and strengthen your will against it by earnest prayer, by the use of the Sacraments, by judicious mortification of the senses, and with the help of God, and under the shadow of His protecting wings, you will be preserved from the deadly poison so temptingly held out for your acceptance by the demon of lust.

### EFFECTS OF LUST.

OUR Lord has given us a very simple test for discovering the nature of any cause which manifests itself by results or effects : "By its fruits you shall know it". Let us then apply this test to the passion of lust, and endeavour to fill our hearts with a loathing of it, by considering the fruits which it produces, or, in other words, the effects which flow from it.

One of the first that strikes us, is its terrible energy or power, by which it masters every other passion that sways the human heart, and enables it to fasten its iron grip upon every faculty of body and of soul. The passion of pride is mighty in its sway over the heart, filling the mind with vain-glorious ideas of self, with boastful vauntings of its excellence, with hypocritical feigning of what it is not, with ambition for still greater honour, with cruel injustice, and with a host of other evils which it is needless to mention. Covetousness is powerful, so powerful that it thrusts God out of the heart, and makes of wealth its idol, sacrificing to it justice, charity, and the pity which our common humanity makes us feel for the miseries and the woes of our fellow-men. Mighty also is the power which wrath exercises over the minds and the hearts of its victims, blinding them to every dictate of reason and of common sense. So is it also with other passions, such as gluttony, envy, and sloth. Their iron grip upon the soul is as the grip of a giant.

Yet, powerful as they undoubtedly are, their force is as that of an infant compared with the strength of a full-grown man, if set side by side with the power inherent in the passion of lust. The other passions are mighty in their strength, but lust is more powerful than all the rest joined together. See what it is able to do, when brought into conflict with them. They cannot withstand it; it masters them all. Proud as a man may be, and full as he may be of the idea of his own worth, yet when lust has fastened upon him its tenacious grip, he will cast down his pride before it. He will humble himself to the dust. He will be guilty of actions which disgrace him in his own estimation. He throws to the winds his lofty notions of himself; he tramples under foot his ambitious aims; he casts off his cloak of hypocrisy; he capitulates to the superior power of lust. Dearly as the covetous man loves his wealth, and devoutly as he worships his idol, hardened as he may be against every touch of human feeling, and narrow as his heart may have become under the contracting greed of gold, yet when lust dominates him, his idol is cast from its throne, and the strings of his purse are loosened; the doors of his treasure-house are thrown open—those doors which were securely locked against the cries of a father, or a mother, or a child in dire distress. Wrath which is blind to reason, which is deaf to counsel, which is proof against even self-interest, nevertheless at the beck of lust bows its bristling crest, and follows in its footsteps meek as a lamb. The glutton forgets his feasting; the envious man, the object of his sadness; the slothful, the ease which enthral him, when lust presents itself before them and claims for itself their allegiance. As we have said, it masters all the other passions of the heart, and they willingly bow before its superior power. From this judge of its energy; of the mighty sway which it exercises; of the tenacity of its grasp.

Consider now in the individual man, the tyrannous empire which it establishes over his heart. That empire extends to his whole being—to the faculties of his body as well as to those of his soul—hideously enslaving them all. The eye is made to curiously search out, to joy in, and to gloat over

scenes of depravity ; the ear, to be on the alert for the obscenities vomited forth from the sink of corrupt hearts ; the hands are made to do shameful deeds ; the feet, to hurry off unto places where iniquity holds high revel. Not one whit less terrible is the empire which it exercises over all the glorious faculties of the soul. With what does it fill the thoughts of that soul ? With projects of lewdness, with desires of bestial indulgence, so shameful, so hideous, that the boldest, the most hardened sinner would shrink with horror from exposing them to the light of day. With what does it occupy the imagination ? With filthy pictures of obscenity. With what does it crowd the memory ? With the recollection of words, and acts, and scenes of iniquity, each of them the germ of many an evil deed. With what does it enslave the will ? With the chains of a readiness to assent unto evil, with an impulse to go on repeating evil already committed, in other words, with a habit, with a kind of second nature imperiously thrusting it on to wallow in, to plunge still deeper into the mire of passion. Such is the power of lust to dominate all other passions, to enslave the whole man.

Moreover, this slavery is not like that induced by the other passions—an intermittent sort of service required at certain times and in certain places ; the service required from its slaves by the passion of lust, is a continuous round of work. They sin by night and by day, the very visions of their repose being only a repetition of their actions during the day. While their hands are occupied in labour, their minds are filled with evil thoughts, their tongues give utterance to these monsters in words of infamy, scattering far and wide the virus of corruption, their imagination revels in scenes of abominable pleasures. When in solitude, as well as when in the midst of their fellow-men, the toil of their dismal slavery still goes on. They have but one thought, one desire, one aim in life—to plunge still deeper into the mire, to pile up upon their heads a very mountain of iniquity.

Like all the other passions, lust separates the soul from God, the source of all spiritual as well as of all intellectual light. Consequently, to be separated from Him, is to be plunged



into spiritual and into intellectual darkness. When thus shut off from that sun of justice, the moral law engraved upon the heart, is soon enveloped in dense clouds which hide its obligations from the mind. The intelligence too, deprived of that supernal light, reasons amiss upon all matters which affect the desires of the depraved heart. Keen sighted enough in other respects, it is stone blind with regard to these. Hence, there spreads over the soul a profound darkness which prevents it from recognising obligations which, to the eyes of those who are not under the spell of this passion, are as manifest as is the sun at midday. Conscience cries aloud for their recognition, but lust drowns its soft voice; honour has its laws, but lust sweeps them aside as silly scruples; fidelity has its claims, but lust will not admit them; friendship has its barriers, but lust bursts through them. Blind to every obligation, to every law, it seems to let loose in man all the wild animality of his nature, and without respect for his lofty faculty of reason, suffers that animality to domineer over him, and to run whithersoever it may desire to go: "Man," says the Psalmist, "is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them".<sup>1</sup>

To blindness of mind, there succeeds—as we are taught by spiritual writers—hardness of heart. Nothing seems capable of touching it, or of drawing from it one gracious, or one noble impulse which might arrest it in its headlong career to perdition. Judicious friends and anxious relatives come with profitable counsels, with tender appeals, with sorrowful chidings. Others listening to these, are moved to tears. On the slave of lust, they make no more impression than a snowflake does upon the flinty rock. Foiled in their good intent, they most earnestly implore for him the all-powerful intervention of God. God hears their prayers, and visits him with His saving grace; but having free will, that grace cannot force him; he may reject it, and alas! but too frequently, grace knocks in vain at the door of his heart. The thought and the sight of death come to cast their weight into the

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlvi. 13.

scale ; but they do not move him to repentance. Eternity and hell, which send a thrill of horror through the souls of others, present themselves to aid in his conversion ; but they have no terrors for him. Reverses of fortune, which bring to their senses and humble other men, fall upon him, but all in vain. Lust has hardened his heart. He is as impervious to grace, as a block of steel is to the gentle rain from heaven.

God, however, has other means for touching the sinner and bringing him to his knees. There is the magical force of His divine word, delivered by one whose heart is on fire with zeal ; there are the glorious Sacraments, conveying the precious blood to the sin-stricken souls of men ; there is prayer, imparting to those who make a right use of it, the power of the Omnipotent. Surely these, or at least some of these, will bring about a change in his darkened and hardened soul ! Alas ! the chances are that they will not ; he is free ; but another effect of this passion of lust, is to fill the soul with a positive hatred of the things of God : " The sensual man," says St. Paul, " perceiveth not the things of the spirit of God." <sup>1</sup>

Being full of the infamous objects of his degrading passion, he has not only no taste for these spiritual things, but even a horror, a detestation of them. He contemns both them and those who use them. Hence the virulent, the unreasoning hate of men such as he is, for the priests of God's Church, who are for them a living prohibition of their unholy lusts. Their hatred stays not here ; it fastens itself upon the law of which they are the exponents, and not only on the law, but upon the framer of the law, upon God Himself. Hating Him, and at the same time fearing Him, they cast about for something that will enable them to satisfy their animal instincts, with at least some degree of security. How shall they be able to silence God's witness, conscience, and screen from view the dread tribunal, eternity, and hell ? This must be done, otherwise their life on earth will be but an anticipation of hell. They begin to doubt the existence of God, of eternity, of hell. From doubt they pass to unbelief, or at least to a pretended unbelief. What they desire as their last end is not God, but

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

the gratification of their lust. Therefore, they wish that there should be no God, no eternity, no dread tribunal, no punishment to vindicate the insulted majesty of God. Apparently they succeed in convincing themselves that what they wish is an established fact. It is their interest that it should be.

But it is impossible that all should succeed in thus egregiously deceiving themselves. Their lust may produce a certain haziness which, like a mist, will envelop and dim the brightness of these truths; but that haziness cannot wholly hide from the eyes of their minds the fact of the existence and the reality of these truths. At times, their faith flashes its brilliant light into their souls, and the mist dissolves before it. Then they awake to the peril which threatens them; they make a feeble effort to be rid of their chains, and to drag themselves away from the brink of the abyss. Alas! in many, many cases, this effort proves vain. For the impressions which the passion of lust leaves in the soul are so vivid, the occasions for the gratification of it are so numerous, the corruption of the mind is so profound, in a word, the force of passion is, through their own fault, so overpowering that they do not resist it, and so they yield to the drawing of that vortex whence grace seemed on the point of rescuing them.

Are not these effects of the passion of lust enough to fill you with a horror of so unmitigated an evil? Therefore, frequently bring them before your mind, and when that insidious and powerful passion with smiling face and flower-crowned head comes to seduce you from the narrow way, when it promises you unbounded happiness—a very heaven upon earth, think of its iron grip, and of its tyrannous power; remember how it hardens the heart; fills it with a hatred of God and of holy things; blinds the intelligence so that it is unable to see aright; destroys faith, leads to despair, and causes man to reject the succours of religion. These effects of lust will fill you with salutary fear, and cause you to flee from it as you would flee from death, nay, as you would flee from the fire of hell; the fire of lust will, then, never inflame your heart, and you will thus be saved from the touch of that other fire which will be its punishment for all eternity.

## REMEDIES OF LUST.

WHEN we consider the power exercised by lust upon the heart of man, and then contemplate its terrible effects, we are at first tempted to regard it as an irremediable evil. This is not true, for there are remedies which are able to check and overcome it. After the grace of God, the efficacy of these remedies depends upon the will of the patient to whom they are applied. If he *wills* to obtain a cure, that efficacy is infallible. But this will on his part, must not, as is but too often the case, be a mere velleity—a feeble desire to be rid of his malady, provided that too much exertion is not required of him. It must be a will which takes the right *means* for effecting what he desires, and removes the *obstacles* which hinder its accomplishment.

A boy who wishes to cross a river, does not sit upon the bank waiting for the waters to flow quite away. He either swims across, or takes a boat, and, vigorously plying the oars, reaches the opposite side. If he desires to be a ripe scholar, he does not confine his efforts to mere fervent longings for that distinction. He applies to his books and wastes not a moment of time in useless day-dreams of the glory, the power, and the wealth which his learning will secure for him. If a farmer wills to have an abundant harvest, he does not limit his efforts to merely willing it. He goes forth into his fields, he labours early and late, and does all that in him lies to make his will a reality. Therefore, really to will anything, is to take the means for effecting it, and to remove the obstacles which hinder its accomplishment. Hence, before Our Lord healed the paralytic, He said to him : “Dost thou *will* to be healed ?”<sup>1</sup>

Let us, then, consider the *means* to be used and the *obstacles* to be removed in conquering the passion of lust ; for a determination to employ these means, and to remove these obstacles, constitutes the will to be healed.

<sup>1</sup> St. John. v. 6.

The first means for conquering the passion of lust is prayer, for, the victory over lust, or, in other words, the acquisition of purity of heart is a gift of God which can be obtained only by prayer: "As I knew," says the Wise Man, "that I could not otherwise be continent unless God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought Him with my whole heart".<sup>1</sup> If then, Solomon, who at this period of his life had not yet plunged into the mire of lust, deemed prayer necessary for obtaining purity, how much more necessary must it be for one who has taken that fatal leap, and who after besmearing himself with the filth of sin, is bound in the adamantine chains of this overmastering passion? These enwrap him in an embrace so close that he is like some unfortunate wayfarer who has been robbed and left bound hand and foot to a tree. All that he can do is to cry aloud, and endeavour in this way to bring to his assistance some good Samaritan who will loosen his bonds, and set him at liberty.

So is it also with the victim of this passion. In his pitiable condition, he can lift up his heart and his mind to God, and pray for freedom from the shameful vice by which he is enthralled. He has lost, not the mere dross of earth—gold, silver, and precious stones, but purity—the life of his soul. Therefore, like the Chanaanian woman, he must cry aloud to God for pity on that soul which to him is as dear as a beloved child. The devil holds that soul in his tyrannous grip, and most grievously torments it. If, then, the lustful man wills to have it freed from his clutches, he must in prayer follow Jesus Christ, calling upon Him for mercy and for help. He must expose to Him his weakness, and inability to do anything for its release. At his prayer, Jesus will pause to listen. He may not immediately attend to his petition, but if the strong cry of the heart be perseveringly sent up, He will at last do that which the penitent sinner wills.

But, take notice, this prayer must be real prayer, not coming from the lips only, while the heart is far away,

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. viii. 21.

occupied with worldly cares, but from the depths of a soul touched by the finger of God and vehemently desiring to be healed, not from one fearing to obtain what it asks, lest it should be deprived of its darling passion. If its prayer be real, its petition will be granted, for we have God's plighted word to that effect ; being the very truth, He is fidelity itself ; His word can never be made void. It is quite true, as we have said in the preceding Lecture, that one of the effects of lust is to fill the soul with a loathing of prayer and of everything that pertains to God. But though this loathing may be very great, yet the will that desires freedom can force itself to shake off this disgust. It can pray to be delivered from it ; to know and to see the magnitude of the ill from which it is suffering ; and knowing it, to obtain so great strength from God as to vanquish the disgust which it feels for the remedies which will effect its cure.

Prayer, then, is the first remedy that must be employed for breaking the chains of lust. The next is the Sacrament of Penance. This is the channel by which the balsam of Christ's precious blood is conveyed to the soul, to heal its wounds and to wash away its filth. But it is something more than a bath for the purification of the soul. For, God has established it as a tribunal in which His representative vested with His authority sits not simply as a judge, but as a physician and a pastor. Consequently, there is to be found in the Sacrament of Penance all that is necessary to heal the disease of sin. Thither the afflicted soul betakes itself, and, becoming its own accuser, acknowledges its transgressions, professes its heartfelt sorrow for them, and its determination never to repeat them. Thereupon God's representative, sitting as judge, pronounces his sentence. To this office succeeds that other, in which he acts as physician prescribing the remedies for these terrible evils. Then he exercises his office of pastor, tenderly lifting the soul out of the mire, loosening its bonds, applying the healing balsam which at one and the same time cleanses and cures. Consequently, the frequent use of Penance is one of the most powerful means for breaking down the force of evil habits, and restoring the erring child to spiritual health.

This, however, is not enough. Sin has rendered flaccid his moral fibre, palsied his power of will and of action, and, therefore, something else is necessary to remedy these consequences of sin. Again, Christ is at hand to bestow it. In the Holy Sacrament of the altar, He has prepared a heavenly food to build up the strength so grievously impaired by the passion of lust. It is the most powerful remedy devised by Him to counteract the consequences of criminal indulgence. By it, the strong living God is united with the soul; and not only with the soul, but with man's sinful flesh, for the body of Christ becomes its sustenance, and His precious blood is poured through its every vein and artery. What can resist the energy of this divine remedy? Surely it must prove omnipotent. Will the blindness of unreasoning passion? His touch has given sight to the blind. Will the palsy of passion's enervating agency? He has made the halt and the lame to leap like the roe. Will the corruption of its devouring leprosy? He has infused new life into decaying members. Will its diabolical strength which bursts through all other restraining bonds? He has crushed the power of the evil one, and by a single word expelled him from the bodies of his wretched victims.

With these three remedies, then, prayer, Penance, and the Holy Eucharist—the disease of lust may be cured, if those who labour under it only *will* to be healed. But as that *will* is manifested not only by the persevering use of these three remedies, but by the removal of those obstacles which mar their efficacy, we must now consider what must be the soul's action in this respect also. We need not here speak of shunning what we called proximate occasions of sin, such as too fervid friendships, evil company, bad books, lascivious pictures and the like; for every one is bound to avoid them. In addition to this, what the slaves of lust must do, is to remove from their daily lives whatever ministers fuel to this passion.

The first of these is *idleness*, which St. Benedict calls "an enemy of the soul".<sup>1</sup> Speaking of it the Wise Man says:

<sup>1</sup> *Regula*, cap. xlvi.

“Idleness hath taught much evil”.<sup>1</sup> The reason of these words is not far to seek ; for, when the mind is not filled with useful thoughts, and the hands are not employed in some equally useful occupation, the soul at once flies to that with which it has been chiefly busied. In the case of one dominated by the passion of lust, it is the imagination, the thought, and the desire of evil. Consequently, to remove from his life either mental or bodily idleness, is to take away an obstacle which hinders him from breaking the bonds of the habit which enslaves him. Hence, the schoolboy who sits lazily over his books and gives himself up to day-dreaming, who does not join in the games, and who, when there are no games afoot, will not fill up his leisure time with healthful reading or with some other kind of useful occupation, is usually seized upon by this unclean devil of lust who finds for him an abundance of filthy work to do.

Therefore, any one who wishes to break the spell woven around him by evil habits, must not be idle. It is vain to pray, to frequent the tribunal of Penance, or to sit at the Holy Table unless idleness is overcome. It is a weak spot in his defences, and must be thoroughly strengthened. As long as he is well occupied, he has only one devil to tempt him ; but if he is idle, he has a whole legion to lay siege to his heart. Therefore, let the schoolboy set to work at his books, chain down his mental energies to the task before him, in a word, let him be industrious, and he has removed the first obstacle that hinders his victory over lust.

The next that blocks the way is intemperance in eating and in drinking. For, as the vice of lust has its seat in the flesh, anything that tends to augment the forces of that flesh, as overmuch eating and drinking do, will render more difficult the already difficult task of keeping it within due bounds and subject to reason. But as boys are usually not given to intemperance in these respects, and, moreover, as they need a great deal of nourishment for the development of their bodily frame which is expanding and growing day by day, we need

<sup>1</sup> Ecclus. xxxiii. 29.



not insist upon the removal of this obstacle. Some little restraint is, however, necessary even on their part, and it would be well for them to accustom themselves to abstain now and then from something that they particularly like, not only to moderate this tendency to self-indulgence, but to accustom the will to do what is difficult, and to withhold its assent to that towards which it feels itself drawn.

A third obstacle to the victory over the passion of lust, is a too great freedom given to the eyes. The impressions upon the imagination received through them are most vivid, and they not unfrequently help to rob the soul of its innocence. Hence the eyes are called in Holy Writ "the windows of the soul," for through them the thief enters. Vain is it to shut the gate if the windows are left open. "Death," says the Prophet Jeremias, "is come up through our windows."<sup>1</sup> Hence the necessity for carefully guarding these windows of the soul against objects which through them may introduce the passion of lust into that sanctuary.

The number of these objects is very great, and the occasions which bring them before man's notice are very frequent. He cannot pass along the public thoroughfares, nor look into the windows of our print-shops, nor visit the museums of our great towns, without often encountering them. Therefore, he who wishes to preserve his purity, or, having unfortunately lost it, to break through the tyranny of an evil habit, must keep a strict guard over these entrances to the soul. Vain is it for him to protect all other ways of ingress if this one is left unguarded. A fortress is easily taken when even one of its gates is left open. So is it with the soul. Therefore, a covenant must be made with the eyes not to look at dangerous objects, not to read lascivious books, not to fasten themselves upon that beauty of form which is so seductive for the too sensitive heart.

The last obstacle to be removed from your path, is that sluggishness which makes men slow to reject the first incitement to passion. This sluggishness induces them to turn the

<sup>1</sup> Jer. ix. 21.

eyes of the intelligence to examine the bait held up before them. It inclines them not only to look at it, but to hold converse with him who offers it, and to allow him to enter their stronghold. While they act in this indiscreet way, he thrusts himself farther and farther into the sanctuary of their souls, till at last he clutches them in his powerful grasp, and binds them hand and foot. Therefore, any one who wishes to remain pure must promptly resist the first incitement to lust. On doing this his victory depends. For, that first incitement is like a spark shot out from the fire and falling upon our flesh. If it is not at once shaken off, we are burnt. If it is allowed to remain for even a moment, we feel the smart of the fire. Therefore, be prompt in repelling the first approach of lust. Do not speak with it; do not suffer it to set foot within your stronghold. Why should you be thus careful? Because dry stubble that has been scorched under the blazing sun is not more ready to burst into a conflagration than our flesh is to flame out into lustful fire. Powder is not more ready to explode than our passions are. As, then, we are careful to keep fire at a distance from our property, and as we studiously protect our magazines from danger, so should we guard our souls which a mere spark of lust may enwrap in a destructive conflagration.

These, then, are the remedies to be employed by every one who wills to be healed of the dreadful malady of lust. If he is bound in the merciless chains of this overmastering passion, his first step towards deliverance must be a humble cry to God for help to burst his bonds asunder. His next, is to go to his physician, and after exposing to him his wretched condition, to ask for that balsam of Christ's blood which will cleanse and heal the wounds inflicted by these chains. After this remedy has worked in him its beneficial effects, another must be applied to overcome the prostration, the utter helplessness, and the incapacity for exertion in the performance of good, an incapacity which is one of the consequences of this abominable passion. The eucharistic bread of Our Lord's life-giving Sacrament must be frequently eaten, that the vigour which it imparts may permeate every faculty of mind and of body.

Being restored to spiritual life, the penitent sinner must studiously avoid everything that might again introduce into his soul the passion of lust. Therefore, every obstacle that might impede the beneficial action of these remedies must be removed. Consequently, let him be an enemy to idleness and to all intemperance; let him set a guard over his eyes, and rouse himself from his state of torpor into one of vigorous exertion. Any one who will apply these remedies and remove these obstacles, shows a *will* to be healed; that will, aided by God's grace, will cause him to triumph over the passion of lust.

### ANGER.

BOTH from our own experience, and from our intercourse with others, each of us is well acquainted with the passion of anger. For, who is there among us that has not either felt its emotion, or seen the manifestations of it in others? Something has been either said or done that has roused it into active life. The face either grows deadly pale or flushes scarlet under its influence; the eyes sparkle like live coals; the lips quiver; the hands are clenched; a torrent of vituperative words breaks forth; blows are sometimes struck; and the excitement expends itself in the vindication of the real or the imaginary wrong that has been inflicted. This is the passion of anger, a source of continual unrest to ourselves and of trouble to others. We are, unfortunately, but too apt to regard it as a natural defect, a something which we cannot help, rather than as a vice which we should earnestly strive to combat and overcome.

Let us, then, try to understand its nature, that the knowledge thus acquired may urge us to make more strenuous efforts to conquer the passion of anger.

Anger is defined by theologians to be "an inordinate desire of revenge"; it is a lively commotion stirred up in the sensitive appetite, a commotion which urges us to repel with force and indignation anything that causes us displeasure. This commotion is aroused within us, not only by our fellow-

men, but by even inanimate objects, and by objects which though animate are without reason. Thus you will find among your companions those who vent their passion upon a spluttering pen or upon a stubborn horse. This manifestation of it ought to be termed impatience rather than anger; yet, though each of these differs but little from the other, both arise from the same cause—a badly regulated love of self—and give birth to almost the same effects. If we consider this passion in itself, that is to say, apart from its motives, its end, and the manner in which it is exercised, it cannot be said to be evil, as pride, covetousness, and [lust] are evil; for it is a passion natural to man, and is of its own nature indifferent—that is to say—it may be either good or evil. If it is kept under the dominion of reason, and employed only in accordance with reason's laws, it is undoubtedly good. Hence the Psalmist could say: "Be angry and sin not".<sup>1</sup> But if it breaks away from the control of reason, and runs riot after the fashion of its impetuous nature, it easily becomes evil. Consequently, there are two kinds of anger, one that is praiseworthy, and the other that is blameworthy.

Anger is praiseworthy when the motive which calls it into life and activity is good. Let me set before you an instance in which this condition is found. You are living, let us say, in an excellent, well-disciplined College which, besides cultivating your intelligence, has been able to establish among the boys a high moral standard of conduct. You rejoice at this, and feel an honest pride in the efficiency of your Alma Mater. But, unhappily, some one gains admission who stealthily introduces among your companions books of an immoral tendency, which break down that modesty which crowns with glory the brows of the young. The evil spreads, and its effects are made manifest. Incalculable harm is done, so that you can no longer regard your College as a seat of piety as well as of learning. To be angry with the culprit who has been guilty of this terrible sin, to be indignant with him, to wish for his punishment and expulsion from the School,

<sup>1</sup> Ps. iv. 5.

would not be sinful anger, nor an inordinate desire of revenge, but a righteous anger in which there is no sin. Anger of this kind filled the breast of Our Lord, when seeing the desecration of His Father's Temple by the money-changers and traffickers who invaded its courts, He made a whip of cords and drove them from its sacred precincts.

But if the motive which rouses your anger is not a just one, and if the way in which you suffer your anger to vent itself is not in accord with the rules of righteousness, it becomes at once sinful and blameworthy. Let me again make clear to you this conclusion by putting it into a concrete example. For one reason or for another, boys at School very often fall foul of one another. Differences, disagreements, quarrels, and enmities are the natural consequences. You go to your desk one morning and, to your disgust, find that your photographs have been smeared with ink, your collection of stamps, or of other schoolboy trifles torn and defaced. Would this be a righteous cause for anger, for a desire of revenge, for a burning wish that the culprit should be severely chastised? We think not. It would be a rational motive for feeling pained at a cowardly and malignant act; but not for anger and a desire of vengeance. For, does not the Gospel tell us not to render evil for evil; not to return hate for hate? If it do so—as it most certainly does—then you would not in these circumstances be justified in giving way to anger and in wishing to be avenged. Your duty is to quell the rising storm of passion, and to return good for the evil done to you.

In this instance, we have contemplated an injury deliberately and maliciously done to you. Now, if even in a case of this nature you may not give vent to your passion, with much less reason would such an outbreak be justifiable when the wrong inflicted is the result of accident, or of irreflection, or of innocent fun. Yet injuries springing from such causes as these, are oftentimes the only motives that boys have for giving way to the passion of anger. A companion accidentally runs against you, and knocks out of your hand the watch into the works of which you chance to be looking; or through want of due reflection blurts out, in the presence of the

professors or of the boys, something which you wish to be kept secret ; or makes a joke at your expense, turning against you the laugh which you thought to raise against him ; or thoughtlessly lets fall some word which gives you pain. To be angry on these or on similar occasions is to be angry without a just cause, and is, therefore, more or less sinful. But if the anger is unjust, it is still more sinful when it is directed against what is only an imaginary offence. Why should you be angry with him who has successfully competed with you for the first place in the class, or for the much-coveted prize ? Why do you resent the refusal of one of your school-fellows to make himself your servant ? Is he obliged to do menial offices for you ? Why do you storm against another for stating concerning you what is false, but yet what he thinks to be true ? Why are you enraged with another who, through pure accident, has struck you with a cricket-ball ? These motives for anger are not just, and consequently the anger resulting from them is wrong, and like them is unjust.

If we reprobate anger of this kind, what shall we say of the anger of those who give way to passion for motives which ought to draw from them grateful thanks ? Yet this is, unfortunately, oftentimes the case with boys. The professors are sometimes the unwitting occasions of these outbursts. You are idling away your precious time, or you are employing it in the pursuit of useless subjects. They call to your mind the duty of study, of being industrious ; and you are angry with them for so doing. They remark that you are slipping into evil ways, and sagely counsel you to be on your guard. You are angry with them for this act of charity and friendliness. They see that you are in imminent danger, and give you timely warning of it. Instead of thanking them for their paternal interest in your welfare, you repay them with angry looks, and with a torrent of abuse, when they are not at hand to defend their action.

Again ; anger may be quite just, and yet be faulty and sinful, because of the way in which it is employed. Let us suppose that in the School you hold some position in which

you exercise authority over others. They transgress some disciplinary law which it is your duty to make them observe. To be angry with them for so doing is just. But when that anger is manifested in such a way as to cause them deep humiliation before others, which humiliation might easily have been avoided, your anger is not just. Again; suppose that you are angry with those over whom you have no business to exercise authority, that circumstance makes your anger faulty. But even granting that they are under your jurisdiction, and that your anger against them is just, it may nevertheless be blameworthy because of the trifling nature of the faults which call it forth. Furthermore, should you be unable, in some particular case, to discover the delinquent who has infringed the disciplinary code, and should you then proceed to vent your anger and to inflict punishment upon a whole class who may be quite innocent of any fault, and if, in addition to this, your anger should not be measured, causing you to use biting, gross, and injurious words, your anger though just would be blameworthy. Again; beware of giving way to even a just anger, when the motive which moves you to anger is not an upright one. It is not upright when it does not aim at the maintenance of discipline and the correction of what is wrong, but is a means of venting upon others your own personal dislike. Hence, a just anger may be vitiated and become reprehensible, when it is exercised without authority; in a way which exceeds the penalty due to the fault; on those who do not deserve it; in a degree that goes beyond what is required; and for an end which justice would not sanction.

You will now naturally ask: "When is anger a sin, and when is it not a sin?" Anger is never a sin so long as it is felt only in the sensitive appetite which naturally incites us to repel from us whatever is either unpleasant or hurtful. But anger is in the sensitive appetite only, when the movements of it are not sanctioned by the will. Therefore, though you may feel, and feel keenly, all the commotion that anger excites, though your blood may boil, your eyes flash fire, and your limbs tremble under the provocation given to you, yet if the will contradicts these emotions and fights against

them, there is no sin ; there is only an impulse to sin, an impulse which cannot be pushed into act, unless the will gives its assent. But when the will takes part in this emotion, and contributes by counselling, or by urging the appetite to give vent to its anger, this anger is a sin, a venial or light sin, in a light matter, but a grave or mortal sin whenever the outburst of wrath causes us grievously to offend against either justice or charity ; when it gives grave scandal to our neighbour, and produces grave consequences which have been sufficiently foreseen. Nay, even that anger which in itself is only venial is a very dangerous passion ; for, if it is cherished in the heart, it goes on increasing ; it intensifies hatred ; it breeds ill-will ; and at last easily pushes its victims into a deadly offence against charity, just as slight maladies, if neglected, very soon develop into mortal diseases which extinguish the flame of life.

What other outcome can there be from a vice which is so opposed to God, and to that virtue of charity which is so peculiarly a characteristic of Our common Father, that St. John says : " God is charity " ? He is a God of peace, of boundless mercy, of infinite loving-kindness, gentle and mild towards all His creatures. These qualities, we may say, manifest to us the spirit of God. How opposed to this spirit is the spirit of anger ? Where anger holds sway, there is no peace, there is no pity, no gentleness with those who are the objects of its fury. " Revenge is mine," it cries, " I will repay," thus thrusting God from His throne, and usurping an office which He reserves exclusively to Himself. Anger is full of this spirit ; therefore it is diametrically opposed to charity or that love of one another by which we are known to be the children of God. Charity is the bond of union which keeps communities and families closely united ; anger sets them at variance with one another. Charity is the preserver of peace ; anger is its destroyer. Charity is patient ; anger will suffer no wrong. Charity is kind ; anger is hard and rigorous. Charity envieth not ; anger is but too often the result of that passion. This contrast might be prolonged indefinitely ; for, as charity has all the characteristics that adorn the children



of God, anger is marked by most of those that disfigure the slaves of the devil.

A glance at the many sins of which this passion is the source or the occasion, will clearly establish the truth of this statement. The commotion which anger stirs up in the heart, finds an outlet through the tongue. Listen to the language of the boy who has suffered himself to be carried away by the passion of anger. To say that it is rude, would be to apply to it a very feeble epithet. It is full of expressions that wound the feelings of others; it is laden with foolish threats, which it would be impossible to carry into effect; sometimes imprecations are mingled with it; calumnious accusations are blurted forth, and imprudent revelations made, gravely injurious to the characters of others.

Look now at his actions. His evil, angry temper is the cause of quarrels with his companions; it is the source of bitter enmities; it leads to savage, inhuman treatment, and among grown-up men often culminates in murder. How many a duty does it cause him to neglect! The agitation which it engenders in the soul destroys that calm, and renders impossible that attention requisite for rightly performing the duty of prayer. He consequently gives it up, or, if he attempts to perform it, he quits himself of it so badly that it ceases to be prayer; for, all his faculties are seized upon, absorbed in the contemplation of that which has stirred up his anger; he nurses the fancied slight or injury that has been inflicted; he revolves in his mind the word uttered against him; he meditates upon the means for exacting vengeance.

If, turning from the many sins with which it causes him to disfigure his soul, we cast a glance at those of which he is the cause in others, it will give us a still more vivid picture of the hatefulness of this but too common vice. Like steel striking against steel, the anger of one man causes the anger of another to flash forth its fire. Either all, or nearly all, the sins of which it is the prolific germ in the soul that is enslaved by it, are called forth in the souls of those with whom he is brought in contact. Blasphemies, imprecations, calumnies, detractions leap forth at the touch of anger. Desires of re-

venge, malignant joy at the misfortunes of others, rash and unworthy judgments spring up in the heart. Disorders of every kind generated by the spirit of revenge crop forth in the actions of every-day life. Of these the angry man is the occasional cause, and if he foresees these results of his anger, he becomes a sharer in the guilt attached to them.

Having seen, then, how dangerous a passion anger is, and how prolific in evil consequences, be determined not to become its slave, but to resist it with all the energy at your command, and by the all-powerful grace of God, to be obtained by humble and persevering prayer. Make not light of it; fear it; never think that it is manly to yield to it; never imagine that by so doing you will push your way in the world, and make men fear to cross your path. They may, it is true, fear you; but it will be as they fear a bull, or a ferocious dog; for a man ruled by anger is as headlong and inconsiderate as a bull, not listening to reason, not accepting counsel, but with lowered head and foaming mouth rushing upon every one that contradicts him, and in his fury, like a mad dog, snarling and snapping blindly at friend and at foe alike. What an exhibition for a rational being to make of himself! If then the guilt incurred by yielding to the passion of anger does not stir you up to crush down and trample upon this demon, let at least the disgrace consequent upon these outbursts of fury make you studiously labour to subject this passion to the control of reason.

### REMEDIES OF ANGER.

THE passion of anger is a source of so many troubles to him who is subject to it, and to every one with whom he is brought in contact, that, setting aside the offence given to God, and the injury done to the soul, these annoyances ought to urge him to employ those remedies which will put it under his control. We are now about to set these before you, in the hope that you will apply them with as great eagerness as you would apply those prescribed by a physician, to rid you of some grievous bodily ailment.

In the case of bodily ills, as in that of spiritual maladies, a due appreciation of their gravity is one of the means best adapted for urging the sufferer to seek relief. As long as he deems them of little importance, he contemns them and lets nature take her course; but as soon as he perceives that life is threatened, he is anxious to shield it from harm. Now, it happens, as we have already hinted, that boys have not an adequate idea of the gravity of the passion of anger, and consequently, they are not at much pains to be rid of it. They look upon it as a sort of second nature, something which they inherit, as they inherit the colour of their eyes, the height of their bodily frame, and the strength of their limbs.

Anger, in their opinion, is one of the characteristics of their age; as they learn from Horace, it is in their case short-lived; it is quickly set aside. On these grounds, and also on the ground that, for the moment, it so blinds them that they know not what they do, they regard it as a very excusable fault, as a something which can hardly be called a fault. This false notion of theirs concerning the passion of anger, draws over the eyes of their mind a film which prevents them from seeing, in all its hideous deformity, the malady which is eating into their moral being, and consequently they are not in earnest in seeking for a remedy to heal it.

That anger is a passion common to our human nature, that we inherit it as part of the dower of that fallen state, no one will deny. But it is a passion that may be used in a lawful or in an unlawful way, and on you there falls the duty of employing it aright. From what has already been said, you know perfectly well the cases in which anger is justifiable, and those also in which it is not. Therefore, if in these latter circumstances, you suffer the passion to run away with you, it is no excuse to say that you are following an instinct of your nature.

That instinct is there, just as others are; but in you these instincts are not as they are in the brute creation, to be followed by you whenever an object which provokes the instinct may present itself. For God has given to you that which He has not bestowed upon them. You have reason

and will—reason to guide, and will to enforce obedience. You are, therefore, set over your instincts or passions, as a master is set over his servants—to guide and rule them. With respect to your passions, you are in the same position as that of a rider to the horse on which he is mounted. By nature, the horse is fiery, impetuous, has an inclination, a sort of will of its own. When urged forwards, it wills to stand still; when kept at rest, it impatiently paws the ground and tugs viciously at the restraining bridle. The rider does not let it have its way, does not suffer it to govern him; he has his way, he governs it, he holds it back when it wishes to go forwards; and when it would stand still he urges it on, he applies both whip and spur, guiding, directing, and training it to do his will and pleasure. Woe unto him if he should lose command of it! Wounds, bruises, even death may be the consequence. Hence, though anger is a natural instinct or passion, it must be under your control. You must not let it run away with you.

Also, the fact that anger quickly passes, that it is only like a lightning flash, does not free it from guilt. It is on this very score that impious men argue against the eternity of punishment. "There is not," say they, "any proportion between the duration of sin and its punishment. A man commits some sinful act which lasts for a moment or two, and for that fleeting transgression, you teach that for all eternity God will punish him."

This is a fallacy; for, God does not weigh the malice of any act by the length of time which it takes to perform it. A dagger is plunged into the heart of one man, a grain of poison is administered to another, a dynamite shell is exploded among a crowd of others—each of these acts being performed in the twinkling of an eye. Yet the evil committed is enormous, and the guilt incurred is equally so; for God looks at the malice of the act, not at its duration. So also do men, who punish by death an act which is consummated in an instant. Consequently, the plea that your anger is short-lived, will not make it excusable in the eyes of God.

If anger is so great as for the moment to deprive you of

your reason, that circumstance may, of course, excuse you from all moral fault. But this is a rare occurrence; and, generally speaking, sufficient light is left to show you the excess of which you are about to be guilty. Even if the faintest spark of light were wanting, and you were completely out of yourself, what has brought about this lamentable state of things? Has it not been your own indulgence of passion? That indulgence has created a habit; habit growing daily in strength, has become a second nature; but that second nature springs from a cause which you yourself have furnished, and voluntarily and wittingly furnished. Therefore, the effects growing out of that cause, if even dimly foreseen, are also voluntary, and therefore attributable to you.

From this you will see what you are to think of the passion of anger. Your notion that it is only a natural instinct which it is no sin to follow, is false; your idea that its transient nature makes it trifling, is also false; and your argument, that because it blinds your intelligence, your action, while under its power is altogether free from blame, is unsound.

Therefore, knowing that anger indulged in, without any sufficient reason, without any of those conditions that render it justifiable, is really an evil thing, try now to learn what remedies will bring it under your control. This is the second step towards ridding yourself of the slavery of this passion.

After the usual remedies of all spiritual ills, that is to say, prayer and the frequent use of the Sacraments, we strongly advise you to employ, in crushing unjustifiable anger out of your heart, the same tactics that are made use of by military men in vanquishing their opponents, or by physicians in battling with a disease. One of the first objects aimed at by a General is to cut off the hostile army from its base of operations; one of the first cares of a physician, to find out and pluck up the root of the disease. Now, the passion of anger has its base of operations, the root of its malady, in the unmortified passions of the heart. Cut these passions off from communicating with and from supplying food to anger, and you will easily vanquish it; you will have your grip upon the root of the disease.

Chief among these passions is pride, which after a little examination you will find to be the root and cause of all your anger. Pride fills you with an overweening estimate of your own personal worth—your talents, your repute among your school-fellows, your station in society. That high estimate makes you sensitive to the conduct of those around you. They do not weigh your worth in the same scales as you yourself do. Consequently, you take offence at that which is not meant to be offensive; you imagine that a slight has been put on you, when no one ever dreamed of slighting you; you make a mountain out of that which is only a very ridiculous mole-hill.

Having so lofty an idea of your own excellence, you unduly love yourself, and therefore, you resent anything that causes you inconvenience. It is for this reason that you so easily flash out into a passion of rage, if any one accidentally lets fall the lid of his desk and disturbs the quiet of the study; if the door is closed with a bang; if it is carelessly left open by some one who is hurrying out to play; and so on of a thousand other trifles which jar upon you, because you are so full of self-love. This self-love, springing from pride, fastens your affections with an undue amount of tenacity upon your little possessions. Hence it is that these are frequently the occasions of your outbursts of wrath. You lend a book to one of your companions, and he returns it in a somewhat battered condition; you intrust your watch to his keeping, and he clumsily breaks the glass, or he tampers with the works; you make him free of your other school-belongings, and he returns them, or rather hurls them into their places without any regard for order, on which you pride yourself. At these misdemeanours you fume and chafe, till at last you break out into fits of passion which are a disgrace to a rational being.

Again; your wrath is oftentimes enkindled by a secret antipathy to those who, in some way or other, will not minister to and flatter your pride. Take, for example, any of the instances already given as being the occasions of your anger. If any of those who are guilty of the offences which excite

your ire are your friends, that is to say if you have a liking for them, or if you wish to gain their love, you readily pardon them, or rather you do not regard their shortcomings as offences; but if they are indifferent to you, or if they are hostile to you, not only you consider their acts as so many injuries done to you, but you are on the watch for the slightest manifestation of ill-will or of what you may construe into ill-will, and therefore, you so easily become incensed against them.

Hence we are right in saying that much of your anger against others is owing to this secret antipathy which you cherish against them. It makes you susceptible, eager to take note of anything that you may set down to premeditated malice and ill-will. On this you seize with avidity and resent with heat, excusing your ill-temper by the sophism that you are able to bear anything from certain persons, but that a word, or a look, or a smile from certain others lashes you into a fury for which you are not accountable. Therefore, in order to vanquish anger, you must attack its base of operation, which are your unmortified passions, particularly your pride. Cut these off from your heart; attack them; reduce them to subjection, and your enemy, anger, will be forced to quit the field.

I have said that you must particularly attack pride; in order to help you to overcome it, and by overcoming it to control the passion of anger, I will, before bringing these words to an end, give you one or two other counsels which will be of great help to you in this difficult undertaking.

One of the consequences of pride, is to fill you with a firm conviction that you are never in the wrong, and that justice is always on your side. Your first step, then, must be thoroughly to convince yourself that you are neither impeccable nor infallible. Being destitute of these two attributes, you cannot but admit that you are guilty of faults, and that you are exposed to fall into error. Therefore, when there occurs between you and any of your companions a difference which rouses your ire, ask yourself: "Is the fault on my side; is my adversary in the right?" Admit the possibility of an

affirmative answer to both these questions, and you will give yourself time to reflect, to act rationally, and thus to curb your anger.

If, however, you practically assume to yourself infallibility as well as impeccability, you will not be able to hold in check the passion which blinds you, and which is the cause of so many of your transgressions. You at once look upon yourself as gravely injured, having, as you think, right and justice on your side ; you become indignant ; you explain your case to others ; you detract your opponent ; you impute to him faults which he never committed ; you magnify his imperfections into grievous sins. Now, from these results of your pride, some of which may easily become deadly sins, you will be freed, and being freed from them you will without much difficulty overcome anger itself, if you will but follow this counsel and apply it as a remedy to this disease.

Another which is strongly recommended by spiritual writers, is to forecast the various circumstances of each day, and to see in which of them there is any likelihood of your coming into collision with your school-fellows. Having marked out these, the next step is to arm the will with a firm resolve not to give its assent to any motion of anger which, in these circumstances, may be excited in your sensitive appetite. But if in spite of your forecasting the daily events which are likely to lead you into the sin of anger, something quite sudden and unforeseen occurs to stir you up to wrath, even against this you must make some sort of provision which will effectually defend you against it.

This provision consists in deeply impressing upon the mind this fact taught by all theologians, that nothing can happen to you except by the will or by the permission of God. Poverty, sickness, death, and other ills of a like nature, may come to you immediately from the hand of God. In this case, you must humbly submit to them, saying with Job : "The hand of the Lord hath touched me". But persecution, calumny, wrong, and unjust treatment may be your portion, owing to the malice of men. To these also you must submit,



because though God does not immediately will them, yet He permits them to befall you, permitting them in this sense—that He does not interfere with the free will of men, that He does not sanction their malice, but endures it for the purpose of exercising your patience, submission, and humility. This view of all such matters, a view so consoling and so true, becomes a shield protecting you against the irritation and the internal revolt which spring up within you against this unjust invasion of your rights. Bearing it in mind, you are enabled to appease the irritation, to quell the revolt, to keep your soul in peace, and by so doing to sanctify it, to draw good out of the evil that has befallen you.

Pride, then, and the other passions which follow in its wake, are the real causes of your anger. Therefore, vigorously attack pride, and you will easily conquer anger, which after all is only one of its minor adherents. Root out self-love by means of a little healthful mortification; detach your love from your possessions by being generous to your companions; watch over yourself, and, by the exercise of fraternal charity, suppress all antipathy to any of them; be provident, farseeing, careful in preparing yourself against the attacks of anger; and lastly, be submissive to the will of God. By following these counsels, you will cut off from its base of operation that anger which is at present so formidable an adversary; you will keep it under control; and by so doing, will fill your heart with that meekness and gentleness, which are such amiable characteristics of the heart of your divine Master, Jesus Christ.

### GLUTTONY.

WHILE plodding through your lessons, and particularly while translating your own mother-tongue into the Latin language, you have no doubt come across that excellent piece of advice: "Eat in order to live, but do not live in order to eat". If you make the first part of this sage counsel a principle to guide your conduct, you will be sober and temperate; but if

setting it aside, you "live in order to eat," you will be guilty of the vice of gluttony, of which we are now about to treat.

Theologians define gluttony to be, "an inordinate love of eating or of drinking"—for drunkenness also is a result of this vice, or rather a part of it. Again; it is said to be, "the immoderate and sensual pursuit of the pleasures of the table". It is a vice into which we are all prone to fall; for nature itself, as well as the divine law, obliges us to care for our body, to sustain its life by frequently taking food, in order that we may be able rightly to fulfil our duties. Hence God has imparted to our sustenance, to our meat and drink, that attractive savour which causes us to accept it without repugnance, nay, with a certain amount of avidity. To enjoy that pleasure while eating and drinking is no sin, provided that the enjoyment of the pleasure derived from our food is not the chief end at which we aim, but only the secondary one. For it would be sinful if we took food simply and solely for the pleasure which we feel in partaking of it, and not for the support and the strength which it imparts to our body, thereby enabling it to accomplish the various tasks incumbent upon it.

In the first place, then, let us try to have clear notions about the sinfulness of gluttony, that we may remove from our minds all occasions for scrupulosity in the performance of a duty which is of daily occurrence. Though gluttony is in itself a capital sin, yet it is not always a mortal sin. To point out with mathematical precision when it is, and when it is not, a deadly sin, is a matter of so great difficulty that no theologian will venture to draw a definite line between the two degrees of guilt. Yet, while shrinking from so doing, they are agreed upon certain cases in which they do not hesitate to say, that in themselves they are grievous transgressions of the law of temperance.

The first of these is that in which any one has so inordinate a love of food as to make his last end in this life consist in the indulgence of the pleasures of the table. The second is that in which any one so gorges a healthy stomach with meat and drink that it rejects them, being unable

to bear the load imposed upon it. The third is that in which any one, without necessity and without a reasonable cause, but only in order to satisfy his unruly desire for certain kinds of food, transgresses the laws of the Church which enjoin either fasting or abstinence. In this last-mentioned case the grave sin would not be one of gluttony, but of disobedience, unless, indeed, excess in eating and in drinking added to it the sin of gluttony also. The fourth is that in which this intemperate indulgence in meat or in drink is gravely detrimental to ourselves or to others, as would be the case if by it we either seriously injured ourselves and shortened our lives, or wasted upon it the money which belongs to others, either as our heirs or as our creditors. The fifth case is that in which, by devoting too much time to these festivities, we gravely neglect our necessary occupations and duties, whether spiritual or temporal. In these and in other ways we see how gluttony is a grave sin, even though it does not lead us into the gross and degrading excess of drunkenness.

With the exception of the cases here enumerated, theologians consider all other transgressions against the law of temperance (in food) to be venial sins. Thus, it would not be anything greater than a venial sin to busy oneself overmuch about food, passionately thinking of it, voraciously partaking of it, not confining oneself to stated times for refectation, but indulging oneself at all times and without necessity in the gratification of eating. Also, to exceed somewhat in the amount of food requisite for one's sustenance; for the purpose of eating is the nourishment of the body, not its gratification unto satiety. Again; we sin venially by overmuch delicacy in food, not being content with ordinary fare, but choosing exquisite meats, and rendering them more palatable by every species of condiment. All these ways of satisfying sensuality are so many acts of gluttony by which we offend against temperance, in quantity or in quality, in time or in manner.

Having now a clear idea of what, in this passion, is gravely sinful, and of what is only venially faulty, let us, in

the next place, consider its effects, both from a physical and from a moral point of view, upon those who give themselves up to it.

From a physical point of view, the first effect of intemperance in eating or in drinking, is a darkening of our mental vision, which darkening renders all intellectual progress next to impossible. Any one who overloads his stomach with an excess of food, paralyses the power of his brain. It becomes heavy, sluggish, and feeble; for the fumes arising from a mass of ill-digested food mount to the brain like a thick fog from a marshy soil. They oppress the head as with a helmet of lead, and this stupefaction hampers the powers of the intelligence, so that intellectual labour becomes an impossibility. In this condition, boys stare stupidly at their books, unable to distinguish one sentence from another, unable to connect one idea with another, and at last, finding themselves lost, as it were in a maze, slumber over their lessons, being absolutely void of energy, and, when they do not actually fall asleep, they give themselves up to any amusement, or to any trifling that will occupy their dazed and bewildered faculties.

One of the consequences resulting from this state of incapacity is ignorance, and from ignorance there follows an inability to fulfil the duties of their position, an inability which often clings to them in after-life, and renders them unfit to transact the business which falls to their lot as men of the world. This is not all; for this incapacity for exertion degenerates into sloth, begetting in them an absolute abhorrence for any kind of work, preventing them from using either their bodily forces or their mental powers, and giving them a horror of any occupation that calls these powers into play. Religious duties are, consequently, the first to suffer, as they require attention of mind and vigorous effort, and, in the next place, the ordinary duties of every-day life, inasmuch as they cannot be performed without much bodily exertion and the endurance of many inconveniences. Hence, we may safely say, that one of the worst enemies of Christian virtues, and one of the most determined opponents of worldly duties, is the vice of gluttony.

These are its effects upon the intellectual and upon the bodily powers of man. Its chief effect upon the moral powers, is to enslave them to the vice of impurity, which it invariably introduces into the soul. For, in consequence of the fall, there is born with us a tendency to this passion. Therefore, anything that ministers to and augments the power of the flesh, adds strength to the depraved instincts of our nature. But as all admit, excess of food supplies fresh fuel to the fire of passion already existing within us. Even at the best of times, the spirit, compared with the flesh, is weak. How then will it fare with it when all the weight of extra force is thrown upon the side of the flesh? The flesh will rebel with greater emphasis; it will rebel more frequently; it will rebel with more assurance of victory; and at last, will, in all likelihood, overpower and enslave the glorious spirit which God intended to be its master, to subdue and keep it in subjection. Therefore, if you wish your intellectual education not to be a failure, and your moral well-being not to be utterly wrecked, you must fight manfully against the vice of gluttony.

How you are to do this, we will now, in the briefest possible way, set before you. From your earliest boyhood, endeavour to be temperate both in eating and in drinking. For this purpose, our first counsel to you is to eat slowly, for this has a twofold advantage; it makes your food more profitable to you, and prevents you from taking more than is needful. One of the precepts given by physicians for securing an excellent state of bodily health, is always to rise from table, not satiated nor surfeited with meat and drink, but with an appetite for more, if only you chose to indulge it.

In the next place, fix for yourself a measure of drink and never go beyond it. It is through forgetfulness of this precept or rather counsel that men are led into intoxication; for nothing is so subtle, so almost imperceptible in its progress as this love of drink. So that consequently men very soon cross the line which separates sobriety from drunkenness. You will be encouraged to persevere in this temperate use of food and of drink, if you bear in mind the advantages which it secures both for soul and for body.

By sobriety in eating and in drinking, the body is preserved in vigorous health and strength; whereas nearly all the ills that weigh so heavily upon our earthly tabernacles arise from giving the stomach more work to do than it is able to perform. The consequence is, that like a man whose strength is overtaxed, it becomes weak, and from that weakness all the other members and parts of the body begin to suffer. Hence, it has been truly said, that intemperance in eating and in drinking has slain more than have ever perished by the edge of the sword. If you need any confirmation of this, see to what a hale and hearty old age the monks and the solitaries attained. Their lives were lives of abstinence, of the greatest simplicity in food and in drink. Consequently, most of them far surpassed in age the threescore years and ten, meted out as the earthly span of mortal men; while those who pampered their flesh and refused their palate nothing for which it craved, have very often not lived out half their days.

As for the soul, the advantages which it reaps from a spare diet are truly marvellous. Its worst enemy is not the devil, nor the world; because the devil can be kept at a distance, and the world be contemned and shut out; but the flesh cannot be kept at a distance, nor can it be shut out. It is ever present with us, and is ever in full life and vigour. Therefore, whatever can tame and weaken this domestic enemy, must be most advantageous. This taming and subjugation of the flesh, temperance is able easily and quickly to effect. For when the flesh is deprived of that which augments its strength, it is humble, it is submissive, it is easily kept within due bounds. Being thus kept in its place, the powers of the mind are able to exert their influence. The intelligence sees more clearly; the will is more vigorous and more prompt to act; it is more capable of carrying into execution whatever it has determined upon. Hence, the soul is better able to pray, to practise virtue, and to conduct itself in accordance with God's law. Thus it is enabled to save both itself and that flesh which naturally wars against its interests.

Therefore, if you wish to lead the life of a rational being, to advance both intellectually and morally towards that perfection which God has appointed to be the subordinate end of your existence, and by so doing, finally to win eternal life and the enjoyment of God, which He has willed to be its last or ultimate end, be determined to fight against the passion of gluttony, to fight it by those means which we have set before you, by sobriety in the use of meat, by sobriety in the use of drink, and you will thus secure for yourself in the next life the eternal reward of heaven, and in this the many advantages both for soul and for body already abundantly set before you.

### ENVY.

ENVY is so ignoble a passion that no one will admit that he is a slave to it. This is not the case with the other passions. Men are not ashamed to confess that they are proud, given to anger, to ambition, and even to impurity ; but they take every precaution to avoid even the suspicion of being envious. Now, though envy is held in abhorrence by men, yet it is not by any means a rare vice, because the passions from which it springs are not uncommon. Self-love, pride, and ambition are widespread enough, and it is these passions that call envy into life and action. Being a common, shameful, and detestable passion, you ought most carefully to avoid it ; and, as one of the surest means for impelling you to do this is a clear knowledge of its nature, we will in the present Lecture do our utmost to set it before you with all possible distinctness.

Envy is defined to be : “ Pain, or displeasure, or sorrow, or sadness at another’s good, because we regard that good as prejudicial to our interests and glory”. Take notice, and keep well before your mind the *motive* of that pain, displeasure, sadness, and sorrow, because it is the stamp which impresses upon the sin its peculiar malice, and sharply marks

it off from other transgressions against the law of God. The absence of that *motive* from your pain, or displeasure, or sorrow, or sadness at the contemplation of another's good, takes away from these feelings the guilt of envy, and either causes them not to be sins at all, or invests them with the malice of some other sin, quite distinct from envy. In order to make this more intelligible to you, let me illustrate it for you by means of a few examples with which, no doubt, your school-life has made you quite familiar.

I will suppose, then, that in your School the post of leader or captain is vacant, and that there are, as is usually the case, three or four aspirants to that honour. All are not equally qualified for its duties. Unfortunately, the one on whom the suffrages of the electors fall may be considered by his competitors to be utterly unfit for the office. They are, therefore, anything but pleased at the honour conferred upon him. They are pained and saddened because owing to his violent temper, want of tact, and inability to take the lead, there will be in the School divisions, quarrels, and a decay of public spirit. This they feel will be hurtful, both to themselves and to their Alma Mater. Their sentiments of pain, grief, displeasure at his elevation, do not in their case constitute the passion of envy. These are rather *fears* of what may come upon themselves and upon others. If their fears are well grounded and reasonable, they are not sinful; nay, so far are they from being sinful, that they may be in reality acts of charity towards their neighbour and zeal for the honour of God.

Again; let me suppose that there is a valuable prize put up to be competed for by the first form. Many enter the lists; but, as in a race, so also in this contest, only one can carry off the much-coveted reward. Now, a reward or prize may be won by fair or by foul means. If, in the case under consideration, the successful boy outstrips all competitors by using translations and by unfair dealing at the actual examination, those whom he has vanquished are naturally grieved beyond measure when his dishonesty comes to their knowledge; but this grief is not envy, but *indignation* at the fact



that an undeserving person has won that to which another may justly lay claim. Now, though the grief of the unsuccessful is not in this case envy, yet it may not be quite free from the guilt of sin ; for, to be pained at another's success, simply and solely because he is unworthy of it, is not a Christian sentiment. His success though undeserved, is yet, as far at least as he is concerned, a good thing, and we are bound to love his good, no matter how unworthy he may be of it. Moreover, this sentiment is opposed to the providence of God, Who for wise and just ends has suffered this to happen. The wisdom of these ends, we do not at present perceive ; but though unable to see it, yet we are bound to adore and humbly to submit to His arrangements. If instead of so doing we are grieved at them, our grief cannot be free from some sin, inasmuch as it opposes the providence of God.

To take another instance which will make the matter clearer still, let me suppose that in the same class there are two boys struggling for the first place. One of them wins it ; the other loses it. The loser is grieved at his failure, and while smarting under his loss uses every honest means at his disposal to supplant his rival, without, however, in any way doing him an injury. Is his sentiment of grief, of disappointment, of sadness at his mishap, a sin of envy ? Certainly not ! It is only that honest, healthy spirit of emulation which causes him grief, not for the success of his rival, but for his own failure. His efforts to gain his ends are directed, not to bring about that rival's abasement, but his own advancement. This, we repeat, is not envy but praiseworthy emulation ; for the object at which he aims is honest and right ; the purpose for which he strives to attain it, is good ; and the means which he employs are fair and honourable.

From these examples, you will see that you may be pained, grieved, saddened, and depressed at another's success, and yet not be guilty of the sin of envy, because the motive producing these sentiments is not precisely another's good, but either your own or another's hurt and misfortune. When, however, the motive which calls them into life is simply and solely our neighbour's good or advantage, these sentiments constitute

the vice of envy. Its consequences are that we feel for them a most pronounced aversion ; we desire to see them humbled ; we are pleased when they are disgraced ; we are saddened when they are in prosperity.

These are unmistakable symptoms of this malady of envy, the roots of which are self-interest and wounded pride. For, from the fact that we desire to excel, to possess certain advantages, or to possess them to a certain degree, we cannot endure that others should either equal or surpass us ; that any comparison should be made between us and them ; or that being made, the comparison should be to our disadvantage. These sentiments if deliberate, voluntary, and in matters of moment, are grievous sins. Take notice that we say, deliberate, voluntary, and in matters of moment ; for as no one is quite free from self-love, no one can be altogether free from the assaults of envy. Hence, the mere feeling of sadness, or grief, or displeasure, at another's good, is not in itself a sin, if it is indeliberate, and involuntary. If deliberate and voluntary, but not in matters of moment, it would be a venial sin. On the contrary, if these feelings, as soon as perceived are combated and rejected, that combat and rejection are virtuous acts deserving God's commendation and reward. If, however, in matters of moment, they are freely admitted into the mind and assented to by the will, they are acts of the detestable sin of envy.

Being now enlightened concerning the nature of envy, let us next consider what that is which constitutes its special malice, in order that seeing how worthy it is of our execration, we may carefully guard ourselves against it, and vigorously resist its first attempt to enter our hearts.

Spiritual writers tell us, that the malice of envy consists in its opposition to divine charity, by which we are bound to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. To love him in this way is to regard all that befalls him as if it befell ourselves. It is to feel the same pain at that which afflicts him as if his misfortune had happened to ourselves ; to experience the same gladness at that which rejoices his heart as would fill our own if his good fortune had befallen ourselves. We

are obliged to have these sentiments, at least in our rational will, for even those who malign, ill-treat, and persecute us; how much more stringent must our obligation be, to have them for those who have never done us any harm? Now, envy is diametrically opposed to these sentiments of charity, because it makes our neighbour's good, his prosperity, his advancement, his honour, his influence with others, the subject of our grief, sadness and displeasure; while his misfortune, his disgrace, his humiliation, his sufferings and even his death are for us the cause of exultation and great joy. What is particularly malicious in this joy, is that it is called forth not only by the evils which afflict mere neighbours and acquaintances, but by those which fill with bitter sorrow the bosoms of friends and of even near relatives.

Another circumstance which brings out before our minds the special malice of this passion is the fact of its unreasonableness, and of its opposition to men's notions of natural equity.

What is it that calls forth this malignant passion? Is it the infliction of some injury? This is usually the cause of displeasure, grief, sadness, and even of enmity—the germ from which these feelings spring into life. In the case of envy, an injury inflicted is not the cause of its life. No; the enmity and the hatred to which it gives birth are absolutely without any sufficient cause. Examine the matter for yourself, and you will see how true this is. What is the offence of which your neighbour has been guilty? He has more ability, more wealth, more friends, more influence than you have. He is advanced to higher posts; he wins more honours; he commands more respect. In all this, where is the offence, where the injury, where the injustice done to you? There is none. Therefore, your hostility to him, and your hatred for him, are without foundation. Consequently, to indulge in these with respect to him is, at one and the same time, an offence against reason, and against those notions of natural equity which call aloud for at least indifference with respect to those who have in no way injured us.

The irrational nature of this vice will, perhaps, be seen in

a still clearer light, if we ask ourselves what advantage is to be gained by yielding ourselves up to its tyranny. If there is any advantage at all, that advantage will at least be of some weight against the losses and the guilt incurred by giving way to the passion. When we look for this advantage, we can find nothing whatever. In the case of the other passions this cannot be said; for each of them brings to its slave, something which, in appearance at least, is of advantage to him. The robber by his dishonesty acquires wealth; the glutton has the pleasure of his senses; the ambitious man wins for himself glory and a high position among his fellows; the sensualist has the ignoble gratification of his animal instincts. But the envious man has absolutely nothing! He has no pleasure, no profit. His envy is to him a worm that gnaws, a fire that consumes, but of advantage there is absolutely none! His sin is one of pure malice like the devil's sin, and being a sin of pure malice it is most opposed to God, Who draws good out of evil, whereas the envious man draws evil out of good.

As, then, envy is a most ignoble, detestable sin, hateful to God and hateful to men; a sin most opposed to that charity by which we are known to be God's children; a sin most repugnant to that natural equity which men prize so highly, strive with all the earnestness of which you are capable to guard yourself against it. Firmly shut against it the door of your heart. That heart cannot but love itself; cannot but aim at its own contentment, at its own exaltation. Consequently, it is exposed to the attacks of this vice. Being exposed to them, it must be carefully guarded. Therefore, be alive to the first indications of envy's approach. Watch over the motives of the grief that lays hold of it, of the sadness that oppresses it, of the pain that afflicts it at the good of others. Purify these sentiments from all that is tainted by envy. This care on your part, aided by God's grace, will save you from the slavery of this ignoble and detestable passion.

## SLOTH.

THIS word brings before the mind of a schoolboy a picture of sleepiness, laziness, sluggishness, and torpor, of which in a greater or in a lesser degree the original is to be found in almost every house of education. There is sure to be among the boys one who distinguishes himself in this unenviable way, and to him the mind of each naturally reverts when the word *sloth* is pronounced. But it is not in this sense that we here use the word. Slowness of movement, torpidity of body or of mind, incapacity for exertion, and a general heaviness, unwieldiness, and clumsiness are often enough constitutional ; but the sloth of which we speak is not a sluggishness of the body, but of the will. It is a deadly sin ; and therefore it claims our attentive consideration that we may ward off from ourselves its insidious approach.

What is the nature of this vice? What is its malice? What are the consequences that flow from it? It is with these questions that we are about to occupy ourselves in the present Lecture.

Theologians define sloth to be: "A torpor of mind and weakness of will from which there flows a disgust for spiritual things, on account of the difficulty, labour, and trouble inseparable from them". The torpor of mind, the weakness of will, and the disgust here spoken of, must be understood to be deliberate and wilful, otherwise they could not be sinful. "The spiritual things" exciting these sentiments may, in a general sort of way, be said to be every obligation imposed upon us by the law of God, as a condition for the enjoyment of His rewards, or as a means for securing the possession of them. We may, therefore, say that among the obligations binding every one who wishes to enter the kingdom of heaven, are the practice of the virtues taught by Christ ; the faithful observance of the great precepts of the law ; the accomplishment of the duties of our state of life ; the careful avoidance of the occasions of sin, and the various practices of piety which

help to keep alive our faith in the great mysteries of our holy religion.

It is needless to say that these various "spiritual things" ought to elicit the love of every true Christian; that he ought to love them as much as he loves his eternal salvation, inasmuch as they are the means ordained by God to help him to win that great prize. To have for them a deliberate, wilful disgust, is to be guilty of the sin of sloth. As in former Lectures, so in this also, we once more call your attention to the words *deliberate and wilful*. These words point out the sinfulness of sloth. To feel a certain amount of repugnance for the practice of virtue, and for spiritual things, is not in itself *sloth*, and therefore sinful. This feeling may be a temptation to the vice; but a temptation to do anything evil is not, as we know so well, a sin. This repugnance is natural to us; we feel it for anything that requires trouble, self-sacrifice, difficulty. So long as we fight against it, and make efforts to overcome it, it is not a sin; on the contrary this fight against it is a virtue. For we are doing violence to our fallen nature; we are carrying the kingdom of heaven by storm; and only those who are willing to use this violence will win that glorious prize.

Also, it is not sloth to feel dry, and to be without sensible devotion at prayer; to have apparently no faith when receiving Holy Communion; to be assailed by a crowd of importunate distractions the moment that we attempt to address our petitions to God; and to find in the practices of the spiritual life naught but disgust and weariness of spirit. This is simply the absence of sensible fervour, which cannot be felt at will. That absence in no way detracts from the worth of our service. On the contrary, it rather enhances it, inasmuch as it purifies it from all self-seeking, and makes us go on serving God, not because of the sweetness that we experience in His service, and the pleasure so often afforded by acts of piety, but simply and solely because the accomplishment of His will is the one end or purpose of a Christian's life here below. Therefore, no matter how great may be the weariness, the repugnance, and the disgust which we feel in the performance of our spiritual

duties and in the observance of God's laws, these sentiments, if against our will, can never be attributable to sloth, can never in fact be sinful.

The sin of sloth is committed, however, whenever any one allows these sentiments to fill him with aversion for his spiritual duties. If he gives up prayer, because he finds in it no sweetness; if he abstains from holy Mass, particularly when the law of the Church obliges him to assist at it; if he neglects to observe the fasts and the days of abstinence ordered by ecclesiastical authority; if he will not go to confession, lest he should be obliged to give up the indulgence of his passions; if he flees from the Holy Table, because of the pure life which it requires him to lead, he is undoubtedly labouring under the tyranny of sloth.

Having entered his heart, that vice brings forth fruit. Its fruit is seen in the absence of good, and in the presence of evil deeds in his life. There is in that life a continual search after all that panders to self-indulgence; a studious avoidance of everything that requires some little exertion. If there are any exercises of piety to be performed, they are performed in a negligent, slipshod manner, duties that call loudly for accomplishment are left undone, or, if an attempt is made to go through them, their performance is effected in a listless, perfunctory sort of way that clearly indicates the aversion of the will. These are but a few of the characteristics of sloth, to which many others might be added, all tending in the same direction and bringing out into the light of day the internal disgust felt for the things of God and of eternity.

With these before our minds, we may now inquire into the malice of the vice, to see in what it consists. The malice of sloth, which in its own nature, and rigorously speaking, is a deadly sin, consists in its direct opposition to that charity with which we are bound to love ourselves, and to that supreme love which we owe to God. Every one is bound to love himself, and the chief duty incumbent upon him in consequence of this love, is to work at the salvation of his soul with all the zeal and the fervour of which he is capable.

This is the one thing necessary. It is the end for which we are in the world. Therefore, we are obliged to make everything else subordinate to this, and of very secondary importance compared with this. No effort must be deemed too great in order to secure it ; no labour too hard to accomplish it.

The passion of sloth, however, causes men to neglect this important business of their lives, and to treat it as a matter of indifference. It induces them to prefer to it, even the minor interests of life, such as learning, or the acquisition of wealth, or the winning of some position of trust and emolument. It leads them to give up the hope of securing for themselves the happiness of heaven. It fills them with a positive disgust for the means by which this their last end may be accomplished ; and that disgust culminates in a most pronounced hatred for these merciful aids ministered to us by Our loving Father. To be thus disposed towards them, is to be guilty of the greatest crime that a man can commit against himself—that is to say—to lose his own soul. Thus, sloth is directly opposed to that love with which we are bound to love ourselves.

But besides this, it is also opposed to the love which we owe to God. The whole law imposed upon us—a law by the fulfilment of which we win our way into heaven—is summed up in this one precept of love. We are bound by that precept to love Him with a supreme love—a love embracing all the energy of our mind and all the affection of our heart. Hence, to love Him in this way requires that all the powers of man should be devoted to this work. But what does sloth do for him who is thus called upon to give up his whole being to the accomplishment of this task? It fills him with apathy, with a deadly languor ; it paralyses his mind and his heart ; it turns the thoughts away from God ; it changes the affections into disgust, aversion, hatred. His service becomes negligent, indifferent, offensive, sinful. There can be no love between God and the soul that is held captive by the passion of sloth.

Now, although sloth is, of its own nature and rigorously speaking, a mortal sin, yet it has not, in all circumstances, this



deadly character. If the disgust which is the outcome of sloth is for matters that are in themselves slight, it cannot be a mortal sin. You may, for instance, feel a wilful and deliberate disgust for being obliged, upon a cold winter's morning, to spend half an hour in the chapel ; for having to go to confession, when you would much rather be at play ; for having to read a spiritual book, when you would prefer some work of fiction. These are all spiritual things ; and yet the disgust felt for them, though wilful, and springing from sloth, is not, we repeat, a mortal sin ; for none of these matters is commanded by the divine law, and your disgust, if analysed, is not for these duties themselves, but for the inconveniences which surround them.

But if your disgust were for things commanded by the divine law, for the resistance which you are obliged to offer to evil thoughts, desires, and actions ; for the obligation of pardoning injuries ; for keeping your hands from appropriating the goods of others ; for refraining from taking vengeance, this disgust would be a mortal sin ; because it is directly opposed to the love of God, about which we have just spoken, and to that charity towards yourself which is the first law of your being. Again ; if this sloth should cause you to give up the practice of those things that are necessary for salvation—notably, to transgress the obligations and to omit the duties of your state of life ; to neglect for weeks and months, when in the state of deadly sin, to reconcile yourself to God—these instances would certainly be mortal offences against Him.

