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THE  
L O R D ' S    B O D Y

BY  
CLEMENT POYNDER

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## INTRODUCTION.



THE aspect that Christendom has for a long time presented with regard to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is this,—While there is a certain amount of independent thought, those who profess Christianity are mainly divided into two schools of thought who hold one ground in common, and on that common ground have diverged in two opposite directions and formed themselves into two hostile and apparently irreconcilable ranks. May it not be that the cause of this unhappy divergence and hostility is that the very ground which the two opposing ranks hold in common is a false ground?

The ground held in common is this, that the primary object of the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of the death of Christ. To this our Lord's own expressions as to eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and the words in which He

instituted the Sacrament, and St. Paul's expressions as to communion in the body and blood of Christ, are all held to have a primary reference.

No one will dispute that the primary object of a sacrament is that its inward spiritual grace,—the benefit signified by the outward sign—may be received. Nor will anyone dispute that the inward spiritual grace of the Lord's Supper is the feeding upon Christ, or, to use His own words, the eating His flesh and drinking His blood. But here comes the critical question. To what do those expressions refer? Did our Lord use them in reference to the physical flesh and blood of His natural body, and to His bodily death? Those who are agreed in holding that our Lord did so use them are agreed only up to that point. Beyond that point they immediately diverge in two opposite directions and are wholly disagreed as to the sense in which the flesh and blood of Christ are to be fed upon.

Now, may not the ground held in common by those who are so diametrically opposed to one another be a false ground? May not those who are so opposed as to the *meaning* of our Lord's words be mistaken as to their *reference*? Can those words have a reference wholly different to



that which they have generally been supposed to have? And may not that reference be to a truth that is accepted by almost all Christians as a truth, and actually associated in their minds, however much they may differ on other points, more or less with the Holy Communion, though it has generally been regarded as an attendant and deducible truth, and as a secondary object of the Sacrament rather than as its fundamental truth and the primary object? Does there not underlie the Sacrament a truth that is not only a common ground, but a ground on which there is very general agreement among those who accept it? Our Lord said, 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood *dwelleth in Me, and I in him.*'<sup>1</sup> Here our Lord Himself has associated the eating His flesh and drinking His blood with the relationship that exists between Himself and those who are in Him. Did He not use the expressions, 'eateth My flesh' and 'drinketh My blood' actually in reference to that relationship? Was not the setting forth of that relationship and the confirming and strengthening of it really the primary object of the Sacrament? Have we not then directly connected by our Lord Himself with the Sacrament and more or less associated

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 56.

with it generally by Christians, this truth, that there can be a real union and positive oneness of our human spirits with Christ's human spirit? Quite irrespective and independent of the literal human body of Jesus, whether His body as it was before death and when offered on the cross, or His body as it is supposed to be, risen, ascended, and glorified in Heaven; and quite apart from a supposed imparting to us of the elements of His physical body, and a supposed active and direct part that our bodies, and the material substances that nourish them, bear in the reception of His body, there is a fairly general agreement in believing that when our spirits are quickened by the Holy Spirit, they so combine with Christ's spirit that they form, as it were, one Body; they are as much one with His spirit as the members of the physical human body are one with it; and He is, to our spirits, what the head and the heart and the vital organs and the life blood of the human body are to the several members and limbs of that body. This is the truth so forcibly expressed by St. Paul (Romans xii. 4, 5), in these words: 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' And again,

in 1 Cor. xii. where he has so fully drawn out the figure, and shown the analogy that exists between the human body of any person and that Body of which Christ is the Head and we are the members.

St. Paul himself, in 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, has directly connected this truth with the Holy Communion; making it, indeed, the very ground of our communion with Christ in the sacrament: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For WE, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BREAD AND ONE BODY; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' This argument of St. Paul will be considered in the following pages. But at the outset it may be asked whether the manifest allusion here to the figure of the many members in the one body, all nourished by the one bread, and, as is implied, from the same cup, has been duly considered as the explanation of the expressions 'communion of the body' and 'communion of the blood of Christ.'

In our treatment of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, we shall be safe if we keep this one accepted truth always uppermost in our minds, and regard the sacrament as the communion of our

spirits with Christ's spirit, whereby His spiritual nature is communicated to us, and our spirits are benefited thereby. And thus we may be led to see that language that has seemed to imply that Christ is locally present in material substances, that that which He communicates to us of His nature is physical and material, and that in the act of partaking of Him our bodies are concerned, is really the language of analogy and language that, so regarded, is fully satisfied by distinctly spiritual communion with Christ. And thus, too, mystery will be kept in its proper region, and will be limited to that which concerns our spirits, and the relation of our spirits to the Divine Persons and to the spiritual world; while mystery will not be forced into that region to which the material body and the bodily senses and functions belong in a way that amounts to a miracle. The ordained ministers of the Church will be seen to be, not workers of miracles, but simply 'ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.'<sup>1</sup>

And we have a further ground for regarding the union of our spirits with Christ's spirit as in one body as the fundamental truth of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, namely, that it clearly

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.

is the fundamental truth of the other sacrament. For the inward spiritual grace of baptism is incorporation into Christ by the new birth of the Spirit, whereby we are made members of Christ and children of God—a relationship to Christ which is distinctly spiritual, and in which neither our own bodies nor the physical body of Christ are directly concerned. For surely it is the same relationship to Christ that the one sacrament is designed to introduce and initiate us into, and that the other is designed to sustain and perfect.

But, in regarding the relation of the regenerate spirit to Christ's spirit as the fundamental truth of the Lord's Supper, we must bear in mind that we are regarding that truth not bare and unadorned, but clothed and adorned in its appropriate figurative language. The truth we have to do with is the oneness of our spirits with Christ's spirit *as in one body*. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is founded on the fact that there is a strict analogy between the human physical body and the mode in which it is framed, constituted, and nourished, and that spiritual Body of which Christ is the Head and we are the members.

The purpose of the following pages will be to show that this analogy is the solution of the hard sayings of the Lord's discourse at Capernaum, and also of the words in which He instituted the sacrament; the same truth underlying His language on both occasions.

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# THE LORD'S BODY.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE DISCOURSE AT CAPERNAUM.

JESUS, being at Capernaum, on the north-west of the Sea of Galilee, desiring rest and retirement for Himself and His disciples, said to them, 'Come ye yourselves into a desert place and rest awhile.'<sup>1</sup> They went therefore over the Sea of Galilee to Bethsaida. But they were not allowed the privacy that they sought. Their departure was not unobserved. A multitude of people, seeing the direction the vessel took, hastened on foot to the spot where he would land. And as the Passover was at hand, many pilgrims were on the march towards Jerusalem, many of whom joined and increased the multitude that were in pursuit of Jesus. Jesus taught them and healed their sick. It was a desert place, the day was far

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 31.

spent, and they were unprovided with food. He had not dismissed them, and as long as they were not dismissed they were bound to the spot by a strong attraction. Nor would He then dismiss them unfed at the disciples' request; but with five barley loaves and two small fishes, which one boy in the crowd happened to have, He fed five thousand men, besides women and children. This miracle produced such an effect upon those who witnessed it and had been benefited by it, that they pronounced Him to be 'that prophet that should come into the world;' and, with their false notions of 'that prophet'—the Messiah—they proposed to 'take Him by force and make Him a king.' To prevent this—His kingdom being not of this world, yet being possessed of kingly power—with gentle but irresistible force He first constrained His disciples to enter their ship and return to Capernaum, and then dismissed the multitude, while He Himself went up into a mountain alone to pray. The multitude had dispersed with the exception of a few, more enthusiastic than the rest, who remained at the foot of the mountain, perhaps with the vain hope that He would yet declare Himself a king. In the night 'the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.' Jesus, knowing that His disciples were tossing on the rough sea, toiling in rowing, and making no progress, went down to the sea, unnoticed by those who were awaiting

Him, and, walking on the sea, went to His disciples. He entered into their ship, and soon they were at Capernaum. In the morning, those who had tarried behind, not finding Him, 'took shipping, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.' And there, to their astonishment, they found Him sitting and teaching in the synagogue. They could not understand how or when He had come there, for they felt sure that He had neither gone by boat from the scene of the miracle, nor walked by the shore. So with astonishment they asked, 'Rabbi, when camest thou hither?'

Jesus perceived that it was from no high motive and for no high good that those men were seeking Him so eagerly; so, instead of answering their question and satisfying their curiosity, He said—

JOHN vi. 26. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles' (literally, 'not because ye saw signs'). He meant, 'Ye seek Me not because ye saw in My mighty works signs of My Divine Nature,'—'but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.' They recognised Him as one who could confer great temporal and worldly benefits upon them. They saw in the miracle nothing more than the supply of their natural wants, and were not led by it to anything higher and nobler.

*Verse 27.* 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give

unto you ; for Him hath God the Father sealed.' The food that alone they hungered for is rightly called 'meat which perisheth.' It is perishable in its nature. It does not endure, or remain, in the system. In part it turns to corruption ; and so much of it as nourishes the body is soon exhausted, and more food must be received. But the meat which Jesus would have had them hunger and labour for 'endureth unto everlasting life.' It is not perishable in its nature. It is not exhausted by being partaken of. It enters into that part of the man which, being spiritual, is immortal ; and which, being of like nature to itself, can assimilate it ; and there it does not expend itself, but—like the Water of Life which Christ gives, which, once received, is within the man an established and perennial well of water springing up unto everlasting life—this meat which Christ gives endureth unto everlasting life. The food, and the life that it sustains, abide together everlastingly. At the first mention of this meat He declares Himself, as the Son of Man, to be the giver of it, and to be sealed by God the Father for that purpose. For this meat the Lord said 'Labour,' that is, 'Work.'

*Verse 28.* 'Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?' They used the same word, 'work,' that Jesus had just used.

*Verse 29.* 'Jesus answered and said unto

them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.' Here is the simple answer to the question, What is to be done to obtain the meat that endureth unto everlasting life? Believe on Him whom God hath sent to give that meat. When we have considered what the nature of that meat is, we shall see that, from its very nature, it cannot be worked for otherwise than by believing, and that when it has been received it must produce in us the works of God; for to have eaten that meat is, in fact, to have been made partakers of the Divine nature.

*Verse 30, 31.* 'They said, therefore, unto Him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat.' They were unwilling to believe in Jesus. They professed to want a further sign or proof that He was sent of God. He had just said of Himself (verse 27), 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' He bore on Himself the Divine impress. One candid Pharisee, in the early part of His ministry, had discerned this seal, and had said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.'<sup>1</sup> But these Jews refused to see in the miracles of Jesus signs

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 2.

and seals of His Divine nature, authority, and power, or to admit the surpassing goodness and loveliness of His character. The miracle they had just witnessed should have been sign enough. But because it was not a miracle that promised to be a permanent worldly advantage to them, they would not receive it as a sign. As if that miracle were nothing, they said, 'What sign showest thou that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' It would seem from our Lord's reply that they intended this reference to the manna as a slight. They referred to the manna as a sign that Moses was, under God, the authorised leader of their fathers; and they would have Jesus know that they regarded Moses as greater than He. They also regarded the sign of manna as of some practical good, since their fathers were fed by it from day to day for forty years in the desert; and so their fathers were relieved of all anxiety about their daily food, and of the necessity of working for it. Their reference to it was, it would seem, a challenge to Jesus to continue His miracle of multiplying the loaves from day to day, that they might see and believe. The answer of Jesus was very striking.

*Verse 32, 33.* 'Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not

that bread from Heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' The amount of meaning compressed into this short answer is very remarkable. Notice how many fallacies Jesus here pointed out.

1. 'Moses gave you *not* that bread.' **It** was not Moses who gave the manna, but He whom Jesus called 'My Father.' So that the manna was no proof that Moses was greater than Jesus. And as Moses could not call God 'My Father' in the full sense in which Jesus could, he could not claim to be with God the joint giver of that bread.

2. 'Moses gave *you* not that bread.' It was to their fathers, and only for the space of forty years, generations and centuries back, that God gave the manna. The benefit did not extend to their descendants. But the bread that God gives is a perpetual gift to the Church. To the end of the world He will give the bread of life to all who hunger for it and believe on Him whom He hath sent. Yes, and throughout eternity that bread will be the life of souls in Heaven.

3. 'Moses gave you not that bread *from Heaven.*' So far as the manna was the gift of the God of Heaven, and miraculously given, and seemed to come down from the firmament as the dew fell, it might be called bread from Heaven.

But it did not come from the Heaven of which Jesus spake, the abode of God, from whence the bread of life comes down. It was not heavenly in its nature. It was corruptible—singularly corruptible—and nothing corruptible comes from Heaven. And being corruptible it could not keep the bodies of those who ate it from corruption; still less could it nourish their souls. But the Bread which the Father gives Jesus here plainly declares to be ‘from Heaven.’

4. Jesus said, ‘My Father giveth you *the true bread* from Heaven.’ Manna was not *the true bread*. Whenever Jesus spake of anything as ‘the true,’—as when He spake of the true Light, the true Vine, or the true Bread—He always meant something distinctly spiritual, of which the natural thing which He named was only a figure. So, though manna was bread, it was only perishable bread for the perishable body, of just the same nature as the food that Jesus was reproving the Jews for hankering after. Yet, inasmuch as it was a miraculous gift of God, and seemed to come down from Heaven, it was a type of that true bread which the Father gives, which is spiritual food for the inner spiritual man. These Jews, like their forefathers, missed the great lesson which the gift of manna was intended to convey. God gave it, Moses expressly told them, that He might make them know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word



that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.<sup>1</sup> In like manner Jesus intended the miracle of feeding the five thousand to lead the people to hunger and work for that true, spiritual, eternal food that the Father would give.

‘For,’ said He, ‘the Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’ We must not here lay stress upon the ‘He,’ which Jesus did not actually express. This sentence meant no more than that ‘the bread of God cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world.’ What that bread is He was immediately about to say, but did not actually say in this sentence.

*Verse 34.* ‘Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.’ Still thinking that He meant nothing more than bread that can be eaten by the mouth for the good of the body.

*Verse 35.* ‘And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.’ This was His first clear announcement that He Himself is the true Bread.

Now notice what, so far, we have been told of the true bread. In verse 33 it is called ‘the bread of God.’ Possibly this expression is intended to convey a deeper truth than that the food by which we live is the gift of God; for we

<sup>1</sup> Deut. viii. 3.

shall presently see that God's great gift is essentially Divine—it is that which God gives of His own self—and on that account may be called 'the bread of God.' Next, in that verse, we are told that *it cometh down from Heaven*. And in this 35th verse the Lord said, 'I am the bread of life.' Must we not infer from this that Christ is the true bread, 'the bread of God,' 'the bread of life,' *in so far only as He came down from Heaven*, and is essentially Divine and Heavenly in His nature? And therefore God's great gift to man whereby we live for ever is not primarily the man Christ Jesus, but His own Divine and eternal Son. But, as we shall see presently, and as will be illustrated by the analogy of the human body, that which God has given to the human race, of which Christ Jesus is constituted the head and representative, is one thing, and that which Christ Jesus gives to each individual believer is another thing; just as that which is given to the human body to eat or drink is one thing, and that which the body supplies to its several members is another thing.

And with this announcement that He, inasmuch as, and in so far as, He came down from Heaven, is the Bread of Life, He coupled this announcement, 'He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.' It is evident from their remarks afterwards that even these words did not open the eyes

of our Lord's hearers to see what manner of food and drink He was speaking of. They probably thought that He only meant that if they came to Him, and believed on Him, He would work a continual miracle to supply them with food, or would in some way contrive that they should no longer suffer bodily hunger and thirst. Speaking to those who thought only of the outer man, in language borrowed from the needs of the body, the Lord was really looking through and beyond it to the inner man. 'Never hunger, never thirst!' Who would say that this result of going to Christ and believing on Him refers to the body? Those who go to Christ are not exempt from bodily hunger and thirst any more than He Himself was as a partaker of a human frame. But surely if, as some teach, the body had any direct and active share in the eating and drinking of which the Lord went on to speak, the body would at least share in the benefit of never hungering and never thirsting. As therefore the expressions, 'Never hunger,' 'never thirst,' can refer only to the inner spiritual man, the food that produces such a result must be something capable of mingling with the spirit and not with the body, and must be something essentially spiritual and not material.

*Verse 36.* 'But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me and believe not.' They had seen His works, but those works did not convince them, for they would not see in them signs of His

Divinity. But more, they had seen *Him*; but they saw in Him no beauty that they should desire Him.<sup>1</sup> They saw Him, but they did not behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. They had not that faith which proceeds from a sense of the needs of the inner spiritual man, and is quick to recognise one who can satisfy those needs. They had not that eye of faith which can see what is holy and spiritual and divine. There were those who had eyes to see, who had but to see Him and to come within the influence of His most holy life and character, to be at once attracted to Him, and to be convinced that He is able and willing to satisfy the deepest cravings and highest aspirations of the spirit. These readily came to Him, and were willingly received by Him.

*Verse 37.* 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' This word 'all' is of the greatest importance in our Lord's argument. Commentators have generally drawn attention to the fact that the word is singular and neuter.<sup>2</sup> It is not 'all those persons,' but 'that whole complete thing that the Father giveth Me.' In that word is conveyed the idea of oneness, the many members in one body, which is the key to this discourse. The Father's great gift to the human

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Stier, Alford, *The Speaker's Commentary*.

race is, as we have noticed, the Son of God, in union with that Son of Man who is the representative of the human race. The Father's gift to His Son is the Church, the whole body of those who are born of the Spirit and believe in Christ Jesus. These form the Bride, which is the Father's gift to His Son, the Bridegroom. This gift is not yet perfect and complete; it is in process of formation. Christ might say to the Father of this His Body as David said of his body: 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in Thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.'<sup>1</sup> This body is being formed as one by one believers are new-created and incorporated in Christ. St. Paul has thus described the process by which this gift of the Father to the Son is being completed:—'Till we all come in the unity of the Spirit, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, UNTO A PERFECT MAN (not unto many perfect persons, but unto ONE PERFECT MAN having many members), unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we . . . speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body (the perfect man), fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure

of every part, maketh INCREASE OF THE BODY unto the edifying of itself in love.’<sup>1</sup> This body, taken as a whole, and having Christ as its head and representative, feeds directly upon the Bread of God from Heaven; but, regarded as composed of many members, its several members are nourished by the spiritual humanity of Christ.

‘And him that cometh to Me,’ said Jesus, ‘I will in no wise cast out.’ The soul that comes to Him, weary and heavy laden, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, is precious to Him as an integral part of the Father’s perfect gift, and as a member of His own body. He will in no wise cast out that soul; He will incorporate it, absorb it in Himself, make it partaker of His own nature and His own life, make it as it were one flesh and one blood with Himself, and keep it as the apple of His eye.

*Verse 38.* ‘For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.’

*Verse 39.* ‘And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.’

*Verse 40.* ‘And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.’ To recover

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians iv. 13-16.

lost souls, to redeem them, to gather them into Himself, to make them His own, and making them His own to make them the Father's—for this purpose the Son was sent by the Father. To be to them the bread of God from Heaven, that they might never hunger and never thirst, and to give them everlasting life—for this purpose the Son of God came down from the Father in Heaven. In this He was doing, not His own will independently of the Father, but the will of Him that sent Him.

*Verse 41.* 'The Jews then murmured at Him because He said, I am the bread which came down from Heaven.'

*Verse 42.* 'And they said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that he saith, I came down from Heaven?' They thought they knew well who Jesus was, and that He was such an one as themselves. They, like Him, were Galileans; He was no stranger to them. They knew His family connections. They knew Joseph and Mary.

*Verse 43.* 'Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.'

*Verse 44.* 'No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.'

*Verse 45.* 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man,

therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.'

*Verse 46.* 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.'