These, it is true, are the broad lines by which, in this matter, you will be able to distinguish mortal from venial offences. Nevertheless, they do not definitively mark for you the line of difference between the two degrees of guilt. If any one has good reason gravely to suspect that he is not in the state of grace, it is certainly the man or the boy that is under the tyranny of the passion of sloth. For, when the grace of God is in the soul, it makes its presence felt by an ardour for spiritual things and an energetic endeavour to carry into effect the inspirations which grace never fails to suggest. But when sloth has taken possession of the soul, grace cannot

subsist in its company; for one of these two things will happen: either grace will expel this foe to all piety, or sloth will cause grace to flee away. The reason is not difficult to find. When sloth, in the early stage of its existence, begins to sway the soul, God is disgusted with that soul's cold, negligent service; consequently, He withdraws His favours; He diminishes the powerful aids which prevent the devil from establishing in it a permanent abode; a strong temptation comes, and the soul, through its own fault, being unable to resist it, is overthrown, and enslaved to sin. Also, the presence of sloth in the soul, even when that soul has not lost God's grace, fills it with disgust for spiritual things; it therefore soon casts them aside, makes no effort to resist evil, and it is speedily vanquished.

Having now a clear idea of the malice of sloth, we may lastly, proceed to consider its pernicious effects. These are hostility to virtue, and an inclination to vice. The first is a natural outcome of sloth; for, as virtue requires effort and a certain amount of violence to self, and as sloth will not make any exertion nor do violence to self, it has a positive enmity for virtue, which calls for exertion and for self-repression. Moreover, as vice is in accord with the inclinations of fallen nature, and as that nature has a tendency to vice, the passion of sloth, which prevents that nature from exerting itself, easily hurries it in the direction to which it is turned. If you examine the matter more in detail, you will find the effects of sloth to be, first, a distaste for spiritual things, a repugnance to good, inconstancy in duty, irresolution, and an exaggerated idea of the difficulties surrounding virtue and eternal salvation; every paltry obstacle being magnified into an impassable mountain, every contemptible cur into a ferocious lion; and secondly, abominable cowardice which enfeebles and paralyses the will. Of idleness—another effect of sloth—we need only say that it makes men shrink from effort of any kind, just as a burnt child shrinks from fire.

These are only some of the effects of sloth, of which we have studied the nature, the malice, and the effects. Its nature is evil, since it inspires us with a disgust for the very

means by which with the aid of God's grace we work out our salvation. Its malice is exceedingly great, since it is opposed to the love which we owe to God and to ourselves. Its effects are so baneful that they ought to fill us with dread of an evil which, though apparently harmless, is full of deadly poison. Do not, therefore, look upon it as a small, insignificant evil, but as a terrible monster slowly and insidiously crawling towards you, at first laying hold of you with a grip as soft as velvet, but eventually crushing out of you every spark of spiritual life.

### REMEDIES OF SLOTH.

WHEN any one is suffering from some grave malady, the first thing that he thinks of is to consult a physician, in order to learn from him what remedies he must employ to rid himself of his disorder. This is what you must do, if from what has already been said you perceive that you are labouring under the deadly influence of sloth, which, like the other vices, is a disease of the soul. You must not despair, nor for a moment believe that because it is of so deadly a nature, it is, therefore, past remedy. We will, for this occasion, be your physician, and as the doctor who heals your bodily ailments usually prescribes two kinds of remedies, we will follow his method of procedure. He first points out to you that from which you must abstain, and in the next place tells you that which you must take as a medicine for your complaint. Therefore, in order to help you to rid yourself of sloth, we will first tell you what you must not do, and in the next place what you must do, if you wish to expel this evil from your soul; in other words, we will point out to you the negative and the positive remedies of sloth.

The things that fasten upon the soul the malady of sloth are tepidity, effeminacy of living, neglect of small faults, and an unmethodical way of life. These must be got rid of by any one who wishes to expel from his soul the deadly disease of sloth. Let us, then, begin with tepidity or lukewarmness

in the service of God. Some writers give this name to sloth itself, and in some minds it is often confounded with this vice, though in reality it is only one of its effects. The difference between the two will at once be perceived, if we bear in mind that sloth begets so great a disgust for spiritual things that the soul altogether omits practices of piety, whereas tepidity does not cause it to omit them, but to perform them with carelessness and indifference.

From this it will be seen how necessary it is that tepidity should be ejected from the soul that wishes to be healed of sloth ; for tepidity may be looked upon as one of the elements that constitute the disease. That which is tepid, tends to become quite cold ; and in the case of the soul, unless a vigorous effort be made to raise the temperature by the infusion of fervour, that tepidity will end in the icy coldness of death, that is to say, in sloth. Therefore, the first step to be taken by those who desire to be healed of this vice, or by those who though not already infected with it, are yet threatened by it, is to rouse themselves out of the torpor of tepidity. The will must be forced to accomplish the duties of the spiritual life ; and, while accomplishing them, to throw into its acts all the energy possible, and never to leave undone anything that calls for trouble and care. To act thus, is like abstaining from some deleterious kind of nourishment which feeds the disease.

Another thing that is detrimental to a sound spiritual state, and particularly to that energy requisite for winning the kingdom of God, is a soft, effeminate way of living. Among schoolboys, one would imagine that this is an impossibility ; but unfortunately it is not. A little ingenuity makes it possible for even a schoolboy to eliminate from his life most of the inconveniences that make life burdensome. Close application to study causes school-life to be anything but a luxury. Taking part in the public games is very often a trying ordeal. The observance of Rule is a yoke that galls the neck. So also is it with many other things which each of you will be able to enumerate.

Now, a boy who wishes to lead a soft, easy life—a life

which most boys would call effeminate, will not do any more brain-work than will save him from the unpleasant intervention of the authorities. This shirking of real work will leave to him many delightful hours for useless reading, for day-dreaming, and for other occupations equally futile. Shrinking from taking his share in the robust, outdoor exercise of public games, will save him from the biting east wind, and enable him to idle away whole hours over the bright play-room fire. The transgression of Rule, in many ways puts a cushion under the elbows, and a pillow under the heads of these embryo epicures. This inclination to shirk whatever is hard and unpleasant, is certainly not the spirit of the Gospel. That spirit is one of mortification, of penance, of bravely enduring at least the ordinary and unavoidable difficulties of life. To cherish one that is contrary to it, a spirit which looks for smooth ways in which to walk, for soft places in which to lie, for sheltered nooks in which the keen winds of trouble and trial cannot find an entrance, is a spirit that ends in sloth. For it enfeebles the mind, it enervates the will, it inspires a positive horror for the slightest inconvenience. What is the consequence? It is, that whenever there is requisite for the accomplishment of duty, self-denial, vigour, generosity, courage—as for instance, observing God's law, by rejecting what panders to pleasure, comfort, and self-ease—the cowardice fostered by this spirit, unfolds itself. The soul shrinks from the difficulty as a delicate boy shrinks from the cold, and rather than endure the inconvenience, yields to the enemy. Therefore, if you would conquer sloth, this soft, effeminate way of living must be brought to an end.

An utter carelessness and indifference about small faults, is another cause of sloth. Take notice that this disposition is not that which we find in so many boys, arising from want of reflection, and from insufficient advertence to what they do. We mean by it a deliberate carelessness, which sees the fault, knows that it is a fault, and yet, without any compunction, commits it. This continual transgression in small matters deprives the spiritual life of all savour. Prayer, Mass, devout

reading, meditation, Confession, and Communion, being full of defects, are sources of disgust. Boys, consequently, begin to loathe them. Almost insensibly, this loathing passes into real sloth—a positive disgust and a hatred of whatever pertains to the service of God. Is it not most necessary that this usual result of tepidity, of this careless and indifferent habit, should be sharply looked after? Death by grievous sin is not far away from a boy thus disposed.

Among the causes leading to sloth, I have put an unmethodical way of life. This is usually not found among schoolboys; for their life is, so to speak, cut out for them, and their various duties succeed one another almost with the regularity of some cunningly contrived piece of mechanism. This method, however, chiefly affects their external lives, whereas the method of which we speak is one that regulates their internal or spiritual life. This latter is often enough without any method, without any regularity except that from which they cannot escape, in the public offices of the Church.

We wish, then, specially to point out the absence of it in the internal spiritual life that each of them ought to lead in his own heart. Every one of them ought to have certain private prayers over and above those publicly recited in the chapel or in the study. He ought to have certain days, or at least certain times in each day, for visiting the Blessed Sacrament. In his mind there should be the firm resolve, frequently during study hours as well as during times of recreation, to lift up to God that mind together with his heart, by some short ejaculatory prayer. Then, he should have certain days for approaching the Sacraments, for going to Confession and to Holy Communion.

This is what we mean by a methodical way of life. Not to have something of the sort as the lines upon which your life should run; to forget for whole weeks and months all ejaculatory prayer; to allow long periods to pass by without ever once visiting the Blessed Sacrament; to omit for a long time Confession and Communion—in one word, to have nothing fixed, nothing regular, is to be without a method of life; it is

to serve God by caprice, and only when the inclination prompts you. This, naturally enough, makes the service of God a something with which you are unfamiliar; and being unfamiliar, the duties which it entails are not accomplished with that ease which habit would engender. They are difficult; and their difficulty begets disgust which at last becomes sloth. Therefore, the want of method in your spiritual life must be rectified, if you wish either to protect yourself against, or to rid yourself of this deadly vice.

After setting before you these negative remedies, let me now suggest to you a few positive ones, or in other words, let me tell you what you must do to be healed of, or to be protected against the vice of sloth. As this vice is a disgust for the service of God, spiritual writers tell us that the first remedy is meditation upon the greatness of the Master Whom we serve. It is frequently owing to a want of proper notions on this head, that negligence, indifference, and coldness creep into our service of Him. We do not appreciate the honour conferred upon us in being allowed to serve Him. No master can be greater, wiser, more powerful, more generous, more loving. None can reward us so bountifully. None can punish us so severely. Compared with Him, the noblest man on earth is as nothing; yet, what zeal, what promptitude, what devotion are some of the world's heroes able to command? To do them the meanest service is counted a privilege for which their clients contend. Their slightest wish is looked upon as a command, and even the risk of death is incurred to win from them a smile of thanks. Why is this? It is because men form for themselves lofty notions of their hero's excellence, his wisdom, his goodness. Try then to obtain, by means of serious meditation upon the attributes God, some faint notions of His claims upon your service, and you will be roused out of your torpor of sloth in order to win for yourself the honour of being admitted to serve so great a Master.

The next remedy prescribed by these enlightened guides, is, like the preceding, one that regards the mind. It consists in reflection upon the magnificence of the reward which God

promises to those who faithfully serve Him. What is that reward? It is the possession of God Himself: "I will be thy reward, exceeding great"—the full and complete satisfaction of the immortal spirit in its craving for eternal felicity. The immense void in its being can be filled by naught else. Therefore, the Apostle, speaking of this felicity, says, that human thought cannot grasp, and that human words are inadequate to express, the immensity of that unutterable happiness. Those who by sustained thought have obtained some slight insight into the nature of that beatitude, have cast aside all things else in order to secure it. They gave up their own ease; they descended from their lofty station; they sacrificed their wealth; they incurred the scorn, the contumely, and the persecution of the world, in order to win it. They deemed no labour too hard, no penance too severe, no loss worth notice, provided that this could be made for them a certainty. So will it be with you also, if you enlighten your mind concerning the magnitude of that which is promised to you, in return for a little faithful service here below.

In addition to these remedies, we would suggest to you this other reflection, that the gaining of this exceeding great reward is the most momentous, the most important event in your existence. For either you will gain that prize or you will not. If you gain it, you will gain an eternity of bliss; if you lose it, you will fall into an abyss of eternal woe. In other words, it means for you either heaven or hell. If you accomplish your duty to God, you will win heaven; if you do not, and if you should die without repentance, you will be condemned to hell. What a motive for energetic work is this! Can any one be indolent, or careless, or indifferent that keeps before his mind these two facts? To be slothful, sluggish, indifferent when the sound of these two eternities is ringing in his ears, argues either a loss of faith or a loss of reason. One must be either an infidel or a fool to remain indifferent when so much is at stake.

If to the preceding consideration we add this other, that the time for securing so magnificent a prize and for escaping so horrible a fate, is very brief, we shall have in our possession



positive remedies enough to expel the disease of sloth. The longest life is short, if considered with respect to the work of salvation. If every instant of it were devoted to the finishing of it, a wise man would deem it little enough. But how much of this time do men employ in transacting the most important affair of their lives? Alas! if compared with the amount of time which they bestow upon matters of but transitory importance, it would be as an hour, or a day, or a week compared with a long succession of years. Yet the longest life is, as we have said, but too short for the accomplishment of so important a work. But the time of our lives—what is its duration? We know not. Our brief day may be close to its end. The night may already be casting its shadows over us. During that night no work can be done. When it has closed in, the work must stand as it is, for all eternity. Is not this a thought startling enough to awake the most torpid mind, to rouse into action the most sluggish will? The night is close upon us. Bestir yourself, or the only business of life will be found, in your case as in the case of so many others, to be a work that is not finished, perhaps a work that has not been even begun.

I say, then, that any one who will seriously apply the faculties of his mind to reflect upon these thoughts, will not fail to expel from his heart the vice of sloth. You would bestir yourself, and use every effort to rid yourself of a malady which threatened your life. You would spare no expense, you would brave every danger, you would endure any suffering. If it were necessary to part with a limb, you would willingly sacrifice it rather than lose your life. Here, then, is a malady threatening the life of your soul, threatening you with eternal ills. Do not, therefore, be less prompt to do for your immortal soul that which you would gladly do for your perishable body. Therefore, remove the causes of your disease; apply the remedies; and through the aid of God's grace you will be healed.

## HUMILITY.

ST. THOMAS defining humility says : " It is a virtue by which we put a curb upon the mind, and prevent it from tending immoderately to great things above itself".<sup>1</sup> As it is a virtue which makes us " choose to be abject in the house of God," the curb which it employs for this purpose is one that it imposes upon the appetite rather than upon the intellectual powers of the soul, for choice belongs to the appetite. Now, the particular appetite upon which this virtue lays a firmly repressive hand, is our appetite for self-exaltation ; and that which regulates the degree of repressive power requisite for this purpose, is self-knowledge, the source of which is knowledge of and reverence for God. Therefore, the foundation of humility is a knowledge of our own nothingness, from which there flows a lowly estimate of ourselves. We may say, then, that the virtue of humility consists in these two things : self-knowledge, and the lowly esteem of self to which that knowledge gives birth.

Let us, then, turn our attention to these two ideas, and we shall learn from them all that we desire to know concerning this most necessary virtue.

Self-knowledge, then, is the first thing that we must acquire, if we wish to be humble ; and we naturally infer that all desire to have humility, because without it there is no hope of entering the Kingdom of God. The gate to that Kingdom is a narrow one, and those who are swollen with pride will never be able to crush through it. We must first, then, know ourselves. Strange as it may seem to say so, very few men have a clear knowledge of themselves. Many of them fondly imagine that they are endowed with qualities which every one else is able to see that they do not possess, while many more pride themselves upon gifts which they have not in that eminent degree in which they fancy that they possess them. Now, in order to rid ourselves of both these false notions, let us take an impartial survey of ourselves to see

<sup>1</sup> St. Thom. ii., 2, q. 161.

whether we have anything on which we may justly pride ourselves, and on account of which we may aspire to a degree of exaltation to which we can lay claim.

Generally speaking, boys pride themselves upon the possession of goods of the natural order ; let us, therefore, begin with these. Their first reason for self-glorification and for seeking lofty things above themselves, is their noble or their genteel descent. To be a gentleman's son, or the son of a nobleman, is regarded by them as a kind of "hall mark" without which it would be a disgrace to belong to the human family. Next to this, and as a sort of compensation for its absence, is the possession of wealth. There is awaiting them a great fortune ; money without end, acquired by a large and respectable business, is stored up for them ; with this they will be able to make a figure upon the stage of the world. If they have neither noble birth to boast of, nor well-filled money bags to depend upon, they have, at least, many natural endowments for which they look forwards to a certain share of exaltation. They are gifted with superb health and strength ; with that beauty of form which attracts all eyes and wins all hearts ; with intellectual ability which ensures respect and throws open the door to influence, wealth, and power. These are some of the possessions which God bestows in the order of nature.

But why should any one pride himself upon his noble or upon his genteel descent? It is not owing to any merit on his part that God has chosen his parents for him. Why again should wealth be a subject of pride? It is not owing to any one's personal credit that others with brain power, industry, and great labour have amassed all this and bequeathed it to him. Is his health owing to his own native worth? Is his beauty, or his intellectual ability? Take away from him all that comes from the bountiful hand of God, and what remains to him as his own peculiar property? There will remain the abuse of these gifts—abuse of noble birth, of wealth, of bodily powers, and of intellectual gifts. This abuse is his own peculiar property. Let him, if he dare, take pride in it, and for it seek to be exalted.

Having considered yourself in the order of nature, survey yourself now in the order of grace. Are you virtuous? Let us suppose that you are. You are leading a pure life; no evil thought is suffered to rest for a moment in your mind; no unlawful desire to occupy your heart; no evil deed to be accomplished by your bodily powers. You have persevered for years in treading this difficult way. During that time you have suffered many a sudden and unforeseen assault; you have prevailed in many a toughly contested fight. All these victories are blazoned on your standard, and the sum total of them is entered in the book of God's recording Angel. Your merits are, in a word, numerous, arising not only from these victories, but from many a fervent prayer, from many a profitable meditation, many an act of gratitude, of resignation to God's holy will, of obedience, and the rest. But do these virtues, these good works, these merits come from yourself? Are they the outcome of those excellent germs planted by you in a nature originally good? No, they are not. They are each and all the gifts of God.

Without Him you are able to do nothing, You cannot conceive a good thought, nor elicit a good desire, nor do any good work, no, not so much as with profit utter the holy name Jesus. Can you, then, with reason take pride in any of these good works? Of itself, your soul is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance; it is infected with the malice of sin; it is enfeebled with the debility resulting from the malice of sin. Your body too, in which you take so great pride, what is it? Only a little dust held together by the power of God, and destined to crumble into the earth whence His almighty power drew that body into existence. This is what you are, whether looked at from the side of nature or of grace.

You have, therefore, now before you that knowledge of self which is the root or foundation of humility; and from this knowledge there ought to spring excellent fruits, the chief of which is your acceptance of your true position with regard to your neighbour and to yourself.

But this self-knowledge also puts before our minds, in a clear and unmistakable light, the position which we hold with

regard to God. For, if we have nothing on the side of nature or of grace, except that which we receive from Him, we must acknowledge that we depend upon Him, not only for all that we have and for all that we are, but for the continuance of our very existence. This dependence makes us conscious of our deep responsibility for each and all the gifts bestowed by Him, as well as for our soul and our body. There is forced upon us also the continual need that we have of His concurrence, and of the outpouring of His bounty. What is the consequence of convictions such as these? It is that God is infinitely great, and that compared with Him we are pure nothingness. Therefore, there springs up in the heart the spirit of profound adoration, and in the will, complete submission to all His ordinances. Gratitude for benefits received wells up out of the heart, as naturally as water gushes out of a fountain; prayer for further favours breaks from the lips; and sorrow for our wretched service and for our many sins floods our soul with those repentant tears which wash away all guilt. Thus, humility puts us in our true position with respect to God.

It brings about for us the same happy result with respect to our fellow-men. It does this, by opening our eyes to see only the evil that is in ourselves, and the good that is in them. Therefore, instead of despising them, of speaking ill of them, of deeming them unworthy of consideration, we begin to hold them in honour, to speak in their well-merited praise, to have for them the same sentiments that we have for ourselves. It pushes us farther still. It causes us to have for them as great esteem as we have for ourselves. It induces us to bestow upon them all those marks of honour due to their excellence. Even if we should see them guilty of faults and sins, it finds out for them valid excuses, and when these cannot be discovered, it causes us to put upon that which seems inexcusable, a charitable interpretation. This is not all. Instead of, as heretofore, flashing out into anger at the slightest injury, and giving back word for word, blow for blow, we are brought, by humility, to bear patiently with their injurious treatment of us, and to endure their defects. In one word,

humility crowns us with meekness and with gentleness, endearing us to all hearts.

Humility is not satisfied with regulating our conduct with respect to God and to our neighbour, it puts upon a right footing our own conduct with respect to ourselves. Pride makes us, in this connection, take up quite a false position. We are, through pride, naturally inclined to regard ourselves with vain complacency on account of the many good qualities which we perceive in ourselves, and of the many others which we imagine that our neighbours ought to discover in us. We are, therefore, anxious to catch the attention of others, and hence most of our actions are performed to win their esteem. Thinking ourselves so worthy of commendation, we flee from anything detrimental to our high opinion of ourselves.

This is not a right position for any of God's rational creatures to occupy. It is a false position, and out of that position humility thrusts us, by making us act towards ourselves in accord with our true deserts. It at once represses in us that vain complacency. It pours into our minds the bright light of truth, and by making us see ourselves as God sees us, causes us to confess that we are unworthy of the many good things with which He has enriched us. To Him, consequently, we then seek to attribute the credit or the praise accruing to us from their possession. Hence, we are induced to flee from the applause and the honour which men are but too ready to bestow. A disposition such as this, nerves the will to endure even humiliation, and gives it courage to seek out and to throw itself in the way of meeting with rebuffs, since the intelligence is made fully aware that of himself man is simply nothingness.

Now, although humility is so excellent a virtue, and although it does for us a service for which we ought to be profoundly grateful, yet it is not a favourite among men. They regard it as unsuitable for those who have to do battle in the world, and fit only for the inhabitants of the cloister, and for priests devoted to the service of the altar. This is a notion of which you must rid yourself, for the simple reason that heaven cannot be won by any one, unless he has humility. For, to

enter heaven, it is absolutely necessary that you should be virtuous, by complying with the conditions for admission into that abode of bliss. What is it that makes our actions virtuous? our almsgiving, for instance, our fasting, our prayer, and the rest? Is it their outward presentment of virtue? No; besides that something else is required. For, there are many who outwardly appear to be what men who see them, take them to be, whereas all the while, in the esteem of God, they may be nothing better than the *simulacra* of the virtues which they pretend to have. Therefore, in addition to the outward seeming of virtue, there must be a right spirit animating the act. That spirit must be humility; for if it is not, the actions themselves are not virtues, but offences against God.

To be virtues, they must be the fruit of divine grace; but divine grace, as we know, is given only to the humble, not to the proud whom God resists because they are ever striving to snatch from Him that glory which He has said that He will not give to another. Besides being the animating spirit of virtue, and the quality that ensures the aid of divine grace, humility is said by Our divine Lord, to be an indispensable requisite or passport into the kingdom of heaven: "Unless" by humility, "you become as little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven". Therefore, humility is a virtue necessary not only for priests and religious, but for each and every one of us, no matter on what walk of life we may be hastening to our end.

As, then, we all pretend, at least, that the end of our being is the possession of God, let us be determined to acquire that which will secure it for us. Sanctity is the condition on which we shall obtain admission to heaven. The foundation on which sanctity rests is humility. Therefore, strive manfully to obtain it, by combating pride and self-love. Ask for it by earnest and persevering prayer. By the consideration of your own imperfections and miseries, keep alive within your heart the ardent desire to obtain it. Not content with desires and prayers, endeavour to practise it in your everyday life. Repress the pride of your thoughts which luxuriate in visions of your

own excellence ; curb the pride of your affections, by hiding from the eyes of others whatever would procure you honour ; remove all haughtiness from your manner, and by these practical means you will have the virtue for which you pray. God will not fail to come to the aid of one who thus shows his earnestness by endeavouring to do something for himself. He will give him humility, and he who is clothed with that virtue will find an easy entrance into God's glorious kingdom.

### MEEKNESS.

THE two virtues which Our Lord invites us to learn from Him are humility and meekness. Of the first of these, we have already treated ; the second shall form the subject of the present Lecture. To be gentle and not given to anger, to be patient and not to resent an injury, is a great deal to ask from a boy. In the school-world, any one who has these dispositions, is generally looked upon as a weak, unmanly character. He is very likely regarded as a coward, and he will, perhaps, be treated with contempt. But when you rightly understand the virtue which endows any one with the strength to be meek under injury and provocation ; when you see the necessity for acquiring this virtue, and for making it a principle of your daily life ; and particularly when you perceive the advantages which it secures for you, you will entertain concerning it very different sentiments.

Let us, then, study this virtue which Our Lord bids us learn of Him, as being one of the distinguishing marks of His sacred heart. Of a certainty, that heart never showed any signs of unmanliness or of cowardice. It stands before us as the model of all that is greatest and noblest in human nature.

Meekness, it is needless to tell you, is a virtue ; and for that reason alone, is worthy of being striven after and planted in your heart. It is a virtue that moderates and regulates the passion of anger. Take notice that it does not destroy, nor does God mean it to destroy, the passion of anger. It only moderates it, by repressing all its disorderly movements.



It leaves that passion in your heart ; for you must not suppose that those who have learnt meekness from the example of Christ never experience any of anger's movements. To arrive at such a state of insensibility is neither possible nor desirable. It is not possible ; because, as we have already told you, injuries, indignities, bad treatment and injustice are at once resented, and fought against by a natural and involuntary instinct of our nature, an instinct that is called "the irascible appetite". To be so stolid as not to be sensible of this invasion of our rights, is not a virtue.

Moreover, it is not desirable that these emotions of anger should not be felt ; for it is this righteous feeling of anger that gives efficacy, firmness, and vigour to the exercise of justice and to the accomplishment of very many duties which imperatively impose this obligation upon those who are in authority. If, in order to avoid trouble, or to escape the unpleasantness of inflicting pain upon those who deserve it, they were to smother these emotions of anger, they would be guilty of sin and they would not be exercising the virtue of meekness. Therefore, it is not meekness to be stolid or insensible to that which calls for anger ; but to moderate that anger and keep it within the bounds of right reason, this is meekness in the true sense of the word.

You will have an illustration of this, if you observe the way in which a wise master corrects the insolence, or the disobedience, or the ill-temper of one of his scholars. If immediately after the commission of the fault, he were to seize upon, and unmercifully whip him ; or if he were to impose upon him a task which the boy could accomplish only in the space of two or three months, you would say and say truly, that the master's anger had run away with him and carried him beyond the bounds of right reason ; for the punishment is excessive. But if he were to wait till every feeling of angry passion had passed away, and then calling to him the delinquent, who by that time had also cooled down into a rational frame of mind, should first point out to him his fault, and then with a discreet measure of severity punish it, you would say that his action is one from which meekness

is not banished. You see that his pupil had contradicted him and set his authority at defiance ; yet he did not flash out into angry passion ; he patiently endured injury ; he stifled the desire for vengeance ; and at last acted only as a calm judge who vindicates the majesty of the law. This is in reality meekness.

From what we have said thus far, you will see that meekness consists in keeping under control the natural impulse of anger which flashes out when we are contradicted, or crossed, or injured ; that it makes us bear with the faults and the weaknesses of others ; that it keeps in check our desire of revenge ; that it induces us to pardon injuries ; to do services to those who are our enemies ; and to act in this way, not through weakness, or cowardice, or policy, but through charity or love of God for Whose sake we crush down the passion surging up within us. In this, there is nothing weak, unmanly, cowardly ; but quite the reverse.

Consider, now, the necessity for this virtue. You were not made by God to live alone. You were intended by Him to form one of a society, to mingle with, and to hold intercourse with your fellow-men. Now, not one of those with whom you are thus brought into such intimate relations, is perfect. Each of them is full of defects of various kinds. Consequently, in your dealings with them, you will discover much that wounds your susceptibilities, fills you with displeasure, and gives you offence.

That which you experience in your school-life is precisely that which you will experience in the wider field of your life among men of the world. Among your companions you find many characters that are difficult to get on with ; their tastes are just the reverse of your own ; they are capricious ; they are intractable ; they seem to be born and to be thrust among their school-fellows for the simple purpose of annoying them and of causing them pain. Yet your lot is cast among them ; you cannot get away from them ; you must, therefore, try to live at peace with them. How is this to be done ? Will it be by making every one comply with your wishes ? That is impossible ! Will it be brought about

by anger and pugnacity? In that case, you will be like Ismael; your hand will be against every one, and the hand of every one will be against you. Upon such conditions, life would hardly be worth living.

Besides, there is a fact of which you must not lose sight. You yourself are not perfect. You have your bad points, your crotchets, your angles and sharp corners which irritate and annoy others. Why, then, should you look for patience from others if you will show none to them? Why look for consideration from them, if you yourself have none for them? It is, then, a case of give and take; of bear and forbear. Consequently, if you are to live with others, meekness or that virtue which curbs your anger, your displeasure, your resentment, and keeps it within the bounds of reason, is a necessity for you. You cannot do without it, unless you are ready to wage an interminable war with the society in which your lot is cast.

Look, now, at this necessity from another point of view. If you are to lay claim to the character of a Christian, you must, perforce, be meek and gentle with others. In this respect, what does the Gospel teach you? It preaches to you meekness. If your fellow-students in their treatment of you are unjust and injurious, you must bear it; you are not to resent it, nor to allow your anger to break forth. If they rail at you, you are not to answer them with acrimonious words. If they are violent towards you, you are not to repel violence by violence. If they strike you, you must not strike back. In one word, if you cannot maintain your rights without thereby sacrificing charity and giving up meekness, you must bend before the storm of injustice and sacrifice your interests in order to preserve your character as a Christian, a character which is essentially one of meekness. Nay, you are told by the Gospel to do more than simply bend or yield to the storm; you are commanded to love your enemies, to pray for them, to do them good services; and it is only when you act thus that you are sure of being a Christian, that is to say, one of Christ's disciples: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another".

All this, I grant, is very difficult ; but so also is every other virtue ; virtue is virtue, because we overcome difficulties in practising it. Let me then try to animate you with a determination to overcome these difficulties, by setting before you the advantages to be gained by meekness.

What did Our Lord, before He ascended to heaven, leave as His last gift to men? He left them His peace: "My peace I leave you ; My peace I give you". That peace bequeathed to us, means the peace of a heart at rest within itself. This tranquillity is the result of a war successfully waged against the passions of the heart. These were intended by Our Creator to be subject to our reason, to be held under control by it, and to be kept in due subordination to one another. Meekness effects this conquest and brings about this peace, by calming the storm of anger. While that is raging, there cannot be quiet or peace in the soul. It is disturbed and violently agitated. The whirlwind of passion brings about disorder and ruin. But when meekness enters upon the scene of uproar and confusion, it is as when the Lord stood up in the boat upon the storm-swept sea of Galilee. It stretches forth its hand and speaks a word of power, whereat the warring elements cease from strife and there ensues a great calm.

The peace thus brought about in our own hearts, is next made to reign between us and those with whom we have to live. Anger raging within the breast of one man, and suffered to break forth, sounds the war blast which calls into the field the irascible elements seething in the bosoms of those with whom he is brought in contact. But in the hearts over which meekness holds sway, nothing is suffered to appear that would rouse from their slumber and lash into fury the quiescent passions of others. When these are suffered to rush forth and throw down the gage of battle, meekness does nothing to add to their violence ; it does not oppose them ; it speaks only that word of power, that mild answer which appeaseth wrath, and there is peace.

The consequence of this peace existing between the hearts of those who are meek and the hearts of their neighbours, is

a profound peace with God. For, by appeasing the storm of anger, meekness preserves the heart from that multitude of sins which ever follow in anger's wake, just as clouds of dust, straws, pieces of paper, and all the loose rubbish lying about follow after the onward rush of an express train. Being free from the turmoil occasioned by conflicting passions, each of which is surrounded by its crowd of sins, the soul is disposed to pray, to give itself up to exercises of piety, to attend to the whisperings of divine grace, and, consequently, to advance in perfection. By so doing, the soul is following out the purpose for which God created it, and, consequently, it is at rest or in peace; for though the creature is happy only when it has attained its end, yet in the attainment of it, it wins for itself that milder form of happiness which we call peace. It knows that it is in the friendship and love of God, and this knowledge fills it with the spiritual joy resulting from peace with its Maker.

Such are the advantages of meekness. Is not any sacrifice, any difficulty, any trouble experienced in acquiring it, most amply repaid by that peace which nothing else can give, and which the world seeks for in the service of its idols, but seeks in vain? Be determined, then, to win it for yourself. In order to do this, watch carefully over the motions of your heart in which the passions have their home. The moment that you perceive them stirring and ready to break forth from control, steadily apply the curb. Stifle the first mutterings of anger and indignation. Be resolved to endure the inconvenience and the strain requisite to hold them in check. Do not shrink from some little suffering in so doing. Be silent; be firm; lift up your heart to God, and you will receive from Him the strength that will effectually keep within due bounds the angry passions which, if let loose, will wreck your own peace, the peace of your neighbour, and bring upon you the chastisement of God.

## LITURGY.

THOSE who are not children of "the household of the faith," are oftentimes scandalised when curiosity leads them into our churches, and they assist at some function of our holy religion. The rich vestments of the officiating Clergy, the lighted tapers, the clouds of incense, the genuflections and the elaborate ceremonial seem to them theatrical. They regard it all as a pandering to the sensuous instincts of unregenerate nature; they look with an eye of pitying contempt upon those who take part in it; and they go away, thanking God that what they call the "Reformation" has ruthlessly swept away this mummery from the Establishment, and enabled them to worship God "in spirit and in truth". Therefore, in order to instruct you in this matter of the Sacred Liturgy, to give you a high idea of it, a profound respect for it, and at the same time to furnish you with an answer which will satisfy those who have the patience and the good sense to examine into the reasons for it, we will study together the origin of the Liturgy observed in the Catholic Church.

The word "Liturgy" is composed of two Greek words signifying "public service or the work of prayer". By it we mean that assemblage of rites, ceremonies, and prayers used in the public worship of the Church. Because God is our Creator and our sovereign Lord, infinite in all perfections, we owe unto Him the interior worship of the soul. This worship consists of a firm faith in His existence, a profound respect for His being, heartfelt gratitude for His benefits, humble submission to His law and to His will, and a burning love, surpassing in appreciation, at least, the love which we have for anything else. But a worship of this kind, excellent as it is, is not enough. God is the Creator not only of our soul, but of our body. He is the absolute Master of our whole being. Therefore, there is due to Him a worship of the body also, that is to say, a worship which must be outwardly manifested. It will, of course, be readily admitted that this

outward worship, unless intimately united with internal worship, is of little use, is in fact, if wilfully separated from it, a mockery and of as little worth as a body is from which the soul has fled. Nevertheless, it is due to God and is of very great assistance to internal worship, for the religious sentiment if deprived of every external form would speedily evaporate, for the simple reason that anything which does not strike our senses makes upon us so feeble an impression that it quickly slips from the grasp of our mind.

Besides this internal worship of our spirit and this external worship of our body, God requires from us a common worship, a recognition from us as families, societies, and nations, of His inalienable rights. The good common sense of mankind admits this, and, consequently, there has never yet been discovered any nation that had not its public or common worship of the Deity. Now, a worship of this kind cannot be paid to God without some sort of ceremonial, without the use of symbols, and of sensible signs. In His infinite mercy, God did not leave the arrangement of this ceremonial to the caprice of men, but from the beginning prescribed external sacrifices which with willing hearts were offered by the Patriarchs who transmitted to their descendants the formalities with which they were to be offered to God, till at last, when the chosen people were formed into a great nation, an elaborate ceremonial for the proper celebration of public worship was, by revelation from on high, drawn up and imposed upon them.

When the promised Redeemer came, not as He Himself expressly tells us, to destroy this order of divine worship, but to perfect it and to teach men a higher way of serving God, He instituted a new method and ceremonial of public worship. His Apostles instructed by Him and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, developed that which they received from Him; and the Church, with whom that same Divine Spirit ever abides, teaching, instructing, and guiding her, continues to develop and to modify the rules and the laws received from God, according as times and circumstances may require.

As we have already said, this collection of the prayers, the

ceremonies, and the functions of the Church's public worship, is called the Liturgy ; but this name is in a particular manner given to that great public act of worship called the Mass. Liturgy, therefore, by which we mean the Liturgy of the Catholic Church, owes its origin to Jesus Christ. It is not a copy nor an adaptation of the Jewish Liturgy, as our opponents so frequently and so boldly assert. For, the Jewish ceremonial and worship being but a foreshadowing, a type of that which was to come, was of necessity either abrogated by Our Lord, or if some parts of it were retained, these were not peculiar to Judaism, but they are the natural symbols of sentiments and of things common to our human nature. The Jewish ceremonial and public method of worship, as such, form no part of the Roman Catholic Liturgy. Of this, Christ is the author in all its main features. Of some of its parts, the Apostles were no doubt the originators, as being the dispensers of the mysteries of God ; of others, the Church guided by the Holy Ghost was the teacher.

As these statements need proof, we will now lay before you a few reasons which will establish and set them upon a solid basis.

It is quite certain that the grandest liturgical act of the Catholic Church has Christ Himself for its author. During the course of His ministry, He had promised to feed His followers with a mysterious bread. He openly proclaimed Himself to be that mysterious bread. In the most solemn form of asseveration He told those who listened to Him, that unless they ate of His body and drank of His blood, they should have no life in them. Then, at His Last Supper, He took bread (into His hands) and blessed and broke and gave it to them, saying : " Take ye and eat ; this is My body ". And taking the chalice He gave thanks and gave to them saying : " Drink ye all of this ; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins ". Finally, He ordered them to do that which He had done, that till the end of time it might be for a commemoration of Him. Now, with all antiquity, believing in the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, thus cele-



brated with the liturgical acts of blessing, breaking, and distributing to the Apostles, we may say that it is the action round which are centred, and for which were instituted all the other liturgical and ceremonial acts of the Church. It has Christ Himself for its author, and on His priests is laid the command to do that which He then did.

Of the other acts performed by the Church in her public worship, we may safely say that the essential parts of them have Christ for their author. For, it is generally believed, and the Fathers held the belief, that during the forty days intervening between the Resurrection and the Ascension, a period during which the Gospels represent Christ as speaking with His Apostles "about the Kingdom of God," it is generally believed, we repeat, that Our Lord taught them everything necessary for the administration of the Sacraments, and the government of the Church.

A glance at the Saviour's life, as it is portrayed for us in the pages of the New Testament, will give us ample reason for drawing this conclusion. For, in that life we see that Christ either approved of, or actually performed all, or nearly all, the liturgical and symbolical actions which the Church uses in her worship; and whenever there is not positive proof either pointing out the Church as the origin of any rite, or tracing that rite to her inspiration and influence, it is but logical to attribute it to the general teaching and practice of Our Lord Himself, either positively ordered and committed to the keeping of the Apostles, or instituted by them in imitation of actions which they had seen Him perform.

Thus, in the public worship and in the ritual practices of the Church, we see such actions as striking the breast, kneeling, prostrating, lifting up the eyes to heaven, outstretching the arms, breathing upon the recipients of some of the Sacraments, imposition of hands, the use of material things such as oil and water, to convey sacramental grace. Now to these or to similar actions, Our Lord either has given His approval or has Himself performed them.

When the Publican struck his breast and stood afar off; when persons fell down before Him and worshipped; when

they touched the hem of His garment, hoping to be healed ; when they kissed His feet and poured out upon them precious ointments, He did not reprobate these actions. On the contrary, He said that the Publican went out of the Temple justified, because of the contrition of which the striking of his breast and his standing afar off were the outward signs. He gave favours to those who worshipped Him, miraculously healing the woman who believed in the efficacy of touching His garments, pardoning the sinner who kissed His feet, and accepting the outpouring of her precious unguents.

In His various miracles, He performed many of the acts now employed in the administration of the Sacraments. He knelt, he prostrated, He lifted up His eyes in prayer. He stretched out His hands and touched the afflicted in order to heal them. He imposed hands to give a blessing. He lifted up His voice to rebuke and to expel devils. He put His fingers into the ears of the deaf to restore their hearing. He used His spittle to touch the tongues of the dumb and restore to them the power of speech. He used the word *Ephpheta* as a word of power to open the ears of the deaf. He made with His spittle and the dust of the road clay, which He put upon the sightless eyes of the blind to give to them the faculty of sight. In one word, there is scarcely a rite or a ceremony in the Church, the like of which has not been performed by Our Lord. Surely, that must be good and praiseworthy which is an exact copy of the manner in which the Incarnate Word praised and worshipped the Father, and imparted to men the blessings of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

That the Apostles were the authors of the various Liturgies in use in the Churches founded by them, no one can rationally doubt. For, in the first place, it is well known that after Our Lord's Ascension, they remained for some considerable time in Jerusalem, and while abiding there, worshipped God in the manner prescribed by their Lord. Of this fact, the Acts bear witness. When the Apostles dispersed to preach the

<sup>1</sup>See *Ritual of the New Testament*, by Rev. Father Bridgett, C.S.S.R., chap. iv.

Gospel to the nations, it is but rational, in the second place, to conclude that they carried with them, to the peoples whom they gathered into the fold, the same method of worship, giving to that method, as a matter of course, such additions as they deemed necessary to suit the national ideas of those among whom their lot was cast. Hence we conclude, that the Liturgies followed at Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome, and elsewhere, owe their existence to them. This is the view held by the Fathers, who consider the Apostles to have been the principal sources of the ceremonial and liturgical observances which we now find in each of these Churches.

Like the Gospel narrative itself, these Liturgies were not, at first, committed to writing. Only towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, did they appear in written form. Now, St. Augustine lays down an axiom by which, as we have said, these books of ritual observances may be traced back to the founders of these respective Churches. "There are many things," he says, "which the whole Church holds and observes. From this fact, these things are believed to have been taught by the Apostles."<sup>1</sup>

Hence we regard as of apostolic origin, those characteristics which in all Liturgies are everywhere found to be the same. These are, in the first place, those actions and ceremonies in the observance of which all the Churches agree. These actions and ceremonies are of such a nature that if omitted, the essence of the Christian Sacrifice would not exist—as for instance—the preparation of the bread and the wine, the oblation or offering, the consecration, the consumption of the *oblata*, and the distribution of them among those assisting at the Sacrifice, who wish to communicate. In the next place, even those characteristics which do not belong to the essence of the various Sacraments, but which are, nevertheless, important in themselves, these also are believed to be of apostolic origin, when they are found in the liturgical services of all the Churches. Of this nature are the singing of

<sup>1</sup> *De Baptismo.*, lib. iv., cap. 23.

Psalms, the reading of the Holy Scripture, the assistance of ministers, the use of incense, the exclusion of catechumens and of the profane, the breaking of the Host, the kiss of peace, multiplied prayers, thanksgivings, and other matters of a similar nature.<sup>1</sup>

If it is objected, that the notable differences occurring in the various Liturgies are enough to overthrow this theory, we reply, that these differences are to be found in matters of only secondary importance. Their presence in the Liturgies is easily explained by the necessity under which the Apostles laboured of accommodating public worship, in these minor matters, to the manners, the customs, and the climate of the various peoples to whom they preached. Thus, in certain countries they would prescribe that the head should be uncovered during public service; in others, that the feet should be uncovered, and the head covered. Such observances as these were never intended by them to be perpetual and immutable. They were left to the good sense of the rulers, to be changed according as circumstances might require.

The pastors of the Church having succeeded to the office of the Apostles, and being guided in their ecclesiastical functions by the Spirit of God, have undoubtedly introduced into public worship many rites and ceremonies for the more reverent and solemn celebration of the divine mysteries. These, however, are [not rites of an essential character, affecting the matter of the Sacraments, but of only a minor and ceremonial nature. Thus, the Church makes use of lighted tapers, incense, flowers, rich vestments, and precious stones, for she considers that whatever is costly and beautiful is rightly applied to the service of the Creator. By introducing them into her worship, she is not imitating either Jews or pagans; she simply accepts and employs these beautiful things which nature itself prompts men to dedicate to the service of those whom they love.

As we still have much to say concerning the importance and the utility of liturgical rites and ceremonies, we will close

<sup>1</sup> Bona., *Rerum Liturg.*, lib. vi., cap. 6

this Lecture by exhorting you to study carefully the Liturgy of the Holy Mass; to try to penetrate into its meaning; to fill yourselves with a deep respect for and a great love of it; and to try to learn from it the many lessons which it will not fail to teach.

## IMPORTANCE AND UTILITY OF LITURGY.

AS we saw in our last Lecture, the Liturgy of the Church owes its origin to Jesus Christ, to the Apostles, and to the Church which He commissioned to teach and to preserve the faith which He gave to men, that through it they might share in the benefits of His copious redemption. Bearing in mind, then, the origin of the Liturgy, we can well understand the sentiment which caused St. Theresa to exclaim: "I would gladly lay down my life for the least rubric appointed by Holy Church". For, she regarded the Liturgy as a present from God to men, and knew both its utility and the important part which it plays in leading them to Him. As, then, we have already considered Liturgy as the creation of Our divine Saviour, let us now study its importance and its utility in the religious system which Christ came on earth to establish among men.

We shall gain a general sort of knowledge upon these two points, if we take notice of the zeal that has ever burned in the bosom of the Church to perfect the forms of its Liturgy, to establish the laws which govern it. To rectify any errors which from time to time have invaded it, and to explain its significance to the people, great Pontiffs have not disdained to devote to it their careful attention; the Councils of the Church have deemed it worthy of their legislation; learned doctors have devoted to it their deepest study; and Bishops have watched over it with untiring vigilance. But if we wish clearly to understand the important part which it plays in the religious life of the Church, we must more closely examine into the reasons inspiring this zeal.

The first of these is their intimate knowledge of human nature, which religion is destined to raise to a union with God. Men, we must remember, are not Angels, but material beings informed by spiritual intelligences. Their intellectual nature is, therefore, necessarily served by their material senses. The eye, the ear, the sensitive flesh, are the channels through which all knowledge flows into it. In order to understand and to know, the intelligence must use forms, figures, symbols, so that its very thoughts are fashioned into signs, which are actually expressed by words, which themselves are but symbols. Through the bodily senses, the soul, then, receives impressions from objects which are external to it. It is for this reason that God, Who fashioned our nature, has decreed that His public worship should have in it those ceremonial and ritual observances which, through these senses, make an impression upon the soul. These observances move the soul to reverence. They excite within it the religious sentiment. They preserve that sentiment when once it has been called into being; and unless that sentiment were constantly fed by outward rites, it would speedily evaporate. These rites minister to it nourishment, and captivate the affections of the heart.

Bearing in mind, then, the nature of man, upon whom religion has to exercise its beneficial influence, we see at a glance how admirably adapted are the liturgical rites of the Church to impress its saving lessons upon his sensitive heart. Therefore, the importance of Liturgy with its accompanying ceremonies cannot be overestimated. For the outward acts, by which the Liturgy is performed, speak through the eye, the ear, and the other senses, to the soul and stir it up to venerate the sacred mysteries. They lift it up out of the absorbing interest of worldly business to the contemplation of the invisible things of faith. If it is piously inclined, they nourish its piety. If it is not, they plant in it germs which, under the fostering influence of divine grace, will at last bud forth into a practical piety, rich in good works. They inflame its charity; they increase its faith; they strengthen its devotion; they convey lessons of the deepest meaning to

minds which are obdurately closed against the arguments of reason.

Besides the important part which liturgical observances in public worship play, in appealing through the senses to the soul of the Christian, their utility in edifying it, in moving it to acts of worship, in teaching it the various duties of a creature to its Creator, in furnishing it with a means outwardly to express the love which burns within, in preserving grave dogmas of faith, and in attracting to the house of God those whom the counter-attractions of the devil's house so easily draw into sin,—all these are a powerful plea for the employment and use by the Church, of liturgical rites and ceremonies in its public worship of God.

In the first place, they edify those who assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries. The very sight and beauty of the Church in which they worship is to them an object lesson, calling back to their minds the fact that they themselves are God's living temples which should be adorned with the beauty of holiness, and enriched with the wealth of all virtues, that the Divinity may dwell therein. The sonorous bells which swing in its towers are for them angel voices calling them to prayer, to repentance, to the consideration of the shortness of time, and of the vanity of all that is merely earthly. The lights that burn upon its altars, are images of the lively faith which should illumine their minds. The stately processions that wind along its aisles, headed by the ensign of the Cross, picture before their eyes the march of human society through the world, into eternity. The colours of the sacerdotal vestments bring to their memory the thought of thanksgiving, of repentance, and of joy in the Lord. The attitude of the priests and of the assistants at the holy altar, their genuflections, their profound inclinations, and their recollected appearance, inspire them with sentiments of reverence for the presence of God. The incense floating upwards to the arched vault, speaks to them of prayer; the blessed water, of purity; the kiss of peace, of fraternal charity. All these things tend unto edification, to the turning of the soul to God.

In the next place, they are of their own nature calculated

to touch the souls of those who behold them, by exciting them to piety, to recollection, to a deep love of religion. For they speak not only to the reason, but to the sensitive heart of man, and they are, therefore, oftentimes more eloquent and persuasive in leading them to God than the most carefully reasoned discourses of zealous preachers. If any one doubts this, let him consider what a very different effect they would have upon him, if they were performed in an irreverent, off-hand, perfunctory sort of way. What a shock they would give to his soul! How incongruous it would seem to him that what should edify, should be turned into a source of disedification, and probably of unbelief! A proof of their efficacy when performed as they ought always to be performed, is seen in the effect which they had upon even the cultured intelligence of the great St. Augustine. In the Church at Milan, as he listened during the matin office to the grave melodious chant of the Psalms and the hymns of the Liturgy, the truth embalmed in those inspired words insinuated itself into his heart. They filled him with devout and pious sentiments. They moved him to tears, flooding his soul with a quiet happiness, such as sensual pleasure could never bestow.

Again; how great is their power to teach the truths of Christian morality! Let any one intelligently assist at the administration of the Sacraments, and he will not fail to carry away with him the deep lessons which the impressive ceremonial accompanying them always imparts. How vividly, for instance, does the rite of Baptism impress upon the soul the lessons which the Church intends that rite to give unto all who witness it! The white robe given to him upon whose head the purifying waters have flowed, is an injunction to him and to all present to carry unspotted before the throne of God that vesture of holiness with which Baptism has clothed the newly made Christian. The burning light put into his hands speaks to us of the lively faith with which we should hold fast to all the truths enshrined in the Christian system. The unction with holy oil and with chrism points out to us that we are athletes bound to fight the battles of the Lord, kings anointed to rule over, after having brought into sub-



jection to God, those souls which are now numbered among the children of Christ. Those who come to have their union blessed by the Sacrament of matrimony are taught, by its ceremonies, all their duties to each other and to God. Those who are raised to Sacred Orders have clearly set before them the holiness of life which is expected from them, by the sacerdotal garments with which they are invested, by the holy vessels which are intrusted to their care, by the imposition of hands which imprints upon their souls the priestly character and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, the rites and the ceremonies in which the Church makes us take part, are a continual and vivid expression of the divine faith that is in us. When, as we enter the church, we sprinkle ourselves with blessed water, we manifest our belief in the holiness which "becometh the house of God". When we genuflect before the altar, we acknowledge Our Lord there present in the Holy Sacrament. When we stand, while the Gospel is read to us, we make known our willingness to carry into effect all its divine precepts. When we are sprinkled with the blessed ashes, we humbly confess our sinfulness, and carry away with us a vivid impression of our mortality, and of that eternal life unto which we are hurrying. When we partake of the blessed bread which, in some churches, is distributed to those who do not communicate, we are forcibly reminded of that spiritual sustenance for the reception of which we must prepare ourselves, and of that brotherly love which should unite those who eat at the same table. When we make upon ourselves the sign of the Cross we must, perforce, call to mind the bitter Passion by which we were redeemed. When we strike our breasts, we are made to feel the sorrow which we ought continually to maintain in our hearts for the many sins of which we have been guilty.

Besides conveying to the minds of the people deep lessons of morality, there is another way in which Liturgy is of infinite utility to the Christian people. It serves to enshrine the beliefs and the dogmas of the Church, and thus becomes a monument testifying to the primitive faith, and guarding men against the impious novelties of so-called reformers. Thus,

the rites and the ceremonies prescribed for the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice bear witness to the unvarying belief of the Church in the real presence of Our Lord in the Holy Sacrament. Those which are observed in the conferring of Baptism point out not only belief in original sin but in the baneful effects which flow from it. The imposition of hands and the unction of chrism, in Confirmation, show us that the Church regards this Sacrament as quite distinct from Baptism, inasmuch as its matter, its form, and the end for which it is given are different from those of Baptism. In the bestowal of Orders, the rites employed clearly point to the Church's intention of making of their recipient a sacrificing priest, and not a mere minister. So is it also with all the other ceremonies of the Church. Hence, it is not to be wondered at that those who are tainted with the spirit of heresy have always shown themselves hostile to these liturgical practices. They have decried, ridiculed, and strenuously fought against them. Therefore, it is that those who have not hesitated to oppose the outward worship so strongly insisted upon by our holy religion have, generally speaking, first parted with most of the principles which that religion dictates.

Lastly, liturgical observances, rites, and ceremonies make religion attractive. They draw men to the House of God, and while speaking to them through eye and ear, gather them round their Father's table, whence they receive the bread of life. This fact makes manifest that they are friends, nay brothers and sisters, being fed at the table of the common Father. Also, the various families of each congregation there see one another; they become acquainted; they form a kind of society, a family. Their hearts are softened towards one another; the bonds of charity are drawn more closely together; for, they are thus made to pray, to chant, to adore God in unison. Knowing all these great advantages that flow from Liturgy, Holy Church impresses upon her ministers the necessity for deeply studying her mystic rites, and for entering into their spirit. She obliges them to learn the laws which regulate her Liturgy, and particularly exhorts them clearly to

explain that glorious Liturgy to their people, in order that they may both intelligently assist at, and devoutly take part in it. For those of her children who belong to the Eastern Church, she has approved of the various Liturgies existing among them, being unwilling, through the broad liberal spirit with which she is animated, to impose upon them one with which they are not familiar. For the Western Church, however, it is her will that the Liturgy should be the same for all its branches. This privilege of retaining their own Liturgy she grants to the Eastern Catholics when they visit the Western Church; and obliges her Western subjects to use their own when they visit the East.

So careful is she to preserve her Liturgy in all its purity, that the right to determine the laws which regulate it, in all that is grave and essential, is reserved to the Pope. For, in order to invest these laws with an authority which all will respect, the Fathers of the Tridentine Council withdrew from the Bishops the power to organise the public worship of their churches, the order of the Breviary, the Missal, the Ritual and the Ceremonial. For this provident care our thanks are due to them. Whenever, then, we call to mind the importance of that Liturgy over which they so lovingly watched, and its great utility in the various points which have been brought under our notice, we should resolve reverently to study it, and diligently to assist at its celebration, that we may draw from it all the edification, the instruction, the piety, and the devotion which it will impart to those who, accepting it as a gift from God, endeavour to make it bring forth in their souls fruit a hundred-fold.

## THE LANGUAGE OF THE LITURGY.

ALTHOUGH the Sacred Liturgy of the Church owes its origin to Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the Church itself; although its importance and its utility in edifying, teaching, moving and attracting men to the worship of God are exceedingly

great, yet its salutary lessons are not conveyed, nor is its celebration performed in the vulgar or common language of the people. This fact is oftentimes made a subject of reproach to the Church, by those who do not count themselves among the number of her children. They regard this rejection of the vulgar tongue as a culpable hiding of divine things from those whom God willed to draw benefit from them, and the choice of an unknown language for their expression, as a sort of jugglery employed for the purpose of imposing upon the simple.

It is, therefore, necessary to explain to you the reasons which have induced the rulers of the Church, in the celebration of her Liturgy, to adhere to the use of what are called "the dead languages," dead, inasmuch as they are no longer the common speech of the people.

We may preface what we have to say upon this subject by a few remarks upon the language of the Liturgy in general. These will enable you more clearly to grasp what we shall say concerning the reasons which have guided the rulers of the Church in adhering to the use of the dead languages. It is quite certain that in the early ages of Christianity, all the Liturgies now in use in the Church were expressed in the common, every-day speech of the people to whom the Apostles preached the Gospel. In those early, apostolic times, besides the Latin tongue, the chief languages employed by the people who were under the sway of the great Roman Empire, and by those who had not yet fallen under its dominion, were the Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek. These languages in the lapse of centuries underwent great changes. But though the speech of the people changed, the Church in her Liturgy neither accepted nor introduced these changes into the language employed by her in her public worship. That language always remained the same.

Hence it came to pass that the Eastern Church in its Liturgy adhered to the language in which it had first conducted its public worship, even when that language had ceased to be the ordinary speech of its people. Hence, even at the present day the Hebrew, Greek, and Syriac

tongues employed in the Church services are no longer those of which the people make use in the business of every-day life. As for the Western Church, its Liturgy was from the very beginning always celebrated in the Latin language ; and even when Latin ceased to be the language of the Empire, the Church continued to use it in all her public services. In later times, however, by a special dispensation of the Holy See, the Liturgy was allowed to be celebrated among the Slavonic nations in the vulgar tongue of the people, because of the difficulty of procuring priests conversant with the Latin tongue.

After these prefatory remarks, we may now ask : What were the reasons which moved the Church thus tenaciously to cling to the original languages of the Liturgy, even when those languages were no longer understood by her children ? These reasons are so sound and good that they will readily be accepted and approved of by any unprejudiced inquirer. In the first place, the chief, the main reason was to preserve the purity of the faith. Language, as we know, is the vehicle by which we convey our thoughts to one another. The thoughts of God, His teachings about Himself and about the means of grace, were imparted to men by means of speech. It is essential, therefore, that these thoughts, these teachings should always remain the same.

Now a living language, one that is in daily use among a people, is subject to continual change. Thus, for example, the English spoken in the days of Chaucer or of Shakespeare would in many things be quite unintelligible at the present day. Words change their meaning ; they become obsolete ; so that we should now be unable to recognise those which every one understood four or five centuries ago.

This is not the case with a dead language, that is to say, with one that has ceased to be in common every-day use. It is fixed, invariable. For a religion that is unchangeable, an invariable language is necessary, because its teaching must always be the same. If its language were subject to change, as modern languages undoubtedly are, the purity of its dogmas could not long be preserved. With almost

every century, its Ceremonial, its Bible, its Ritual, would have to be altered and reprinted in order to accommodate themselves to the march of the various and varying national tongues.

Hence it is that the Church, in order to preserve the purity of her teaching, has been pleased to embalm that teaching in a language that is fixed and invariable, so that she knows exactly the meaning of the words in which that teaching is conveyed to the minds of her children.

The purity, then, of her faith being safeguarded by an invariable language, is next preserved in its catholicity by the use of that unchanging tongue. The children of the Church are everywhere, and they speak the language of every nation under the sun. It is, therefore, necessary that her Liturgy should be in a language that is the same for all. Public worship thus becomes a very easy matter; the communication of doctrine is shorn of endless difficulties; the union of Church with Church, and of all the Churches with the Apostolic See, the centre of unity, is made more close and intimate than it could otherwise be.

A result of this is seen in the fact that a Catholic, as far as his religion is concerned, is never expatriated. He is always at home before the Altar of God, and familiar with the religious rites of the Catholic people among whom he may chance to be thrown. Thus, an English priest when travelling may celebrate Mass in Germany or in France, in Austria or in Spain, and all the faithful of these various countries can assist at his Sacrifice, just as they would at a Mass celebrated by one of their own pastors. The laity, too, when journeying through these foreign countries perceive, in the public worship of these lands, nothing that in any way differs from that with which they are familiar in their own parish churches. The prayers, the rites, the ceremonies, the altars, the vestments of the priests are all the same. Therefore, they feel that they are the children of the one Church and of the same family. Thus the conviction is forced upon them that a Church which is one, holy, catholic and apostolical, must have a language which like itself is uniform and universal.

A third reason which has moved the Church to use, in her ritual observances a dead language like the Latin, is the immense advantage gained by her and by her people from the knowledge of that imperial tongue which this use obliges all her Clergy to acquire. For, in that tongue are preserved, as in a store-house, all the teachings of the great Fathers of the Church, their commentaries and their disquisitions upon the Sacred Scripture, their eloquent discourses, their solution of difficult problems, and the traditions and various usages of the Churches. Therefore, a knowledge of Latin puts into their hands the key of that treasury, and places at their disposal the accumulated wealth of centuries upon centuries.

As then the teaching body of the Church have in their possession a language that is well known also to all the cultured men of every nation, they are furnished not only with the stores of knowledge gathered together by the learned men of past generations, but with a means of communication with the learned men of the whole civilised world, an advantage which is of the utmost utility for preserving intact the purity of the faith, and for maintaining in all its vigour ecclesiastical discipline. By means of it they can hold intercourse with and obtain information and teaching from the Supreme Pastor, and in matters of grave difficulty consult the learned theologians of other lands. When assembled together in General Council, they are able to understand one another, and thus every question of moment may be clearly and thoroughly and satisfactorily discussed by all. This would be practically impossible if the possession of a common language had not been secured by the possession of a common Liturgy in that language, to know which Liturgy necessitates a thorough knowledge of the common language in which it must be performed.<sup>1</sup>

To these reasons we may add one other, and by no means an unimportant one. This is the dignity and the grandeur imparted to our public worship by the fact that it is conducted in a learned language, the use and the knowledge

<sup>1</sup> See *Ritual of the New Testament*, Appendix A.

of which are confined to educated men. For, there is in the liturgical language employed by the Catholic Church a certain majesty most becoming the sacred character of religion. Religion has its profound mysteries which seem to require that the vulgar tongue should not be used for their expression. Those of the sects who have adopted the common language of the people for their religious services, have not secured for these services that respect which is due to everything regarding the worship of God.

If these advocates for a Liturgy in the vulgar tongue were consistent, they would publish one for each of the dialects that prevail in various parts of the country. For, the English of the metropolis is well-nigh unintelligible to the Lancashire or the Yorkshire peasant. The French of the Parisian is an unknown tongue to the Breton or the Gascon. Germany too has its various dialects. Wales has a language of its own; so also have Scotland and Ireland.

To celebrate the Liturgy in these various languages and in the various dialects of these same languages, not only would detract from its majesty and endanger its purity, but would divide in their public worship the multitudinous nationalities that obey the Catholic Church. It would make them in religious matters strangers to one another, and destroy that uniformity which is one of the distinguishing features of the Church.

That Church, however, while rigidly maintaining in her public worship the use of a dead language, is far from desiring or from intending that her services should be unintelligible to her children. On the contrary, she wishes all the treasures of her Liturgy to be at their service. For this purpose, she desires that her pastors should most carefully explain it to their people; should unfold to their view its beauties; and make them share in the treasures of piety which it contains. These instructions all zealous priests are eager to impart. They earnestly exhort their people to take a deep interest in everything that concerns the worship of God. They go even farther than this. With the approbation of the Holy See and under the supervision of the Bishops, the



learned among the Clergy have made excellent translations of the Missal. These translations are to be found in the popular manuals of piety in daily use among the faithful, so that any one who is able to read—and in these days the number of these is very great—may intelligently follow each part of the divine service while it is celebrated by the priest at the altar.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, while making these concessions to the very natural and laudable desire of her children to understand the Liturgy, and amply providing them with the means for so doing, she is careful to point out to them, and she rigidly maintains, the necessity for celebrating it in the ancient language in which it was first celebrated in the West. Effectually to prevent any one from attempting to make a change in this her disciplinary action, she pronounces an anathema upon any one who shall dare to maintain that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue.

Therefore, both in the East and in the West the Church has wisely adhered to the ancient languages in which the early Christians first celebrated the Liturgy. By a special providence of God, those languages to which her invariable truths were committed, in the course of time became like those truths which they embalmed, fixed and invariable.

By clinging in her Liturgy to such languages as these, truth is preserved, unity is secured, the faithful are united into one family, and the majesty befitting the public worship of the Godhead is protected against irreverence. As true and obedient children of that loving Mother, let us be submissive to her wishes, and while bowing to her decrees, let us make it our delight to study and to know the various parts of her glorious Liturgy, that having here below, in the unity of the Catholic Church, worshipped God, we may from its precincts be transferred to the triumphant Church in heaven, where in the bonds of unfailling charity we may praise and worship Him for ever.

<sup>1</sup> *Concil. Trident.*, Sess. xxii., cap. 8.

## LITURGICAL BOOKS.

THE rules by which the Liturgy is regulated, the forms in which it is expressed, and the prayers which constitute so important a part of it have all been committed to the safe-keeping of written documents which, since the invention of printing, have been indefinitely multiplied and brought within the reach of any one who cares to peruse their pages. These are called "Liturgical Books" the chief of which are the Missal, the Breviary, the Ritual, the Pontifical, the Ceremonial of Bishops, the Diurnal, the Book of Epistles and Gospels, the Gradual, and the Antiphonary. For those who take an interest in the due celebration of divine worship—an interest which is daily on the increase in the hearts of enlightened Catholics—a few words will not be out of place to describe for them the contents of these books, and to bring home to them the extreme care which has ever animated the action of our great Pontiffs in giving to these publications as great a degree of perfection as possible.

Chief in importance among these Liturgical works, inasmuch as it deals with the great Sacrifice of the New Law, is the Missal which, as its name implies, is used at the celebration of Holy Mass. This book contains the ceremonies to be observed by those who offer that Sacrifice, the Introits, the Prayers, the Epistles and Gospels, the Offertories and the Post-communions for all the Sundays and the festivals of the ecclesiastical year, together with the various Prefaces for the different feasts and seasons, and the Canon which is always the same, no matter what may be the season or the feast of the year. During the sessions of the Council of Trent, the Fathers decreed that the Missal should be carefully revised and corrected of any errors that in the course of centuries had crept into it, a work which the energy of Pius V. brought to a happy conclusion and caused to be published on 29th July, 1570.

On its appearance, he forbade any one to sing or to say Mass in any other form except in that which this Missal pre-

scribed. But while so doing, he did not forget the prescriptive rights of the various Churches. Those among them who for two centuries before the above-mentioned date had used Missals approved of by the Holy See, were allowed to retain them and to celebrate Mass according to the ceremonial which they prescribed. Besides making to them this concession, he gave to any of these Churches permission to adopt the new Missal provided that the Bishop and the Chapter of the diocese agreed to make the change.

Notwithstanding all the care bestowed by the Pontiff upon this new edition which he aimed at bringing into conformity with the most ancient and correct copies, faults crept into it owing to the carelessness of printers, and, it must be added, through the perverse temerity of restless innovators. Therefore, Clement VIII. ordered a second revision which when completed he published to the world. The decree issued for this purpose appeared on 7th July, 1604. This Pontiff was moved to take this step in order to establish in its first purity that which the lapse of years had altered. He therefore commissioned some of the most learned of his subjects to undertake the work. Their efforts were crowned with so great success that the outcome of their labours left nothing to be desired. They rectified the rubrics which, by degrees, and almost imperceptibly, had deviated somewhat from the right line; they rendered more intelligible those of them that were obscure; and having compared the text itself of the Missal with the text of the Vulgate and brought both into agreement with each other, they gave to the world a work perfect in every particular.

In the year 1725, Benedict XIII. published a supplement to this Missal entitled the *Memoriale Rituum*, the object of which is to describe the rites to be observed in small churches, for the blessing of candles on the Feast of the Purification, the blessing of ashes at the beginning of Lent, the blessing of palms on Palm Sunday, and the ceremonies of the last three days of Holy Week.

In 1821, and again in 1846, the Congregation of Rites approved of this "Memoriale" and ordered it to be used for

the aforementioned functions in all parish churches in which the assistance of at least three or four servers or clerics could be obtained. Moreover, it authorised the Bishops to allow the priests of these churches to celebrate on Holy Thursday a Low Mass before the commencement of the High Mass in the Cathedral Church, provided that they could not find at least three persons to assist them. This "Memoriale" of Benedict XIII. is, according to the decree of the Congregation of Rites, to serve as the ritual of small churches on the days above-mentioned. Also it is to be used in the public chapels of religious when a deacon and a subdeacon cannot be found to assist at the service.

Previously to reforming the Missal, Clement VIII. had already given his attention to the correction of the Breviary, styling these two books "the two wings which the priest daily extends over the true propitiatory". The Breviary is the book which contains the Divine Office and the rules prescribed for its due celebration by those who, as ministers of the Church, are bound to recite it. In its present form it is an abridgment or abbreviation—hence its name *Breviarium*—of the exceedingly long Offices which in the early ages of fervour and of faith even laics were accustomed to say daily, and which, when laics ceased to recite them, were confined exclusively to the Clergy and the Religious Orders.

In the eleventh century, Gregory VII. found it necessary to shorten these Offices for the members of his household, and this Breviary or *Officium Breviatum* soon spread far and wide among the Clergy. By order of Gregory IX., Haymo, fourth minister-general of the Franciscans, received instructions to correct and to put in order this work of Gregory VII. When the injunctions of the Pope had been duly carried into effect, Nicolas III. ordered this Breviary to be recited in all the churches of Rome. From that date till the pontificate of Pius V. it underwent several other reforms.

In order to carry out the decrees of the Council of Trent, this great Pontiff completed the work of correcting the Breviary, and by his Bull "*Quod a nobis*" 7th July, 1568, imposed the use of the new one upon all the Churches

of the Catholic world, declaring that no one bound to recite the Breviary "*ex more et ritu Romanæ Ecclesiæ*" could henceforth satisfy that obligation by reciting the Office from any other. Yet, while making the law so stringent, he did not compel all without exception to lay aside the Breviary which hitherto they had been accustomed to use. Those who could claim for their Breviary—formerly approved of by the Holy See—a use extending as far back as two centuries before the date of this Bull, were empowered either to continue its use, or if they preferred the new Breviary, to exchange their own for it, provided that the Bishops and their Chapters consented to receive it. The Breviary thus published by the Supreme Pontiff afterwards received the approval of Clement VIII. and of Urban VIII. It is the one now known as the Roman Breviary.

Next in order, after the Missal and the Breviary, comes the Ritual, which is a book containing the rites and the ceremonies to be used in the administration of those Sacraments which simple priests can confer, as well as the formulas for various blessings, the ceremonies for processions, burials, and the like. Paul V. published it on 17th June, 1614. Having first recalled to the minds of the Clergy the labours of his predecessors, Pius V. and Clement VIII., for the reform of the Liturgy, he points out the necessity for such a volume as that which he had ordered to be published, containing all the sacred rites to be performed in the administration of Sacraments and in other sacred functions by those having the care of souls, in order that being invested with apostolic authority, it might secure a certain and uniform method in the performance of these holy offices.

To ensure order and exactitude in this work, he had committed the task of preparing the volume to the care of certain Cardinals eminent for their piety, learning, and prudence. These distinguished men, aided by other profound scholars, after having first examined the Rituals actually in use, drew up with all brevity and precision that which is now known as the Roman Ritual. By his apostolic authority, the Supreme Pontiff then ordered it to be observed by all

Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, as well as by their vicars, parish priests, and curates, securing by this means adherence to the laws and the ancient usages of the Catholic Church. On 25th March, 1752, Benedict XIV. gave permission for a reprint of this Ritual, together with the Ceremonial of Bishops and the Pontifical, enriched by many corrections and additions, the fruit of his labours and researches.<sup>1</sup>

After the Ritual, we come next to consider the Roman Pontifical. This book contains the rites and the ceremonies performed by Bishops and by Pontiffs. Clement VIII. drew up its present order, and by his constitution "*Ex quo*," 10th February, 1596, published it for the use of the Catholic Church. All editions in use before the date of its publication were prohibited; but as in course of time many alterations had been inserted in it, a commission appointed by Urban VIII., 17th June, 1644, revised and expurgated it. To this work several additions were made by Benedict XIV., who, by a brief "*Quam ardenti studio*," 25th March, 1752, permitted the printing in one volume, together with the additions made by him, of the Ritual, the Ceremonial of Bishops, and the Pontifical.