The Lord did not reveal to these carnal-minded, unbelieving Jews the great mystery of the Incarnation. To have done so would have been casting pearls before swine. He only bade them 'Murmur not,' and told them who alone will come to Him and discover who and what He is. It is the man who is drawn of the Father. When the man in whom God had awakened a consciousness of the existence within him of a spirit that has wants and yearnings came under the influence of Jesus, he found an attraction of his spirit to the spirit of Jesus. The Lord at once united that man to Himself, gave to him eternal life, and said, 'I will raise him up at the last day.' That man has been taught of God. He has been taught that he has a spirit, that this spirit has needs, that in Christ he will find the resting-place of his spirit, the satisfaction and eternal life of his spirit. In Christ he finds one who, being of God, and Himself God, has seen the Father; and though he cannot himself see the Father, yet, in Christ, his spirit is brought into direct communication with the Father of spirits.

*Verse 47.* 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.'

*Verse 48.* 'I am that bread of life.'



*Verse 49.* ‘Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.’

*Verse 50.* ‘This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.’

*Verse 51.* ‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. . . .’

The Lord here repeats, with additional emphasis, what He had before said. Faith in Him is necessary if we would have everlasting life. For the work of God is that we believe on Him whom He hath sent. He Himself, as a Person, is the bread of life. But He is so as a Divine Person, because the bread of life came down from Heaven. He again contrasts the effect of eating the bread from Heaven with the effect of eating the manna. Their fathers ate the manna and died; ‘if any man eat this bread, he shall live for ever.’ It is different in its nature to manna. It is eaten in a different sense. It nourishes a different part of the man. As he who eats it shall not die, the body, that must die, does not eat it. It is divine, heavenly, spiritual food for the inner spiritual man.

And now comes the statement that has been the great stumbling-block and cause of division and offence in the Church.

*Verse 51.* ‘. . . And the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’

At this point an important change has taken place in the Lord's argument and expressions. In the 'I will give' there is an emphasis on the 'I.' At the commencement of His discourse, in verse 27, He bade the Jews work for the *meat* that He, *the Son of Man*, would give. That meat includes both the bread and the flesh that are the subjects of His discourse from that point. In the giving of that meat to man, both the Father works and He works. From that point to this He spake of *God the Father* as the giver, and declared that He Himself, the Son of God, who came down from Heaven, is the gift, the *bread* that the Father gives. From this point He speaks of *Himself* as the giver. Hitherto He has spoken of *bread* as the food which the Father gives; but now he speaks of *flesh*, and presently of *flesh and blood*, as the food that He gives. Now what is the significance of this change? Is it that hitherto the Lord has been speaking in figurative language, and now He speaks in literal language? Is it that the bread of which He has hitherto spoken is the figure, and the flesh and blood of which He now speaks are the reality? Or is it that at this point He has advanced another stage in the analogy of the human body, and that the bread of which He has spoken and the flesh and blood of which He is about to speak form two parts of one consistent parable? If we decide on the former of

these two alternatives, then the remarks of our Lord that follow about His flesh and blood being meat and drink must either be taken in a grossly literal sense—a sense which we have been noticing is inconsistent with the coming down from Heaven, the never hungering, never thirsting and not dying—or else His sayings must appear extravagantly metaphorical; for to express the deriving benefit from the contemplation of the sacrifice of His flesh and blood upon the Cross, as the eating His flesh and drinking His blood, does seem extravagant language. Let us see if the latter alternative, that the Lord is still speaking in the language of analogy and continuing the same parable, will not give a reasonable and satisfactory explanation of the hard sayings that follow. If from this point the Lord is simply continuing the same parable, then up to this point He has been taking as His figure the nourishing of the body taken as a whole by bread and wine; and from this point He takes as His figure the nourishing of the several members of the body by the flesh and blood that the body imparts to them.

The Lord said, 'The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' The true reading is, 'The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.' Now, must our Lord here have meant by His flesh the literal flesh of His mortal body? Has the expression no other meaning in the Bible? There is a saying of St. Paul that

conveys quite another meaning. 'We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.'<sup>1</sup> Here undoubtedly the flesh of Christ has nothing to do with His mortal body, but belongs to the figure of the body and its members whereby is illustrated the union of our spirits with His spirit, or the spiritual part of our humanity with the spiritual part of His humanity. That which Christ imparts to us, and in which we have membership, is indeed His humanity. But humanity consists of two parts, the material and the spiritual. It is the spiritual part of His humanity that He imparts to us. Membership in Christ is membership of our human spirits in His human spirit, and not membership of our bodies in His body. Nor can there be any such cross membership as that of our spirits with His fleshly body, or of our mortal bodies with His spirit. It must be like that combines with like. This is still more evident when we consider the result of membership in Christ, namely, membership one with another. All those whom Christ unites to Himself He unites in Himself to one another so as to form one Body. We are then united to one another in a way similar to that in which we are united to Christ. As regards this union and membership one with another, we see at once that our bodies are in no way concerned. It follows then that in our union and member-

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians v. 30.

ship with Christ, neither our own bodies nor His fleshly body can be directly concerned. ‘He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.’<sup>1</sup> Now let us see how the truth that God, through Jesus Christ, nourishes our spirits unto everlasting life, is illustrated by the analogy of the human body.

The body takes in food—bread and wine—at the mouth. That food, by the processes of digestion and assimilation, is adapted within the body to its wants, converted into the component parts of the body, and supplies the several members with flesh and blood; so that all the members are literally, as St. Paul says, ‘partakers of one bread;’ for the same particle of bread,<sup>2</sup> by the circulation of the blood through the whole frame, nourishes alike every member of the body. And every member of the body may be said to feed upon the body: it derives its flesh and blood from the body, and may be said to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the body. In like manner Christ, as the Head of that body which is composed of all those spirits that are brought into vital union with His spirit, receives for man, from the Father, the living bread, as the mouth receives the food. This living bread is His Divine Nature which came down from Heaven. This, His Divine Nature, He mingles in Himself with His own spiritual human nature. Thus mingled, adapted, assimilated, He imparts it as a divinely nourished

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17.

spiritual humanity to His spiritual members. And thus He is, for the members of His Body, the Church, the great bread receiver and flesh and blood giver.

The Bread of God from Heaven, being the Divine Nature of the Son of God, can be received in the form in which God gave it, by no other man than the Son of Man, Christ Jesus. We cannot be the sons of God in the high sense in which Christ Jesus was. We cannot have the pure essence of the Godhead in us as it was in Christ Jesus, in whom dwelt 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;'<sup>1</sup> who was 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person.'<sup>2</sup> He who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary was so truly the Son of Man, the Child born, the Son given to the human race,<sup>3</sup> that he was rightly constituted to be the Head and Representative of the human race. His Virgin-born representative humanity was rendered sinless at the very spring of its being by conception of the Holy Ghost and conjunction with His own Divine Nature as the Son of God. The Incarnation was God's gift of divine life and the divine nature in the Person of the Son of God to the human race represented by the Son of Mary, constituting Christ the God-man, Immanuel, God with us. It was God's act of giving the bread of life from

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews i. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah ix. 6.

Heaven to man. So we must regard Christ alone as the direct receiver of the bread of God from Heaven. And what does this our Immanuel, our God with us, give to us? He gives to us that which here he calls 'My flesh.' As our Head He receives what He calls 'bread,' and to us, His members, He gives what He calls 'flesh and blood.' If the expression *the bread that the Father gives* is figurative, the expression *My flesh which I will give* is also figurative. And if the two expressions belong to the same figure, then, the bread being the Divine Nature which He, as our representative, receives from the Father for us, the flesh and blood that He gives to us are His own spiritual nature and His own spiritual life.

The human body, regarded as a complex organism whereby food and drink are converted into flesh and blood, intervenes between the hand or the foot and the bread and wine whereby they are nourished. So Christ, the God-man, intervenes between us and the Divine Nature of which the Father would have us partakers. We can no more feed directly upon the Bread of God from Heaven than the hand or the foot can eat bread or drink wine. It is only as members of that spiritual body, of which Christ is the head, and heart, and life, that we can be nourished with the Bread of God from Heaven, and be made partakers of the Divine Nature.

Objection might be made to the expression that the members *eat* the flesh and *drink* the blood of the body to which they belong. It might be pronounced an inappropriate way of expressing the fact that the limbs derive their nourishment and life from the body. And certainly it is not the expression we should choose if we were simply speaking of the body. But there is a real fitness in the expression when the spiritual body is being spoken of under the figure of the natural body. Our Lord had to express two truths which could not be perfectly represented by one figure. He had to express the truth that each believer has his own separate individuality and complete freedom to eat and drink spiritually, or to refuse to do so. And at the same time He had to express the truth that, notwithstanding that individuality and freedom, the believer is as dependent upon Him for his spiritual sustenance as the member is upon the body. These two truths could not be better expressed than by saying we eat and drink the flesh and blood of Christ. We eat and drink as free agents,—the flesh and blood of Christ because we are His members. We must bear in mind, too, the circumstances that led to the discourse. The Jews were anxious about what they should eat and what they should drink. The Lord wished to impress upon them that their inner spirits were of more importance than their



bodies ; that their spirits required food and sustenance as much as their bodies ; that spiritual food is of more importance than the food that perisheth ; and that there is a spiritual hunger and thirst as well as a physical. So that he was naturally led by the circumstances to speak of eating and drinking, and then, considering the relationship of our spirits to His spirit, He was, of necessity, obliged to combine with His illustration of the individual who eats and drinks, that of the limb that is replenished with flesh and blood, substance and life, from the body.

It is as if He said, ‘Hunger and thirst in your spirits ; hunger and thirst after righteousness ; hunger for the bread of God from Heaven, which is the very nature of God ; thirst for the wine of God from Heaven, which is the very life of God ; thirst for the Water of Life, which is the Holy Spirit. But know this, that the only way in which your spirits can be sustained unto everlasting life by this divine meat and drink is by entering into such a relationship to Me as is like that of the members to the body. I am between your spirits and the Father of spirits, the author and giver of all spiritual life and goodness, as the body, with its thinking head and receiving mouth, and vital and digestive organs, is between the hand or foot and the bread which is its nourishment ; or as the stem and the root of the tree is between the fruit-bearing branch and the

soil from which it derives its nourishment. To hunger, and thirst, and work for the spiritual food, and to eat and drink it when it is supplied, you are as independent as any individual person; but for the actual acquirement of the divine food by which your spirits live, you are as dependent upon Me, the Mediator, as any separate member of your body is upon that living organism which we call the body.'

*Verse 52.* 'The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' At the very first utterance of this truth commenced the controversy and the janglings that have ever since been carried on by those who do not discern it spiritually. At once the Jews began to dispute among themselves as to the meaning of the Lord's words. '*How can,*' they say—'*How can* this man give us His flesh to eat?' We are reminded of the question of Nicodemus, '*How can* a man be born when he is old?'<sup>1</sup> These Jews were making the same mistake that Nicodemus made in supposing that Jesus was speaking of that which, being born of the flesh, is flesh. As before they had thought that the eating bread of which Jesus spake was literal, so now they think the same of the eating flesh. But, according to His custom, He did not explain to them the meaning of His words. To those who had no spiritual discern-

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 4.

ment and whose minds were set only on worldly and carnal things, He would speak of Divine and heavenly things only in parables. So He said to them :

*Verse 53.* ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.’ Most startling must this announcement have sounded in the ears of those, a part of whose religion it was not to drink blood. How strictly were the Jews forbidden to drink the blood of any sacrifice ! Even the blood of the Lamb of the Passover, the type of Christ, they might not drink. Is then the blood of the Antitype—the Lamb of God—to be drunk as the blood of the type was forbidden to be drunk, i.e. as we drink with the mouth ? Is such a notion admissible even as a figure ? This announcement, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,’ is an exact parallel to two other sayings of His that will reveal the sense in which it is to be taken. To Nicodemus Jesus said, ‘Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’<sup>1</sup> Nicodemus thought Jesus was speaking of the body. He knew of no other birth than that of the fleshly body. Jesus then explained Himself to him, saying, ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 3.

born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’<sup>1</sup>

As that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,<sup>2</sup> it could not be a birth that concerns the fleshly part of our being that is necessary for entering into the kingdom of God. But as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, it was the new birth of the spiritual part of our being that Jesus was speaking of. And what is the nature of this new birth of the Spirit? ‘If any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature.’<sup>3</sup> To be born again is to be ‘created in Christ Jesus,’<sup>4</sup> to become a member of Christ. When Christ said, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,’ He meant, ‘Except ye be created, incorporated, and absorbed in Me—made spiritually, as it were, one flesh and one blood with Me—and so placed in a position to receive, through Me, the Divine Nature, ye have no life in you.’ ‘No life in *yourselves*’ He really said. Has the limb life in itself? Has the branch life in itself? No, the life of the limb is in the body—the life of the branch is in the tree. So the life of our spirits is in Christ’s spirit. It is only as we dwell in Christ, or abide in Christ, that we have life in us.

The other saying of our Lord to which this saying, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 50.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. ii. 10.

Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,' is an exact parallel, is in His parable of the vine and the branches: 'Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.'<sup>1</sup> What, then, does this expression, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood,' mean, but 'Except your spirits abide, or dwell, in My spirit, as the branches abide in the vine, and as the members dwell in the body from which they derive their flesh and blood'?

*Verse 54.* 'Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Being a member of Christ—one flesh and one blood with Christ—he lives, but his life is not in himself. So St. Paul said, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'<sup>2</sup> And again: 'Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.'<sup>3</sup>

*Verse 55.* 'For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.' The flesh of the body is indeed the nourishment and support of the members; and the blood of the body is indeed the living drink of the members. So, in membership with Christ, our spirits have indeed their spiritual meat and drink.

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians ii. 20.

Colossians iii. 3, 4.

*Verse 56.* 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, DWELLETH IN ME AND I IN HIM.' Should there be any doubt, now, as to what Jesus meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood? To eat His flesh and drink His blood is one and the same thing as to dwell in Him and have Him to dwell in us. What other figure can satisfy these expressions but the figure of the body and its members? The food we eat with the mouth dwells in us, but we cannot be said to dwell in it. We dwell in a house, but a house cannot be said to dwell in us. But it is literally true that the limbs dwell in the body, and the flesh and blood, the substance and life of the body, dwell in the limbs. In like manner we dwell in Christ, and Christ dwells in us. The conviction that this was the idea in the Lord's mind is confirmed by His using exactly the same expression in an exactly similar figure, the interpretation of which is clear and undisputed. Immediately after He had instituted the ordinance of His Supper, as if to explain that spiritual relation of the believer to Himself which He designed that ordinance to represent and promote, He spake that beautiful parable in which He compared Himself to a vine tree, and His disciples to the branches. In that parable He used phrases, expressions, and sentences so strikingly similar to those He used in the former discourse on His flesh and blood, that the

disciples could not but have been reminded of it. When He said, 'Abide in Me and I in you,'<sup>1</sup> He used exactly the same word in Greek for 'abide' as when He said '*dwelleth* in Me and I in him.' The saying, 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me,' is the very counterpart of the saying, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in yourselves.' So also the saying, 'He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing,' is the very counterpart of the saying, 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him.' The design of the two discourses being clearly the same, namely, to depict the position of the believer as dwelling or abiding in Christ, and having Christ dwelling or abiding in him, it is only reasonable to suppose that in the two discourses the Lord employed kindred parables, and that in the discourse we are considering His parable was that of the Body and its members.

*Verse 57.* 'As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.' This verse is the very climax of the Lord's argument, and all that has gone before has been leading up to it. Here He reveals to us this sublime truth, that we live

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 4.

by Him as He lives by the Father. He, being the Son of God, lives by the Father by oneness of Divine being and nature. In like manner, it is by oneness of spiritual being and nature that we live by Christ. The members live by the body, as the body lives by bread. The branches live by the tree, deriving from it wood and sap, substance and life, as the tree lives by the soil in which it is rooted. Christ is like a vine tree, rooted by reason of His Divine Nature in God, in Heaven, and having its branches on earth. The fruits that the branches bear partake alike of the nature of Him in whom they abide, and of the nature of God in whom He is rooted. Entirely in harmony with this truth was the sublime prayer of Jesus which immediately followed the discourse that contained the parable of the vine, and that followed the Last Supper. He then prayed thus to the Father, not only for the apostles who were present, but for all ‘which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us’<sup>1</sup> ‘That they may be one, even as we are one.’<sup>2</sup> Of the disciple He had said, he ‘dwelleth in Me and I in him.’ To the Father He now says, ‘Thou in Me and I in Thee.’ So completely are Christ and the believer one, as He and the Father are one. And again: ‘I in them and Thou in Me,

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 22.



that they may be made perfect in one.'<sup>1</sup> 'I in them,' that they may live by Me as the members live by the body, and the branches by the tree. 'Thou in Me,' that I, for their sakes, may live by Thee, as the body lives by bread and the tree by the soil. And they being in Me, one spirit, one perfect man; and I being in Thee and one with Thee; they are perfect in one, as Thou, their Father in Heaven, art perfect. And this prayer is truly answered; for not only is the believer, in the Father's sight, as if he were perfect, because, being one with Christ, his imperfection is covered by Christ's perfection, and he is completely identified with Christ's perfection, but in Christ he is actually partaker of the Divine nature. Notwithstanding much imperfection, and much sin that still clings to his fleshly nature, he has within him that nature of God which is essentially perfect. Elements of personal imperfection and Divine perfection exist together; the latter, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, ever more and more overcoming the former.

*Verse 58.* 'This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.' Having discoursed, from verse 51, of that which He, the Son of Man, gives to His spiritual members, His own spiritual humanity whereby they directly live, He

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 23.

now reverts to that of which He first discoursed, that which the Father gives to humanity, the Bread of God from Heaven, the Divine nature of the Son of God, whereby the Son lives by the Father. This heavenly food the whole Body of Christ's members themselves eat through Him their Head and Mouth. And they eat it, says Jesus, 'not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead.' But it is spiritual food for their spirits, and it is in their spirits the ever-abiding nature of God. And as perfection is an element of God's nature, and they become imperfect partakers of God's perfection, so also eternal life is an element of God's nature, and their inner man, even while tabernacling in mortal flesh, partaking of God's nature, is possessed of that life which is divine and eternal: they 'shall live for ever.' Being engrafted into Christ, they are rooted in God Himself, deep in heavenly and incorruptible soil; and so must live for ever. 'Your life is hid with Christ, in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.'<sup>1</sup>

*Verse 59.* 'These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.' Thus far the Lord had been speaking, not to His disciples only, but in a public synagogue, to a mixed assembly. Many of His hearers were hardened against the truth, and to such He would

<sup>1</sup> Colossians iii. 3, 4.

speak of spiritual things only in parables. What followed was between him and His disciples.

*Verse 60.* ‘Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’ No doubt there was much in the Lord’s discourse that they did not understand. But their exclamation meant, as that which follows proves, that the Lord’s doctrine was hard for them to accept. If they did not fully understand the Lord’s meaning, the drift of His discourse was clear enough for them to be offended at it. They saw that the doctrine demanded of them a self-surrender and self-sacrifice, a living and walking after the spirit and not after the flesh, a looking at things unseen and spiritual and not at things seen and temporal, a living above the world, and a dependence upon God, that they were altogether indisposed to.

*Verse 61.* ‘When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you?’

*Verse 62.* ‘What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?’

His former discourse with Nicodemus throws light upon this saying. In that, He said, ‘No man hath ascended into Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.’<sup>1</sup> There was a sense in which He, as Son of Man, had ascended into

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 13.