The Ceremonial of Bishops follows naturally after the Pontifical. It is a volume that contains the order and all the details of the ceremonies to be observed in Episcopal and in Collegiate churches. These latter are churches which have a Canonical Chapter, but not the Episcopal chair or presence of the Bishop. The correction of this book is due to Clement VIII., 16th July, 1600. A further revision of it was made by Innocent V. who was moved to undertake the task on account of the manifold alterations which, in the course of years, had been made in it, 30th July, 1650. Benedict XIII. made a further revision, 7th March, 1727; and

<sup>1</sup> The laws of the Roman Ritual regard the Universal Church (7th Sept., 1850). It may be used in dioceses into which the Roman Rite has not been introduced (22nd May, 1841). Only books conformable with its blessings (*benedictionibus*) may be used (7th April, 1832). If any other formularies are employed, they must have the approval of the Congregation of Rites (23rd May, 1835). Hence, any additions to the Roman Ritual, except those which have this approval, are absolutely null and void.

Benedict XIV. finally amended all that was faulty in it, 25th March, 1752.

Another liturgical book, about which it is necessary to have suitable information, is the Roman Martyrology. This work contains the names and sometimes a brief history of the Martyrs, the holy Pontiffs, the Confessors, the Virgins, and the saintly Widows whose lives and heroic actions have edified the Church, which in gratitude for the good effected by them during their mortal pilgrimage, holds them up for veneration and humbly begs for their powerful intercession. It is read during the capitular office, after the first prayer at Prime, and it announces the name of the Saint whose feast is to be celebrated on the following day, together with the names of all those who are on that day commemorated. Previously to the existing edition of this work, many learned men, such as Venerable Bede, Usuard, and Rabanus Maurus, had drawn up Martyrologies or lists of the saintly men of old. The most ancient, perhaps, is that of the celebrated Eusebius of Cæsarea whose works St. Jerome translated into Latin.

This volume, into which many inaccuracies and mistakes had crept, Gregory XIII. ordered to be carefully corrected. To carry out his command, he appointed a commission of scholarly men under the presidency of the learned Baronius. The first two editions, in spite of all the labour and care bestowed upon them, were found to be inexact. The Pontiff accordingly ordered a third edition to be prepared. This appeared in 1584, and it is the only one authorised for public use in the Church. A fourth edition, with certain modifications, was issued from the press during the pontificate of Sixtus V. Urban VIII. and Clement X. adopted this; Benedict XIV. put the finishing touches to it (1748); and other Pontiffs added to it the names of the various Saints whom they raised to the altar. These are only additions; they are neither changes nor corrections; so that since the reign of Benedict XIV. the Martyrology has remained substantially the same.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Only the names of *canonised* Saints are inserted in the Martyrology. (Decree, 30th July, 1616; 27th March, 1628.)

The names of the other liturgical books, already mentioned, sufficiently explain their nature, so that they call for no further notice from us.

From what has been said, we see how great importance the chief Pastors of the Church have ever attached to the Liturgy. They have bestowed upon it the greatest care; they have spared neither labour nor expense in bringing it to that perfection which befits a work having for its object the worthy celebration of divine worship. To secure that work from all error, they have called to their assistance the most eminent men of their respective times, men skilled in ecclesiastical matters and deeply read in the discipline and the history of the Church. By their aid they have corrected what was erroneous; they have rectified what was out of order; they have stripped off what was superfluous; they have added what was defective.

Seeing, then, the great care of these vigilant Pastors to make perfect and uniform the noble Liturgy of the Church, we ought first to be filled with sentiments of gratitude to them for their great labours, and secondly, to devote ourselves to the study of these holy rites, that through them we may advance in piety, and endeavour worthily to worship Our good God Who, from the testimony of the Old Law, we know to have been so careful in instructing both priests and people in the right way of paying to Him that public honour and worship which, upon so many titles, are His due.

### LITURGICAL VESTMENTS.

HAVING treated of the origin of Liturgy, the important part which it plays in the public worship of the Church, the language in which it is celebrated, and the books in which its various rites are preserved, we are, in the next place, naturally led to speak of the vestments appointed for the use of those who, as public ministers, are set apart for the celebration of that Liturgy in the sight of the people.



In the early years of the Church, there can be no doubt that the vestments employed in public worship were the ordinary clothing which men used in their every-day life, but no doubt of a more splendid character and of a finer texture than were the garments which they wore while engaged in their worldly avocations. The natural respect and reverence for things pertaining to God, a reverence inherent in our very nature, would impress upon them the fitness of such a proceeding. Moreover, we are told by those whose deep researches into these matters invest their opinions with unquestionable authority, that this same feeling of reverence caused them to set aside these garments, when once used in the service of the altar, for that purpose only, and never again to wear them in the ordinary duties of their daily life. As the ages rolled on, the fashion of men's dress, as was natural, changed, but that change did not affect the fashion of the garments used in the celebration of the divine mysteries. These garments always remained the same ; so that, in course of time, instead of being the ordinary garb of every citizen, they became exclusively the dress of the sacred ministers while performing their priestly functions at the altar. Those skilled in liturgical lore fix the date of this occurrence at about the close of the sixth century.

When the Emperor Constantine embraced the faith, the professors of Christianity ceased to be under the ban of the law. Thereupon the public worship began to be performed with all the splendour which a devout people deemed but fitting for the service of God. Their gold, their silver, their purple, their fine linen and their precious stones poured into the treasury of the Church to add to its wealth and to the lustre to its worship. Even in the worst times of persecution this instinct had prompted the faithful to be lavish of their wealth in all that concerned the Church of God, so much so, that their generosity drew down upon the priests who ministered at their secret services the greedy eyes of their pagan persecutors. Thus, we find St. Laurence called upon by them to deliver up the gold and the silver ornaments which, as deacon of the Church, were under his safe keeping. Nay,

even in apostolic times the priests, when offering the Holy Sacrifice, were accustomed to vest themselves in costly and peculiar garments. Eusebius relates that St. John wore upon his forehead a golden plate and vested himself in a fine linen tunic, whenever he celebrated the dread mysteries ;<sup>1</sup> and from Epiphanius we learn that the Apostle St. James wore a similar dress when he officiated in the church at Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

Even if we make but little account of the fact that God Himself deemed it worthy of special legislation that His priests, when ministering to Him, should have not only a special but a splendid dress, our own common sense will point out to us the propriety of such an ordinance. For, it sees a fitness in the fact that public functionaries should have some distinguishing mark of their respective offices. The soldier has his uniform, the magistrate his robes, the lawyer his wig and gown, and, upon every state occasion, the Sovereign requires that those who are admitted to his presence should be clad in the insignia of their respective orders. But besides the instinct of common sense, the Church in this matter of ecclesiastical vestments, acted upon its deep knowledge of human nature. Knowing that the vast bulk of men are most deeply impressed by earthly things, and that they are not easily raised to the contemplation of heavenly things, she does her utmost to help them to consider the beauties of the invisible kingdom. She clothes her ministers in rich and splendid vestments ; she draws up for them solemn rites and majestic ceremonies. Through the senses, she thus appeals to the souls of her children ; and not only thus, but by the solemn services in which these ministers are engaged ; by the burning lights which shed their lustre upon her altars ; by the clouds of incense which float to the roofs of her temples ; and by many other striking symbolical rites which she has received from apostolic tradition.<sup>3</sup>

In these various ritual observances, the Church has in view not only the general faithful or laity, but the priests themselves

<sup>1</sup> Hist., lib. 5, cap. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Hier., xxiv., No. 2 ; Rock. Hierurg. Sacr., vol. II.

<sup>3</sup> *Concil. Trid.*, Sess. xxii., cap. 5.

who are set apart for the performance of these sacred functions. They who are to deal familiarly with holy things, need all the help that natural things can afford them to keep their faith unshaken, and their reverence undiminished. If during their ministry they wear a peculiar and splendid garb, it is to insinuate that their lives must, in purity and holiness, be as far superior to the lives of their people as their priestly vesture surpasses in richness the ordinary garments of every-day life. If they are clad in fine linen, it is to make them remember the sinlessness that must adorn their souls, and keep them without spot or stain. If there are given to them garments of purple interwoven with gold, it is to make them bear in mind the high commission intrusted to them—to be in holiness and virtue the leaders and the rulers of men.

Thus much, then, in a general sort of way, concerning the vestments used in our liturgical services. From these generalities we may now pass to describe the various garments of the priestly office, and to point out to you their respective symbolical meanings.

The first liturgical garment that the priest takes into his hands, and, after suffering it to rest for a moment on his head, draws over his shoulders and confines there by the tapes attached to each end, is called the *Amice*, from the Latin word *amicire*, to cover. It is an oblong piece of fine linen which, in early times, did not rest upon the head for only a moment, but it was kept there, forming a kind of hood which the priest wore while vesting, and which he did not throw back to rest upon his shoulders until he had arrived at the foot of the altar. This custom is still retained by some of the monastic orders, and it helps us to understand the symbolical meaning of the *Amice*, which some persons consider to represent the cloth with which the soldiers covered Our Saviour's eyes; others regard it as representing the sackcloth and ashes which betoken a penitential spirit; but the hood already points out to us that by the *Amice* is symbolised the spiritual armour with which the Christian should defend himself, a view borne out by the prayer which the priest recites while putting on this portion of his sacerdotal vestments, for in that

prayer he asks God to put upon his head the helmet of salvation to ward off the missiles shot against him by the evil one. The *Amice* was introduced in the eighth century for the purpose of covering the neck which, before that date according to Roman usage, was left bare.

When the priest has fixed the *Amice* in its place, he next takes the *Alb*. This is a long, white linen garment called *alb* from the Latin word *alba*, white.<sup>1</sup> It reaches down to the feet, and in the East, in early times, it was commonly used by all classes of men as a sort of under-garment. Among the Romans also it was in general use, consisting of plain, unadorned linen for ordinary days, but for days of ceremony and for religious functions, of some rich and costly material. In the Catholic Church it is devoted to the use of priests, deacons, and sub-deacons. Both for those who wear it, and for those who behold them thus vested in spotless white, it is an emblem of that resplendent purity which ought to grace the souls and the lives of those who come into so close contact not only with holy things, but with the God of all sanctity. In order to impress this upon their minds, the Church orders those who are about to vest themselves with the *Alb*, to ask God to cleanse and purify their hearts, that being sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, they may be made worthy to enjoy eternal felicity.

In order to confine the *Alb* to his person, the priest next takes the *Girdle* which is made to resemble a thick cord. In ancient times this belt, zone, or girdle, was broad and flat. It is usually of a white colour, but this is not rigorously adhered to, and, consequently, we see various colours employed in the material out of which it is made. The mystical signification implied by the girding of the loins, is that justice should be one of the distinguishing features of every minister of God. Speaking of the Messiah or Christ Whom they represent, and Whose priestly office they fill, the Prophet Isaias says: "Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle

<sup>1</sup> The word "*tunica*" is probably understood with the adjective *albus*, *a, um*.

of his reins".<sup>1</sup> Christ Himself, the great High Priest, speaking not only to His Apostles and to their successors in the priesthood, but to all the faithful indiscriminately, says: "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands".<sup>2</sup> The Apostle St. Paul, following in the footsteps of his Master, gives the same counsel to his disciples when he bids them, "Stand, having their loins girt about with truth".<sup>3</sup> In order, therefore, to fill the minds of her priests with the symbolical meaning of the *Girdle*, the Church orders them, when fastening it around their waists, to pray that God may gird their reins with purity, that He may extinguish in their hearts the fire of concupiscence, and with the flames of holy love may conquer every earthly affection and everything that is unworthy of Him.

Being now vested with *Amice*, *Alb* and *Girdle*, the priest next fastens upon his left arm another sacerdotal vestment called the *Maniple*. In the early ages of the Church, this was nothing more than a strip of linen which served the purpose of a handkerchief, to wipe away the perspiration which gathered upon the faces of the ministers, in consequence of the labours and the fatigues of their office. By degrees, certain embellishments were added to it. It was bordered with a fringe, and at last it became too precious to be used for its original purpose. But though thus ceasing to be of use for the end for which it had been given to the Clergy, it was retained as an ornament, and it became the distinctive mark of the sub-deacon's office. When thus transformed, it began to be made of the same material as the *Chasuble*, and in the eighth century it was numbered among the sacred vestments. Its symbolical meaning is the patience necessary for the endurance of the ills of life, and the cares and anxieties inseparable from the priesthood. Those who wear it are reminded of this meaning by the prayer which they are ordered to say while adjusting it upon their left arm. They are told to beseech God that they may be worthy to bear the *Maniple* of sorrow and affliction, that they may reap with joy the reward of their labours.

<sup>1</sup> Isaias xi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. vi. 14

The priest next takes up the *Stole*, and placing it upon his neck, crosses over his breast the two parts which fall in front, and confines them in their places by the Girdle. This *Stole* was formerly called the *Orarium*, from *ora* the countenance. Anciently, it was a kind of oblong linen scarf, which served as a handkerchief to wipe the face. A good idea of what it used to be may be obtained from the veil which the sub-deacon wears over his shoulders from the Offertory till the end of the "Agnus Dei" of the Mass. It was in use before the *Maniple* superseded it as a handkerchief. Like the *Maniple*, it began in the course of years to be adorned with stripes of purple round the hem. Later on embroidery was added, till at last it became too costly to serve its original purpose. Then the *Maniple* took its place, till in turn it ceased to be applicable to the use for which originally it was destined. Nor need we be surprised at these changes, inasmuch as our own ordinary dress has, in many particulars, become far more ornate than it used to be.

Before the *Dalmatic* was given to the deacon, the *Stole* was the distinctive mark of his sacred order; but when the *Dalmatic* was bestowed on him, the *Stole* began to be made of the same material as that vestment. Yet, while continuing to be the distinctive mark of the deacon's office, the Church did not allow him to wear it as the priest wears his *Stole*, but only over his left shoulder, to remind him that he has not yet received the full power of the priesthood. The prayer which he, as well as the priest, says while vesting himself with it, recalls to the minds of both, the symbolical meaning attached to it, which is immortality; for, they are told to ask God to restore to them the robe of immortality forfeited by the prevarication of our first parents, that though unworthy to celebrate so august a mystery, or to assist him who celebrates it, they may nevertheless attain to everlasting glory.

The last liturgical vestment assumed by the priest before proceeding to the altar, is the outward garment which covers those already mentioned. This is called the *Chasuble*, from the Latin word *casubula* or *casula*, a little house, because its ample folds envelop and cover him as a house does its

occupant. At the present day, this amplitude has been somewhat curtailed, so that this garment descends only a certain way both before and behind the priest. In England, France and Belgium, it is generally marked with a cross on the back part only; but in Italy and elsewhere, the cross is sometimes on the front only, at others both on the front and on the back. An excellent idea of what the *Chasuble* used anciently to be, may be gained if we represent to ourselves a circular piece of cloth with a round aperture cut in the centre for the head to pass through. In this respect it resembles the tunic of the ephod, of which a description is given in Exodus: "it shall be all of violet, in the midst whereof above shall be a hole for the head, and a border round about it woven, as is wont to be made in the outmost parts of garments".<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of Christianity, the *Chasuble* was doubtless nothing more than a kind of cloak, not unlike the Roman *pænula*. Among the Romans, this last-named garment superseded the use of the *toga* which confined the arms too much, and which was considered too cumbersome. As we have already said, the *Chasuble* was a perfect circle, with an aperture in the centre for the head to pass through. This was its shape for about a thousand years, and in the Greek Church this shape is retained till the present day. Till about the sixth century of our era, the ordinary outmost garment of a Roman citizen was the *pænula*. By degrees, laymen adopted other less cumbersome garments, but the Clergy clung to the ancient fashion; and when they in turn ceased to wear the *pænula*, its use was still retained by them in the churches when ministering at the altar.

Ample as was this ecclesiastical vestment, and covering as it did the whole person, it nevertheless did not incommode the priests in their celebration of the divine mysteries; for they were assisted in their functions by a numerous body of Clergy. Whenever it was necessary for them to have their hands free for the performance of the various rites of the Sacrifice, the deacon and the sub-deacon raised the border of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxviii. 31, 32.

the vestment, and thus enabled them freely to use their hands in the office of their service at the altar.

A relic of this ancient usage may still be observed at High Mass, when these assistants lift up, or at least hold the part of the vestment near the shoulders, while the priest is incensing the *oblata* and the altar. But when the celebration of Mass became more frequent, and the number of assistants necessarily decreased, the inconvenience of the more ample *Chasuble* of ancient times made itself painfully felt. To remedy this inconvenience, the *Chasuble* was gradually curtailed, till at last it reached its present scanty dimensions. The symbolical meaning of this liturgical vestment is said by Alcuin (A.D. 800) to signify that all embracing charity "which covereth a multitude of sins". St. Germanus regards it as representing the purple garment, thrown in derision by the soldiers round the shoulders of Our Lord.

The Cross which is usually upon it, is said to signify the yoke of obedience, a virtue which throughout the whole course of His life shone so conspicuous in all the actions of Our divine Teacher: "I came to do not My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me". This is evidently the view of it taken by the Church, since she orders her priests when vesting themselves with the *Chasuble* to address to God this beautiful prayer: "O Lord Who didst say 'My yoke is sweet and My burden light,' grant that I may now so carry that which Thou dost impose upon my shoulders as to merit Thy grace".

Behold the priest now arrayed in all his sacrificial garments! Clad in *Amice* and *Alb*, girded with the cincture of purity, with the *Maniple* of sorrow upon his arm, and round his neck the *Stole* of immortality, protected and covered by the mantle of charity or the yoke of the Lord, he is about to stand before the altar of God. But of the liturgical office which he will there perform we must speak in detail in another Lecture.



## PRINCIPLES OF LITURGY.

WHENEVER and wherever the Church finds herself in possession of political freedom and of abundant wealth, she presses into the service of her Liturgy all the magnificence and the splendour which her influence can command or her wealth can procure. The temples in which that divine worship is given unto God are then in no way inferior, nay, they are oftentimes far superior in beauty of design, in richness of material, and in wealth of decoration, to the palaces of kings. Rising high above the habitations of men, their lofty pillars spanned by the graceful pointed arch supporting the arcaded triforium and the lightsome clerestory, crowned by their vaulted roofs, their steeple-shafts piercing the very clouds, they stand as beacons amid the seething waters indicating God's haven of rest for weary storm-tossed souls.

Those who enter these sanctuaries pass at once from the tumult of the world into the restful quiet which invites to contemplation and to repose. The altar glittering with gold, recalls to their minds the throne of God and the mount of sacrifice; the painted windows blazon forth the deeds of the saintly heroes who have conquered in the battles of the Lord; the very walls speak to them of the various incidents in the Saviour's earthly career. All that the wealth, the genius, the science and the art of man can do to glorify God, are here poured out in profusion before His altar-throne.

The hour of sacrifice rings forth, and then, with deepest reverence, the sacred ministers come forth in golden or in silken vesture, and amid the awe-inspiring rites of a splendid ceremonial, offer up the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Such is the action of the Church in all her liturgical services whenever it is in her power to celebrate them as she desires.

What then are the principles which inspire her to act thus? In other words, what are the principles from which her Liturgy flows? Let us reflect for a few moments upon these, and from the consideration of them we shall be filled with a still greater love for the Liturgy of Mother Church.

The first principle that has inspired the Liturgy is, we should think, a most profound reverence for the awful majesty of God. The central object towards which that Liturgy is directed—and under the word Liturgy we include all that is requisite for its worthy celebration—is Jesus Christ as God, and as God dwelling among us in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. Firmly believing in His Godhead, we know that He is the Supreme Being, the eternal, self-existent, self-sufficing, omniscient, omnipotent God, magnificent, wonderful. Before Him, and compared with Him, all the universe is even less than a grain of sand. Fully conscious of this and knowing it in a manner far more appreciative than it is possible for us to know it, the angelic Spirits are represented to us in the Sacred Scriptures as falling prostrate before Him; as veiling their faces in the presence of His awful majesty; and spotless as they are, deeming themselves impure when standing beneath the blaze of His superexcellent glory.

Now we, as His creatures, must, perforce, endeavour to worship Him just as the Angels do. In a dim sort of way we know what they know clearly, and as it were face to face. We feel that we are His; that we are in His hands; that He can do with us what He pleases. Therefore, like the Angels we must in His presence prostrate ourselves and worship Him. But in what way shall we offer to Him our worship? We have an intelligence; it must humbly believe in Him. We have a heart; it must fervently love Him. We have a will; it must perseveringly cleave to Him by observing His law. Our bodies also are His. He made them, and, therefore, they also, as well as our spiritual faculties, must serve and worship Him. Instinctively then we kneel, we prostrate ourselves, we bow down to the very dust in His presence.

This, however, is not enough. All that we have is His. Therefore, all that we have must be employed in His worship. If we have wealth, it must be poured out for His service; if we have skill, it must be devoted to Him; if we have art, that art must use its cunning to adorn the place where His glory dwelleth. As we know full well, it is the homage and

the worship of our spirit for which God chiefly looks. Anything else that we may give Him, if we withhold that, is worthless in His sight. But we know also that the heart which truly loves is not content and it cannot be content till it has poured out all that it possesses in order to show its love. Therefore, the majesty of God is the first principle from which Liturgy flows, particularly that part of it which adorns and beautifies whatever is used in the rites by which we worship God.

The next principle from which it springs is what is called the principle of compensation,<sup>1</sup> or that natural instinct which prompts man to make some sort of return to those who have either benefited or befriended him. If any one has served us well, we give him an address and a purse of gold. We raise to the peerage and enrich with a pension the successful General who has fought the battles of our country and humbled her enemies. We erect a statue to the honour of the statesman who, by his political sagacity, has advanced the well-being of the nation. This instinct, then, is not to be stifled where God is concerned. He has given to us all the good that we have. He has opened for us the Kingdom of Heaven. He became man in order to lead us into, and to give us the possession of, that kingdom. For us He laboured and taught and suffered and died. But what a life and what a death! Poverty, sorrow, toil, contempt, and at last a cruel death—a public execution as if He were some vile, noxious animal!

The instinct of the loving heart is to make a return for all that Jesus endured in order to purify, to exalt, to save, and to enthrone it in heaven. Therefore, because He chose to be born in a stable, His altars shall be of precious stone; because He was swathed in mean garments, His Eucharistic body shall rest upon gold and silver, and His servants shall be vested in regal purple and in fine linen; because He dwelt in a mean cottage, He shall be housed in temples with which the palaces of kings cannot vie; because His surroundings

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Fr. Bridgett, C.S.S.R., *Ritual of the New Testament*, chap. vii.

were mean and sordid, all that art can do to beautify His dwelling-place shall be lovingly, generously, and lavishly done to make it somewhat less unworthy of Him. With this instinct the wise men were animated who from the far East followed the guiding star, and coming to His lowly dwelling knelt while they presented to Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This same instinct moved the penitent heart of Magdalene to pour upon His feet her most precious unguents. It caused the people to strew their garments under His feet as He came in modest triumph to His ancestral city.

It is this also that makes the Church in her Liturgy and in all that is connected with it use all the wealth, the beauty, and the magnificence at her command. This is a devout, loving, generous instinct. That which would refuse it, is a cold, sordid, selfish spirit. This latter says: "Christ was throughout His life poor and simple. He despised wealth. Therefore, now that He is in His glory He would wish us in our worship of Him to be content with the utmost simplicity. Consequently, let there be no splendid temples built in His honour; no glitter of gold, no incense, no lights; no priestly vestments of precious stuff adorned by the skilful fingers of the embroiderer. Let us keep all these good things for ourselves. Let us have palatial residences; let our tables be graced with gold and with silver ornaments; let us be clad in purple and in fine linen. Christ is the God of poverty; let us therefore treat Him as a beggar, and He will be content with our worship of Him in spirit and in truth."

The Church's reasoning is just the reverse of this. She says: "My Lord has chosen for my sake to be poor; therefore, I will pour out my riches at His feet. He has humbled Himself for me; therefore, I will exalt Him. For my sake He has exposed Himself to men's neglect; therefore, I will redouble my loving adoration." Let common sense decide which of these two ways of worshipping God is the more pleasing to Our Lord. It will scorn the sordid selfishness of the one and praise the loving, generous worship of the Catholic Church, a worship animated by her desire to make what

compensation she is able for all the good things that she has received from her bountiful Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The third principle, from which we may conclude that Liturgy has sprung, is somewhat akin to that which we have just considered, for it is nothing else than that chivalrous sentiment which wells up out of the heart for all that is weak and helpless. The central object of our worship is Jesus Christ in this condition of helplessness. We believe that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, for which our temples are built, our noblest rites instituted, our very religion is organised by God, there is truly present the Incarnate Word under the mean forms of bread and wine. When to the crowds surrounding Him and listening to His heavenly teaching Jesus said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," the Church teaches that He meant what He said. When He went on to give as a reason for these startling words: "For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed," she believes the reason alleged. When He furthermore added: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall have no life in you," she gives her adhesion to this conclusion also, and humbly prepares to obey His wishes. She accepts His assurance that the bread which He then promised to give us is His flesh, later on to be offered for the life of the world.

But while so accepting His doctrine, she does not believe that this flesh would be given as the carnal-minded Capharnaites imagined that it would be bestowed—that is to say—just like meat from the shambles, but in some sacramental form which infinite wisdom would know how to devise. Therefore, what Jesus then promised to the people, she believes that He accomplished at His Last Supper, when taking bread into His all-holy hands He said: "Take ye and eat: this is My body. And taking the chalice He said: This is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins." By that solemn act of almighty power, Jesus the Son of God has put Himself

<sup>1</sup> See *Ritual of the New Testament*, chap. vii.

into our hands, stripped of His omnipotence, as helpless, nay, even more helpless, than a child. He is at the command of His creatures. They say to Him: Come, and He comes. They lay Him upon the altar, and He remains there. They carry Him from place to place; they lock Him up like a prisoner; they give Him to the faithful, as bread. He is among us quite helpless, exposed to the insults and the profanations of any one who wishes to take advantage of His condition of powerlessness.

It is this state of feebleness that calls forth all the chivalry of loving hearts. We gather round Him, and we determine that He shall not suffer in consequence of His trust in us. He has put Himself in our power, and by that act He shall not be the loser. For our sakes He has humbled Himself; therefore, we shall treat Him as a mighty prince. He has shorn Himself of wealth; therefore, we shall surround Him with all the riches that our poverty can mass together. He has laid aside His strength, and He is among us weak as a babe; therefore, we shall do all in our power to shield Him from harm.

Inspired by this chivalrous spirit, which is inspired and guided by God, the Church surrounds the helplessness of Jesus in the Eucharist with the most minute and loving attention. Silent, motionless, acting as a thin veil to screen from our eyes the majesty of God, the consecrated Host is treated by her as the Monarch of the world. Hence her punctilious ceremonial, the profound genuflections and the prostrations of her priests, her gorgeous vestments, her ornaments of silver and of gold, and all that the human intelligence fired by the spirit of God can do, worthily and as far as our weak human nature will permit, to offer up our heart's love to One Who has so demeaned Himself for us.

The majesty of God lying concealed beneath these veils; our wish to make Him some sort of compensation for what that act has cost Him; our chivalrous sentiments for Him thus weak and dependent—these we consider to be the principles whence the Liturgy has sprung. These are at the root of all that it teaches the ministers of the Church to do. Each

of these principles is a sentiment natural to the heart of man, but in the case of the Liturgy, these sentiments are set in motion by the Spirit of God. That Spirit did not impose upon the Church a Liturgy and a ceremonial as It did upon the Jewish Church. What the Holy Ghost did was to give to her Himself, and that gift calls forth from the hearts of her children all that they do to adore, to offer compensation, and to be chivalrous towards their Lord in His state of sacramental helplessness. "This is the testament which I will make to the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord: I will give My laws into their mind, and in their heart will I write them: . . . and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest of them."<sup>1</sup>

## THE HOLY MASS.

### *Part I.*

AFTER these few general remarks upon Liturgy, we come now to study the grandest liturgical act of the Church, namely, the Sacrifice of the Mass. In our English tongue this Sacrifice is thus named from the Latin word *missio*, meaning a dismissal, because in the early ages this liturgical service consisted of two parts at the first of which all the faithful were present, but at the second, only the initiated or those who having been baptised and thoroughly instructed in the mystery of the Eucharist, were allowed to remain for the sacrificial part. Before the beginning of this more solemn part, one of the deacons turning towards the people said in a loud voice: "The Catechumens are dismissed; the faithful shall remain". Hence, in ancient times the Christians called this first part, the Mass of the Catechumens; and the second, the Mass of the faithful. But when in later times the discipline of "the secret" concerning the Holy Eucharist had fallen into disuse, the distinction between the two parts ceased to be observed.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. viii. 10, 11; Jerem. xxxi. 33.

For the sake of greater clearness we will retain the distinction, and explain to you the first part of the Mass which we may call the Ante-Communion Liturgy, reserving our explanation of the second for the next Lecture.

The priest, then, having, together with his attendant acolyte or clerk, come from the sacristy and deposited upon the altar the chalice with the host prepared for the Sacrifice, descends to the platform which is before the lowest step of the altar. Kneeling for an instant before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, he rises, makes upon himself the sign of the Cross, and recites, alternately with the acolyte, the forty-second Psalm, which expresses the joy and the confidence experienced by David when he once again looked upon the Ark of God, from the contemplation of which he had been debarred by the stratagems of his enemies: "I will go in to the altar of God; to God Who giveth joy to my youth. To Thee, O God! I will give praise upon the harp." This Psalm is followed by a form of general confession of sins made both by the priest, and by the acolyte in the name of the people. This general accusation of these our miseries is made not only to God, but to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Michael the Archangel, to St. John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, as well as to the other Saints, and the faithful present at the Sacrifice, in the assured hope of having all these stains washed away in the blood of the august Victim, so soon to be immolated upon the mystical Calvary of the New Law.

Having performed this act of humility and sorrow for sin, the priest extends and raises his hands as he ascends towards the altar, meanwhile pouring forth an earnest prayer to God to take away from him all his iniquities, that with a pure mind he may be able to enter the Holy of Holies. Then approaching the altar and bowing down over it, he asks God, through the merits of the Saints whose holy relics are enclosed within the altar-stone, and of the other Saints in heaven, to forgive him all his sins. At the end of this prayer, he reverently kisses the altar, out of respect for the sacred spot upon which the body of Christ is so soon to rest, and then proceeds to the corner of the altar at which the Missal is placed, to read what



is called the "Introit". This is composed of two or three verses selected from the Psalms. It derives its name either from the fact that in former times the Clergy used to recite a Psalm while the people were entering the church, or that these verses are generally sung by the choir, while the priest is beginning or entering upon this portion of the Liturgy.

After the Introit the priest leaves the book, and going to the middle of the altar, alternately with the acolyte recites the "Kyrie" or "Lord, have mercy upon us," with which words the Litanies both begin and end. These supplications were either recited or sung while the Clergy were going from one church to the other at which the *Station* was held. On these occasions the Introit was omitted, as is done even at the present day on the eves of Easter and of Pentecost, on which occasions the solemn Mass begins by the *Kyrie* of the Litanies which are chanted while returning from the font, which on these days is solemnly blessed. These supplications are thrice addressed to God the Father, thrice to God the Son, and thrice to God the Holy Ghost. By using in her Liturgy these Greek words and also such Hebrew words as "*Alleluia, Amen, Hosanna*" and the like, the Church may possibly have wished to call to our minds the inscription placed by Pilate over the head of Our Lord as He hung upon the Cross, an inscription which, as the Evangelist tells us, was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, the three chief liturgical languages employed by the Church.

After alternately reciting with the acolyte these petitions for mercy, the priest lifts up his hands while beginning the "*Gloria in Excelsis*," and joins them while saying the word *Deo*, at the same time bowing his head in adoration of the God-Man. This magnificent hymn of praise is called the "Greater Doxology," to distinguish it from the "Gloria Patri" which is called the "Lesser". The first words of which it is composed were chanted in the midnight sky by the angelic host, after one of this glorious company had announced the glad tidings of the Redeemer's birth. It is, therefore, sometimes styled "the angelic hymn," and well may this epithet be given to it, for it breathes forth sentiments of joyous homage, adora-

tion and gratitude which the Church has added to the words of these heavenly Spirits: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth, peace to men of good will. We praise Thee; we bless Thee; we adore Thee; we give Thee thanks."

Being so full of the gladness of an exulting heart, this hymn is omitted in Masses for the dead and in seasons of penitential mourning. The rest of the hymn, after the words of the angelic choir, was added by the Fathers of the fourth General Council of Toledo (633), and by the Pastors of the Church. It expresses the loving aspirations of souls moved to their lowest depths by the condescension of God in becoming man for our salvation. It calls upon Him Who taketh away the sins of the world, Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, Who, like the Father, is all holy and all powerful, to have mercy and to spare. At the concluding words, the priest makes upon himself the sign of the Cross, in accordance with an ancient custom existing among the Christians, "who in this way sanctified all their principal actions by calling to mind the Sacrifice of Christ's atonement".<sup>1</sup>

At the end of this heavenly hymn, the priest kisses the altar, and turning towards the people, extends his arms and addresses to them the salutation: "The Lord be with you". This formula of words occurs frequently during the Mass. It is the mode of address—as we see in the Sacred Scripture—employed by the angelic messengers sent by God to announce to men great and important events. Thus, both the Angel sent to Gideon, and the Angel deputed to announce to our Blessed Lady the incarnation of the Word, made use of this formula: "The Lord be with you". It gives expression to the most appropriate salutation that the priest can employ; for that salutation comes from the mouth of one who, in the language of Malachy, is for the people an Angel of the Lord: "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts".<sup>2</sup> To this salutation the people answer, through the lips of the acolyte: "And with thy spirit". Going to the

<sup>1</sup> *Rock. Hier. Sacra.*, vol. i., No. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. ii. 7.

book at the corner of the altar, the priest reads a prayer called the "Collect".

Two reasons are given for so styling it: the first, because it is said only when the people are assembled in the place of worship; the Bishop, or the priest who was about to celebrate, then said aloud—as does also the priest at the present day—"Let us pray". The deacon thereupon ordered those present to kneel, saying: "Let us kneel". Some moments were then spent in silent prayer which the sub-deacon brought to an end by saying: "Arise". The celebrant then said the prayer over the collected people.

The second reason for calling this prayer the "Collect" is given by Cassian, who derives the word from the fact that in this prayer the priest gathers together, as in a sheaf or bundle, the wishes of the people, in order to offer them to God. Or again, it may have arisen from the fact that it is the sum total of the people's wishes. This prayer or collect is always made in the name of Jesus Christ, both to fill the minds of the faithful with greater confidence, and to recall to them Our Lord's promise, that the Father will grant whatever they ask in that blessed name. At the conclusion of this prayer, the people by their representative say, "Amen," that is, "So be it," as a sign of their adhesion to and their union with the soul of the priest.

The collect or collects being ended, the priest reads a portion of the Sacred Scripture. This, as a general rule, being taken from the writings of the Apostles, is called the Epistle, although other parts of the Sacred Text are used. The passages selected are usually most appropriate to the seasons of the year, to the festival that is celebrated, and to the Saint whom the Church, on that day, commemorates. It is customary in some places, and particularly at a High Mass, when the Epistle is sung, for the people to sit until the sub-deacon has finished the lection. The reason assigned for this, is that anciently this reading from the Scripture was a sort of conference, during which the faithful were allowed to put questions to the priest, who gave an instruction upon the passages that had been read, and to make their remarks upon what he said to

them. The inconveniences arising from this practice were so numerous, and the reasons for suppressing it—at least during the liturgical service of the Mass—so great, that the practice speedily fell into disuse.

At the end of the Epistle the acolyte in the name of the people answers: "Thanks be to God," in gratitude for the heavenly instruction conveyed to them in the lesson just terminated. Thereupon, the priest reads some verses from a Psalm. These verses, from the fact of having been in early times sung on the steps (*gradus*) of the platform from which the deacon chanted the Gospel, were called the "Gradual". The singing of this Psalm allowed sufficient time for the assistant ministers to prepare for the solemn chanting of the Gospel.

This Gospel is a passage taken from one of the four Evangelists. Before either reading or chanting it, the priest bows profoundly before the centre of the altar, and beseeches God to purify his lips as the Angel purified the lips of Isaias with a burning coal, in order that being thus cleansed from every stain he may worthily announce to the people the glad tidings which it contains. In solemn Masses, the assistant ministers carry lighted wax candles at the singing of the Gospel, and incense being first blessed by the celebrant, is used to honour the Sacred Text. Before either reading or singing the Gospel, that is to say, while announcing the name of the Evangelist from whose writings the passage is taken, the priest signs the place at which the lection begins with the sign of the Cross, then his forehead, mouth, and breast. He does this, first in imitation of the early Christians, who thus sanctified each action of their lives; and, secondly, as a public profession that he glories in the Cross, that he will openly proclaim its virtues, and cherish in his heart the precepts and the admonitions of Him Who, on the Cross, died for our salvation.

As soon as the salutation "The Lord be with you," addressed to the people before the Gospel, is heard, all present stand and remain standing till the Gospel is ended. Then the acolyte says: "Praise be to Thee, O Christ!" When the priest signs himself with the sign of the Cross, the people

also sign themselves. Their respect for the word of God, and their willingness to carry it into effect, are made manifest by their standing while the word of God is announced to them. The burning lights remind them that the word of God contained in the Gospel is the light which should illumine the intellect; and the sweet-smelling incense intimates to them that the lives of those who live in accordance with the precepts of that Gospel become a good odour ascending before the throne of God, and filling Him with delight at their dutiful service.

With the reading of the Gospel ended, in ancient times, the Mass of the Catechumens. They were then warned by the deacon to withdraw, as the more sacred and secret parts were to be witnessed only by the baptised, who were thoroughly instructed in all the mysteries of the holy faith.

## THE HOLY MASS.

### *Part II.*

WHEN the deacon turning round and facing the people ordered the Catechumens to depart, as the portion of the Liturgy at which they were allowed to be present had come to an end, not only these neophytes rose and left the sacred edifice, but also the penitents, who by their sins had forfeited the right to be present at the portion which followed, quitted the holy precincts. Only the faithful were now left with the celebrant and his assistant ministers. The great Sacrifice was about to begin, and, therefore, those who were privileged to assist at it joined in the recital of the Creed, with which this second part of Holy Mass begins. This Creed rejects all heresies which in the early ages had disturbed the Church, and opposes to the teaching of innovators her firmly established dogmas, thereby paying homage to the three Divine Persons of the Trinity for the benefits of creation, redemption, and sanctification conferred by Them.

We will, therefore, now consider this second part of the Mass, consisting as it does of the oblation, the consecration, and the consumption or destruction of the sacred elements.

At the conclusion of the Creed, the priest once again turns towards the people, and addresses to them the salutation: "The Lord be with you," a salutation which is answered in the usual way by the response: "And with thy spirit". He then says: "Let us pray," and reads a short verse taken from the Scripture. At High Masses this verse is sung by the choir. In ancient times, some of the faithful at this moment used to come forwards and present to the officiating Clergy the elements for the Sacrifice, that is to say, bread and wine. At the conclusion of the verse, a square piece of linen called the corporal, representing the linen cloth in which the disciples wrapped the body of Our Lord, is spread upon the altar, and the priest then taking the paten upon which the unconsecrated host is lying, lifts it up and begs God to accept this unspotted host for his own innumerable sins, offences, and negligences; for all present; for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail both him and them unto life everlasting. Laying the host upon the corporal, he next takes the chalice, and carrying it to the corner of the altar pours into it wine, with which he mingles a few drops of water, praying that through the mystery represented by this mixture of so weak an element with one that is so strong, all may be made partakers of Christ's divine nature, as Christ Himself vouchsafed to share in our human nature.

He then returns to the middle of the altar, and raising the chalice offers it to God, praying that it may ascend before the Divine Majesty as a sweet odour, both for his own salvation and for the salvation of the whole world. Bowing down in lowly reverence over the altar, he beseeches God to accept all present, coming as they do in the spirit of humility and of sorrow, and to grant that the Sacrifice which together with him they offer to the Divine Majesty, may be pleasing to God. Returning to the corner of the altar, the priest next washes the tips of his fingers with water poured upon them by the acolyte, and while so doing recites a part of the twenty-fifth

Psalm: "I will wash my hands among the innocent," adding at the end—except in Masses for the dead—the "Glory be to the Father". This ceremony recalls to our minds the purity requisite in one who would approach to God, the washing of the Apostles' feet at the Last Supper, and the unmanly weakness of Pilate, who thus strove to show his own freedom from guilt in the condemnation of Our divine Lord.<sup>1</sup>

After thus manifesting his desire to be free from the slightest stain, the priest returns to the middle of the altar, and after a beautiful prayer to the Holy Trinity, turns towards the people and asks them to pray that both his and their Sacrifice may be acceptable to Almighty God. While the response is said, the priest turns to the altar as if to indicate that he has now taken leave of the people until the Holy Sacrifice shall be accomplished, and in a low voice reads the Secret, so called because in ancient times it began that portion of the Mass which, to the Catechumens or uninitiated, was an *actio* or *oratio secreta*.<sup>2</sup>

At the conclusion of the Secret, the priest without turning to the people salutes them with the words: "The Lord be with you". The reason assigned for thus breaking through the ordinary custom when addressing the people, is that after the "Orate Fratres," in the ancient liturgical services, a veil was drawn across the sanctuary. He then calls upon them to lift up their hearts to the heavenly Father, and when they reply that they are thus turned towards Him, he calls upon them to give thanks to God, to which invitation they answer: "It is meet and just". Only after this solemn adjuration of the people to be intent and full of the spirit of prayer, does the priest address to God what is by excellence

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xxvii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> In an old MS. Sacramentary of Tours this prayer is called the "Arcana". In other books it is termed the *Secreta parva*, to distinguish it from the Canon which is known as the *Secreta Major*. This latter is sometimes called the *Secreta*, e.g., by Innocent III., in his *De Sacro Altaris Mysterio*. Migne, P. L., vol. ccxvii, p. 840. Rev. E. Taunton.

called the great prayer or preface, so named because it serves as a kind of introduction to the Canon of the Mass.

This preface proclaims that it is meet and just at all times to give honour, glory, and thanks to God, all holy, omnipotent, eternal. To render this more pleasing to God, it prays that this homage may be presented to Him in the name of Christ, by the Cherubim, the Seraphim, the Dominations, the Powers, and by all the angelic host. Then remembering that man is unable to praise God as God deserves to be praised, the Church borrows the language which the Prophet Isaias heard before the great throne, and which St. John heard sung by the choirs of heaven. Therefore, at the end of the preface, the words: "Holy, holy, holy," are added in honour of the Trinity. To these words of praise the Church, in special worship of Christ our Saviour, has joined the words with which the Jews joyously received Him when He came in triumph to the city of David, His earthly ancestor: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest".

After repeating these words, while bending down in lowly reverence before the altar, the priest lifts up his hands, and joining them, places them in such a way upon the altar that the third fingers rest upon the Holy Table. While thus bending over the place of sacrifice, he begins the Canon, which ends with the "Pater Noster". This portion of the liturgical act is called the Canon, that is to say, the Gospel rule or law in accordance with which the Sacrifice instituted by Christ is about to be offered. Unlike the preceding portion, which varies according to the seasons of the ecclesiastical year and the feasts that are celebrated, the Canon always remains the same. In the early ages, only the priests knew this most sacred part, and at the present day it is always recited in so inaudible a tone of voice that not even the assistants, still less the people, are able to hear it. Rising upright from his posture of adoration, at the end of which he has kissed the spot upon which the body of Christ is so soon to rest, the celebrant makes over the oblation or elements to be consecrated, the sign of the holy Cross.

Then proceeding with his secret prayer, he asks God to grant peace to His Church, to protect it from errors, to preserve it in



that unity which Christ prayed might be one of its distinguishing features. Mindful of the precept of St. Paul, he next invokes the blessing of heaven upon the Church's Vicar, the visible head, upon the chief Pastors of the dioceses, and upon the temporal rulers who hold in their hands the destinies of the nations. Calling to his assistance the members of the Church triumphant who enjoy the beatitude of heaven, he implores their intervention with God to win for us His almighty protection. Then like the priests of the Old Testament, extending his hands over the elements so soon to be changed into the adorable body and blood of Christ, he beseeches God to bless, approve, ratify and accept them that they may be made or changed into the body and blood of His beloved Son.

The most solemn moment of the Mass has now arrived. The priest is about to obey the mandate of the Eternal Word, to do that which He did, to use the words of power which He used, to act as He acted. Taking into his hands the bread that has been lying upon the altar, he performs the very actions which Our Lord performed. He looks up to heaven, he blesses, and then bending low, he utters in the person of the Man-God the solemn words: "This is My body". At once falling upon his knees he adores God, there truly, really, and substantially present under what appears to be the mean element of bread, and raises up the Host to be seen and adored by the faithful. In like manner, taking into his hands the chalice, he blesses it and says: "This is the chalice of My blood, of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many to the remission of sins".

Once more he prostrates himself to adore, and then lifting up the chalice as he has already lifted up the Host, he for an instant holds it aloft that the people may see and adore. Up to the eleventh century, the Elevation of the Host and of the chalice did not take place till the end of the Canon. But towards the year 1047, when Berengarius began to disseminate his errors concerning the Eucharist, the Church did not content herself with simply condemning and anathematising his heresy, but adopted the ceremonial of the Elevation to be a practical

profession of faith concerning the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, in which bread and wine are "transubstantiated" into the body and blood of Jesus, to be uplifted by the priest and adored by the people.<sup>1</sup>

In the prayer which follows the Elevation, the priest calls to mind the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, because these holy men in a most marvellous manner prefigured the great Sacrifice of the Church; Abel, by his innocence and his cruel death; Abraham, by his obedience and his faith; Melchisedech, by his office as priest of the Most High, and the nature of the gifts which he offered to the Lord. At the end of this prayer, the priest bowing low beseeches God that the Angel of the Testament, the Angel of the Great Council may carry and present these sacred elements, now changed into the Victim of Calvary, before the throne of the Eternal Father, that they may repair the outrage done to Him by sin, and cause His heavenly grace to descend into our unworthy hearts.

It is at this moment that the priest prays for the holy souls in Purgatory, that God, through the merits of Christ, may be propitious to them, pardon them all their faults, and introduce them into the mansions of the blessed. Then, like the Publican, humbly striking his breast, he asks for himself and for all others, mercy, pardon, and admission into the society of the Saints in heaven. Filled with a holy confidence, he then recites the "Lord's Prayer," which in its various petitions asks for all of which we stand in need. Upon the last petition, in which we pray to be delivered from evil, the Church dwells for some time developing the idea expressed and asking to be freed from evils past, present, and to come, that is to say, from sin, from daily faults, from the ills of life, and from those chastisements which God may send upon us in punishment of our irregularities.

<sup>1</sup> *Rock. Hier. Sacra.*, I vol., No. 102. At the beginning of the Canon, at the covering of the Oblation, at the Elevation, and at the "Domine non sum dignus" a bell is rung to call the attention of the people to these solemn parts.

By the separate consecration of the wine, the blood of Our Lord is mystically separated from His body, so that the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world is, as it were slain: "And I saw; and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the priest thrice addresses the Eucharistic elements as "Lamb of God," praying unto Him for mercy and for peace.

The moment being now come for the consummation of the Sacrifice, the Victim that has been offered must be received and eaten by the priest, and by those of the faithful who wish to feed their souls with that living bread which cometh down from heaven. Therefore, mindful of his great unworthiness, the priest bowing low over the consecrated elements, recites three prayers for those dispositions with which a creature ought to be animated who is about to unite himself with His Creator in the sacramental feast of the Eucharist. Having fervently poured forth these most beautiful petitions, and by so doing prepared himself to sit at the divine Banquet, he first kneels in adoration. Then rising and taking into his left hand the Sacred Host, he with his right hand humbly strikes his breast, uttering at the same time the Centurion's prayer: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. Say only the word and my soul shall be healed." Then he reverently receives the heavenly bread, and after it the chalice of salvation.

The chalice is then purified, first with wine and afterwards with wine and water; it is carefully dried, covered with its veil, and placed in the middle of the altar. A short versicle called the Post-Communion is then recited by way of thanksgiving, after which the priest reads a prayer. At the conclusion of this prayer, he goes to the middle of the altar, salutes the people, and in the words, "Ite, Missa est," announces to them that the Liturgy of the Mass is ended. But before dismissing them to their homes, he lifts up his hands and blesses them. The service then terminates; but the piety of the people introduced the custom of reciting, after this blessing, the open-

<sup>1</sup> Apocal. v. 6.

ing verses of St. John's Gospel, which custom since the sixteenth century has received the sanction of the Church. At the words, "Et Verbum caro factum est—The Word was made flesh," all kneel to pay homage to the mystery of Our Lord's Incarnation.

After the remaining words of the verse are concluded, the priest returns to the middle of the altar, takes the chalice in his hands, and descending to the "planum," genuflects to the Most Holy Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, and retires to the sacristy to unvest, reciting meanwhile the "Benedicite" or the "Te Deum Laudamus".

### MINOR LITURGICAL RITES.

AFTER treating of the great liturgical service of Holy Mass, in which the body and blood of Our divine Lord are offered in sacrifice, according to the command of Christ Himself, Who said, "Do this in memory of Me," we may, in the next place, consider some of the Minor Rites performed in the Church. Of these the chief are: Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Office, the blessing of candles, ashes, and palms, concerning each of which we will, in the present Lecture, offer a few remarks.

The Blessed Sacrament, as is well attested by historical documents, was usually reserved in the church for the use of the faithful, particularly of the sick who were unable to assist at the public services. It was natural that the utmost reverence should be paid to the sacred elements under which lay concealed the God of heaven and earth. By the Divine Spirit given to her for her guidance, the Church gradually developed her Liturgy for the due veneration and adoration of that which lies hidden under these holy symbols. But not till the fifteenth century did she introduce the rite which we now know by the name "Benediction".

This is nothing else than the blessing of the faithful with the consecrated Host, a blessing usually bestowed after the celebration of Vespers or of Compline, at the afternoon service

performed in the church. At present, this Benediction is given either solemnly or with a less degree of solemnity. When it is solemnly bestowed, the Blessed Sacrament is taken from the tabernacle and placed in a sacred vessel called the "Ostensorium or Monstrance," which is then enthroned in a niche above the tabernacle, that it may be visible to the eyes of all. The altar is adorned with lights and flowers; the hymn "O salutaris hostia" is intoned, and incense is offered. At the end of the hymn, either the Litany of Loretto or some sacred canticle is sung, followed in the case of the Litany by its appropriate prayer. Then the "Tantum ergo" is chanted, incense is again offered, and the versicle and prayer of the Blessed Sacrament are sung.

The assistant priest or the deacon next takes down from the throne the Ostensorium containing the Sacred Host, and placing it upon the corporal previously spread upon the altar, leaves it there to be taken by the priest, who having a white veil covering his shoulders, ascends to the plane of the predella, genuflects, rises, and concealing his hands with the ends of the veil, reverently lifts the Ostensorium, and, turning towards the people, makes over them with it the sign of the Cross. Placing the Ostensorium once more upon the altar, the veil is taken from his shoulders, and then descending to the steps on which he had been previously kneeling, he recites in the vernacular the "divine praises," after which the "Adoremus, the Laudate, and the Gloria Patri" are sung by the choir, while the assistant priest or the deacon replaces the Sacred Host in the tabernacle.

The less solemn rite is performed by simply opening the tabernacle, offering incense—though this is not obligatory—and blessing the people with the Ciborium.<sup>1</sup> If the rite of Benediction follows immediately after Vespers, and the priest does not leave the altar, the cope worn must be of the colour used in the festival that is celebrated, but in that case, and in fact always, the humeral veil must be white. If, however, the priest leaves the altar, or if Benediction is

<sup>1</sup> *Decretum*, 11th Sept., 1847.

given apart from the Vesper office, the colour used is always white. The number of times that Benediction may be given during the week, is left to the disposition of the Bishop, as is also the number of persons who must be present for solemnly giving it. Though we have called Benediction a liturgical service, it is not reckoned among the rites of the Church—that is to say, rites properly so called.

Let us now turn our attention to another liturgical service to which is given the name “Canonical Office”. This is to be found in the Breviary, concerning which we have already spoken in a preceding Lecture. This office is recited publicly in Cathedral and in Collegiate churches, in monasteries, and in convents of Religious Orders. It is composed of seven parts, to be recited at seven different times during the course of the day. This is done in imitation of the Prophet David, who in Psalm cxviii. tells us that he seven times each day offered praise to God. These seven parts are divided into Matins—with Lauds—anciently, and in certain places, even at the present day, said either at midnight or shortly after it; Prime, recited in the early morning at seven o'clock; Tierce, at nine; Sext, at midday; None, at two or at three; Vespers, at four; and Compline at six. The number of Psalms recited at Matins differs in different Orders. In the Benedictine Order, this service is begun by the Our Father and the Creed, said secretly. After these follow the “Deus in adjutorium” and the “Gloria Patri,” the “Domine labia mea aperies,” the third Psalm, the Invitatory, that is to say, the ninety-fourth Psalm with its antiphon, and the hymn.

The rest of the Matin Office is divided into three Nocturns. In each of the first two there are six Psalms and four lessons; in the third, there are three Psalms, usually taken from the Canticles of the Old Testament, followed by four lessons, the “Te Deum,” and the Gospel. Immediately after the reading of the Gospel, there follow a versicle and a prayer. Then Lauds are said, consisting of eight Psalms, a short chapter, a responsory, a hymn, the “Benedictus,” and the prayer of the day.

In each of the “Little Hours”—Vespers excepted—there

are a hymn, three Psalms, a chapter, a versicle, and a prayer. At Vespers there are four Psalms, a chapter, a responsory, a hymn, the "Magnificat," and the prayer of the day. The faithful are familiar only with Vespers and Compline, which in our churches usually constitute the Sunday afternoon service. They are followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The next of the Minor Rites is the blessing of candles, a ceremony which takes place on the festival of our Lady's Purification. The Church on that day celebrates a feast in honour of her who, though spotlessly pure, yet submitted to this legal ceremony in order to fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic Law, and present in the Temple Our Lord, her first born, as that Law ordained. On that occasion, holy Simeon proclaimed Him to be the light of the nations. Therefore, candles are solemnly blessed and are held in the hand at certain parts of the Mass, and during the procession which usually takes place before the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. The origin of this festival and of the rite performed on it goes back to a very early date in the Church's history. Pope Gelasius in the year 496 instituted it in order to put an end to the pagan ceremonies of the Lupercalia celebrated in honour of the god Pan.

So inveterate is custom, and so obstinately do men cling to error, that fully sixteen years elapsed after this date before the Emperor Anastasius could utterly abolish the unclean priesthood which officiated at these heathen abominations. Meanwhile the festival in honour of our Lady's Purification had been held every year. The Clergy at Constantinople adopted it in order to obtain her intercession to stay the plague which ravaged the city, and thus in the course of time the various Churches one after another began to celebrate the feast.

The procession which takes place on this day was instituted about the sixth century, in order to do away with one of pagan origin called the suburbal festival, occurring every fourth year. The chief feature of this festival consisted in running through the streets bearing in the hand lighted

torches. Therefore, on the Purification, the Roman Pontiff ordered that a grand procession should start from the church of St. Andrew, each person taking part in it bearing in his hand a lighted candle, and should wend its way to St. Mary Major's, singing a hymn in honour of Jesus and Mary, for the victory won by them over the heathen world.

These burning lights are intended also to bring back to our memory that scene which took place in the Temple, when God manifested to His devout servants the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. There we behold the profound humility of our Virgin Queen, the burning zeal which led her Divine Son thus early in His earthly career to shed His blood for us, and the lively faith of those obscure but loving souls to whom God vouchsafed the grace to recognise under the feeble form of an infant, the Great Messiah, the Ruler of Israel.

Therefore, when we take part in these ceremonies, we should pray for that virtue of humility which is at once the foundation and the guardian of the rest; for that zeal which manifests itself chiefly in eagerness for our own sanctification; and for that lively faith which will be fruitful in good works.

On the first day of the Lenten fast, another of the Church's Minor Rites is performed. This is the blessing of ashes, which are afterwards sprinkled upon the heads of those who are present, the priest meanwhile addressing to each of them these solemn words: "Remember man that thou art dust and into dust shalt thou return". The origin of this impressive ceremony may be traced back to very early times. The Clergy of the Infant Church chose this first day of Lent for devoting to public penance those who had gravely sinned and scandalised, by their transgressions, the whole Christian community. These sinners after first confessing their sins came barefoot into the church, and humbly prostrating before the Bishop, or the priest deputed by him to perform this ceremony, tearfully asked to be admitted among the penitents, that after performing various acts of self-denial they might at Easter be suffered to approach the Holy Table.



They were then clothed with hair-cloth, ashes were sprinkled upon their heads, and after the recitation of appropriate prayers they were conducted to the door of the church from which the celebrant of the Mass, holding in his hands the staff of the Cross, expelled them as Adam and Eve had been expelled from Paradise by the Angel of the Lord. In course of time, these ceremonies, which originally had been used in the case of only great sinners, were voluntarily shared in by those of the faithful who wished to maintain in their hearts a true penitential spirit. At last, when these rigorous measures began to fall into desuetude, the Church retained only the ceremony of sprinkling ashes, a ceremony which she made common to all who assisted at this opening service of the Lenten season.

This service points out to us the enormity of sin which brought death into the world. It recalls to our minds a fact which in our pride we are apt to forget—that we are but dust. It brings home to us the end awaiting us—death, corruption, dust. Ashes, emblematical of this dust, are sprinkled upon our heads, the sign of the Cross is made with them upon our foreheads, to make us feel that we ought not to be ashamed of doing penance or of professing our faith. It impresses upon us the necessity for punishing ourselves for our sins, and for averting from ourselves the anger of God thereby kindled against us and against our fellow-men.

Therefore, no ceremony is better adapted for the beginning of the penitential season than is that of the “Blessed Ashes,” distributed upon this day in every Catholic church. Every one should endeavour to be present at it, and to fill his heart with those sentiments of repentant sorrow which so powerfully move God to pardon and to spare.

Towards the end of Lent, that is to say, on the Sunday with which Holy Week begins, there takes place the last of these Minor Rites which we have undertaken to explain. This is the blessing of palm branches which are distributed among the faithful and borne in the hands during the procession which follows, and the Mass which is celebrated. This ceremony is intended to bring vividly before our minds the entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem, on the first day of the

week in which He suffered for us the death of the Cross. It owes its origin to the Eastern Church, particularly to the Church in Palestine. Thence it passed into the West, and in the sixth or the seventh century, took root in the Latin Church.

During the procession which passes from the church, and in some countries goes round the boundaries of the parish or of the square in front of the church, the joyous canticle sung by the people who preceded and who followed Our Lord in His modest triumph, is chanted by the Clergy and the choristers. On returning to the church, the doors are found closed, but stationed within are some of the choir who on the arrival of the Clergy sing the hymn, "Gloria, laus et honor"—"Glory, praise, and honour, be to Thee O Christ! Our King and Our Redeemer". By this ceremony is typified, first the Kingdom of God represented by the closed church; and secondly, the banished race of men represented by the faithful standing without. When those within the church have finished the first verse, it is repeated by those who are without; then the sub-deacon, with the staff of the processional cross knocks at the door which is at once thrown open at the touch of that key which unlocked for us the kingdom of heaven, and all enter singing an antiphon in which the jubilant "Hosanna" is the dominant note.

The beautiful hymn, "Gloria, laus et honor," consisting of seventy-eight verses, only two or three of which are sung at the door of the church, was composed by Theodulphus, Bishop of Orleans. Being accused of conspiring against Louis le Debonnaire, he was thrown into prison at Angers. During his captivity he composed this hymn, and on Palm Sunday when the king, being at Angers, passed under the window of his cell, the Bishop sang this joyous canticle. The king paused to listen, and the words so enchanted him that he set the Bishop at liberty and restored him to his See.

Such, then, are the Minor Rites of Holy Church. May these few words help you to penetrate their meaning, and aid you to assist at them with an intelligence which will stir your hearts and fill them with devout sentiments of love for Our Lord and of obedience to His holy laws.

## LITURGY OF BAPTISM.

HAVING studied the Liturgy of the Holy Mass, and of the Minor Rites so wisely instituted by the Church, we may now advance another step and study the Liturgy of which she makes use in the administration of the Sacraments. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted each of these ; for, only a Divine Person can impart to outward signs, to material things, the power of conferring grace. As He is the author of these Sacraments, so is He the author—at least in germ—also of the ritual observances with which they are administered. As we have already remarked, the Church to whom He left the Divine Spirit to be her guide, has added to these, certain rites and ceremonies which, in a forcible manner, serve to bring out before the eyes of her children the wonderful effects of these divine means of grace. These rites are particularly noticeable in the solemn administration of Baptism.

We will, therefore, in the present Lecture consider these, and for greater clearness will divide them into those which precede, those which accompany, and those which follow the essential act of pouring water upon the head of the child, while at the same time the words ordained by Christ are pronounced : “ *Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit Sacramentum* ”.

By the sin of our first parents, every one of their descendants is born in sin ; is excluded from heaven ; is before God a child of the devil ; and, as far as spiritual things are concerned, is deaf, and dumb, and blind. Baptism, instituted by Christ, is the means by which these miseries are removed. His Passion and death give to this rite its efficacy, and only by receiving it either actually or by desire, can the soul of man enter heaven. This is the condition for admission into that abode of bliss. God, the Being outraged and offended by sin, is the one to lay down the condition necessary for entrance, and in the plainest, the most unmistakable language possible, Jesus Christ the God-Man has done so. Therefore, Baptism, is necessary for salvation.

This being the case, the Church has willed and decreed that, as soon as possible after birth, the future citizen of heaven should be brought to the sacred laver of regeneration, lest the innumerable accidents and dangers which threaten the frail being who has just been ushered into this rough world of ours, should extinguish its feeble spark of life, before the sacred rite can be administered. Consequently, the child is carried to the door of the church by a god-father and a god-mother who are to stand sponsors for it, and in its name to speak the wishes which every man would express, to have eternal life.

As, however, it is not yet a child of God, being stained with original sin, and, therefore, bearing upon its soul the seal of the devil, the child is not suffered to proceed farther into the church than the vestibule within the door. There it is met by the priest, clad in his surplice, with a purple stole—the sign of sorrow, penance, mourning—around his neck. Only after the “Exorcisms” does he lay aside this emblem of sorrow and take a white one, vested with which he confers the Sacrament itself.

As this will change the child into a new creature, the priest first asks the sponsors what name they wish to give to it; for that name, which should be the name of a Saint of the New Law, signifies a new creature. It is given, that the child may have a patron in heaven to intercede for it, and a model which it may imitate during its earthly career.

Having learnt the name, he next asks what the child seeks from the Church of God. To this question the sponsors answer, “Faith,” which opens the way to everlasting life, and then the priest gives the briefest summary of the divine law by the observance of which that prize must be won: “If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments,” the sum of which is love of God and of our neighbour.

As by the sin with which the child’s soul is stained, it has come under the dominion of Satan, the priest now uses the exorcism of the Church to expel him from the throne which he has usurped. Breathing thrice into the face of the child, he commands the evil one to begone, a command given with

that tone of authority which the devil cannot withstand, for it is the authority of the Church. Then he signs the child's forehead with the sign of the Cross, thus putting upon it the seal of the Redeemer, and laying his hand upon the child's head, he in the name of the Holy Trinity takes possession of it as the property of God.

Salt is now blessed by the priest; and as its properties are to give a savour to our food and to preserve from corruption that which is impregnated with it, it is taken to represent heavenly wisdom. A small quantity of this blessed salt is put into the mouth of the child to represent this gift of heavenly wisdom, and addressing the evil spirit, the priest forbids him ever to rob the child of the wealth thus bestowed upon it. Once again he makes upon its forehead the sign of the Cross, and once again in the name of the Trinity takes possession of it as the creature of God, by laying his hand upon its head. At the conclusion of the prayer accompanying this ceremony, the priest lays the end of his stole upon the child's head and leads it from the vestibule into the church, to the place in which the font is situated, saying: "Come into the Temple of God that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life-everlasting". Having entered the church, and while proceeding to the font, the priest and the sponsors recite the Apostles' Creed and the Our Father, the one containing the sum of that faith which the neophyte has come to ask, the other, petitions to God for all those graces which will enable him to walk the path of life, in conformity with the various articles of which he then makes a profession.

Before proceeding to the great act of Baptism, the minister of God once again addresses to the unclean spirit an exorcism commanding him, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to depart from that creature which God is now about to make a temple in which He will abide. Then, in memory of that mysterious act by which Our Lord cast forth the deaf and dumb spirit, he moistens with spittle the thumb of his right hand, and making therewith upon the mouth and the ears of the child the saving sign of the Cross, he speaks the word employed by Our Lord—*Ephpheta!*—that is to say, "Be thou opened,"

commanding Satan to flee away, in the words : " But do thou, Satan, flee away ; for lo ! the great and powerful God approaches, God Who taketh away from the powerful his prey ". After this he calls upon the sponsors to make, in the child's name, that triple renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh, a renunciation which must constitute its life's struggle against the powers of darkness.

The sponsors having made, in the child's name this renunciation, the priest dips his thumb into the vessel containing the oil of Catechumens, and in the form of a Cross therewith anoints the child on the breast and between the shoulders, as the athletes of old were anointed with oil before their contests, to intimate that in its heart it must love that Cross and patiently endure the yoke which that Cross imposes upon it.

It is at this point that the priest lays aside the purple stole, and taking the white one, which is a sign of joy and gladness, once again in a special manner interrogates through the sponsors the child in its belief in each of the articles of the Creed. This being done, he puts to it the question : " Wilt thou be baptised ? " to which the sponsors reply, " I will ". With this answer end the rites which precede Baptism.

We will now consider those which accompany this important act. The god-mother, approaching the font, holds over it the head of the child. The god-father places his hand upon the child, and the priest taking a small vessel dips it into the water of the font. Then calling the child by its name, and in the form of the Cross thrice pouring the water on its head, he says : " I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ". This is the manner of baptising at present in use in the Church. But this Sacrament may be conferred by *immersion*, that is to say, by thrice plunging the head under the water ; by *aspersion*, that is to say, by sprinkling ; and by *infusion*, that is to say, in the manner just described. After Baptism, the head is carefully dried with a white linen cloth, and in this way end the rites accompanying this Sacrament.

The ceremonies which follow point out to us the lofty dignity to which we are raised by the laver of regeneration,

and the duties which that dignity imposes upon us. For the priest, now dipping his thumb into the sacred chrism with which kings are anointed, signs the newly baptised child on the forehead with the sign of the Cross. While so doing, he says : " May the Almighty God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath regenerated thee with water and the Holy Spirit, and given to thee remission of all thy sins, Himself anoint thee with the chrism of salvation in the same Christ Jesus Our Lord, unto life eternal. Amen."

Having said this prayer, he gives to it that inheritance which Christ left to His Apostles, the beginning of that bliss for which He created man—that is to say—he gives to it peace : " Peace be to thee". In the next place he lays upon it a spotlessly white cloth, emblematical of that stainless purity, which, in virtue of the precious blood, Baptism has conferred, solemnly commanding the child to carry it unspotted through the mire of the world into the presence of the judgment-seat of Christ. A lighted taper, the emblem of lively faith, is next held by the god-father in the hand of the child, while the priest bids it perform those works which flow from a true, living faith : " Receive this burning light and keep thy Baptism so as to be without blame. Keep the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the nuptials thou mayest meet Him in the company of all the Saints in the heavenly court, have eternal life, and live for ever and ever. Amen." Having thus completed the Liturgy of Baptism, the priest dismisses the child and sends it forth upon the journey of life with these beautiful words : " Go in peace, and may the Lord be with thee. Amen."

Such is the majestic Liturgy with which the Church, while opening for us the kingdom of God, confers this Sacrament. What thoughts does it not suggest to us? What lessons does it not teach to those who will but reflect a little? We are forcibly reminded of our wretched condition—outcasts from God and from His heavenly kingdom ; stained with sin ; sealed with the mark of His enemy ; deaf to God's voice ; dumb in His praise ; destined here to be the thralls of Satan, and hereafter his miserable victims. But God admits us to His

kingdom on earth that we may pass thence to His kingdom in heaven. He drives the devil from our souls ; removes the demon's seal ; and sets His own upon us. He opens our eyes that they may see, and our ears that they may hear. He gives us heavenly wisdom ; He admits us into His army ; He blots out sin ; He clothes us in the garments of salvation. What a duty does this last act of His impose upon us ! We have to carry that garment unspotted through the miry ways of the world, and to present ourselves clothed in it before the dread judgment-seat. Here is a work indeed ! a work which of ourselves we cannot accomplish. But that which will enable us to finish it, is a constant remembrance of what God has done for us in Baptism, and of what He expects from us in return for His infinite goodness.

Pray, then, that aided by His strong right arm you may walk circumspectly through the miry ways of the world, enlightened concerning dangerous precipices and awful chasms by the brilliant light of the torch of faith. Let the words with which you were dismissed from the font ever ring in your ears : "See that thou carry unstained by grievous sin this white garment into the presence of the great Judge". You will then be able to walk without either slipping or falling, bearing in your hands the treasure which God intrusted to you when he washed you clean from every stain in the blood of His only begotten Son, on the ever-memorable day of your Baptism.

### LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION.

BAPTISM is the gate to all the other Sacraments, because it not only washes away the guilt of original sin, and of actual sin, should the recipient have incurred this stain, but imparts that spiritual life which renders him capable of benefiting from the other means of grace instituted by Jesus Christ. After Baptism, the next Sacrament bestowed by the Church is Confirmation, the object of which is to strengthen the spiritual life received through Baptism, and to enable that life to withstand the attempts of our enemies to destroy it.



We will, therefore, first explain to you the Liturgy of this Sacrament ; and secondly, put before you the teaching of the Church proving it to be that which she says it is—a true sacrament of the New Law, ordained by Christ to convey His divine grace to our souls.

In order to understand the Liturgy of this Sacrament, let us in spirit enter a church in which it is about to be administered. There, before the high altar, are gathered the children and the adults upon whom the Bishop is about to impose hands. Presently the Pontiff enters accompanied by his attendant ministers, and after praying for a few moments before the altar, rises and takes his seat. Water is then poured upon his hands in token of the purity requisite in one who is about to perform so sacred a function. He is vested in amice and rochet, also emblematical of innocence. The stole, one of the insignia of his sacerdotal office, is next put around his neck ; the cope is fastened round his shoulders ; the mitre, signifying the parted tongues of fire, is placed upon his head ; and into his left hand is given the pastoral staff, betokening his office as chief shepherd of the diocese committed to his care. Turning towards those to be confirmed, he usually addresses to them a short discourse, explaining the nature of the Sacrament which they are about to receive, and pointing out the dispositions with which they ought to receive it.

Having finished his address, the Bishop approaches the altar, and then turning towards the children, who at a sign from the master of ceremonies have cast themselves upon their knees, he says : “ May the Holy Ghost descend upon you, and may the virtue of the Most High preserve you from all sin ”. Then while making the sign of the Cross, he says : “ Our help is in the name of the Lord ”. The assistants answer : “ Who hath made heaven and earth ”. Proceeding with his prayer he says : “ O Lord ! hear my prayer,” to which petition is given the answer : “ And let my cry come to Thee ”. Then lifting up his hands and holding them outstretched over the heads of the children, to signify the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, he recites the following prayer, to each of the petitions of which the assistants answer “ Amen ”. “ O almighty and

eternal God! Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate with water and the Holy Ghost these Thy servants, and hast granted them the forgiveness of all their sins, send upon them from the height of heaven Thy Paraclete the author of all gifts. Amen. The spirit of wisdom and of understanding. Amen. The spirit of counsel and of fortitude. Amen. The spirit of knowledge and of piety. Amen. Fill them with the spirit of fear, and calling them to eternal life, sign them with the sign of the Cross of Jesus Christ Our Lord, Thy Son Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.”<sup>1</sup>

After this prayer, which accompanies what we may call the general imposition of hands, the persons to be confirmed rise, and approaching the altar-rails kneel there. The Bishop then proceeds to the rails, having on his right hand an assistant who takes from each child the card on which the “confirmation name” is written, and on his left another who has a vessel containing some cotton-wool with which to wipe off the sacred chrism. Dipping his thumb into the chrismatory, he signs the forehead of each with chrism, saying: “I sign thee with the sign of the Cross,” then with his hand thrice making that holy sign over the head, he continues: “and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. Having said this, he gives a slight blow to the right cheek of each, with the words: “Peace be to thee”. This blow signifies that the recipient of Confirmation must be ready courageously to suffer all kinds of persecution for the sake of Jesus. The words accompanying it point out that it is only through Christian patience that the peace of God can be secured in this world.