Heaven even while He was in the flesh on earth. From the moment that the human spirit of the Son of Man was taken into conjunction with His Divine Nature, the Son of Man was, in spirit, in Heaven as well as on earth. He had brought the Divine Nature down to earth, and so had brought Heaven to earth. And by intermingling the human spirit with the Divine Spirit, He had raised the human spirit to Heaven. We are nearer to Heaven, and nearer to Hell, in this life, than we are conscious of. Where God is, there is Heaven. Where God is not, there is Hell. Reconciliation to God and union with God is Heaven commenced on earth. Alienation from God is Hell commenced on earth. To *realise* the blessedness of reconciliation to God and union with God, is to *taste* on earth the joys of Heaven. To *realise* the misery of alienation from God is to *taste* on earth the horrors of Hell. When Christ lived among men in mortal flesh, He no doubt experienced at one and the same time both the unutterable joys of Heaven and the agonies of Hell; the joy of Heaven in His oneness with God, and the agony of Hell in realising, as the sinner's representative and sin-bearer, all the horror of the sinner's position as estranged from God, and under the curse and wrath of God—a horror that the sinner himself cannot experience in this life, because he cannot realise his real and

awful position. Now that Jesus has ascended into Heaven and is no longer in the flesh on earth among men, He is still, in spirit, both as Son of God and as Son of Man, on earth as well as in Heaven. And with his Spirit, alike human and Divine, the spirits of His people on earth unite and intermingle. And so we on earth can, in spirit, ascend to be with Him in Heaven. So the inspired writer, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of us as already 'come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant.'<sup>1</sup>

Jesus put this question to the disciples without answering it, 'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?' There may have been, even among the disciples, two classes of persons whose offence was produced by two different causes, and upon whose offence His ascension would produce two different effects. There were those who were offended because their minds were set on things below and their notions of Christ's kingdom were earthly. These would be still more offended when they saw Him ascend and thus convince them that He and His kingdom were

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews xii. 22-24.

not of this world. But there were also those who were offended because they understood not as yet whence He was and whither He went; they understood not the mystery of the Incarnation, they knew not that beside that human nature like their own, which was conceived and born on earth, there was in Him the eternal Sonship of God, that He came forth from the Father and would go to the Father.<sup>1</sup> These when they saw Him ascend up where He was before, would know indeed that He was the Son of God, that He was indeed the bread of God that came down from Heaven to give life unto the world. These would then cease to be offended.

*Verse 63.* 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' Those who were offended from not understanding what He meant by speaking of His flesh and blood as their meat and drink, when they saw Him ascend into Heaven would know that the flesh and blood which they had seen with their eyes and were now removed from their sight were not the flesh and blood of which He had spoken. Flesh of that kind, even His flesh, could profit them nothing. They had known Him after the flesh; but henceforth they would know Him thus no more.<sup>2</sup> But that which was to be for ever the life of their souls would not be removed from

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 28.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 16.

them by His Ascension. In spirit He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> And it is the Spirit that quickeneth our spirits. Here again we must refer to what He said to Nicodemus. ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’<sup>2</sup> Though flesh and spirit have the same Creator, and though they are brought into close contact, yet they are two separate realms. There are analogies between them; but they cannot intermingle. Flesh, though it be the flesh of Christ, cannot nourish spirit. Blood of the human body, though it be the blood of Christ, cannot give life to spirit. So Jesus says, ‘The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.’ By ‘the words that I speak unto you,’ He did not here mean His general doctrine, but the particular hard sayings of this discourse that gave offence, the difficult, and—to the unbelieving and earthly-minded—the offensive expressions, ‘I am bread,’ ‘My flesh is meat,’ ‘My blood is drink.’ These expressions are not to be taken literally; they are figures of those spirit-sustaining things which are spirit and life.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. xxviii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 6.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE LORD'S BODY IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE words we have been considering were spoken at the time of the Passover. With those words in their minds, it may be that many would have gone up to Jerusalem to keep the feast. A year passed away. Another Passover came round. It would be the last our Lord would keep on earth. He determined to observe it with His twelve Apostles, the representatives and foundation of His Church. The time had come for Him to be 'brought as a lamb to the slaughter;' <sup>1</sup> to offer up Himself, the true Paschal Lamb, 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'<sup>2</sup> All that was typified by the Passover was about to be accomplished. And most fitting it was that the great Antitype should be manifested at the very time the type was being celebrated.

## I.

*THE BREAD.*

MATTHEW xxvi. 26. 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and

<sup>1</sup> Is. liii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 29.



gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is My body.'

MARK xiv. 22. 'And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat ; this is My body.'

LUKE xxii. 19. 'And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me.'

For what purpose did Jesus break the bread ? His act of breaking is often said to represent the breaking of His body in sacrifice. St. Paul's account of the Lord's Supper is referred to in confirmation of this. In 1 Corinthians xi. 24, according to the Authorised Version, St. Paul said, 'And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body *which is broken* for you.' But the words 'which is broken' are omitted in the Revised Version, according to which St. Paul's report of the Lord's words was simply, 'This is My body, which is for you.'

Most inappropriate would have been the word 'broken' in reference to His body, as spoken by the Lord at the Passover feast, having just eaten, with His disciples, the lamb of which He was the Antitype—the lamb concerning which God had given such a strict command that not a bone of it should be broken.

A few hours after that Supper Jesus was crucified. It being the Passover, and the day

before the Sabbath, the unusual order was given by the Roman governor, at the request of the Jews, that the legs of Jesus and of the two malefactors who were crucified with Him should be broken; <sup>1</sup> an act of violence which was probably the commencement of a course of cruelty by which death was hastened when there was a reason for hastening it. The soldiers brake the legs of the two malefactors. 'But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs.' Death had already taken place from a natural cause. There was no necessity or excuse for any act of violence to hasten death. 'But one of the soldiers,' either to make sure of His death, or as a brutal outrage, 'with a spear, pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.'<sup>2</sup> And thus, in the opinion of many, was revealed a fact of deep importance—namely, that the real cause of the Saviour's death was not the cross itself, but literally the breaking of His heart through unutterable and crushing sorrow. That violent emotion of heart which was the cause of death was already at work when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death: <sup>3</sup> and 'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'<sup>4</sup> In this sense only—that is, in

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 31, 32, 33.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew xxvi. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxii. 44.

reference to His ruptured heart—could it be said that His body was broken for us.

These two circumstances—the prevention of the breaking of His bones, and the piercing of His side which caused to flow forth blood and water—made a deep impression upon the beloved Apostle, who said, ‘He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’<sup>1</sup> Who pierced the Lord Jesus and caused his heart to bleed and break? Not the soldier with his spear. That spear only brought to light the fact that the heart of Jesus was already pierced with many sorrows. But those whose iniquities were laid upon Him; whose griefs He bore and whose sorrows He carried; these pierced Him and caused His heart to break. This breaking of the heart was indeed no mere figure of speech. A literal and true rupture of the heart had taken place as the result of mental and spiritual anguish. But such a result would hardly justify the expression, ‘This is my body broken for you.’ It seems strange then, considering the strict prohibition that not a bone should be broken, that the expres-

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 35, 36, 37.

sion 'This is my body that is broken for you' should have crept into Christian phraseology.

Now let us inquire why such a strict charge was given by God that not a bone of the Passover lamb should be broken. Why did God so strictly forbid the lamb to be divided, and order that, if a lamb were too much for a household, two or more families should take a lamb between them, and meet in one house to eat it; so that, when the flesh was consumed, the skeleton of the lamb might remain whole, undivided and unbroken? Was it not because the lamb was intended to be a symbol of unity—'the unity of the Israelitish family, the unity of the nation, the unity of God with His people, whom He had taken into covenant with Himself'?<sup>1</sup> Doubtless this was the idea that the unbroken lamb was to convey to the Israelites. But it also had a significance that they did not understand. As they themselves, as a nation, were a type of the Church of God, so the lamb that might not be divided was a type of the unity that is betwixt Christ and His Church, and the unity that, in Christ Jesus, is betwixt God and His people. And the natural body of Jesus which hung upon the cross was also a type of that spiritual body of which He is the head and believers are the members. Not a bone of His natural body might be broken, to teach that Christ is not divided; to teach the unity

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*. 'Passover,' p. 725.

that is betwixt Him and His living members, betwixt Him and them together and His Father, and betwixt one member and another.

If, then, the breaking of the bread in the institution of the Lord's Supper did not signify the breaking of His body in sacrifice, why did the Lord break the bread? Surely, simply for distribution; and that, as far as possible, it might seem to be the same bread that all those who took part in that Supper, including Himself, partook of. God gave the children of Israel the ordinance of the Passover partly to be a bond of union, uniting them together. On this account the tribes might not eat it in any of their gates, but must all assemble in one place to observe it. And, in each house where it was observed, those who assembled around one board were all partakers of one meat—the flesh of one undivided and unbroken lamb. So Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Holy Communion to be a bond of union uniting His people to Himself and to one another. In it, all who meet at the same table of the Lord are partakers of one bread; and they are reminded that their Lord was lifted up to be the great centre of attraction and unity.

But the great figure of unity in the Lord's Supper is not the mere meeting of several persons at one common board, and partaking of one common food, eating the same bread and drinking from the same cup. There is a figure of

unity far more forcible than that, and that far more perfectly represents the unity that is betwixt Christ and His Church. That figure is the human body, every member of which is nourished by the same particle of bread eaten by the mouth. The natural body of Jesus, a bone of which might not be broken, was pre-eminently such a figure. But each individual who partakes of the Lord's Supper supplies, in his own person, the like figure, and his body is a representation of the whole Church, of which his spirit is only a member.

Let us now consider the Lord's words, 'This is My body, which is given for you.'

In these few words doubtless there are depths we cannot fathom, and mysteries we cannot solve. But believing them to be identical with the words He spake in His discourse at Capernaum, 'The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world,'<sup>1</sup> let us see if, interpreted in the same way that those words have been, they have not a very real meaning. As in that saying, so in this, we must not say that the sentence contains both the figure and the interpretation—that the bread is the figure and the body the interpretation—for bread and body both belong to the same figure or parable. But though primarily the Lord was expressing only the figure, it was a figure intended to suggest its own spiritual interpretation.

The Lord pronounced a real physical fact when

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 51.

He said, 'This bread is My body.' Throughout Nature there are common elements in the thing nourished and in that which nourishes it. There is actual elemental identity between bread and the flesh that it produces—as there is also between wine and the blood that it produces. They are one and the same thing in two different forms. The same elemental properties are common to both. Place bread and wine in a certain position, subject them to a certain process, and they are transformed—transubstantiated—into flesh and blood. Bread, as the staff of life, is the bone and sinew, flesh and blood, of the human organism. We are not far from speaking literal truth when we say, 'Bread is body,' 'Bread is flesh.' We see the same fundamental principle in another department of nature. There is identity between soil and vegetation. Subject soil to the action of a living seed or root, and it is taken up, absorbed, transformed into wood and sap and blossom and fruit. All the substance and life of the branches and fruits of a tree are the product of the earth—they are soil and atmosphere in another form. There is an exact analogy between these processes of nature and the process of grace. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was, in part, intended to be an object lesson to teach us this vital truth. How are our spirits to be fed with Divine and heavenly food, and nourished unto everlasting life? Through Christ, the God-man, the Media-

tor. As the physical organism intervenes between the several members and the food that supplies their flesh and blood, and as the vegetable organism intervenes between the branches that bear blossoms and fruits and the soil that is their nourishment, so Christ intervenes between our spirits and their Divine and heavenly food. There is essential identity between the bread of heaven or nature of God in Christ, and the spiritual flesh or nature of Christ in us—between the wine of heaven or life of God in Christ, and the spiritual blood or life of Christ in us. As the virtue of bread and wine is transmitted through the physical organism to the members, so the essence and benefits of divine and heavenly food are transmitted through Christ to us, His spiritual members. And so we, through Christ, are partakers of the Divine nature.

According to St. Luke's Gospel our Lord said 'This is my body which is given for you.' It is not at all certain that He used the words 'given for you.' But if He did, the words may apply both to the natural body of the figure and to the spiritual body of the interpretation. His natural body that would eat the bread and make it a part of itself was about to be offered in sacrifice. But the words 'given for you' would apply just as truly to His spiritual Body as to His natural body. For He gives the nature and life of His spiritual Body to His spiritual members. And



that whole Body of which He is the Head and representative He gives in sacrifice to God. For He presents with Himself to the Father those who in spirit are one with Him.

Has not St. Paul clearly given this meaning to our Lord's words? In 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 he wrote: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion (or participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion (or participation) of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' How often is the 16th verse quoted without the explanatory 17th verse! But reading the two together, we find St. Paul in the clearest and most emphatic manner connecting the expression 'Communion of the body and blood of Christ' with the figure of the body and its members.

'We,' he says, 'being many, are one bread, and one body.' We, as members of a body which eats heavenly bread, *are one bread*. He here identifies the members with the bread by which they are nourished. Just as the Lord, only reversing the order, identified the bread with the members that it nourishes, when He said, 'This bread is my body,' and (John vi. 51) 'The bread that I will give is my flesh.' Both alike, by these sayings, expressed the truth that we, in Christ, are partakers of the Divine nature,

and that dwelling in Christ, we dwell in God and God in us.

Again, he says, 'We are all partakers of that one bread.' The nourishing properties of food taken at a single meal are equally distributed through the whole frame, so that hand and foot are replenished with flesh and blood by the same crumb of bread. So all who are in Christ are partakers of the same Divine nature. 'It is the same God that worketh all in all.'<sup>1</sup>

From the fact that in these two verses St. Paul uses the word 'body' twice, and that in the 17th verse he unmistakably meant the spiritual body of Christ, it is only reasonable to conclude that it is in that spiritual body of Christ that we have communion, or participation.

It is an erroneous notion, that we can have communion in that visible flesh of Christ which was nailed to the cross, and communion in that visible blood of Christ which flowed from the wounds in His side, and hands, and feet and brow. It is a misuse of words to speak of spiritual communion in that which is material. We may speak of contemplation and meditation on the physical flesh and blood of Christ. But Communion, or participation, as the word really means, would be a wrong word to use. Moreover, Communion, or participation, is here associated by St. Paul with membership, and we can have

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 6.

no membership in the natural body of Christ. Christ's natural body was complete in itself. But it is not so with His spiritual Body. His spiritual Body is no more complete without the incorporation of the spirits of those who believe in Him, than a physical human body is complete which consists of a head and vital organs without limbs, or than a tree is complete which consists of a root and trunk without branches. Together with His human body He took a human spirit to be the Head and nucleus of a spiritual Body that He might gather together into it all those spirits that are willing to be gathered in, whom in Himself He will present as one new and perfect man to the Father of spirits. This is the Body of Christ, in which in the Holy Communion we have communion, or participation.

In the next chapter (xi. 29), St. Paul speaks of the condemnation they incur who, in the Lord's Supper, do not 'discern the Lord's body.' Still we must take the word 'body' in the same sense, and believe that the unworthy recipient of the Lord's Supper is he who does not discriminate between the natural body of Jesus and that spiritual Body of which it was a figure, who does not discern that Body of Christ of which he is a member, who does not realise the union of his spirit with Christ's spirit, and his dependence upon Christ, and who does not regard the Holy Communion as a means of spiritual communion

with Christ and His members, and, through Christ, with God.

And the very next chapter (xii.) contains a detailed and striking working out of the figure of the body and its members. *Verse 12.* 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.' *Verse 13.* 'For by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body—Jews and Gentiles—and have been all made to drink into one spirit.' *Verses 14–26.* Foot and hand, the organs of seeing, hearing and smelling, have severally their special functions, but all form one body; have sympathy one with another; suffer or rejoice together. *Verse 27.* 'Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.' There is no reason whatever why, in these three chapters, the expression the Lord's Body should not consistently be taken in precisely the same sense. And this being so, the Lord's Body that we are to discern, or discriminate, in the Lord's Supper, and which we must have communion in and be partakers of, is that spiritual body of which His spirit is the Head, and our spirits are the members.

We would now inquire whether eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ was foreshadowed by eating the flesh of the lamb of the Passover. In the type the flesh was eaten but the blood was not drunk. In the antitype the flesh

of Christ is to be eaten and His blood is to be drunk. The drinking the blood of Christ had no counterpart in the type. May we not fairly infer that the eating the flesh of Christ had not its counterpart in the eating the flesh of the lamb? The type may have foreshadowed the fact that the Lamb of God is the sustenance of our spirits. But it was not intended to illustrate the exact way in which we derive spiritual sustenance and life from Him. It was not intended to teach that we are to eat the flesh of Christ as the Israelites ate the flesh of the lamb with their mouths, or that we are to drink the blood of Christ as the Israelites could, but might not, drink the blood of the lamb with their mouths.

When our Lord gave the bread to His disciples, He said 'This do in remembrance of Me.' He did not say 'in remembrance of *My death,*' but 'in remembrance of ME.' We must take that ME in all its fulness; Me, in My Person and offices; Me, in My whole history; Me, as the Son of God, and as the Son of Man; Me, as the Incarnate Word, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Atoner, the Mediator; Me, as the Head of My Body, the Church; Me, in My Divine Nature as the Bread of God from Heaven; Me, in My spiritual humanity as the giver of My spiritual flesh and blood to My spiritual members.

## II.

*THE CUP.*

MATTHEW xxvi. 27, 28. 'And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'

MARK xiv. 23, 24. 'And He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it.'

'And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.'

LUKE xxii. 20. 'Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.'

What is this 'blood of the new covenant'—the blood which is shed for the remission of sins, the blood that our Lord here connected with the wine in the sacramental cup, the blood, therefore, which we must drink or have no life in us?

If we have rightly interpreted our Lord's sayings in His discourse at Capernaum, we must come to this conclusion—that while in certain passages of Scripture that refer to the blood of Christ there is undoubted reference to the physical blood of the natural body of Christ, and while that physical blood performed an important part in His work of redemption and atonement, yet the expression

‘the blood of Christ’ as the source of spiritual life always has an ultimate reference to a *spiritual* life-blood, and implies an analogy between the physical and the spiritual blood.

### PHYSICAL BLOOD.

We will consider first the important part in the work of redemption and atonement that the physical blood of the natural body of Christ performed.

1. The physical blood of Christ was the blood that He had in common with every member of the human race. ‘Since, then, the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same.’<sup>1</sup> The natural human blood which Jesus had in common with us, differed from that which flows in our veins in one important particular. We inherit a sinful nature. It may be said that sin is in our very blood, for sin is inseparable from the body of flesh and blood which we derive from our parents. But in Him, whose human nature was from its very commencement in union with the Divine nature, the stream of life was purified at the fountain-head. There was no inherited sin in His blood. He, as it were, introduced into humanity a pure and sinless blood. His precious blood, though perfectly human, never had the least taint of the poison of sin, never was heated

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

by sinful lusts and passions. So that the blood of Jesus, as it flowed in His natural, living human body, still speaks and tells of the perfect sinlessness, righteousness, and holiness that were realised in Him, and to which, by the grace of God and by spiritual union with Him, we, even in our mortal bodies, may be conformed, so that our very blood may become more and more free from the taint of sin. It speaks of that devotion to the will of God, that living sacrifice, or consecration of His body, soul, and spirit, through which we have acceptance with God.

2. The blood of Jesus that fell in great drops upon the ground in His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, bore witness to the truth of His own utterance, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' Those drops of blood tell us that He was then bearing the sins of the world, that the sins of the world were then weighing as a heavy burden upon His soul. They bear witness to the exceeding sinfulness of man, the contemplation and realisation of which caused such agony of mind, and exceeding sorrow of soul to the Saviour. And that blood of Jesus that flowed in the form of blood and water from His pierced and broken heart as His body hung upon the tree, tells again of the sin of the world, and of Him as the bearer of the world's sin. And it tells of the alone effectual sacrifice for sin that He offered to God on man's behalf—the sacrifice of a



troubled spirit and a broken heart, a heart broken in sorrow for the world's sin, the sacrifice through which we have propitiation with God.

3. The blood of Jesus that may be specially called the blood of His cross, the blood that flowed from the wounds inflicted by the hands of wicked and cruel men, the blood that the crown of thorns may have brought upon His brow and that the scourge brought upon His back, the blood that flowed from the wounds of the nails in His hands and feet and from the flesh-wound in His side caused by the spear (as distinguished from the phenomenon of blood and water from His broken heart that bore its own distinctive witness), this blood tells of the exceeding sin and desperate wickedness of the men of this world, that even in ignorance of what they did, could inflict such wounds on the sinless Son of Man, that could reject the Saviour of the world, and crucify the Lord of glory. For the sin of the world reached its climax when it shed the innocent blood of the Incarnate Son of God. And further, the blood of His cross tells of His conflict with sin and victory over sin. It was the blood that flowed from the wound that the serpent inflicted in the heel of the lower fleshly humanity of the seed of the woman in that conflict in which the seed of the woman inflicted the fatal wound in the serpent's head. The prince of this world, the powers of darkness, and the rulers of this

world, conspired and strove to overcome Christ. They endeavoured to make Him desist from the work for which He had come into this world, and to claim Him as their own. They assailed Him with temptations and threats. They offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and they threatened Him with their worst punishment if He would not yield. He would not yield, and so they rejected Him. He accepted their rejection and endured the cross. His faithfulness unto death, even the death of the cross, His acceptance at the hands of the prince of the world of the cross rather than a worldly kingdom, was a great moral and spiritual victory over the devil, the world, and sin. Through that victory we have deliverance and redemption from the power of the devil. The blood of His cross tells of that victory and redemption; and as peace follows victory, it tells of peace and reconciliation wrought between man and God. 'For it was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through Him (i.e. Christ), to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross.'<sup>1</sup>

To recapitulate: the physical blood of Jesus ever lives in the mind of the Church, bearing witness to, speaking eloquently of, outwardly expressing these three things: 1. The perfect sinlessness, righteousness, and holiness of Jesus, the Lord our righteousness, through which we

<sup>1</sup> Colossians i. 20.

have acceptance with God. 2. The identification of Jesus with the sin of the world, His bearing sin, His sorrow for sin even unto death, and His offering of the only effectual sacrifice for sin—the sacrifice of a broken heart—through which we have propitiation with God. 3. The degradation and depravity of fallen man, the enmity of the devil to God and His Christ, and the enmity of the world to holiness, Christ's conflict with the evil one and His victory and triumph over evil, through which we have redemption from the power of evil.

But though the physical blood of Jesus thus speaks volumes, and pleads eloquently and effectually, its efficacy stops there. It has no inherent ever-living spiritual virtue in itself. It does not itself effect that for which it pleads. It must have been shed as a preliminary to remission of sins, redemption, and atonement, but it is not itself the blood that cleanses from sin, or that makes us at one with God. It is a blood of the past that no longer exists, though it still speaks and pleads. We need an ever-living blood that can now, in a real and true sense, touch our spirits, that we can drink in, that can cleanse us from all sin and give us life eternal. This living, active, life-giving blood, can only be a purely spiritual blood.

*SPIRITUAL BLOOD.*

This Blood cannot be adequately illustrated by any shed blood, or by blood separated from the living organism. We must not picture to ourselves as a representation of the spiritual Blood of Christ a bath, or pool, or river of blood into which we can plunge and be clean, nor any outward application of blood. Nor must we picture to ourselves a cup full of blood which we have to drink. Such a picture is in reality utterly repulsive. Such illustrations may be used as mere figures of speech, but they do not express true analogies, nor do such uses of blood come within our practical experience. But we must seek our illustration of the spiritual Blood of Christ where living human blood really does give life and purify; where, indeed, the blood is the life, and this can only be found where alone human blood is living, active, and operative, and that is in the living human organism. We must set before our mind's eye the figure of the human body with its head, and heart, and members, the body that breathes the breath of life, the body that receives food and drink, such as bread and wine, and that assimilates that food and drink, and supplies to its members the flesh and blood that the bread and wine produce, the body in which the heart sends forth a continuous stream of living blood, which flows through the arteries and fills the veins of every member and limb, and circulates through

the whole system, conveying life and health and purity to every member, and returns again to the heart to be there again replenished and quickened, and again sent forth on its life-giving course.

In this living human organism we have a true picture of the Body of Christ, which consists of Himself, and all those who by the Holy Spirit have been created into Him, and are in living union with Him. Of that Body the Holy Spirit is the breath of life, and Christ Himself is both the Head and the Heart. As the Head, He receives for us the bread of God and the wine of God from Heaven—His own Divine nature and life. And as the Heart, there flows from Him a stream of pure spiritual Life-Blood that conveys to our spirits His own life and the very life of God, quickening our spirits, and truly purifying and cleansing them from all sin, and causing our lives to flow back into Him.

So in the living blood of the living human organism, we have a true picture of what Jesus called 'My Blood of the new covenant,' that Blood which performs a part in the region of grace that corresponds to the part that physical blood performs in the region of nature, which is to the spiritual body what physical blood is to the natural body. Of this Blood of Jesus, St. John says (1 John i. 7), it 'cleanseth us from all sin.' St. John was speaking of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We

have fellowship with the Father through spiritual incorporation and membership with the Son. If we dwell in Christ as living members we have life. If the circulation of the blood is stopped in any limb, that limb will soon mortify, the very blood that is in it turning to corruption by ceasing to be in communication with the heart. So if we, as professed members of Christ, cease to have communion and fellowship with Him by faith and prayer, if we cease to drink in His life, spiritual death ensues. If the hand is poisoned or wounded, it is the pure, healthy, living blood, replenished and quickened by wholesome food and drink and pure air, flowing afresh from the heart, that purifies the poisoned blood and heals the wound. So it is the spiritual Life-Blood of Jesus, who lives by the Father, flowing into us as we dwell in Him, that cleanses us from all sin. For sin is a deadly poison. It is separation from God and loss of Divine life and likeness to God. But when we are in living union with Christ, and in Him brought into communication and contact with God, the stream of Divine, heavenly, spiritual life flows into our spirits, conveying to us the life of God and making us partakers of the nature of God. That Life-Blood of Jesus is the antidote to the poison of sin, and gives us the godlike, godly nature, holiness, and freedom from sin. So that there is reality in such statements as these : 'The Blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth

us from all sin.' 'The Blood of Christ' shall 'cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' 'Except ye drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.' And even the expressions 'The blood shed for the remission of sins,' and 'for redemption from sin,' though they have immediate reference to the shedding of Christ's physical blood in His agony and on the cross as a necessary preliminary to the remission of sins and redemption from sin, yet have ultimate reference to the pouring forth of the spiritual Blood from Him as the Heart, into his spiritual members—that Blood which is the life of Him who lives by the Father, and drinks the wine of God, and which becomes in us the very life of God.

The figures of blood under the Old Dispensation were necessarily drawn from dead or shed blood, and took the form of visible manifestations and external applications and sprinklings. No other figures were possible. Until the atonement was accomplished it was impossible for the mind of man to have any clear idea of the atonement. Consequently it was a mystery hidden from ages, and only revealed as it was accomplished. And those to whom the atonement itself was an unrevealed mystery, could not possibly see the true significance of those figures, rites, and ceremonies of blood that were shadows of the atonement. The untutored and unspiritual minds of those

times had to be taught by figures, which at least were visible to the eye, that there was a mystery of blood which they could not understand, but which would be revealed in due time. Such figures as the vine and its branches, and the body and its members, and the living organism with its circulation of the blood—such figures as alone can set forth that mystery of godliness which is 'Christ in us,' would have been neither comprehensible to them, nor adapted to ritual and ceremonial purposes.

Indeed it may be doubted whether the early Church could see the full force of the figure of blood. It is comparatively modern science that has discovered the principle of the circulation of the blood, through the operation of which bread and wine are transubstantiated into flesh and blood, and that has brought to light the elemental identity that exists between food and that which it produces, and has demonstrated that there is scientific truth in the statements, 'bread is flesh,' 'wine is blood.'

Our Lord spoke for all ages, and the Apostles wrote under inspiration for all ages. If, then, their words had indeed reference to an analogy between nature and grace—between the physical and the spiritual organisms—as science advances and knowledge of the physical organism increases, the full force and significance of the figurative language of the New Testament become more



clear, and light is thrown upon the doctrines of Christianity.

*THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.*

When Jesus said, 'This is My blood of the new testament, or covenant,' He clearly had in His mind the words of Moses, Exodus xxiv. 8, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you.' It is necessary that we should refer to the occasion when Moses spake those words. It was the solemn occasion of giving the law and inaugurating the old covenant God had given Moses—the Ten Commandments and other laws contained in Exodus xx.—xxiii. Then we read, xxiv. 3, 4, 'And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.' These words Moses wrote in a book, which is called, in the 7th verse, 'the Book of the Covenant.' Some think that this Book of the Covenant contained only the series of laws that immediately followed the Ten Commandments. Others think that it contained the Ten Commandments. The Commandments were not yet written on the two tables of stone. Moses had again to draw near to God on the mountain, to receive the two tables on which the Commandments were written with

the finger of God. Then it was that for the first time he continued forty days and forty nights with the Lord on the mountain and neither ate nor drank. And then too it was that God gave instructions concerning the Tabernacle and instituted all the rites and ceremonies of the service of the Tabernacle. But whatever the Book of the Covenant actually contained, we may regard it as representing the whole law of the old Covenant. For the solemn ceremony that Moses performed over that book is declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 18-21) to have been the dedication of the first covenant. It was in the performance of that ceremony that Moses spake the words, 'Behold the blood of the Covenant.'

EXODUS xxiv. 3-8. 'And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.'

'And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

'And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.

'And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

‘And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.

‘And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words.’

The comments on this description in ‘The Speaker’s Commentary’ are very striking:—‘It should be observed that the blood which sealed the covenant was the blood of burnt offerings and peace offerings. The sin offering had not yet been instituted. . . . Half of the blood had been put into basins, and half of it had been cast upon the altar. The book of the covenant was then read, and after that the blood in the basins was cast “upon the people.” It was cast either upon the elders, or those who stood foremost; or, as others have supposed, upon the twelve pillars representing the twelve tribes, as the first half had been cast upon the altar, which witnessed the presence of Jehovah. The blood thus divided between the two parties to the covenant signified the sacramental union between the Lord and His people.’

The fact that the blood which sealed the covenant was not the blood of a sin offering, but of burnt offerings and peace offerings, is very important. Whatever was the idea intended to

be conveyed by the blood of the sin offering, the idea intended to be conveyed by the blood of burnt offerings and peace offerings could not have been that of physical sufferings and death. 'The blood is the life,' and the blood of such sacrifices was suggestive of life rather than death. The shedding and pouring out of blood at the altar was expressive of life consecrated and returned to God in recognition that He is the author, and giver, and claimer of life. And the blood sprinkled or cast upon the worshippers was expressive of life applied to them.

The impressive ceremony that Moses performed was a foreshadowing of the new covenant. In it we see, flowing from the same source, two streams of blood, one toward God and the other toward man. So from Jesus Christ we see flowing two streams of life, one toward God and one toward man; the life of man represented by Him as the Son of Man, flowing toward God; and the life of God represented by Him as the Son of God, flowing toward man. He who poured out His life in sacrifice to God at the same time became the source of eternal life for us. Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is the medium of communication between God and man, through whom the life of God reaches our spirits. 'God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in His Son.'<sup>1</sup> Jesus Christ is the central heart of redeemed and

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 11.

renewed humanity—of those regenerate spirits that form in Him one body. Taking the popular notion that wine, more than other drink, makes blood, the wine that we drink is converted into blood, and, by the action of the heart, forced through the arteries into every limb of the body; and, having done its work of replenishing the tissues, it returns again, through the veins, to the heart. So the life of God flows, through Jesus Christ, into our spirits; and our lives, being thus quickened by the life of God, as our spirits are quickened by the Holy Spirit, flow back into Christ, and through Christ, who poured out His own life in sacrifice to God, our whole being—body, soul, and spirit—is presented a living sacrifice to God, and our lives flow into the life of God. ‘The mystery of godliness’—the mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations—the mystery that was typified by the blood of animals in the old dispensation, but is made manifest in Christ, is ‘Christ in you the hope of glory.’<sup>1</sup> God in Christ and Christ in us—we in Christ and Christ in God—this is the mysterious secret of godliness whereby the very life and nature of God are imparted to us, and we become Godlike and godly.

We must now notice the distinguishing features of the two covenants. The first covenant, which Moses sealed by the blood of animals, was

<sup>1</sup> Colossians i. 27.

of this nature. God gave man a law. The moral and most important part of that law consisted of the Ten Commandments, which were written upon two tables of stone; which fact was suggestive of the hardness, coldness, and severity of the covenant, and that the law of righteousness was naturally altogether external to the man. And God gave man to understand that if he, on his part, would keep the law, without breaking the least commandment, he should remain in God's favour; and God, on His part, would be his God, and make him His subject; and would be a father to him, and make him His son. That law man could not keep, and therefore man could not remain in that covenant. And the evident, and afterwards avowed, purpose of that covenant was to convince man of the need of a better covenant, and to prepare the way for it. And most graciously, the very institution of the old covenant was accompanied by a ceremony that foreshadowed the new covenant; and the blood with which Moses publicly sealed the old covenant was figurative of the living blood of the better covenant.

God's purpose to replace the old covenant by a new and better covenant was predicted, and the nature of the new covenant was strikingly intimated by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xxxi. 31-34):—

‘Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I

will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'

This description of the New Covenant is quoted almost word for word in Hebrews viii. 8-12.

The distinguishing feature of the New Covenant, in which it differed from the Old, is expressed in these words, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' The Old Covenant gave man a law, written on tables of stone, and said, 'Keep the Commandments and live.' But it could not give life or produce righteousness. The New Covenant gives life and says, 'Live, and you will keep the Command-

ments.' Under it the law is written, 'not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.'<sup>1</sup> God's law becomes naturalised in the human heart and mind. Under the Old Covenant God said, 'Keep my commandments and I will be to you a Father and you shall be to Me a son.' Under the New Covenant God says, accept the relationship of sonship, be created into Christ, receive the spirit of adoption, and you will have the heart and disposition to keep the commandments of your God and Father. The Old Covenant was not indeed untempered with mercy. In those who believed faith was counted for righteousness. And the law was accompanied by sacrifices and ceremonies, which foreshadowed the mystery of godliness to be manifested in the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is truly a covenant of life. In it we have 'life in Christ Jesus,' and the life of God in us. 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.'<sup>2</sup> The New Covenant is in fact the admission of our spirits, quickened by the Holy Spirit, into Christ's spirit and their union with His spirit as in one body, and oneness of life and being with Him as He is one with the Father, with the accompanying requirement from us of repentance, faith, and righteousness. It is the being created in Christ Jesus unto good

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John v. 11, 12.



works ; membership in the body of Christ that we may be instruments of righteousness unto God. And the law of the New Covenant is, 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.'

We may see now the force of our Lord's words, 'This (wine) is my blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.'

As wine is converted into blood by the action of the heart, and the blood circulates through the limbs, is the life of the limbs, and returns again to the heart ; so the life of God in Christ flows through Christ into us and is the life of our spirits. Of the wine it may be said, 'it is blood ;' as of the bread it may be said, 'it is flesh.' So of the life of God in Christ it may be said, 'it is our life.' As it was, so to speak, the same blood that in the ceremony we have considered flowed in the two directions ; so, if we are in Christ, in covenant with God, the life of God is our life, for in Him we live ; and our life is God's life, for it is given and devoted to God and belongs to God. We are partakers of the life and of the nature of God, and through Christ our lives flow back into God as living sacrifices, acceptable to God in and through the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

Having instituted the ordinance, the supper being ended, Judas having gone out to betray his Lord into the hands of sinners, the Lord remained behind with the eleven to give them His last words of instruction before He died. Then it was that

He delivered that wondrous and precious discourse contained in John xiv., xv., and xvi.; and then poured out that sublime prayer contained in John xvii. We have already considered how the parable of the Vine in John xv. throws light upon the discourse in John vi. It equally throws light upon the words of institution just spoken. It shows that His purpose in instituting the ordinance was to represent that there may exist between Him and His Church a union as close as that between the vine and the branches, and the body and its members, and to provide a means of producing and increasing such a union. It is only reasonable to expect that in the sublime prayer to His Father into which, from addressing the apostles, He suddenly passed, expression should be given to the great underlying truth of the Lord's Supper. The great purpose of that prayer may be summed up in these repeated words, 'that they may be one as We are one.' At first this prayer was for the eleven. Then He included in it all who should believe in Him, 'that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.'<sup>1</sup> Then He added, 'and the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one.'<sup>2</sup> This glory of Jesus was His divine nature. 'I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.'<sup>3</sup> So that in Christ we

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 20, 21.      <sup>2</sup> John xvii. 22.      <sup>3</sup> John xvii. 23.

are partakers both of the divine glory and of the divine perfection. We see then that the discourse at Capernaum, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the parable of the vine, and the sublime prayer to the Father, have all four the same key-note—namely, that believing in Jesus we dwell in Him and He in us, and through Him we dwell in God and God in us. And the First Epistle of the beloved Apostle St. John, who recorded the two discourses and the prayer, has exactly the same key-note, repeated again and again, that he who loves God and keeps His commandments is he who dwells in God and in whom God dwells. And our Church in the Communion Service consistently with this declares the benefit of receiving the Holy Sacrament with a true penitent heart and lively faith to be that, 'then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.'

## CHAPTER III.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A SACRAMENT.

WE have now to consider the Lord's Supper as a Sacrament and an ordinance of the Church. The Church of England has well defined a sacrament as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.' If we accept this definition, we must adhere strictly to it, or we can have no right understanding of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We must avoid all ambiguity of expression and, whatever words and phrases we use, all uncertainty as to whether we are speaking of the outward and visible sign or of the inward and spiritual grace, and whether we are using figurative or literal language. We must keep the two parts of the sacrament perfectly distinct. The one part must be consistently regarded as an outward and visible sign that concerns only the outward physical part of our being; and the other as an inward and spiritual grace that concerns only the inward spiritual part

of our being. We must bear in mind that the principle upon which the sacrament is founded is that there is an analogy between the human body and that spiritual body of which Christ is the head and we are the members. The outward sign must therefore be a true sign and representation of the inward spiritual grace. We must believe that to the proper, faithful, and prayerful use of the outward sign our Lord himself has attached the promised gift of the inward spiritual grace signified and represented. But we must not regard the outward sign as converted into or capable of being converted into the spiritual grace.

If we have put a right construction upon our Lord's words in His discourse at Capernaum and in instituting the sacrament, and upon St. Paul's words in reference to the sacrament, we must see that both the outward visible sign and the inward spiritual grace are of a complex nature, and consist of two factors,—food, and that which food produces;—that each part is in fact a process, and consists of a transubstantiation,—the one a transubstantiation of nature, whereby ordinary bread and wine are transubstantiated into natural flesh and blood; and the other a transubstantiation of grace, whereby the bread of God from Heaven and the implied wine of God from Heaven, are transubstantiated into the flesh and blood of Christ in His members. The expression 'flesh

and blood' being here as figurative and spiritual in its significance, as is the expression 'bread of God from Heaven'—the two expressions being in fact two factors of one figure.

The confusion of thought and the misunderstanding that exist on this subject proceed in great measure from not recognising these facts, that each part of the sacrament consists of two factors, that in the outward sign both factors are strictly natural, and that in the inward grace both are distinctly spiritual, though expressed in figurative and natural language.

In the Church Catechism the outward part or sign is said to be 'Bread and Wine which the Lord hath commanded to be received.' But here only one factor of the complete outward sign, the first, namely food, is mentioned. There is a deficiency which in our minds we must supply, namely, the physical flesh and blood that the bread and wine produce in the human limbs. And we must bear in mind that between the bread and wine and the flesh and blood that they produce there is elemental identity, so that it may be truly said 'Bread is flesh' and 'Wine is blood.'

And in the Catechism the inward part or thing signified is said to be, 'The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.' Here, again, only one factor of the inward grace, the second, namely, that which

spiritual food produces, is mentioned. We must in our minds supply the deficiency, namely, the bread of God, and the wine of God, which produce the spiritual flesh and blood of Christ in the spiritual members. And we must bear in mind that between the Divine and Heavenly food and drink, and the spiritual flesh and blood that they produce, there is essential identity;—there is essential identity between the nature and life of God in Christ, and the nature and life of Christ in us.

It is a fallacy to speak of bread and wine as figures of the flesh and blood of Christ. They produce natural flesh and blood. But they are true figures of Divine and Heavenly Bread and Wine. And natural flesh and blood are true figures of the spiritual flesh and blood of Christ.