When all have been confirmed, the Bishop purifies his hands, the choir meanwhile singing an antiphon, in which God is besought to accomplish in the souls of the children the work that day begun. At the conclusion of the antiphon, the Bishop offers up to God a beautiful prayer, in which he beseeches Him to bestow upon them the inestimable grace of perseverance.

<sup>1</sup> This prayer has been in use since the eighth century.

Then turning towards them, he invokes upon them a solemn blessing in these words: "May the Lord from the height of heaven bless you, that all the days of your lives you may see the good things of Jerusalem, and that you may obtain eternal life!" Before dismissing them, the Bishop calls upon the confirmed to say with him the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. This act is performed to remind the sponsors of their obligation to instruct their god-children in the truths and the duties of our holy religion.<sup>1</sup> Thus ends the sacred rite of Confirmation.

Confirmation is the second of the seven Sacraments; for, after birth into the spiritual life by the regenerating laver of Baptism, the soul must grow in strength by means of another sacrament prepared for this very purpose by Jesus Christ. Therefore, after having explained to you the rite by which this second Sacrament is conferred, it remains for us to put before you the teaching of the Church concerning it.

The Council of Trent in its seventh session proclaimed it to be of faith, that Confirmation is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church. The sacred Scriptures implicitly prove this to us; for, in the Acts of the Apostles we read "that when the Apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who when they were come prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for He was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost."<sup>2</sup> Farther on, in the same Book, we read: "(The Ephesians) having heard these things were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them."<sup>3</sup> These quotations from the Acts prove to us that the imposition of hands accompanied by prayer, or in other words, Confirmation, is a sacrament. For, they give us those three elements which constitute every sacrament—a

<sup>1</sup> *Pontific, Rom.*

<sup>2</sup> Chap. viii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xix. 6.

sensible sign in the imposition of hands ; the bestowal of grace, “ And they received the Holy Ghost ” ; and the institution of Christ, for only God can give to any material thing the power of conferring grace. Therefore, the Apostles did what they are represented as having done, by the order of their Divine Master. Like every other sacrament, Confirmation consists of matter and form. The matter is to be found in the sensible or visible sign, that is to say, in the imposition of hands and in the unction with chrism ; the form, in the words accompanying this action : “ I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ”.

From what we have said when explaining the liturgical part of this Sacrament, it will be seen that there are two impositions of hands, the one general, when the Bishop with outstretched hands prays over all those who are to be confirmed, the other particular, which accompanies and which is inseparable from the actual unction with chrism. It may, therefore, be asked which of these two is essential ; which of them constitutes the Sacrament ? The opinion most commonly held by theologians and taught by St. Thomas, is that the essence of this Sacrament consists in the unction with chrism and in the imposition of the hand made in the act of anointing. In this, both the Western and the Eastern Church agree ; whereas in the general imposition of hands made in the beginning over all the *confirmandi*, they do not, for it is altogether omitted by the Eastern Church. Even in the Western Church, the custom has not always been uniform ; for in the Latin Rituals examined by Martène, this action sometimes precedes, and at others follows the unction ; and it is omitted, should any persons come to be confirmed after the Bishop has ended this portion of the liturgical act.<sup>1</sup> The chrism used, in conferring this Sacrament, is composed of olive oil with which there is mingled balm—an oily odoriferous substance endowed with medicinal properties. This is consecrated by the Bishop, at

<sup>1</sup> According to the present custom, the Bishop always repeats it if the child has not been present at the general imposition of hands.

the solemn Mass on Maunday Thursday, because in former times it was necessary for the administration of Baptism conferred on Easter Eve. It is a symbol of the sweetness and the strength imparted by the reception of the Holy Ghost. In the early ages, the foreheads of those signed with chrism by the Bishop were for three days after the rite bound round with a white linen cloth; and in Rome, even at the present day, a remnant of this custom may be seen in the white silk ribbon bound round the heads of those who have been confirmed, and worn all the day on which the Sacrament has been received.

The form of this Sacrament is not the same in the East as in the West. Our present form is not older than the twelfth century, whereas the Greek form: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost," is very ancient. In the eighth century, the *Ordo Romanus* gives simply: "I confirm thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". In a Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York, it stands thus: "Receive the sign of the holy Cross with the chrism of salvation in Christ Jesus unto eternal life". In the Sacramentary of Gelasius, it is given thus: "The sign of the Cross with eternal life". All these forms have been permitted, because all sufficiently indicate the grace bestowed by the Sacrament and they were, therefore, valid.<sup>1</sup>

The ordinary minister of this Sacrament is a Bishop only, because the administration of Confirmation pertained to the Apostles whose successors are the Bishops of the Church; but by a dispensation of the Holy See, priests also are empowered to confer it, in places in which there are no Bishops.

The effects which it produces in the soul are three in number. First, it confers sanctifying grace—not grace which remits sin and reconciles the sinner with God, but that grace which more and more purifies those who are already just and in the friendship of God. Secondly, it communicates to us the Holy Ghost Himself, together with His priceless gifts. Thirdly, it imprints upon the soul an indelible character or

<sup>1</sup> *Cath. Dict.*, art. "Confirmation".

mark which for all eternity procures for those sealed with it a greater degree of felicity than is enjoyed by those who have not received it. This character or mark differs from that received in Baptism ; for Baptism seals us as the children of God, whereas Confirmation marks us out as the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Confirmation like Baptism can be received only once. Hence, the necessity for receiving it only after a most careful preparation, and in the best dispositions possible. Unlike Baptism, it is not absolutely necessary for salvation, but only relatively, inasmuch as it gives to us a special grace, enabling us to persevere faithfully in that holiness of life which, at our adoption into the membership of the Christian Church, we undertook to practise.

We may fittingly conclude these remarks upon this Sacrament by these beautiful words of Pope Melchiades : " The Holy Spirit Who descends upon the sacred font to make it fruitful, Who fills it with the plenitude of grace, giving to us innocence by effacing sin, also descends in Confirmation, to increase grace. In Baptism we are born to the spiritual life, in Confirmation we are strengthened for the combat ; in Baptism we are cleansed, in Confirmation we are armed. Though Baptism suffices for those who immediately after its reception quit this life, the help of Confirmation is necessary for those who must undertake and prosecute life's dangerous journey."

## LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

ALTHOUGH we have already spoken of the Holy Eucharist, when treating of the liturgical sacrifice of the Mass, we may with profit again call your attention to some of the rites and ceremonies connected with the celebration of that sacred mystery. These, let us hope, will deepen your reverence and inflame your love still more for that most astounding pledge of God's boundless affection for fallen man.

As you already know full well, the matter or elements of this Sacrament are wheaten bread and wine of the grape. In the early ages of the Church, these elements were presented

to the celebrant by the faithful people, who deemed it an honour and a privilege to be allowed to make this offering for the august Sacrifice. A remnant or memorial of this ancient custom is still preserved in the ritual of the Church of Milan. Ten old men and as many old women forming a sort of confraternity called "The School of St. Ambrose," are privileged on all great festivals to present the bread and the wine used in the Mass. When the Clergy have reached the altar, these approach the sanctuary two by two, one of each pair carrying the bread, and the other a cruets of wine. The reasons inducing the Church to do away with this custom were, first, that the Clergy might furnish breads better and more carefully prepared than were those usually presented by the people; secondly, that the loving disposition of the faithful might find a more ample scope for its charity, for seeing how much better it was that the ministers of the altar should have full charge of everything connected with the unbloody Sacrifice, they were not slow in furnishing them with the means to procure all necessaries for its due celebration, thus, though in a more indirect manner, continuing the ancient custom.

When the bread and the wine were delivered into the hands of the assistants or into those of the celebrant himself, they were carried to the altar, the bread being laid upon a gold or a silver paten, and the wine poured into a large chalice, which unlike the chalices of the present day had two handles, thus facilitating the distribution of its contents to the people who in ancient times drank of the sacred cup, just as the priest now does. After the consecration, those who intended to communicate drew nigh to the sanctuary; but before any one partook of the Sacred Victim, the deacon turning round and facing the people cried out in a loud voice: "Sancta sanctis—Holy things for the holy," by which words all were warned to approach with a conscience free from the guilt of any grave sin.

Then the celebrant, holding the vessel containing the consecrated bread, distributed it among the communicants, saying to each: "The body of the Lord". Before receiving it, each answered: "Amen," as an act of faith in the real

presence. This form remained in use till the eighth century, when it was replaced by that employed by the Church even at this present day : " May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ keep thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen." At the end of the Mass it was customary in some churches to call in innocent children, and to distribute among them whatever might remain of the Holy Sacrifice. An authentic witness for this custom is the historian Nicephorus who flourished in the fourteenth century. In his *Church History*<sup>1</sup> he tells us that as a child he had been thus privileged to share in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

It was usual for the celebrant to communicate at the middle of the altar at which he stood to offer the Sacred Victim ; the deacon or the deacons who assisted him, behind the altar ; the sub-deacon, at the entrance of the sanctuary ; the faithful, outside the rails which separated the sanctuary from the body of the church. Royal personages communicated at the altar, and there also made their offering. Another peculiarity of these early ages was, that the people stood when receiving Holy Communion, doubtless in order to commemorate the typical celebration of the Pasch among the Israelites, who, as the law commanded, stood with their loins girt, and staves in their hands, ready as it were for a journey. By imitating them, Christians were reminded of life's journey which they had to accomplish, supported by that heavenly bread in the strength of which they hoped to reach the Mount of God, the abode of everlasting peace, of eternal rest.

Before receiving, they bowed their heads in adoration ; for, as St. Augustine says : " This is food which no one must receive without having first adored ". In memory of a much more solemn Pasch, the Vicar of Christ, the visible head of the Church, communicates sitting. The early Christians when communicating did not receive the Holy Eucharist as we do at the present day. The men held forth their right hands on which the celebrant placed the Sacred Host ; the women also their right hands, but covered with a linen cloth.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. 18, cap. 25.



This manner of receiving Holy Communion prevailed until the ninth century, when owing no doubt to the accidents frequently occurring, the Church wisely changed it for the present usage, by which the priest reverently places the Sacred Host on the tongue of the communicant. The faithful were accustomed also to carry away with them, particularly in times of persecution, a sufficient number of consecrated particles to supply their needs.

Moreover the chalice also was distributed among the communicants. In receiving it, they did not pass it from hand to hand, but as we learn from St. Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> the celebrant presented it to the lips of each, and from it each took a sip; for in his catechetical instruction upon this sacred rite, he says: "After partaking of the body of Christ, approach the chalice of His blood, not stretching forth your hands, but bowing in adoration to it and saying: 'Amen'. He then tells each of them to wipe the mouth with the hand, and having done so, to carry that hand to the eyes, the forehead, and the other chief organs of sense, as a kind of consecration of them to the service of Almighty God." This method of receiving the chalice continued till the sixth century, at which date, through fear of accident, a tube was employed through which each drew into his mouth a few drops of the precious blood. Later on, in order still more to lessen the danger of any irreverence, the particles of bread were dipped in the chalice and given to the communicants. Thus the practice of receiving under both kinds was continued till the twelfth century, at which date it insensibly fell into disuse, and in 1414 it was finally abolished at the Council of Constance.

The reasons for its discontinuance, reasons which for centuries had pressed upon the pastors of the Church, namely, the danger of spilling the sacred species, particularly on occasions of high festival when the concourse of the faithful at Holy Communion was very great, and the difficulty in northern countries of procuring a sufficiency of wine even for the ministers celebrating the divine mysteries, at last changed

<sup>1</sup> *Catechis. Mystie.*, v.

the discipline of the Church in this respect to that in force at the present day.

This custom in no way derogates from the integrity of the Sacrament ; for Christ is wholly and entirely present under each species. Moreover, the perfection of the Eucharist does not consist in the use which the faithful make of it, but in the consecration by which Christ is placed upon our altars, mystically slain as the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the world. Consequently, from the fact that the people receive the Eucharist under only one species, there can be no derogation from the perfection of the Sacrament. That perfection, as St. Thomas teaches,<sup>1</sup> is secured by the fact that the sacrificing priest receives it under both species. Even the primitive Church had occasionally the same custom that is now prevalent among us ; for the confessors in prison, the sick, and those who for any other reason could not be present at the Sacrifice, received the Sacrament under only one species. In the Eastern Church, the Holy Eucharist is received under one kind during the Lenten season, Saturdays and Sundays excepted ; and in the Western Church, it is on Good Friday received in this way even by priests. By following this custom, the Church sets the seal of her sanction upon a discipline which is demanded by the reverence due to the body of the Lord.

Another custom prevalent in the early ages has also been abolished, both because it is no longer needful, and because the danger of irreverence imperatively required its discontinuance. This was the practice of allowing the faithful to carry away with them to their homes some of the Hosts consecrated during the Mass. In days of persecution, when they could not without danger of death assemble for public worship and for sacrifice, this necessity superseded all laws to the contrary. Yet, even when the iron hand of tyranny ceased to press upon them, the custom continued in force. But in the fourth century, when the Priscillian heretics were numerous, these impious men, though not believers in the real presence,

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas, p. iii. q. 80, a. 12.

were in the habit of carrying away from the churches the Sacred Hosts distributed to the faithful, in order that they might profane them; then the rulers of the Spanish Church ceased to allow this privilege to her children, and from Spain the prohibition soon extended to all the Churches of the Catholic world.

The sending of the Holy Eucharist from one Bishop to another, in token of union and of fraternal charity, also was discontinued because of the many irreverences to which such a custom often exposed the sacred elements. But on the cessation of this custom, another was introduced, namely, that of sending to one another unconsecrated breads, which from the blessings imparted to them were called "Eulogia". In his Rule, St. Benedict speaks of these, and forbids his monks to accept these gifts without having first obtained from their Abbot permission to receive them.

Having brought before your notice the various rites connected with the Holy Sacrament of the altar, we will conclude this Lecture by a few words upon the way in which this divine treasure was guarded in the places in which the people used to assemble to worship God.

At the present day, each of us is familiar with the tabernacle in which the Hosts consecrated at Mass are reserved for the use of the sick and for the worship of the faithful. It stands in the centre of the altar, and it is the altar's chief ornament. All that our poverty will allow us to do, is done to deck it with the splendour that we are able to procure. Before it, there is kept constantly burning a brilliant light which, like the star leading the Magi to Bethlehem, points out the place where Our Lord lies concealed. Towards it, we direct our reverential gaze; before it, we humbly bend the knee; for there, in the midst of us, there is a greater than Solomon, even the Omnipotent Creator before Whom one day we shall all stand in trembling awe to hear the sentence that will decide our lot for eternity. But in the early ages, the Holy of Holies was not in this way reserved in the churches. Persecution rendered it necessary to conceal His hiding-place, and as we have seen, His faithful adorers were allowed the privilege of

having Christ as their guest in their own homes, in which no doubt they housed Him with all the splendour, and guarded Him with all the loving attention of men who, at any moment, were ready to shed their blood for Him.

As the centuries rolled on and troubles ceased, the Church came forth from the Catacombs. Vast temples were built, and in them Christ found a permanent abode. At first the vessels containing the consecrated species were made in the shape of a dove, which with outstretched wings hung over the altar of sacrifice. By this symbol, the Church wished to call to the minds of her children the mildness of the Great God Who gave Himself to them to be their food, the excellence of that supersubstantial bread, and the spotless purity requisite in those who would worthily partake of it.

Later on, there was substituted for the dove-like shape of the Eucharistic vessel, a tower which hung suspended over the altar. To the eyes of those who were well acquainted with the symbolism of the Church, this was a figure of the heavenly force or strength imparted to the soul by this bread of the strong, and it spoke to them of the faithful guardianship which they might expect from Him Who is as a tower of strength against the face of their enemies.

Finally, both forms were combined, when the tower was made to stand upon the outstretched wings of the dove. In our own day these symbolic shrines have given place to one that represents to us the Ark in which are preserved, not the two tables of the Law, not the rod of Aaron that miraculously flowered, not the figurative manna, but the true bread which cometh down from heaven, that living bread of which Christ has said: "This is My body; this is My blood"—the very same body that was sacrificed for us on Calvary, the very same blood that was poured out for the remission of sins.

### LITURGY OF PENANCE.

BAPTISM gives to us spiritual life; Confirmation strengthens it; the Holy Eucharist feeds and maintains it. Now, just as our corporeal life is exposed to many maladies which threaten

it with extinction, and which at last do actually quench its feeble flame, so also is our spiritual life exposed to many spiritual ills which will destroy it, unless we vigorously repel their insidious attacks. Should these evils, however, succeed in extinguishing the life received in Baptism, God has mercifully provided for us another sacrament by which the life that has been lost is restored. This Sacrament is called Penance. Now, although we are principally concerned with its liturgical aspect, it will not, we think, be out of place, before treating of it from that point of view, to say a few words concerning the Sacrament itself.

After His resurrection, Our divine Lord instituted it when, having breathed upon His Apostles, He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"<sup>1</sup>. By these words, He constituted His Apostles, and all who should succeed them in the sacred ministry, judges of the sins of men. But, as is evident, they could not intelligently exercise that office and validly pronounce their judgment unless the cause, or, in other words, the sins of those who came to them for judgment, were first made manifest to them. How then was this disclosure to be made? Undoubtedly by the avowal or confession of the evils which lay concealed within the folds of their hearts, for neither to the Apostles nor to their successors did Christ give the power to penetrate into the secrets of men's consciences.

Hence, in the power bestowed upon them to forgive sins, there is implied the necessity for confessing these sins to those authorised to forgive them. Those who falsely assert that both this Sacrament and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist were, in the year 1215, introduced into the Church by the Council of Lateran, calmly shut their eyes to the history of the Church; for in the pages of that history, no dogma is written in characters so broad and deep as are those of Confession and Communion. All that the Lateran Council did with respect to these Sacraments, was to fix the time at

<sup>1</sup> St. John, xx. 23.

which the children of the Church are obliged, under penalty of exclusion from her communion, to receive these Sacraments.

In the Sacrament of Penance for the reception of which, at least once during the year, the Council then legislated, we find, as in the other Sacraments, those three elements which constitute the essence of each. There are first, the acts of the penitent or the sensible sign, consisting of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, together with the absolution pronounced by the priest; secondly, the institution of Christ, as is evident from the words cited from the Gospel of St. John; thirdly, the bestowal of grace, as is evident in the forgiveness of sins. When speaking of Penance, the Council of Trent calls the acts of the penitent the *quasi* matter of the Sacrament or the sensible sign. By so doing, the Council did not mean us to infer that these acts are not truly the matter of the Sacrament, but only to call our attention to the fact that they do not constitute matter similar in kind to that which we see in the other Sacraments, as, for example, water in Baptism, chrism and the imposition of hands in Confirmation, bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist. The form or words of absolution combined with this matter constitute the Sacrament, just as soul and body constitute a human being.

In order to present this matter for the Sacrament, the penitent must first examine carefully, and under the all-seeing eye of God, into the folds of his conscience. When he has called to mind all his transgressions—as far at least as this is possible—and when he has before him the list of his manifold sins, he must in the next place, with the aid of divine grace, conceive for them a heartfelt sorrow, because they have offended the God of infinite goodness. This sorrow must not be a mere external sorrow, but one that is internal; it must surpass, in appreciation at least, all other sorrow; it must extend to all grievous sin without any exception whatever; and it must be supernatural in its origin—that is to say—coming from God's grace, and in its motive—that is to say—springing from grief for having offended Him Who is infinite goodness, for having exposed ourselves to the fire of hell, for having incurred the loss of heaven, for having covered our-

selves with the turpitude of sin, or for any other motive founded on divine faith.

After this sorrow comes the confession of all the grievous sins of which the penitent is conscious, a confession which must be made to a rightly ordained priest who has received from his Bishop jurisdiction, that is to say, authority to sit in the tribunal of penance. This confession should be simple, that is to say, made without any duplicity of mind, of heart, or of speech ; it should be humble, inasmuch as it is an avowal of guilt ; pure in words, and in the intention with which it is made ; prudent, so as not to reveal the faults and the sins of one's neighbour ; sorrowful, being accompanied by true contrition ; sincere, without any dissimulation ; and entire, as far at least as that is possible to human infirmity. Lastly, after confession and absolution, the penitent must faithfully accomplish the works of penance imposed as some sort of satisfaction for the evil committed.

After these preliminary observations upon the Sacrament, we may now proceed to consider the Liturgy observed in its administration.

The tribunal of penance in many respects differs from the tribunals of justice erected by the laws of men. From these latter, all that the culprit can expect to receive is impartial justice, which sometimes, in spite of every precaution to secure it, is not meted out. The tribunal of penance, on the contrary, is a tribunal of mercy. Thither the sinner comes, not strictly speaking as a criminal, but as an erring child ; the judge is his father ; the accuser is the sinner himself. Therefore, like the Prodigal, casting himself upon his knees, he says to his judge : " Pray, Father, give me a blessing, for I have sinned ". What does he hear in response to this humble petition ? He hears, not an indictment of his crimes, but a loving blessing : " May the Lord be in thy heart, and upon thy lips, that thou mayest make a sincere and full confession of thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen ".

What an encouragement is this for one who comes heavily burdened with the grievous load of his sins ! Full of the

confidence breathed into his soul by this prayer, the penitent next in spirit puts himself in presence of the heavenly court. He confesses to Almighty God Whom he has outraged by his grievous offences ; to the spotless Virgin-Mother of God, the advocate of sinners ; to the great Archangel Michael, the dread adversary of the devil ; to the sainted Baptist who preached penance for the remission of sins ; to the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, whom Christ invested with power to bind and to loose ; to all the other Saints in heaven ; and lastly to God's representative, the priest before whom he kneels. Before this august assembly, he humbly confesses that he has sinned in thought, in word, and in deed, through his own most grievous fault.

Then with heartfelt sorrow and confusion of face, he accuses himself of all the sins that he can call to mind ; the evil thoughts in which he has indulged ; the evil desires which he has harboured in his mind ; the wicked words to which he has given utterance ; the evil deeds of which he has been guilty ; the scandal which he has given to others, and by which he has become partaker in their sin ; and the number of times in which he has sinned in each of these respects. Having completed this self-accusation, he turns his suppliant eyes to the court before which he has acknowledged his guilt, and beseeches all these glorious Angels and Saints not to condemn, but to pray to God both with him and for him, that the Divine Majesty may grant to him pardon and peace.

The penitent has now done his part. He has furnished the matter, or at least a portion of it, for the Sacrament. Having so done, it now remains for the priest to exercise the merciful office committed to him by Jesus Christ. But before pronouncing that sentence, which through the merits of the Redeemer will blot out all these sins and wash the sinner's soul white as snow in the blood of the Lamb, he addresses to him words of fatherly advice. In order to inspire him with a still greater horror for his sins, and to fill his heart with sorrow for having been guilty of them, he first points out to him their heinous nature. Then, like a true physician, he exposes before his eyes the causes from which they have sprung, and pre-



scribes the means by which in future they may be avoided. Having done this, and obtained from the penitent a promise faithfully to put in practice the means suggested for the amendment of his life, he next imposes upon him some work of piety as a sort of expiation for the evil committed, leaving to his own generous heart the addition of any other penitential exercises which it may please him to perform.

Before pronouncing the form of absolution prescribed by the Church, the priest says the two following beautiful prayers: "May Almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen." To this he adds: "May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant thee pardon, absolution, and remission of all thy sins. Amen." Then raising his hand, he pronounces the sentence of pardon, saying: "May Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I, by His authority, do absolve thee from every bond of excommunication (suspension) and interdict, as far as I am able and as thou dost need it, then, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

What a marvel is worked by these words of power! He who but a moment before was the enemy of God and the child of the devil, becomes at once a child of God, a free man, no longer under the thralldom of Satan. An instant before, he was dead, and now he lives; he was covered with a hideous leprosy, and lo! it has disappeared. The robe of innocence has been brought forth and thrown upon his shoulders. The token of God's love has been set upon his finger; the kiss of God's forgiveness has been imprinted upon his brow; the Angels of God cluster round him and chant their joyous hymn of praise over one other sinner that hath done penance. While these are exulting, the words of prayer are still falling from the lips of the priest. Over the bowed head of the penitent he says: "May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints; may whatever good thou thyself shalt do, whatever ill thou shalt suffer, be unto thee for the remission of sins, the increase of grace, and the reward of eternal life. Amen."

Lastly, he bids him go in peace, in that peace which only God can give, a peace surpassing all understanding, surpassing all that the world can give, a peace which is a foretaste of the joys of heaven. With that peace making jubilee in his heart, the repentant sinner goes forth from the sacred tribunal resolved to do better for the future, and to prove himself a true soldier of his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### LITURGY OF EXTREME UNCTION.

THE fatherly providence of God meets us at each successive period of our existence, and supplies us with the particular grace of which we then stand in need. Thus, at our entrance upon the stage of life, he cleanses us from the stain of original sin. In the opening years of our boyhood, he infuses into our souls His own Holy Spirit to strengthen us, so that we may be able manfully to fight against and to overcome our nascent passions. He then feeds the strength already imparted, frequently allowing us in the Holy Eucharist to eat of His own most precious body and blood. Should the fury of our passions prevail over us, and induce the soul to yield to their imperious demands, He restores us by the saving Sacrament of Penance, to the friendship which we have lost. When at last the flame of our earthly life is burning low, and feebly flickering before its final extinction, He meets us with another sacrament which either restores our bodies to health, or worthily prepares us to quit this transitory scene of life and enter upon our glorious and eternal existence.

This last Sacrament is called "Extreme Unction," of which we will speak first in its sacramental character, and secondly in its liturgical aspect.

As a sacrament, we may define it to be "a sacrament of the New Law; a sacrament instituted by Christ; a sacrament through which, by the unction of blessed oil accompanied by a prescribed form of prayer, there is conferred upon the baptised who are in danger of death through sickness, and conferred by the ministry of priests, a grace to wash away their

sins and all the remnants of their sins, strength to overcome the onslaughts of the devil, patience to endure the pains and the inconveniences of their maladies, and, if it should please God, health to enable them to resume the duties of their every-day life". From these words it is evident that all the conditions requisite to constitute a true sacrament of Holy Church are to be found in the rite of Extreme Unction. There is the matter or visible sign, in the unction with blessed oil; there is the prescribed form, in the prayer accompanying this unction; and there is the bestowal of grace, in the remission of sins—a fact which argues the institution of Christ, for only God can impart to any material thing the power of conferring divine grace.

Christ, then, instituted this Sacrament, and St. James the Apostle in these well-known words promulgated it to the faithful: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."<sup>1</sup>

From these words we see, that the use of this Sacrament goes back to apostolic times. Nevertheless, it is quite true that during the first three centuries of the Christian era very little mention is made of it. But this fact is easily accounted for. The terrible persecutions to which, during those early times, the followers of Christ were subject, made it a very difficult matter for the priests of the Church to be called to the bedside of the dying. The rite of Extreme Unction would at once have betrayed, into the hands of their enemies, both them and those to whom they were called. For, as Our Lord had foretold, their faith in Him had divided from one another the members of well-nigh every household. The mother might be a Christian, the father a pagan; or the parents might be idolaters, and the children Christians.

Hence, a sacrament which after all is not absolutely necessary for salvation, may possibly in many cases have been dis-

<sup>1</sup> St. James v. 14, 15.

pensed with, whenever the conferring of it would mean death to those who wished to obtain its consolations, and death not only to those who had asked for it, but to those who had ventured to administer it. But as soon as the cruel hands of persecutors ceased to be heavy upon the faithful, we find mention of it in the writings of the Apologists and of the Fathers of the Church. Origen, speaking of Penance, of which Extreme Unction is the perfection, says: "In it, there is completed that of which the Apostle James spoke when he said: 'Is any one sick among you? Let him call in the priests of the Church,' and the rest."<sup>1</sup> In the fourth century, Victor of Antioch, commenting upon St. Mark, and gathering together whatever the more ancient interpreters and the Fathers had written, says: "The words of which the Apostle James makes use in his Canonical Epistle, differ not from these; for he writes: 'Is any one sick among you?' and the rest."<sup>2</sup> St. John Chrysostom in his treatise on the priesthood, speaking of the power of forgiving sins intrusted to priests, says: "They are able to forgive even those sins committed after our regeneration. For, is any one sick among you? asks the Apostle; let him call in the priests of the Church." Therefore, from the words of these writers, we see that they are speaking of a practice well known to their disciples, and in common everyday use among them.

Consequently, we say that Extreme Unction is a sacrament; that it is so, is an article of our faith; and any one who denies this, or says that the Sacrament does not confer grace, or that it does not pardon sins, or that the doctrine concerning it is repugnant to the teaching of St. James, or that by the words "priests and elders" used by the Apostle, priests rightly ordained are not meant, but only elders, is justly anathematised by the Council of Trent.<sup>3</sup>

Having proved this point, let us now consider the liturgical rite by which the Sacrament is conferred.

As Extreme Unction is what is called "a sacrament of the

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 2 in Levit.

<sup>2</sup> *In Marcum.*, cap. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Sessio xiv., Can. 1, 2, 3, 4.

living"—that is to say—of those who are already in the state of grace, and as it is not meant to forgive deadly sins, but to remove only the remnants of sins, and sins which have been forgotten and which, consequently, have not been confessed in the tribunal of penance, it is always, when this is possible, preceded by confession. In preparation for its administration, there should be in readiness a table covered with a white cloth. On this table there ought to be a crucifix and two lights, a vessel of holy water, and a branch of boxwood with which to sprinkle it over the sick person, a plate on which there are three or four pieces of cotton wool, and another on which there should be some morsels of bread, and lastly a basin and ewer filled with water, with which the priest may afterwards purify his fingers of any of the holy oil which may perchance adhere to them. Out of reverence for the Sacrament, the bed also of the sick person ought to be covered with a white cloth.

As soon as the priest enters the sick room, he says: "Peace be to this house". To this salutation those present answer: "And to all that dwell therein". Having reverently placed upon the table the vessel containing the holy oil, the priest puts on a surplice and a purple stole.<sup>1</sup> Taking the crucifix, he presents it to be kissed by the sick person, and then sprinkles with holy water both him and all present, saying: "Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord! with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed, Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Have mercy on me, O God! according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities." To this verse he adds the "Glory be to the Father," after which the "Asperges me," is repeated. He then says: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit." Then, in a most beautiful prayer, he begs the blessing of God upon the sick man's abode, inviting eternal plenty, divine prosperity, serene joy, fruitful charity, and everlasting health to enter it. He asks that the demons and every kind

<sup>1</sup> The surplice is dispensed with in Protestant countries.

of malignant discord may depart from it, and that the Angel of peace may take possession of it. He invites God to bless and sanctify all who dwell in it; to put it under the guardianship of His holy Angel; to make all who dwell in it serve Him; to drive away from it all adverse powers, all fear, all perturbation.

This prayer being ended, he in another beseeches God to send his holy Angel from heaven to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who dwell in it. After this prayer there follows the "Confiteor" or general confession of sins, made in the presence of God, of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Michael, of the holy Baptist, of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the other Saints in heaven. Then is given the general absolution, as in the Sacrament of Penance, it is given before the sacramental absolution.

Making thrice over the sick person the sign of the Cross, the priest then says: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and beseeches God, by the imposition of the priest's hands, and the invocation made to all the holy Angels, Archangels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins, to extinguish in the person there lying before him all power of the devil.

Having finished these preparatory prayers, he next dips his thumb into the holy oil, and anointing with it in the form of a Cross all the principal members, that is to say, the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the lips, the hands, and the feet, says at the unction of each: "By this holy anointing and His own most loving mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sin thou hast committed by seeing, by hearing, by smelling, by speaking, by doing, or by walking". After each anointing, the places touched by the holy oil are gently rubbed with a morsel of cotton wool.

The anointings are followed by suitable petitions and responses, to which there are added three short prayers. In the first of these, after citing the words of the Apostle St. James, promulgating this holy Sacrament, he calls upon Our Redeemer to cure the infirmity of the sick man, to heal his wounds, to pardon his sins, to drive away from him all sorrow of mind and of body, and mercifully to restore to him both spiritual

and bodily health, in order that being reinstated therein through God's loving-kindness, he may be able to betake himself to his ordinary duties. In the second, he beseeches God to look upon His poor servant languishing under this infirmity of body, and to cherish the soul which He has created, that being reformed by this chastisement, he may feel that he is saved by God's healing power. In the third, addressing himself to the Omnipotent Father, the Eternal God, Who by infusing the grace of His blessing into the ailing bodies of His children, protects His own handiwork with manifold loving-kindness, he implores Him mercifully to give ear to the invocation made in His name, and after freeing His servant from sickness and restoring him to health, by His mighty hand to raise him up, by His virtue to strengthen Him, by His power to defend and restore him to His Holy Church, through Christ Our Lord. With these prayers, the Liturgy of Extreme Unction ends. The priest then purifies his fingers with the morsels of bread prepared for this purpose, and after washing them with water, gives his blessing to the sick person.

From these liturgical acts and the prayers accompanying them, it is evident that the Church wishes not only to obtain the pardon of the infirm person's sins, but to restore him to health. Hence, the Sacrament should be sought for and given, whenever the physician declares that his patient is in serious danger; for when human science confesses that its skill will probably fail to accomplish its object, then is the moment to have recourse to Almighty God Who, if He should think fit, will through the prayers of the Church do that which human skill is powerless to effect.

Therefore, Extreme Unction ought not to be put off till the malady has made so great progress and gained so firm a hold as to render it impossible, without the miraculous intervention of God, to work a cure. Instead of being, as only too many consider it to be, a forerunner and messenger of death, it is very often the Angel of God carrying in his hands the ordinary means established by God to banish disease and prolong for the humble, faithful Christian, his tenure of life.

## LITURGY OF HOLY ORDERS.

*Part I.*

## MINOR ORDERS.

IT is evident from the New Testament that Our divine Lord divided His flock into two distinct parts—those who were to govern and those who were to be the governed. To the governors or shepherds, He gave three wonderful powers which constituted them a class altogether apart from the main body of His sheep. First, the power to offer in sacrifice His own body and blood when He said to them: “Do this in memory of Me”. Second, the power to forgive sins when, having breathed upon them, He said: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained”. Third, the power to teach, when He said: “Go ye and teach all nations”. Now, the powers which Christ gave to His Apostles were destined to last till the end of time; for till the day of doom there will be men to be instructed, sinners to be forgiven, and sacrifice to be offered. Therefore, they were authorised to transmit to others the powers intrusted to them. The rite by which this is done is called the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

That it is a sacrament of the New Law is evident from the fact that there are found in it the three elements necessary for every sacrament—a sensible or visible sign in the imposition of hands; the conferring of grace, concerning which St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to Timothy, saying: “Neglect not the grace that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood”;<sup>1</sup> the institution of Christ, since this material sign confers grace. As to the matter of the Sacrament it is a generally received opinion that for Minor Orders it consists in the giving by the Bishop, and in the touching by the recipient, the various im-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.



plements used in the exercise of these Orders. But with regard to the matter of the Greater Orders, there is among theologians a divergence of opinion. Some hold that the delivery of the implements to the persons to be ordained constitutes the matter of the Greater, just as it does that of the Minor Orders. Others, that the giving of the implements together with the imposition of hands, is the matter. Others, again, that the imposition of hands is the essence, and alone constitutes the matter of Holy Orders.

This last is the commonest and safest opinion; for it rests upon the principle that the essence of the Sacrament must consist in that rite which, in the conferring of Holy Orders, has always been used by the Latin and by the Greek Church. But both Churches have ever used the imposition of hands, whereas, with respect to the giving of the implements, the Greek Church has never practised it, and in the Latin Church it is not quite certain that the custom has been invariable. However, this is merely a theoretical question; because in practice both the imposition of hands and the giving of the implements are always rigidly observed.

The minister who confers this Sacrament is a Bishop only; for though in the rite of ordination all the priests present impose hands on the persons to be ordained, yet their action is in no way of the essence of the Sacrament, but is only a ceremonial part of it. The proof which points to the Bishop only as the minister of this Sacrament is to be found in the unvarying teaching of Sacred Scripture, in the voice of tradition, and in the uniform practice of the East and of the West. As for the Minor Orders—which are not a part of the Sacrament—these may, by the authority of the Holy See, be conferred by a simple priest, who in that case becomes the extraordinary minister of these Orders.

As is well known, there are in the Sacrament of Orders, several degrees or steps which all must mount in order to reach the priesthood. These steps are seven in number, namely, ostiarius or porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon, deacon, and priest. Only these last two, that is to say, the diaconate and the priesthood are the Sacrament of Orders

properly so called, the preceding five being considered to be merely of ecclesiastical institution.

Some of these degrees, such as the diaconate and the priesthood as well as the rite by which they are conferred, are distinctly mentioned in Holy Scripture. The lesser degrees, such as those of sub-deacon, acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter, have from the earliest ages existed in the Church. Thus, St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the faithful of that city, salutes the sub-deacons, the lectors, the chanters, the porters, the labourers, the exorcists and the confessors.<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the heretic Novatus, Pope St. Cornelius ironically says: "This excellent defender of the faith has altogether forgotten that there ought to be but one Bishop in this Catholic Church (the Church of Rome). Yet he is not ignorant—for how could he be ignorant of it?—that there are in it forty-six priests, seven deacons and as many sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists and lectors, together with porters."<sup>2</sup> In the works formerly attributed to Denis the Areopagite, the author after having spoken of Bishops and priests adds these words: "As for inferior ministers, some are stationed near the gates of the holy place, others fulfil some other function of their Order. The highest among them, that is to say the deacons, unite with the priests, and, after the whole assembly has sung the profession of faith, present upon the altar the sacred bread and the chalice."<sup>3</sup>

The fourth Council of Carthage, a Council at which St. Augustine assisted, enters into the minutest details for the administration of the inferior degrees of the Sacrament of Orders. What is of faith concerning this Sacrament is, that besides the priesthood there are other Orders. Now, though there are several *degrees* in the Sacrament of Orders, there is only *one* sacrament. Each of these degrees taken by itself is not a sacrament, but only a part of a sacrament, so that he who, for example, receives but one of them, does not receive the Sacrament of Orders, but only a certain share in it.

<sup>1</sup> Epist. ad Antioch.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. ad Fabian.

<sup>3</sup> *De Eccles. Hier.*, cap. 2.

Having said thus much of the Sacrament, it remains for us to explain the various steps by which the Sacrament is reached, and the Liturgy that accompanies the reception of each of them.

Before even the least of these degrees can be received, there is a preliminary ceremony by which the aspirant to Holy Orders is made a member of the Clergy. This is called the *tonsure*, and in early times it consisted in shaving the upper part of the head, leaving below it the hair to form a species of corona or crown, in memory of the crown of thorns worn by Our Lord. Some writers affirm that St. Peter was the author of this clerical tonsure; but be that as it may, we find it in the sixth century established as a sort of initiatory rite for Holy Orders. The prayers and the ceremonies accompanying it are set down in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory. At the present day, only the monastic Orders wear the ancient form of tonsure, the secular Clergy having in Catholic countries only a small space shaved on the crown of the head. Symbolically, this shaving of the head means the destruction of vices, "by stripping themselves" as St. Paul says, "of the old man with his deeds, and by putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him Who created him".<sup>1</sup> When performing this rite, the Bishop cuts from the head only a little of the hair, and clothes the aspirant in a white surplice, emblematical of that purity which, as a member of the Clergy, he must henceforth show in his life.

After the reception of the tonsure, the first of the Minor Orders conferred is that of *ostiarius*, door-keeper or porter. In the early Church, this was an important office. The duties of him who held it were to guard the entrance to the place where the faithful assembled, to exclude infidels and prevent them from causing any disturbance to the worshippers. He kept the laity separate from the Clergy; the men from the women; and saw that silence was observed, and that nothing was done unbecoming the house of God. He announced the

<sup>1</sup> Col. iii. 9, 10.

hour of prayer ; closed the church ; adorned the altars ; lighted the lamps ; and opened the book for him who preached. In promoting aspirants to this Order, the Bishop mentions in the prayers their several duties, and then, as a sign of their office, presents to them the keys of the church. After this, they are led down to the main entrance. They unlock, open, and shut the door, and taking into their hands the rope of the bell which summons the laity to worship, toll it for a moment or two.

Higher than the Order of door-keeper is that of lector or reader, inasmuch as it approaches nearer to the Holy Eucharist. The lector's functions were to keep the Sacred Books, by no means an unimportant office in times of persecution, when the faithful custody of them and a refusal to deliver them into pagan hands, meant a cruel death ; to read from them, in presence of the people assembled for divine worship, lessons out of the Old and the New Testament ; also, to read for these congregations, those passages upon which the Bishop or the priest was about to preach ; to chant the lessons ; and, lastly, to bless bread. In conferring this office or Order, the Bishop makes the recipient of it touch the Lectionary or Book of Lessons, saying : " Receive this book, and be reader of the word of God. If you be faithful in your office, you shall have part with those who, from the beginning, have wisely delivered this holy word ".<sup>1</sup>

The third Minor Order is that of exorcist whose office is to cast out devils. That the evil spirit is sometimes suffered to seize upon the bodies of men, and in various ways to torment them, is an incontrovertible fact of which many instances are recorded in the Sacred Scripture. That Jesus Christ gave to His Apostles and to their successors power to expel these unclean spirits, is also a fact which cannot be gainsaid : " He gave them power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils ".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The formulas used in conferring Minor Orders are taken from the fourth Council of Carthage held in A.D. 398.

<sup>2</sup> St. Mark iii. 15.

The power thus given to the Apostles, the Bishop, as one of their successors, gives to those who are to exercise this office. But before advancing them to this Order, he explains to them, as he has already explained to those who have received the other Orders, the nature of the office about to be conferred: "Being about to be raised to the degree of exorcist, you ought, my dear children, to know the power which you receive. It is the exorcist's office to cast out devils; to say to those who do not communicate—"Retire"; to prepare water for the holy ministry. Therefore, you receive this day, power to impose hands on energumens, which imposition of hands joined with the words of the exorcism and the grace of the Holy Spirit, expels from the bodies of the possessed, impure spirits. Therefore, being called to drive out devils from the bodies of your brethren, study to purify both your own bodies and your own souls from every stain and blemish, lest you yourselves should become the slaves of him whom you have expelled from others. From the Order which you receive, learn to conquer your passions, that in you the enemy may find nothing that he can claim as his own; for then will you successfully impose your commands upon the devil, when you yourselves shall have first resisted all his suggestions."

Then taking the Book of Exorcisms, the Bishop makes the *ordinandi* lay their hands upon it, saying: "Receive this book; commit it to memory; and have power to impose hands on energumens, both those who have been baptised and those who are still catechumens".<sup>1</sup>

Though this office is intrusted to the inferior ministers of the sanctuary, the exercise of it is reserved to priests, and even they never presume to exercise it, except at the command of the Bishop. But though the exorcist is not allowed to perform this special function of his office, his other duties are to assist those commissioned to do it; to prepare all that is necessary for blessing holy water; to accompany the priest when he sprinkles with it the faithful assembled for divine worship; and to carry the vessel which contains it.

<sup>1</sup> *Pontific. Rom. Ordo Exorcist.*

The fourth Minor Order is that of acolyte, a word derived from the Greek and meaning "follower or attendant". This name is given to those who are empowered to accompany, and to assist, the higher ministers of the altar in the execution of their sublime and sacred offices. The acolyte prepares the fire for the thurible. He carries this, and at times offers incense. He makes ready the wine and the water for the Holy Sacrifice; during Mass, he presents these elements to the sub-deacon; also he lights the candles on the altar, and at the singing of the Gospel, and in processions, carries in his hand a lighted candle or a torch. The lights thus employed during these holy functions are not used for the purpose of enabling the sacred ministers to see, but they are carried as signs of joy and as emblems to call to our minds that "light which enlightenth every man that cometh into this world".<sup>1</sup>

In conferring this Order, the Bishop, after mentioning in detail the various duties which it implies, says: "Study in a worthy manner to exercise these functions. For, you cannot please the Lord if, while carrying in your hands during the service of God flaming torches, your life offers to the eyes of others only darkness and evil example. Remember, that the Truth hath said: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven,' and that the great Apostle also has said, 'Shine in the midst of a perverse generation as stars in the world'. But the Apostle himself indicates what is that light which he so earnestly recommends, when he says: 'The fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth'. Therefore, be instant in the practice of justice, goodness, and truth, in order that in the Church of God, you may enlighten both yourselves and others. Then, while offering yourselves in sacrifice to God by a chaste life and by good works, you will worthily offer the water and the wine of the Holy Sacrifice, a blessing which may God in His mercy grant unto you."

After these words he presents to them, first, a candlestick, in which there is an unlighted candle, and then, an empty cruet.

<sup>1</sup> St. John i. 9.

The *ordinandi* touch each of these, and while intrusting to them the implements of their office, the Bishop accompanies the giving of them by a form of words which points out to the acolytes the use which they are to make of them.

The offices of those who receive these Minor Orders are most honourable, and they ought to be held in the highest esteem by those who are privileged to perform them. As Amalarius observes, they were exercised by Our Lord Himself. "He fulfilled the office of *ostiarius* or door-keeper, when, fired with zeal for the sanctity of His Father's house, He drove from its sacred precincts those who profaned it by their traffic. He acted as lector or reader, when in the Synagogue He read to the people from the Prophet. He performed the office of exorcist, when He delivered men from the thralldom of the devils who had taken possession of their bodies. Lastly, by willing to be the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, He performed the functions of an acolyte, whose duty it is, in the assemblies of the faithful, to carry a lighted torch."<sup>1</sup>

## LITURGY OF HOLY ORDERS.

### *Part II.*

#### THE SUB-DIACONATE AND THE DIACONATE.

AFTER the four Minor Orders, the next step in the ecclesiastical hierarchy is the sub-diaconate. The Greek Church regarded this as a Minor Order, and though conferred by the imposition of hands, never considered it to be a part of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, for being only of ecclesiastical institution, it might in course of time be superseded by another degree. The Latin Church also, until the twelfth century, ranked it among the Minor Orders. At that date, however, she raised it to the dignity of a Major or Greater Order, without, be it observed, considering it to be a part of the Sacrament.

<sup>1</sup> Amalarius *apud* Boucarut, *Instruct. Theolog. sur les Sacr.*, tom. iv.

Of this fact, we have indisputable evidence from the first canon of the Synod of Beneventum, held in 1091 under Urban II. That canon ordains that no one shall be raised to the episcopate unless he have previously, in a religious manner, lived in Sacred Orders, which it states to be the diaconate and the priesthood, as is abundantly and beyond all doubt proved by the unvarying tradition of the primitive Church. The sub-diaconate, therefore, may be defined to be: "an Order or sacred rite by which there is given to the recipient of it, power to minister to the deacon and the priest, in the Sacrifice of the Mass".

For the reception of this Order, the Church requires that the candidate should have lived in good repute in the Minor Orders; that he should be sufficiently instructed in letters and in all that regards the office to which he aspires; that during the year which he must spend in the exercise of this office, he should on Sundays and on festivals approach to Holy Communion. Should the Bishop, however, deem it necessary, he may dispense with the interval of a whole year, and after the lapse of one day promote him to the next Order. Those who are advanced to the sub-diaconate undertake, by the reception of that Order, to observe throughout their lives the grave obligation of clerical celibacy or perpetual chastity; for, by their office they are called upon to handle the sacred things of the Holy Mysteries, and, therefore, according to the injunction of Isaias, they must lead a spotlessly pure life: "Be ye clean, ye that carry the vessels of the Lord".<sup>1</sup>

On presenting themselves before the Bishop, for the reception of this Order, the candidates are vested in amice, alb, and girdle, bearing on their left arms the maniple and the tunic, and holding in their right hands a lighted candle. Standing in the sanctuary, facing the Prelate, they listen to the few words which he addresses to them previously to taking that irrevocable step which for ever binds them to the service of the altar. "Dearly beloved children!" he says to them, "as you are to be advanced to the Order of the sub-diaconate, you ought

<sup>1</sup> Isaias lii. 11.



again and again attentively to consider what a burden you this day, of your own free will, take upon yourselves. For, up to this present moment you are free, and you may, if you please, betake yourselves to worldly pursuits ; but if you receive this Order, you will no longer be able to loose yourselves from the bond by which it for ever unites you to God Whose service is a royal one. By the aid of divine grace, you will have to observe perpetual chastity, and to remain irrevocably attached to the service of the Church. Therefore, while there is yet time, reflect ; and if you persist in your holy design, in the name of the Lord come up hither ! ” At this invitation, they make one step forwards, by which act they signify their will to take upon themselves the obligations of this holy state. Then, at a given signal, they prostrate upon the earth, and the Bishop rising, kneels and recites the Litany of the Saints.<sup>1</sup>

Just before the “ Agnus Dei ” he rises, and turning towards the *ordinandi*, thrice makes over them the sign of the Cross, beseeching God to bless, to sanctify, and to consecrate these His chosen servants, and then kneels till the conclusion of the Litany. This being ended, he once more takes his seat upon the faldstool placed before the middle of the altar, and before proceeding with the rite by which the Order of the subdiaconate is bestowed, addresses to them a few words in which are explained the duties of the office about to be received by them. These duties are, to assist the deacon, and to serve him in the functions of his ministry ; at solemn Masses, to sing the Epistle ; to pour a few drops of water into the wine which the deacon has prepared for the Sacrifice ; to take care of the sacred vessels and of the altar-linen ; to wash the palls, the purificatories, and the corporals ; to receive the offerings of the people ; in all processions, to carry the Cross ; to hold the book for the deacon while the latter chants the Gospel, and at its conclusion, to carry the book to be kissed by the Bishop or the celebrant.

Having explained to them these various duties, each in his turn advances and kneels before the Bishop, who holding in

<sup>1</sup> In High Masses this is sung by two cantors.

his hands an empty chalice with its paten, presents it to the candidate to be touched, saying: "Behold what manner of ministry is given to you; I therefore admonish you so to conduct yourself as to please God". The assistant archdeacon then gives to the *ordinandus* the cruets, one of which is filled with wine, the other with water; also the basin and the towel, all which he touches, as he did the chalice. The Bishop then rises and recites two prayers, after which he resumes his seat, in order to invest the *ordinandi* with the insignia of their office. As each of them kneels before him, he takes the amice which lies like a hood on the sub-deacon's neck, and having drawn it over the head, puts upon the left arm the maniple—which is the distinguishing ornament of the sub-diaconate—and lastly vests him in the tunic, accompanying each of these acts by a suitable prayer. Then there is presented to each the Book of the Epistles which the Bishop empowers him to read in the church during the celebration of Masses both for the living and for the dead.

Ordinarily speaking, the sub-deacon must spend a whole year in the exercise of his duties before being advanced to the next step which is the diaconate; but, as we have already observed, this interval may be dispensed with by the Bishop whenever he considers that there is a reasonable cause for so doing.

That the diaconate is a part of the Sacrament of Orders, and, consequently, that it is of divine institution, is the teaching generally received in the Church. For, when the Apostles ordained the seven deacons, they prayed and imposed hands upon them.<sup>1</sup> In this act, we have the matter and the form of a sacrament. The effect of its reception is pointedly referred to in the case of St. Stephen, and we may logically infer that what the rite did for him, it accomplished also in the rest: "he was full of grace and fortitude" in consequence of it, and he had the power of working great wonders and miracles among the people. There are, therefore, to be found in the diaconate all the requisites for a sacrament—the visible

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 6, 8.

sign, in the imposition of hands ; the conferring of grace ; and consequently, the institution of Christ. The Apostles, therefore, must have acted as they did, in consequence of an injunction left to them by Our Lord. With this they complied, when the necessity for their compliance with it arose. Such is the traditional teaching of the Church, a teaching on which the Council of Trent has set its seal by pronouncing *anathema* upon all who shall dare to deny a hierarchy established in the Church by Christ, which hierarchy, as it affirms, consists of Bishops, priests, and ministers, the first among these last-named being deacons.<sup>1</sup>

The striking difference between the rite of their ordination and that of the sub-deacons, is another proof of the sacramental nature of this Order ; for when the sub-deacons present themselves to receive the Order of the diaconate, the arch-deacon addressing the Bishop says : “ Most Reverend Father ! our Holy Mother the Catholic Church asks you to ordain these sub-deacons here present, to the burden of the diaconate ”. To the Bishop’s question : “ Dost thou know them to be worthy to take this step ? ” he replies : “ I both know and testify that they are worthy to bear the weight of this office ”. For these good tidings the Bishop thanks God, and then, in pursuance of an ancient custom, calls upon any one present who may chance to know of some reason which would prevent the candidate from taking this step, boldly to come forwards and declare it.

After pausing for a few seconds to give time to any one who may think fit to present himself and perform this duty, he next proceeds to lay before the aspirants to the diaconate its various duties. These are, to serve at the altar ; to offer with the priest the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, not as consecrators, but as the people’s representatives ; to sing the Gospel ; to preach to and to instruct the faithful ; in all solemn functions of the Church, to assist the Bishop or the celebrant of the Mass ; in case of necessity, to administer solemn Baptism, and when no such case arises, to do so only

<sup>1</sup> *Concil. Trident.*, Sess. xxiii., Can. 6.

with the permission of the Bishop; during church services, to give the people notice when to kneel, to prostrate, to go forwards in processions; to dismiss them at the end of the Mass; and, in everything that regards the external government of the church, to carry out the Bishop's orders.

In the days when the faithful received Communion under both kinds, the deacon carried the chalice and ministered to them the cup of the Lord. He also carried to the sick Holy Communion under the form of bread only. Another of his duties used to be the visitation of the poor and the distribution among them of the alms of the faithful. Also, when Baptism used to be administered by immersion, the deacon stood by to help the baptised to go forth from the font. In the case of females this office was performed by some aged women who devoted themselves to the service of the church, and who, in consequence of performing these duties, were called deaconesses. In the seventh century they were suppressed because of abuses which had crept in among them.

Having explained to the aspirants to the diaconate the various duties of their Order, the Bishop recites two prayers in which he begs God to pour into their hearts all the blessings which will enable them worthily to perform the levite's office. There follows after these a long preface which, in solemn Masses, the Bishop chants. Towards the end of it he pauses, and, as the *ordinandi* kneel before him, he lays upon each of their heads his right hand, saying: "Receive the Holy Ghost that you may have strength to resist the devil and his temptations, in the name of the Lord".<sup>1</sup>

He does not impose upon them *both* hands, in order to show that the deacon does not receive full priestly powers. After thus imposing his hand on each, he resumes the chanting of the preface till he reaches the words: "Through the same Jesus Christ, etc.". These words he pronounces in the ordinary reading tone, and having ended them he sits, and the deacons draw nigh to be vested in the garments of their office. The stole, worn over the left shoulder, is the distinctive mark

<sup>1</sup> Accipe Spiritum Sanctum, ad robur, et ad resistendum diabolo, etc.

of the diaconate. In giving it to the deacon, the Bishop says : "Receive from the hand of God this white stole ; fulfil thy ministry ; for God is powerful to increase in you His grace, Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever, Amen." Then, taking the dalmatic, the Bishop vests him with it, saying: "May the Lord clothe thee with the garment of salvation, and the robe of joy, and ever encompass thee with the dalmatic of justice, in the name of the Lord. Amen." Lastly presenting to him the Book of the Gospels, he says : "Receive power to read the Gospel in the church, both for the living and the dead, in the name of the Lord. Amen."

After this, the Bishop reads two prayers in which he implores God, first, to fill the newly ordained deacons with the blessings of the Holy Spirit by which they may acquire grace, and give unto others the example of a blameless life ; and, secondly, to enlighten them with a spiritual affection that they may grow in purity of life, that they may be worthy to join the company of the seven deacons, and that they may please God by the practice of all those virtues with which they ought to be endowed.

## LITURGY OF HOLY ORDERS.

### *Part III.*

#### THE PRIESTHOOD.

THE next Order received after the diaconate is the priesthood, a divinely instituted sacred Order or sacrament, in which there is given the power of consecrating the body and the blood of the Lord, and of remitting and retaining sins. This is the external priesthood, the priesthood properly so-called ; for besides this there is an internal priesthood, one so-called only by analogy. To this secondary priesthood all men are raised by their Baptism. St. Peter speaking of it, exhorts all to be as living stones, built up as a living house, a holy priest-

hood to offer spiritual sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> Alluding to it, St. John says, that Christ having washed us from our sins in His own blood, has made us priests unto God and His Father.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet David invites those who served under the Old Law, among whom also this kind of priesthood existed, to offer the only sacrifice that they were empowered to offer: "Offer up the sacrifice of justice. Sacrifice the sacrifice of praise. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit . . . a contrite heart."<sup>3</sup> When, however, we speak of the priesthood, it is not of this latter that we speak, but of that external priesthood which Jesus Christ instituted in the Church.

The existence of this is of faith, as the Council of Trent teaches, supporting that teaching by the authority of the Church and of the Sacred Scripture. That Christ did not intend to make all His followers members of this priesthood is evident from the words in which He commissioned those who were to offer the external sacrifice of the New Law; for He made priests, only those unto whom He said: "Do this in memory of Me". But these words were addressed to the Apostles only, not to the faithful in general; and, therefore, only the Apostles and those who succeed them in the ministry were intended by Him to be priests of the external or real sacrifice.

After these preliminary remarks, let us now consider the Liturgy by which this sacred Order is conferred. As in the case of the deacon's ordination, so also in this of the priest, the Church causes the archdeacon to petition in her name that the Bishop would promote to the office of the priesthood the deacons there assembled. Concerning them also, the Bishop inquires whether he knows them to be worthy to undertake so weighty a charge; and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he thanks God for the blameless life which divine grace has enabled the candidates to lead. Before, however, advancing farther in the sacred rite, he invites those who may know of any cause rendering the candidate unworthy of the

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. Peter ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. i. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. iv. 6; cvi. 22; l., 19.

Order about to be conferred, to come forwards and fearlessly to make it known. Pausing for a brief space to afford all an opportunity of making this protest, if any such is necessary, he next proceeds to prepare the minds of the *ordinandi* for what they are about to receive, by rehearsing to them the various duties incumbent upon priests.

These duties are: to offer up sacrifice to God; to bless both persons and things; to govern the people intrusted to their charge; to preach to them the word of God; and to admit, by the sacred rite of Baptism, members into the Church. Those who aspire to exercise these functions should, he tells them, approach to receive the power of so doing, only with great fear, after having previously by the acquisition of heavenly wisdom, by the leading of a blameless life, and by a long practice of virtue, made themselves in some degree worthy "to ascend unto the mountain of the Lord". For consider, he continues, how it comes about that men should be chosen to share in the government of God's people. Seeing that Moses alone was unable to rule the children of Israel, God ordered him to choose from among the people seventy men whom he knew to be, in every sense of the word, truly *elders* among the Israelites. Such as these elders were, will all candidates approaching to receive the priesthood be, if, after having kept by the aid of the sevenfold spirit, the ten commandments, they be found righteous, and ripe both in knowledge and in good works. A figure of such men were the seventy-two disciples whom Our Lord chose, and sent two by two to preach the Gospel, thereby making known to us by word and by deed that the ministers of His Church must be perfect in faith and in works, having the twofold love of God and of their neighbour, in which love the whole law consists. Therefore, aspirants to the priesthood must study to resemble these chosen few; that by the grace of God they may help Moses and the Apostles, that is to say, the Bishops who were prefigured by them. Thus, the Church of God will be surrounded, adorned, and ruled with wondrous variety, when in it some are Pontiffs, others priests of a lower order, others deacons, others again sub-deacons, and when from men

of various degrees of dignity there is formed one body of Christ. Therefore, candidates for this office must lead a pure, holy life, and recognising that what they touch while celebrating the Divine Mysteries is the body of Christ, must mortify their flesh and curb its unruly desires. Their teaching must be a sort of medicine for the people under their charge; their lives, a sweet odour to delight the Church; their preaching made persuasive by the example which they give, rather than by the words in which it is conveyed.

At the conclusion of this address, the Bishop imposes both hands on each of the candidates, and all the priests present, vested in surplice and stole, do the same, the Bishop meanwhile holding his right hand extended over the *ordinandi*. All having imposed hands, the Bishop prays Almighty God to multiply His heavenly gifts in these His servants whom He has chosen for the office of priesthood, that what through His condescension they receive, they may by His help obtain through Christ Our Lord. This imposition of hands, together with the prayer which follows it, is considered by all theologians to be the *essence* of the Sacrament, and it raises those who but a moment before were deacons, to the lofty dignity of the priesthood.

This prayer is followed by another, to which there succeeds a long preface, on the conclusion of which the Bishop clothes the newly ordained priests in the vestments of their office. Taking the stole which, as deacons they wore upon the left shoulder, he crosses it upon their breasts, saying: "Receive the yoke of the Lord, for His yoke is sweet and His burden is light". Then taking the chasuble, the after-part of which is folded, to show that the full power of the priesthood is not yet bestowed upon them, he says: "Receive the priestly vesture by which is understood charity, for God is powerful to increase in thee charity and a perfect work". After this, he again breathes forth for them a prayer in which he asks that every sacerdotal virtue may be infused into their hearts.

On the conclusion of this he kneels and intones the "Veni Creator". At the end of the first strophe he rises, and seating himself upon the faldstool placed before the middle of the



altar, each of the newly ordained priests comes forwards in turn, kneels before him, and holds out his hands for the sacred unction. The Bishop anoints them with the oil of catechumens, praying God by this unction and by his (the Bishop's) blessing, to consecrate them to His service.

The hands, between the fingers of which some morsels of bread are placed, are then bound with a white napkin. In the next place, a chalice in which there is wine mingled with a few drops of water, and covered with a paten on which there is an unconsecrated bread, is brought to the Bishop. Holding this in his hands, he causes each of the candidates to touch simultaneously the chalice, the paten, and the host, saying: "Receive power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Masses for the living and for the dead, in the name of the Lord. Amen."

When the newly ordained priests have purified their hands from the holy oil, they form in a semicircle behind the Bishop, join with him in the celebration of the Mass, and from him receive Holy Communion. Then the Bishop begins that beautiful antiphon which is continued by the choir: "I will not now call you servants, but friends, because you know all things that I have done in the midst of you. Alleluia. Receive in you the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. He it is that the Father will send upon you. Alleluia. You are my friends, if you shall do what I command you. Receive in you the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. He it is that the Father will send upon you, the Paraclete."

During the chanting of this antiphon, the Bishop, turning towards the ordained, listens while they recite the Apostles' Creed, as a profession of faith. He then takes his seat upon the faldstool, and each of them in turn presents himself before him. Imposing both hands upon each, he says: "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained". Having by these words received the full power of the priesthood, the after-part of the chasuble is, in token of this pleni-

tude, unfolded and allowed to hang down to its full length. While loosing the folds of the chasuble, the Bishop says: "May the Lord clothe thee with the vesture of innocence". Then taking the priest's hands between his own, he says to him: "Dost thou promise to me and to my successors, reverence and obedience?" to which question the priest replies: "I do promise". Thereupon the Bishop kisses him upon the cheek, saying: "May the peace of the Lord be always with thee;" to this wish the priest answers, "Amen".

On the conclusion of this ceremony, the Bishop bestows upon the newly ordained, his solemn blessing, saying: "May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost descend upon you, that you may be blessed in the sacerdotal Order, and that you may offer peace-offerings for the sins and the offences of the people, to Almighty God, to Whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." The Mass is then continued till the "Ite Missa est" has been said, and the last blessing has been given. Before reading the Gospel of St. John, the Bishop once again takes his seat upon the faldstool and delivers a short address to the newly ordained. He bids them seriously reflect upon the Order just bestowed upon them, and weigh well the burden imposed upon their shoulders. He exhorts them to live so holily and religiously as to please God and merit His grace, which he beseeches God in His mercy to bestow upon them. He then imposes upon each of those who have received Orders, certain prayers, but upon the priests the duty of saying three Masses, and finally asks them to pray for him. He then rises, and while proceeding to the throne to unvest, recites the last Gospel, that is to say, the Gospel of St. John.

Thus ends the touching and impressive ceremony of a priest's ordination. Those who are privileged to witness it should humbly ask God to make those who have been ordained zealous priests of Holy Church, that they may walk worthy of the high vocation to which He has called them; and that they themselves may deserve to be priests of that internal sacrifice which devout men are everywhere and at all times able to offer unto God.

## LITURGY OF HOLY ORDERS.

*Part IV.*

## THE EPISCOPATE.

THE plenitude of Holy Orders is the episcopate. The priesthood does not contain the episcopate, but the episcopate contains the priesthood. Therefore, the episcopal Order is superior to the priestly Order—a conclusion which is of faith—for the Council of Trent anathematises any one who shall dare to gainsay it. But whether this superiority, though certain, is of divine institution—*jure divino*—the Council does not expressly state, and, therefore, we cannot affirm it of the episcopate, as we can affirm it of the episcopate's superiority to the priesthood. Nevertheless, since the arguments establishing its superiority to the priesthood point out that this superiority is to be traced to the divine appointment, you will be able after we have briefly put these arguments before you, to prove to yourself not only its superiority to the priesthood, but its superiority by divine right.

Until the days of the heretic Aërius, the Church supporting her teaching not only by Sacred Scripture, but by the voice of an uninterrupted tradition, everywhere proclaimed the superiority of the episcopal to the priestly Order. According to the testimony of St. Epiphanius,<sup>1</sup> Aërius seems to have been the first to call in question this generally accepted truth. "In what respect," asks the innovator, does the Bishop surpass the priest? There is no difference whatever between them. For one is the Order of both, and of both, the honour and the dignity are the same." Such however is not the teaching which the Sacred Scripture puts before us. For, in the pages of the Inspired Volume, Christ is represented as setting the twelve Apostles over the seventy-two disciples. In the infant Church, then, there must have been some sort of distinction

<sup>1</sup> *Hæres.*, 75, c. 3.

between these two classes of men. In what does that distinction consist? According to the common opinion of the Fathers, it consists in the distinction which Christ made between Bishops and priests, the episcopal Order being represented by the Apostles, and the priestly Order by the seventy-two disciples.

St. Clement of Rome, though styling the Bishop of a diocese "priest," nevertheless distinctly points out the superiority of the Bishop's Order to that of the priest, by assigning to the Bishop peculiar offices which the priest is not able to perform: "To the supreme priest" he says, "his own peculiar functions are given; and to the priests their proper place is assigned; also to the levites their offices are portioned out".<sup>1</sup>

St. Ignatius of Antioch in several parts of his writings, but particularly in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Magnesians, divides the ecclesiastical hierarchy into three grades, giving the highest to Bishops: "I exhort you to make this your aim—to do everything in the divine harmony of God; the Bishop presiding in the place of God, the priests and the deacons who are most dear to me in the place of the apostolic senate". In these two Fathers we have the testimony of the first and second centuries.

In the third century, St. Clement of Alexandria bears witness for the Greeks, and St. Cyprian for the Latins: "In the Church," says St. Clement, "there are progressions or grades, to wit, of Bishops, priests, and deacons".<sup>2</sup> "On Bishops," writes St. Cyprian, "the Church is constituted, and every act of the Church is governed by these same superiors."<sup>3</sup>

To this fact it is owing that the ancient Fathers have with the greatest care transmitted to us lists of the Bishops from apostolic times till their own age, so that we find the foundation stone of each church to have been either an Apostle or some Bishop appointed by them or by their successors. Therefore, in their contests with the heretical followers of Aërius, it is to these successions that they bring

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Epist. ad Corinth.*, c. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Strom.*, lib. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist.* 26.

their adversaries, as to the test which convicts their doctrine of novelty and of falsehood. If in addition to these witnesses we consult the most ancient rituals both of the Eastern and of the Western Church, we shall find that in them there is constantly made a distinction between Bishops and priests, and that the superiority of Bishops to priests is traced to Christ Himself, as the author of the difference between their respective Orders.<sup>1</sup>

Having pointed out that the episcopate and the priesthood, though one as to essence, are different in the degree of power assigned to each—the episcopate being the plenitude of Orders, whereas the priesthood is restricted both in power and in jurisdiction—we will now proceed to consider the Liturgy by which the episcopate is conferred.

The priest who is to be raised to the episcopal Order is first chosen for that high office by the votes of the Cathedral Chapter. In the early ages of the Church, the priests of each diocese, after consulting the magistrates and the people, usually elected one of their number, or of some other diocese, to exercise this pastoral office. But in the course of time innumerable abuses having sprung from this method of procedure, the ecclesiastical authorities restricted the right of election to the Canons only. In some Catholic countries it is the Government that presents the name of the candidate, but even in these cases it is the Pope that chooses the man who, in his opinion, is best fitted to occupy the episcopal chair. When all the preliminaries of election have been gone through, and the Papal Brief confirming it has been received, a day is fixed for the ceremony of consecration.

For this function, a consecrating Bishop and two assistant Bishops are requisite; but in case of necessity, the places of these latter may, by dispensation from Rome, be supplied by two priests. When everything is ready in the church in which the ceremony is to take place, and when all those who are to take part in the function are assembled, the Brief authorising the consecration is read. Then the consecrating Bishop ex-

<sup>1</sup> Perrone, *De Ordine*, cap. 3.

amines the elect, in faith and in morals, putting to him upon these matters all the questions which are to be found in the Pontifical. At the end of this examination, he enumerates the various duties of the episcopal office. These are: to act as judge in the Church of God; to interpret both for Clergy and for laity the meaning of difficult passages in Scripture and in ecclesiastical law; to consecrate Bishops; to ordain priests and other ministers of the sanctuary; to offer up the Holy Sacrifice; to baptise and to confirm.

In order to obtain the aid of the Saints, in the great act about to be performed, the Litany is next sung, while the elect lies prostrate upon the predella beside the consecrator, who kneels at a faldstool placed opposite to the centre of the altar. Before the concluding supplication, the consecrator rises, and thrice solemnly prays God, first, to bless the elect; then, to bless and to sanctify him; lastly, to bless, to sanctify, and to consecrate him. On the conclusion of the Litany, the elect rises from his recumbent posture and kneels before the consecrator who stands in the middle of the altar. The two assistant Prelates advance, and stand behind the elect. Then the consecrator, having received from one of the masters of ceremonies, the open Book of the Gospels, with the aid of one of the assistant Bishops, lays it upon the shoulders of the elect, so that the upper part of the book touches his neck, the text of it being upon the shoulders, and the outside of the cover turned towards the assistant Bishops. Having done this, a cleric kneels behind the elect and keeps the book in its place until the moment when it has to be given into the hands of the future Bishop. Then the consecrator and the assistant Bishops laying hands upon his head say: "Receive the Holy Ghost". This imposition of hands, together with the words accompanying and the prayers following it, is commonly regarded as the matter and the form of the Sacrament.

When these last-mentioned prayers are ended, the consecrating Bishop sits upon the faldstool placed in the middle of the predella, and the newly made Bishop kneels before him. A vessel containing sacred chrism is then presented to the consecrator who with it anoints first the head of the candi-

date, and then the hands. As we have already remarked, it is with the oil of catechumens that the priest's hands are anointed; but here, in the case of a Bishop, it is holy chrism that is used, for this, in a special manner, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the Church makes this distinction, in order to point out to us that a Bishop receives, with far greater plenitude than does a priest, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as on him is poured forth the fulness of the priesthood.