Wonderful as is the process of nature that the natural bread and wine of the sacrament undergo in the bodies of the recipients, a process that is in fact a natural transubstantiation, they still work only in the region of nature, and cannot go beyond and reach the spiritual part of our being. But in the region of grace there is an analogous process that exactly corresponds to the process of nature, and that is from beginning to end a spiritual process—spiritual in its source and spiritual in its effect. For the simple primary object of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to teach, under the analogy of nature, the truth

that dwelling in Christ we dwell in God and God in us, and that through Christ the nature and life of God are transmitted to us, and we become partakers of the Divine nature.

This interpretation is not inconsistent with the teaching of the Catechism in answer to the question, 'What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?' 'The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.' Only this answer is altogether too condensed. To convey any explanation some such answer as this is needed: 'Spiritual strength and refreshment, divine substance and life, for our spirits, from God through Christ, as our members have strength and refreshment, flesh and blood, from bread and wine, through the body.'

The Romish doctrine that natural bread and wine are transubstantiated into the flesh and blood of Christ, is a confusion: it crosses the line of separation between the material and spiritual, between nature and grace; it is a transubstantiation of the first factor of the outward sign into the second factor of the inward grace. This transubstantiation is supposed to take place, not within the recipient, but in the hand of the priest. Then this outward sign converted into the inward grace—this spiritualised matter and materialised grace—has to be received into the hand and mouth and body of the recipient, and to pass



through the processes of mastication, digestion, and assimilation, and then at some undefinable point to pass from the body to the spirit. For even those who take the most materialistic view admit that the part of the man ultimately and really benefited is not the body, which must still hunger and thirst and taste of death, but the immortal spirit. Now this teaching is directly opposed to a clear unmistakable declaration of our Lord.

The Jews thought that they might defile their souls by eating certain ceremonially unclean meats. But Jesus said to them, 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man.'<sup>1</sup> And He explained why. Because it does not—and we may fairly infer that He meant it cannot—enter into his heart; meaning, by his heart, the inner spiritual part of his being. Our Lord clearly meant to impress upon them that the natural body, with its mouth and wonderful digestive organs, is no channel of communication to the spirit for evil. And if it cannot be so for evil, neither can it be so for good. Nor can material substances be vehicles of inward spiritual poison or inward spiritual grace. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.' It is the spirit that quickeneth spirit. The flesh profiteth nothing. Flesh and

<sup>1</sup> Matthew xv. 11.

spirit are a parallelism; they never can merge the one into the other; they are distinct regions, existing together in the same complete humanity, which in many ways act and react upon one another, influence and sympathise with one another, but are incapable of direct interchange of nature, or absorption the one in the other.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S  
NATURAL BODY.

THE ground we have so far taken is this. We are made partakers of the divine nature, and quickened with the life of God by the union of our spirits with Christ's spirit as in one body. The Lord instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a means whereby we realise and more fully partake of that benefit. The way in which that benefit is conferred upon us is illustrated and represented by the analogy of the human body; but the medium through which it is conferred is the human *spirit* of Jesus, and not His natural *body*.

We have now to consider how far there is reference in the Lord's Supper to the natural body of Jesus Christ, to His physical sufferings and literal blood-shedding and death. We may say at once there is reference to the natural body of Jesus just so far as it was concerned in the work of our redemption. How far was it so concerned? How far was that natural flesh and blood which He derived from His human mother,

which was subjected to like infirmities with other men, which endured the cross and tasted death, instrumental in our salvation? This question has been already answered, but more remains to be said.

If we regarded the body of Jesus only as the tabernacle in which the Son of God dwelt among men, and the visible medium through which God manifested Himself and His great love to man; and if we regarded the life of Jesus Christ in the flesh only as the field of action in which He wrought man's salvation, great importance and high honour must be attached to that body and that life. But to discern the important part that the natural body of Jesus performed in our redemption, we must bear in mind the peculiarly representative character of that body.

Conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, the body of Jesus bore a peculiar relationship to every member of the human race. This peculiar relationship is expressed in the words of Isaiah: 'Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given.'<sup>1</sup> We must regard the body of Jesus as something more than the offspring of Mary. We must regard *the human race*, taken as a whole, as the human parent of Jesus; and we must regard Him as born to the human race rather than to one woman, and Mary we must regard as the selected representative of the race;

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah ix. 6.

selected—not for any special qualification in herself, though, as a woman, not unworthy—to supply that humanity which the Son of God would take into conjunction with His divinity. Every member of the human race may claim relationship almost of consanguinity to Jesus. That body of Jesus, then, to which we all may claim the closest relationship—the relationship of brotherhood—was a representative body, truly representing us before God the Father; and all that He did or endured in that body was representative and vicarious.

In a general sense, Christ was the representative of the whole human race. A member of Parliament represents a whole constituency, consisting of some who approve of him and others who disapprove; but he only beneficially represents those whose views are identical with his own. So Christ represents the whole world before the Father, before whom He stands as the Saviour of all men, the Redeemer of all mankind. But He beneficially and savingly represents those only who in spirit are identified with Him, who are members of that body of which He is the head, who are, in a spiritual sense, one flesh and one blood with Him, who are one with Him, as He is one with the Father. When we are in that position, then we are in every respect identified with Him. We have placed ourselves in the same position before the Father that He Himself

was in. We have made Him, in every respect, our own. We have made His very natural body of physical flesh and blood our own, as a possession. As that body was a representative body, we claim all that He did in it as done for us. And as His natural body belonged as a possession to that spiritual body to which He and we alike belong, we claim the acts of that natural body as more than representative acts ; we claim them as the very acts of that spiritual body of which we form a part. All that He did in the flesh to satisfy and please God become our own acts ; we become in God's sight partakers in the doing of them, because of the absolute oneness of our spirits with His spirit. And so those who, through faith, are joined to the Lord as one spirit, He represents before the Father for their justification.

And He does more than represent them for their justification. He further communicates Himself to them for their sanctification. Not only was the body of Jesus representative, but in every respect in which it was so it was a standard of human perfection, a model to be conformed to, an example to be followed. When, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, our spirits have been united to Christ's spirit as in one body, then we have in us the same spirit, nature, and disposition that were in Him. The same spirit that actuated Him in all that He did and suf-

ferred in the flesh for our justification actuates us. And in all that He did and suffered in the flesh as our representative we have communion, and fellowship, and participation.

We will now proceed to notice certain particulars in which Jesus, by what He did and suffered in the flesh, was our representative, and in which we have communion and participation; and at the same time show that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper regarded as a commemorative Festival is a commemoration of those particulars; and that the sacrament regarded as a Holy Communion is a means whereby we place ourselves under their representative power; and is also a means whereby we have conformity of spirit to Christ, and communion and participation in all that He did and suffered for us.

The particulars we will notice are these five: 1, His righteousness; 2, His sufferings; 3, His sacrifice; 4, His death; and 5, His crucifixion.

## CHAPTER V.

## COMMUNION IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JESUS was our representative because He exhibited, performed, and fulfilled for us in the flesh perfect Righteousness. There is a passage in the Psalms, quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which points prophetically to the truth that Christ fulfilled in the flesh the righteousness of God; the point of which is made the more clear by the remarkable way in which it is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

PSALM xl. 6-8. 'Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; MINE EARS HAST THOU OPENED; burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law *is* within my heart.'

Taking the words 'Mine ears hast Thou opened' as the words really spoken by David, they may mean two things. They may either mean 'Mine ears hast Thou pierced,' and refer to the custom of boring the ear of a servant as a token of continuous and willing service to a master; or they



may mean 'Thou hast provided me with ears to hear readily and clearly whatever Thou shalt command or declare to be Thy will.' In either case the point is the same, and the words express a willing obedience and devotion to the will of God, as the sacrifice most pleasing to God, and a willing obedience to whatever is written in the book of the law; and more than that, an inclination and disposition to keep that law, for he adds, 'I delight to do Thy will: yea, Thy law is within my heart.' For some reason that cannot be explained, the Septuagint Version makes David say, not 'Mine ears hast Thou opened,' but '*A body hast Thou prepared me.*' In the Epistle to the Hebrews the words of David are thus quoted, and in that form put into the mouth of the Lord:—

HEBREWS x. 5-7. 'Wherefore when He [i.e., the Son of God] cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but **A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME**; in burnt offerings *and sacrifices* for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.' Here the Lord is represented as saying to the Father, 'It is not the performance of the sacrifices and offerings appointed in the ceremonial law that Thou desirest, and that I have come into this world for; but Thou hast prepared for Me a *body*,—Thou hast provided Me with a human body, a body like the bodies of those

whom I have come to save, a representative body, a body that will represent the human race, in which to do Thy will, in which to manifest Thy nature, in which to fulfil all righteousness; a body that, together with My soul and spirit, I devote to Thee, a living sacrifice, every member of which shall be employed in Thy service and in glorifying Thee; a body of which the ear shall be like an ever open door, into which Thy mind and will and purpose shall flow as a continuous stream, and pervade Me, and make Me Thy very Word; and of which the mouth shall be ever open to speak what the ear hears, the very word of God, from which shall flow forth Thy word, declaring to men Thy mind and will and purpose.' And then the Lord is represented as appealing to the volume of the Book that contained the law of God; not as containing the laws of rites and ceremonies, but as containing the great law that underlies all those laws, and of which they are but the shadow and expression—the law of love, the law of delighting to do the will of God. This law of love and righteousness Christ, in His fleshly body, as man's representative, perfectly fulfilled. God's purpose in creating man was that man by righteousness should honour and serve Him. Man having fallen, the human race would not have fulfilled the purpose for which God made it, and God would not have been honoured in and by it, unless perfect righteousness had been ex-

hibited by some one of the human race, unless full satisfaction had been made by some one of the human race for man's breach of God's law, unless the devil, who had led man into departure and alienation from God, had been conquered by some one of the human race; and unless that one, who in the flesh fulfilled all righteousness, rendered full satisfaction, and overcame the wicked one, was so truly the Son of Man, so truly a Second Adam, and so peculiarly related to every other child of man, that in the truest and fullest sense He represented the race.

In the Lord's Supper, regarded as a commemorative feast, we should call to remembrance this perfect righteousness of Christ which He fulfilled in the flesh. And we should remember that He fulfilled it as our representative, and for our justification before God. And then we should remember that it is only when our spirits are in living union with His spirit that we can claim Him as our own, and His body as ours, and all that He did in the flesh as done for us. But when we have thus identified ourselves with Him, we have placed ourselves under His representation, we have appropriated His righteousness to ourselves, it is imputed to us, and then, under cover of His righteousness, we can approach God: it is our ground of acceptance with God; our defects are covered by His merits, and our imperfections by His perfect righteousness.

And further, in the Lord's Supper, regarded as a Holy Communion, in which we realise our spiritual oneness with Christ, we spiritually feed upon Him, and become really partakers of His nature, and therefore of His righteousness. And partaking of His nature we partake of God's nature. For what is true righteousness? The Jews gave a right definition of it when they said, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' For as God created man, in the first instance, in His own image, righteousness is the reflection of the image of God in man, the exhibition of likeness to God; and therefore in practice it is the working the works of God. To be righteous, therefore, man must have the Divine nature, and be renewed after the image of Him that created him. And the answer of Jesus reveals to us both the nature of true righteousness and how it is to be acquired. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.' To believe is to breathe the first breath of 'life in Christ Jesus.' The instant we believe with a true faith, we have opened the arteries of our spirits to receive into them the life blood of Christ. That instant the life of God has touched our spirits, and therefore we are justified in His sight. We are found to be in living union with His Son and implicated in His Son's righteousness. We are found to be in vital communication with Himself. He finds in

us His own life, the life of His Son, and the life of His Holy Spirit. He finds in us His own Divine nature, and therefore the root of holiness, even before the fruits of holiness have begun to manifest themselves in our lives. As Christ was the incarnate Word of God, His righteousness was the manifestation in humanity of the Divine nature. And those who believe in Him have their spirits brought into union with His spirit and dwell in Him; and dwelling in Him, they dwell in God. They have His nature, and through Him they are partakers of the Divine nature. They have His righteousness, and His righteousness is the righteousness of God. And so they are made the righteousness of God in Him.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit dwelling in them, the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts.<sup>2</sup> They have within them that nature of God which is love. The law of God is written in their hearts. They love what God loves, and hate what God hates. And, as the result of this, there is in their literal human body of flesh and blood a conformity to the natural body of Jesus. Like Him, their body is presented a living sacrifice to God; it is yielded to the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; their members become, like His, instruments of righteousness; they live and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; they bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. And, however far those

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 5.

fruits may fall short of His perfection, yet they are living branches of the true Vine, and the nature of the Vine is in them ; and so they are in a position to bear hereafter the perfect fruits of righteousness. The fruits of trees we rightly call the fruits of the earth. So the righteous acts of those who are in Christ are truly the works of God by whom the true Vine lives, and the works of heaven in which the true Vine is rooted.

## CHAPTER VI.

## COMMUNION IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

JESUS was our representative because of His sufferings in the flesh. Now, when we speak of the sufferings of Jesus in the flesh, we mean those sufferings which He endured while He was in the flesh, and a great deal more than mere physical sufferings. We may make altogether too much of the physical sufferings of Jesus. As far as we know, Jesus had not a greater share of bodily sufferings than falls to the lot of most mortal men. He probably had far less of such sufferings than multitudes in any age and any country have to endure. Brought up from infancy with the tenderest care, by the best and sweetest of mothers, in a home that we delight in picturing to ourselves as a very model of peace, piety, and virtue, He was altogether free from the sufferings of the children of depraved, drunken and cruel parents, neglected, starved, buffeted, and cursed. While many have to endure years of distressing physical infirmity or excruciating agony from disease, for all we know to the contrary, Jesus may have been singularly exempt from such suf-

ferings. During His ministry, what do we know of His life? All the surroundings of that life were charming and beautiful. He was mostly at Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. With perfect freedom he went about from place to place with a company of devoted followers. Much of His time was spent in lovely scenery, and amidst the beauties of nature. We find Him sometimes sailing on the lovely waters of the lake, sometimes in vineyards, and olive groves, and corn-fields; constantly directing the attention of His followers and hearers to objects of beauty in nature, the lilies and grass of the field, and the fowls of the air; or to objects of interest in husbandry, drawing from them precious lessons and instructive parables; sometimes taking with His disciples sweet Sabbath days' walks. At other times we find Him in social and festive gatherings, and always with some who loved and revered Him. And occasionally we find Him in some wild solitude or on some mountain top, being refreshed and strengthened by communion with His Father. True, in all this He was never seeking His own selfish ease, or pleasure, or profit. He was always thinking of others, doing acts of mercy, and denying Himself. Often, while going about doing good, He was weary, and hungry and thirsty; but He could always find the refreshment that He needed, and His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him. He was poor in this



world's goods, and had no home on earth that He could call His own. 'The Son of Man,' He said, 'hath not where to lay His head;' but He was absolutely free from all care and anxiety about the supply of His wants, and devoted followers and pious women ministered to Him of their substance. He often aroused the hatred of the men of this world against Himself, but He was absolutely without fear of man, and He could always escape unharmed from those who purposed to do Him violence, until the appointed time came for Him to be delivered into the hands of wicked men.

Now compare such a life of freedom, and, as far as external circumstances and physical conditions were concerned, we may say, with all reverence, of healthy enjoyment, with the lives of multitudes of human sufferers. Compare it with the lives of a large proportion of the inhabitants of great cities at the present day—lives spent in filthy courts and alleys, in miserable cellars and attics, surrounded by everything that is offensive to every sense, cut off from all that in nature is lovely and healthy; lives of anxious care, ceaseless toil, wearisome monotony, utter destitution; friendless, forlorn, depressed, despairing lives. What were the physical sufferings of Jesus compared with the sufferings of kidnapped slaves in the worst days of the slave trade; or compared with the sufferings of many of His followers who

had to endure the bitterest persecution and the most excruciating torture that the ingenuity of cruel men could devise? What were His sufferings compared with those of many of the victims of the Inquisition? Or what were they compared with the self-inflicted sufferings of many a fanatical devotee? Indeed, as far as physical and external circumstances are concerned, may we not compare favourably the ministerial life of Jesus with the life of many a modern missionary, alone among savages, with whom there is nothing in common but bare humanity, uncheered by success, battling perhaps with infirmity and disease, and the severities of climate to which he is not inured? Take even the real sufferings of the last few hours of the life of Jesus—the spitting in the face, the striking with the palms of the hands, the smiting on the head with a reed, the pricking of the crown of thorns, the scourging; these were indignities hurtful to the mind, but as physical sufferings they were nothing extraordinary, and were of short duration. And even the sufferings of the cross, the bearing of the cross, which, being too heavy for His then weakened frame, was placed on the back of another, the pain of the nails driven through His hands and feet, the pain of hanging on the cross, and the thirst—these, while they lasted, were just what all who were condemned to suffer crucifixion had to endure; they were the same as the sufferings of the two male-

factors who were crucified with Him. And in our Lord's case the sufferings of the cross were soon over. Within six hours He was dead. In most cases of crucifixion the victim hung for days in continually increasing agony before he died. This prolongation of suffering and shame, and the last and worst sufferings of the cross, Jesus was spared. His physical sufferings were not even so great as those of the two thieves who were crucified with Him; for, though their sufferings were cut short because of the passover, they were subjected to the cruel treatment of breaking the bones to hasten death, which He was spared, death from another cause having come to His relief.

Yet we believe that Jesus endured sufferings while in the flesh to which, for intensity, no sufferings of other human beings can be compared. Where shall we find those sufferings? Not in His body, nor as due to any physical conditions or external circumstances. It was the higher sphere of His humanity, even the spiritual, that was the seat of His deepest griefs as well as of His highest joys, though the lower physical sphere had sympathy with and was affected by the sufferings of the higher sphere. It was in His heart, and mind, and soul, and spirit that He suffered as the world's sin-bearer. Who can tell the agony He endured in that capacity! Who can tell what it was for the holy Son of God to live incarnate on this sin-cursed earth! Who can tell what it was for the

sinless Son of Man to descend in spirit into the lowest depths of fallen humanity, and in heart and mind to make common cause with the most lost and depraved of sinners! What did He experience in that, to Him, most dreadful position? He experienced for the sinner that which the sinner cannot experience for himself; what it is to be, as indeed he is, under the wrath and curse of God. In His human nature He experienced passively the wrath that His Divine nature exercised actively. He realised, as the sinner cannot realise himself, how degraded and lost man is through sin: He tasted, as the sinner cannot taste himself, how exceedingly bitter a thing it is to have departed from the living God: He sorrowed for the sinner as the sinner cannot sorrow for himself. As the Son of God He grieved with the grief of God over the havoc and ruin that sin had wrought among His own creatures, the work of His own creative hands. And as the Son of Man, having become man's representative, and having espoused man's cause, and constituted Himself the true Brother of the race, He had made man so precious to Himself, that man's ruined condition was to Him a source of unutterable grief; and He so completely made common cause with the sinner, that He sorrowed for his sin and ruin as if they were His own. He the righteous One suffered sorrow unto death for the sins of us the unrighteous, that He might bring

us to God.<sup>1</sup> Who can tell the horror of great darkness that enshrouded His righteous soul when He, the true Light, went down into that blackest darkness that to Him was a darkness to be felt—when down amongst those and identified with those who, because they had departed from God, were forsaken of God, He realised what it is to be forsaken of God, and in so doing felt and exclaimed as if He Himself were forsaken of God! Who can tell the anguish of His soul when, from those dismal and woeful depths He raised on behalf of fallen, lost, God-forsaken sinners the piercing cry, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’<sup>2</sup> That was the cry, not of a God-forsaken Christ, but of Christ as the Representative and Advocate of God-forsaken humanity. How welcome to the Father must have been that cry! Coming from His own Son, it was the echo of His own Voice, resounding from the lowest cells of man’s prison-house. Coming from Him whom He had sent down into those depths—in whom, indeed, He Himself was in those depths—that cry meant that the purpose of His love was accomplished, that the light of Heaven had penetrated the darkness, that the Divine hand of mercy and pity had reached and could now raise the lowest atom of fallen humanity that should cling to it. It was the cry of the Saviour for the lost ones in the midst of whom He was. It was

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 46.

the cry of the Redeemer for those whom He would redeem from bondage—the cry raised from the very prison-house into which He had gained an entrance. Who can tell the deep and excruciating sense of the sin of man that He experienced when He raised from those dark depths the all-prevailing cry of pity that could reach the ear and touch the heart of the Father in Heaven, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!’<sup>1</sup> Who can tell the burning and intolerable sense of shame which He endured when He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us; when He, the Lord our Righteousness, identified Himself with the worst sinners of this world; when He, who was Himself spotless, presented Himself before the Father laden with the sins of the world! Though not ashamed on His own account to become the child of man and the brother of the human race, and to call men His brethren, yet, as He represented man before the Father, how ashamed He must have felt of the race with which He had identified Himself! How He must have felt for His brethren the shame which they could not feel for themselves! How ashamed He must have felt of those who were lost to shame! Though He despised the shame that man attached to the cross—as He despised its pain,—yet how ashamed He must have been of us, whose cause He had espoused, in the presence of the God and Father

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 34.

of all, as He bare our sins in His own body on the tree! Oh, who can tell what these His sufferings were? None can tell but He Himself. How can *we* tell what He as God and Creator felt among His lost creatures? 'Born in sin, and the children of wrath,' we are inured to the degrading and cruel bondage of sin, and feel not the fierceness of the consuming wrath of God. The same sin that has degraded and ruined us has deadened our spiritual faculties and sensibilities, and destroyed our sense of sin, our sense of the evil of sin, and our sense of shame before God. The very sin that is the true cause for suffering has rendered us incapable of holy suffering. By being long shut up in an unhealthy chamber persons become quite unconscious of a foul and fetid atmosphere, which would be intolerable to those who should go suddenly into it from a pure and bracing air. So the very best of men, who are not only born into a sinful world, but inherit a sin-tainted nature, cannot possibly feel their position and their condition, or experience what in God's sight is true and adequate sorrow for sin, as He could who came to this sin-cursed world straight from the pure atmosphere of heaven, and in whom, as a man, was no sin. No other mortal man can tell what to Jesus was the deep humiliation of acquaintance with sinners, the unutterable horror of contact with sin, and the unutterable suffering of sin-bearing. But we know that

so great was the agony of His soul, as He began to drink the bitter cup, that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And so great was the anguish of His spirit, as He drained the cup to the dregs, that His frail human frame could not endure the agitation that the anguish caused. His heart brake. And on the cross He died ere the cross itself had time to kill Him. No man took away His life, but by surrendering Himself to suffer for sins He laid it down of Himself.

When we contemplate the real heart sufferings of Jesus, how small by comparison seem the worst suffering that the body is capable of enduring! To dwell and dilate upon the physical sufferings of Jesus only diverts the mind from the contemplation of those true sufferings which prevailed with God for the forgiveness of man's sin, and which, as St. Paul said, He endured 'for His body's sake, which is the Church.'<sup>1</sup>

In the Lord's Supper, regarded as a commemorative festival, we call to remembrance our Lord's sufferings for us in the flesh. But how are we to be personally benefited by those sufferings? His sufferings were for His body's sake, which is the Church. We must, therefore, be members of that body for which He suffered. There must be that oneness of spirit with His spirit, as in one spiritual body, which is figured and advanced in

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 24.



the Holy Communion. We are then completely identified with Christ. We are then, in God's sight, as if we ourselves suffered for sins as Christ suffered. We are as if we were capable of seeing ourselves as sinners, as Jesus saw us, and as God Himself sees us; as if we ourselves felt what Jesus felt when He was in contact with sin; as if we ourselves sorrowed for sin with such a sorrow as proceeds from a full realisation and perfect horror and hatred of sin; and our repentance, inadequate and imperfect as it is in itself, is accepted of the Father for the merit's sake of the perfect, the infinite, the indeed godly sorrow of Jesus for sin. And since we are one with Christ in spirit, His natural body of flesh and blood is ours as a possession. We are, in God's sight, as if our own blood flowed in intensity of agony for sin, as the blood of Jesus flowed in the garden of Gethsemane; as if our own souls were sorrowful even unto death, as His then was; we are as if our own heart literally brake through the crushing weight of sin upon the conscience, as the heart of Jesus brake when, on the cross, the sins of the world were laid upon Him.

But, further, not only do we, in Holy Communion, thus identify ourselves with Him who, as our representative, sorrowed for our sins, so that His sufferings plead with God for our pardon, but we realise that we are actual partakers of His nature. And in proportion as we are partakers of

Christ's nature, that defect of our nature which prevents our seeing ourselves as we are in God's sight, seeing our true position as sinners, seeing sin as God sees it, and sorrowing for sin as it ought to be sorrowed for, is remedied. We then have that capability of suffering and sorrowing for sin which is the result and evidence of spiritual life. We must not think that the sufferings of Christ for our sins differed in nature from those sufferings that God would have us experience. So far as they were human, they only differed from ours just as His human nature differed from ours. St. Peter said, 'Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.'<sup>1</sup> The more we have of the spirit and mind of Christ, the deeper will be our sense of sin, and the greater will be our grief for sin in ourselves; the stronger, too, will be our love and pity for our fellow-sinners, and the greater our grief for the ruin and misery that sin is working in the world. And this capability of suffering and sorrowing for sin becomes in us a source of rejoicing. St. Paul said, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church.'<sup>2</sup> His meaning is, 'I, in my flesh, fill up that which remains to be filled up of the afflictions which Christ, in His flesh, endured for the sake of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 24.

His body, the Church.' Not that the sufferings of Christ were in any sense inadequate or insufficient for the purpose for which He suffered, namely, to satisfy the Father that sin is being seen and felt as it ought to be in humanity by the representative man, Christ Jesus, and to prevail with the Father for the general pardon of the sin of the world: but regarding Him as the head of that body, the Church, which He gathers into Himself, makes, spiritually, one flesh and one blood with Himself, and makes entirely one in nature and life with Himself, feeding it, as it were, with His own flesh and blood, He, the head, having suffered, it remains for His members to suffer with Him.

Again. St. Peter says, 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.'<sup>1</sup> To partake in the sufferings of Christ is, we see, set before us as something to be desired. But the desire for it is no morbid wish to be wretched and miserable. Though the sufferings of Christ were by far the most intense that were ever experienced in human flesh, yet, of all men, He was the furthest possible from being what we understand by the wretched and miserable man. There was in Him none of the morbid and profitless self-mortification of the fanatic; and sullenness and moroseness were utterly foreign to His nature. His sufferings were wholly unselfish; they were

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 13.

the sufferings of a nature pre-eminent for love and holiness, and they were accompanied by the highest possible joy—a joy as high as His sufferings were deep. For in His deepest sufferings on account of man's sins, there was always the consciousness of His Father's favour; and He had always in view the blessed fruit of the travail of His soul, the salvation of man; and He was never without the joy of heaven. If never sorrow was like His sorrow, never joy was like His joy. When we consider what kind of nature it is that alone can suffer as Christ suffered, we see that to partake in His sufferings is a condition to be indeed desired and rejoiced in, both because of the blessedness of having such a nature, and because the nature that alone can suffer after such a sort is the only nature capable of the highest joy; to say nothing of the honour of suffering with our Saviour, and the prospect of sharing with Him the joy and glory of heaven. Surely we ought to desire, before all things, to have the nature of Jesus. What can be more desirable than to have, like Him, an enlightened understanding and a clear spiritual insight to see things as they really are, to see the true position of the sinner before God, to see sin and holiness as they are in God's sight; though such an insight cannot but discern causes for deep sorrow? What can be more desirable than to have, like Jesus, a holy nature, with a heart to hate sin;

having which, we cannot but grieve that once we were under the power of sin, and still have much sin clinging to us? What can be more desirable than to have a heart to love God; having which, we cannot but grieve for dishonour done to God? What can be more desirable than to have, like Christ, a heart to feel for others; having which we cannot but grieve for those whose state is grievous and a cause of grief in heaven, though they know it not?

And if those who are partakers in Christ's nature have communion in His sorrows, they have communion also in His joys. Like Him and like His apostles, their condition is 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.'<sup>1</sup> When Jesus had spoken the parable of the Vine and the Branches, He said, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'<sup>2</sup> And in His prayer to the Father that His disciples might be one with Him, as He is one with the Father, He said, 'These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.'<sup>3</sup> When experiencing the deepest sorrow because of sin, we can always turn Christward and Godward, and find ourselves, in Christ Jesus, the pardoned, accepted and beloved of the Father, well-pleasing in His sight for the sake of His beloved Son, and dwelt in by the Holy Ghost the Comforter; we can always 'with

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 10.<sup>2</sup> John xv. 11.<sup>3</sup> John xvii. 13.

joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.'<sup>1</sup> As Jesus could see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, as He knew that he was not suffering for nought, that His sufferings were the ransom of souls, so we, while sharing in His grief, may always share in His joys of redemption, and rejoice with the angels of God over sinners that repent.

The grief and the joy of Jesus were the manifestation of the grief and the joy of God. We speak of God's grief because of man's sin, and of God's joy because of man's recovery and reconciliation. But we who do not know our own selves, who do not know what the highest part of our own nature, the spirit, is like, do not know what God is like, and so can form no true notion of God's grief and God's joy. But we believe that they correspond to and are reflected and manifested by the grief and joy that Jesus experienced. And in proportion as we are partakers of Christ's nature, and through Him of the Divine nature, we shall ourselves experience divine grief and divine joy.

In the Holy Communion we should seek such union of spirit with Christ's spirit, such oneness of nature with the divine Persons, as will enable us to grieve with Christ in all that caused Him grief and ought to cause us grief, with the very grief of God; and to rejoice with Him in all that caused Him joy and ought to cause us joy, with the very joy of God.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xii. 3.

## CHAPTER VII.

## COMMUNION IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE.

JESUS was our representative in offering Himself a sacrifice to God for us. It is of the utmost importance that we should discern the true principle of sacrifice. When an animal was offered up in sacrifice, the thing signified was not that the animal was enduring bodily pain and death as it were at the hand of God. It was not that God was inflicting upon the innocent animal, as the substitute of the person who brought it, the punishment that that person deserved. But, in the first place, the principle and spirit of sacrifice were in the person who offered it, and were expressed by his giving to God of his very best and that which cost him something. He was in truth the sacrificer and made a genuine sacrifice. And thus he expressed his recognition that all that he possessed was from God, and belonged to God.

In the second place we see the principle of sacrifice in the animal that was offered. For by being put to death it was fulfilling the purpose

for which God intended it, and to which it was devoted and consecrated. The animal that was slain in sacrifice endured no more pain than other animals. It would have been slain under any circumstances. If its life had not been taken by the priest, it would have been taken by the butcher. By the priest it was taken with due regard to the sacredness of life, and probably with the careful avoidance of inflicting unnecessary pain. The killing of the animal in sacrifice was the solemn devotion of its life and body to the purpose for which God intended it, for in the great majority of cases its flesh was for the nourishment of the bodies of God's priests and people. This devotion of God's creature to the will of God and the benefit of man was accompanied by religious services, by praise and thanksgiving, by the confession of sin, and by ceremonies rich in sacred symbolism and spiritual significance. Since the blood is the life, the shedding of the blood of the animal in sacrifice to God expressed the recognition that *life* is from God and belongs to God, and should be devoted to God even unto death. And the sprinkling of the blood on the worshipper represented the application of spiritual life to the worshipper. And in God's acceptance of the sacrifice we see Him claiming life as His own and accepting life devoted to Him. For the death of the righteous, viewed as it were from the other side of the grave, is not that King of



terrors that it seems to us viewing it from this side the grave; but it is the flowing of life to the author and giver of life, and the translation of life to a higher sphere. And the shedding of the blood of the sin offering for the remission of sin signified that the sorrow for sin that will prevail with God for remission of sin, must be sorrow so heartfelt and heartrending that it is sorrow unto death; and redemption from sin must cost the life and involve the death of the Redeemer.

In the third place, the fact that the animal sacrificed was the sacrificer's substitute, expressed the recognition that sinful man cannot himself render a full satisfaction to God. The animal was therefore a type of Him who alone could render a full satisfaction, upon whom the sins of the world were laid; who was the world's vicarious sin-bearer and sacrificer; who, in man's stead, sorrowed for sin, with a divine and sinless sorrow, unto death; and who devoted and sacrificed Himself to the Father's will and to man's redemption with a divine and perfect devotion even unto death.

In the Lord's Supper we commemorate the Sacrifice of Christ, the complete consecration and devotion of Himself, His whole self, body, soul, and spirit, to the will of God and the salvation of man, the pouring out of His soul unto death for man's redemption. That sacrifice was, as our Church says in the Communion Service, 'a full,

perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.' But if we are to be personally benefited by that sacrifice,—if we are to be accepted of God on account of it,—we must be one in spirit with Christ. So at the same time that we commemorate His sacrifice, we have communion with Him: we realise that we are so identified with Him, so completely made spiritually one flesh and one blood with Him, that all that He offered in sacrifice to God for us we can claim as our own, and so His sacrifice is accepted of the Father as if it were our own, and through it we have propitiation with God.

And not only is this so,—not only is the sacrifice of Christ accepted of the Father in our stead and for our justification,—but as our spirits are one with His spirit, we are partakers of His nature. And thus the same spirit of sacrifice,—the spirit of self-surrender, of consecration of the whole man to God, and of devotion to the will of God,—that existed in Him is reproduced in us.

We must not think that the sacrifice that Christ offered for us was different in kind to the sacrifice that God requires of us. So far only as His divine nature was concerned in the sacrifice,—so far only as it commenced in heaven,—was it higher in kind than any sacrifice we can offer. But so far as the human nature of Jesus was concerned in His sacrifice, we must not only have the

mind that led Him to sacrifice Himself, but we must sacrifice ourselves in like manner. His sacrifice differed from that which God requires of us, not in kind, but in degree, in the circumstances that attended it and in the form it took, and in its effects and results. It differed in degree, inasmuch as it was absolutely perfect and spotless. It was the outpouring of a perfectly sinless soul, the sacrifice of a lamb without blemish and without spot. It differed in the attendant circumstances and in the form it assumed, inasmuch as circumstances required that it should be consummated by death upon the cross. And it differed in its effect and results on account of its power, and the virtue that goes forth from it, both toward God and toward man. It had power to prevail with God; it had a sweetness of savour to Him; it had an acceptableness with Him for its own intrinsic worth that no sacrifice of sinful man could have. It had, as no other sacrifice can have, a propitiatory effect upon God, and an attractive and reconciliatory effect upon man. But it was just such a sacrifice as God would have from man, if man could render it. St. Paul said,<sup>1</sup> 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize (or a thing to be grasped) to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a

<sup>1</sup> Philippians ii. 5, 6, 7, R.V.

servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.' Here St. Paul sets before us the sacrifice of Christ as that to which in principle we must be conformed. So far as it was human, there is nothing in us but our own imperfection and sinfulness that prevents our offering a like sacrifice. It should not be regarded as a punishment which is deserved by us, but was inflicted upon Christ instead of upon us ; but as a pouring out of the whole man in sacrifice to God so perfect, so in accordance with God's will, so truly performed in His representative character as man's sin-bearer and high priest, and so capable of being conformed to in spirit and principle by all who shall be conformed to His likeness, that it prevailed with God for the pardon of the sins of the whole world. So far from exempting us from a like sacrifice, so far from being a punishment which we escape because He endured it, it has placed us under the strongest obligation to sacrifice ourselves in like manner to God. And the nearest approach in us to such a sacrifice will be the best pleasing to God.

If we would be pardoned, reconciled to God, and accepted of God, we must be partakers of the nature of Christ by union of our spirits with His spirit, and we must have such communion and participation in His sacrifice that we are enabled

to offer ourselves sacrifices to God in like manner. So St. Paul exhorted: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.'<sup>1</sup> Christ, in offering Himself without spot to God, did so as the Head of His Body, the Church; not only that what the head did may be accepted on behalf of the members, but also that the members might do that which the head has done; that the whole body of the Church, with Christ as its head, might be presented a perfect sacrifice to God. We might substitute the word 'sacrifice' for 'afflictions' in the saying of St. Paul already quoted, and say that we, the members, fill up, in our own persons, that which is behind of the *sacrifice* of Christ which He offered for His body's sake, which is the Church.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of Christ's sacrifice should pervade the whole Church. It remains for us, His members, to do that which He, our head, did for us. We must consider that we are not our own, that we are bought with a price, that our whole body, soul, and spirit belong to God. And however defective, faulty, sin-stained we may be, however frail, and lame, and halt, such as we are we must present ourselves to God. We must lay ourselves, as the members of Christ's Body, with Christ, upon His altar. Then His sinless sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour will

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 1.<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 24.

disinfect and give sweetness to our sin-tainted sacrifice; and our imperfect sacrifice will be acceptable to the Father for the sake of His perfect sacrifice.

In the Holy Communion we alike commemorate, and have communion and participation in, that great sacrifice of Christ offered once for all. In this sense we may safely, and should truly, regard the sacrament as a sacrifice; not an offering over again in some mysterious and unexplainable manner of the sacrifice of Christ, the head, but a re-acting and carrying on of the sacrifice of Christ in the person of His members. Every worshipper at the table of the Lord should regard himself as a member of the Lord's body, which is the Church of the living God, a living stone in that spiritual house of which Christ is the chief corner stone, a member of that holy priesthood over which Christ presides as the great high priest, that he should offer up a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Yes; we should regard every attendance at Holy Communion as, in the truest and highest sense, a sacrificial act, an act of reconsecration and entire devotion of ourselves to God, a laying of ourselves, as Christ's members, with Him upon His altar, a taking our part in that great sacrifice which He offered to God for us. So in the Communion Service we say, after we have communicated, 'Here we offer

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.

and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee. . . . And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this, our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

And as the Holy Communion is a means whereby we are made partakers of Christ's nature, and through Christ of the Divine nature, so in offering ourselves a sacrifice to God we manifest a likeness to God. Christ in His sacrifice, as in other respects, was the manifestation of the Father. The spirit of sacrifice originated in the Father Himself. It is an essential element of love. The principle of sacrifice is the outflowing of self toward the object of love. It originated in the eternal purpose of the Divine Father to save man. It was the spirit of sacrifice in the Father that disposed Him to save and to receive back into favour the creature that had rebelled against the Creator, to give and devote for that purpose His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and to send forth from Himself the Holy Spirit. It was the spirit of sacrifice in God the Son that led Him to take upon Him the nature of sinful man. And indeed it was a greater sacrifice for God the Son to become incarnate, than it was for Him when found in fashion as a man to become

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And it was the spirit of sacrifice in God the Holy Spirit that led Him to proceed and flow forth from the Father and the Son to plead mournfully with man, and to submit with grief to man's resistance and provocation, and to make man His dwelling-place and temple. The principle and spirit of sacrifice actuate, and have from eternity actuated, all three Persons of the Divine Trinity. So all true sacrifice is divine ; and we can offer to God acceptable sacrifice only when we are partakers of the divine nature. In offering ourselves to God as members of His own Son and in the spirit of His Son, we offer to Him that which is His own, and that which He has made like Himself. So ' He hath made us accepted in the beloved.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ephes i. 6.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## COMMUNION IN CHRIST'S DEATH.

JESUS was our representative in the death that He died for us.

Jesus died for us two deaths, a physical death and a death unto sin. Both of these deaths He underwent as our representative, and to both we may be conformed. We will consider them separately.

*PHYSICAL DEATH.*

What ought we to see in Christ's bodily death that was representative, precious, and satisfactory?