The insignia of the episcopal office are then presented to him. First, there is put into his hands the pastoral staff, the head of which is fashioned like a shepherd's crook, in order to show that he is now vested with authority to govern the flock committed to his charge; to correct its vices; to administer to it justice; to cherish in it virtues; and to possess it in peace. Next, there is blessed and put upon the third finger of his right hand the ring of office, to signify that he is now espoused to the Church over which he has been appointed, and therefore, that he must love it and guard it from every spot and stain. Then, there is delivered into his hands the Book of the Gospels, and he is told to preach its doctrine to the people committed to his care.

Finally, at the end of the Mass the consecrator blesses and puts upon his head a mitre, by which is signified the helmet of salvation. While so doing, he prays God to make him terrible to the adversaries of the faith, and valiant in warring against their errors and their vices. The gloves are then blessed and put upon his hands, and the consecrator rising from the faldstool takes the new Bishop by the right hand, while the first of the assistant Bishops takes him by the left. He is thus conducted by them to the episcopal throne—if the consecration has taken place in the new Bishop's Cathedral—but if not, to the faldstool.

Having seated him upon it and given into his left hand the pastoral staff, the consecrator turns towards the altar, and having taken off the mitre, intones the "Te Deum". As soon as this hymn of jubilee has been taken up by the choir, the assistant Bishops lead the newly consecrated Bishop through the church, to give his blessing to the assembled

people, while the consecrator remains standing in his place at the altar. The new Bishop with the two assistant Bishops having returned to the sanctuary, takes his seat either upon the throne or upon the faldstool, until the "Te Deum" is ended, while the assistants, without their mitres, stand with the consecrator. At the end of the hymn, the consecrator intones, and the choir takes up the antiphon: "May thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand exalted, may justice and judgment be the supports of thy throne. Glory be to the Father," etc.

After this antiphon, the Mass is continued till after the solemn blessing given by the celebrating prelate, who having resumed his mitre, goes to the Gospel-corner of the altar. There he is joined by the assistant Bishops. Then the newly consecrated Bishop, holding in his left hand the pastoral staff, and with his head crowned by the mitre, advances towards the consecrator, and genuflecting thrice, sings thrice, but each time in a higher key, the salutation: "Ad multos annos". After the third salutation, he is received with the kiss of peace, by the consecrator and by each of the assistant Bishops. The consecrator then begins the Gospel of St. John and continues the recitation of it while proceeding to his throne, where having finished it, he unvests, while the newly consecrated and the assistant Bishops likewise unvest. A procession is then usually formed, and all retire. Thus ends the solemn function of a Bishop's consecration.

## VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

FROM what we have said when treating of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, it will be seen that the priesthood, of which the episcopate is the plenitude, is an office instituted by Christ for the purpose of carrying on the work for which He assumed our human nature. That work is the salvation of souls. For the accomplishment of it, He first chose a body of men to whom He imparted knowledge which enabled them to be unto others, guides to the kingdom of God. Into them He



breathed His own spirit and power, authorising them to transmit that spirit and that power to their successors. He laid down His life to pay men's ransom, and then instituted ways and means for applying to them the infinite worth of that ransom. Hence the priest's office is to offer up for them that real though commemorative Sacrifice which Christ commanded His Apostles to present to His Father; to bless the people in His name; to teach and to rule that portion of His flock which shall be intrusted to him; to minister to it the Sacraments by which His merits are conveyed to souls—such as Baptism, Penance, the Eucharist, Extreme Unction, and the rest. This is a most exalted and most holy office, an office which not every one is able to fill.

Therefore, it will be necessary to inquire what qualifications are requisite, in order to give to a man a reasonable hope that, in taking upon himself that office, he will be able to accomplish its duties, and to comply with the obligations which it imposes.

In the first place, it is necessary that he who wishes to be raised to the office of the priesthood, should have received from God a *vocation* or calling to that exalted dignity. Even in the old dispensation, not every one was eligible for the sacerdotal or for even the levitical office. These were confined to a special tribe, specially appointed by God Himself. When Christ came to establish His Church, He called to Himself, in order to make them priests, certain men chosen from the whole Jewish nation. These in their turn selected others in whom they saw signs of this divine call whispered into their hearts. Hence, St. Paul says that no man takes this honour upon himself, but only those who are called unto it by God, as Aaron was.<sup>1</sup> Even Our divine Lord Himself "did not glorify Himself that He might be made a high priest, but He Who said to Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," appointed Him to it.

Fully aware of this, St. Peter, when about to fill the place vacated by the unhappy Judas, first called upon his fellow Apostles and those who, after Our Lord's ascension, had re-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. v. 4.

turned to the upper room in Jerusalem, to choose some one who had been with them from the baptism of John till the ascension of Our Lord into heaven. Two persons, Joseph and Matthias, were then set before them. Then praying they said : "Thou, Lord, Who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two *Thou hast chosen* to take the place of this ministry".<sup>1</sup> Our Lord Himself points out that God gives this call, saying : "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, is a thief and a robber. . . . I am the door."<sup>2</sup> Hence, no one must dare to enter the sheepfold, in order to be a shepherd to Christ's sheep, unless the Master of the sheep calls him to that office.

On another occasion, when speaking to His Apostles, He plainly tells them that their calling to this office comes from Himself : "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you".<sup>3</sup> In another Gospel, after telling them that the harvest of souls is very great, but that the labourers are few, He again insists upon this fact, that the call to the work of gathering in this harvest must come from Him, for He says : "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send labourers into His harvest".<sup>4</sup> Consequently, any one who presumes to climb into the sheepfold instead of passing through the door, or to enter the harvest field without being chosen for that work by the Master, may with justice be looked upon as were those men of whom we read in the prophecy of Jeremias : "I did not send Prophets, yet they ran ; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied".<sup>5</sup> It is evident, therefore, that a divine call to undertake the office of the priesthood is the first qualification to be looked for in any one who presents himself at the altar to receive the imposition of hands, which impresses on the soul the character of the priesthood.

If this is true, and if no one must presume to enter the sanctuary unless he has received a call from the Lord of the sanctuary, we may reasonably ask, how shall any one be able to know, or how shall those whose business it is to test

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 24.

<sup>2</sup> St. John x. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 16.

<sup>4</sup> St. Luke x. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xxiii. 21.

the genuineness of the call, be able to perceive that an invitation has been given by God to undertake the office of the priesthood? Both the person who has received the call from God, and those who by their office are expected to discover whether it is a true call or not, will be able to know this by means of certain signs which are sure indications of its existence. For, God never calls any one to any office without having first endowed him with the qualities necessary for its accomplishment. Hence, any one called to the priesthood is sure to have those natural and those supernatural gifts which will make him a worthy minister of the Gospel.

Therefore, he must, in the first place, have sufficient natural ability to discharge with efficiency the duties falling to the lot of a priest. A priest has to teach to others the Christian doctrine; he has to preach; to hear confessions; to give counsel. Consequently, he must possess a sufficiency of brain power to fulfil these duties, if not brilliantly, at least efficiently. Hence, an aptitude or ability to acquire knowledge is one of the first requisites in one who would be a priest, and the possession of this ability is one of the signs, not indeed of a divine call to the office, but of his fitness to comply with that call should God vouchsafe to give it.

The next sign is a willingness on the part of the individual to hold and to exercise the office of the priesthood. This willingness is evident in those who love the duties inseparable from the priesthood; who desire to take part in the services of the Church; who are glad to be occupied in various ministries at the holy altar. These are indications that God is drawing them, is calling them to Himself. But both these signs, if not accompanied by another, would be unsafe guides for those to follow who are testing the genuineness of a call from God to enter the priesthood. This other is innocence of life, either preserved unstained, or, after being stained and lost, recovered by sincere repentance.

It is of the utmost importance that this qualification should be rigorously exacted from all who aspire to the priesthood. The candidate himself must not dare to accept the priestly character unless he has proved and tried himself in virtue, and

unless he is able from that trial prudently to hope that with the aid of God's grace he will persevere in the path of virtue. If, unfortunately, he should presume to enter the sanctuary without having acquired this well-trying, solidly built-up character of virtue, he will become a wolf and not a shepherd; he will scatter, but he will not guard the flock; he will probably lose his own soul and destroy the souls committed to his care.

Hence the necessity for those who have the care of boys preparing to enter the ecclesiastical state, to impress upon them the importance of leading virtuous lives, and not only to impress it upon them, but if they make light of it, rigorously to exclude them from the sanctuary. To that sanctuary many indeed are called, but few are chosen, and only these chosen few should be suffered to set foot within its sacred precincts. Let the many who are shaky and uncertain in virtue, stand back; for, it is better to have one good priest than fifty indifferent ones. Those who have this qualification of a pure, innocent life, acquired no doubt with great labour and after many a bitter contest, are not neophytes, mere children, but full-grown men, nay, men whose heads are grey by reason of their virtue and purity.

On such, and on such only, St. Paul counsels his disciple Timothy to impose hands; for as St. Thomas<sup>1</sup> teaches, the word neophyte as used by the Apostle refers not to one young in point of years, but to one young and weak in virtue. For this reason he tells us, in another place, that the priesthood requires in those who receive it, sanctity; and not any kind of sanctity or goodness, but goodness of an excellent degree; because, inasmuch as by their Orders they are placed over others, they ought for that reason, by the holiness of their lives, to surpass them. Therefore, there is required from them, before they ascend to that position of dignity, so great a degree of holiness as to be worthy of being numbered among the people of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Besides sanctity or holiness of life, it is furthermore re-

<sup>1</sup> *In loco cit.*

<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas, 2, 2, q. 189, a. 1.

quisite that their intention, in seeking this exalted office, should be an upright one. It will have this qualification, if their motive be a desire of working for the divine glory, of procuring the salvation of souls, not of winning for themselves honours and distinctions, or of leading a life free from the cares and the troubles inseparable from the lives of those engaged in the business of the world. To have this latter intention would be to seek their own advantage, not the honour of their Divine Master and the advancement of His kingdom on earth.

The action of those who, without these signs of a divine calling, thrust themselves into the ministry, is presumptuous to the last degree. By so doing, they act like robbers with regard to the grace of God, sacrilegiously laying hold of that which is not intended for them, and, therefore, deserve to receive from God a curse instead of a blessing. For, the ability to fill the office of the priesthood is a gift bestowed by God, not impiously snatched from His hands by man's greed or by man's ambition; for the Apostle says: "Our sufficiency or ability"—to act as His priests—"is from God Who hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament".<sup>1</sup> Consequently, those persons who, without the necessary grace or calling, presume to invade the sanctuary can only with the utmost difficulty work out their salvation, because they are in the body of the Church as a disjointed or a broken member is in the material body, performing its functions only with very great pain.

Hence the solemn warnings addressed by the Apostle to his disciple Timothy, and through him to the Bishops whose place it is to admit others to a share in their divinely appointed functions: "Impose not hands lightly upon any man"—that is to say readily or easily, without due consideration and forethought—for, if by so doing, an unworthy person is admitted to the priesthood, a Bishop is made partaker of the sins and the scandal consequent upon the intrusion of that person into an office to which God has not called him.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

For the same reason, the Council of Trent<sup>1</sup> orders Bishops, before admitting any one to the sanctuary, diligently to search into his early education, his moral character, and his acquirements, a search which must be made *before* his admission, and not after it, for only proved or tried persons are to be admitted to Holy Orders, and not those who are to be tried. Moreover, the Bishop is told that it is not enough for him to know nothing to the prejudice of the candidate; he must have positive proof of his virtue, and of the uprightness of his life. For, so great a burden as the priestly office must not be laid upon walls that have been but recently built and that are reeking with damp, but upon those from which the humours of vice have been dried, that are firm and compact, and that will not sink under the weight imposed upon them.

Therefore, St. Paul's word "lightly" must not be taken to mean after a first, or a second, or a third trial; but after a lengthy trial or grave inquiry into, and a severe testing of, the virtue of those who aspire to the priesthood.

It is evident, then, that in order to become a worthy minister of God's sanctuary, the candidate should have received a call from God to enter His vineyard, to share in the gathering in of His harvest, and to be intrusted with the care of His sheep. If he has received that call, its presence will be attested by ability to discharge the duties entailed by the priesthood. It will show itself by eagerness to take part in God's work of saving souls. It will appear in the holiness of his life. It will shine forth in the purity of his intention which, in that glorious office, will seek only God's will, only God's work; not self; not honour; not distinction; not ease; not glory. Consequently, let those who aspire to this heavenly dignity, prepare themselves for its reception by a spotlessly pure life, by solidly building themselves up in virtue; for, the weight of that which one day is to be imposed upon them is a burden so heavy as to be dreaded by the strength of even an angelic nature.

<sup>1</sup> Sess. xxv. 7.

## PRIESTLY POWERS.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE ASPIRING TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

WHEN Our divine Lord at the Last Supper said to His Apostles: "Do this in memory of Me," He gave them power to consecrate His body and blood, and to offer up to His heavenly Father the eucharistic or unbloody Sacrifice. After His resurrection He gave them another power, the power to forgive sins. He breathed upon them, infusing into their hearts His own spirit of tender compassion, of gentleness, and of love. He gave them the Spirit of God: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost". That Spirit was needed for the extraordinary power with which He was about to endow them, for He added: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained".<sup>1</sup> By these words they were constituted judges of the consciences of their fellow-men, with power to forgive their sins, to be unto them as another Christ—in one word, to build up in this world the kingdom of God, and to rule in it as princes. They became a royal race, a kingly priesthood, with a commission to transmit unto others the magnificent office and the authority intrusted to them.

That office and that authority have come down to us. We stand within the sanctuary. Into our hearts the Spirit of God has been breathed; over our hands the sacred unction has flowed; we are priests of the living God. But you are standing at the gates of the sanctuary, wistfully looking in, and longing for the day when God shall say to you: "Come up hither". Before you, and awaiting you, is that grand, that glorious prize—the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

What is that priesthood? What are the qualities which must be found in those who present themselves to undertake its dread responsibilities? These are the questions which I will now endeavour to answer for you.

<sup>1</sup> St. John xx. 22, 23.

The priesthood is an office instituted by Jesus Christ to carry on the work of redemption. He came into the world and began that work by paying the price of our redemption from sin and hell—from everlasting death. This ransom, however, so munificently poured forth from the treasury of God, must be applied to each individual soul, partly by its own efforts, and partly by the action of certain specially chosen and commissioned ministers, whose office it is to bring into contact with the soul the ransom given for it. These ministers are the priests of the Church of God. They co-operate with Jesus Christ in saving souls. They are vested with His authority. They wield His power. They act in His name. What an office, then, is this that is put into the hands of weak, sinful men! How shall we be able rightly to estimate its power and its surpassing dignity?

We may do so, but only in a dim sort of way, by examining some of the functions of that exalted ministry. Those functions in which the priest comes most prominently before us are, as God's ambassador, as the offerer of the great Sacrifice, and as judge in the tribunal of Penance. The priest is God's ambassador. He who is chosen by his Sovereign to act as ambassador at the court of a foreign prince, goes thither vested as it were with the very personality of his master. He speaks in his name; he acts with his authority; he is the interpreter of his wishes, and of the wishes of the nation over which that monarch rules. As God's ambassador, the priest bears a commission from Jesus Christ. "All power," said our Divine Redeemer, "is given to Me in heaven and on earth; therefore, going, *teach*".<sup>1</sup> His mission is the same as that of Him Who sends him: "As the Father hath sent Me, so do I also send you".<sup>2</sup> He acts for Christ Himself. St. Paul says that when the priest speaks, it is Jesus Himself that is exhorting the faithful by his lips: "For Christ we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us".<sup>3</sup> Nay, God Himself gives the Apostle authority to use this bold language, for Our Lord

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xx. 21.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.



actually identifies Himself with His ministers, and bids His people regard them and listen to them with the same veneration with which they would attend to and carry into execution orders proceeding from His own ever-blessed lips: "He that heareth you, heareth Me".<sup>1</sup> Hence the Apostle with perfect truth could say: "Jesus Christ speaketh in me".<sup>2</sup>

What a sublime office! To speak in the name of Jesus Christ; to be vested with His personality; to wield His authority! All the dignities of earth how brilliant soever they may be grow pale, they are extinguished before the overwhelming blaze of this, just as the stars fade as it were from the firmament when the sun bursts forth in all the effulgence of his noonday splendour. It is not an earthly monarch that gives the priest his high commission, but the King of kings and Lord of lords before Whom all the potentates of this world are but as a little dust. It is not a matter of merely momentary importance upon which he is sent, but one that has consequences reaching into eternity. The words of the message that he carries are not his own; they are the words of God Himself. Therefore, the priest is for men, not a mere man, but the Angel of the Lord, and as such he was received by the early Christians, whose faith was so much more vivid than is our own: "You received me," says St. Paul, "as an Angel of God, nay, as Jesus Christ Himself".<sup>3</sup> "You received my word, not as the word of man, but (as it is indeed) the word of God".<sup>4</sup>

Yet, sublime and dignified as the priest's office undoubtedly is, considered merely as an embassy from God to man, that office is enhanced a thousandfold if we bear in mind the power with which it is endowed, a power over the souls of men and over the eucharistic body of Christ.

The priest has power over the souls of men. These souls are full of moral weaknesses. Consequently, they need remedies which will heal them of these maladies. The remedies which will effect this are intrusted to the priest. To him, in

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke x. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 13.

the persons of the Apostles, Christ has said: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." On hearing these words, some men, like the Jews of old, will cry out: "Who can forgive sins, but God only?" Quite true; only God can forgive sins. But that power which is peculiarly His, He intrusts to the hands of His priests. Therefore, "the sons of men *have* power on earth to forgive sins". They can say to the man crippled by sin: "Rise"; and he will spring to his feet. They can say to the habitual sinner incrustured with the leprosy of sin: "Be thou made clean," and forthwith he will become whole. They can say to him that is dead and buried in his wickedness: "Come forth from the tomb," and he will rise to life.

What an office, what a power, what a dignity! Picture to yourself St. Peter and St. John going up to the Temple amid the throng of people pressing in through the "Beautiful Gate". A wretched cripple is seated there. For years he has been daily carried thither to beg his bread from the charitable worshippers. He was well known to the whole city. He had come into the world a deformed, blighted, pitiable object. For years he had been the recipient of the alms of the faithful. The Apostles as they walked by, cast upon him a look of compassion. Observing their glance of pity, he stretched forth his hand, and earnestly fixed his eyes upon them, hoping that he would receive something. So indeed he did, but not that which he expected. "Look upon us," said the great Apostle, as the poor wretched being held forth his trembling hand. The people crowded round, wondering what was about to happen. Then lifting up his voice St. Peter said: "Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give to thee. In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk."<sup>1</sup> On the word, he that had never till that moment either stood or walked, leaped to his feet, and in the exulta-

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 6.

tion of his newly acquired power, bounded with joy, and clinging to the Apostles, with them and with the crowd pressing around them, entered the Temple.

Again ; imagine that you are standing in the midst of the crowd listening to the words of Jesus Christ. There crawls slowly towards Him a poor wretch, at sight of whom every one shrinks away with shuddering horror, for he is a loathsome leper. His hair is long and white. His eyes are rolling in his head as in the skull of a skeleton. His flesh is rotting away. His limbs are swollen. He is covered with hideous, gaping, putrid sores. His is a living death, for he is decaying while still alive. Homeless, hopeless, friendless, he is unclean—a leper. Falling at the feet of Jesus, Who never turned a deaf ear to the cry of sorrow, he humbly says : “ Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean ! ” The sweet, beautiful eyes of Jesus look pityingly upon him. He speaks only a few words, but they are words of wondrous power : “ Be thou made clean,” and lo ! a miraculous change ! The healthy blood circulates once again in the leper’s veins. The foul incrustation of his disease, as a worn-out garment, falls away from him. He lives, he is full of lusty life, and of unutterable joy.<sup>1</sup>

Or, if you please, follow that same Jesus to the grave of one whom He most tenderly loved. He deigned to look upon him as a friend, for he was the brother of Martha and of Mary. His relatives had paid to him all the funeral rites, and now he lay in the grave, wrapped in his winding sheet, bound hand and foot, his face covered with a napkin, a huge stone blocking the entrance to the vault. Four days had already elapsed since he had breathed his last breath. To that vault the weeping friends lead Our divine Lord. He stands before it. At His command the stone is removed. Then He prays to His Father ; He weeps ; He groans aloud. At last, lifting up His voice He speaks with the authority of One Whom even Death must obey, and says : “ Lazarus, come forth ”. The dead man awakes. His bands are loosed and

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. viii. 3.

removed ; he comes forth and stands amid the stupefied crowd.<sup>1</sup> These are acts of stupendous, of supernatural power. Those who witnessed them were carried out of themselves with excitement and with enthusiasm. They fell down before Jesus and adored. Yet acts every whit as great, as astounding, as stupendous as these are every day worked by the hands of God's priests.

As the priest sits in the tribunal of Penance, there comes to him with bent head, with downcast eyes, with a heart fluttering with fear and with shame, one who is morally speaking crippled in every limb. The hand of Satan has touched him. The spell of his thralldom is upon him. He is a slave, he is an habitual sinner, he is covered with the leprosy of sin. His whole soul is vitiated by it. His thoughts are foul, his desires are filthy, his deeds are abominable. Corrupt to the heart's core, he spreads abroad infection, he is a very centre of death. He is dead to the life of grace. He is wrapped in the ceremonies of the grave. He is laid in the tomb, and habit, like a huge monumental stone, covers him, and holds him there a prisoner.

But the grace of God touches him. The priest of God goes to him, for that touch of God's hand has made the sinner call for the representative of Christ. He finds him with a heart broken with sorrow, with a mind full of fear that comes of God. Thus deeply moved, the wretched being falls at the feet of God's minister. He calls him "Father," for the priest is to him another Jesus Christ. That father receives him with all the gentleness and the tenderness of Jesus Christ. With the noble generosity of Jesus, he accepts his humble avowal of sins. With the power and by the authority of the Redeemer, he speaks over that bent head the mystic words of absolution. To the cripple he says : " In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, arise and walk " ; to the leper : " Be thou made clean ; " to the dead : " Lazarus, come forth ! " The cripple springs to his feet ; the leper rises whole and sound ; the dead man lives once again. O glorious priest-

<sup>1</sup> St. John xi. 43.

hood, endowed with powers so marvellous over the faithful who are the mystical body of Christ; O mighty priesthood to which also has been intrusted the dispensation of the mysteries of God!

But marvellous as is the power of the priest over the mystical body of Christ, it is immeasurably surpassed by that other power conferred upon him, his power over the eucharistic body of the Lord. At the Last Supper, after instituting the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, Jesus addressed these words to the Apostles, and through them to all who should in future times exercise the office of the priesthood: "Do this in memory of Me". What had He done? He had taken bread into His all-holy hands; He had blessed it, and had said: "This is My body". Then He had taken the chalice of wine and had said: "This is My blood". They were to do just what He had done. They were to offer up, and after them their successors were to offer up till the end of time, "that clean oblation" foretold by the Prophet Malachy—an oblation which was to continue incessantly from the rising till the setting of the sun, "till time shall be no longer".

Therefore, in the Church of God the priest of the Most High, clad in his sacred vestments, with fear and trembling, with holy awe, continues to obey that mandate. He lifts up his hands in prayer; he goes through the sacred rite; at last the dread moment comes; he bows low over the sacramental elements, uttering the mystic words of power, and lo! the Sacrifice is accomplished. He has done what Christ did. He has obeyed His orders, and Christ has obeyed him, and has taken the place of the earthly matter held so reverently in the priest's consecrated hands.

Try to realise what that lowly priest has done! Go in spirit to the height of Carmel, whither the Prophet Elias, by the authority of Achab who reigned in Samaria, has gathered together a vast multitude of the people and the 850 priests of Baal. He has summoned them thither to make trial in their presence of the power of these ministers of Satan, and of the power of Israel's God, Whom the people had abandoned for the service and the worship of Baal. At his command the

priests built up their altar, slew their victim, and placing it upon the dry wood, called from morn till noon upon their deity to consume the sacrifice prepared for him. But they called in vain. No responsive voice was heard, no sign was given.

At last the Prophet began his preparations for the sacrifice. The altar of God, ruined long before, was repaired ; the wood was laid upon it ; the victim slain, was placed upon the logs, and twelve vessels of water were poured over both wood and victim till the water streamed out over the trench dug round the place of sacrifice. Then lifting up his voice amid the deep silence of the expectant multitude, the Prophet cried to the Lord : "O Lord ! God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, show this day that Thou art the God of Israel, and I Thy servant, and that according to Thy commandment I have done all these things. Hear me, O Lord ! hear me, that this people may learn that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts again."<sup>1</sup> Scarcely had the last word passed his lips, than from the blue vault of heaven there flashed down the fire of the Lord. In an instant it had seized the victim, the wood, nay, the very stones, of the altar, and had left not a trace behind.

This was a great marvel. But what is it compared with the marvel that takes place at every Mass? It is not a lightning flash that the priest calls down to consume the elements of bread and wine ; it is not a bright Angel clad in shining vesture, and bearing in his hand a flaming sword ; it is not a glorified Saint that has won his eternal crown ; it is God Himself that comes at the priest's bidding to transform the elements lying upon the altar into the body and blood of the Redeemer. Jesus Christ is there, body and blood, soul and divinity, as truly, as really, and as substantially as I am here before you at this moment. God is there, and He is obedient to His priest.

The priest takes Him into his hands, and He does not resist. He places Him upon the altar, and He remains. He

<sup>1</sup> 3 Kings xviii. 36, 37.

makes Him a prisoner in the tabernacle, and He does not escape. The good and the bad crowd up to the altar-rails, and the priest distributes Christ's sacramental flesh among them to be their food, the wicked receiving equally with the good. He carries Him in his bosom to the bed-side of the sick. He bears Him along the busy streets of the crowded city; he goes with Him into dens of filth and misery, to the dying poor, the ill-bred, the ignorant. God does not resist; He is passive; He is obedient. What marvellous, what unlimited power is this over the eucharistic body of Our Lord and God!

Great is the priest's power as ambassador of God, and as representative before the eyes of men of the divine personality; great is his power over the mystical body of Christ, that is to say, over the Christian people, since he can say to those crippled by sin: "Arise and walk"; to those covered with leprosy: "Be ye made clean"; to those killed by the arrows of the devil: "Come forth from your loathsome tomb". But these powers, great as they undoubtedly are, pale into insignificance before that power by which the Omnipotent subjects Himself to His own creature. This is indeed obedience unto death, unto a death as humiliating as was the death of the Cross.

Again I say, how sublime is this office! It is so sublime, so far above the deserts of human nature, that St. Chrysostom looks upon it as one that even an angelic nature might dread to undertake. Yet you aspire to exercise its heavenly functions. You will, therefore, wish to know what qualification is specially necessary for those who would step in where Angels might well fear to tread.

In reply to this wish I say that, given the call or vocation from God; given an aptitude for the execution of the duties of the priesthood; given a sufficiency of learning to perform them with credit, there is but one other requisite, and that is holiness. You will have to stand in the "Holy of Holies". You will have to mingle with the Angels. You will have to come in contact with God. You will have to pour His precious blood on the heads of sinners to wash away their stains.

Therefore, holiness, sanctity, purity, is necessary for you. "Who," asks the Psalmist, "shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" In reply to his own question, he says: "The innocent in hands and clean of heart".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, what you must aim at now in the days of your boyhood is extreme purity of mind, and heart, and body. You must have purity in your thoughts, in your desires, in your words, in your acts. Let that jewel of boyhood be ever locked up safely in your heart. It will not remain unfruitful there. It will be productive of sanctity, and seeing it, God will one day say to you: "Follow Me. Behold I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit."<sup>2</sup> "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you"<sup>3</sup> to be My ambassador, My representative. I appoint you over My people to heal those who are crippled by sin; to purify the unclean; to raise to life those who have died by sin's virulent poison. Above all, I make you My familiar friend. I give Myself to you. I submit Myself to you. Say but the word, and I will do your bidding.

Such is the glorious, the kingly priesthood of Jesus Christ! Is it not worth the long probation, the difficult studies, the years of self-repression, the life of purity, chastity, holiness that must precede the reception of it? Is not so magnificent a prize worth the tough and continuous struggle necessary to win it? Worth it? Yes, even if the difficulty of winning it were a thousand-fold more arduous than it is. Therefore, begin at once to prepare for an office so lofty and so dignified that the brightest Archangel in heaven might well envy those who are vested with it. You cannot begin too soon to make yourself in some degree worthy of the honour that awaits you. You who have just entered College, you who are in your mid-career, and you who are so soon to take your first step into the sanctuary of God, begin at once to make yourselves worthy. Guard well your thoughts; guard well the affections of your hearts; keep them for God Whose familiar friends you

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxiii. 3, 4.<sup>2</sup> St. John xv. 16.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xx. 21.



will be. Fight down the devil that within you is striving for the mastery. Weary not till you have clutched him firmly in your grasp, and set him for ever beneath your heel.

Do this, and the long-wished for day will come at last. Clad in your robe of spotless white, the girdle of chastity round your loins, the stole of glory on your shoulders, the maniple of sorrow for sin and the vesture of sacrifice upon your arm, you will kneel in the sanctuary of God at the feet of the Pontiff when the dread Sacrifice is about to be offered. In accordance with the rite prescribed by Christ Himself, the Bishop will lay his anointed hands upon your head, and breathe into your soul the Spirit of God. He will take your hands into his own, and on them will pour the oil of unction. He will make you the ambassador of God ; he will give you the power to forgive sins ; to offer up the Sacrifice of Calvary. You will rise from your knees, and you will go forth "a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech"! You will go forth on your work of mercy, instructing the ignorant, consoling, encouraging and building up the penitent, helping men to die, lifting up your hands in sacrifice and in prayer, daily advancing the kingdom of God among men.

Such will be your task till God shall call you to your reward. Whenever it shall please the great Master, that moment will come. Stricken down like a soldier on the field of battle, you will look back over the life that is now verging towards its end. You will look back to your happy boyhood here. What a consolation it will be to you if it shall have been spent in purity and holiness, preparing for the great work of your life! You will look back on the days of your priesthood, spent in working for God. You will look back once more upon your sins to ask God utterly to blot out every vestige of them. The world will fade from your view. The Angels that have stood around you in the time of Sacrifice, the souls that you have saved, these will come forth to meet you when you have breathed your last. They will conduct you in triumphant procession to the gates of the "Beautiful City," and as they draw nigh they will cry to the bright Guardians stationed upon its glittering walls: "Up with your gates, O ye Princes!

and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates, that the priest of God may enter". You will pass through those golden portals with the song of gladness, with the triumphant shout of victory. You will kneel at the feet of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ. He will place upon your brow the crown of glory, and will say to you: "Thou hast fought the good fight; thou hast finished thy course; thou hast kept the faith. Enter now into the joy of thy Lord."

### CLERICAL CELIBACY.

THE example of Our divine Lord, Who would not be born but of a Virgin-Mother, and Who throughout His life remained a virgin, together with His luminous teaching about virginity, first planted the germ which eventually developed into the practice of a celibate life among those who afterwards were enrolled among the number of His priests. The law binding them to this state is not of divine, but only of ecclesiastical institution; for, in the Sacred Text we cannot find any positive injunction to this effect. That injunction is found only in such documents as prove that it rests upon, and derives its authority from, a custom introduced in the apostolic age, or from the institution of the Apostles themselves. These documents show that although in the Eastern Church there existed no positive law imposing celibacy upon priests, yet that many priests, moved by the words and the example of the Apostles, rigidly observed the law of celibacy.

In the Western Church, however, their evidence goes to prove that the Apostle Peter did impose this law upon Bishops, priests and deacons—a fact to which Tertullian bears witness when, speaking of the African Clergy, he says: "How high an ideal of continence have those who are in Holy Orders, since by preferring to wed themselves unto God they have brought back their flesh to that degree of dignity and honour in which it was in the earthly Paradise, and have devoted themselves to be children of that age by

killing within themselves the concupiscence of lust, and everything that could not be admitted into Paradise".<sup>1</sup>

Now the word *devoted*, occurring in this passage, means *vowed* to the profession of continency, and it is on this account that in another place he styles clerics "virginal men," and "voluntarily continent".<sup>2</sup> A still stronger proof that such is the meaning of the word is the fact that when he himself was raised to the higher Orders, he separated from his wife. Wishing to recall to this ancient discipline, Bishops, priests and deacons, Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, in the second Council held in that city, said: "Let us also keep what the Apostles taught, and what antiquity itself has observed". This testimony is of great worth, as it is a well-known fact that either St. Peter himself, or the Roman Pontiffs his successors, founded the African Church as they founded the other Western Churches. In the year 385, Pope Siricius mentions this law of celibacy as having been made by St. Peter, and strongly urges its observance. Innocent I. and St. Leo speak of it as a well-known ordinance. Many Councils held in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries do the same. Hence, in the Latin Church, no example can be adduced of any Bishop, or priest, or deacon that has with impunity transgressed this law, as on the contrary we find to have been the case in the Eastern Church.

As, then, the law of celibacy is one of ecclesiastical discipline, founded upon apostolic tradition, let us examine into the reasons which in those early days called for it, and which in our own days require it to be observed by all who are in Major Orders, that is to say, by sub-deacons, deacons, priests and Bishops.

The reasons assigned by theologians for the celibacy of the Clergy may be reduced to those of propriety and of utility. All nations seem to be agreed as to the propriety of God's ministers being devoted to a life of celibacy; for, among them all, there is a deeply rooted persuasion that continence not only is pleasing to the God Whom they serve, but both exalts and

<sup>1</sup> *De exhort. castit.*, c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *De veland. virgin.*, c. 10.

makes them acceptable to Him. This persuasion is manifest in their legislation with regard to priests. In the Old Law, given upon Mount Sinai, the priests of the Tabernacle and of the Temple, though allowed to marry, were nevertheless obliged to be continent before they approached to offer sacrifice. Among the Romans, the sacred fire in the Temple of Vesta was kept always burning by a chosen body of virgins. In Greece, in India, and in Egypt, continence was regarded as a necessary preparation for approaching the Divinity.

From these facts we may argue that if, under the Old Law, in which there were but the shadows of the good things to come, if among pagan nations and barbarous peoples continence was required before approaching the altar of sacrifice, it must, to say the least, be a matter of propriety, of becomingness, that it should be found in the ministers of the New Law which is more perfect than was that which preceded it, and which has been abolished. For, if you consider for a moment the duties incumbent upon the priests of the new dispensation, you will see that these require in them a certain celestial kind of life, which is rendered possible only by a life of celibacy or of perpetual continence.

The first of these duties is to offer sacrifice, and what a sacrifice! It is not now the flesh of oxen, of sheep, and of goats that is offered; it is not their blood that is poured out; but the reality, of which these things were only a figure, has succeeded to and has taken their place. Our faith teaches us that in the Sacrifice of the New Law, the body and blood of the Man-God, Christ Jesus, are truly and really offered up to God; that on the altar before which the priest stands, there are truly, really, and substantially present, the very body and blood immolated for us on Calvary. Christ Himself offered this Sacrifice, first in an unbloody and mystical manner at His Last Supper, and, secondly, in a bloody manner when He died upon the Cross. He was, therefore, the first priest of the New Law. He gave to His Apostles, and to their successors, a share in His priesthood, and ordered them to do what He had done.

Now Christ was a virgin. He praised the continent, He

exhorted those who felt that they could comply with its laws to cultivate virginity. Should not, then, those who as priests use His power, and who when offering sacrifice are in a certain sense vested with His personality—should they not, we ask, endeavour to imitate Him in His virginal purity? Every religiously minded man will at once admit that they should; and, therefore, we conclude that priests should lead a celibate life; for, not only the Jewish people, but even pagans without the aid of revelation, saw the becomingness of continence in those who approach so nigh to the Divinity.

This argument from propriety is a strong one; but the argument drawn from utility is, in its way, not one whit less telling in favour of a celibate priesthood. As a matter of fact, celibacy in their case is so useful as to be indispensable. For St. Paul, speaking of the duties of a priest, lays down as a principle that he is chosen by God, and “appointed for men in the things that appertain to God”.<sup>1</sup> Being appointed for men, he must devote himself to their eternal interests—“in the things that appertain to God”. But how is it possible for him to devote or give himself up to that which concerns their welfare, unless he is free from the trammelling cares of a married life? In his Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul evidently considers that the care or solicitude inseparable from a married life renders devotedness, in the true sense of the word, quite out of the question for those who have entered upon that state: “He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided,”<sup>2</sup> that is to say, between God and the world.

The man, however, who is celibate, not being thus divided, as St. Paul expresses it, is able to be busied or solicitous about the things of God. Therefore, it is possible for him to be devoted, and he has, moreover, every chance of being devoted. Now, devotedness means sacrifice, and the first sacrifice that a minister of God must make is the sacrifice of his time. This

<sup>1</sup> Heb. v. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.

must be given "to the things of God". The priest's time must be consecrated to prayer, and to the duty of public worship in the church. He has to preach to, and to instruct, his people. To do this with any degree of efficiency, he must study and thoroughly steep his mind in sacred science, otherwise he will but "beat the air". He will not know what he has said, nor will his people be able to gather from his words any solid instruction. Moreover, not all the flock comes with docility to listen to him. Many of them being wanderers must be sought after, and be persuaded to return to healthful pastures. Then again, there are among them poor who must be cared for, and in order to care for them, he must become for them a mendicant among the rich. To accomplish duties such as these a great deal of time is required. But if the priest were a married man, whence would come this leisure for their fulfilment? What few moments he can spare from the duties of his sacerdotal life must be devoted to the care of his household, of his wife, and of his children.

The next sacrifice which devotedness requires from him, is that of his possessions. Ordinarily speaking, a minister of the Gospel has very few of these; yet from that little the poor will call for frequent alms. Now a family man, a man with a wife and children dependent upon him, is in duty bound to provide for them. They must be kept in a state befitting their condition. The children must be educated; they must be put in a position in which they will be able to win their daily bread; consequently, some sort of provision must be made for them. With these cares upon his mind, and with these necessities pressing upon him, how will he be able to give unto others that which he requires for his own flesh and blood? His first care will naturally be for his own. The poor will, therefore, cry unto him in vain for clothes, and food and shelter.

Besides this, there is required from a priest another sacrifice. It is one from which a married man will shrink. The priest is specially needed at the bedside of the sick and the dying. He is called not only to those who through natural decay are passing from this world, but to those who are violently

torn from it by infectious diseases. He is sent for, and he must go into miserable dens, reeking with fever, where the very atmosphere is laden with the germs of death. If he is a married man, there are seated round his hearthstone his wife and his little children depending upon him for home, for food, for everything that makes life worth living. If he be carried off by the infection, they will have to go forth into the world without a roof to shelter them, without any one to support and protect them.

The unmarried priest, on the other hand, must always look upon himself as the shepherd of his flock. He must prove himself to be a true one, a shepherd worthy of the name, when the wolf in the shape of disease or of death steals into the fold. Fearlessly will he abide in the midst of them, disdain- ing to flee away. Death stares him in the face ; but he recoils not ; he remains with them ; he ministers to them ; he sup- ports, he consoles them, and but too often lays down his life for their sake.

The married priest shrinks from this, and small blame to him for so doing. He will not venture into places whence he may bring back death to those who are dear to him. There- fore, like the hireling, he will flee away when the grim terror of death stares him in the face.

Therefore, the law of celibacy enables the priest to do his duty, while the married state puts in his way most serious obstacles which effectually hinder him from making the sacri- fice of time, of money, and of life, a sacrifice which the true shepherd will always willingly make. The sheep committed to his care are for him wife, and children, and wealth. They are his all, and for them he will lay down that which to all is most dear—the life to which men naturally cling with the utmost tenacity.

Hence, we see the propriety and the utility of the law of celibacy, a disciplinary enactment introduced into the early Church, and as Tradition teaches, introduced by apostolic authority. Let us, therefore, thank the Good Shepherd for this wise provision made for the sake of those beloved sheep for whom He sacrificed His life, giving for them His body

and His blood that they might be saved from the jaws of infernal wolves. May His spirit of sacrifice always remain in the hearts of those who, by the continence of a celibate life, endeavour to walk in His blessed footsteps.

### LITURGY OF MATRIMONY.

As in the other Sacraments, so also in the Sacrament of Matrimony there are two points which we will bring under your notice for your attentive consideration : first, the Church's doctrine concerning it, namely that it is a sacrament ; and secondly, the sacred Liturgy which accompanies its administration.

The Church's doctrine concerning Matrimony is that from the creation of the first pair of human beings till the coming of Christ, marriage was a sacred contract, willed and instituted by God for the propagation and preservation of the human race ; but that since His coming there has been superadded to the natural contract, the nature and character of a sacrament. From this it will follow that in the new dispensation, marriage is more excellent than it was under the old, inasmuch as there has been infused into a natural contract the power of conferring upon those who enter into it the inestimable gift of divine grace. The authority upon which the Church teaches this revealed truth is the infallible word of Christ Himself, a word transmitted to us by the Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, the Councils, and the Tradition, throughout all the ages of her existence, of the Church herself. Therefore, when the innovators of the sixteenth century excluded Matrimony from the number of the Sacraments, the Council of Trent anathematised both them and any one who should join them in their impious revolt ; also, all who should dare to assert either that it was not instituted by God, but by men, or that it does not confer grace.

If then Matrimony be a sacrament, it will have in it all that is essentially necessary to constitute one of those wondrous gifts of God ; there will be the sensible or visible sign ; the



power to impart grace ; and the institution of Christ. In the Sacrament of Matrimony we find these three requisites—the sensible or visible sign in the mutual donation by the contracting parties of each to the other ; the power of conferring grace, for St. Paul represents Matrimony as a sacrament or sign of Christ's union with the Church, a sign moreover exhibiting all the duties which by reason of their conjugal union the married are obliged to fulfil, particularly that of supernatural love. But in order to make this love shine forth in their union, there is need of divine grace, and of a continual influx of that grace, such as flows from a sacrament ; for, there is question of sanctifying a permanent state. Lastly, there is the institution of Christ, as is evident from the fact that grace is bestowed by the Sacrament or visible sign ; for, as we have already so often remarked, only God can attach to these material, sensible signs the power of imparting grace to the soul. Therefore, Matrimony is a sacrament of the New Law.

From the very foundation of the Church, this has been her invariable teaching. When the early heretics endeavoured to fasten upon marriage the guilt of sin, Clement of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> defended it, declared it to be holy, and called it “a sacrament,” as did the illustrious Tertullian<sup>2</sup> who placed it upon the same footing as are the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. The same language is used respecting it by those great doctors of the Church, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine. In the decrees of the Popes, and in the canons of the Councils, we find the same sentiments expressed regarding it, and throughout the world the ministers of the Church have everywhere boldly faced the anger and the unjust persecution of kings and of powerful factions, in order to safeguard the binding force of the conjugal bond. The light in which the Church regards it may be seen also in the ritual books used both in the East and in the West. In these marriage is always called “a sacrament,” and is said to be represented by that mystical union which exists between Christ and His Church.

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.*, iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Marcion.*, c. 18.

Attached to this Sacrament are certain conditions which strictly bind those who receive it. These are called its qualities or properties, consisting of its oneness or unity, and its indissolubility. Its unity or oneness requires that a man should have at the same time only one wife, a woman only one husband. In the olden time, Moses permitted divorce and the marrying of another wife; but Our Lord, when the Jews brought forwards this fact as an objection against His more stringent enactment, replied: "By reason of the hardness of your hearts, Moses permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife . . . and shall marry another, committeth adultery."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if according to Our Lord's teaching, the man who divorces his wife and marries another while the first is living—and the man who marries her that has been divorced while her husband lives—are adulterers, it follows that the first marriage holds good, or in other words is one; and from this fact flows the other quality of marriage, namely its indissolubility, which can be done away with only by the death of one of the contracting parties. From what has been said, it is easy to see in what the indissolubility of marriage consists.

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, as in the other Sacraments, there are matter and form. The commonly accepted doctrine concerning its matter is that the mutual consent of the bridegroom and the bride constitutes this matter; for, this consent being already the matter of the matrimonial contract, regarded simply as a contract, and this consent itself being the Sacrament of Matrimony, it follows that the consent of the contracting parties is the matter of the Sacrament also.

Its form consists of the words or the signs which express this contract; because the form of a sacrament is that which determines the sense or meaning of the matter employed. Thus, in Baptism, the words accompanying the ablution of the candidate fix the sense or meaning of that washing, and separate it from any other act of the same nature. So also

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xix. 8, 9.

in Matrimony, the words by which the contract is expressed mark it sharply off from all other contracts, and constitute its form.

This form used to be pronounced by the contracting parties ; but as they frequently mutilated it and made its meaning very uncertain, it is now elicited from them by questions put to them by the officiating priest. Hence, it may be asked : " Who is the minister of this Sacrament ? " Is it the priest, or is it the contracting parties themselves ? On this point there are two opinions. The first is that the priest is the minister, and consequently, that the form of the Sacrament are the words which he uses : " I join you in holy Matrimony ". The second is that the contracting parties are themselves the ministers of the Sacrament, and that the form is made up of the words by which they express their mutual consent.

St. Liguori maintains that this latter opinion is morally certain ; and Bellarmine informs us that this is the common opinion held in the Schools. It is, therefore, the one that is usually followed ; moreover, it is one that evidently expresses the mind of the Church ; for the Council of Trent regards as true and valid, certain clandestine marriages. But these are celebrated without the presence of the priest ; consequently, if these are true and valid, though celebrated in his absence, they are the Sacrament, and, if the Sacrament, then the contracting parties are evidently the ministers of it. The Council, however, though pronouncing such marriages true and valid, nevertheless wishes and ordains that a priest should be present to bless the union, and requires his presence at the marriage as an essential condition for its validity. Therefore, in those countries in which the decrees of Trent have been promulgated, marriages celebrated without the presence of the priest are not marriages at all, because the absence of the priest invalidates them.

Having then sufficiently instructed you as regards the Sacramental nature of Matrimony, let us next turn our attention to the Liturgy by which it is administered.

When the bride and the bridegroom have entered the church in which the marriage is to be celebrated, they present them-

selves at the altar steps before the priest who is to perform the ceremony. The bridegroom stands at the right hand of the bride, the witnesses meanwhile grouping themselves some on the side of the bride, and others on the side of the bridegroom. First addressing the bridegroom, the priest says: "Wilt thou (Edward) take (Gertrude) here present for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our Holy Mother the Church?" To this the bridegroom answers: "I will". Having put to the bride this same question, she also replies: "I will". Thereupon either the father or some intimate friend gives her away. If the bride has never before been married, she takes off her gloves, and at the word of the priest the bridegroom taking her by the right hand says these words after the priest: "I (Edward) take thee (Gertrude) to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forwards, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part, if Holy Church will it permit, and thereto I plight thee my troth".

The bridegroom having said these words, the bride disengages her hand from his, and then taking hold of his right hand, in like manner makes to him the same promise. Then the priest says over both: "I join you in Matrimony, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," signing them while saying these words with the sign of the holy Cross. They are then sprinkled with holy water, and the bridegroom having placed upon a salver the wedding ring together with a gold and a silver piece of money, the priest proceeds to bless these, saying: "V. Our help is in the name of the Lord. R. Who hath made heaven and earth. V. O Lord, hear my prayer. R. And let my cry come unto Thee. V. The Lord be with you. R. And with thy spirit. Let us pray. Bless, O Lord! the ring which in Thy name we bless; and grant unto her who shall wear it, the strength to keep towards her spouse a perfect fidelity; to abide in peace subject to Thy will, and always to live in mutual charity with her husband, through Christ Our Lord."

The ring and the coins are next sprinkled with holy water, and are then put by the priest into the hand of the bridegroom,

who having given the gold and the silver coins to the bride, says after the priest: "With this ring, I thee wed; this gold and silver, I thee give; with my body, I thee worship; and with all my worldly goods, I thee endow". Then, placing the ring first on the thumb of the bride's left hand, he says: "In the name of the Father"; on the index finger, "And of the Son"; on the second finger, "And of the Holy Ghost"; and on the third finger while saying "Amen". After the versicles, the Kyrie eleison and the Lord's Prayer, the priest concludes with this prayer: "Let us pray. Look down we beseech Thee, O Lord! upon these Thy servants, and with Thy loving-kindness assist Thy own ordinances by which Thou hast provided for the propagation of the human race, that they who are joined under Thy guidance may with Thy assistance be preserved, through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

On the conclusion of this prayer, if the nuptials are solemnly performed, the Mass is either said or sung. After the "Pater Noster" of the Mass, the priest genuflects to the Sacred Host and goes to the Epistle corner of the altar. Then turning towards the newly married pair, he pronounces over them a beautiful prayer of which the following is the substance: "O God! Who, after wisely arranging all things, didst form man to Thy own image, and out of his flesh didst create the woman whom Thou gavest to him to be his inseparable companion, thereby intimating to us that what God hath joined, no man should separate; O God! Who didst consecrate this union, and make it the symbol of that which exists between Christ and the Church; O God! Who Thyself didst unite the woman with the man, enriching their union with a blessing which neither original sin nor the deluge has been able to destroy, look down with a favourable eye upon Thy servant here present who beseeches Thee to cover her with Thy protection; may she in pure affection find peace, that being always faithful she may consecrate her union in Christ; may she after the example of the holy women be to her spouse amiable as Rachel, wise as Rebecca, faithful and long-lived as Sara; may the author of all ill find in her actions nothing to claim as his own; may she by the might of Thy commandments

strengthen her own weakness ; may she be esteemed for her modesty, and venerated for her purity ; may she be instructed and formed by heavenly doctrine ; may she be innocent and held in high esteem for her virtue, and at last attain to the repose of the blessed in the kingdom of heaven."

After this prayer, the priest proceeds with the Holy Sacrifice, and having himself communicated, gives to the newly married pair the body and blood of Christ to cement their union. Lastly, before bestowing upon the faithful the usual blessing, he once more turns towards the bride and the bridegroom who kneel at the altar-rails, and says: "May the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob be with you, and Himself accomplish in you His blessing, that you may see your children's children to the third and fourth generations ; and afterwards may you have life eternal through the help of Our Lord Jesus Christ Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen."

Thus, with the blessing of God, and of God's holy Church, resting upon them, the newly married pair leave the holy altar to walk together the path of life, bearing each other's burdens, sharing each other's joys, meekly enduring the sorrows of life till death shall them part, and at last shall unite them once more in that kingdom of bliss in which all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, and partings, sorrows, trials, and labours shall be no more.

## FAITH.

IN the preceding Lectures on the Liturgy of the Sacraments, we have treated of what may be called the external worship which the soul pays to God by an outward adoration manifested by the body, a worship which must be animated by a soul, or the internal worship of the mind. This internal worship is rendered to God by subjecting to Him the intelligence by means of faith ; by hoping from Him for everything of which we have need to work out our salvation ; and by loving Him with all the powers of our soul. In other words, the internal worship due to God consists in faith, hope, and charity.

Let us for the present consider our first duty to God, the duty of giving to Him that divine faith by which we submit to Him our intelligence.

In the Sacred Scripture the word faith has a variety of meanings. It is used sometimes to signify fidelity in carrying into effect what we have promised to do. St. Paul uses it in this sense, when, writing to the Romans he says: "For what if some of them have not believed? Shall their unbelief make the *faith* of God—that is to say His fidelity in executing His promises—shall it make it without effect?"<sup>1</sup> In another passage of the same Epistle, he employs the word faith to mean *conscience*, when he says: "All that is not of faith is sin,"<sup>2</sup> meaning thereby that whenever any one acts against the dictates of conscience, he sins. Thus, we also speak of persons acting in good or in bad faith. St. James employs the word to signify confidence or hope, when he says: "Let him ask in *faith*, nothing wavering".<sup>3</sup> The word is also used to denote the objective sum of our belief, as when we speak of our Catholic faith.

But in none of these senses can we use the word faith, when by it we wish to denote the submission of our intelligence to God by a humble belief in all that God has revealed. In this latter sense we may define it to be: a supernatural virtue or gift of God by which we firmly believe, as revealed by God, all truths whether written or unwritten, proposed to us by the Church for our acceptance and belief. Faith taken in this sense is "a gift of God," as St. Paul teaches: "By grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, for it is the *gift* of God".<sup>4</sup> This fact is furthermore attested by the words of Christ Himself when in answer to St. Peter's confession of His Divinity He says: "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven".<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, it would be a great error to think or to assert that faith is the outcome or effect of reasoning, and not

<sup>1</sup>Rom. iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, xiv. 23.

<sup>3</sup>James i. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Eph. ii. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. xvi. 17.

the supernatural fruit of grace which God gives gratuitously to us. By its aid we are enabled "firmly to believe," which words do not convey the idea that we are of opinion, or that we esteem as true, but that we fully, without any reserve, with entire conviction and perfect certainty, acquiesce in that which is proposed to us for belief.

This belief must, moreover, be accorded to all truths whether written or unwritten that have been revealed by Him. For, many revelations have been made to men on the part of God, sometimes by Angels, at others by Patriarchs and by Prophets, at others by Jesus Christ Himself. All these are the objects of our faith. But historical facts and the principles educed from scientific research in no way can be considered as being the objects of faith. However, as Our Lord did not command His Apostles to *write*, but to *preach* His word, many of His acts and words have come down to us by Tradition only. These must be believed by us with a no less unwavering faith than those things which have been consigned to written documents; and hence we say, faith imposes upon us an obligation to accept not only what has been written, but what has not been consigned to writing.

These last, however, can claim this homage from us, only "when proposed to us by the authoritative voice of the Church". The reason is not far to seek. For it is from the Church that we have received both Scripture and Tradition. Being the pillar and the ground of truth, she and only she can point out to us what is genuine Scripture, and what is true Tradition, and when any doubt arises as to the true meaning either of the one or of the other, she and she only can give to us the true meaning, the right interpretation.

Faith, therefore, thus explained as a supernatural gift of God, by which we firmly believe all the truths whether written or unwritten, revealed by Him, and proposed to us by the Church, is what we call divine faith. Outside this, there is what we call a human faith, or that belief which we give to many things of which we ourselves have not immediate knowledge. By this faith we believe the facts recorded for us by history, and we believe them because of



the confidence which we put in the truthfulness of others. On that truthfulness, the certitude of history is based. Any one who refuses to accept anything as true unless he himself has either with his own eyes seen it, or with his own ears heard it, must perforce fall into universal scepticism, and move in a very limited circle of ascertained facts. For, to know anything we must begin with faith in a master. Now if we put our trust in men, why should we not trust God? This trust in Him, belief in what He teaches, is faith.

Faith is *actual*, when we make a profession of our belief in all revelation or in any particular part of it, by repeating the Credo, for instance, or by making an act of faith in which we adhere either to some article of revelation, or to all the truths which the Church teaches. It is *habitual*, when without actually adverting to our faith, or to any part of it, we nevertheless adhere to it through the force of some preceding act. This habitual faith is infused into our soul by Baptism which, through the grace then imparted, gives to us both a disposition to believe, and a facility to accept and believe whatever God teaches. The faith thus habitually infused is furthermore said to be an habitually *acquired* faith, when having arrived at the use of reason, we often repeat acts of this virtue, and by oft repeating them, acquire a facility in belief. Faith is also said to be *living*, when being animated by charity, it is joined with sanctifying grace. Faith, however, is *dead*, when it is not joined with sanctifying grace, as is the case with those who, having abandoned God in order to gratify their passions, nevertheless still continue to believe in all that He has revealed.

In requiring from us this worship of our intelligence, God Who fashioned our human nature, and Who consequently knows all its requirements, is consulting for our well-being. For, without faith, the possession of all worldly goods is worthless. To enjoy these we need tranquillity and repose; and when there is no faith, these essentials for happiness are absent. Consider the matter for a moment, and you will see how true this statement is. In man there are two powers which constitute his moral life; these are his mind and his heart. If peace

reigns not in both these, there cannot be for him any true, any real happiness. His mind was created to possess truth, and his heart was made to love and to adhere to good. Truth, however, cannot be possessed without certitude, and certitude cannot be grasped without faith. In what then does peace of mind or of the intelligence consist? It consists in the possession of truth, which cannot be grasped without the repose of certitude. In what also does peace of heart consist? It consists in the satisfaction of all its desires by the possession of permanent good.

This is the happiness which St. Paul wished the Philippians to possess when he wrote to them: "May the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus". This also is what Our Lord bestowed upon His Apostles when He said to them: "Peace be with you". So long as men are merely searching after truth, and journeying towards it, they cannot be in the repose which is the result of its possession. Mere opinion, and mere systems of truth do not satisfy. There is labour, there is unrest, there is weariness; there is no possession; consequently no repose, and, therefore, no happiness. Therefore, God is consulting for our well-being, when He requires us to submit to Him our intelligence by means of faith, and by that faith to pay to Him the worship of our soul.

But here, an objection will naturally enough present itself to any one who examines into, and reflects upon this homage of the intellect required by God. That God Who asks for this submission, has given to us the faculty of reason. We are reasonable beings, and, consequently, we must act as such. Our reason must be used by us even in our service and worship of God, for such service after all must be a rational one. Now if we are blindly to believe whatever God has revealed, where does this exercise of one of our most glorious faculties come into play? Faith and reason it seems must mutually exclude each other. This, we suppose, is the general idea entertained by most men concerning faith, till they begin to examine the matter carefully for themselves: they imagine that to believe is to admit as true, without any reason, and

oftentimes against reason, that which can neither be demonstrated nor even understood. To accept any statement of this nature would be unreasonable, and unbecoming the dignity of man.

Now, in answer to this objection, we must state at once that faith does not require from us this total surrender of our reason. On the contrary, our service of faith in God is styled by the Apostle "a reasonable service"; and profound philosophers have shown that faith and reason are not irreconcilable. Both have their sphere of action in the intellectual world, reason claiming as the field of its energy all natural truths which it is able to know with clear evidence; while faith raises man up to the knowledge of supernatural truths, the evidence of which the mind cannot obtain in this present life. The horizon of reason is a limited one, beyond which the eye of the soul cannot reach, whereas faith penetrates beyond that horizon, not to enter rashly upon unknown ways, but to advance under the guidance of an infallible authority. The office of reason, therefore, is to furnish the soul with the certainty that this authority is the authority of God, and this fact once being made clear, acquiescence in that which it reveals is only a reasonable action. Consequently, faith, far from destroying or dispensing with reason, presupposes its exercise. The truths which are presented for the acceptance of faith surpass the grasp of reason, hence reason cannot demonstrate them; yet while unable to do this, it is able to accept with certainty those truths which faith proposes to it.

This seems to imply a contradiction, since without evidence there cannot be any certainty, but only doubt. But the repugnance or contradiction is only apparent. For we must bear in mind that evidence is of two kinds: direct and indirect. Direct evidence of the truths which are the objects of faith we cannot have, because these truths surpass the capacity of our reason; but indirect evidence we can obtain, for this consists in a knowledge of the motives which determine us to believe these truths. If we could have no light thrown upon either the motives or the objects of faith, then belief would certainly be impossible. If, on the other hand, evidence

could be obtained both for the objects of faith and for the motives which determine belief, faith itself would cease to exist. Such, however, is not the will of God in our regard. He has determined to impose upon our minds the duty of obedience, the homage of our finite intelligence to the infinite intelligence of God.

The motive for such submission to the acceptance of truths which we cannot grasp, is the authority of God Who reveals these truths to us. When once the fact of that revelation is certain, that is to say, has been demonstrated to us, our reason must yield. To withhold its submission, then, would be an act of impiety. Now this fact of God's revelation to us is as easily demonstrable as are the facts of history. As a matter of fact, revelation offers to our reason motives of credibility more powerful than we can obtain for the least contested facts of history, so extraordinary were the circumstances which accompanied that revelation, and so marked with a divine character are the consequences which it produced on the world. The fact of that revelation being demonstrated, he who accepts what it proposes to him has for his belief an evident, rational motive, which banishes all doubt and establishes in his mind certitude, although this certitude does not, like scientific knowledge, cause him to understand that which is the object of his faith. It causes him to hear the voice of God, Who reveals the truth, and that voice is his reason, his light, his evidence for accepting as truth whatever it may teach him.

This divine faith, as we ought never to forget, must have certain qualities. Its motive must, in the first place, be supernatural; it must be reasonable; it must be free, in order that the homage which it pays to God, by making our intelligence subject to Him, may be meritorious. If our faith rested merely upon our reason, it would not be supernatural, but natural; if our mind could not on any side grasp the object which faith proposes for our acceptance and belief, if it did not know something that would induce it to believe the mysteries which it does not understand, then our faith would not be reasonable. Again, if our faith had in it nothing

mysterious, nothing incomprehensible, it would not be free; for, having in it nothing incomprehensible, nothing mysterious, the object of it would be evident, and evidence as we know essentially forces the mind to yield, and makes doubt impossible. Moreover, our faith, in these circumstances, would not be meritorious; for it would not then be an act of our will determined by His divine grace, submitting itself to His authority, as faith demands.

Even the very beginning of faith, considered as a supernatural virtue, comes from God, and not from human reason. But in adults, this faith may have its external preparation, consisting in the knowledge which reason obtains from the words of preachers, from the study of proofs given in favour of religion, from the action of reason, and from other means employed by God to lead men to belief. Now although *Isaias* says: "If you do not believe, you will not understand," yet we must admit that there is a certain kind of understanding which precedes faith, that is to say, the comprehension of the motives of belief furnished by reason; for reason points out the way to faith, because before believing, we must first understand that the authority of those who teach is divine.

Nay more; faith far from banishing reason, imposes upon us an obligation of trying to understand, by means of study and meditation, the truths which it teaches: "Be always ready," is the advice of *St. Peter*, "to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you," for knowledge of this kind is the nourishment of faith. This knowledge consists of an acquaintance with the proofs and the motives which render our religion credible, and if it is set aside, if no examination into them is made, and no discussion of them practised, our faith cannot but be a wavering one, without principles and without constancy.

Therefore, while humbly submitting our intelligence to the facts of faith revealed unto us, let us always apply our minds to reason upon and to discuss the motives furnished to us for accepting these truths. Over this field our reason has its rights. Its office is to establish and defend these motives; but, at the same time, we must never forget that our reason is

not the measure of God's truth. By itself, it is not sufficient to grasp them; but having once discovered that the grounds for accepting that which we can neither understand nor demonstrate are rational, that they point out God as the author of the revelation, let us bow down our reason, and submit it to the infinite intelligence of God.

### THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

WHEN the word "*faith*" falls upon our ears, the idea which it conveys to our minds is that of firm, unwavering belief in God, in His power, wisdom, mercy, goodness. The "*spirit of faith*" implies something more than this. It signifies a principle of belief animating all one's life and actions. This is what God wishes you to have; for mere belief that does not grow into action is dead. It is like those beautiful masterpieces of sculpture which are preserved in our public museums. They have eyes which see not; ears which hear not; feet which move not; hands which are incapable of action. Now, Our blessed Lord, Who wishes to perform in our souls miracles of grace which will open our spiritual eyes, and give power and movement to our spiritual limbs, looks for faith—the *spirit of faith*—before He will do for us any of those marvels that will transform us into other men.

In order, therefore, to stir up in your heart an eager desire to be filled with this life-giving spirit, consider the vast difference which its presence will make in the daily round of your ordinary duties.

A schoolboy's life may roughly be said to be made up of study, obedience, recreation and prayer. Now, let us first consider the life of a boy in whose heart the spirit of faith has not taken up its abode. Study for every boy is a difficulty. As a general rule, he looks upon it as a disagreeable task or imposition, from which it is quite legitimate for him to escape if he can. He goes to it with reluctance; he remains at it much against his will. It has no attractions for him. It is dry, difficult, wearisome beyond the powers of endurance.

Consequently, he does as little as he can; the little that he does, is done very imperfectly; and, when that is finished, he escapes as speedily as possible from the trammels which impede his liberty.

Obedience is for him a yoke under which he is as restive as an unbroken colt. It galls him; it checks him at every turn; and contradicts the licence of his untrained will. Superiors are his natural enemies. Their wishes are not to be complied with; their laws are to be evaded; their government is to be resisted. Why should he not be allowed to talk both when and where he pleases? Why should one part of the College be debarred him? Why should he not be suffered to ramble at will beyond its boundaries? "Consider," he will say to his companions, "the absurdity of their arrangements! We cannot read whatever books and papers we may choose to select for ourselves. We cannot purchase for ourselves whatever we think conducive to our comfort. Nay, sometimes they will not allow us to select even our own friends from among the members of the School." Therefore, proud of his own enlightenment, confident in his own views, he sets obedience aside, and walks in the ways which to him seem right, not knowing, in his inexperience, the abysses to which they very often lead.

Recreation or play, is to him the main object to be aimed at and pursued with eagerness in his School career. To use his own language—"he goes in for it," and small blame to him if he would use it only as he ought—but of this more later on.

As a matter of course he prays, for prayer, in every house of education worthy of the name, is made to permeate every duty of the day. But how does he pray? He kneels as the rest do. He makes the sign of the Cross in an off-hand sort of way. It would be difficult sometimes to say for what he means that sacred action. He recites the customary formulas; he makes the usual responses. Does he pray? If his thoughts are not in his words, he does not pray. Where, then, are those thoughts of his? His thoughts are with his heart, with his affections, and these are far away. They are in the play-

ground, or the cricket-field, or the bathing-pond, or they are skimming over the ice, or, perchance, at rare intervals, on his lessons. They are not with God. His thoughts remain below. With his lips he honours God, but his heart is far from Him. All this is owing to a want of the spirit of *faith*. Study on compulsion; obedience without heart; recreation merely for recreation's sake; and prayer that comes only from the lips—works without faith. Works that are dead.

But let us turn away from this sad picture to contemplate that same boy when the spirit of faith has entered his heart, and has breathed into his works the breath of its own energetic life. The great duty of his life as a schoolboy—the study of difficult and not very interesting subjects, though distasteful, and perhaps wearisome enough, is not regarded by him with that loathing and rebellious disgust which spring from the absence of a spirit of faith. He looks upon it now as that duty of labour imposed upon man by God, in punishment of sin. He, therefore, considers it to be a part of his duty to fulfil this general law, and deems himself unworthy to eat his daily bread, unless it has been earned by this mental toil. In this light there is quite a halo of honour and glory thrown on the work which he has to accomplish. It is God's work. It is the lot appointed by Him for man. It is a means to expiate sin. Therefore, he does it with all the energy of which he is capable. He cleaves to it, though the eye grows weary, and the brain is tired, and the flesh rebels against the exhaustion which it induces. If he cannot accomplish all that is set before him, he does what he is able, and does it well. He gives not over till the appointed time has run its course.

This spirit sanctifies and sweetens labour. Nay more; it touches it as with a magic wand, and converts it into pure gold which will pass current in the kingdom of God; for it is stamped with God's sign and superscription.

Obedience, animated by the spirit of faith, ceases to be a yoke. It no longer galls the neck. A check upon the will it cannot cease to be; but it is the gentle, loving, guiding check of a father's hand. For, that beautiful spirit sees in those who impose the yoke, such as it is, not stern task-masters, not



pitiless slave-drivers, but men invested with the personality of God. In hearing their voice, it hears the voice of God ; in yielding to them, it yields to God. Hence, the boy who is filled with this spirit of faith, always looks upon his Superiors as his parents. Their wishes are to be complied with ; their laws are to be accepted with humility ; their government is to be upheld. He sees good reasons for silence, for being kept within certain limits, for being debarred from indiscriminate reading, and for being guided in his choice of friends. What is the consequence of this? It is that his feet are kept upon safe ways which lead to the kingdom of God, and his daily routine of rule is made to be nothing more nor less than an hourly fulfilment of the will of God.

What does the spirit of faith do for recreation? It transforms it from a boyish piece of self-indulgence into a supernatural act, worthy of a supernatural reward. Faith regards recreation as a means to an end. It is to unbend the mind ; to give it a little repose, in order to fit it for renewed labour. It is, therefore, to be regarded as a duty, a pleasant duty it is true, but still a duty to be performed for God—just as labour is, just as obedience is. Accepted in this light, performed in this spirit, it is no longer a gratification of the animal man. It becomes a religious act, as meritorious as prayer is, and deserving a heavenly reward. What a magician is this spirit of faith! How it turns all that it touches into gold!

What shall we say of prayer when animated by the spirit of faith? What a difference there is between it and the empty lip-service that is sometimes dignified with that title! The boy who is full of faith knows what he is doing when he kneels to pray. He is in God's presence. He is adoring, worshipping, paying homage to his Maker. He is fully aware of the necessity for that prayer ; he is bound to pay that tribute to his Creator ; but though obliged to present it, it is a sweet necessity which procures for him every grace and blessing. He kneels in deep humility, at one and the same time to mark his own unworthiness, and his deep sense of the sanctity of God. It is not a mere formula of words that his lips utter. Mind and voice are in accord. The words which ascend from

his lips are borne aloft on the wings of the thoughts which are stirring within him. They pierce the clouds ; they reach the throne of God ; they draw down a copious shower of grace.

Thus, the spirit of faith breathes life into all the actions of the schoolboy's life. His work becomes prayer ; his obedience, the dutiful service of a child to his father ; his recreation, a meritorious action ; his prayer, real and true homage of God. Pray, therefore, for this spirit. Use every effort to win it by endeavouring to perform even the most insignificant action for God.

### HOPE.

FAITH holds up before our eyes its brilliant light, and enables us to see with the eyes of our spirit, that which without its aid we could never see, or perhaps see only in so dim and uncertain a way as would render our vision of no use to us. By turning its powerful rays into our minds, it causes us to see what our last end is, and how boundless is the goodness of God. The glory of the end and purpose for which God has created us, attracts all the desires of our hearts as the magnet attracts steel, and His infinite goodness fills our hearts with confidence of being able to win that end. The confidence thus inspired is called hope, which is defined to be a supernatural, theological virtue, by which we expect with firm confidence, through the goodness of God and the merits of Christ, eternal life and the helps necessary to win it.

In this definition we have put clearly before us the nature of this virtue, the object at which it aims, and the motives which support it as a foundation supports a house. In order, then, to have a definite notion of what hope is, we must reflect on these three things.

When we say that we hope for anything, we mean that we are in expectation of some future good ; that we ardently desire it ; and that we are confident of obtaining it. Thus the object at which hope aims is always a good thing, either in reality or from the point of view from which we look at it. For, the evils which men hope and desire are in reality from

their point of view good. Thus, when any one wishes for death, which most regard as an evil, it is really because death will bring him good, either by opening for him the gates of heaven, or by ridding him of the intolerable ills from which he desires to flee away. Moreover, the good object hoped for must necessarily not be already possessed; for with possession hope ceases to be hope; it is fruition of the good which the soul takes to itself. Besides this, it must be regarded as a something to be possessed later on; for without this there is no expectation which is an essential feature in hope.

When temporal goods are the object of hope, it is called human hope; when spiritual goods, it is called Christian. Human hope is always accompanied by uncertainty, because the objects of it are circled by so many circumstances which make them elude our grasp. Christian hope, on the other hand, has in it a mixture of certainty and of uncertainty; this latter arising from the natural frailty of man who so often is untrue to the nobler impulses of his nature; the former, from the goodness of God, on Whom we may rely without fear of failure.

After this general notion of hope, let us consider the various terms by which it is defined. The first of these is the word *supernatural* which points out to us that the acts elicited by the virtue of hope are beyond the inborn strength of the soul, and are the result of a power infused into it by God, a power which imparts to it a force capable of doing that which is pleasing to Him. St. Paul teaches this very clearly in his Epistle to the Romans when he says: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost".<sup>1</sup> To the word *supernatural* is added the word *theological*, to signify that God is both the object of hope and the principle whence it flows, for hope regards Him as man's last end, and as the efficient cause of his salvation.