Can there be anything in death itself, simply regarded as physical death, that can give to God either pleasure or satisfaction? 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

Yet the death of the righteous has its bright as well as its gloomy aspects, and in its bright aspects it is precious to God. It is the close of a blighted existence to enter upon a higher and more glorious existence; the breaking up of the earthly tabernacle to enter a building of God

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xviii. 32.

eternal in the heavens; the abandoning of a body of humiliation that it may be changed for a spiritual body fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. It is the close of all connection with a sin-cursed world, to enter upon a heavenly inheritance where there shall be no more curse; the ceasing for ever from sin to enter upon a life of perfect holiness; the end of all conflict with sin to enter upon eternal peace; the end of all toil and sorrow to enter upon eternal rest and happiness. It is the release of the redeemed spirit from its fleshly prison-house to return to the Father of spirits; the rending in twain of the veil that hangs between the spirit and the full consciousness of God's presence. These are aspects of death,<sup>1</sup> that in the case of any man reconciled to God make death welcome to him who dies, and precious to God. And how much more welcome to Himself and precious to the Father must have been the death of Him who by His own death has made such a death possible for all men, having destroyed the sting of death. If 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,'<sup>1</sup> most precious in the sight of the Father must have been the returning to Him of His well-beloved Son, having glorified Him on the earth and finished the work that He had given Him to do.<sup>2</sup> What words could more fully express the true nature and the preciousness of

<sup>1</sup> Psa. cxvi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 4.

the death of Jesus than His dying words, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit'?<sup>1</sup> Whatever there is in the death of the righteous that takes away from its gloom and causes it to have a bright side was, in the death of Jesus, unsullied and undimmed by the least painful retrospect of a spotted or defective life. His was the only death that was the close of a perfectly faultless life. His spirit was the only human spirit that ever returned to the Father of spirits to bear the inspection of the all-searching eye, the only spirit into which sin had never gained an entrance, every moment of whose existence in this sinful world had been holy, which had perfectly fulfilled the purpose for which it had come into the world, and perfectly done the will of the Father in heaven. The death of Jesus was the close of a life on earth in which there was nothing to be forgiven, nothing to be forgotten, nothing to be regretted, nothing to draw a veil over.

The death of Jesus then was pre-eminently the death of the righteous as His life had been pre-eminently the life of the righteous. And as His righteous life was representative, so His righteous death was representative. As it is only through His righteousness that our righteousness can be acceptable to God, so it is only through His death that our death can be precious to God. Jesus died for us a death we cannot die. We who have been defiled by sin, and who have failed to live

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 46.

the life of the righteous, cannot perfectly die the death of the righteous. Jesus, therefore, as man's representative, died for man the death of the righteous.

In the Lord's Supper we commemorate that perfect death of the righteous which was realised in humanity, to God's satisfaction, in the death of Jesus Christ.

In the Holy Communion we realise that we have such oneness of spirit with Christ's spirit, we are so truly His spiritual members, and He is so truly our spiritual head, that we make our own His righteous death, and when we die, dying as the members of His Body, dying in Him, we shall be in the Father's sight as if we ourselves died the death of the perfectly righteous. And more than this. In Holy Communion we are actually partakers of Christ's nature. By the power of His Holy Spirit we are conformed in our lives to Christ's righteousness, we are enabled really, though imperfectly, to live the life of the righteous, and our last end will be like His. Having lived as He lived, and walked in His footsteps, we shall, according to the measure of the grace given to us, die as He died. Not only will our death derive from His death a borrowed and reflected glory, but it will have received from Him a glory of its own. With Stephen we can pray, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'<sup>1</sup> And Jesus, standing at the

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii. 59.

right hand of God, will repeat his own dying prayer, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend this spirit, being one with My spirit.' 'For he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.'<sup>1</sup> And all spirits incorporated into His spirit He presents spotless to the Father.

And being partakers of Christ's nature we are partakers of the divine nature. Christ by dying has made even death divine. Righteousness is likeness to God. A righteous death is a divine death. It is to be like God in the close of the mortal life as the righteous man is like God during his mortal life. In death the spirits of the righteous are being rid for ever of all that is unlike God, and are being illumined with divine light and divine glory.

Take now the sadder aspect of death. It is part of the curse pronounced upon all men because of Adam's transgression. 'In Adam all die.'<sup>2</sup> 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'<sup>3</sup> 'The wages of sin is death.'<sup>4</sup> This bitter property of death Jesus tasted for all men. For it was ordained 'that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.'<sup>5</sup> Jesus tasted in death that which other men cannot taste, because their spirit's sense of taste is deadened by sin—that which could only

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 17.      <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.      <sup>3</sup> Rom. v. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vi. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ii. 9.

be tasted by one whose death was the perfect realisation of the death of the righteous. He tasted perfectly and keenly in death its bitter property as the wages of sin. How bitter, how nauseous, how loathsome that taste of death must have been to Him, who can tell! He died with the full realisation of what death is in relation to sin. And was He not already realising the same bitterness of death when at the grave of Lazarus He groaned in spirit and wept? <sup>1</sup> For at the very time He was about to manifest His power over death as the resurrection and the life, He could not but weep as He contemplated death as the wages of sin. Again, 'the sting of death is sin.'<sup>2</sup> Jesus had to feel that sting. As man's representative and man's sinbearer He had to realise to the full that sin is the sting of death. He had to feel that sting as those who have been paralysed by sin cannot feel it. He had to feel the sting in the very act of destroying it. He had to be bruised by Satan, harmlessly indeed, as in the heel, though painfully, in the very act of bruising the serpent's head.<sup>3</sup> He had to make his grave with the wicked,<sup>4</sup> and realise to the full the humiliation of the grave, that He might rob the grave of its victory.<sup>5</sup>

It was for every man that He so tasted death and felt the sting of death; but savingly it was

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 33, 35, 38.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. liii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 55.

for His Body's sake, which is the Church. It was for every member of His spiritual Body that He, the head, tasted the true taste of death and felt the real pain of the sting of death.

In the Lord's Supper we commemorate Christ's tasting death for us, and His feeling for us the sting of death.

In the Holy Communion we realise that we have such oneness of spirit with Christ's spirit as in one body that we, the members, are in God's sight as if we in death shall taste what Christ the head tasted, and as if we ourselves shall feel with regard to sin what Christ felt for us. And further, being actually partakers of the nature of Christ, in proportion as we are so, we shall actually taste what Christ tasted and feel what He felt. For in proportion as we are partakers of the nature of Christ our senses of spiritual taste and feeling become more keen and lively, and become more and more exercised to discern both good and evil. We know not, but it may be that there dawns upon the spirit of the believer, as it passes away from the fleshly tenement, a keen sense of what death really is in relation to sin, and a gracious consciousness that together with death the bitterness of death ceases for ever, and the sting of death is destroyed, for those who sleep in Jesus. It may be that as the believer passes through the valley of the shadow of death, that being the devil's last opportunity of assaulting his spirit,

and his own last conflict with evil, he is keenly alive to the position of his spirit as alike the object of the devil's malignity and of the Saviour's love: it may be that then he has a clear consciousness that sin is the sting of death, that the devil is present to give to death its sting, and that the Saviour, who through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil,<sup>1</sup> is present to keep his spirit safe in His own spirit, to supply the antidote that counteracts the sting of death, to suffer him not for any pains of death to fall from Him; and he knows that he will come out of the last conflict victorious, that for him, as for his Saviour, death will be swallowed up in victory.'<sup>2</sup>

And being partakers of Christ's nature, we are partakers of the divine nature. To taste the true taste of death as the wages of sin,—to feel the full anguish of the sting of death, which is sin,—is, for a mortal man, a divine sensation. For only Emmanuel, Christ Jesus, who was very God and very man, could as a man perfectly taste and feel sin as it is to God. We can taste and feel sin as He did in death only when—and only so far as—we are partakers of the divine nature.

Now consider the death of Christ in connection with the cause of death. If no other cause had intervened, the cross would have been the cause of His death. And as He submitted to be

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

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 54.



crucified it may be truly said that He 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'<sup>1</sup> Considering what Jesus Christ was, and what the world and fallen men were by reason of sin; considering that He was the manifestation of God, and of all righteousness in the midst of a world lying in the wicked one,<sup>2</sup>—that He was the true light shining in darkness and reproofing the deeds of darkness—it was inevitable that He should arouse the hatred of many of those whom He came to save, and that they should purpose to kill Him; for His position was that of a lamb in the midst of wolves. But what has been already said of the sacrifice of Christ is opposed to the notion that that sacrifice consisted only in His death. His great sacrifice was primarily the taking upon Himself, though He was God, the nature of sinful men, and, in that nature, devoting His whole being, body, soul, and spirit, to the will of God and the salvation of man. The death of His body was merely the result of one part of His sacrifice, the devotion of His body to the work of redemption. And even that partial sacrifice He had already made before He was crucified, for He really made it when He undertook His great work with the full knowledge that it would cost Him His life. His actual death was but the last drop of the pouring out of His soul in sacrifice to God. As soon as a man has undertaken a work of de-

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

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

liverance that must inevitably cost him his life, he has sacrificed his life, and the virtue is in that sacrifice and devotion of his life, and not in his actual death. So with Christ, the sacrifice of His life necessitated the death of His body.

As the Son of God, in whom dwelt essentially the principle of love and the spirit of sacrifice, He was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'<sup>1</sup> His nature was such that circumstances could not have come about as they did without His acting and suffering as He did. So His life was devoted unto death, and the sacrifice was made from the time of His coming into the world.

But as Jesus hung upon the cross, another cause intervened as the real cause of death, a cause in consequence of which He would have died just when He did, whether he had been crucified or not. A cross that weighed heavily upon His spirit, and not the cross of wood upon which His body hung, was the real cause of His bodily death. In this case death was the natural and inevitable consequence of His becoming man's sinbearer, and being at the same time the manifestation of God to man. His human frame was not stronger than that of other men. His pulse could beat and His heart palpitate with strong emotion as much as other men's. Experiencing in human nature the horror of sin as it is in God's sight,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiii. 8.

and true and divine sorrow for the sin of those whom He would save, produced such mental emotion and physical agitation as were altogether too violent for the human frame,—and that emotion and that agitation would be increased, and not diminished, by the additional experience, as a man, of the joy of God,—His heart brake. The earthen vessel was not strong enough either for ‘the wine of the fierceness of God’s wrath,’<sup>1</sup> or for the new wine of heaven, much less for the mixture of the two together.

In the Lord’s Supper we ‘do show the Lord’s death till He come.’<sup>2</sup> We contemplate what there was in His death of virtue and efficacy, and what in it was representative. It was for us men and for our salvation that He was ‘obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’ It was for us sinners that He endured sorrow for sin so intense that literally, truly, and perfectly, He offered to God the sacrifice of a broken heart.

In the Holy Communion we seek for such union of our spirits with the spirit of Jesus as makes His death, regarded as the result of perfect obedience to the will of God, and of sinbearing, truly representative for us.

When our spirits are joined to His spirit as in one body, then we make the very body of flesh and blood which died upon the cross in obedience

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26.

and submission to the will of God, our own. And because we are found of God in Jesus, we are in God's sight as if we ourselves were, like Him, obedient unto death. And we make that very heart of Jesus which the spear pierced and from which flowed blood and water, our own. We have considered the representative nature of the *body* of Jesus. His literal bodily heart partook of that representative character. It was the central heart of redeemed humanity. It was for our sins that the heart of Jesus beat so violently and brake and bled upon the cross. And if we are in Him and He in us, we are in God's sight as if the heart of Jesus beat in our bodies with like emotions—as if we had within us His broken heart. All who are one in spirit with Christ are in God's sight as if they themselves sorrowed for sin even unto death, as if they themselves offered unto God such a broken and contrite heart as He will not despise, as if they themselves sorrowed for sin with a sorrow as godly as that of Jesus, and repented with such a repentance as needeth not to be repented of.

And this union of spirit with Christ makes us indeed partakers of His nature. By the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us we become, like Him, in deed and in truth obedient to the will of God and devoted to the work of God. Like Him, we are led to regard ourselves as not our own, but as bought by a price, and belonging to God, and

to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's ;<sup>1</sup> we are led to regard our life as not our own, as belonging to God, and to place it unreservedly in God's hands, for Him to employ it in His service, to preserve it or take it as shall seem best to Him. Being partakers of Christ's nature, 'the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died ; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.'<sup>2</sup>

And being partakers of the nature of Christ, we are enabled to see sin somewhat as He saw it, to hate it as He hated it, to sorrow for it as He sorrowed for it ; and we acquire some experience of those deep emotions which caused His heart to break. It is no figure of speech to say that our very heart is depressed with His heart, as we experience His hatred of sin, His love for sinners, His concern for the lost and perishing. We become like Him heavily burdened with the sins and sorrows of our fellow-creatures.

In this respect the disciple must be like his Master, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'<sup>3</sup> To bear the burden of the sins of the world was the cross which Jesus carried through life, which weighed more and

<sup>1</sup> Cor. vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. R.V.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. vi. 2.

more heavily upon His soul, till at last, on the cross of wood, it crushed His soul, and brake His heart, and caused His death. This cross Jesus endured *for* us, but not *instead* of us. For He said, 'He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of Me.'<sup>1</sup> And again, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'<sup>2</sup> Yes, if we would go after Christ through life and death to everlasting life with God in heaven, we must place our lives in God's hands, and concern ourselves about the eternal interests of our fellow-creatures, and be willing to sacrifice ourselves for 'the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. Such willingness St. Paul expressed in forcible language when he said, 'Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.'<sup>3</sup> 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself.'<sup>4</sup>

And thus to be partakers of Christ's nature is to be partakers of the divine nature. Christ's obedience unto death was truly divine; for it proceeded from identity of will with the Father's will, and oneness of nature and mind with the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Philipp. ii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3.

Father. It was, in fact, the manifestation in human nature of the divine nature; of the mind, and will, and purpose of God that man should be saved. His sacrifice of Himself for the salvation of man, was the manifestation of the love of God for man. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.'<sup>1</sup> 'God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'<sup>2</sup> So no qualities are more divine, or are more clear evidences of likeness to God, than obedience and devotion to the will of God, and such love for our fellow-creatures as leads us to sacrifice ourselves for their good. And Christ's sorrow of heart for the sin of the world was truly divine, the reflection of a grief in the very heart of God, a grief that is expressed in these words: 'It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.'<sup>3</sup> Unfathomable love is contained in these words. The Father Himself is burdened with man's sin. His repentance and grief at heart were no vain wish that He had never created man in His own image. There was in the Father a grief that altogether passes our knowledge, that man had lost the image of his Maker, that sin had entered into the world, and death by sin. And His was no fruitless grief, but accompanied by the purpose

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 9.<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 8.<sup>3</sup> Gen. vi. 6.

that His image should yet be perfectly exhibited in man, in a second Adam, and far more gloriously and truly than in the first Adam; and that even sinful, fallen man should, by a new creation into that second Adam, become, to an extent the first Adam never was, a temple of the Holy Ghost; a habitation of God through the Spirit; a dweller in God; and a partaker of the divine nature. And as God is love, he who is partaker of God's nature has in him a love like God's love. 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'<sup>1</sup> There is implanted within his heart a love like the love of God, who 'so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' such a divine love for sinners as will make him share in God's repentance and grief at heart because of sin in the world; such a love as will constrain him, like Christ, to burden himself with the sins and sorrows of others; such a love as will dispose him, if God should so will, to lay down his life for the brethren.<sup>2</sup> And having God's nature, he shares in God's hatred of sin; he has a truly divine repentance and grief at the heart for sin because it is sin, because it destroys all likeness to God. He has, what St. Paul calls, a 'godly sorrow,' which 'worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;'<sup>3</sup> a sorrow and

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 16.<sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 16.<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 10.



a repentance that have their counterpart and source in God Himself.

*DEATH UNTO SIN.*

But there is another death beside the death of the body that Jesus experienced as our representative, that we do show in the Lord's Supper, and that we must be conformed to. St. Paul, in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, uses such expressions as these: 'How shall we, that are **DEAD TO SIN**, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were **BAPTISED INTO HIS DEATH**? Therefore we are buried with Him, by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be **DEAD WITH CHRIST**, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, **HE DIED UNTO SIN** once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye

also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' And again, in Philippians iii. 10, St. Paul said: 'That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH.'

Here we find St. Paul using these two expressions, 'Dead to sin' and 'dead with Christ,' and evidently meaning by them exactly the same thing. Let us inquire what death to sin in us has to do with the death of Christ, and in what sense death unto sin is a 'being made conformable to the death of Christ.'

There are two ways in which the *bodily* death of Christ is concerned with death unto sin in us; firstly, as supplying a figure; secondly, as being a means.

1. There can be no doubt that St. Paul did refer to the bodily death of Christ, and that he referred to it, taken together with His resurrection, as a figure of the change which has taken place in the man who has been new-created into Christ and become dead to sin. The death and future resurrection to eternal life of any saint would answer the purpose as a figure. But the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is especially fitted for that purpose, both because it is through His resurrection that we shall rise again to eternal life; and, also, because He only, at present, has passed through all the stages of death, resurrec-

tion, and ascension into Heaven, and so supplied the figure that is wanted.

St. Paul speaks of Christ as having died unto sin when His body died. 'In that He died, He died unto sin once.' Now, though He Himself never sinned, He had, before His death, a great deal to do with sin. He was tempted to sin; He had to wage war with sin; and He had to bear our sins. But when He died, He had no more to do with sin; He ceased to have any contact, personal conflict, or connection with sin. Sin then completely lost all power over Him, even to annoy Him. So, though after we are born again *we* remain with sinful bodies in a sinful world, we have obtained a very real and great deliverance from the power of sin. We cease to serve sin. We may reckon ourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Again, there was a great difference in the human nature of Jesus Christ before and after His death, resurrection and ascension. After His resurrection and ascension He no longer had the mortal nature that He had before. And a change no less mighty and important comes over our spirits when they are born again of the Spirit and united to the spirit of Christ. Then what is called 'the old man' within us is said to die, and what is called 'the new man' is raised up in us. We have 'put off the old man,' and 'put on the new

man.'<sup>1</sup> We have a nature and disposition that we had not before; and we have a life that we had not before, even the life of God—eternal life—within us. And we become more or less dead to those sinful and worldly desires to which, before the change, we were alive.

2. Our death unto sin has to do with the death of Christ upon the cross, because it is traceable to His death, as the cause and means whereby it is effected.

We have been considering the death of Christ, first, as dying for us the death of the perfectly righteous; secondly, as tasting for us the true taste of death as the wages of sin, as we cannot taste it ourselves; thirdly, as the result of His perfect obedience and submission to the will of God, even unto death, as our representative; fourthly, as the inevitable consequence of bearing the sins of the world upon His heart and mind. In each of these respects He truly died for us, and has obtained for us pardon of sin and peace with God. And by His resurrection He rose again for our justification, and ever to live to make intercession for us, and to obtain for us the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit. And in each of those respects in which His death was for us, we, who by the power of the Holy Spirit are in spirit united to Him, are partakers of His nature, and are made like unto Him in spirit, mind, nature,

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24; Col. iii. 9, 10.

and disposition. The result of this is that we ourselves become dead to sin and alive unto God.

But still, though the bodily death of Jesus Christ has to do with death unto sin in us, both as a figure and as a cause and means, we must further consider whether the expression 'dead with Christ,' as an equivalent to 'dead to sin,' and the expression, 'conformable unto His death,' are fully satisfied by reference to the *bodily* death of Christ.

Death unto sin is, in *us*, entirely a *spiritual* condition. And it becomes a condition of our spirits in *this life*, and is quite distinct from our bodily death, though it will be perfected and completed when we die.

Must there not have been in Jesus Christ, during His mortal life, and quite distinct from His bodily death, the same spiritual condition of death unto sin, to which we are made conformable, when it can be said of us that we are dead to sin? Was there not in Him a condition corresponding to that in His redeemed, differing only with these circumstances, viz. that He was ever sinless, while they have sinned—a condition that may strictly be called a being dead to sin?

In us, indeed, death unto sin is a ceasing from things to which we once lived; the putting to death of something within us that was once alive; the destroying of that sinful condition of heart in which we were born. Jesus took to Himself a

nature exactly the same as ours, with the same weak points and infirmities, the same liability to sin, for He 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'<sup>1</sup> But in Him actual sin *never came to life*. He never was *alive to sin*. From the very first His spiritual nature always had the mastery and ascendancy over His lower fleshly nature.