Another reason for the introduction of this word into the definition is that, by means of hope, we pay to God

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xv. 13.

a species of worship that is peculiarly honourable and glorious. For it inspires us with confidence that God cannot fail us; that He is faithful to His promises; and that no created thing can fill the place which He is destined to occupy in our hearts. Being supernatural in its origin, and having God for its object, it is evidently a virtue necessary for us in order to win that for which we hope. Therefore it is that David in the Psalm exhorts us to trust in Him, that is to say, to put our hopes in Him: "Trust in Him, all ye congregation of people";<sup>1</sup> and the Prophet Osee cries out to us: "Turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and hope in thy God always".<sup>2</sup> For in order to reach and obtain possession of God, it is not enough simply to believe that He exists, and that we are destined to enjoy Him for ever; we must furthermore hope in Him. If we did not do so, what would be the result? The result would be that having no object at which to aim, no motive for the exercise of good, we should do none of those things that are necessary to obtain the kingdom of heaven. It would be to us as if it did not exist, and consequently we should never arrive there.

Besides, charity without hope would be an impossibility; for it stands to reason that unless we desire to possess God, we cannot really love Him. We should be wanting in that respect for God which is a part of our love of Him, inasmuch as without hope we should be practically unbelievers in God's promises, and acting contrary to the innate tendency of our nature in which God has implanted a desire for eternal happiness.

Therefore, hope being founded upon the word or promise of God, and established or built upon the innate operations of our nature, there is an absolute necessity for it, in order to obtain salvation. Without faith we cannot please God, and without hope we cannot reach Him. Consequently, hope is as necessary for our eternal salvation as faith itself.

Such is the nature of hope. Let us now examine the object

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xii. 6.

at which it aims. This object is twofold ; first, eternal life, and secondly, the means of obtaining it. Eternal life or the glory of Paradise is the never-ending beatitude of heaven, which consists in the clear vision of God, and the enjoyment of the immortal soul in the possession of Him. In that abode of never-ending bliss there will be many things to contribute to our happiness. The beauty of the mansions destined for us ; the company of the glorified Saints and the holy Angels ; the satisfaction of every desire ; the absence of all care, trouble, and sorrow. But these are mere accessories of the happiness of heaven. The very essence of it, that without which all else would be affliction of spirit, is the possession of God : " O Lord, Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living ".<sup>1</sup> God Himself has proclaimed this in no uncertain way : " I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great ".<sup>2</sup> This fact our faith teaches ; but hope enables us to aspire to it. It is the lot of us all, and Christ Our Redeemer confirms that hope in us when He says : " Fear not, little flock, because it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom, " <sup>3</sup> of which kingdom the great Apostle has said, " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him ".<sup>4</sup>

But it is not enough that this surpassing reward should be set before us as the object of our hope. Like every other object that is worthy of our striving, it would excite in us only despair, unless our hope embraced also the means by which it is to be secured. These means are mercifully given to us by Our good God, so that our hope of winning heaven is sustained by the certainty that God will give us all that is necessary to win it. Consequently, God liberally pours down upon us the beams of His heavenly light by which we are enabled to distinguish good from evil. He enriches our minds with clear instruction. He imparts to us strength to resist the seductive influence of sin, and to practise the difficult

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxli. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xv. 1.

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. ii. 9.

duties of virtue. That which renders these duties difficult is our own corrupt nature, which rebels against the restraint imposed upon it by virtue. He, therefore, gives to us that patient courage which by its persistent efforts quells the proud resistance of our passions, and nerves us to turn away from the glittering bait held up before our eyes. He fills our hearts with a respect for His law, and with strength to carry it into effect. If we fall, He raises us, and breathes into us fresh courage to proceed upon our toilsome way. He whispers into our ears encouraging words; He calls to our minds His promises; He enables us to persevere.

Hence, hope is a virtue which belongs not only to those who have preserved their innocence, and to those who having lost it have recovered it by repentance, but to those who are in the state of sin. True, they deserve hell as long as they persist in living in that state. But if they do what in them lies to emerge from it, they may hope to return to the narrow way leading to eternal life, and eventually to pass through the narrow gate into the full fruition of its ecstatic joys, as Peter, Mary Magdalene, and so many other repentant sinners have done. Such, then, are the objects of our hope, namely the happiness of heaven, and the means which will infallibly secure it for us.

In order to build ourselves up in this supernatural, theological virtue, we must, in the last place, consider upon what foundations it securely rests. The first of these is the infinite goodness of God. Proud human nature may think that its own meritorious actions are the solid rock upon which the hope of eternal life and the possession of God must rest. But this is not so. For, even if we could by means of our own native strength observe all the commandments of God, that fact would not be able to give us a hope of winning our heavenly crown. Would it make God our debtor? Would it give us a right to recompense? In itself, most certainly not; for although the happiness of heaven is a recompense, it is a gratuitous one. Our hope, therefore, is founded upon God, upon His infinite goodness.

When we begin to reflect upon the many instances and

incontestable proofs of that goodness in our regard, our hope is excited, and resting on that goodness we feel that heaven and the possession of God will be ours. We were nothing, and God has drawn us out of nothing and given us being. With that being He imposed upon us duties, as a trial to test our worthiness for the high destiny awaiting us. But even in this trial His goodness shines forth. We are furnished by Him with means to undergo its rigours. We have help from Him to pass through them and make each suffering of our trial turn to our advantage. A shower of divine grace is continually falling upon us. Prayer is put into our hands, and by it we can at each moment have in those hands the might of the Omnipotent to crush our enemies. As soon as we entered upon this scene of our trial, we were cleansed from the stain of sin. We were then strengthened by the gifts of His Holy Spirit. If we fell away, we were raised from the mire of our vices, and reinstated in our former rights and privileges. His goodness to us is so great that our spiritual life is fed by the body and the blood of the only begotten Son of God. How good then is God? Is not that goodness a firm foundation upon which to rest our hope?

This, however, is not all. Good as God is to us, He is not content that our hope should rest simply upon that attribute of His divine being. He went so far as to give us His own divine promise: "I am thy reward exceeding great".<sup>1</sup> That He should give us a kingdom, eternal life, is for us matter of the greatest astonishment; but that He should give us Himself, this almost surpasses belief. Yet He has said it. He has given His word to that effect; He has promised it. Nay more, He has confirmed that promise by an oath. St. Paul has pointed out this, in these well-known words: "God meaning more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed an oath".<sup>2</sup> After this assurance, who can for a moment entertain a doubt that God will accomplish that which He has sworn to perform? If we depended upon men, we should have good reason to

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vi. 17.

doubt ; for they often enough promise that which they are unable to fulfil. They promise, and do nothing, because they frequently change their purpose. They promise, and oftentimes have no intention of carrying it into effect, because they wish to deceive us. It is not so with God. In Him there is no inconstancy, no deceit. He has given us His word, and that word will stand firm for ever. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's words shall never pass away."<sup>1</sup>

Besides having as a foundation for our hope the goodness of God and His unfailling promise, we have also the merits of Christ to sustain it. As if these were not enough, that His goodness should be made manifest to us by our creation, and His fidelity by an oath with which He confirmed our belief in it, He gave us a still greater pledge in His only Son. That Son paid the penalty due to our sins, and by so doing unlocked for us the gates of heaven which sin had closed against us. "He spared not," says St. Paul, "His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things."<sup>2</sup> Had not God, we may ask with astonishment, any other means than this to fill us with unshaken hope in Him? Undoubtedly He had ; and yet He chose this one to take from our hearts the last vestiges of distrust, and fill them with loving, child-like confidence. A greater or a more precious pledge He could not possibly give us. Therefore it is that we say Christ is the base—the sovereign foundation of all our hope.

Therefore, strive to fill your heart with this blessed hope, which, being founded upon the merits of Christ, the fidelity and the goodness of God, will enable you to look forwards confidently to the attainment of the end for which He created you. But in order that it may exercise upon you all its beneficent influence, you must endeavour to endow your hope with all those qualities which will make it efficacious. See, then, that it is firm, without any doubt, hesitation, incertitude. In the next place, that it may not degenerate into presumption, let your hope be mingled with fear. On the part of God you need have no fear. Your fear must be for yourself, lest

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 32.



you should not co-operate with His grace ; for you are frail ; your nature is inclined to evil ; you have sinned ; you may have contracted evil habits. Besides all this, there are dangers besetting you on all sides from men, and from the spirits of wickedness. You stand perhaps now in God's grace, but be full of fear ; take heed lest you fall. Yet though full of fear, nevertheless strive to fill your hope with confidence. God is with you. You lean on His arm, and that arm is almighty. Let your hope, finally, be accompanied by good works, for to hope that God will give you eternal life, while you do nothing to deserve it, is absurd. God helps those who help themselves, or as the French proverb expresses it, *Aide toi, et Dieu t'aidera*. With these qualities your hope will never be confounded.

### CHARITY.

FAITH, as we have said, puts before us the object, end or purpose for which God has given us the breath of life. By so doing, it fills us with the hope of winning that glorious destiny. Animated with hope, we are next induced to love Him from Whom we look for the accomplishment of our hope. This love or charity is the essential point in the law, by the observance of which God enables us to merit the end for which He destines us. We call it the *essential* point, because without it all else is worthless. "If I have not charity," says St. Paul, "I am nothing . . . it profiteth nothing."<sup>1</sup> It is the crown, the perfection of the Christian character. It is defined to be a gift of God by which we love Him above all things, because of what He is in Himself, and our neighbour as ourselves, for God's sake. Charity therefore has two sides to it. Let us at present consider that side which regards God.

Under this aspect, charity is our love for God. Love is our tendency towards any object which pleases us, and our pleasure in contemplating and enjoying that object. This tendency is planted in our nature by God Himself. It is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3.

a sort of moral attraction governing our minds, somewhat similar to that physical attraction which governs material things in their relation to one another ; so that we are naturally drawn to that which is good, or which pleases us, just as steel is drawn towards the magnet. Hence love is the first, the principal law that we obey, inasmuch as in us it precedes all other sentiments. For it goes before desire ; we desire only what we first love ; we enjoy, take pleasure in, and feel satisfaction only in that which first we love ; we hate any object, only inasmuch as we perceive that it thwarts our love ; in one word, we love by a sort of natural instinct, just as the eye turns spontaneously towards the light, or as a child seeks its mother's breast. So true is this, that philosophers reduce all the other movements of the soul to this primary law or principle of our being. For, what else than love is the desire which agitates our heart ? It is merely love tending towards its object. What is the joy that thrills it with happiness, but the satisfaction arising from the possession of that which it loves ? What is the fear which fills it with dread, but the soul's aversion or effort to flee from that which contradicts it ? What is the sadness which covers it as with a pall, but its inability to escape the uneasiness, the pain, the ill which affects it because of its unsatisfied love ? Hence, philosophers say that love is all man. Arguing upon this proposition, theologians infer that if love is all man, it must be also all God. For they say : Man was created to the image and likeness of God, and for this reason the Apostle St. John was able to say : " God is charity or love ".<sup>1</sup> But they proceed to say that man being only the image of God, love in God is infinitely superior to love in man. God's love is infinite, uncreated, eternal ; man's love is finite, infused into him by God, and though lasting for ever in the kingdom for which man is destined, is yet not eternal in the same sense as it is eternal in God.

Now, although man is in this sense all love, and although God is all lovable, yet of himself man could not love God as he ought, unless God gave him the grace to do so. For, the

<sup>1</sup> I St. John iv. 8.

soul of man being depraved by the fall of Adam, has by that fact had the tendency of its love turned away from God. Man's love tends to that which is below, and not to that which is above. Therefore, theologians in defining charity, call it "a gift of God," whether it is considered as a habit or as an act. As a habit, it is infused into the soul by Baptism, in the same way as faith and hope are. Consequently, it is a pure gift since we have no share in procuring it, and obtain it in virtue of Christ's infinite merits. Even if, later on in life, after having lost charity by wilful sin, we recover it by penance, and in this way seem to have some share in procuring it, we must still regard it as a pure gift of God, for the grace of penance also is His gift.

Charity, considered as an act, is still a pure gift of God. For what is actual charity? It is nothing else than some good that we perform through the love of God. But if every act done through the love of God is necessarily an act of the free will, and if our free will is unable by its own strength to perform any act of that nature, it is evident that actual charity as well as habitual charity is the gift of God: "For we are not sufficient (or able) to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency (or ability to act) is from God".<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, what we have said will enable you to form an idea of what charity is in its own nature. Let us, in the next place, consider its excellence.

By means of charity we love God. It is, therefore, the living bond by which our soul is united to Him. Consequently, it is through charity that the soul lives. Apart from charity, faith is valueless, for it is dead; hope is vain, for it expends itself in empty longings which cannot be realised. St. John's words on this head are most emphatic: "He that loveth not, abideth in death". Charity, therefore, is the life of the soul. It is not only its life, but it enables it to enjoy the good things of the Lord; for, animated by charity the soul takes pleasure in the infinite perfection of God; it contemplates Him; it embraces Him as a loving child draws to his heart a fond

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 5.

parent ; it finds in Him that heavenly calm, that sweet repose for which the nature of man sighs ; it gives to God a homage similar to that given to Him by the Saints and the Angels who minister round His throne ; it is transformed in a measure into God, and thus is accomplished that union for which Christ prayed so earnestly on behalf of His Apostles : “ That they may be one, as We also are one : I in them, and Thou in Me ”.<sup>1</sup>

If, then, charity is thus excellent by reason of its very nature, it is no less so because of the reason for which God bestows it upon us. This is to unite us with Himself. To obtain this end, or rather to enable us to obtain this end, Christ came on earth and assumed our human nature. He Himself teaches us this truth in these well-known words : “ I am come to cast fire on the earth ”—that is to say, to enkindle in the hearts of men this divine love—“ and what will I but that it be kindled ? ”<sup>2</sup> What other purpose is there in His divine commandments ? The observance of them unites us with Him, and it is the best proof of our love of Him : “ If any man love Me, he will keep My commandments ”. The motive, too, which is the very soul of charity, proves to us its excellence ; for that motive is none other than the goodness of God Himself, a motive which being perfectly disinterested, is one reason the more, proving to us how immeasurably charity surpasses all the other virtues.

Any one who gives a moment's thought to the extraordinary efficacy of this virtue, will add yet another reason to the number of those which raise it above other virtues. What is it not able to do ? Standing alone, without the aid of any other, it is able to fulfil the whole law of God, for St. Paul says : “ Love is the fulfilling of the law ”. All others, however, without the aid of charity can do nothing meritorious in the sight of God. Let charity but once obtain complete possession of the heart, and that heart will shun even the appearance of evil ; it will be rich in every virtue—upright, honest, chaste, mild, affable, obliging, generous and honour-

<sup>1</sup> St. John xvii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xii. 49.

able ; no sacrifice will be burdensome to it, and no sin will be able to exist in it. If the transgressions of that heart had surpassed in number the multitude of the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, at the entrance of charity into it, they would all be blotted out, "for charity covers"—that is destroys, obliterates—"a multitude of sins".

Consider now its excellence by reason of its merit and its worth. In what does its merit consist? It consists in causing our souls to live always in the presence of God ; for, being in charity, they are ever united with sanctifying grace: "He that loveth Me," says Christ, "shall be loved by My Father".<sup>1</sup> But the moment that charity leaves the soul, that soul is no longer united with sanctifying grace, it no longer lives in the presence of God—it is dead: "He that loveth not, abideth in death".<sup>2</sup> By thus incurring death, it in a moment loses all the merits which it may have previously acquired: "If the just man turn himself away from his justice and do iniquity . . . all his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered".<sup>3</sup>

But now on the other hand consider its worth. The moment that man, repenting of his sin, returns once more to God, it restores to him the merits which he had lost. More than this ; it imparts to his most insignificant actions a worth which makes them of inestimable price, procuring for them an eternal reward. Hence, if animated by charity, he gives a cup of water to one that is thirsty, or speaks a word of consolation to one that is sorrowful, or a word of advice to one that is in doubt, or bows his head to salute a passer-by, not one of these acts will be suffered by God to go unrewarded. Whereas if without charity he fasted, and prayed, and gave large alms, had faith and hope, uttered prophecies, and guided the Universal Church by his sage counsel, it would profit him nothing.

The last excellence of charity is expressed in these words of the great Apostle: "Charity never falleth away ; whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or

<sup>1</sup> St. John xiv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ezech. xviii. 24.

knowledge shall be destroyed".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, charity will endure for ever. In God, charity or love is eternal. It began, if we may use the expression, with His being; it will continue to endure as long as God Himself shall exist. In us, however, charity is not eternal, but it may become immortal. It has a beginning; but, if we persevere in good, it will never have an end. Other virtues, as faith and hope, do not enjoy this prerogative. Faith is given to us to last only for the term of our natural life. Its purpose is to enable us to believe the truths and the mysteries which we neither see nor understand. But when at death the veil which hides God from our view is drawn aside, faith will cease, and it will be replaced by an actual vision of the great verities which we have accepted on the word of God.

Hope, too, will pass away, for it will become useless, just as a cripple's crutches are flung from his grasp when he recovers the full use of his limbs. Its purpose during life was to uphold us in the expectation of that ineffable good which is to flood our souls with joy during eternity. At death we no longer expect, nor await its coming. It is with us; it is ours; we enter into possession. Hope will, therefore, pass away, for we no longer look forwards to the possession of that which we already hold. For, the good which is the object of it, that is to say, God Himself, never passes away. We have Him even in this life, we shall have Him amid the sorrows and the cleansing fires of Purgatory; we shall hold Him for ever in the kingdom of His glory.

Such, then, is that glorious virtue bestowed upon us by Our heavenly Father to enable us to love Him above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves for His sake. Its excellence above all other virtues is evident to us, when we contemplate it in its essence and in its nature; in its end and in its motive; in its efficacy and in its force; in its merit, its worth, and its duration.

Our aim, therefore, must be to cultivate this virtue. In order to do this, we must make it the end of our existence

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

here below to love God with all the force of our hearts. But in so doing, we must remember that there are two kinds of love, the love of friendship and the love of gratitude. The love of friendship is that by which we love and take pleasure in the object loved, on account of its goodness and its beauty. The love of gratitude is that by which we attach ourselves to the object loved, chiefly on account of its beneficent qualities with respect to ourselves. Having in it this regard for ourselves, it is not so perfect as the love of friendship. Consequently, it must be our aim to have for God this love of friendship.

But while aiming at this, we must bear in mind that God may be loved in both ways. Let us then strive to love Him because He is our sovereign good, infinitely good to us, and ever engaged in showering down upon us His priceless gifts and favours. Yet, while filling our hearts with love for Him on this account, let us strive to love Him, also on account of His own surpassing loveliness, as being infinitely good in Himself, without any thought of recompense, without any dread of chastisement. Beginning with the love of gratitude, our love will thus in course of time, and with the aid of divine grace, develop into that perfect love which casts out all fear, all imperfect motives, and loves God simply and solely because He is the infinite good.

#### MOTIVES FOR CHARITY OR LOVE OF GOD.

HAVING explained in what charity or love of God consists, we come next to consider the motives which should urge us to love God. When these have been put before us, and our hearts have been thoroughly convinced of their duty towards Our Creator, the next questions for solution are, in what manner, or in what measure we are to love Him, and by what test we shall be able to discover whether we do really love Him. Therefore, the motives, the measure, and the test of our love of God, these are the questions that shall occupy our attention during this Lecture.

Our love of God is one of those things about which we do not usually need to make inquiries. It is taken for granted. But when we come to ask ourselves why it is that we love Him, and to give the reasons for that love, the most obvious motives that suggest themselves are, because God Himself has commanded us to love Him, because He is infinitely worthy of love, and because by His goodness to us He stirs up whatever generosity there is in the human heart to make Him a return of love.

To love God is the first commandment. It is the greatest. It comprises all the rest. This we learn from the lips of infallible truth. Quoting the words of Deuteronomy, Our Lord said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength".<sup>1</sup> This, said He, is the first commandment; first in order, because imposed upon Adam and Eve in Paradise; true, the command given to them was one of obedience; but prior to that was the command to love their Creator, obedience being but the test or proof of a previous duty. It is first not only in order, but in importance or greatness, for without its observance, obedience to the rest is useless. It comprises all the rest; for love of God is the fulfilling of the law. Hence, the whole teaching of the Prophets and the wise men sent to rule and guide the people of God may be said to have consisted in an exhortation to comply with this primary and all-important duty.

When Our Lord came, He simply perfected the teaching which had preceded His coming. He did not do away with the law, but by His precept of love, He developed it in every particular. The wisdom of God in imposing such a command upon man is manifest from the fact of its being most aptly suited to the nature which it was destined to rule. That nature is one in which love is supreme. God as we have seen is all love; and man being made to the image of God is also love. Hence every act of man either is an act of love or it may be referred to love. Therefore, since such is the case, man is created to love, and God by commanding him to love

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vi. 5.



his Creator, has imposed upon him a precept most admirably adapted to and conformable with his nature. Moreover, since God Himself is all love, He cannot be perfectly honoured except by love. Faith, it is true, pays to Him a certain meed of honour, so also does hope ; but it is an imperfect measure which only love can fill up.

God mercifully deigns to ask us for this worship, and in so doing He has elicited the wonder of all the holy men that have made the consideration of this condescension the subject of their meditation. "What," exclaims Job, "is man that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?"<sup>1</sup> The great ones of the earth disdain to ask for the love of their inferiors ; but God, as it were, humbly solicits it from us. We are so far beneath Him that even if He did not command us to love Him, we ought to pass our whole life in humbly praying Him to accept our love.

Even if God, by His own special command, did not impose this duty upon us, another motive for stirring up our love and devoting it to Him would be, the consideration of the many titles upon which He deserves our love. He is infinite perfection. Now if love is only a tendency of our heart to that which is good, it will follow that the greater is the good towards which it tends, the more worthy that good is of our love. With what love then ought God to be loved? He is the supreme good. In Him is all good. Whatever good we may perceive in the created things that surround us, of this we shall find the plenitude in God. If wisdom draws our hearts towards it, we find in God infinite wisdom ; if power attracts us, we find in God omnipotence ; if beauty enthral us, we discover in God the splendour of eternal light ; if wealth and glory captivate our hearts, "glory and wealth are in His house" ; if delights attract our hearts, "at His right hand are delights even to the end". Therefore, no one is more worthy of love than God, for He is most excellent, most perfect, most glorious ; He commands us to love Him ; He even condescends to solicit our love.

<sup>1</sup> Job vii. 17.

Now if love can be repaid only by love, then we ought never to cease for a single instant in paying to Him this debt, for He, on His part, never ceases to manifest to us His love by showering down upon us benefits by which He testifies to us His love. Cast a rapid glance at these. He created man in a state of innocence. He made him to His own image, giving to him not a merely animal soul such as the brute creation have, but a soul endowed with reason, capable of knowing and of loving its Creator. He adorned that soul with sanctity, filled it with justice. He made it master of the earth, lord of all visible created things, in dignity only a little less than the Angels.

From that high estate man cast himself down by his own free, deliberate act, and made himself a slave, not only to material things, but to the base passions of his nature which heretofore he was able completely to control and rule. For that act of ingratitude, eternal death was the penalty. But God's love here intervened on our behalf. The Eternal Word assumed our nature and as one of ourselves expiated our manifold crimes, by voluntarily giving Himself up to death for us, and washing away our guilt in His own life's blood.

Even this astounding proof of love does not win man's heart. He outrages God by new offences. But God grows not weary ; He gives to man other means to apply to his rebellious soul the waters of a most copious redemption. Man has but humbly and sorrowfully to ask for pardon, and it is granted, not once, but innumerable times. As if this was not enough, God threatens man with eternal chastisement unless he will give to Him his love. For without that love man cannot be in the state of grace ; and not being in the state of grace, he cannot merit eternal glory ; he may expect only everlasting death : " He that loveth not, abideth in death ".<sup>1</sup> When St. Paul contemplated all that God, and Christ, the Man-God, had done to win the love of man he cried out in his vehement zeal : " If any man love not Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema ".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Hence, from these considerations, any one may see that the motives for charity or the love of God are first, God's own express command ; next, His infinite perfection ; and lastly, His infinite goodness to us.

For these reasons, then, we are bound to love God. But how are we to love Him? or, to put the question in another form, in what measure are we to love Him? St. Bernard's answer to this is the best that can be found : " The measure with which we are to love God is to love Him without measure, that is to say, above all things". For, our love of anything ought to be proportioned to the goodness of the object loved. Now the goodness of God is infinite ; therefore, our love of Him ought to be infinite. We, however, being finite beings, cannot in this way love Our God. Yet, though we cannot infinitely love Him, we must approach as near to this measure as our nature will permit, by loving Him as much as we are able, that is to say, above all things else, without any restriction whatever.

To love God in this way is so necessary, that no other love can be acceptable to Him. For, all that is outside God comes from Him, and whatever good there may be in these created objects has its origin in Him. Consequently, these created goods must return to God, they belong to Him, and He cannot permit any creature to give to these created things the rights which belong to Him alone. To love any of these in preference to God would be to substitute the creature for the Creator. To love that creature as much as we love God would be to attribute to it as much perfection as we attribute to God. This would be blasphemy. Therefore, a supreme love of God, a love which sets Him above everything else, which prefers Him to everything else, is a necessity.

We have used the words " which prefers Him to everything else". Hence this love is termed by theologians—a love of preference. A love of this nature does not consist in intensity of feeling, in sensible love. Consequently, it does not consist in feeling. It would be good for us, it is true, could we have this love, because it consoles and fortifies us, but it is not necessary, for it does not depend upon us ; we

cannot command it at will. Often, indeed, it is the effect of a highly strung, sensitive organisation or temperament, and is, therefore, in these instances transitory and barren of results. It may produce sighs and tears, but it fails to produce works. Therefore, it is not to be depended upon, and is not true love of God unless it proceeds from the will which makes it operative.

But true love of preference may co-exist in a man whose heart remains cold, dry, insensible, and apparently without taste for piety. It is to be found in company with these sentiments when the heart, the will, the soul, is firmly convinced that God deserves by His own nature and perfections to be preferred to all creatures, and when this conviction makes it resolve that nothing shall ever induce it to sin against Him. This is the love of preference. He that has it in his heart is able to say with St. Paul: "Neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God".<sup>1</sup>

This is a high degree of love, but it is not too high for the ordinary Christian to attain. It is that without which no man can enter heaven; for each of us must be ready to make every sacrifice rather than offend God; for, as Our Lord says: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me". Consequently, a love of God such as this is not a mere matter of counsel, which we may either follow out or not just as it shall seem good to us; it is a matter of precept, just as much as it is, not to kill, or not to forswear one's self, or not to overreach one's neighbour. In this precept God does not forbid us to love other things as well as Him, for instance, our parents or our relatives; but He commands us not to prefer them to Him. We may, of course, if we wish to enter upon a more perfect way, exclude from our love all objects except God, but this is a matter of counsel only, not of precept. It is the perfection of the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 38, 39.

cept, not its mere fulfilment. We do this latter part by avoiding all gross, deadly sins. We rise a stage higher in perfection, by avoiding all merely venial offences and small faults. We become perfect, when we love nothing else than God, and our neighbour for His sake.

From what has been said, you have seen that the motives which urge us to love God are His own command, His perfections, and His infinite goodness to us. In giving to God that love which He asks, and merits, and commands us to give, we have seen that it must be a love of preference, supreme not in intensity, but in appreciation, so that we should be ready to sacrifice everything rather than offend God.

In conclusion, we will give to you a test by which you will be able to discover whether you truly love God. Love being essentially active must ever be doing something. It is always moving towards the object loved. Consequently, an essential feature of love, is action. To say, "I love," is no proof that love is in your heart. The true test is once more, action. Love always does something to show its love. It avoids whatever will displease the object of its love ; it does whatever will give it pleasure and satisfaction. You will, therefore, see at once how impossible it is that any one should love God and at the same time be a transgressor of His law. If he love God, he will keep His law. This is the surest sign that a man loves God. It is the sign given by Christ Himself: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me".<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, if you are indolent and inactive in your duties, not faithful in prayer, not earnest in religious exercises, if you shun not anger, lying, pride, and impurity, you cannot say that you love God—you do not love Him. Of that you may be perfectly certain. On the other hand, if you are diligent at prayer, submissive to Superiors, a lover of truth, a hater of pride, a strenuous athlete in struggling against the unclean devil, in one word if you keep the law, then you can say with all truth—"I love God".

<sup>1</sup> St. John xiv. 21.

## LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

THERE is in charity or love a twofold force which impels us first, towards God, and next, towards our fellow-men. We love God for His own sake, and our neighbour for God's sake. As we have already considered charity with respect to God, it now remains for us to consider it as it regards our neighbour.

By the word "neighbour," we mean all men without exception; for, no one can be excluded from our love without wounding and breaking the precept of charity. The natural law imposes this duty upon us; for, we were created by God to live in society; and, therefore, we are unable to suffice for ourselves. For our well-being we need the help of our fellow-men, and they have need of us. To obtain this succour which is necessary for our happiness and prosperity, union, agreement, love or charity is requisite. That charity, or union, or agreement, founds families, cements societies, builds up peoples. But as the unbridled passions of our nature are ever apt to set aside and transgress the natural law, Our Creator deemed it necessary to add to it the sanction of His positive command: "I give you," says Our Lord, "a new commandment: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another".<sup>1</sup>

To impress upon us the importance of this precept, Our Lord calls it His own special command: "This is *My* commandment". He gave it to us just before His Passion, as a sort of last will or testament which all men hold to be most sacred and inviolable. He so strongly insists upon it that He declares it to be the peculiar mark or stamp by which men, in after ages, shall be able to distinguish His followers from all other men: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another".<sup>2</sup> He attaches to it so great importance that He considers it to be equal to the precept by which we are bound to love God Himself. For, when asked upon one occasion: "Which is the greatest

<sup>1</sup> St. John xiii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii. 35.

commandment?" He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart". Then He added, "And the second is like unto this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

If we turn from Jesus to those whom He had taught and filled with His own spirit, we find that they also rank this precept as equal to the first and greatest commandment. "This commandment," says St. John, "we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother."<sup>1</sup> In the observance of it, St. Paul makes the whole Christian law to consist: "He that loveth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the law";<sup>2</sup> and in His Epistle to the Galatians, he repeats this doctrine when he says: "All the law is fulfilled in one sentence: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".<sup>3</sup> St. John points out how inseparable is this love of our neighbour from our love of God, when he says: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar".<sup>4</sup> Hence, both by the natural and by the positive law, we are bound to love all men without exception.

But though we are obliged to love all without any exception whatever, we are not bound to love all equally. For, the first rule that ought to regulate the measure of love meted out to our fellow-men is the degree of their nearness to us; so that the more closely either nature, or accidental causes unite them to us, the greater ought to be the measure of our love to them. Hence, father and mother being most closely and intimately united to us, deserve from us, and they are entitled to, a larger share of love than our sisters and our brothers; these latter, to more love than our uncles and our aunts; and these again to more love than our cousins; and all blood relations of a less degree to more love than our friends and our acquaintances.

The second rule which must guide us in the distribution of our love, is the degree of closeness to God attained by those who claim our love. For, it stands to reason that those who

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John iv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. v. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 1 St. John iv. 20.

are near to Him are deserving of greater love than those who are afar off. Therefore, we owe to the Saints and to the just a larger measure of love than we do to sinners and to the impious. The reason of this is that God is the centre towards which all love tends. Those, therefore, who are nearest to Him deserve to receive a measure of love proportioned to their proximity to Him, and to the love entertained for them by God. Consequently, we should bestow less love upon those whom God loves less, and more upon those whom He loves more. From this it is evident that God Himself though loving all men without distinction, inasmuch as they are His creatures, yet loves some more than others, that is to say, He loves them unequally. So also ought we to distribute our love. We should, as God does, love all men without exception, but we should love some men more than others.

Are we then bound, you will ask, to love sinners, the impious, and those who are our bitterest enemies? There can be no doubt that we are, though it is not as sinners and impious and enemies that we love them, but as the rational creatures of God redeemed by the blood of Christ, as creatures who may be converted to better ways; and who through that conversion may be rendered worthy of the eternal beatitude of heaven. It is their persons and not their sins that we love; for, we should entertain for their sins no other sentiments than those of hatred. To love sinners who in no way are troublesome to us, and who also do not inflict upon us any wrong, is not a matter of very great difficulty. But to love enemies who hate us, who meditate evil against us, and whenever a chance offers, do us serious harm, is an act requiring a great deal of self-repression and self-effacement. Yet, difficult as it is to love them, we are obliged to do it. For, though they are our enemies, they are nevertheless our neighbours, and on that score they must be loved by us, and not simply not hated. This is the strict teaching of Christ, a teaching with which He wishes us to comply. For, He says: "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good



to them that hate you ; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.”<sup>1</sup>

A hard precept no doubt ; and one that runs counter to the unregenerate nature which we inherit from our first parents. Yet, difficult as it undoubtedly is, it is not one that it is impossible to fulfill. Men weak as ourselves have completely subdued themselves and generously pardoned those who had done them the most galling injuries. So also can the weakest among us. Not only he can, but he must pardon ; for, his enemy, from the fact of being hostile to him, does not on that account, as we have said before, cease to be his neighbour. Consequently, no one, no matter how grievously he may be wronged, insulted, and defamed by his enemy, can dispense himself from the law of loving him. It is God’s command, and a command founded on a natural right. That natural right is, that no one should be injured by another ; and as each of us would not wish his fellow-man to inflict any injury upon him, so each of us should never do any injury to another. “As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner.”<sup>2</sup> Each of us wishes those who are at variance with him to treat him well. Therefore each of us must do to his enemies as he would wish them to do to him. If we will not act thus, then we are no better than the pagans who benefited those who did good to them, and injured those who worked them evil. If we pretend to be Christ’s disciples, we must have in our conduct that mark by which His followers are distinguished from all others—we must love those who do us ill.

Nor is it sufficient to have this negative sort of charity. Our charity, to be Christian, must be of a positive kind ; we must do good to our enemies. We must desire their advantage, and as far as in us lies, procure it for them, being ready if they happen to be in need, to share our goods with them, and in every possible way to assist them. This is God’s command, and no mere logical deduction from it : “If thou meetest thy enemy’s ox or his ass going astray,” says the Law, “bring

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. v. 43.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke vi. 31.

it back to him. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lie underneath his burden, thou shalt not pass by, but shalt lift him up with him.”<sup>1</sup> “If thy enemy be hungry,” says the wise man, “give him to eat; if he thirst, give him water to drink.”<sup>2</sup> Besides desiring for him every good, and making that desire efficacious by deeds, you must not wish any evil to happen to him, nor rejoice when misfortune overtakes him. Nay, your charity must go so far as to grieve over his losses: “When thy enemy shall fall, be not glad; and in his ruin, let not thy heart rejoice.”<sup>3</sup>

In order that this charity may be what God wishes it to be, and, therefore, that it may deserve His eternal reward, it must not be inspired by natural motives. We call “natural,” those motives which proceed from nature. Thus, to act towards our neighbour in the various excellent ways which we have already pointed out, because he is closely connected with us, or because he enlists our sympathy, is to be moved by merely natural motives which would induce even a pagan to act in a benevolent and kindly manner towards his fellow-men and his fellow-citizens.

Supernatural motives, however, are those which spring from faith. Thus, if we love our neighbour not for his own sake, but for God’s sake, that is to say, in order to accomplish the law, because God commands us, because he is one of God’s creatures, redeemed by Christ’s precious blood, and destined for the happiness of heaven, our charity at once becomes supernatural, and deserves the reward of God. Natural motives may make us benevolent, philanthropic, but only supernatural ones can make us charitable, can make us fulfil the law, can make us love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves.

These last words point out to us the way or manner in which we are to exercise our charity. They tell us how we are to love him. Therefore, it is important that we should clearly understand their meaning. Do they imply that we

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv. 17.

should love him *as much* as we love ourselves, and as strongly as we love ourselves? No; this is not their meaning. They point out to us that our love of him must *resemble* the love which we have for ourselves, not that it should be equal to it; we should love him, not equally, but similarly, as St. Thomas expresses it: "Non æqualiter, sed similiter". As we have already pointed out, all men are not equally to be loved; but to those who are nearest to us, more love is owing than to those who are farther removed from us. But no one is so near to us as we are to ourselves. Therefore, most love is due to ourselves. Consequently, in a case of equal necessity, we may prefer ourselves to others; we may care for our interests more than for those of others; we may prefer our honour, our life, and the rest, more than the honour or the life of others. It must, however, be observed that we are not *obliged* to give this preference to ourselves and to our own interests. We may, if we so please, give that preference to others, when by so doing we do not fail in our duty to ourselves. By acting thus, we attain to the heroism of charity, and, therefore, procure for ourselves a more precious good. But heroic acts, as we know, do not fall under the precept. In order, then, rightly to love our neighbour as ourselves, we must understand how we ought to love ourselves; for, not all love of ourselves is good, just as not all love of our neighbour is good. Our love of ourselves is good when we refer it to God, and when it leads us to conform our will to His will by submitting it to His law. Thus, when our love of ourselves makes us follow our inclinations to good, and resist those which impel us to evil, it is a just love. When it causes us to desire eternal goods and to labour to obtain them, it is a true love. Hence, our love of self is good, only when we seek our happiness in God and tend towards Him. But it is bad, when it stays at ourselves; when it does not prefer God to ourselves; for, we were not created for ourselves, but for God. By thus loving ourselves, we sin; we commit iniquity; and they who so act, instead of loving, hate their souls. Therefore, when we say that we must love our neighbour as ourselves, we do not mean that we must love him as strongly,

but with the same kind of love with which we love ourselves, that is to say, with a love which is just, holy, and true.

Therefore, to love our neighbour "as ourselves" is to refrain from doing to him that which with justice and reason we do not wish him to do unto us; but on the contrary, to do to him that which, in the order of wisdom and of justice, we desire him to do unto us. Now, what is it that we wish our neighbour to do unto us? When we are in misfortune, we wish him to compassionate us and to come to our aid. When we are prosperous, to rejoice at our success. We should like him to desire for us all that is good, and to do for us all that will benefit us and that will be advantageous to us. Consequently, if we wish to comply with the precept of Christ, we should treat our neighbour in the same way. When we have schooled ourselves into doing this, we may be perfectly certain of our eternal salvation; for, we shall then love him as Christ has loved us; we shall have conformed ourselves to the image of Christ; and as we know so well, they who have done this, have upon them the marks of the predestinated; for, "whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son".<sup>1</sup>

### PRUDENCE.

HAVING already treated of faith, hope, and charity—virtues which are called theological, because they refer to God—we have next to study those other virtues which regulate our actions and make them agreeable to Our Creator. These are very numerous; but as they may all be traced back to certain principal or root virtues, they are usually grouped about them. These principal or root virtues are four in number, namely prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. They are called *cardinal* from the Latin word *cardo*, a hinge, because the other moral virtues turn, so to speak, on these. Besides being the hinges on which the other moral virtues turn, they are mutually connected with one another; for "justice seeks, prudence

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 29.

finds, fortitude appropriates to itself, and temperance possesses and enjoys".<sup>1</sup>

In order thoroughly to understand the nature of these virtues, we will consider them one after another. For the present, we will confine our attention to the first of them, the virtue of prudence.

Prudence may be regarded either as a natural talent—a very conspicuous portion of our intellectual outfit—or as a moral virtue. As a natural talent, it is that perspicacity, or foresight, which enables us clearly to see the end to be attained in any given project, and to select the means best fitted to attain that end. Thus, in the fable of the fox and the goat, we have put before us the prudence of the one and the imprudence of the other. The fox having fallen into difficulties saw the way to escape from them, and the means to secure that end; whereas the goat undertook to aid him in his project, without weighing the consequences of what he was about to do. The fox, in pursuit of food, had leaped into a large pit out of which he was not able to climb. Seeing a goat browsing on its brink, he called to him, and implored his aid to liberate him from his predicament. Without reflection, the goat leaped in, and the fox mounting upon his back was able to scramble out. But then the goat discovered that though he had helped another out of a difficulty, he had not foreseen the predicament in which that act had placed himself. This perspicuous knowledge of the end to be obtained, and of the means to obtain it, is, therefore, what we may call merely natural talent or foresight.

The virtue of prudence, however, is one that raises this merely natural talent into the high region of a moral act, meritorious of eternal life; for, it enables us to know both what we ought to do, and what we ought to avoid, in order to gain the kingdom of God. Among the moral virtues it holds the first rank, as faith does among the theological virtues. This priority is given to it because it affects the intelligence, the action of which precedes that of the will

<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard, *De Consider.*, lib. ii., c. 10.

and governs all the other intellectual faculties. Being a virtue which is concerned chiefly with the attainment of our last end, and with the proper employment of the means to secure that end, it manifests its presence in the soul by the mode of its action in guiding the soul to the attainment of God.

Having placed before itself the winning of that great prize, prudence causes the Christian soul never to leave anything to chance, in the hope that chance will direct things aright, and lead them to throw their weight into the scale in its favour. But before the performance of any work, it carefully weighs the value and the righteousness of that work. Having satisfied itself on this score, it, in the next place, proposes to itself a good end in the execution of that work. Then it considers the act, not only in itself, but in its smallest details, its most minute circumstances, in order to seek out the most suitable means for carrying into effect the end proposed. It carefully considers that which will augment, and that which may diminish these means. Those which will add to their force, it will employ; those which will take away from it, it will set aside.

From this it is easy to see in what Christian prudence consists. No one can rightly be called a prudent Christian man, unless he clearly sets before his eyes the end for which God has given him the breath of life. That end is to do the will of God, and by doing it to win his way into the eternal kingdom. Having done this, he has not done everything. It is good to know the end proposed, but it is useless to know it unless we take the means to accomplish it. Therefore, the selection of the means and the employment of them for the securing of the end, are essential parts of Christian prudence.

The chief of these means is, first, not to judge of anything by the light with which self-love invests it, nor by the false maxims of worldly prudence, but by the glorious principles of faith. These principles lay it down as the very essence of Christian life, that the body must submit to be ruled by the soul; that passion must submit to reason, and follow its commands. They tell us that the smallest good work is preferable to the most brilliant exploits performed for self-

glorification; that to win one degree of virtue is better than to amass treasures vaster than those which filled the coffers of Solomon.

This is true prudence, and it is highly commended in the Sacred Scriptures. The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Wise Man, exhorts us, on every occasion to make use of it, when He says: "Do nothing without counsel,"<sup>1</sup> for he who does not rely upon himself, but who seeks the advice and the opinion of experienced men, is always sure to act prudently. Our Lord commends it to us, when He bids us "be wise as serpents and simple as doves".<sup>2</sup> St. Paul writing to the Ephesians tells them, and in their persons us also, to "walk circumspectly, that is with prudence, not as unwise but as wise".<sup>3</sup>

These earnest exhortations are given to us in order to stir up our sluggish wills to labour at the acquisition of a virtue which is of so great advantage to those who possess it. A glance at the benefits which it procures for us will be enough to fill us with eagerness in the pursuit of it. The first benefit, and, consequently, advantage that we perceive in it is the brilliancy, the beauty, and the worth which it imparts to the other virtues. What would these be if they were separated from prudence? Instead of being virtues, they would become vices; for they would at once step beyond their limits; they would forsake the rules by which they should be guided, and would thus fail either by excess or by defect. By doing this, they would become vices. Look for instance at that love which we ought to have for one another; a love which, when given for God's sake, becomes divine charity—the greatest of the theological virtues! If it is forsaken by prudence, it degenerates into a furious passion, which will outrage even our human nature.

What is more pleasing to God than zeal in His service, and particularly zeal for the salvation of souls? Yet this virtue, when destitute of prudence, brings naught but disastrous ruin upon those who exercise it. To what are there more liberal

<sup>1</sup> Ecclus. xxxii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. x. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. v. 15, 16.

promises of recompense made than to almsgiving? How powerful it is to blot out sins, to arrest for a time at least the hand of death, to fill the soul with confidence when going before its Judge! Yet, into what lamentable excesses it will run, unless it be moderated and ruled by prudence. Therefore, the first benefit of prudence is that it preserves and regulates all the other virtues.

In the next place, it makes sure our footsteps in the difficult path of salvation. That path is a narrow one, a steep and rugged one. It is carried along the edge of frightful precipices, and is shadowed over with thick darkness. Even with a trusty guide, it is a hard road to travel. Consequently, to enable us safely to follow it, there is needed something more than the guidance of another. An internal light in the soul is required, and this internal light is prudence. If that light of prudence does not shine bright within, the Christian is like a blind man set upon a dangerous way. In that way he is sure to walk without caution, because being unconscious of danger, he knows not fear. He will, consequently, run the risk of falling into the abyss in which he will perish miserably. Or again, being without light, and being fully aware of the difficulties of the way, he will be full of fear—even when his foothold is certain, and the way smooth and plain. Hence, it is impossible for any one to avoid evil and to practise virtue, unless he is guided by prudence.

The third and most important benefit of prudence is that it actually wins heaven for us. For, it is to their prudence in having in their vessels oil with which to feed their lamps, that the Gospel attributes the salvation of the five prudent Virgins; and to the absence of prudence in the conduct of the foolish Virgins, that it attributes their rejection by the bridegroom, and their reprobation.

Seeing, then, the necessity for prudence, and the great advantages which are to be reaped from its possession, each of you must make strenuous efforts to acquire it. It must be humbly asked of God, and then certain means must be taken to follow out the rules by which prudence is acquired. The observance of these will induce the habit of acting prudently,



and thus the virtue will become the guiding star of your souls.

The first of these rules is that, when you are confronted with two courses of action (the one of which is certain, the other uncertain), or when there are offered to you two good things (the one a greater, the other a less good) you should, in the first case, follow the safer course, and in the second, choose the greater good, in preference to that which is less.

The second rule is, never to commit the slightest sin in order to procure any advantage, no matter how great it may seem to you to be ; for, you cannot do evil that good may come from it, since evil is a disorder which separates man from his last end.

The third rule is, to flee away from danger which exposes you to offend God ; for, if you love the danger, you will perish in it.

The fourth rule is, not to trust too much to your own judgment lest you be deluded, particularly in matters in which your own interests are liable to bias your judgment, but ever to be ready to seek light, counsel, advice from those who are enlightened, from superiors, directors, masters, parents, in a word, from all who have your interest at heart.

The fifth rule is, to make your will carry out the resolution at which your intelligence arrives, for, prudence is eminently practical and it is never satisfied with mere theories of right. Its aim always is to do what is right, as soon as that right thing has been clearly pointed out to the intelligence.

Therefore, earnestly beseech God to endow you with the virtue of prudence, and to give you together with it all those other glorious virtues which invariably accompany it, as obsequious courtiers do their beloved queen. These are : discretion, which in all spiritual matters enables us to distinguish truth from falsehood, good from evil, a greater from a less good ; docility, which inclines us to submit to the advice of superiors, and not to neglect or to despise the counsel of even our inferiors ; solicitude, which prompts us to perform virtuous actions when we perceive that they will be profitable to us ; circumspection, which will cause us to attend to the various

circumstances accompanying good actions, in order to perform them in accordance with the rules of virtue, and to remove the obstacles which arise and which would hinder us from performing them. While praying for these, humbly ask to be preserved from the vice of imprudence, which is ever followed by precipitation, by want of attention, inconstancy, and negligence; for, these latter plunge the soul into that wretched state of tepidity which makes it abominable to God, and causes Him to say: "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth".<sup>1</sup>

## JUSTICE.

THE second of the cardinal virtues is justice. In a general sort of way, each of you have a sufficiently clear notion of what is meant by this word. You understand by it, fairness to you on the part of your Superiors, and of yourselves to one another. You consider it to be the absence of all favouritism, and the giving to every one that which is his due. This notion is a tolerably correct one; but it is necessary that we should clear up our ideas on this subject, and in precise terms set before our minds the definition of this virtue, that seeing its beauty and its utility we may earnestly strive to gain possession of it, and make it one of the guiding principles of our lives.

Justice, then, we define to be a moral virtue which continually impels our wills to give every one his due. Therefore, the object of justice, or that about which it is concerned, is right—the right of others. Wherever there is right, there is a corresponding duty or due, and that is to respect it, to give it its due, to do it justice. Consequently, as there are various rights, there are various kinds of justice which may all be reduced to four—legal justice, distributive justice, commutative justice, and vindictive justice—all great names, each of which may be illustrated by examples familiar enough to you all.

<sup>1</sup> Apoc. iii. 16.

At College, the society of which you are a member is composed of a ruler, and of those who are ruled by him. Now this fact induces between the two, a certain relation from which there spring rights which must be respected. There are the rights of the Superior or ruler ; there are the rights of his subjects or the ruled ; and there are the rights of these latter again with respect to one another. Justice requires that each of these rights should be respected. When, therefore, this virtue induces you to observe all the laws made by your Superior, and to give to his government all that is its due, it is called *legal* justice. For you must know that whenever many persons unite to form a body politic or society, the head of that body or society is invested with a right, and with true authority over all those who have made themselves members of it. He has authority over their persons, their actions, and their goods, as far as such authority is necessary for the preservation and the general utility of the society. To respect this right, and to obey this authority is to practise legal justice.

But now comes the turn of the authority which is thus respected to practise that virtue which secures for it obedience and respect. When justice impels the Superior to give to those who are under his authority all that is their due, by conferring upon the most capable, charges and employments conducive to their interests, and by making them share in the advantages which the society over which he rules secures for its members, he is practising justice which is called *distributive*.

Having exercised justice towards the Superior by obeying all his mandates and laws, we are next called upon to exercise justice towards one another. The virtue which impels us to do this, and to pay to our fellows that which is their due, not inasmuch as they are either superiors or inferiors, but simply as members of the same society, is called *commutative* justice. Lastly, when the Superior is induced by the virtue of justice to punish those who violate either his rights as ruler, or the rights of the members of the society, he is exercising what is called *vindictive* justice.

From this explanation you will have a clear idea of what is meant by legal, distributive, commutative, and vindictive justice. All four are only various aspects of the same virtue of justice which embraces all duties and contains all obligations. Writing to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of this all-embracing virtue, when he bids them: "Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute (is due); custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour".<sup>1</sup> It is of this justice also that Our Lord spoke in His celebrated answer to those who thought to entrap Him in His speech: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's". Consequently, we can call a man *just*, only when we perceive that he firmly adheres to the fulfilment of all his duties. This is the goal towards which justice directs all his efforts, and this is the influence which it exercises on his will.

From this fact it is evident that the virtue of justice is the basis on which all society rests. For, there can be no society in which there is not a principle of order, because order rests upon the rights due to each member of which a society is composed, on the recognition of these rights, and the careful performance of the duties springing from them. If the members of a society had no rights, there would be no duties required from one to another. Consequently, there would be no subordination of one member to another, and this absence of subordination would destroy all authority. Therefore, the basis on which society rests is that which is the foundation of duty; but this foundation is right; and as both right and duty rest upon justice, justice is the very foundation of society, or, changing the figure, we may call justice the cohesive power which cements and keeps together as one great whole the multitudinous units of which society is composed.

We have said that justice is the basis or foundation on which all society rests; in fact it is that which renders society possible. Being the foundation, its chief characteristic is its immutability or unchangeableness. Justice can never become injustice. If this were once granted, society would be built

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 7.

upon sand. It would not stand ; it would not hold together. The weak would soon be crushed by the strong ; the simple would be outwitted by the astute ; their wealth, their honour, their liberty, their very lives would be at the mercy of those who by might had seized upon the supreme power. Therefore, it can never change. It must remain firm, immovable as a rock. Then, the society built upon it, of whatever kind it may be, whether it is a company or a people, a kingdom or an empire, will last, and like that on which it is built will withstand the storms which rush down upon and test all human institutions. Like the house spoken of by Christ, a house built upon a rock, it will remain in spite of wind and waves, that unite their almost irresistible strength to overturn and destroy it.

Having now clearly before your mind in what the virtue of justice consists, make a firm resolve to win for yourself the character of a just man, of one whose life and conduct are guided and shaped by this all-embracing, immutable virtue. You have even in your collegiate life many opportunities for exercising yourself in it. For, you are sometimes in each of the positions in which justice must manifest itself under its various aspects. The suffrages of your fellow-students occasionally put you in the place of command ; then you find yourself in the ranks under the direction of others ; and lastly, you are merely one of a multitude.

In each of these positions, justice must be your guide. When you are the head, the captain, the ruler, devote yourself with zeal to the public good ; uphold and maintain order among those subject to you, distributing to the most deserving and the most competent the most honourable and responsible offices, and coercing those who are inclined to rebel and be disorderly, by the means furnished to you by your laws.

If instead of being the ruler, the leader, you find yourself in the position of a subject under authority, here again let justice be your guide. Respect the power vested in the person of him who commands, and loyally obey him in all matters that are not contrary to the law of God, and that are for the common good.

When you find yourself merely one of the multitude, make it your business to respect the rights of your fellow-students. Never do them any wrong. Injure not their persons, nor their honour, nor their goods. Abstain from doing them any mischief in action, in word, in thought. Thus, justice will guide and shape your life and actions in accordance with its dictates, and you will have the glorious title of a just man.

This will not be the only benefit that you will reap from it. That title will not be an empty one. It will be one which will draw in its train a host of virtues. For, justice will make you first pay to God the honour and worship which are His due. It will cause you to detest from the bottom of your heart all sin, thereby restoring to God the honour of which you have deprived Him, and inflicting upon yourself the penalties which sin deserves. It will induce you to give to your parents and to your pastors—who in a spiritual sense have brought you forth to the life of divine grace—that love, honour, and respect which on so many titles they may claim from you. It will bend your will to carry into effect with alacrity, speed, and joy, all the other duties which your Superiors may think fit to impose upon you. It will fill your heart with sentiments of the deepest gratitude to all those who have in any way benefited you. It will inspire you with a deep love of truth which makes you honest and straightforward in all your dealings with your neighbours. It will remove from your heart all duplicity and dissimulation. It will infuse into it a loving, kindly, friendly spirit towards all, and cause it to be large and generous with those who seek for its charity and compassion. Therefore, love, and endeavour to practise this glorious virtue of justice, which is the mother of so many and so beautiful virtues.

#### FORTITUDE.

FROM what we have already said concerning the cardinal virtues, it will be seen that prudence rules the intelligence, while justice guides and regulates the will. Of the remaining two virtues which form this group, temperance moderates the

concupiscible, and fortitude is busied with that which is called the irascible appetite, that is to say, with the appetite which helps us to defend ourselves against the encroachments of others. It is of this last-mentioned virtue that we are to treat to-day. From what we shall say about it, it is to be hoped that you will be induced to strive for its attainment, as you no doubt have already resolved to strive for the attainment of prudence and of justice.

Fortitude is a virtue which may be regarded from a natural or from a supernatural stand-point. Considered as a natural virtue, it is that strength of character which enables us to grapple bravely with difficulties, and earnestly to endeavour to remove them from our path; while at the same time it endows us with force patiently to endure all the hardships, trials, and labours to be met with in our everyday life. Viewed from the supernatural side, it is a virtue that causes us, in working out our salvation, to surmount all obstacles, and to endure every species of suffering, rather than be guilty of anything opposed to our duty to God. The definition will stand out more clearly before your eyes, if we illustrate it by examples with which you are familiar.

Let us suppose, then, that you have determined to become an accomplished mathematician. This particular branch of your education is, perhaps, distasteful to you. Naturally, you prefer the classical, the literary part of your studies. But mathematics are necessary for your career in the world, and, therefore, you determine to master them, and to become an adept in them.

The first thing that you discover when you set about your work is that you have undertaken no easy task. The way before you bristles with difficulties. There is nothing in this branch of science to enlist the sympathies of your heart. It does not appeal to the imagination. The memory is not of much use in grasping its principles. The intelligence meets with blank walls not very easy to scale. Yet you are not going to be baulked by difficulties.

These difficulties are the obstacles in your path, blocking the way and preventing you from obtaining a grip upon

the science of mathematics. You strain every nerve to remove them. Instead of sighing after the green pastures of literature with its glowing flowers, its woods, its streams, its beautiful characters, you shut your eyes to them, and lay hold of what is before you. You turn all the powers of your intelligence to solve the problems, to build up the theorems. You have to suffer much in so doing, but you persevere, you faint not, you endure, and at last you succeed. Light breaks in upon you. You grasp the principles. You learn how to apply them. You become exact, patient, and you end by being a mathematician. In carrying out this task, you have exercised fortitude; you have perseveringly fought with the obstacles opposing you; and you have patiently endured the ills inevitable in so doing.

Now, apply this same energy to spiritual matters, and you will be practising, and by practising you will acquire the Christian virtue of fortitude. Let me suppose that you wish to acquire the virtue of truth, and by so doing, to undo the detestable habit of lying. Around truth there are camped, for you at least, many difficulties. There is, perhaps, in the first place the inveterate habit of screening yourself by a falsehood. Then, there is the penalty for some misdemeanour which has been detected. Next, there is the fear of incurring the ill-will of those whom you cannot help betraying into the hands of the authorities by a revelation of your own delinquencies. These are a few of the obstacles to your acquisition of truth. But you are fully determined to be truthful. You have learnt to see the hideous deformity of lying. You have had a glimpse of the beauty of truth. Your heart is full of fear lest you should offend God, and incur His anger and the punishment due to sin. Therefore, you withstand the inclination of your will, bent by habit towards falsehood. You submit to the punishment which you used to dread. You condemn the irrational anger of those who would applaud your lie, and by degrees you win for yourself the beautiful virtue of truth.

From these two examples you will see that spiritual fortitude is not the impetuous movement of natural courage, not the offspring of a violent passion, but an invincible firmness of



will in accomplishing duty. That which it places before itself as the end to be gained is not any temporal advantage, not the acquisition of honour, nor of wealth, but the accomplishment of God's holy will. It is, therefore, in a special way called "virtue," because of the difficulties which must be overcome in its attainment. With respect to the other virtues it may, and in fact it is, generally compared with them as a root is to the tree. For, as the root sustains the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the blossom, and the fruit, so also does fortitude uphold the other virtues, the actions which spring from them, and the merits which are acquired by them.

It is evident, also, from what we have said that the action or office of fortitude is twofold. It has to *attack* the obstacles which stand in its way, and to *suffer* the inconvenience, the pain, the disappointment, and even the apparent failure of its efforts.

The obstacles confronting it when it sets about the acquisition of virtue and the accomplishment of duty are: the evil spirit, the fallen nature which is our inheritance, and the corrupt world, which is the trusty ally of both these enemies of God. It attacks the devil, by repulsing him the moment he comes to suggest his evil, deceitful counsel; the world, by boldly and loudly proclaiming Christian principles; and the flesh, by curbing and mortifying its evil impulses.

Besides attacking these obstacles, these enemies of God, it has to *suffer*. It does this, by bearing with calmness and tranquillity of mind all the evils that befall it in the accomplishment of its duty, being willing to lose everything no matter how dear, rather than offend God. This is the most difficult, the most heroic part of fortitude; for, there is absent from it everything that impels men to action, sustains them in grappling with difficulties, nothing being left but pure, simple force, concentrated in a man's self. It is this side of fortitude that enabled the confessors of the faith to live on for years in darksome dungeons; to encounter danger to reputation, to fortune, to position, in defence of virtue; to bear with adversity; to endure the merciless, the unceasing assaults of the devil, lasting throughout a long life; to undertake difficult enterprises with a loving confidence in the aid of God alone.

What wonder, then, is it that the Apostles of Our Lord should so earnestly exhort us to strive to win this root virtue which sustains and gives life to all other Christian virtues. "Be sober," says St. Peter, "and watch: for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world."<sup>1</sup> To these words we may add that other splendid exhortation of St. Paul: "Therefore we also having so great a cloud of witnesses over our head, laying aside every weight of sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us. Looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith; Who having joy set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For, think diligently upon Him Who endureth such opposition from sinners against Himself. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you, as to children, saying: My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord: neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by Him. . . . Now all chastisement for the present, indeed, seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow; but afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice. Wherefore, lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet: that no one, halting, may go astray; but rather be healed."<sup>2</sup>

Those who neglect to ask humbly for this gift of God, or who, having asked for it, do not strenuously endeavour to put it in practice, are timorous as hares whenever a difficulty presents itself in their path, either to bar their progress towards virtue, or to prevent them from accomplishing their duty. They flee away from it with coward hearts. But when once God has mercifully bestowed this favour on them, their souls are filled with a magnanimous spirit to attempt everything for God. Resting confidently in Him, they meet difficulties with a secure

<sup>1</sup> I St. Peter v. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 1-13.

feeling that they will be able to remove them from their path. While calmly labouring at this, they patiently endure all the trouble, the inconvenience, and the pain which are inseparable from any arduous task. Though often failing to accomplish what they desire, still they persevere with a sort of dogged determination, till at last they are victorious.

Having, then, seen in what the virtue of fortitude consists, make a strong resolve to win it for yourself. You stand in great need of it, for you are weak. You cannot be virtuous without it, and you know that without virtue you cannot be pleasing to God. Therefore, do your utmost to know it by studying its various features, and knowing it, to esteem it. Then you will long most earnestly to possess it. This longing desire will make you go to God—the source of all strength. You will ask it with a strong cry, and God, Who is the source of strength will communicate to you this virtue by which you will attack and sweep from your path whatever opposes your salvation, patiently and constantly enduring whatever pain is incidental to this glorious conflict which will eventually win for you the crown of eternal life.

## TEMPERANCE.

MOST of you have no doubt travelled by rail, and you have been whirled along at a great speed for hours together. You are also familiar with the appearance of the mighty engines which are able to cover vast distances in so short a space of time, drawing after them a long train of heavy carriages. That which propels the engine, and gives to it both its immense strength and its great speed, is the steam generated within it. This, you will bear in mind, is under the control of the engineer. It is his will that allows it to reach the pistons, and to set the wheels in motion. He holds his hand upon the lever which brings its tremendous force into play, and suffers only what he knows to be sufficient for the purpose to reach the mechanism on which it has to act, so that he can cause the great train to move slowly, or to fly along at a great speed, or to come to a

dead stop. Now, that which the engineer does for the force under his control, the virtue of temperance does for all the various passions of our complex being.

We will, therefore, study it together that we may, from the knowledge which we shall thus acquire, be filled with a desire to make this last of the cardinal virtues one of the ruling principles of our lives.

From what we have already said, you will see that this virtue is one that moderates and regulates our passions in their desire and use of the pleasures and the good things of life. These passions are within us like steam within the engine. They are a great fire. They are a great force. They were given to us by God to help us to reach our end, the possession of Himself in the kingdom of heaven. But, like steam, they are a source of destruction and of hideous ruin unless they are kept under proper control. As they continually strive to escape from that control, it is the office of the virtue of temperance to see that it is exercised upon them, by suffering them to be indulged only in strict measure, and to that degree which right reason approves and the law of God permits.

Hence, temperance most studiously turns them away, and prevents them from desiring anything which if granted would bring into the soul grief, pain, remorse; in the use of even those pleasures which it allows, it never suffers the passions to go beyond the limits of moderation; in all things it submits them to the yoke of right reason. Therefore, it controls them by withholding them not only from evil, but from any indiscretion in the pursuit of virtue. Right reason taught the pagans to exercise this control, and many of them acting on the dictates of reason were able to a certain extent to practise it as a natural virtue.

It was reserved for Christianity to raise it to the rank of a supernatural virtue; for only Christianity has been able to breathe into it the breath which animates it with supernatural life, by furnishing it with the motives which work in it this marvellous change, a change as marvellous as it would be to convert an inert marble statue into a living, thinking man.

It teaches man that he must be temperate in order to present himself to God as a pleasing oblation, a rational being, living in accordance with the dictates of his reason. It instils into him the principle that, being only a pilgrim and traveller in this world, having here no lasting city, but journeying towards one that is eternal, it would be against the light of reason to fasten the love of his heart upon objects that must be passed by and left behind, objects intended by God to be used only inasmuch as they will help him to win eternal felicity. It tells him that, being created superior to the things which surround him, and inferior only to the angelic Spirits that people the courts of heaven, temperance must teach him to separate himself from all inferior things, by keeping in subjection the animal instincts of his nature, and cultivating the spiritual part, so as to be able afterwards to mingle with the purely spiritual creation of the Angels.

Animated by motives of this nature, temperance becomes a supernatural virtue, which enables the Christian to subject his passions to the yoke of reason and his reason to God his Creator; for it teaches him not to fasten his affections upon transitory things, not to deem them worthy of his love for any innate goodness which they may seem to possess, but to use them only in as far as they will help him to win a kingdom, a lasting city enduring for eternity, and to use them only as far as the necessity of life shall require. Thus, it saves him from that intemperate use of earthly things—a use which enslaves the hearts, darkens the minds, and ends by ruining the souls of those whom it binds in bonds of brass, and miserably enslaves. When, however, the soul has, by means of this virtue of temperance, brought itself under complete control, all danger of wreck and of ruin is removed, and if, aided by God's grace, it continues to exercise that control, it will for a certainty win for itself the crown of life—a happy eternity in the possession of God.

A glance at the virtues engendered by the practice of this self-control will convince you of its inestimable worth, and will make you eager to exert yourself—to strain every nerve to make it your own.

The first of these is the power with which it endows the will to abstain from the enjoyment of those aliments which feed the passions, and impart to them strength so overmastering that they are able to conquer the power of reason. Thus, it curbs that immoderate desire of eating and of drinking—a desire which, if indulged, throws the preponderance of weight on the side of the flesh, and makes it subdue the spirit.

By thus withdrawing from the body that which feeds its strength, temperance next is easily able to make the body deny itself those pleasures for which it naturally craves, and thus to procure for the soul and the body continence and chastity; because, the vehemence of the fleshly passions being by this abstinence considerably abated, it becomes a comparatively easy matter for the soul to prevent all illicit acts of the members. Hence, a soul that has been so fortunate as not to yield to the fury of the bodily instinct for the pleasures of the flesh, is able to preserve itself, together with the body which it informs, in that glorious state of virginity which entitles its happy possessor to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

Moreover, temperance obtains so great a mastery over the senses that it is able to guard the eyes from all glances which would endanger modesty, to prevent the tongue from uttering words unbecoming a Christian, and the other organs of the body from performing any action prohibited by the precept of purity. It inspires the soul with a fixed determination to maintain its kingly power and to sway the body by the dictates of reason. For this purpose the soul does not shrink from inflicting pain upon the sensitive flesh which is under its dominion. It, therefore, chastises the flesh by voluntary fasts. It robs it of that repose and sleep for which it so eagerly longs. It represses the proud uprising of rebellious nature by the galling hair shirt, the stinging discipline, and by long abstinence from food.

The virtue of temperance also enables the soul to practise that mildness and clemency which sit so well on those who profess to be imitators of Christ, for it causes man to repress

those outbursts of anger which would otherwise sweep like a furious storm over the soul that is outraged, or insulted, or injured by its enemies; and induces it easily to be appeased and to be moderate in the infliction of chastisement upon those who have offended it. Having thus filled the soul with a spirit of calmness and self-restraint, it encircles it with that repose of mind and that quiet which are requisite in order to obtain a thorough knowledge of self; and not only of self, but of the great God Who is its Master. The consequence of this knowledge is that the soul, seeing God's infinite perfections and its own baseness, worthlessness and vileness, is filled with another admirable Christian virtue without which the other virtues are impossible, since it is the foundation of them all. This virtue is humility, which teaches a man his true worth and his true place; which makes him despise himself, and rejoice when others treat him according to his deserts by holding him in but scant esteem.

Temperance lays its constraining hand upon three other passions of the human heart, and brings them into subjection to the spirit.

The human heart is full of eagerness to possess the wealth of this world; it desires to be filled with the science of the world; and being filled with this science, it just as eagerly desires to make known its wealth to others by immoderate and boastful speech. But when the soul is in possession of temperance, it represses this immoderate desire of having and of knowing. It curbs the desire of having, and after doing its utmost to better its condition, it is content with that which Providence shall assign to it. With respect to that science which the world prizes so highly — while honouring, respecting and pursuing it as a gift of God, and as a spark of His infinite intelligence, the soul strives to follow that apostolic precept "not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety". On the tongue which would so gladly make known its wealth of mental riches, it imposes a discreet silence, and thus teaches the tongue to refrain from uttering what would be damaging to the soul itself, and injurious to those who hear such boastful

words. Lastly, temperance shows itself in the outward carriage of the body. Every one of its members is under control. Each of them is regulated by reason, and, therefore, all are modest.

Is it not then most desirable that you should earnestly strive to win for yourself this great Christian virtue? Make now the resolution to win it. Pray for it, and endeavour to practise it in all the actions of your life. The union of these two forces, prayer and action, will secure for you the possession of temperance. You will find that it will make you sober, chaste, modest. You will lead a mortified, Christian life. Mildness and clemency will shine forth in your conduct. You will be humble and poor in spirit. In one word it will make you like your divine model Christ, full of virtues, without reproach, so that no one will be able to convict you of sin.

### THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.<sup>1</sup>

THE Eternal Word assumed our human nature, and came into the world to pay the ransom due to His Father for our transgressions, and to teach us how to apply to our souls the treasures which He placed at our disposal. When He withdrew His visible presence from among us, He left in the world His holy Church to continue the work inaugurated by Himself. This commission she most faithfully fulfils by teaching all nations the truths intrusted to her keeping, and by applying to them the Sacraments which convey the healing streams of the Redeemer's precious blood to their sinful souls. In pursuance of her mission, the Church makes use of every means at her disposal to set before the minds of her children the life and the teaching of her Divine Master. For this purpose she divides the natural year into several parts, in each of which that loving Master's holy life and heavenly doctrine are submitted to the devout contemplation of those whose chief glory it is to be Christians or followers of Jesus Christ. The sum of these various parts is called the Ecclesiastical or Liturgical year.

<sup>1</sup> Guéranger, *An. Lit. Pref.*; Durandus, *Rat. Div. Offic.*, lib. vi.



During that year she represents to us the patient expectation of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and, in general, of even the pagan world, for the advent of the Messiah ; the birth, the infancy, and the hidden life of that great Deliverer ; His baptism and His fasting before entering upon the public work of His ministry ; His preaching and His miracles ; His Passion and His death ; His resurrection, His glorious ascension into heaven, and the descent upon the Apostles of that Paraclete Whom He had promised to send. Thus, during the course of the Ecclesiastical year the whole life of Our Redeemer is unfolded before us.

Following the natural order of the events which occurred during His life, she divides her year into seven parts which are : Advent, the Nativity or Christmas, the Epiphany, Septuagesima, Lent, Easter, and the time after Pentecost.

By the time of Advent, the Church wishes to bring under our notice that long period of 4000 years which elapsed between the fall of our first parents and the coming of the Redeemer, a period during which the Patriarchs, the Prophets, devout men, and even the heathen world, longed and sighed and prayed for the coming of the Deliverer. To mark the forty centuries occupied by this longing expectation, she devotes four weeks, each corresponding to a thousand years. The season of Advent ends on 25th of December, on which day the birth of Christ the Messiah is celebrated.

To Advent succeeds the Christmas time in which we see Christ born into the world ; announced by the Angels ; adored by the shepherds ; circumcised, in order to comply with the ordinance of the law ; and at last presented in the Temple by His parents. With the commemoration of this last-mentioned event, the Christmas season comes to an end.

But during that season another period is presented to our consideration, a period which for some time runs concurrently with it, that is to say, from the 6th of January to Septuagesima, at which time it comes to an end. This is the season of the Epiphany, or, in other words, the occasion when Christ manifested Himself to the Gentiles in the persons of the Magi who came from the East country to adore Him, and to offer to Him

those mystical gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. This season is sometimes limited to only one Sunday; at others it embraces as many as six Sundays, according as the date of Easter is either earlier or later.

The three Sundays preceding Lent constitute the fourth period of the Ecclesiastical year. These Sundays are called respectively, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, that is to say, the seventieth, the sixtieth, and the fiftieth day before Easter. This calculation is not rigorously exact, because in the first place, the weeks do not each contain ten days; and secondly, because from Septuagesima till the Saturday before Easter there are not really seventy, but only sixty-three days.

After Septuagesima, there comes the fifth period which begins on the Wednesday after Quinquagesima, and contains within its cycle six Sundays or forty days of fasting. Hence, from the number of these days of penance this period is called Quadragesima, or the forty days of Lent.

The sixth period, which is called the Paschal season begins on Easter Day, and ends with the octave day of Pentecost, comprising eight Sundays, the days of Easter and of Pentecost being included.

The time after Pentecost is the seventh period. It embraces all the Sundays which intervene between that great festival and the first Sunday of Advent. It numbers within its cycle twenty-four Sundays—when Easter, happening as late as it possibly can, has allowed six Sundays to come between the feast of the Epiphany and Septuagesima. But when Easter is celebrated at a time which brings Septuagesima nearer to the Epiphany, then the Sundays which, in consequence of that fact, cannot be placed between the Epiphany and Septuagesima, are put after the twenty-third Sunday; hence, we sometimes have twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, and twenty-eight Sundays after Pentecost.<sup>1</sup>

Now, as at times there is but one Sunday between the Epiphany and Septuagesima, we might infer that there ought

<sup>1</sup> The twenty-fourth Sunday is always put last, because in the Gospel read on that day, the General Judgment is foretold by Our Lord.

to be *twenty-nine* Sundays after Pentecost. But this cannot be; for the Sundays following Pentecost never go beyond twenty-eight; because this Sunday which is apparently left out, is placed between the last day of Advent—24th of December—and the day following the Epiphany—7th of January—an interval in which there is sometimes only one Sunday; sometimes, however, there are two, according to the day of the week on which Christmas Day falls.

This variety in the advance, and in the delay of the various periods of the Christian year, arises first from the fact that the festival of Easter is determined by the movement of the lunar and not of the solar year; and secondly, because the Church at the Council of Nicæa (325) appointed that this festival should always be celebrated on the Sunday following the fourteenth day of the moon of the vernal equinox—in other words—on the Sunday following the fourteenth day of that moon which is called the moon of March. Hence it comes to pass that the feast of Easter may be fixed for thirty-five different days, from the 22nd of March to 25th of April—both days inclusive. By this legislation the Church secured uniformity in the observance of the great Christian festival.

These, then, are the various divisions of the Ecclesiastical year. Like the seasons of the natural year, seasons presenting to our view the earth in its various aspects and conditions, budding forth into leaf and blossom during the spring, bearing rich crops during the summer, yielding plentiful harvests during the autumn, lying for the most part at rest during winter, so the Ecclesiastical year in each of its seasons sets before us Jesus Christ in some particular stage of His human life, and from the contemplation of that particular stage or phase, offers to us special consolations and graces.

During the Advent season, we mingle with the Prophets and the holy men of old time who, through the long centuries, looked forwards with tearful prayer and earnest expectation for the coming of the Just One Who should lift up the degraded, sinful, human race from the mire of its vices, and restore to it the dignity which it had lost. With them we pray, we look forwards, we beseech Jesus to come and

once more to be born in our hearts. We call upon God to send Him down into those passion-swept abodes, as the gentle dew noiselessly dropped down by the heavens upon the parched and thirsty earth.

At Christmas, we join with the shepherds who kept the night watches over their flocks, and moved about among their fleecy charge upon the slopes and on the plain below Bethlehem. We hear the strains of heavenly minstrelsy poured forth from angelic lips, and receive the glad tidings that a Saviour has been born into the world. In company with them we go over to Bethlehem to see this wonder that has come to pass, and entering the mean stable we find there the Virgin-Mother, the gentle St. Joseph, and lying in the manger that beauteous Child before Whom we fall down in profoundest adoration because He is truly God.

The Epiphany introduces us into the company, not of the poor simple shepherds, but of great men, strangers from afar, kings in their own land, men who mindful of the prophecy of Balaam that out of Jacob a star should arise as a portent heralding the coming of the world's Saviour, had patiently watched for its appearance, till at last its brilliant lustre burst upon their sight and became their guide in their search for the Prince of peace. With them we enter the abode, poor no doubt and simple, into which the Virgin and her holy spouse had removed the recently born Child. With them we exercise our faith in accepting that feeble infant as the ruler of the universe, and in adoring Him as the Incarnate Word of the eternal, omnipotent God. With them we offer to Him gold as to Our true King; frankincense as to Our God; and myrrh as to One Who is man as well as God.

Time speeds on apace; the days of the Epiphany glide by; and behold, the season of Septuagesima is at hand. The hidden life of Christ has ceased. He is now about to come forth, and stand before men as their teacher. He appears in the towns, the villages, the country hamlets, the synagogues, and in the great Temple at Jerusalem. Everywhere we hear the words of wisdom that fall from His lips; everywhere we witness the marvellous deeds performed by His hands. We

see, we hear, we are deeply impressed. Thus we are instructed and duly prepared to witness the last days of His mortal life.

To the season of Septuagesima there succeeds the Lenten season. During this time of penance, we strive to keep in Our Saviour's company during His rigorous fast of forty days. We are present at His contests with His enemies. We listen to the discussions in which He is always the victor. At last we behold Him arrested, tried, condemned, most cruelly treated, and finally hanged upon the infamous Cross as the outcast of His people, and as one accursed of God. Apparently He is utterly crushed by His enemies, and amid the darkness and the gloom of Calvary the Lenten season comes to an end.

But on the morrow, the gladsome, sunny festival of the Paschal solemnity begins to run its course, and we are invited by the Church to rejoice with Christ rising triumphantly from the dead. We see the print of the nails; the deep gash in the side. We fall down and adore Christ as Our Lord and Our God. During the space of forty days we contemplate His risen life; we listen to His weighty words; we mark His actions in dealing with His Apostles; with them we accompany Him to Olivet whence we behold Him ascending into heaven whither He wishes to draw up our hearts after Him. From Olivet we return with the sorrowing, yet calmly peaceful Apostles to join with them in prayer, humbly awaiting the dawning of the next glad season of the Ecclesiastical year.

This begins with Pentecost Sunday, and continues till the first Sunday of Advent. At Pentecost we contemplate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the chosen band of teachers and disciples, coming as it were to crown the work of Christ, and to inaugurate their mission to the world. We behold the wondrous change wrought in them by that coming. We see their zeal, their force, their wisdom, their courage. We rejoice at these favours and at the numberless other gifts bestowed upon them. During the whole of this season, we humbly petition heaven to bestow upon us also these and similar graces, in the assured hope that they will enable us to attain to life everlasting.

This variety, in the seasons of the Ecclesiastical year, helps to impress deeply upon the memory all the sacred mysteries of our faith. Each of these seasons, like those of the natural year, seems to be an excellent preparation for that which follows, and, by the contrasts which it presents with that which precedes and with that which follows, deepens the effect produced by them. For, just as winter prepares us to revel in the new life of spring; and spring, for the wealth of summer; and summer, for the maturity of autumn; and autumn, for the repose of winter, so the serious Advent season makes us more vividly feel the joys of Christmas; these in their turn enable us to experience a deeper emotion than we should otherwise feel when from their sunshine we pass into the shadows of Septuagesima. This season of retirement gradually prepares us for the rigours of Lent. In its turn, Lent prepares the soul to contemplate and to share in the sorrows of the Passion. These sorrows act as a sort of foil to the brilliant triumph of Easter, and in its turn Easter is crowned by the solemnities of the Ascension and of Pentecost.

Let it then be your aim to draw profit from each of these seasons of the Ecclesiastical year. Fill the days of Advent with ardent desires for the birth of Christ in your soul. At Christmas, study His poverty and His humility. At the Epiphany, stir up within you a most fervent faith. During Septuagesima, withdraw from worldly pursuits and rid yourself of the spirit of the world. In the time of Lent, fill your soul with the spirit of penance. At Easter, rise from your sins and never again repeat them. At Pentecost, ask for the gifts of the Holy Ghost that the fruit springing from them may support you in this vale of tears, and enable you to win the crown of eternal life.

### ADVENT.

ON this day the Church opens her Ecclesiastical year. During that year, she unfolds before our view the whole life of Our Redeemer, and as the first great event in that life is His

coming among us in the flesh as a little infant, she wisely calls her children to prepare for the due celebration of the day on which the great mystery of the Incarnation became an accomplished fact. The time dedicated to this preparation is called Advent, which comes from the Latin word *Adventus*, or the coming of Our Lord. It will, therefore, be profitable to explain to you the full meaning of this word, and to tell you how you ought to spend these days in such a way as to make them advantageous to the salvation of your immortal souls.

St. Bernard in one of his sermons<sup>1</sup> tells us that there is a threefold advent or coming of Our Lord. He came in the flesh, when at Bethlehem He entered as man upon the theatre of the world: "In the middle of the night a cry was heard: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him." He comes into the souls of men by His divine grace. He will come at the end of time as judge to render to every one according to his works. For each of these comings the Church prepares herself with tears of holy impatience. She looks for His first coming in the flesh, making use of the fervid expressions of the Prophets, and pouring forth her own ardent supplications. These are not, as we are told, a mere commemoration of the desires of the ancient people who beside their smoking altars called upon God to drop down as dew upon the earth the long-looked for Redeemer; they have had a real value, an efficacious influence in hastening His arrival. For, from all eternity the prayers of the Jewish people and of the Church were present to the mind of God, and, in a certain sense, they may be said to have caused Him to send to us His Son.

Moreover, the Church longs and prepares herself for His second coming, that is to say, to the souls of men. She implores Him to visit them in His mercy. To change them. To take away from them all stain of sin, that they may deserve to enjoy and to profit by His presence. But not satisfied with this, she most ardently longs for the third coming of Christ, to deliver her from the trammels of time, to fill up

<sup>1</sup> *Sermo de Adventu.* Guéranger, *Année Lit., L'Avent.*

the number of the elect, and to begin His everlasting kingdom in their hearts.

Advent, therefore, being a time of expectation, of preparation, is necessarily a time of penance, for this preparation consists in removing what is offensive to God Who is to come, and in filling the soul with what will give Him pleasure. These actions are contrary to our natural will, to our depraved, fallen nature, and, therefore, they cause pain and consequently entail penance. This fact the Church endeavours in many ways to make evident to her children. Her altars are stripped of their ornaments of joy; her jubilant hymns are, for the most part, silenced; there is a strain of sadness in her music; her ministers are clothed in the garments of sorrow, and their lessons and teaching inculcate penance and sorrow for sin, by putting, in a very forcible manner, before us the great truths of eternity—death which is so close at hand, and the terrible judgment which is to follow, a judgment which will be publicly ratified at the last great assize, when Christ shall come in great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead.

Consequently, her exhortations are to prayer and to penance. In the early ages, fasting was general for fully forty days before the great feast, but as time went on and the fervour of the faithful decreased, this penitential exercise was mitigated, so that by degrees at first only three days in each week were devoted to fasting, while in different countries different customs prevailed, till at last in England the fasting and abstinence were confined to the Wednesdays and the Fridays of this holy season. It is, therefore, the intention of the Church, in the employment of these various means, that we should prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Is she not right in so doing? Do not the great anniversaries of kings or of national events inspire men to make ready for their due celebration? What event can be greater than that of the Incarnation of the King of kings, when the second Person of the Trinity for love of us deigned to take upon Himself our perishable flesh, and to appear among us in a form that must compel our love to go out to Him? If, in the early times, the great lawgiver Moses prepared both himself and the people



under his charge for the reception of God's wondrous favour, by fasting, by purification, and by prayer, why should we be behindhand in making a similar preparation for the reception of far greater graces, of far more astounding favours?

For the space of forty centuries men looked forwards in anxious expectation of His coming, and shall not we devote at least these four weeks of Advent to a like preparation to commemorate these 4000 years during which they sighed, and longed, and prayed for His advent? Certainly we should show ourselves but little impressed by the magnitude of the graces conferred upon us, if we neglected so imperative a duty.

Therefore, let us now consider in what way we should spend these days of expectation of His advent. If we wish to learn how this may best be done, we must turn to the Church for instruction in this matter. Choosing her words from the inspired text of St. Paul's Epistle, which is read in the Mass on this day, she says to us: "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep".<sup>1</sup> That sleep may be the death sleep of grievous sin, or it may be the equally perilous slumber of lukewarmness in God's service. Of whatever nature it may be, it is of the utmost importance that by vigorous efforts we should rouse ourselves out of it. For the Saviour is at hand. He is passing by. His hands are full of healing balsam for our wounds. If we take not advantage of this summons, He may pass on, and we may awake only to hear the sentence of condemnation to a death that will last for ever. Rise, therefore, at once, for your salvation is nearer than you believe. But in order effectually to rise, those noxious vapours which have brought on this death sleep, or this enthralling slumber, must be dissipated. Again the Church, in the Apostle's words, tells us how this may be done. This atmosphere of evil has encompassed us with works of darkness. Therefore, hasten to cast them aside. "Walk honestly as in the day". Put away all the excesses of the past; detest all uncleanness; give not way to strife and contention which kill charity, but clothe yourself in the virtues of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 11.

He is coming to visit you. Prepare the way for His coming. Lay low the mountain of pride that has arisen in your heart. Fill up by good works the defects in your service. Make straight the crooked ways of evil, and plain the rough ways of iniquity. In one word, bring forth works worthy of penance.

If you wish for a living example on which to fashion your conduct, behold the majestic figure of the forerunner sent by God to call His people to do all that we have exhorted you to do. He stands there, in the Jordan valley, and all Jerusalem has gone forth to see him, to listen to his words, and to do as He bids them. His life is full of austerity and penance; his garment is of camel's hair; a leathern girdle is round his loins; his food is locusts and wild honey. His virtues are on a par with the garb which he wears and the life which he leads. Purity of morals, high principles of action, and zeal for God's honour, make him fearless in the presence of kings. He is fervent in prayer; he is profoundly humble; he desires to be little in the eyes of men; his only longing is that God's honour may be promoted by all that he does.

These are the virtues which the Church wishes you to practise during these days of preparation for the great Christmas festival. This is the embodiment of them which she sets before you. Learn the first, and try to imitate the second. This conduct will prepare your soul for a right celebration of Christmas. Let both make a deep impression upon your heart. Let the constant meditation of them fill your mind with holy thoughts, and then, these burning bright and clear, will stir your heart to prayer. Fervent prayer coming from a soul that wishes to be pleasing to God will penetrate the clouds of heaven. It will reach the Most High. It will draw down upon you His look of compassion. It will open wide His treasures. He will infuse into you His divine grace, and that grace will enable you to rise from the sleep of death, to cast out all uncleanness, to clothe yourself in the virtues of Christ, and thus to prepare the way of the Lord. He will come to you. He will take up His abode in you, and this Advent will be a preparation which will make you not to fear His last coming when He shall appear in the clouds of heaven with

great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead, to give to every man his due according to the deeds which he has done in the body whether they have been good or evil.

## LITURGY OF ADVENT.

IN the preceding Lecture, we explained to you the meaning of Advent, and told you in what way you may best employ the time in preparation for the due celebration of Our Lord's coming in the great mystery of the Incarnation. But though our explanation is clear enough, it will be rendered still more intelligible by a consideration of the Liturgy employed by the Church during this holy season; for, by her Liturgy, she is wont to make her wishes as clear as the day. That Liturgy during Advent is made up of the prayers offered by the holy men of old for the coming of the Redeemer; of God's promises given through the mouths of the Prophets in response to their ardent longings; and of the records to be found in the Holy Books, of the way in which He accomplished His promises. We will, therefore, as briefly as possible, examine these, since we find them conveniently gathered together for us in the liturgical services used by the Church on each of the four Sundays of this Advent season.

We say, then, that the Liturgy of these Sundays consists of a prayer; a promise in answer to that prayer; and a record of the fulfilment of the promise made by God. In order to imprint these upon your mind, you should carefully read through and deeply ponder upon the service given in your Missals for each of the four Sundays. You will find in the Introit, the Gradual, the Epistle, and the Gospel all that we shall say on each of these points, the whole being usually summed up in the collect or prayer said at the Mass.

In churches in which before the principal Mass of the day there is a procession, these touching words from the Prophet Isaias are chanted, and also the supplication of David for the long-expected Saviour: "Look down, O Lord! from heaven . . . from Thy holy habitation and the place of Thy glory. . . ."

Thou art Our Father, Our Redeemer, from everlasting is Thy name. Rend the heaven, O Lord! and descend. Where are Thy zeal and Thy strength, Thy mercy and Thy love? Are not the bowels of Thy mercy moved towards us?"<sup>1</sup> "O Lord of hosts, convert us; and show Thy face and we shall be saved."<sup>2</sup> These ardent and loving supplications pierced the clouds; they reached the ear of God, and in answer to them He inspired His Prophet with words which contain His answer to these prayers: "Behold the Lord hath made it to be heard in the ends of the earth. Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold thy Saviour cometh; behold His reward is with Him."<sup>3</sup> Then, citing the words of Habacuc, uttered to console the Jews in their bitter captivity, she says: "The vision shall appear at the end, and shall not lie; if it make any delay, wait for it, for it shall surely come and it shall not be slack".<sup>4</sup>

She supplements these fervent aspirations with the instruction given by the Apostle, telling us in what way we are to make ready for the coming of that vision. "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, for now our salvation is at hand. The night is passed and the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup>

In order that this trumpet call to duty may make a deeper impression upon us, the Church, in the Gospel, next sets before our eyes all the dread pageantry of the great accounting day, the terrors that shall precede, the horrors that shall accompany, and the awful sentence that shall be passed upon those who have closed their ears to the voice of God, and hardened their hearts against His grace: the darkening of the sun and the moon; the falling of the stars from heaven; the bursting open of the earth; the roaring of the sea; the fear of the wicked; the destruction of all earthly things; then the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, with great power

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxvi. 15; Isaias lxiii. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxix. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Isaias lxii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Hab. ii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. xiii. 11, 14.

and majesty; the dreadful separation of the good from the bad; the reward of the just and the punishment of the wicked. These things are enough to appal the stoutest heart, to fill the soul with shuddering horror. This dread, this fear of God's judgments is salutary. It is the beginning of wisdom. It softens the heart to the impressions of grace. Let it fill you with terror. For that terror will turn you away from sin, and prepare you for the coming of Our Lord.

On the second Sunday, the Church, mindful of the great event for which she wishes to prepare her children, again causes to sound in our ears the piercing cry of suffering humanity for the speedy advent of the Saviour. In the words of Isaias she says: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just; let the earth be opened and bud forth the Saviour".<sup>1</sup> Then, in response to this fervent prayer, she sets before us the answer of God: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see the Saviour".<sup>2</sup> In order to point out to us the object of our expectation, she in the Epistle tells us that Christ shall come to accomplish all the figures that had been previously sent by God to foreshadow Him, and to unite both Jews and Gentiles in the fold of the one Shepherd: "What things soever were written, were written for our learning: that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope".<sup>3</sup> In the Gospel, she introduces us to the Precursor, and shows him to us actually pointing out to the men of his time the Redeemer, the expected of all nations, expected during the forty centuries that had elapsed since the fall. John by divine revelation knew Him, but John's disciples knew Him not. John therefore pointed Him out to them, and that there might be no mistake about Him, he sent a deputation of his own followers to Him, to ask Him: "Art thou He that art to come, or do we look for another?"<sup>4</sup> The Redeemer gave them an answer which indicated most plainly the fact of His divine mission. By His works they were to know Him. He had made the blind to

<sup>1</sup> Isaias xlv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xl. 5.

<sup>4</sup> St. Matt. xi. 3.

see ; the lame to walk ; the lepers were cleansed ; the dead rose again ; the poor had the Gospel preached to them. These were the deeds of the God-Man, the Saviour promised in the beginning.

On the third Sunday, as if full of joy at the nearness of the Messiah, she once again records the loving promise of the Saviour's advent : " O ye mountains of Israel, shoot ye forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people of Israel . . . for, lo I am for you ".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in the Epistle, she calls upon us to be full of gladness and to rejoice : " Rejoice in the Lord always ; again I say rejoice. . . . The Lord is nigh." <sup>2</sup> Therefore, be not solicitous, " but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God ". The Lord being nigh, ready at the very doors, she represents in the Gospel the great Baptist, no longer announcing the coming of the Redeemer, but declaring that He is actually in the midst of His people : " There hath stood One in the midst of you, Whom you know not ; the same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me, the latchet of Whose shoe I am not worthy to loose ".<sup>3</sup> Hearing these startling words, adore Jesus as He yet lies concealed in the bosom of His Mother, ardently longing to enter the world and begin the work of our redemption.

The last Sunday of Advent has now come. The Church, therefore, as if hearing the Spouse knocking at the gate, and full of tenderest emotion at His close proximity, draws her instructions to a close by once again unfolding to our view the promise of God : " All flesh shall see the Lord sent by God ". The allotted time has run its course. The night is past. The dawn approaches. The sun of justice shall soon appear upon our horizon, and pour the light and the warmth of His presence upon the world. This being the case, the Gospel once more puts before our eyes the grand figure of the austere Baptist, traversing all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins.

<sup>1</sup> Ezech. xxxvi. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iv. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> St. John i. 26, 27.

He cried out in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths".<sup>1</sup> Humble yourselves, by levelling the mountains of pride. Fill up by good works the defects of your sinful lives. Make straight your crooked ways. Make even and plain your rough ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

In order to make our longing more fervent, more ardent, the Church has instituted a festival in honour of the expectation of Our Lord's birth. This festival is kept on the 18th of December, so that during the next eight days we should make a more immediate preparation for the coming of Our Lord. On each of these days, one of the great antiphons is sung at the Magnificat. In these, Christ is addressed as the *Wisdom* of God to guide us; the *Adonai* to redeem us; the *Root of David* to deliver us; the *Key of David* to unlock our prison house; the *Orient* to enlighten us; the *King of Nations* to save the Gentiles; the *Emmanuel* to rescue the Jews.

Such in brief is the Liturgy of the Church during this Advent season. As we have already said, its object is to make sensible to us that it is a time of preparation and of expectation of the great event of the Incarnation, a time during which by prayer, by fervent longing, and by penance, we make ready the soul to participate in the graces which flow unto us from that great mystery. In order to fill our hearts with the requisite dispositions, she puts into our mouths the fervent cries and prayers of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the great men of old, who for the space of four thousand years patiently awaited to see that which we see, but they did not see it; to hear that which we hear, but they did not hear it. In response to their cries, she next peals in our ears the gracious promise vouchsafed from age to age by the great God Who was to come and to save. She exhibits to our eyes the fulfilment of that promise, thereby fixing in our minds that every word of God shall be most certainly accomplished, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's words shall never pass away". They shall never be made void.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke iii. 4.

It is, therefore, our duty, our privilege, to lay these things up in our hearts, and to meditate upon them. By so doing, we shall nourish our piety, we shall fill our hearts with longing desires of God's holy presence, we shall be stirred up to detest sin, to cast it out of our hearts, to guard them against its return thither, and when Our God does come in the dead of night and a cry is heard: "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," we shall be found watching. On our ear will fall the sounds of angelic minstrelsy, and to us as to the shepherds those heavenly spirits will say: "Peace on earth to men of good will".

### THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

THE Advent season is brought to a close by the great festival for which it is but a preparation. This is the festival of Christmas, instituted to commemorate the birthday of the Incarnate Word. It is the beginning of what we call the Christmas season, and in England it takes its name from the Mass or Liturgy employed on that day by the Church—"Christ's-mass-day". In the Latin language, it is called *Nativitas Domini*—the Lord's birthday; in French, *Noël*, a word which is said to be a contraction of "Emmanuel"—God with us; or from *natalis*—natal-day of Christ. The liturgical period of Christmas begins on the 25th of December, and lasts till the 2nd of February, that is to say, for the space of forty days. The Gospel itself determines the length of this season. It tells us that, in accordance with the prescription of the Mosaic Law, our Lady remained hidden in the solitude and obscurity of her home, contemplating with humble and loving reverence the great mystery that had been wrought in her. At the expiration of the time ordained by the law, she carried her divine Child to the Temple, to present Him to the Lord, because every first-born was called "holy to the Lord," and he had to be redeemed by a sacrifice. In memory of these forty days, the Church has set aside the Christmas season and devoted it to the contemplation and honour of this stupendous mystery.



It is only natural that the birthday of Christ the Redeemer should have been, from the very beginning, kept as a feast day by the Church which derives its origin from Him. Among men, it was customary, as we see from the Gospel, to celebrate with feasting and with joy, the anniversary of their birth. Hence the birthday of the God-Man would not, by His followers, be suffered to pass unheeded. But the question which at once suggests itself to us, is this: "When was it first observed as a festival, and why was the date of it fixed for the 25th of December?" The earliest date which, with any degree of certainty, it is possible to assign for the first keeping of this festival, is the pontificate of Pope St. Telesphorus (A.D. 128-139). This Pontiff is generally supposed to have assigned for its celebration the 25th of December. In all likelihood, this is the first official record of the keeping of the festival. Tradition had most probably handed it down as the Lord's birthday, and devout men from even apostolic times had religiously observed it by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

After the lapse of more than two centuries, that is to say between the years 337 and 352, Pope Julius I. caused a searching inquiry to be made for the exact date of Our Lord's birth, and after the most minute and careful investigation, fixed it for the 25th of December. St. John Chrysostom, who died in A.D. 407, vouches for this fact, and tells us that the Pope was moved by St. Cyril of Jerusalem to institute this investigation.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in his homily on this festival, he states that from the very beginning the Roman Church had celebrated Christmas Day on the 25th of December, whereas the Eastern Church had kept it on the 6th of January. He proceeds to prove that, on this point, the Roman Church had exceptional claims to be trusted for the accuracy of her chronology, since she had at her disposal all the documents to establish this fact. In the public archives of Rome, all the acts of the census taken in Judea by order of Augustus were preserved, and from them the precise year and day could

<sup>1</sup> Baronius, *Apparatus ad An. Ecclesiast.*

be accurately determined. After making this statement, he next proceeds, from an examination of St. Luke's Gospel, to prove that the birth of Our Lord must have taken place in December.

The practice of the Eastern Church, in this respect, differed from that of the Western or Roman Church. Only in the fourth century did it conform with the Western observance. Before that date, it had been accustomed to keep the festival of Christmas on the 6th of January, thus uniting it with the manifestation of Our Lord to the Gentiles in the persons of the Magi; sometimes it had celebrated it on the 15th of May; at others on the 25th of April. The conformity of the Eastern Church with the Western in the observance of this festival was brought about by the authority of the Roman See, which authority, towards the end of the fourth century, received additional weight from an edict of the Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian. By this edict, the feast of the Nativity was separated from that of the Epiphany. After this date, only the Armenian Church retained the practice of celebrating Christmas on the 6th of January. The retention of this custom was probably owing to the fact that Armenia was independent of the imperial authority, and at an early date it had by heresy and schism been separated from the Roman See.

The feast of the Purification, with which the Christmas season comes to an end, is of a date so ancient that it is impossible to assign to it any other beginning than the very days of the Apostles. It is agreed, upon all hands, that it is the most ancient of our Lady's festivals, and it must have been celebrated by the first Christian communities. It evidently began in the Roman Church, and from that Church passed into the East, for only in the sixth century was it definitely fixed in the Eastern Church for the 2nd of February; but in spite of this fact there are left certain traces by which we can see that the festival was not altogether unknown in the East, for here and there in particular churches it was celebrated a few days after Christmas, and not on the fortieth day, when our Lady went up to the Temple to present the divine Child unto the Lord.

The commentators on the Sacred Liturgy remark, that the characteristic feature of the Christmas season is joy. A little Child has been born to us. He is the Prince of peace, the Saviour, the Redeemer. Therefore, the Church rejoices at this event, just as men of the world make merry when a son is born to their king, or when the monarch himself comes to visit his people. What do they do to express their joy and to honour him? They hang festoons of evergreens and of sweet-smelling flowers across the public thoroughfares; they decorate with flags all the public buildings; they raise triumphal arches; they put on holiday attire; they go forth to see him pass along in all the glitter of his majesty. Bands of music make the air resound with the stirring strains of martial music; the bells ring out a merry peal from all the church towers; the military appear in all the bravery of their various uniforms; and the loyal multitudes make the welkin ring with their shouts of welcome. Thus, by every means in their power do the people endeavour to manifest the joy which their Sovereign's presence excites in all hearts.

In the same way does the Church act upon this the Saviour's birthday, the day on which He first deigned to appear in the midst of His devoted children. He is her King. Therefore, she recalls to mind His first coming into the world, and does her utmost to commemorate, in a worthy manner, that auspicious event. She remembers each and every circumstance of His advent. The joy of Mary and of Joseph floods her heart; the gladness of the shepherds when they beheld the vision of Angels, and received from them the tidings of their Deliverer's presence among them, pours its floods of happiness unto her soul; the minstrelsy of those angelic choirs, re-echoing in the midnight sky, entrances her ears with the sweetness of its melody. Therefore, she enters heartily into the spirit of joy pervading all the events connected with this glorious mystery, and does her utmost to invest it with all possible pomp, and to breathe into the hearts of her children some of the feelings with which she is animated.

In response to her wishes, we must endeavour to celebrate this festival with the dispositions wherewith she would have

us be animated. Therefore, lay aside the gravity and the sadness of the Advent season, a season of longing and of earnest desires for the coming of Him Who is now in our very midst. We prayed for Him, we sighed for Him, we awaited Him with tears. He has come. A child is born to us. He is the prince of peace. He is our king, our teacher, our defender, our God. He has come to abide among us. In our sorrows He will console us; in our trials He will sustain us; in our perplexities He will enlighten us. If we are weak He will make us strong; if we are fearful, He will encourage us; if we are ignorant, He will pour into our minds a flood of divine wisdom. There is no ill for which He has not a remedy. There is no want which He is unable to satisfy. What reasons, then, have we not to be glad and to rejoice on this the birthday of Our Saviour?

Therefore, let us give ourselves up unreservedly to the holy gladness which, at this season, floods the heart of every true Christian. But, in order to taste of this gladness, we must be "men of good will," for it was only unto such that the Angel promised that peace which the Saviour brought with Him into the world, "Peace on earth to men of good will".

To gain that good will, entitling us to share in so inestimable a blessing, let us keep close to the crib in which Our infant Saviour lies. Let us be much in the company of Mary and of Joseph. Let us with the shepherds go over to Bethlehem to worship Him; with the three kings let us prostrate ourselves upon the earth before Him, at one and the same time adoring Him as Our God and Our Saviour; let us offer to Him the frankincense of prayer, the gold of our heart's love, and the myrrh of a soul that through the repressive force of Christian mortification, is subject to the divine law.

## LITURGY OF CHRISTMAS.

THE spirit which at this great festival, and during the days following it, animates the soul of the Church may be learned from her Liturgy, that is to say, from the prayers, the hymns

and the other parts of her public worship. Through all these there rings a note of joy, and on that note she chants to God her love and her gratitude. The garments with which she clothes her ministers are in keeping with the emotions stirring within her heart, being emblematic of the gladness thence welling forth and flooding the souls of her children. With the exception of the days on which she commemorates the martyrdom of Canterbury's great Pontiff, and of St. Stephen, and the day on which the Holy Innocents made profession of their faith, not by words, but by the outpouring of their life's blood, the vestments employed by her in the Holy Sacrifice, and in the other services, are white. For the two martyrs, she uses red ; for the slaughtered Innocents, she vests herself in purple, a colour which typifies mourning. On the Sundays following Christmas, even till Septuagesima, she uses green, unless prevented by the occurrence of some superior feast. This she does to insinuate into the minds of her children this never to be forgotten lesson—that with the birth of Christ, Who is the flower of the field, there should be born in every human heart the hope of eternal salvation—just as out of the dreary bleakness of winter there is born the bright verdure of early spring. So predominating is this spirit of joy that, should Christmas Day fall upon a Friday, the Church dispenses her children from the obligation of abstinence.

These, then, are the general features of the Christmas Liturgy. There is, however, in it a particular feature which cannot fail to strike even the most unobservant. This is the permission given to every priest to celebrate three Masses on the day of the great festival. On no other day of the year is so extraordinary a privilege granted. Not even the joyous Easter festival is so favoured. There must then be some special reason for making so great an exception, and into this reason we will now inquire.

The Church permits her priests thrice on Christmas Day to celebrate the divine Mysteries, in order by this privilege to commemorate the threefold birth of the Son of God. First, there is His eternal birth in the bosom of the Father ; secondly, there is His temporal birth in the bosom of His ever-blessed

and Immaculate Mother, Mary; and thirdly, there is His spiritual birth by grace in the souls of the just. To give us a further lesson she ordains that, when this is possible, each of these Masses should be said at a particular time fixed by her; the first at midnight; the second at dawn of day; the third when the light, having asserted itself, pours its bright rays upon the world. The Mass celebrated at midnight is to indicate that the Fathers and the just who lived before the promulgation of the law were yet saved by Jesus Christ. The Aurora Mass, or that celebrated at dawn, points out to us that the Fathers who lived under the written law had indeed some knowledge of God, but yet not so clear a knowledge as we at present possess. Hence this Mass is begun by an extract from Isaias recording the promise made to the ancients: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; to them that dwell in the regions of the shadow of death light is risen".<sup>1</sup> The third Mass is celebrated in the full light of day, at the time when the Hour of Tierce is sung, to signify that being born among us, Christ inaugurated the period of grace when the full light of His revelation pours its resplendent rays over the whole earth, since He, the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, then deigned to begin His mortal career and rejoiced like a giant to run His course. To mark her gratitude for so unspeakable a benefit, the Church formerly obliged all her children to communicate on this day, just as at the present time she imposes on them this obligation at the Easter festival. But since the Council of Lateran, when the Paschal Communion was ordered, the obligation of the Christmas Communion has ceased to bind.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Durandus, *Rat. Div. Offic.*, lib. vi., c. 13. In order to induce her children to communicate at Christmas, the Church has been lavish in opening to them the treasures of her indulgences. In 1586, Sixtus V. granted to all who, after confessing and communicating, should either assist at the office of the day or recite it, 100 years for Matins and Lauds; 100 years for the Mass; 100 for the first Vespers; 100 for the second Vespers; for each of the Little Hours and Compline, forty years. Pius VII., 1816, granted to those who should make a Novena in preparation for Christmas 300 days for each of the days and a plenary indulgence on Christmas Day itself.

After this brief account of the Liturgy of Christmas, we may now inquire what are our duties to God during these glad-some days, that by knowing them we may do our utmost to comply with them, and thus reap from this holy season all those graces and mercies which God will not fail to bestow on His devoted servants.

As intelligent beings, the creatures of that great God Who on this day came among us, our first duty is that of adoration. For, to adore is nothing else than to offer to Him the homage of our dependence and of our submission to His omnipotence. As soon as any one fills his mind with even that feeble notion of God's omnipotence which it is possible for our limited capacity to form, he cannot help at once falling down in humble adoration before the almighty Being to Whom he owes his existence. The more clearly he apprehends that attribute, the better is he able to perform this act, for he sees that his very breath of life comes from God, and, therefore, he hastens to acknowledge to Him his dependence. It is true that in this mystery God lies there before him as a helpless infant, but that fact makes it all the more imperative for him to admit his dependence. God's abasement does not in the least degree diminish His omnipotence, and His condescension to man's weakness, adds, if we may dare so to speak, to His nature a quality which man does not previously perceive in it. It makes Him our Saviour. Hence, it is a special duty at this Christmas season, during which God presents Himself before us shorn as it were of this almighty attribute, that we should all the more readily acknowledge and adore it, for, if through love of us He deigns to veil it from our sight, by so doing He makes it possible for us to approach Him with a greater degree of confidence.

After paying to Him this first debt of our adoring homage, our next duty is to express to Him our gratitude for His unspeakable condescension. Just reflect for a moment upon all that we owe to Him. Our first parents fell, and by their fall—their rebellion against God—forfeited not only Paradise, but their breath of life and their title to eternal life. These penalties incurred by them they transmitted as an inheritance to their

posterity, for in them were enfolded the wills of all that should spring from their union. Consequently, in them, we have all sinned. But God had compassion upon His fallen creature. He pardoned him ; but though pardoning him, His infinite justice required an adequate satisfaction for the injury done to His divine Majesty. Who could pay to Him that debt of satisfaction? Man was utterly unable to atone for what he had done. His offence being committed against an infinite Being, was in a certain sense infinite. Therefore, no one but God could pay the debt contracted by that act. Moreover, he that should undertake to pay it must be of the same nature as the debtor who contracted the debt. Here is a difficulty which the infinite wisdom of God discovered a means effectually to remove. The second Person of the adorable Trinity, the Word, equal to God in all perfections, offered Himself to the Eternal Father to satisfy the outraged justice of God. He became man, and being thus constituted one of the offending race, presented Himself as a victim to His almighty Father to pay the debt incurred by man's transgression. Therefore, bowing before Him in the lowliness of His human nature, pour forth the gratitude of your heart to Him Whose delight it is to be with the children of men and Who, especially during this season, sends His message of peace to those who are of good will.

But no matter how grateful we may feel to God for His infinite goodness in atoning for our sins, and in opening for us the kingdom of heaven, mere gratitude will not suffice to make to Him an adequate return. A stronger motive must actuate us. We must love Him. For, above all His other relations in our regard, He is our Father. He created us ; we owe our being to Him. Therefore, He will not be satisfied with our worship of gratitude. He asks for something more. He requires our love. If you ask why He does so, we reply because He loves us : " I have loved thee," He says to each of us, " with an everlasting love," with a love which dates from eternity. Moreover, He wishes to be loved by us, for He tells us that " His delights are to be with the children of men ". If you ask for proofs, what greater can He give than that of His



Incarnation by which He made Himself our brother, assuming our nature, clothing Himself with our flesh, and associating with us, we might almost say, as our servant. He could give us no stronger, no more convincing, proof of His love than this. Therefore, not only must we adore and be grateful to Him, we must, in the full sense of that word, love Him.

But how love One so far removed from us, so completely hidden from the sight of our eye, and the touch of our hand? The best proof that we can offer to Him of our love will be obedience to His holy law. That law is the expression of His will in our regard. We have to square our lives by it. We have to will what He wills, and to turn away from what He abhors. Therefore, as to will what another wills, and to turn away from that which he dislikes, is the true test of friendship, so is it also of love. Our Lord Himself tells us this when He says: "If any man love Me, he will keep My commandments". Hence, whenever distressing doubts come into our minds about our love of God, and particularly when our spirit is dry, our will feeble and apparently unable to cling to God's holy law, we may always reassure ourselves that we are still His faithful children by applying this test: "Do I keep the law of God? Are my thoughts in accord with it? Do my words not contradict it? Do my aims seek for nothing that is opposed to it? Are my actions in conformity with it?" If we can conscientiously say: "I keep that law," there can be no doubt that we really and truly love God.

Therefore, during this Christmas season humbly fall down in profound adoration before the God-Man Who has come in this lowly guise to work out your redemption. Pour forth the stream of your grateful thanks for all His mercies and benefits. Above all things, cling to Him by a burning love which will prove its existence in your heart by your faithful observance of His holy law.

## THE EPIPHANY.

THE third season of the Ecclesiastical year is devoted to the celebration of a feast called the Epiphany, that is to say, the manifestation of Our Lord to the race which He came to save. In the Antiphon sung at the Magnificat of the second Vespers of this festival, the Church speaks of three distinct manifestations which she wishes to commemorate: "We celebrate," she says, "a festival adorned by three miracles: on this day, a star led the Magi to the manger; on this day, at the marriage feast of Cana, water was changed into wine; on this day, in the river Jordan, Christ, for our salvation, willed to be baptised by John. Alleluia." It is quite evident, at first sight, that these three events did not occur on the same day. But among liturgical scholars, it is a commonly received opinion that on the 6th of January the Magi came to adore Our Lord, and that thirty years afterwards, on the anniversary of that day, He received baptism, at the hands of His precursor, John. As for the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, it is not quite certain that it was celebrated on the 6th of January; but although among authorities who have written upon this subject there is a divergence of opinion, yet the fact that from the beginning the Church has united these three events in the festival of the Epiphany leads us to think that the writers in question incline towards the belief that the miracle of Galilee occurred also on this day.

The first, then, of the events commemorated on this day is the manifestation of the infant Saviour to the Magi. Centuries before His birth, Balaam had foretold that a star should arise out of Jacob, and that it should be the portent vouchsafed by God to make evident to men that the "desired of all nations" had descended upon the earth. The tradition of this prophecy had been carefully preserved in the East, and those who there were earnestly watching for the sign and longing for the advent of the Messiah, most confidently expected its fulfilment. The three Magi, or Kings as they are called, who dwelt in that east country, were at last, after years of waiting,

gladdened by the appearance of that wondrous star. "This," said they, "is the sign of the great King. Let us go and adore Him, offering to Him such gifts as beseem One so exalted." They would argue that this brilliant, this miraculous, star could not be the signal for the advent of a merely earthly king. Only the master of the world could cause so marvellous a sign to appear, especially as this sign, obedient to His wishes, went before them, and at last conducted them into His very presence. It stood over the spot where Jesus, the recently born Child, had found shelter with His Mother.

They entered ; they saw the poverty of the place ; the lowliness of His surroundings. They seem not to have staggered in their faith, for to them the star pointed Him out as the Eternal God ! In coming to redeem men, that God had lowered Himself to men's level. They knew and felt that obdurate pride had ruined the human race. Therefore, in His humility, they recognised the remedy designed by omnipotent wisdom for the healing of this desperate wound. Hence they fell down before that weak, helpless, little Child and adored Him as the God-Man. Their gifts show the sentiments of their hearts towards Him. They laid at His feet gold, in token of His royalty ; incense, in acknowledgement of His divinity ; and myrrh as a confession of His human nature. This is admirably expressed by the Church in the hymn composed by Sedulius for the festival, and adopted by her to manifest her faith. "By their gifts," says the poet, speaking the mind of the Church, "they confessed Him to be God" : "*Deum fatentur munere*".

The second event commemorated to-day is the miracle wrought by Our Lord at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee : "*Hodie vinum ex aqua factum est ad nuptias*". In the preceding mystery He allowed His Divinity to be manifested by the miraculous star ; in this, He acts directly and personally, to make evident His divine nature. It is generally believed that the youthful pair who were united in marriage at Cana in Galilee, were relatives of Our Lord's Mother. She had, therefore, been invited to share in their joy ; so also had Jesus, Who went with her, accompanied by some of His

Apostles. Their hosts were not wealthy, and from this fact, and probably also from the presence of so many guests, their slender stock of wine failed. The Mother of Jesus very soon perceived this, and feeling the deepest compassion for their hosts on whom confusion would undoubtedly fall in consequence of this exposure of their poverty, she turned towards her Divine Son, and made known to Him the straits in which their relatives were placed. She did this, though she knew full well that He could not be ignorant of the fact. "Son," she said, "they have no wine."

Our Lord's reply to this implicit call upon Him to come to their assistance in their necessity is, in appearance, somewhat harsh: "What is that to Me and to thee; My hour is not yet come"—that is to say the time for manifesting my Divinity is not yet at hand. But though this answer is in appearance harsh, there must have been in the tone of His voice and in the expression of His face a something which told her that her intervention had met with complete success; for she immediately said to the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say, do ye".

As the Gospel tells us, there were there in the chamber six vessels containing water for the ceremonial ablutions enjoined by the law. Jesus said to the waiters: "Fill the water-pots with water," and they filled them to the brim. Then He bade them draw forth the wine and carry it to the chief steward of the feast. They obeyed Him to the letter. The chief steward tasted, as was required by his office, the water which had been changed into wine by Our Lord's word of power. He knew not whence it had come; but the servants who had filled the vessels with water knew. The chief steward pronounced it to be excellent wine, better by far than that which had been first served to the guests. Speaking to the bridegroom, he said: "Thou hast kept the good wine until now. Other men give first a good wine, and when men have well drunk, that which is inferior. Thou hast reversed this custom." This act, none but a Divine Person could perform. Only the Creator has so great command over matter as to change it from one substance into another. That act pro-

claimed Jesus to be God. It manifested Him as God to His disciples, and as the Evangelist remarks: "They believed in Him".<sup>1</sup>

The third event commemorated to-day is our Lord's baptism in the river Jordan: "*Hodie in Jordane a Joanne Christus baptizari voluit*". The preceding event either may, or it may not, have occurred on the 6th of January of the year which had just passed. Liturgical writers are not agreed upon this point, but there is among them a certain amount of unanimity in thinking that the baptism by St. John was conferred on the anniversary of the day when Jesus first manifested Himself to the Gentiles. This event of His baptism preceded His missionary career to men, and, therefore, must make Him known to them as the Son of God. He came to the river's brink as a man among other men. He came among sinners, as if He were a sinner needing penance. He was hidden, and men did not recognise Him. But the Baptist saw with eyes purged of the darkness veiling the vision of the rest. He had been conscious of the Saviour's presence, even when that Saviour had been shut up in Mary's womb, and when he himself had not yet seen the light of day. Now that the Lord stood before him in the flesh, the Incarnate Word could not screen Himself from that inner sight which sees the things of God. Therefore, when Jesus came to be baptised, John said to his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world!" These were plain, unmistakable words. But words and facts of far greater authority were, upon this memorable occasion, vouchsafed to all present. For, as Jesus came up out of the water, the Baptist saw a dove descending upon Him, and resting upon Him, that is to say—he had a vision of the Holy Spirit of God testifying in this visible way His union with Jesus Christ. But there came concerning His Divinity a still more emphatic testimony which was made known to all present. For there was heard the voice of the Eternal Father, speaking in accents of thunder from the clouds of heaven and saying:

<sup>1</sup> St. John ii. 11.

“This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.”<sup>1</sup>

These, then, are the three mysteries which the Church celebrates to-day—mysteries which she unites in one festival, and calls that festival the Epiphany or manifestation, because they pointed out to those who witnessed them, and to us who have learned the facts of what they witnessed, that Christ is God. As we have already remarked, there seems to be among liturgical writers an opinion, for which no doubt there are probable grounds, that these three mysterious events occurred on the 6th of January in different years of Our Lord's life. The Church has thought fit, on that day, to commemorate these events, yet, while so doing, she seems to lay most stress upon, and to give far greater prominence to, the first of them—the adoration of the Magi. On the octave day, she celebrates the third of them—the Baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan—an act by which He imparted to the water of Baptism its power to regenerate by washing away the stain of original sin. Lastly, to the second Sunday after the Epiphany, she dedicates the commemoration of the second event—His manifestation of His Divinity at the marriage-feast of Cana in Galilee.

We may say that the splendour and the brightness of the Epiphany pour their brilliancy over the three weeks which follow the feast. These weeks we may regard as, in a special manner, constituting the Epiphany season. For, when this season because of the lateness of the Easter festival, occupies more than three weeks, we notice that these additional weeks belong by their Liturgy to the apostolic life of Our Lord, rather than to His life which preceded that period. Therefore it is that the Gospels read on these Sundays treat of matters which properly come after the feast of Pentecost, and therefore they may rightly be put after the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, in years in which the Easter festival is late. At these times, the Gospels for the third and fourth Sundays after Epiphany put before our minds miracles which are evident manifestations

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew iii. 17 ; 2 Peter i. 17.

of Our Lord's Divinity. Thus, on one of these Sundays, we are told that by a mere word He cleansed the leper of his hideous disease, and snatched the centurion's servant from the jaws of death ; on the other, that at His command the raging billows of the storm-swept sea became calm, and the winds ceased to stir and vex their rage. As for the Sunday which comes within the octave of the Epiphany—a Sunday which is usually the first after that great feast, except when that feast itself falls upon a Sunday—the Church fails not to call to our minds a mystery which, in a general sort of way, is in harmony with the time, that is to say, that wondrous manifestation of His Divinity, given by Jesus in the Temple, when He had reached His twelfth year, astonishing the doctors by the depth of His searching questions, and the lucidity of His answers to their interrogations.

With these explanations in your mind, you will now clearly understand the object which the Church has in view in celebrating the festival of the Epiphany. That object, as we have so often repeated, is to manifest to her children the Divinity of Our Lord. That Divinity was made to stand out clear before the eyes of men, by the adoration of the Magi, and their offering of mysterious gifts ; by the testimony of the heavenly voice, and the vision of the overshadowing dove at His baptism in the river Jordan ; and by the miracle of supreme power, when, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, Jesus changed water into wine. The feast of the Epiphany causes us to assist at each of these mysteries ; and, by so doing, to receive a confirmation of our faith in the Divine and the human nature united in the one person of Christ Our Lord and Saviour.

### SEPTUAGESIMA.

WE enter to-day upon the fourth part of the Ecclesiastical year. It is called Septuagesima, and as you will naturally wish to know its history, and the purpose which the Church had in view when she instituted it, we will endeavour to satisfy your wish as far as we are able. The title Septuagesima is

given to that time which intervenes between the end of the third period of the Ecclesiastical year, that is to say, the period of the Epiphany, and Lent. It lasts for the space of seventeen days, although it comprises three Sundays, for it comes to an end on the day before Ash Wednesday. The three Sundays embraced within this cycle are called respectively Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, that is to say, the seventieth, the sixtieth, and the fiftieth day before Easter. The time of Lent is called Quadragesima—the forty days of fasting instituted in memory of Our Lord's fast before entering upon His mission.

Before the observance of this holy season had been definitely settled, as it is at the present day, some Churches did not during this time fast on Saturday, because they regarded the Sabbath (Saturday), as an occasion of joy, inasmuch as on that day God ceased to work in the creation of the world. Others did not observe the fast on Thursday, because they regarded it also as a day of joy, for on it Our gracious Lord instituted the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Therefore, in order to have forty days of fasting before the Easter festival, they were obliged to begin that course of penance somewhat earlier than those who did not regard the Thursdays and the Saturdays as days of joy on which it would be unbecoming to perform any penitential exercises. From this cause arose the custom of beginning the time of Lent, in some cases fifty days before Easter; in others, sixty; and in others, seventy. Now, although the duration of Septuagesima is always the same, its position in the calendar is movable, for like Easter, to which it is a prelude, it is subject to advance and to postponement. The earliest time at which it is placed is the 18th of January, and the latest to which it is deferred is the 21st of February.

The time of Septuagesima was not definitely fixed until the season of Lent had been clearly determined. As long as this latter remained undetermined, both seasons constituted one period. At last, in the ninth century, the Latin Church began the Lenten season on Ash Wednesday, and during the course of forty days omitted, only on the Sundays, the duty of fasting. All the manuscripts of the Gregorian Sacramentary agree in



calling Ash Wednesday the beginning of Lent: "*In capite Jejunii*". Amalarius testifies to this when he says that the fast began four days before the first Sunday of Lent. The practice of the faithful in the twelfth century is thus described by Peter of Blois.<sup>1</sup> "All religious, both men and women, began to fast on Septuagesima Sunday; the Greek Church on Sexagesima; the Clergy on Quinquagesima, and the people on the following Wednesday". This custom, however, shortly afterwards fell into disuse, so that from the fifteenth century the Clergy and the monks began on Ash Wednesday the Lenten fast, just as the people did. No doubt the reason which induced them to take up this custom was to do away with the scandal taken by the Greeks at the fact of their not fasting, as it seemed to them, for all the forty days. But though adopting this custom, the Latin Church did not conform to the Greek Church in not fasting on the Saturdays.

The Church of Gaul had preserved among its observances many things which it had derived from the Eastern Church to which in part it owed its origin, yet it was only with difficulty that among its members the fast and the abstinence of Saturday were introduced. Before the Roman use was adopted by them, they were, like other Churches, obliged to anticipate the fast of Lent. Of this we have several indisputable proofs. Thus the Council of Orleans, held in the beginning of the fifth century, orders the faithful to begin their Lenten observance on Quinquagesima, and not on Quinquagesima Sunday. Again; the fourth Council of Orleans, held towards the end of the fifth century, repeats this order, and explains the reason of the command by saying that they must fast on all the Saturdays of Lent. Moreover, the first and second Councils of Orange, held respectively in A.D. 511 and 541, attacked the same abuse by obliging the faithful to begin on Quinquagesima Sunday their Lenten fast.

When, through the exertions of Pepin and of Charlemagne, the Roman rite was introduced into France, these two illustrious men established the custom of making every Saturday

<sup>1</sup> Sermo xiii.

a day of penance. When this had taken deep root, the custom of anticipating Lent on the Monday of Quinquagesima week was observed only by the Clergy. In the thirteenth century, only the Church of Poland retained the custom of beginning the fast of Lent before the Roman Church. In consequence of their relations with the Greek Church, they began that fast on the Monday of Septuagesima, and retained this practice till, in 1248, Innocent IV. abolished it by his supreme authority.

The Roman Church, while observing the Saturdays as days of penance, filled up the forty days of Lent by beginning the fast on the four days preceding the first Sunday. From the Greek Church it borrowed the practice of giving a sad tone to its Liturgy for three whole weeks preceding the Lenten season. In the ninth century, it introduced the custom of omitting the "Alleluia" and the "Gloria in Excelsis," as soon as Septuagesima began. To this custom the Monastic Orders conformed, although the Benedictine Rule prescribed a different arrangement. Finally, in the latter half of the eleventh century, Alexander II. everywhere established the uniformity of this observance by ordaining that, from the Vespers of the preceding Septuagesima Sunday till the end of Lent, these two signs of joy should be omitted. By so doing, he simply renewed an ordinance established by St. Leo III. in the beginning of the ninth century. Thus this important portion of the Liturgical year was firmly fixed, and it has maintained its position for more than a thousand years.

We may now inquire into the purpose which the Church had in view in making this arrangement.

The Church established the season of Lent in order to prepare her children for the due celebration of Easter. Lent being the acceptable time of which St. Paul speaks, a time during which God showers upon His people more abundant graces, the Church redoubles her zeal to revive in the minds of her children the high idea which they ought to have of their heavenly calling. She desires that they should lose none of these graces, but should employ them to the best advantage. Therefore, she deems it fitting that they should prepare themselves for this acceptable time. With this end in view she

instituted the time of Septuagesima, which is a preparation for Lent, as Lent itself is a preparation for Easter. Hence, as on entering a church we do not immediately find ourselves at the foot of the altar, but we first pass through the inner porch, traverse the nave, go through the choir, and at last bend our knees at the steps of the altar, so also before beginning Lent we are prepared for it by the days which intervene between Septuagesima and Ash Wednesday. This passage through the various parts of the church leading to the altar prepares the mind for that which it will do on arriving there. You have seen in your passage the baptismal font in which original sin has been washed away, and you are thereby reminded of the fall, and of all the ill worked to the human soul by that primal transgression; the tribunal of penance, where your manifold transgressions are forgiven, and the balm of consolation is poured upon your grievous wounds; the chair of truth, whence the saving doctrine of the Gospel is dispensed; the image of the Crucified, from Whom all grace proceeds; the Stations, and the pictures of Our Lord, and of the Saints who are your advocates with God. The sight of these things leaves its impress on your mind, and puts it in a fit state for kneeling before the throne of mercy, and sending up before it your humble petitions. Thus, Septuagesima is an excellent preparation for Lent, just as Lent itself is for the great Easter festival.

During Septuagesima the soul should lay aside all disorderly earthly affections; during Lent it should labour to adorn itself with every Christian virtue, in order worthily to share in the joys of Easter. If there were no season of Septuagesima, we should not be able in the proper dispositions to begin Lent. The heart, as we know so well, is not able all at once to change its sentiments. It must be prepared by slow degrees to do so. Therefore, the Church begins to move it, to stir it up, to take away its coldness, to inspire it with warmth, with fervour, till at last it is on fire with divine love and capable of receiving an increase of life and of grace.

Such is the season of Septuagesima which the Church has instituted for this very purpose. True, its duration is very

short, but the antiquity of its institution shows us its importance, since at so early a period of its existence divinely guided men so clearly saw its necessity. From its origin we see that the method of its observance has not always been the same. Our duty, then, is to fill our hearts with a just idea of its importance. We should make use of it to prepare ourselves for Lent. With this end in view, we should flee from our customary amusements; we should carefully avoid all dissipation of mind; we should accustom ourselves to be habitually grave, remembering that we are on the eve of a solemn period of fasting and prayer in honour of the Passion and death of Our Lord. This preparation will enable us to enter upon this holy season with great spiritual joy, and to draw from it those abundant graces which God never fails to pour out upon those who worthily prepare their hearts to receive them.

### LITURGY OF SEPTUAGESIMA.

IF we examine the Liturgy employed by the Church at any particular season, we shall discover the end that she had in view in the institution of that season. For, by her Liturgy, she speaks to the souls of her children, and manifests to them the sentiments with which she is animated, and with which she wishes that they should be animated at the particular time at which she makes to them her loving appeal. Let us then, to-day, search into the Liturgy appointed by her for the time of Septuagesima.

During the festive season of the Epiphany, she clothed her priests, while ministering at the holy altar, in white vestments, signifying thereby the joy which filled her heart. But now we perceive a great change. The garments expressive of joy are laid aside, and her priests appear in the sanctuary clad in purple, a colour employed by her to indicate sorrow and mourning. Before chanting the Epistle during the Mass, the sub-deacon divests himself of his tunic, and before singing the Gospel, the deacon lays aside his dalmatic. This action also

betokens grief; for, as Septuagesima is typical of the ages which elapsed before the coming of Christ—ages during which the human race threw aside virtue—so the sacred ministers cast off the garments of joy to make this fact sensible to our dull hearts, by speaking to them thus forcibly through our very eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The ear also perceives another sign of sadness in the suppression, throughout all the Church offices, of the joyous "Alleluia". This is replaced after the "Deus in adiutorium," by the words: "Praise be to Thee, O Lord! the King of eternal glory". At the Mass there is substituted for the verses which are both preceded and followed by "Alleluia," what is called the "Tract," so named not only because it is not followed by a response, but because it is sung either in a monotone, or in a species of slow, lugubrious chant. Moreover, the "Gloria in Excelsis," that joyous hymn of praise sung by the Angels on the night of Our Lord's nativity, is laid aside, to intimate that men, filled with the bitter memory of their manifold transgressions, cannot justly share in the gladness promised to men of good will. When the divine service comes to an end, the assembled faithful are dismissed, not with the usual formula: "Ite, missa est," but with the words: "Benedicamus Domino"—"Let us bless the Lord," which words give them to understand that they must now persevere in continual prayer.

From the lessons read at the Divine Office during this season, as well as from the Epistles and the Gospels used in the Liturgy of the Mass, the Church, furthermore, makes evident to us her intention in instituting the time of Septuagesima. At the Divine Office the lessons chosen and read are taken from that portion of the Scripture which recounts the fall of man. The guilt incurred by that fall, Adam transmitted to his posterity, because in his single person were united all the wills of his descendants, who in his person revolted from God. To this original stain they have added their own heinous sins. Consequently, these lessons point

<sup>1</sup> Durandus, *Rat. Div. Offic.*, lib. vi., cap. 24.

out to them their obligation to deplore these transgressions and humbly to implore God's infinite mercy. On Septuagesima Sunday, the Epistle most earnestly exhorts us to abstain from all further sin ; ever to watch against its insidious temptations ; and, as far as possible, to make amends for the evil which we have done. To incite us to this work of penance, the Apostle sets before us his own example, and tells us that he chastised his body, and thus brought it into subjection, lest after having preached to others, he himself should become a castaway. The Gospel inculcates the necessity for labouring assiduously at the work of salvation, and encourages us to undertake this painful task in the assured hope of the transcendent reward with which God will crown that bitter toil, when life's fitful day is over.

On Sexagesima Sunday, St. Paul in his Epistle recounts to us the innumerable labours, sorrows, trials and persecutions which he endured for the faith, in order to give us a striking example of the humility and patience by which we are to work out our salvation. In the Gospel, Our Lord treats of that living word, which is so efficacious in turning the soul to heavenly things, and points out to us that its wondrous power depends in great measure upon the soul in which, with so much labour, it is planted, thereby encouraging us with all diligence to prepare our hearts for the reception of its marvellous force.

On Quinquagesima Sunday we are taught by the Epistle, that all our works, that all our sufferings, that all our efforts are worthless, and that they will profit us nothing unless they be animated by divine charity. The Gospel, which recounts the cure of the blind man, warns us against the danger of spiritual blindness, one of the most formidable obstacles of a true conversion to God. Consequently, there is borne in upon us, with a force that is irresistible, the necessity for deep meditation on the truths of faith, and for earnest prayer to obtain light to see the nothingness of all that is not God.

Therefore, we may infer from the action of the Church, in her Liturgy during Septuagesima, that her intention is to inspire us with grave, serious thoughts, which will prepare us

to endure the severity of the Lenten observance, and to take in hand those much-needed reforms which will make our hearts fitting abodes for the perpetual indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

Let us now consider the mystical meaning attached to the time of Septuagesima. Holy men have always regarded the number *seven* as one that is full of mystery. It is called by St. Benedict, "the sacred number *seven*," because of its frequent use in the Scriptures. Thus, we have the seven days of creation—six devoted to labour, the seventh to rest; the seven days of the consecration of priests; the seven days of a leper's purification; the seven days during which the army marched round the walls of Jericho; the seven Angels of the Apocalypse; the seven Churches of Asia; the seven-branched candlestick; the seven trumpets; the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; the seven times at which the Prophet praised the Lord. Therefore, in this number multiplied by ten—the symbol of perfection—they find the seventy days of Septuagesima, followed by the seven full weeks after Easter, till the feast of Pentecost, when the coming of the Holy Ghost completed the work of Christ. By these two periods, they say, are typified the two periods of man's life, first that which here below is passed in sorrow, labour, and pain; and secondly, that which is passed in eternity, in the joy of the beatific vision. Thus, the time of Septuagesima—a time of penance and sorrow—represents the present life; and the time after Easter, the life to come.

The Church, the legitimate interpreter of Holy Scripture, points out to us two places which are in direct relation with those two periods: Babylon, symbolising the world of sin, a world in which the Christian must go through the time of his probation; and Jerusalem, that promised land in which he is for ever to rest from his labours. The Jewish people—a figure of humanity—remained captive at Babylon for the space of seventy years. Therefore, in order to express this mystery, the Church has fixed the number of seventy days for the time of expiation preceding Easter.

Again; the duration of the world, as Christian tradition has

pointed out, is divided into seven great periods after which there succeeds the endless duration of eternity. Of these periods the first was from the creation till Noah; the second, from Noah till the calling of Abraham; the third, from Abraham till Moses, by whom God gave the law to His people; the fourth, from Moses till the establishment of the kingdom of Juda in the person of David; the fifth embraces the centuries from the time of David till the captivity of Babylon; the sixth, the period which elapsed between the return of the Jews from Babylon till the birth of Christ; the seventh, which began with the birth of Our Lord, and which will last till the coming of the Great Judge at the end of time.<sup>1</sup>

In order to encourage us in the battle of life, the Church points out to us a period of seven weeks following immediately after that upon which we enter to-day. In her eyes that period is a type of the blessed life which will be our portion if we behave manfully during the bitter war which we have to wage against the devil, the world, and the flesh. After these days of fasting and of abstinence, during which we bear Our Lord company, and after the contemplation of all that He suffered during His Passion for our redemption, there will come the seven full weeks that intervene between the feast of His resurrection and that which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Thus will come to an end the seventy days that represent our life of struggling in this world, and the seven weeks that call to our mind the blissful repose of the never-ending joys of our celestial home.

In conclusion, we will suggest to you a method for passing these acceptable days in such a way as to draw from them all the profit that the Church intends you to receive by establishing this holy season. First, it is but rational that as a preparation for the Lenten fast you should studiously withdraw yourself from all profane amusements. Men of the world act in just the contrary way. As a preparation for Lent they give themselves up to feasting and to diversions of every kind. Not so devout Catholics. Like the Jews in

<sup>1</sup> *An. Litur. Septuag.*, chap. ii; S. Greg. Mag., *Hom. xix.*, *In Matth.*



captivity in Babylon, they feel no desire to amuse themselves in company with the giddy and unthinking world. The Jews considered that it would be a profanation to sing the Canticles of Sion in a foreign land; and devout Christians ought to regard it as at least incongruous to give themselves up to pleasures in this land of exile during a time of penance and of humiliation. How is it possible that dissipation should be a preparation for recollection, or intemperance for abstinence, or gluttony for rigorous fasting? Therefore, as far as possible, shun all worldly dissipation.

In the next place, practice in all possible ways the virtue of temperance. Be sparing in your meat and in your drink; set a guard upon your lips that they indulge not in over much conversation; draw a veil over your eyes that they may not wander and fix themselves upon dangerous objects; regulate the affections of your heart that they may not fasten themselves upon anything that would hurry you into sin. Then prescribe for yourself particular exercises of devotion, such as visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, the Rosary, examination of conscience, and certain special prayers which at stated times you will daily undertake to recite.

Lastly, make it a point to assist at the public services of the Church, going if possible every day to Holy Mass, to benediction of the Blessed Sacrament whenever it is given in the church which you attend, and to the Stations of the Cross, usually performed on Fridays.

If you put in practice these counsels, you will make an excellent use of the time of Septuagesima; you will prepare your soul to reap all the advantages which the grace of the Lenten season procures; you will attune it to share in all the spiritual joys of the glad Easter festival.

## THE LENTEN SEASON.

THE forty days of the Lenten fast constitute the fifth period or season of the Ecclesiastical year. This season, in an indirect sort of way, owes its origin to Our divine Lord Himself. For

on one occasion the followers of St. John Baptist came to Him and said: "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast?" In reply to their question Jesus said: "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast."<sup>1</sup> Owing partly to this prediction which the Apostles no doubt took as a command, and partly to the example given by their Master in His prolonged fast, they began after Christ's resurrection to practise the austerity of fasting, and in memory of what their Lord had done, instituted the fast preceding the Easter festival, a fast which lasts for the space of forty days. Also, it may be noticed that they did not confine their fasting to these days only, but frequently during the year they gave themselves up to this healthful discipline, as any one may prove to his satisfaction by consulting the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

As early as the middle of the second century (A.D. 150) we find the first trace or indication of the Lenten fast; for at that time there arose among the Christian communities a warm discussion as to the precise day on which the fast preceding the Easter festival should be ended. The Christians of Asia kept the Paschal festival on the same day as the Jews celebrated their feast of the Passover, that is to say, on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month. But the Christians of the Western Church, in order to avoid seeming to keep festival with the Jews, deferred their celebration of Easter till the Sunday immediately after that fourteenth day. Hence it follows that if they discussed among themselves upon what day the feast should be celebrated, they must have observed it, and consequently must have also observed the fast preceding it. Hence, the Lenten fast must have been in existence before the date of the dispute about the celebration of Easter. Therefore, proceeding by the rule laid down for tracing to their source all similar practices, we may say that whenever we cannot discover the date at which any particular practice began, nor the place in which it began, nor the person

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. ix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiii. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 5; xi. 27.

who inaugurated it, we may safely attribute to the Apostles the origin of that practice.

From the very beginning, the fast of Lent has consisted of forty days. In the Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325), Lent is styled "the fast of forty days"; Origen gives to it this same appellation (A.D. 250); and the Fathers of the fourth century agree with him in giving to it this name. Now, although the whole Church is in accord as to the number of days comprised within this cycle of fasting, yet the various Churches had different times or days on which they began this wholesome austerity. In the East they began sooner than in the West, because in certain places it had been a traditional custom not to fast either on Thursdays or on Saturdays. On this account, the faithful were obliged, in order to make forty days of fasting before Easter, to begin their fast on the Monday before Sexagesima. In the Western or Latin Church, it had been customary during only the six weeks preceding Easter. However, as during those six weeks each of the Sundays was not a fasting day, Lent would consist of only thirty-six instead of forty days. Therefore, in the seventh century a great change was introduced. In order to make up the forty days, the Latins began to fast on the Wednesday of Quinquagesima or Ash-Wednesday. By so doing, they made up the number of forty days.

From what has, thus far, been said concerning the difference existing in the Church as to the time of Lent, we are naturally led to expect that there will be a difference as to the manner of its observance also. The manner of fasting differed in different places. In the early ages, as we learn from the writings of the Fathers, the faithful were allowed during the time of Lent to eat only bread with a little salt and water. To this meagre fare, some were permitted to add a few uncooked herbs. The use of eggs, meat, milk, and wine, was absolutely interdicted.<sup>1</sup> Meagre and austere as was the matter

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, *De Expos. fidei*; St. Cyril Hieresol., *Catechis. IV.*; St. Chrysostom, *Hom. de jejunio*; Theophilus Alex., *Hom. IV. Ad pop. Antoch.*

of this Lenten repast, the early Christians were just as rigorous about the time at which they partook of it. Imitating the Jews among whom they lived, they refrained from eating until the hour of sunset. This custom passed from the Eastern to the Western nations. As Lent advanced, the observance of it became more and more austere. The faithful regarded this holy season as divided into three parts: the first, from the beginning until Holy Week; the second, consisting of the six days preceding Easter, during which time they partook of only dry food; the third, containing the last two or three days, during which no food whatever was taken. The observance of this last period was not of obligation, but of counsel only. Moreover, during Lent, the people abstained not only from food, but from their usual recreations and diversions. Even the public authority of the law intervened to forbid these to all. Besides this, the public tribunals were closed. In A.D. 380, Gratian and Theodosius, ordered all judges to interrupt, for forty days before Easter, their sessions in the public courts, and though during the lapse of ages Western legislation has put an end to this observance, we have to record it, to our shame, that the Moslems retain it during the solemn days of their Ramadam.

The fervent observance of these holy days, like all human things, had its period of decadence. In the ninth century, many mitigations of the severity of Lent were introduced. These first crept into the hours for taking the one repast permitted by the Church. Instead of waiting till sunset, the Latin Church allowed it to be taken at three o'clock in the afternoon. When this custom first made its appearance and began to prevail, many protests were made against it, both by Bishops and by provincial Councils, but, in spite of their reclamations, it continued to spread far and wide, till at last in the twelfth century it became general, for it was upheld and taught by the scholastic doctors.<sup>1</sup>

Later on, theologians taught that if this repast were taken

<sup>1</sup>Hugh of St. Victor., *In Reg. S. August.*, cap. 3; Alex. Hales; S Thomas, *Sum.*, 2, 2, q. 147, a. 7.

even at midday, the fast would still be observed, because the essence of it does not consist in the time at which it is taken, but in the fact that there is only one meal in the day. This opinion rapidly gained ground, so that in the fourteenth century, Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, priests and religious scrupled not to take their single repast at midday, the Schoolmen going so far as to teach that for a valid reason the hour might be advanced to a certain time before midday.

As was natural, this custom opened wide the door for the introduction of another altogether unknown to antiquity. The custom referred to, was that of taking, in the evening, a slight refection called "collation". The origin of this may be traced to the Monastic Orders. St. Benedict's Rule, in addition to the Lenten fast, prescribed several others during the course of the year. These fasts, not being ordered by the Church, allowed certain mitigations never permitted on Ecclesiastical fasts. The great legislator, on these occasions, instead of obliging his subjects to abstain from eating until sunset, allowed them to take their single meal at three o'clock. At the season when these fasts were prescribed, the monks found themselves engaged in the hard labour which fell to their lot during the summer and autumn months. Therefore, using the discretionary power given to them by the Rule, the Abbots gave leave to their subjects to take before Compline a cup of wine, to refresh them after the hard field labour undergone during the day. This cup of wine was given at the hour of the evening lecture or conference, in Latin termed *collatio*, consisting chiefly of some pages selected from the *Collationes* of Casian. Hence there was given to this slight indulgence the name *collatio* or collation. In the ninth century, the Council of Aix-la-chapelle, extended this permission to the Lenten fast, because of the fatigue undergone by the monks in the performance of their lengthy church offices.

By degrees men began to feel that this cup of wine, taken without any solid food to counteract its effects, was injurious to health, and consequently there crept in, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the custom of adding to it a

morsel of bread. From the Monastic Orders and the Clergy, these mitigations passed to the laity, and the further relaxation of drinking between meals was allowed. This custom St. Thomas defended, because liquid does not break the fast; nevertheless, with this drink any solid food was strictly prohibited. At the end of the thirteenth, and during the course of the fourteenth century, the one repast being permitted at midday, men began to discover that a simple draught of wine did not sufficiently sustain their bodily force, and the custom began to gain ground of taking in addition to this draught, bread, vegetables, and fruit, provided that the amount eaten did not constitute a second repast.

When, out of regard for the enfeebled state of bodily health among the Western nations, these mitigations with respect to the time of refection were granted, others respecting the nature of the food permitted on fasting days were introduced. Heretofore only fish had been allowed; but now, eggs, milk, butter, and cheese were permitted. The use of milk during Lent began in Germany towards the ninth century. Ecclesiastical rulers tried to stop this custom, but their efforts were vain; for the Churches which had begun this practice, by every year obtaining from Rome permission to eat these various articles of food, ended at last in being able to continue it in peace. For a long time the Church of France maintained the ancient rigour of Ecclesiastical discipline, but at last, in the seventeenth century, yielded to the custom accepted throughout Christendom, and adopted the use on fast days of milk, butter, and cheese. With respect to the use of eggs, the old discipline is still maintained, except in cases in which a dispensation has been obtained from Rome. At the present day, this dispensation is asked by the Bishops for all their subjects, but in former times it was sought and obtained only for particular individuals, who for grave reasons required it.

Thus the Church, while earnestly exhorting her children to maintain the rigour of Lent, nevertheless acts towards the weak as a tender mother acts towards her children. When their bodily strength is unequal to the strain put upon it by abstinence from food, she wisely and lovingly relaxes the

rigour of her laws. But while so doing, she never fails to point out to us that we, as our fathers were, are sinners, and consequently that we need penance as much as they did. From this, she neither can nor will she dispense us. True, she softens the hardship of Lent, but she does not free us from the obligation of penance. Therefore, because she asks from us less than she required from our sturdy ancestors, let it be our aim, as far as possible, to observe the discipline that is still in force. If we are unable to fast, let us at least take up the practice of some penitential works which we are able to perform, and thus in some measure at least chastise our bodies for their revolt against our spiritual nature, and having brought them into subjection, let us strive ever to keep them obedient to the law of God.

### LITURGY OF LENT.

THE Lenten season has ever been regarded by the Church as the most solemn, the most holy portion of the Ecclesiastical year, commemorating as it does, the lengthy fast of her Divine Founder and all the bitter sufferings which He endured for our salvation. It is, therefore, but natural that she should have instituted for its due celebration numerous and imposing rites to strike the imagination of her children, and to stir up in their hearts a lively sorrow for sin which flooded His soul with woe unutterable.

In order, then, to enable you intelligently to take part in these rites and thus to reap from them all the instruction which they are intended to convey, we will as briefly as possible explain them to you.

As sorrow is the characteristic feature of this season, the Church endeavours by all her ritual observances to make it stand out in bold relief, so that even the most unobservant can hardly fail to notice and to be influenced by it. For this purpose, she for many centuries excluded from the Lenten season the celebration of all festivals, because in these there is always an element of joy. As early as the fourth century we

discover a trace of this her spirit in one of the canons of the Council of Laodicea. That canon forbade during Lent, not only the celebration of feasts, but even the commemoration of them, except on Saturdays and on Sundays.<sup>1</sup> The Greek Church held just as rigorously to the same rule, from which in the fifth century it somewhat diverged, in order to admit the feast of the Annunciation. For a long time the Roman Church maintained the same discipline; but, with that broad spirit ever visible in her action, she also permitted the celebration of the Annunciation and the feast of St. Matthew. In these latter times she has gone farther still, and has allowed the introduction of several other feasts; because, among the Western nations, the observance of a feast day is not considered to be incompatible with fasting, as it is among the Easterns. The Greek Church still adheres to the view prevalent among those who acknowledge her authority, and, therefore, in her calendar Saturday, being always a solemn feast, is never even during the Lenten season a fasting day—the only exceptions being Holy Saturday and the feast of the Annunciation. Besides excluding feast days, the Church furthermore eliminates from her liturgical services all chants expressive of joy. Thus, we no longer hear the “Alleluia,” the “Gloria in Excelsis,” the “Ite missa est,” and the “Te Deum”. With the commencement of Septuagesima these are laid aside, and when Passiontide begins, even the “Gloria Patri” is omitted in order to make known to us the grief in which our Holy Mother the Church is plunged when contemplating the sorrows of her Divine Spouse.

#### ASH WEDNESDAY.

These, we may say, are general features characterising the Liturgy during the whole Lenten season. But a very special rite is employed by the Church when entering upon the forty days of penance, a rite which cannot fail to inspire with holy awe those who intelligently take part in it. This is the sprinkling of blessed ashes on the heads of the faithful. Under the

<sup>1</sup> Labbe, *Concil.*, 51 can., tom. i.



old dispensation, those who recognised and admitted their guilt were accustomed, in sign of their repentance, to cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes. Even among pagan nations this seems to have been the ordinary way of expressing their sorrow for sin. When the Ninivites heard the preaching of Jonas, and understood the dread penalties hanging over them in punishment of their manifold crimes, they did penance in this way, covering themselves with sackcloth and ashes.

This practice soon found its way into the Church, which enjoined it not only on public sinners but upon all who, in the spirit of repentant sorrow, were willing to submit to it. At first, only those who had been guilty of grievous crimes were thus treated, but towards the eleventh century all the faithful without exception voluntarily came to have the blessed ashes sprinkled upon their heads. In order to fill their hearts with sentiments of penitential sorrow, the sacred ministers when performing this ceremony were accustomed to say: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust shalt thou return".

By these words the Church brought vividly before their minds the thought of death, which by detaching their hearts from that which at death they must quit for ever, admirably disposed them for sincere conversion. The more forcibly to inculcate this detachment, the faithful used to approach barefoot to the altar, there to receive upon their heads the symbol of their mortality. Before drawing nigh to the sanctuary, and before the High Mass at which the ashes were distributed, they were also accustomed to make a procession, barefoot. This was the practice observed in Rome, where the Pope and the Cardinals, after receiving in the Church of St. Anastasia the blessed ashes, proceeded thence barefoot and in procession to the Church of St. Sabina where the Mass of the day was solemnly chanted. All this, however, has since the thirteenth century fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, the Popes are still accustomed to receive the ashes as the rest of the faithful do, but out of respect for their exalted dignity and the sublime office which they exercise, the solemn words,

"Remember, man, thou art but dust," are not addressed to them.

#### VEILING OF CROSSES AND OF PICTURES.

To keep alive in the hearts of the faithful the sentiments of compunction awakened in them by the suppression of every sign of joy, and by the sprinkling on their heads of the penitential ashes, the Church had recourse in many places to another striking rite. This was to cover with a veil the crosses and the holy pictures which adorned the public places of worship. At the very beginning of Lent these sacred objects, so dear to the hearts of the devout people, were hidden from their view. At the present day, however, when the Roman rite almost everywhere prevails, crosses and holy pictures are covered with a veil only during Passiontide. By this ritual observance, the Church wishes to impress upon our minds the deep humiliation to which Our divine Lord was reduced when, as we read in the Gospel for Passion Sunday, He was forced to conceal Himself from the eyes of the Jews, lest in their blind rage they should stone Him to death. "But why," it may be asked, "should the Church hide from view the pictures and the images of the Saints? The same reason that justifies the covering of the Cross will not hold good for them." This is quite true, and interpreters of ritual are ready with a satisfactory answer. They tell us that when the glory of the Master is eclipsed, the glory of His servants should also be obscured. So rigorous used this custom to be, that when the feast of the Annunciation chanced to fall in Passiontide, our Lady's pictures and images remained veiled even on the anniversary of the day when the Angel sent by God greeted her with the title "full of grace," and pronounced her "blessed among women".

#### BLESSING OF PALMS.

Before entering upon the great week during which are commemorated the sufferings endured by Our Lord in His Passion, the Church, by means of another beautiful rite, recalls to our minds the event with which that week of sorrow began.

Centuries before the Redeemer's birth, the Prophets had foretold all that He should do, and all that He should suffer. Referring to their predictions, Our Lord had said that He must fulfil all that had been written by them concerning Him. As then the Prophet Zacharias had spoken of His entry into Jerusalem, and of the manner in which it should take place, these facts had of necessity to be accomplished to the very letter. "Rejoice," said the Prophet, "rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion! shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour: He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass".<sup>1</sup> Jesus, therefore, calling to Him two of His disciples said to them: "Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and bring them to Me".<sup>2</sup> In obedience to His command the disciples brought to Him the ass, and laying upon it their garments, seated Him thereon. Hearing of His close proximity to the city, vast multitudes flocked out to meet Him, and cutting down branches from the palm-trees, strewed these branches in the way along which He was to come, preceding Him with shouts of joy, crying out: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest."<sup>3</sup> Thus, in modest triumph did the Redeemer of the world approach and enter the city of His great ancestor, the warrior King David.

To commemorate this event, the Church, shortly after the cessation of the great persecutions, instituted a procession in which the faithful carried in their hands palm branches, and chanted those words with which the Jews had greeted the coming of Jesus Christ to their city. This custom began first in the Eastern and thence passed into the Western Church. By it the Church intends not only to celebrate Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but to raise our minds to a still more excellent triumph which He obtained over sin and hell. The prayers employed by her in the blessing of the palms carried by those assisting at this function, clearly point

<sup>1</sup> Zach. ix. 9.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xxi. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

out to us this her intention. For all who bear these palms she implores from God a plenteous outpouring of graces and blessings, to enable them in this life to resist the attacks of their enemies, that in the life to come they may appear before God with the palm of victory in their hands.

It is for this reason that when possible the procession is made outside the church, the doors of which are fast closed as soon as the cortege passes beyond its threshold. As the church is to us a figure of our heavenly home, its closed doors intimate that before the redemption wrought by Our Lord, the gates of that glorious abode were barred against us, to be opened only by the saving blood of Christ. At its return, the procession halts before the closed doors while the hymn "Gloria laus" is chanted by a few members of the choir, who have been allowed to enter, before the arrival of the main body. At the end of each verse, the choir outside repeats the first strophe. It does this to represent the Church militant mingling its voice with the Church triumphant in celebrating the glories of the Redeemer. When the hymn is finished, the sub-deacon strikes with the staff of the Cross the closed portals, which are then thrown open to remind us that heaven, barred against us by sin, is opened wide unto us by the Cross of Jesus Christ. The procession then enters, singing joyous antiphons which commemorate Our Lord's glorious entry into Jerusalem.

#### TENEBRÆ.

As the day draws nigh on which we celebrate the anniversary of Our Saviour's death, the grief which the Church endeavours to make evident to us increases, till at last it seems to end in a loud wail of sorrow. This cry of her stricken heart is specially heard in the offices set apart for the last three days of Holy Week. To this liturgical service, which at other seasons of the year is called the "Divine Office," she has given the name "Tenebræ" or darkness, because in ancient times it was celebrated during the night. Another reason assigned for this name is the fact that this office used

to begin before light, and ended only at sunset. During its recital, a solemn, imposing and mysterious rite is made use of. There is placed in the sanctuary, close to the altar, a large, triangular candelabrum on which there are fixed fifteen wax tapers. With the exception of the one standing upon the apex of the triangle, these as well as the six great lights on the altar are of yellow or unbleached wax, such as are used in offices of the dead. At the end of each Psalm one of the lights on the triangle is extinguished, and during the canticle "Benedictus," also the six lights of the altar are extinguished, leaving only the white waxen taper burning on the triangle. During the antiphon chanted at the end of the "Benedictus"—an antiphon which also precedes it—one of the assistants takes down the white taper from the triangle, and holds it upon the corner of the altar till the conclusion of the antiphon. As soon as the "Miserere" is begun, he conceals the light behind the altar until the prayer which follows this Psalm is ended. After this prayer, the members of the choir make a confused noise by striking with their hands or with their books the *priedieu* at which they are kneeling, and then the assistant replaces the light upon the triangle and extinguishes it, as a sign that the office has come to an end.

Let us now try to penetrate into the meaning of these sacred rites. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. During His Passion, the glory of that light was totally eclipsed. Formerly, He had been acclaimed by the populace; He had been praised, blessed, hailed as the great Messias. Now He is derided, hissed, scorned, and in appearance He has utterly fallen from all His greatness. He has become a man of sorrows, a very worm of the earth, a leper, the outcast of the people. All have abandoned Him—the people, His friends, His disciples, His Apostles. This abandonment the Church sets before our eyes by extinguishing one after another the lighted tapers on the triangular candelabrum. Yet, the light of Christ is not extinguished. It remains solitary, shining with a brilliant light. For a moment, like Christ Himself on Calvary, it is placed upon the altar. To intimate to us His burial, it is then for a short time hidden

from view. When the light of the world has disappeared there is noise, there is confusion, there is total darkness, to express the upheaval of nature at the death of its Divine Creator, when the earth trembled, when the rocks were split asunder, when the graves gave up their dead. But suddenly that light reappears, having lost nothing of its brilliancy, and all pay homage to the Conqueror of death and of hell.

#### SILENCE OF THE CHURCH BELLS.

The Church makes use of another striking ritual observance to express her deep grief as the anniversary of Christ's sacrifice draws nigh. She silences all her bells which, like angelic voices high up in her lofty towers, are wont to call the faithful to the duty of prayer and praise. During the "Gloria in Excelsis" of the Mass of Holy Thursday, they ring out a joyous peal in thanksgiving for the institution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. At its conclusion, their sonorous voices are heard no more, till the "Gloria in Excelsis" of Holy Saturday ushers in the gladsome vigil of the Resurrection. During the cessation of their office their duty is supplied by a rattle, which in early times gave the faithful a signal for the various church services, till towards the close of the fifth century bells were employed for this purpose. This silence of the bells, besides indicating the mourning of Mother Church, is said by liturgical writers to signify the fear which fell upon the Apostles during Our Lord's Passion, and their abandonment of Him in the hour of His direst need. To understand this allegory, we must bear in mind that bells, being destined to signify to the people the hour for prayer and for sacrifice, are an image of the pastoral and apostolic office. The priests of God's Church, and particularly the Apostles, are appointed by God to call men unto His Church by preaching to them the all-powerful word of the Gospel. If we bear this fact in mind, the analogy between their office and that of the church bells is very striking. Therefore, the silence of these bells during the last three days of Holy Week has been fittingly ordered to represent unto us the fear of the Apostles, and their abandonment of Our Lord during the time of His Passion.

## BLESSING OF THE HOLY OILS.

During the High Mass on Holy Thursday, another liturgical service takes place, but only in Cathedral churches. This is the blessing of the Holy Oils, an act which can be performed only by a Bishop. The Church environs this rite with all possible solemnity, in order to impress the faithful with the most profound respect for the Sacraments, in the administration of which these Holy Oils are employed. In this sacred function the Bishop is, if possible, assisted by twelve priests vested in chasubles. These priests stand, six on each side of him, while he performs the ceremony. Behind him are seven deacons and as many sub-deacons, who by their presence add to the solemnity of this great act. This concourse of clergy during the Mass of Holy Thursday is a remnant of ancient church-discipline, in accordance with which the principal or Cathedral church of each diocese was served by a certain number of priests, deacons, and sub-deacons. The priests assisted the Bishop in the performance of his various offices, and ordinarily celebrated Mass conjointly with him, as they do at the present day during the Ordination Mass. The priests in their turn were helped in their duties by the deacons, and the deacons were served in their ministrations by the sub-deacons.<sup>1</sup>

The Oils blessed by the Bishop are, first, the Oil of Catechumens. This is used in the administration of Baptism, in the blessing of fonts, in the consecration of churches and of altars, in the ordination of priests, and in the coronation of kings. Secondly, the Oil for the anointing of the sick (*oleum infirmorum*), employed in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and in the blessing of church bells. Thirdly, the Oil of chrism, used in the administration of Baptism and of Confirmation, in the consecration of Bishops, of chalices, of patens, of churches, and of bells. The consecration of these Oils takes place, as we have said, on Holy Thursday, because it is but fitting to mark the day on which the Blessed Sacra-

<sup>1</sup> Gosselin, *In loco cit.*

ment of the altar was instituted, by blessing the matter of Holy Oil, which is employed in the administration of four out of the seven Sacraments; for the Sacraments in various ways have a relation to the sublime mystery of the Holy Eucharist.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE SEPULCHRE OR ALTAR OF REPOSE.

During the Mass of Holy Thursday, celebrated in Cathedrals, in parish churches, and in chapels, two large hosts are consecrated. One of these is consumed by the celebrant, the other is reserved for the office of Good Friday, on which sorrowful day the Sacrifice of the Mass is not offered up. By thus suspending for a brief space of time that bloodless oblation, the Church seems to shrink from renewing even in her commemorative Sacrifice the awful act performed on Calvary, and contents herself with a participation in the Sacrifice offered on the preceding day, by consuming the reserved host. Yet, while thus withholding herself from what to her is the sweetest of her services to Our divine Lord, she takes care that her Spouse shall lose nothing of the loving homage due to Him. Her piety towards Him knows how to change into a triumph for His Eucharistic body the few hours during which that object of her worship is, as it were, withdrawn from the unworthiness of her children. Consequently, in each church there is prepared as fitting a place of repose for the Holy Sacrament as her poverty will permit. Thither, in solemn procession, amid the chanting of sacred hymns, her ministers transport the body of her Lord, and round that altar-tomb or sepulchre the devout faithful gather in loving adoration, for, as Christ Himself foretold: "Wheresoever the body shall be, there also shall the eagles be gathered together".<sup>2</sup> From every quarter of the globe fervent prayers are directed to Him as some sort of compensation for the outrages heaped upon Him by the Jews, and not only the innocent, but repentant sinners, drop their tears of sorrow as they kneel in all humility before the hallowed spot where He lies, as it were in the death and stillness of the tomb.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas, *Summa*, 3 p., q. 72, a. 12, ad. 3.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xxiv. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Guéranger, *Le jeudi Saint*.



## THE "MANDATUM" OR WASHING OF FEET.

About midday on Holy Thursday, there usually takes place another ceremony, which in a very vivid manner brings before us one of the most touching acts of Our Lord's life—an act performed by Him just before that Last Supper at which He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. He girded Himself with a towel, and then, kneeling before each of His Apostles, performed for them the menial office of washing their feet. Having done this, He said to them: "I have given you an example, that as I have done, so should you also". In order to comply with this injunction of their Lord, the early Christians were accustomed to wash the feet of their guests and of strangers—an act of charity by no means uncommon in the East, where the custom of wearing sandals made it a matter of almost daily necessity. But at a very early date of the Christian era it fell into disuse. Origen says that even in his day it was rarely practised. Nevertheless, the devout faithful, still adhered to it, and though as the ages went on the practice became rare, yet, in order not altogether to lose it, they adhered to the custom of washing the feet of catechumens, before their admission to the Sacrament of Baptism. St. Augustine bears witness to this custom, and the Council of Elvire, held in the beginning of the fourth century, authorises its continuance. St. Jerome; as we learn from his letters, never failed to perform this act of humility for the poor pilgrims who came in such crowds to visit the holy places.

When this custom began to fall into disuse among the faithful in general, it still held its ground both in the East and in the West, at least on the feast of Holy Thursday. On that day, the Bishops and the Abbots, in all churches and in all monasteries, never failed to wash the feet of the Clergy and of the monks respectively subject to them, and also of a certain number of the poor, to whom they afterwards gave abundant alms. It is difficult accurately to determine the date at which this practice began to be general in the churches, but in the West it was widespread before the seventh century, for the seventeenth Council of Toledo, held in 694, blames the

negligence of certain churches of Spain and of Gaul for allowing it to fall into disuse, and orders it to be re-established. The antiphons chanted during the ceremony recall the great commandment given by Our Lord to His Apostles, "to love one another, as He had loved them"—"Mandatum novum dedi vobis". Hence, the ceremony of washing the feet on this day, is usually called the "Mandatum," from the first word of this beautiful antiphon.

#### STRIPPING AND WASHING THE ALTARS.

On the conclusion of the Mass, Vespers are recited in the choir. Then the sacred ministers, vested in alb and purple stole, and accompanied by a certain number of assistants, approach the foot of the altar. The priest having intoned the antiphon "Diviserunt," the twenty-first Psalm is recited by the choir, during which recitation they ascend to the altar and strip it not only of its various linen cloths, but of all its ornaments. It remains thus denuded till Holy Saturday. This ceremony is mentioned in the seventeenth Council of Toledo (694), and it is probably a vestige of the ancient practice of stripping the altars after the conclusion of the Holy Sacrifice, as is still done in many places, partly for the sake of greater cleanliness, and partly for the purpose of guarding against robbers. Though these may originally have been the chief reasons for what has now become a part of the Liturgy, ancient writers and interpreters of that Liturgy attach to it a mystical meaning, for which we may discover a foundation in these well-known words of the great Apostle: "Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the Saints and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."<sup>1</sup>

In their view of the matter, the altar is a figure of Christ; therefore, the stripping of it represents to us Our Lord on the Cross, despoiled of His garments, and hanging there an object of scorn to His people. Hence it is that, while the sacred

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. ii. 19, 20.

ministers are performing this striking ceremony, there is recited by the choir the twenty-first Psalm, in the nineteenth verse of which we read: "They parted My garments among them, and on My vesture they cast lots". In many places, the altars after being thus denuded of every ornament, are in the evening carefully washed, as are also the sacred vessels, the walls, and the pavement of the church. As early as the seventh century, St. Isidore, in his work on *Ecclesiastical Offices*, mentions this custom; it is practised in the Greek Church; it takes place in St. Peter's in Rome, in Paris, and in many other places. Though mainly performed for the sake of cleanliness, St. Isidore and the majority of liturgical writers regard it as having a mystical signification, and consider that it is done in imitation of Our Lord's action when He condescended to wash the Apostles' feet, which may be taken as a figure of the churches, the altars, and the sacred vessels employed in public worship.

#### ADORATION OF THE CROSS.<sup>1</sup>

During the Good Friday service—ordinarily called "the Mass of the Presanctified"—a service conducted with every sign of the deepest mourning—ministers vested in black, a bare altar, with tapers of unbleached wax as at a funeral or a dirge—there is introduced another rite which first began at Jerusalem, when in the fourth century the sainted Empress Helena, discovered the Cross on which Our Lord paid the penalty of our sins. Naturally enough, the faithful were eager to feast their eyes with a sight of this precious relic, and in order to satisfy their devotion it was once a year exposed for their veneration. On these occasions, vast crowds of pilgrims from every part of the world flocked annually to the holy city, and on their return home recounted to their less fortunate brethren the wonders that they had seen, and described to them the manner in which the holy Cross was venerated.

<sup>1</sup> The word *adoration* is not here used in its strict sense for that worship which is given to God only, but in its wide sense, *i.e.*, veneration of whatever represents to us His Passion and death.

Those who were not able to make this pilgrimage then began to nourish their piety by imitating, as far as possible, the ceremony which took place in Jerusalem. Towards the seventh century this practice began to come into general use, and in the various churches the Cross was exposed for veneration, and was revered with the same ritual observances employed in its veneration at Jerusalem.

These ritual observances, for any one who will devoutly and intelligently meditate upon them, are full of the deepest pathos which will fill the heart with sorrow for sin, and move the will to detest and avoid it. For, while reverence is paid to the Cross, there are chanted certain antiphons which form a most touching dialogue between Christ and His people. Our Lord, in words that melt the heart, recounts all that He has done for them, and the people in reply make use of what is called the "Trisagion,"—a prayer in which they profess their faith in His Divinity, and give expression to the anguish which they feel for their share in His cruel death. The Patriarch Proclus, in the year 446, introduced into the Church of Constantinople this magnificent act of worship. It was frequently used in the Greek Church, and throughout the East. Thence it passed into the West, and by the Latin Church was admitted into her Good Friday service. From the seventh century it was customary to chant this prayer, both in Greek and in Latin, in order to manifest the agreement of the two Churches in their belief in Christ's Divinity, and to make evident to the world that among all Christians, no matter how much they may differ from one another in speech, in customs, and in race, the glorious Cross of Christ is an object of the most profound veneration. After the schism which divided the two Churches, the Latins preserved in their Liturgy the "Trisagion," as a monument of their former union, and as a proof of their desire for its re-establishment.

After the "Trisagion," antiphons, prayers, and hymns are recited, admirably expressing the faith, the love, and the gratitude of the penitent Christian kneeling at the foot of the Cross. Among these hymns, two are worthy of special notice, namely, the "Vexilla Regis prodeunt," and the "Pange lingua gloriosi".

Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers (570), composed the "Vexilla Regis," on the occasion of the entry into his episcopal city of a portion of the true Cross, sent by the Emperor Justinian II. as a present to Radegonda, consort of Clotaire I. The sainted queen had retired to the Convent of the Holy Cross, and there under her safe keeping the priceless relic was enshrined. The "Pange lingua," is of a still earlier date. It is attributed to Claudianus Mamertius, a priest of Vienne, who died in the year 473.<sup>1</sup>

We have said that these hymns are worthy of special notice, because in them we have an incontrovertible witness that the belief, and the veneration of preceding ages for the Cross, are in accord with our own. The ceremonies and the prayers accompanying that veneration, and inspired by that belief, add fresh life to our faith, and make us enter into the sentiments with which they are animated. Where the Roman rite prevails, the celebrant, the assistant ministers, and the Clergy present, approach barefoot to pay to the Cross this act of profound respect and love. This is the remnant of an ancient custom in accordance with which it was usual to celebrate barefoot the whole office of Good Friday.

You will observe, that in approaching the spot where the Cross has been deposited to receive the veneration of the Clergy and the faithful, the celebrant, and all who take part in this ceremony, thrice, at certain fixed places, kneel on both knees before the Cross. This is done to make some sort of reparation for the three acts of derision and scorn committed against Our Lord during His Passion. The first of these took place in the house of Caiaphas where Jesus was treated as a false prophet; the second, in the Pretorium, and the Court of Herod, where He was regarded as a fool; the third, on Calvary where He was reviled as an impostor, Who had pretended to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Dom. Cellier, *Hist. des auteurs Eccles.*, tom. xvi.

## MASS OF THE PRESANCTIFIED.

As we have already said, two large hosts are consecrated at the Mass of Holy Thursday. One of these the celebrant consumes, as at other Masses; the other, being placed in a chalice and covered with a veil, remains on the altar till the conclusion of the Sacrifice; it is then carried in solemn procession to the altar of repose, or sepulchre as it is commonly called, and there is enclosed in the tabernacle. The Church acts thus, as we have also pointed out to you, in order that on Good Friday, the anniversary of Christ's actual immolation on the Cross, she may not be obliged to celebrate even His mystic immolation in the consecration of the eucharistic elements, thus manifesting in a most impressive way her supreme horror of the sacrilegious act committed by the Jews in putting her Lord to a cruel death. Nevertheless, wishing the faithful to share in the communion received by the celebrant, she orders her sacred ministers to go to the sepulchre; to carry thence her Lord's most sacred body; and to deposit it upon the altar. Wine is then poured into the chalice, the host is incensed, and after a short prayer, the celebrant turns towards the faithful and says, "Orate Fratres". No response is made by the assistants. Before communicating, he chants the "Pater Noster" and the prayer which follows it. Then with his right hand elevating over the paten the Sacred Host, in such a way that it may be seen and adored by the people, he replaces it upon the paten, breaks it in two, as at Holy Mass, separates from one of these halves a small fragment, and puts it into the unconsecrated wine that is in the chalice. After this he receives the Sacred Host, consumes the particle and the wine in the chalice, and thus the Good Friday service, named the Mass of the Presanctified, comes to an end.

## BLESSING OF THE NEW FIRE.

Holy Saturday is devoted by the Church to commemorate the mysteries of Our Lord's burial, and His descent into Limbo where were detained the souls of the Just against whom the

gates of heaven were closed till He should open them by the outpouring of His precious blood. By the offices which she celebrates on this day, she also wishes to prepare us for the joyous feast of Easter. To accomplish these ends, she has instituted several beautiful and mysterious rites, the first of which is the blessing of new fire.

In the early ages of the Christian era, this ceremony used to take place every day. Before the hour of Vespers, one of the church officials was accustomed to strike from a flint the sparks of fire with which the lamps and the wax-tapers of the altar were lighted. These remained burning till the Vespers of the following day. In the Roman Church, however, this ceremony took place only on the morning of Holy Thursday. It was performed with all possible solemnity, for on that day the new fire received a very special blessing. From a letter of Pope St. Zacharias, written to St. Boniface, Archbishop of Mayence, we learn that from this fire three lamps were on Holy Thursday lighted, and kept in a secret place till Holy Saturday. From these lamps the tapers used during the night of that festival were lighted. Only in the following century, under Pope St. Leo IV. (847), was the rite performed on Holy Saturday.

The meaning of this symbolical act, particularly as it is carried out on Easter Eve, is not difficult to see, for in the Gospel of St. John<sup>1</sup> Our Lord says of Himself: "I am the light of the world"; consequently, any material light may be taken as a figure of Our Redeemer. Stone also is one of the symbolical signs under which in the Holy Scripture Our Lord is represented to us: "Christ," says St. Peter<sup>2</sup> "is the corner stone," to which words St. Paul<sup>3</sup> refers when he tells us that on this corner stone we, the living Church, are built as upon an immovable foundation. If we keep these words before our minds, the spark of glittering fire struck from the hard rock or flint will furnish us with a lively image of the great mystery for which we are preparing. It represents to us Christ, the light of the world,

<sup>1</sup> Chap. viii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> I Peter ii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. ii. 20.

issuing from the sepulchre hewn out of the solid rock, though the entrance of that sepulchre had been securely closed by a huge slab of stone, and carefully sealed to prevent any attempt that might be made fraudulently to abstract the sacred body of the dead Christ.

Hence, the Church deems worthy of a special rite, and a special blessing, that fire from which the Paschal candle—an image of Christ—and later on the tapers of the altar, are to be lighted. To make this act all the more impressive, the lighted lamps hanging in the church are extinguished before this blessing is given. In early times, the faithful were accustomed, before going to this service, to remove from their hearths the fire with which they cooked their food, and to rekindle it from the fire which they carried back with them on their return from the Holy Saturday offices.

Lastly, it is worthy of notice that the extinction of all lights, before the blessing of the new fire, furnishes us with another symbol representing to us the abrogation of the old ceremonial law, an abrogation which took place when, at Our Lord's death, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, while in the new fire we see a figure of the promulgation of the new dispensation, made by the mouth of Jesus Christ.

#### BLESSING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE.

When the new fire has been blessed at the entrance of the church, a procession is formed, headed by the sub-deacon carrying the Cross. Immediately before the celebrant comes the deacon, bearing in his hand a wand on the summit of which there is fixed a triple candle of white wax. Thrice during the advance of the procession towards the sanctuary a halt is made, and the deacon, lighting from a taper kindled from the new fire one of the triple candles, raises the wand and sings the words; "Lumen Christi," each time in a higher key. To these words the choir answers: "Deo Gratias". On arriving at the altar, he gives the wand to one of the assistants, and, taking from the book-stand a missal prepared for the solemn chant which he is about to sing, ascends to the altar, and on it deposits the book. Then descending, he kneels



as before the Gospel chanted during High Mass, and says the prayer: "Munda cor meum". On the conclusion of this prayer he rises, takes the book from the altar, and kneeling before the celebrant, asks the blessing, which on this day slightly differs from the one usually given before the Gospel. After receiving the blessing, he rises, proceeds to the bookstand, and on it lays the opened Missal, and having incensed it, begins the magnificent chant which is called the "Preconium Paschale".

This rite is a very ancient one. It had already been long in use, when in 417 Pope Zosimus ascended the papal throne, This Pontiff extended to the Clergy of every parish church the privilege of blessing the Paschal candle. Comparatively modern writers, who have searched into the meaning of this huge wax light, and of the ceremonial employed in its blessing, are of opinion that it was intended solely to light up the church during the vigil of Easter. This is a very prosaic reason for so solemn and so elaborate a ceremonial, and it will not bear investigation, for there are several other great vigils kept in the Church, yet for none of them is a similar candle blessed, nor has a similar rite been instituted. Moreover, the Paschal candle is lighted not only during the Easter vigil, but during all the great offices until Ascension Day. The more ancient liturgical writers teach that it has a special, mysterious, and symbolical meaning, closely connected with the great Easter festival. To their minds this great wax candle represents the risen Christ, and this interpretation the fourth Council of Toledo adopted (633). If we examine the words employed by the Church in the blessing of this special light, words which are attributed to the great St. Augustine, we cannot fail to remark that they refer to the mystery of Our Lord's resurrection. The rites made use of in the blessing confirm this view; for the deacon inserts into the column of wax of which the candle is formed, five grains of incense, representing the perfumes with which Christ's body was embalmed, while the five holes in which these are fastened in the form of a cross point out to us the five grievous wounds inflicted on His sacred body during the Passion; and the

lighting of the candle on the conclusion of this act indicates to all present the resurrection from the tomb, of the glorious light of the world.

It is worthy of notice that the office of blessing this Paschal candle is assigned to a deacon, whereas the Church ordinarily restricts to priests the right to impart her blessings. In this, liturgists fancy that they can detect an intention on the part of the Church to recall to our minds that the body of Christ was taken down from the Cross, was embalmed, and was laid in the tomb, not by the Apostles, but by the disciples; also that the glorious tidings of His resurrection were first announced, not by the Apostles, but by the holy women who in the early morning had gone to satisfy their devotion to the body of their Lord.

The solemn nature of the blessing given to the Paschal candle, the mystical signification of the light itself, and the holy memories surrounding the Easter festival before which it was blessed, inspired the faithful with a great veneration for it. They were accustomed religiously to gather up the drops of wax which fell from it, and after the feast of the Ascension to obtain one at least of the fragments into which the remnant of it was usually broken. These, they religiously preserved in their houses as precious relics. As if to give a sanction to their devotion, it was customary at Rome, even before the eighth century, to make from the remnants of the Paschal candle waxen images of a lamb. On the Holy Thursday of the following year, these images were blessed by the Pope, and distributed among the faithful. It is to this practice that antiquarians trace the origin of the "Agnus Dei," or cakes of wax stamped with the figure of a lamb. These are blessed by the Pontiff during the octave of Easter in the year of his accession to the papal throne, and on every seventh year during the period of his pontificate.<sup>1</sup>

#### BLESSING OF BAPTISMAL WATER.

Before the celebration of Mass on Holy Saturday, the water used in the administration of Baptism is solemnly blessed.

<sup>1</sup> Gosselin, *Instruct. sur les fêtes; Samedi Saint.*

This is a custom which, as St. Basil informs us, dates from so early an age that it is generally regarded as of apostolic origin. That which gave rise to it is very probably the custom of administering on this day and on the Vigil of Pentecost, the Sacrament of holy Baptism.<sup>1</sup> Though the Church, for grave reasons, has thought fit to change this custom, she has nevertheless preserved a vestige of it in the blessing on this day of the baptismal fonts, that by assisting at this ceremony the faithful may carry away with them a high idea of the Sacrament of regeneration. The prayers and the sacred rites made use of by her, on this occasion, are admirably adapted to accomplish this purpose. But besides this secondary end, it is evident that her chief intention in employing them is to ask God to sanctify the waters of Baptism, to make them fruitful and productive, in the recipients of this Sacrament, of those fruits which will be beneficial to them unto eternal life.

In the course of these prayers the Bishop or the priest performing the ceremony first touches the water, imploring God not to suffer the evil spirit to have any power over it; he then dips his hand into it, and scatters some of it towards the four quarters of the globe, to signify the grace of Baptism extended by Christ to the whole world when, addressing His Apostles, He bade them teach all nations: "Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and because on this occasion, as in the administration of the Sacraments, the officiating minister holds the place of Christ, he breathes upon the waters, beseeching God to impart to them the power to purify and to sanctify souls.

After this prayer, he thrice plunges into the water the Paschal candle which represents the risen Christ, each time praying that the virtue or power of the Holy Spirit may descend into the water, and make it productive, in the baptised, of all the virtues consequent upon their reception of the Sacrament. After these ceremonies, water is taken from the font, and with that water the faithful present are sprinkled in order to make them call to mind the grace received by them in Baptism, to cause

<sup>1</sup> *Liber de Spirit. Sanct.*, cap. 27.

them most earnestly to pray that it may by them be ever guarded most diligently, and be every day renewed. They are then permitted to carry away with them to their homes some of the water that has been thus solemnly blessed, to be both for themselves and for their dwellings, a preservative against the attacks of the devil.

To render more sacred the water thus set apart for the Sacrament of Baptism, the officiating priest or the Bishop pours into it, in the form of a Cross, some of the oil of catechumens, then of the chrism, and afterwards of both at the same time. While so doing, he prays God to render it fruitful in spiritual favours for those who by it are born again unto eternal life. The blessing of the font being ended, any catechumens, who for this very purpose are there present, are forthwith baptised, as are also any children born during Holy Week. At Rome, it is customary during Lent to prepare for baptism a certain number of adults or of converted Jews on whom the Sacrament is conferred, in the Baptistery of St. John Lateran's, by the Pope or by his vicar. After their Baptism, they are in accordance with an ancient custom also confirmed, and during the Mass, they receive their first Communion.

These, then, in short, are the chief liturgical services performed during the Lenten season by Holy Mother Church. If you bear in mind the necessarily brief explanation of them which we have given you, and intelligently assist at them, you will draw from them that edification and that instruction which they are intended to impart, and they will prepare you to celebrate, in a worthy manner, the joyous festival of Our Lord's resurrection.

## THE PASCHAL OR EASTER SEASON.

To Lent there succeeds the Paschal or Easter season, for which the penitential days of fasting and of mourning are a fitting preparation. This joyous time, in which we commemorate the resurrection of Our Lord from the tomb, lasts from Easter Sunday till the Saturday preceding the Feast of

Pentecost. The festival itself is called "the Pasch," a word signifying "passage," because under the old dispensation there was a feast instituted by the command of God Himself, to be for the Jewish people a perpetual memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. For, when the hour of their liberation was at hand, each family received a command to immolate a lamb, and to eat it, staff in hand and girded for their march into the Promised Land. With the blood of this victim which they had immolated, they sprinkled the door-posts of their dwellings; then, in the middle of that night, an Angel of the Lord passed over the land, slaying the first-born of every house not thus marked with the protecting and mystical sign, symbolical of that blood which was hereafter to guard the whole human race from the death of sin, and to deliver it from the bondage of Satan.

Easter, or the Christian Pasch, is celebrated in memory of an event of which the Jewish Pasch was but a figure. For, it has for its object the immolation of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, and the passage or deliverance of His people from the bondage of sin and of the devil. The ransom paid to accomplish that deliverance, was offered and accepted on Good Friday, and our entrance into possession of what it purchased for us is commemorated on Easter Sunday, the day of the Christian Pasch.

Consequently, Easter is regarded as the most august festival of the Ecclesiastical year, and is, therefore, by excellence called the Lord's Day—*Dies Dominica*—after which all the other Sundays of the year are named. The Church not only celebrates it with the ordinary octave assigned to other great feasts, but she has ordained that the season in which it occurs shall last for fifty days, giving to it the name "Paschal Season". Hence it is that, in their writings, the great Fathers of the Church have called it "the beginning of a happy eternity, and the festival of festivals".

The festival itself owes its origin to the action of the Apostles, who by it wished to celebrate the resurrection of their Divine Lord from the dead. That event occurred during the celebration of the Jewish Pasch, which it was

meant to supersede. The Passover, however, or Pasch of the Jews, being irrevocably fixed for the fourteenth day of the moon of March—the anniversary of their deliverance from Egypt—would consequently year after year, fall upon each of the days of the week. But as the resurrection of Christ, or our Pasch, took place on the first day of the week, that is to say on Sunday, the Apostles decided that the celebration of it should be kept always on a Sunday. Therefore, in order not to confound the reality with the figure, and also to prevent the Christian from being celebrated on the same day as the Jewish Pasch, they furthermore ordained that when the Jewish Pasch fell on a Sunday, the Christian Pasch should be deferred till the following Sunday.

However, in order not to give needless offence to the various communities of converted Jews, this ordinance was enforced with great prudence and reserve. Hence it came to pass that, in many places, the celebration of the Christian and of the Jewish festival took place on the same day. This tolerance could not last very long; for in places in which the vast majority of converts were Gentiles, the Pasch was observed, not on the fourteenth day of the moon of March, but on the Sunday following that date, so that a great diversity of practice began to manifest itself among the various Christian communities. The Roman Church, having always followed the apostolic regulation, by degrees induced those Churches that had observed the Jewish practice, to conform themselves to that which was observed by her. Most of these were obedient to her wishes; but for a long time the Churches of Asia Minor, consisting for the most part of Jewish converts, were not, and they gave as a reason for their resistance the practice of the Apostle St. John, who had permitted them to celebrate the Easter festival on the same day that the Jews observed the feast of the Passover.

As early as the year 150, Pope Anicetus endeavoured, by amicable means, to bring them into conformity with the Roman practice, but his efforts proved of no avail. Later on, Pope St. Victor, thinking that the time had now arrived for effecting this external unity in so essential a point of

Christian worship, issued an order by which he thought to influence the Asiatic Churches. He called upon all the other Churches to summon Councils, and in them to examine carefully into the question of the Easter celebration. With the exception of the Council of Ephesus, all the others were found to be in accord with the Roman Church. In spite of the vast majority against them, the Asiatics refused to change their practice, sanctioned as they maintained by the beloved disciple St. John. Thereupon, the Pope published a decree by which he separated from communion with himself all the refractory Churches. On the intervention of St. Irenæus, Bishop of Smyrna, the holy Father was induced to recall his sentence, but the mere fact of having launched it against them had an excellent effect, for little by little and year after year the Asiatic Christians conformed with the Roman practice.

At the very time, however, when the Asiatics abandoned their ancient mode of celebrating Easter, the Christians of Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia, moved by a strange and unaccountable perversity, gave up the Roman method, and adopted that of Asia Minor, by keeping Easter on the same day that the Jews celebrated their Pasch. For some time this schism afflicted the Church, but it was at last healed by the decree of the Council of Nicæa, which made obligatory the celebration of Easter on the day on which it was observed by the Roman Church.

This Council intrusted to the Bishop of Alexandria the duty of making the astronomical calculations necessary for determining the precise day of the Easter festival, with an injunction that when he had done so, he should send the result of his researches to the Roman Pontiff, who should then issue letters to the Church, fixing the day for the following year, as he had previously been accustomed to do, a fact which we learn from the synodal letters of the Council of Arles (314) addressed to Pope St. Sylvester: "In the first place we ask that, throughout the world, the observance of the Pasch of the Lord should be uniform, both as to the time and the day of its celebration, and that according

to custom, you should on this matter address letters to all".<sup>1</sup>

The prescriptions of Nicæa did not long hold good, because of the disorder introduced into the method of calculating the time of Easter, a disorder resulting from the imperfect nature of the astronomical instruments then in use. Though the festival was always kept on a Sunday, yet that Sunday was not in all places the same. Therefore, to secure uniformity of practice, a complete reform of the calendar was necessary. Though this necessity was on all hands admitted, yet the reform was for a long time delayed, but was at last effected by Gregory XIII. By a Bull dated 24th of February, 1581, the Supreme Pontiff ordered ten days to be taken from the year 1582, that is to say, the ten days intervening between the 4th and the 15th of October. By so doing, the holy Father renewed the task undertaken in his day by Julius Cæsar, who had devoted considerable time and labour to these astronomical calculations. In this reform of the calendar, the fundamental and chief idea influencing the action of the Pope was the final settlement of the Easter festival, the date for the celebration of which he then fixed not for a few years, but for many centuries.

The reform thus effected, though generally admitted as necessary by the world at large, was not at first accepted by all the European nations. England and the Lutheran States protested against it, as they had already protested against the Catholic faith, and for some time they preferred to follow a faulty calendar, which science condemned and rejected, rather than accept at the hands of the Pope one of which both science and sound common sense approved. At the present day, however, Russia is the only nation that adheres to the old calendar, and it is thus ten or twelve days behind the rest of the civilised world.

From these details it is evident that the Church attaches very great importance to uniformity in the celebration of the Easter festival ; and with reason : for, although in disciplinary

<sup>1</sup> *Concilia Galliæ*, tom. 1.



matters of only secondary importance she permits a great variety of observance, yet in others that are essential, she will tolerate no such variety. Easter is regarded by her as one of these, for on it depends the date of the great festivals of the Ecclesiastical year. Thus, both the season of Lent which lasts for forty days, and the season of Pentecost which lasts for fifty, are determined by the date at which Easter is celebrated. That date being fixed, the faithful throughout the world are united both in their penitential exercises and in their spiritual joys. Thus, their unity in worship helps to preserve their unity in practise and in faith.

In the early ages it was customary on Easter Eve to baptise all catechumens, in order that on the anniversary of the day on which Christ rose from the dead they might be born unto their new spiritual life. Also, it was usual on Easter Day for the faithful, after confessing their sins, to receive the Holy Eucharist, a vestige of which custom remains in the rigorous obligation binding all Christians to approach the Holy Table on that great feast. From the writings of St. John Chrysostom, of St. Gregory the Great, and of many Fathers of a more recent date, we learn that the faithful used to communicate at Christmas and at Pentecost, as well as at the Easter festival.

So rigorous was this obligation considered to be that the Council of Agatho<sup>1</sup> (506) declared all who did not comply with its enactment to be no longer members of the Catholic Church. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the force of this disciplinary law became somewhat relaxed, in consequence of the ignorance and the confusion resulting from the incursion of the Barbarians. At last matters came to such a pass that, in the fourth Council of Lateran, held in 1215, during the Pontificate of Innocent III. a decree was passed obliging all to communicate at least once in each year, that is to say, either on or about the Easter festival—unless, of course, for just reasons they were counselled to abstain from the Holy Table. Those who refused to obey this

<sup>1</sup> Canon xviii.

mandate were excluded from the Church, and after their death were refused Christian burial.<sup>1</sup>

From what has been said, you see that the object of the Easter festival is to celebrate the resurrection of Our divine Lord, His return from death to life, and our own spiritual resurrection, or the return of our soul from the death of sin to the life of grace. The precise time of its celebration was deemed by the Church to be a matter of the greatest importance, because the time of Easter determines all the other great festivals of the year. Hence, in order definitely to fix its proper date, she did not hesitate to brave the most bitter and obstinate resistance of whole provinces of her empire. You should, therefore, thank God that you live in an age when this central festival of Christendom is celebrated on the same day by all the family of the universal Church, thus enabling Christian hearts to beat in unison in the joy of the Lord.

But while pouring out your acts of thanksgiving for so great a benefit, never forget that there are millions of Christians who remain indifferent both to the glories of the resurrection and to the well-being of their souls, inasmuch as they persistently abstain on that day from eating of the true Paschal Lamb. Remember them in your prayers. Ask God to visit their hearts, to pour into them His light and grace, that seeing the evils threatening them, because of their neglect and indifference, they may be brought with you to celebrate here the glad feast of Easter, and that they may hereafter merit to reap the fruits of it in the home of Our common Father.

### LITURGY OF EASTER.

AS the festival of Easter was instituted by the Church to celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord, His passage from death to life, and, consequently, our resurrection to a new life of grace, to be afterwards crowned by a life of glory in heaven,

<sup>1</sup> Later on, Eugenius IV. "Constit. fide digna," 1440, permitted this communion to be made between Palm Sunday and Low Sunday inclusive.

the chief characteristic of it is unbounded joy. To mark the exultation flooding her heart with gladness, she makes use of many symbolical ceremonies by which she wishes to inspire us also with sentiments in accord with this gladsome season. Therefore, her ministers while performing their sacred functions at the altar, are clad in white vestments, to intimate to us the purity of heart obtained for us by the Sacrament of Baptism, the joy which thence ought to well up within us, and the care which we ought to take ever to keep free from spot or stain the bright vesture with which God then clothed us.

Consequently, white is the colour employed during this season, because this Easter festival is one that brings before us the mystery of eternal light that knows neither shadow nor decrease. Beholding in vision a glimpse of that eternal light, St. John at the same time heard from the lips of the glorified Christ the promise that those who should keep unstained the purity carried away by them from the sacred font, should be clothed in white; and as a proof of the fulfilment of that promise, "John saw round about the throne four and twenty seats, and upon the seats four and twenty Ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold".<sup>1</sup>

To imprint this idea deeply in the hearts of her children, those persons who had been baptised on Easter Eve were, in the early ages of the Church, clothed in white garments on coming forth from the laver of regeneration, and they wore them every day during the octave of the Easter festival. On the octave day itself this symbolical vesture was laid aside, and each of the neophytes received from the hands of the Bishop a waxen image of the Lamb of God, to point out to him the innocence of life which thenceforth should mark his daily actions.

With the use of white vestments in the Holy Sacrifice, the Church once again takes up the chant of the "Alleluia," which she laid aside during the penitential seasons of Septuagesima and of Lent. It was this word "Alleluia" that

<sup>1</sup> Apocal. iii. 4, 5; iv. 4.

St. John heard sung in the courts of heaven by the countless multitudes of those who had fought the good fight, and who had been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb: "After these things, I heard, as it were, the voice of much people in heaven saying: Alleluia. . . . And again they said: Alleluia. . . . And the four and twenty Ancients and the four living creatures fell down and adored God that sitteth upon the throne, saying: Amen, alleluia. . . . And I heard, as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying: Alleluia, for the Lord our God, the Almighty hath reigned."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, regarding the Easter festival as an anticipation of the joys of heaven, the Church multiplies in her offices this "Alleluia," which signifies "Praise be to God," not only concluding with it the versicles and the prayers, but interspersing them with it, as with so many glittering diamonds.

As a further indication of her joy, she considerably shortens all her services; for one of the effects of joy in a family is to take away from the servants of that family somewhat of the weight of their daily duties. She remembers the long offices of Lent and of Holy Week, and, therefore, during this season of gladness, the nocturns of the Divine Office are said under one antiphon, as are also the Psalms at Lauds and at Vespers. In the Roman Office, and in the Office of several of the Religious Orders, the number of Psalms is diminished, and in other parts of the service much is omitted. Moreover, all fasting is dispensed with, and only at a comparatively recent date did the Church make an exception in this respect for the Saturday or vigil before Pentecost Sunday. In ancient times, it was also a custom at this season not to kneel during prayer, to signify the great confidence inspired by the mystery of the resurrection; for he who prays with little confidence bends low, thus making evident his unworthiness and his consciousness of that unworthiness, whereas he who petitions with a lively expectation of receiving that for which he asks, stands erect, raising his eyes to heaven in confidence of ob-

<sup>1</sup> Apocal. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6.

taining that for which he prays. This custom has in great measure disappeared from among us, but a vestige of it yet remains; for during Paschal time the "Regina Cœli," which takes the place of the "Angelus," from the evening of Holy Saturday till midday on the eve of Trinity Sunday, is always said standing.

In Catholic countries it is also customary on Easter Day to make two processions: the first before the High Mass, the second after the Vespers of the day. The procession before Mass, usually made with great pomp and ceremony, is intended to recall to our minds the journey of the Apostles and the disciples from Jerusalem to Galilee, whither Our divine Lord had announced to the holy women that He should precede them. Consequently, the Clergy at the head of their faithful people, walk in procession to some place beyond the precincts of the church, and there make a "station" or halting-place. This is called the "Galilee," and is decorated as an altar of repose is at a procession of the Blessed Sacrament. During the "station" antiphons, canticles, and hymns are chanted, the chief of these being the "Salve festæ dies" composed by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers. On the conclusion of this hymn, the procession is reformed, and it returns to the church for the celebration of High Mass. At the present day, this procession is generally made round the church, and the hymn sung during its progress is the "Victimæ paschali laudes".

The procession which takes place after Vespers, makes the baptismal font its "*statio*" or halting-place, and in former times it used to be made on each of the days of Easter week. During this procession, those who were baptised on Easter Eve, clothed in their garments of spotless white, are led to that fountain at which the waters of regeneration were poured upon their heads. While proceeding thither, the Psalm "Laudate pueri Dominum" is chanted, and while returning, the Psalm "In exitu Israel". This last-mentioned Psalm, commemorating the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, recalls to the minds of the neophytes their own deliverance from a far more degrading slavery, the slavery of sin, and all the

terrible consequences following in its train. Though it is not usual at the present day to baptise on Easter Eve the adults of the various parishes, yet we all have the same reasons that the neophytes of former times had for joy and thanksgiving. During this Easter time we have all, in the tribunal of Penance, been washed clean from every stain, and we have all been privileged to sit at the Holy Table and to eat of the true Paschal Lamb. Therefore, being for us all a day of spiritual regeneration, it should be for us a day also of exultation and of gladness.

One other mystical ceremony of this joyous Easter time must not be forgotten. It deals with the Paschal candle, blessed with so great solemnity on Easter Eve. The Church ordains that during all the principal services of Paschal time it should be kept lighted, and that after the chanting of the Gospel on Ascension Day, it should be extinguished. The light of the Paschal candle represents to us the visible presence in His Church of Christ the light of the world, a presence which lasted till the moment of His ascension into heaven. But though His bodily presence is taken away from us, He ceases not to be present with us in His sacramental body, though that presence is veiled from our sight by the species or accidents of the Eucharist. This fact is kept before our minds by the light of the Paschal candle, a light which represents to us not only Christ the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, but that excellent light of faith by which we are enabled to realise the presence of Our Lord, in the Sacrament of His love.

Therefore, try to understand all these symbolical ceremonies of the holy Liturgy, and they will keep before your mind the great mysteries which they were established to commemorate. By careful thought endeavour to penetrate into their meaning, and you will receive from them valuable instruction. The white colour made use of at this time in all the services of the altar, will point out to you the innocence of life with which a Catholic schoolboy ought to clothe both his soul and his body as with a garment of honour. The "Alleluia" will speak to you of the joy that ever fills the heart of one whose conscience

does not reproach him with the guilt of sin. The shortness of the offices will suggest to you that the labours necessary to win for yourself the kingdom of God are of very brief duration. The suppression of all fasting will be for you a sign of the joys awaiting you in that abode of never-ending bliss. The light of the Paschal candle will remind you ever to keep burning bright and clear the brilliant torch of your Catholic faith. Thus, the Liturgy of Easter will enable you to spend in a devout manner the fleeting days of this glad season, and it will be one other means to help you onwards in your journey to the kingdom of God.

### THE TIME AFTER PENTECOST.

FROM what has already been said concerning the Ecclesiastical year, we have seen that Advent represents the long period which elapsed between the fall of our first parents and the coming of the Redeemer, a period during which the human race longed and prayed for His appearance among them, to raise them from their degraded state, and to direct them in the way of salvation. The Christmas season puts before us His actual arrival among us; the Epiphany, His manifestation of Himself to the Gentile nations; Septuagesima, the days immediately preceding His immolation upon the Cross, an immolation which the Lenten season keeps ever present before our minds; while the Easter festival displays before our admiring gaze the glories of His resurrection from the dead, and His triumphant ascension into heaven.

The time of Pentecost, which succeeds that of Easter, is the season on which we are now entering. Its end or object is made sufficiently evident to us by the great feast by which it is ushered in. That feast commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. He came among us to take Christ's place; to recall to the minds of the Apostles all the truths that the Saviour had taught them; to preside over the foundation of the Church; to govern it during the ages yet to come; and to preserve both its teaching and its morality from

all error and corruption. Consequently, while the other seasons of the Ecclesiastical year represent to us the past, the time after Pentecost represents to us the present and the future. It sets before our eyes the pilgrimage of the Church through the world, a pilgrimage beginning at Pentecost and lasting till the end of time, when Christ shall come again to judge the living and the dead, and to render unto every one according to his works, whether these have been good or evil.

The duration of this season almost equals that of all the other seasons united, that is to say, it lasts for well-nigh half the Ecclesiastical year. We have said for well-nigh half that time, for in some years there are twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, and in others as many as twenty-eight. This difference arises from the variation of the time at which the Easter festival is celebrated. In some years it falls on the 22nd of March, and in others on the 25th of April, according as the course of the moon shall have determined.

When Easter comes early in the year, the time after Pentecost is longer, because it begins at an earlier date and continues till Advent. When the feast of Easter is celebrated later, the time of Pentecost is shortened; but as in the solar year there are fifty-two weeks, the Church contrives to bring them all within the cycle of her Ecclesiastical year. She accomplishes this in the following manner. When Easter comes late, she places a greater number of weeks after the Epiphany, thus reducing the number of those that come after Pentecost; on the other hand, when that great festival comes at an early date, she diminishes the number of weeks after the Epiphany, and increases the number of those that follow the feast of Pentecost. This method used to be employed in all the Churches that observed the Roman rite, for at the present day a somewhat different method is actually in use. Formerly, the Sundays were divided into four classes: (1) those after Pentecost; (2) those coming after the feast of SS. Peter and Paul; (3) the Sundays after the feast of St. Laurence; (4) the Sundays following the feast of St. Cyprian.

The three last-mentioned classes contained every year almost the same number of Sundays, because they depended



upon immovable feasts. The first class, however, not depending upon an immovable feast, could not have a determinate number of Sundays, and, consequently, they underwent the modifications just mentioned. Thus, whenever the feast of Easter came towards the end of April, there were only two or three Sundays after Pentecost, because the feast of SS. Peter and Paul was close at hand to give a name to the Sundays following that festival. On the other hand, when Easter came in the month of March, there would be six or seven Sundays after Pentecost. It was only when the Missal published by order of St. Pius V. was adopted by all the Churches of the Roman rite that the uniformity now existing became firmly established.

For some considerable time, the Roman Church did not determinately settle the Epistles and the Gospels for each Sunday. Also it occasionally changed the office of one Sunday for that of another. Nevertheless, each of the Sundays had its own proper office, particularly since the time of Gregory the Great. The Churches of France and of Spain, however, were accustomed in this respect to follow a discipline which it is more difficult to determine. For instance, the ancient Liturgy which before the time of Charlemagne and the adoption of the Roman Liturgy, was made use of by the Churches of France, had but one office for all these Sundays after Pentecost, whenever it chanced that no particular feast was kept on them. The ancient Sacramentary of Central France—named from the Visigoths who ruled that portion of the country, the Gothic—gives only six Masses for the Sundays between Pentecost and Advent, a fact which proves that these Masses were often repeated, and that the choice of them for any particular Sunday was left to the discretion of the respective pastors of the Churches. Still fewer are the Masses found in the Mozarabic Missal used in Spain, over which country the Visigoths also held sway, for it contains only three Masses for all the Sundays intervening between Pentecost and the fast which used to be observed at the beginning of November. At present, however, the Church has proper Masses for each of the twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost.

Should the twenty-fourth Sunday not be the last, as is the case when Easter comes at an early date, she borrows the Masses for the remaining Sundays before Advent from the offices of the Sundays that have not been celebrated after the Epiphany. If, for instance, there are twenty-five Sundays after Pentecost, she takes the office for the twenty-fourth from the sixth Sunday after Epiphany; if there are twenty-six, she takes the office for the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth, from the fifth and sixth Sundays after Epiphany, and so on in succession for years in which there are twenty-seven or twenty-eight Sundays, always, however, reserving the office of the twenty-fourth Sunday for the last after Pentecost, because in the office for that twenty-fourth Sunday, there is read the Gospel which treats of the end of time and of the General Judgment.

As the time after Pentecost is not consecrated to the honour of any particular period of Our Lord's life, we find in it many festivals which recall to our minds several of the great mysteries of our holy faith. First among these is the feast of the Most Holy Trinity. Now, although the Church every day, and in all parts of the Liturgy, honours and sets before us this great mystery, by frequently calling upon her children to make the sign of the Cross, to recite the "Glory be to the Father," and in many other ways; and though in consequence of this her practice, she did not institute in its honour any particular festival, yet in the fourteenth century, during the pontificate of John XXII., seeing that in many Churches this festival was yearly celebrated, she at last adopted it for Rome, and fixed the day for its observance throughout the Church on the first Sunday after Pentecost, that it might thus be, as it were, the end and consummation of all the other solemnities.

Afterward, in the year 1264, through the action of Urban IV., she instituted a festival in honour of the Most Holy Sacrament, fixing for its observance the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. At a much later date she appointed a feast in honour of Our Lord's most sacred heart. This feast is kept on the Friday following the octave of Corpus Christi. Then there were established many festivals in honour of our Blessed Lady, among which are those of her nativity and of her as-

sumption into heaven. All these feasts coming during the season after Pentecost, are for us symbols of our pilgrimage through this world, during which pilgrimage we obtain strength and the means of sanctifying our souls from the holy Sacrament, the sacred heart, and the intercession of our Blessed Lady. These festivals are the strength of the Church ; they constitute her beauty, and they are her consolation. They obtain for her the aid of divine grace, always to bear off the palm of victory, till she shall be able at last in the heavenly Jerusalem to sing her final song of triumph over all the powers of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Therefore, as we live in this world of strife during a period when the visible, corporal presence of Our Lord is no longer before our eyes to cheer and console us, we must use every effort to repair our past infidelities by sincere repentance ; we must prepare for the future life by enriching ourselves with merits which will ensure our entrance into God's kingdom ; and we must, as far as possible, win for ourselves that perfection which will prepare us to associate with God and to mingle unabashed among the glorious citizens of His heavenly court.

## LITURGY OF THE TIME AFTER PENTECOST.

As the four weeks preceding the Christmas festival represent the long period intervening between the fall of man and the coming of the Redeemer, so, also, do the four and twenty Sundays, or, as is sometimes the case, the eight and twenty Sundays following the feast of Pentecost represent the centuries which have elapsed since the foundation of the Church, and those also that will elapse till the end of time. This is evident from the Liturgy employed by the Church during this, the longest season of her Ecclesiastical year.

We will, therefore, examine that Liturgy as it is set before us in her Canonical Office and in her public services, that from the study of it we may learn the lessons with which it will not fail to furnish us.

The Canonical Office, as you are well aware, consists of the Psalms, the lessons, and the collects appointed for each day of the Ecclesiastical year. These are to be found in the liturgical work known as the "Breviary," usually printed in four volumes, each of which corresponds to one of the seasons of the year. This Canonical Office is privately recited by the secular Clergy, and publicly in their choirs by Religious, by Cathedral, and by Collegiate Chapters. Its seven parts, as you will doubtless remember, are Matins with Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. In the Benedictine Order, the Matin Office consists of three nocturns, the first and second of which contain each six Psalms and four lessons; the third, however, has only three Psalms, followed by four lessons, the *Te Deum*, the Gospel, and the prayer. As it is the lessons of the first nocturn that give to the season of the year its characteristic feature, an examination of these lessons will bear out what we have said, to wit, that the time after Pentecost represents to us the life that will be led by the Church till the end of time.

Making, then, of this season a broad division into two parts, the first of which embraces the time between Pentecost and the month of August, and the second, the months that precede Advent, we find that the lessons chosen for the first division give us the history of the establishment and of the fortunes of the Jewish Church, to serve as a kind of prophetic history of the Church established by Christ, which is to endure until the end of time.

These lessons are taken from the four Books of Kings, in which we find a succinct account of the monarchy of Israel—a figure of the Christian Church—a monarchy inaugurated by David, and firmly established by Solomon; David, the victorious warrior, being a figure of Christ victorious over his enemies; Solomon, the "*rex pacificus*" who consolidated the power won by his father's prowess, and built the Temple to the glory of God, being a figure of that same Christ, the founder and builder of the great Catholic Church. How strikingly the history of the reality corresponds to the history of the figure that preceded it, is evident to even the least

observant. For the Jewish Church, though established by the power of God, failed not to experience all the vicissitudes through which the Christian Church also has passed. It could boast of great Saints, like Asa, Ezechias, and Josias, and it had to deplore the scandalous lives of great sinners such as was the infamous Menasses. The evil of schism rent it in twain, Samaria carrying away in her revolt ten out of the twelve tribes, only the remaining two being faithful to the traditions of the Fathers.

Yet, though thus so sadly torn asunder, that creation of God was not abandoned by His fatherly providence which guided and instructed it by the teachings and the warnings of the holy Prophets, who from time to time were raised up within it. To these heavenly instructions and warnings, the chosen people but too often turned a deaf ear, giving themselves up to the worship of the false gods of the nations around them, till at last the long-promised Messiah, the Emmanuel, the Incarnate God came to perfect that which till then had been but in figure. As a nation, as a Church, they rejected and crucified Him. Then, the measure of their iniquities being filled up, the wrath of God flashed down upon them. Their Temple was destroyed; their holy city was laid in ashes; their sons and their daughters were scattered among the nations of the world, bearing upon their heads that curse which they had invoked upon themselves, when after rejecting the Christ, they had cried out: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children".

Has not the history of the Church, during the centuries, been very like unto this? Has it not had to fight against the wickedness of its revolted children? Has it not produced great Saints? Has it not had to deplore the existence in its bosom of great sinners? Has it not continually to meet and to war against the hostility of the world? May we not, also, reasonably fear that the decay of faith among the nations, and their daily increasing hostility against all that speaks to them of God, will at last drive the Church back into the catacombs, in order to keep alive the torch of faith till the end shall come? What has been, may again come to pass.

Though the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church, she will ever continue to give her witness against the world, and she will be found giving it, and sustaining her warfare against unrighteousness when the day of whirlwind and of storm shall burst upon this earth, and the consummation of all things shall come to pass.

After figuratively in these lessons from the Book of Kings portraying for us the history of the Church, our Holy Mother selects for us in her lessons for the first of the four quarters of her next division of the Ecclesiastical year, that is to say for the month of August, readings from the Sapiential Books or Books of Wisdom, so called because they contain the teachings of Divine Wisdom,

That Divine Wisdom, having in the fulness of time become Incarnate, and having as man taught the world and in it established the Church to be its guide, still continues according to His promise to abide with and to instruct us by the energising presence of the Paraclete. Truth, thus infallibly taught through the divinely guided Church, pours itself abroad in the hearts of the faithful. It leavens those hearts. It fills them with divine light and grace, the outcome of its action upon them being that marvellous sanctity visible in the lives of so many thousands, who by their virtues bear witness unto Christ, and draw others to submit their necks to His sweet yoke.

To imprint upon our minds the close connection between holiness and truth—the seed whence holiness springs—the Church selects for the month of September lessons from the hagiographical Books, so called because they contain the histories of the men and the women who were famous for the holiness of their lives. These lessons are consequently chosen from the Books of Tobias, Judith, Esther, and Job—books which admirably set before us sanctity in a concrete form, emphasised and illustrated in the every-day actions of men like ourselves, men who in spite of their varied and distracting occupations, trials, difficulties, and misfortunes, were yet able through the force imparted to them by divine Truth to triumph over the world, the devil, and their own selves, thus

proving to their fellow-men that a life of eminent holiness is possible, is practicable.

Furthermore, as in the latter days the Church will again be subjected to persecutions as fierce and as bitter as were those which she endured in the infancy of her existence, this fact is brought before our notice by her selection of the lessons for the month of October. These are taken from the Books of Machabees, in which books we read with what courage and constancy the faithful few struggle against the tyrannical cruelty and the impiety of men who strove to rob them of their faith. They fought for it; they clung to it "in spite of dungeon, fire and sword"; and when necessary they died for it. By their death, impiety seemed to triumph; but that triumph was only apparent; for truth though struck down and trampled in the mire has in it a vitality that is not of this world, but of God. It springs up again and flourishes as the lily. Those who in their folly shouted over its seeming downfall: "Victory! we have conquered!"—quickly passed away. Their place knew them no more. But the truth for which the faithful died, remained. It became for their children a seed fruitful in heroism equal to their own. It was able as before to mould and fashion generations of men who would never bend the knee to Baal.

The furious persecutions spoken of in these Books foreshadow those which, as time is verging towards the close of its brief day, shall burst upon the Church of God. They recall to our minds the prophecies of the Apocalypse. These prophecies tell us that the "Beast" will once again be suffered to rage against the servants of Christ, and, for a brief period at least, apparently to prevail over them, till at last the great Judge shall come and shall thrust both the Beast and his adorers into the bottomless pit of hell, there to abide for ever.

As if to keep these truths before our minds while her Ecclesiastical year is rapidly nearing its close, the Church chooses for the month of November lessons drawn from the Prophets who have announced to men all the woes that are to come upon them before the destruction of the world. First, we have the lessons chosen from the terrible visions of Ezechiel

whose prophecies fill every one with awe ; next, from Daniel, before whose mental vision the Lord opened out as in a panorama the fortunes of the various kingdoms and empires that shall arise, and flourish, and fall, till time shall have run its course ; lastly, those drawn from the minor Prophets who foretell the divine vengeance on the wickedness of men, and the coming at last of the great Judge. Thus, we have in figure set before us the history of Christ's Spouse in the latter days of the world, when, faith shall have grown cold, till Christ shall come in great power and majesty to render unto every one according to his works.

Passing now from the Canonical Office, we come to the other public services of the Church, the chief of which are the Sunday Vespers and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. These, as a rule, are celebrated under what liturgists term a semi-double rite, though in the English Benedictine Congregation both the Sunday Vespers and the Mass are celebrated as a greater double. During the season from Pentecost till Advent, the colour used in these offices is green, a colour by which the Church would have us understand her firm hope in the unfailing assistance of the Holy Spirit as well as the hope with which she desires to inspire her children of possessing their God at the end of their earthly career. In the Gospels either read or chanted during Holy Mass, are set forth either the chief instructions given by Our divine Lord, or His most notable parables which are replete with lessons on all the duties of a Christian life. By bringing these so prominently before us, the Church endeavours to make us accomplish our earthly pilgrimage in such a way as to merit the rewards and the glory of that never-ending life towards which she strives ever to direct our eyes and the aspirations of our hearts.

At Vespers, the antiphons and the Psalms are those appointed for the Sundays ; the hymn is that beautiful one composed by St. Gregory the Great, entitled : " *Lucis Creator optime* ". In this we earnestly pray that our souls may not be exiled from that eternal life prepared for us by Our Creator. In order to recall to our minds the teaching of the Gospel for the day, the antiphon for the Magnificat is taken from one of



its verses, so that the lesson conveyed may dwell in our minds during the night that is now fast coming on.

Therefore, when during the time after Pentecost we assist at these services of the Church, our aim should be to fill ourselves with the idea running through her Liturgy at this season of her Ecclesiastical year. What is that idea? It is, as we have seen, the pilgrimage of the Church through the centuries till the end of time, and, consequently, our own pilgrimage through the few brief days of our mortal life. The record of that pilgrimage is one filled with the various and continual trials falling upon us, of the obstacles opposing both her and our progress, of the contests through which both she and we have to pass, and of her and of our progress towards the end which, in our regard, God has in view, namely the salvation of our immortal souls.

As she pushes onwards, led by the standard of the Cross in her battle and her march, she scatters among her children, and exposes to the view of her adversaries, the teaching of the Prophets and of the Apostles, and the eternal truth of the Gospel of Christ. She sets before the eyes of the world the shining examples of the sanctity engendered by that truth; she utters the warnings that should correct and save; and thus will she act till she shall have gathered together her children within the gates of her Master's kingdom. Her history will be your history; her fortunes will be your fortunes; her triumphs will be your triumphs, if you ever bear in mind that you also are only a pilgrim, only a wayfarer in this world, hurrying on to another land without any great interest in that through which you are journeying. The memory of this indubitable fact will fill you with detachment, with the spirit of sacrifice, with the spirit of prayer. The outcome of such a temper of mind will be a holy life, and that life will procure for you a title to a fellowship with the Saints in the heavenly Jerusalem.





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