That common humanity from which He derived His representative humanity was poisoned with the germs of evil. But in the very act of assuming flesh the Son of God destroyed what germs of evil were in it, and rendered it, in His own person, sinless. He took a tainted nature in order that He might disinfect it, and He disinfected it in the act of taking it. The Incarnation itself was an act of Redemption—the redemption of that humanity which He actually assumed from the taint of sin. And by the power of His own Divine nature, and of the Holy Spirit, such seeds of evil as the devil cast upon Him during His life in the flesh never could germinate. They fell upon soil rendered unfavourable and uncongenial for their life and growth. They fell harmlessly upon Him and perished at the touch. The poisonous germs fell upon their antidote. He quenched all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

This deadness to sin in Christ was consummated in His death upon the cross. 'In that He

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews iv. 15.

died, He died unto sin.' And in this deadness to sin which He maintained through life and consummated and confirmed for ever in His bodily death, He was our Representative. By it deadness to sin was realised in humanity to God's satisfaction by man's Representative. In it, too, we see our own death unto sin. Deadness to sin in the Head and Heart anticipated and rendered possible death unto sin in the members. So St. Paul said (2 Cor. v, 14): 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died'—(that is, they died unto sin in His death, for in His death, regarded as the consummation of His deadness to sin, provision was made for the death unto sin of all men):—'and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.' For to live unto Him is equivalent to dying unto sin.

In the Lord's Supper we should commemorate and show this deadness to sin in Jesus Christ.

And this perfect deadness to sin Jesus maintained and exhibited for our sakes, as our Representative.

If Christ's deadness to sin is to benefit us, we must be baptised into Him, created into Him, made spiritually one body with Him who was dead to sin. And then shall we be as well pleasing to the Father as if we ourselves were, and had

ever been, as dead to sin as Jesus Christ ever was.

In the Holy Communion we seek to be more completely one with Christ to this end.

And further: in the Holy Communion we seek for that oneness of spirit with Christ which makes us partakers of His nature. 'So many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.'<sup>1</sup> We become in Him, and like Him, dead to sin and alive unto God. Sin no longer has dominion over us.<sup>2</sup> It no longer reigns in our mortal bodies. The prayer of our baptism is answered: 'All carnal affections die in us, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us.'

And to be thus dead with Christ to sin is clear evidence that we are partakers of the Divine Nature. To be dead to sin and to be alive unto God is to be like God. They only are so who have been born of God, and have within them the life of God and the seed of the divine nature. 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in Him; and he cannot sin—he is dead to sin—because he is born of God.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Romans vi. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Romans vi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John iii. 9.



## CHAPTER IX.

## COMMUNION IN CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION.

JESUS was our Representative in being crucified. How are we to regard the crucifixion of Jesus Christ? Who purposed, brought about, and accomplished it? Was crucifixion divine in its origin? Was it God's appointed way of executing judgment on those who break His law? Was it a punishment of the same nature as that which, on the great day of vengeance and judgment, will be inflicted on those whom the righteous Judge will condemn? Was it in any way equivalent to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels? Can it be right to say that the crucifixion of the Incarnate Son of God was God the Father's doing? or that God the Father condemned to the death of the cross His well-beloved Son?

Must we not say that just the reverse of all this was the truth? The cross was a Roman instrument of death. Crucifixion was the approved way in which the Roman nation—the most powerful, civilised, essentially worldly, and depraved

nation of the world at that time—executed those who were condemned to death for the worst offences against its laws. It was the punishment that Rome generally reserved, not for her own citizens, but for the alien and the slave. Crucifixion was essentially a human and worldly mode of capital punishment as compared with stoning, which was appointed by God as the punishment for certain transgressions of His law. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, so far from being appointed by God, and the execution of the sentence pronounced by Him upon His sinless and well-beloved Son, was brought about by the malice, hatred, and rage of wicked men ; it was entirely the act of this wicked world, instigated by the devil. It was the most unjust and desperately wicked act that this wicked world ever committed—the most deadly fruit that the corruption of human nature ever brought forth. God can indeed turn the wrath of man to His own praise and glory. And most effectually He did so in the case of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and caused the devil's most malignant onslaught to recoil upon himself. But we must be careful that we do not attribute to God what is attributable to the devil and the world and wicked men. We are right in saying that Jesus was obedient to the Father unto death, even the death of the cross. But we are far from right in saying that the Father *condemned* His Son to the death of the cross.

Our Lord has Himself taught us how we ought to regard the treatment that He received at the hands of sinners, by the parables of the wicked husbandmen and the foolish builders (Matthew xxi. 33-45; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-19). It could not possibly have been the will and purpose of the Heavenly Householder that those to whom He sent His Son should lay violent hands upon Him, cast Him out of the vineyard and kill Him. Even though, from His knowledge of what the husbandmen were, He knew perfectly well beforehand how they would receive and treat His Son—even though with that knowledge He willingly gave up His Son—yet nothing could be more opposed to the spirit and plain facts of the parable than to say that the Father willed, purposed, and devised that His Son should be thus treated. It was through the sheer wickedness of the husbandmen that the Son was cast out of the vineyard and killed. They hated Him who came to reprove them for their unfaithfulness, and to disturb them in the appropriation to themselves of what was not their own. They cast Him out and killed Him because He was the Heir, and that the inheritance might be their own. So Peter said to the Jews concerning Jesus (Acts ii. 23): ‘Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.’ It was the determinate counsel of the Father to deliver

His Son into the hands of sinners in order that they by Him might be saved from sin and made the sons of God and heirs of eternal life. And this determinate counsel He carried out with the foreknowledge that they by wicked hands would crucify and slay their Saviour. Again, it could not possibly have formed part of the design and purpose of the Heavenly Architect that the precious stone that He had Himself provided should be rejected. That stone was rejected through sheer folly and ignorance in the builders. They rejected it because they knew not its preciousness, and could not appreciate true worth. They rejected it because they were what they were. And the Heavenly Architect, knowing what they were, knew that they would reject it. They rejected it to their own utter confusion, and in spite of their rejection the design of the Heavenly Architect was carried out, and the precious stone became the head of the corner.

God sent His Son into the world, 'that the world by Him might be saved;'—that all who in this world would desire to be saved and would accept Christ as a Saviour might be saved by Him. And he allowed the devil and the world and wicked men to act toward Him as they willed in order that what they really were might be made manifest, and that as they behaved and acted toward Him their sentence, acquittal or condemnation, might be. Primarily God sent

His Son to save and not to condemn. But the result of His so sending Him is the condemnation of those who will not be saved. Jesus Himself told Nicodemus most clearly the purpose for which the Father sent Him, and the result of His being sent: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'<sup>1</sup>

Sinners are condemned, because they will not be saved by Christ the Saviour. The devil and the world are condemned, because they condemned the holy Son of God. So Jesus said of Himself, 'For judgment I am come into this world.'<sup>2</sup> And at the approach of His crucifixion He said, 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 14-19.

<sup>2</sup> John ix. 39.

<sup>3</sup> John xii. 31, 32.

We may regard the Jewish and the Roman powers that combined to crucify Jesus, as representing at that time *the world* which, as described by St. John, 'lieth in the evil one,'<sup>1</sup>—the world as it is under the influence of 'the prince of this world.' And those who assented to the crucifixion of Jesus we may regard as representing all those who, through the whole history of the world, may be described as being *of the world, and not of God*. And Jesus Christ then represented the whole body of those who are not of the world, even as He was not of the world, who are chosen out of the world and who are of God.

The time that Jesus was upon earth was a very remarkable period of the world's history. The world was then to an extent probably that it had never been before—at least since the flood—and has never been since, under the power of the prince of this world and the powers of darkness. The dominion of the devil was made manifest by the very bodies and minds of human beings being often and manifestly possessed of evil spirits. Wickedness and righteousness had at that time both attained to their fullest development. In what was then enacted we see the culmination both of wickedness as it was then manifested in the world, and of righteousness as it was then manifested in the man Christ Jesus. The devil and his host knew Jesus, who He was, that He was

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 19.

the Son of God. They knew why He was come and was manifest in the flesh, namely that He might subdue the devil, destroy his works, and redeem souls from his power and bondage. They were alive to the importance of the occasion to them. They therefore exercised their full influence upon the world, and put forth their full power to oppose God, to overcome Christ and to stir up the hatred and hostility of wicked men. As the prince of this world the devil succeeded in instigating the world, both Jewish and Gentile, to reject the Saviour of the world, to scorn the Lord of glory, to condemn and put to death the Prince of Peace. God sent His Son to save the world, and the devil induced the world to put to death the human manifestation of the Son of God. The devil, it would seem, had gained a great victory over God. That was indeed the world's hour and the power of darkness. But that which seemed the devil's great victory was his most crushing defeat. It was but the fleshly part of the humanity of the Incarnate Son of God that the devil could induce the world to destroy, and even that would rise victoriously from the grave. The very lifting up on the cross as a curse and an execration would defeat the devil's object by drawing men to the Saviour. The seeming triumph of evil over good was really the triumph of good over evil. The world's condemnation to death of Jesus Christ has become

the ground of God's condemnation of it. By that desperately wicked deed the world stands self-condemned before God. What more terrible indictment can be brought against the world—what more conclusive evidence of its guilt—than this, that it hated the holiness and loveliness of Jesus, which were the manifestation of the holiness and love of God; that it presumed to judge, reproach, and condemn Him who was indeed its Maker and its God and its would-be Saviour; that it put to a shameful and accursed death the Incarnate Son of God? What more convincing proof of the influence of the devil over man, and of the complete estrangement of the world from God, and of its utter unlikeness to Him could there be than this, that 'He (the Son of God) was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not?'<sup>1</sup>—that the citizens of this world regarded as an alien and put to an alien's death the Prince of Heaven?

The Son of God, manifest in the flesh, was the gift of the Bread of God from Heaven to this famine-stricken world. Would the men of this world hunger for that bread, receive it, and live for ever? Or would they refuse it, reject it, cast it out, trample it under foot, and perish? The Crucifixion was the world's conclusive act of rejection of the bread of life.

And while the crucifixion brought to light the

<sup>1</sup> John i. 10.



true nature of the world, it also brought to light the true nature of Jesus Christ. In anticipation of what was about to happen to Him He said, 'The prince of this world cometh, and HATH NOTHING IN ME.'<sup>1</sup> There was nothing of Satan, nothing of sin, nothing of the world in Jesus Christ. The world's hatred and rejection and condemnation of Him proved that what He said of himself was true: 'I am not of this world;'<sup>2</sup> 'My kingdom is not of this world.'<sup>3</sup> And His submitting to be crucified by the world was such a complete rising superior to the world and stamping of the worldly spirit and all worldly principles under His feet, and has so brought about the condemnation of the world, that He may be said to have crucified the world to Himself. Metaphorically He may be said to have nailed for ever to His cross the world that crucified Him. For by His cross He has put to an open and perpetual shame the spirit and principles of the world that condemned and crucified Him. As a counterpart to this, those who reject Him, represented as they are by those who crucified Him literally, are said to 'crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.'<sup>4</sup>

His submitting to be crucified was also a great triumph of the spirit over the flesh, which would naturally shrink from such a death. He

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 30.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> John xviii. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews vi. 6.

thus completely crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Viewing the crucifixion in this light we see the force of St. Paul's words: 'The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.'<sup>1</sup> 'We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.'<sup>2</sup> In the cross of Christ we see the world outwitted, the wisdom of the world convicted of folly, and the strength of the world convicted of weakness.

And now, too, we see the meaning of our Lord's words in John iii. 14, 15: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life.' What did the serpent-bitten Israelites see on the pole that Moses lifted up in the wilderness? They saw, as it were in effigy, the cause of their sufferings and of the fearful fatality that was among them, hanging before their eyes powerless to hurt them. Looking at the brazen serpent implied their faith that God could render the living serpents equally powerless to hurt them. And

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians i. 23, 24.

what is to be seen in the cross of Jesus Christ? What did the men of this world, represented by those who witnessed the crucifixion, see on the cross? They saw nothing there but Jesus of Nazareth crucified. And in His crucifixion they thought they saw themselves victorious over Him whose life and presence in their midst reprov'd and condemned them. They saw no serpent on the cross. The followers of Jesus saw, it may be, the devil and the world victorious and their Master rejected, dishonoured, defeated and crushed; and they too, at the time, saw only Jesus of Nazareth, and no serpent on the cross. We too see that, for a time, Jesus hung upon the cross. But look again, and what do we there see? Was He, even as He hung there, defeated or victorious? In His hanging there do we see Satan, the Old Serpent, victorious or defeated? If Satan and the world had gained the victory, would Christ, at the close of His life-long conflict with the evil one, have been on the cross? Had not the devil offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them? Had not the world offered to make Him a king? To have accepted these offers would have been to have fallen down and worshipped the Prince of this world. If then the devil and the world had gained the victory, Christ would have been at that moment not on a cross, but on a throne; wearing a crown, not of thorns, but of gold; possessed of all the kingdoms of the

world and the glory of them ; the world's greatest and, according to its notions, most glorious monarch. By resisting the devil's suggestions and rejecting his offers, and by renouncing the world, and by submitting to the world's rejection and yielding His body to the cross, Jesus gained the most complete victory over the powers and influences of evil. In the crucifixion we see the fulfilment of the first prophecy,<sup>1</sup> ' I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.' The Crucifixion was the exhibition of that bitter enmity wherewith the devil sought the ruin of man. In Christ crucified we see indeed the seed of the woman bruised in the heel of the lower fleshly part of His humanity, with a bruise which was quickly healed by His Resurrection : but we see also the serpent bruised in the head with a wound from which it will never recover. We see then the serpent on the cross. We see there the devil overcome and his works destroyed ; we see the world crucified ; we see the flesh, that would have inclined Christ to shrink from the cross and its shame, crucified with its affections and lusts. As Haman was seen hanging on the gallows that he had caused to be set up for Mordecai, so the devil, the world, and the flesh are seen by the eye of faith nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. As

<sup>1</sup> Genesis iii. 15.

the Israelites saw on the pole the sign and pledge that the fiery serpents were powerless to hurt those who had faith, so we see on the cross the pledge and assurance that the old serpent, the devil, is powerless to hurt those who believe in Jesus Christ. In the lifting up of the brazen serpent Moses himself was a prominent figure. He was the lifter up, and he was indeed, in that scene, the real type of Christ. The brazen serpent was the figure, not of Christ Himself, but of that which Christ lifted up with Himself that He might put it to a perpetual shame. This clearly is the teaching of St. Paul in Colossians ii. 14, 15. Speaking of the bond that was written in ordinances that was against us,—that legal bondage which reveals our bondage to sin, he says, 'He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers (i.e. of evil—the devil, the world, and the flesh), he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (i.e. the cross).' We look at the cross and we see that though Jesus was there, it was but for a moment. He is no longer there, but lifted up from the cross to Heaven. But on the cross we see the devil, the world, and the flesh eternally defeated and put to a perpetual shame. And in that great victory that Christ there gained we see our own Redemption from bondage to the devil, the world, and the flesh.

This aspect of the Crucifixion throws light upon a much misunderstood statement of St. Paul (Galatians iii. 13):—‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.’ We must here discriminate between *the* curse of the law from which Christ redeemed us—which St. Paul here distinguishes with the definite article—and a curse that Christ became for us. What is the curse of the law from which we are redeemed? The word ‘*redeemed*’ implies that it is not something awaiting us or overhanging us, such as the execution of a sentence to be pronounced in future judgment, but a state or condition in which we actually are by nature, by reason of sin, out of which and back from which we need to be redeemed. The curse of the law—the curse under which man abides by reason of the transgression of the law—is expressed in these sentences:—‘In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;’ (as Adam lived some hundreds of years after the fall, the immediate fatal result of his transgression must have been spiritual and not physical death);—and ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ The curse of the law, then, is deadness of soul, spiritual death, deadness to God and to holiness, deadness of conscience, death in sin. It is alienation from God and hostility to God. It is to be lost to God, out of God’s favour, and under God’s wrath. It is to

be in bondage—a double bondage—bondage to the law of God which we are bound to keep and are disinclined and unable to keep, and bondage to the enemies of our souls, the devil, the world, and the flesh. Though Christ identified Himself with those who are under this curse that He might redeem them from it, and even realised what it is for man to be under such a curse, yet in no true sense can it be said that He Himself was made or became this curse. He was never cursed with spiritual death or deadness of soul—with a spirit that cannot hold communion with God, or a soul incapable of holiness, or a heart that cannot love God. He was never in alienation from God or out of God's favour. God's law was never a grievous bondage to Him; nor was He ever in bondage to sin. No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, can call Jesus accursed in this sense. What, then, is it that St. Paul calls a curse that Christ became for us? He tells us plainly in these words: 'For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' St. Peter (Acts v. 30), addressing those who were concerned in the Crucifixion of Christ, said to them: 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree.' This, then, was the curse that He became for us, and that He endured in order that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. He was cursed, rejected, cast out, crucified by the men of this

world. He was cursed of those who were under the curse of the law, whom He came to redeem from the curse, whom He came to bless. The rulers of this world held up God manifest in the flesh, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, to be an object of curse and execration, scorn and derision of the profane and reprobate. And in His willing submission to this rejection and curse of the world consisted, in part, that great victory over the enemies of our souls through which we have redemption from the curse of the law.

St. Peter, who again and again imputed to wicked men the sin of having crucified Christ,<sup>1</sup> said of Him (1 Peter ii. 24): 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body upon the tree.' Here, again, we must discriminate between His bearing our sins and His position on the tree. The two were simultaneous in point of time, closely connected, but not identical in fact. At the same moment that sin attained its greatest height and most deadly development, by making the incarnate Son of God its victim, the sorrow of Jesus, as the bearer of the world's sin, attained its greatest weight; and, as He hung upon the cross, He accomplished His all-prevailing sacrifice for sin—the sacrifice of the troubled spirit, the sorrow of soul unto death, and the broken heart.

In the Lord's Supper we should commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. And as we call it

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 23, 36; iii. 13-15; iv. 10, 11; v. 28, 30.



to remembrance we should contemplate how He accomplished in His flesh, and consummated by His cross, the complete victory over the powers of darkness, the devil, the world, and the flesh; how by submitting to the false witness they bore against Him He has borne true witness against them, and brought about their eternal condemnation.

And it was as the seed of the woman—that is, *as our Representative*—that Jesus submitted to the cross. It was as our Champion and the Captain of our salvation that Jesus encountered the powers of darkness, and by His cross conquered Satan and overcame the world, and subdued the flesh. The powers of darkness renounced Him as having nothing of them in Him. He gladly accepted their renunciation, and by so doing He, as our Representative, renounced them—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

How are we to be benefited by His crucifixion? By union of our spirits with His spirit. Then we are members of Him and one with Him and identified with Him whom the world renounced, condemned, and crucified. Then we are in God's sight as if we ourselves had effectually encountered, renounced, and overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are reckoned with Christ as the world's outcasts and God's chosen, the disowned of the world and the adopted of the Father, the hated of the world and the beloved of God, the reproached of the world and the com-

mended of God, the accursed of the world and the blessed of God, the condemned of the world and the acquitted of God, the disinherited of the world and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We are identified with that good which the world would eliminate and which God would absorb in Himself.

In the Holy Communion we realise that spiritual union with Christ crucified whereby we are crucified with Him.

And further, in the Holy Communion we seek to have our spirits so nourished by His spirit that we partake of His nature. And thus we are truly conformed to His unworldliness, and to His superiority to the world. And the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us gives us the strength of Christ to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. And we are placed in the same position with regard both to the Father in Heaven and to the world that Jesus Himself maintained. For of His true disciples Jesus said, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.'<sup>1</sup> And again He said to His disciples, 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'<sup>2</sup> Exactly to the same effect are the words of St. John: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> John xv. 18, 19.

be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.'<sup>1</sup> 'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.'<sup>2</sup> And St. Paul said, 'We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God.'<sup>3</sup> And St. James: 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.'<sup>4</sup>

Christ was crucified for us not only as our representative for our justification before God, but for our sanctification, by imparting to us His own unworldly nature. He 'gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.'<sup>5</sup> Making all due allowance for what the civilised world was in our Lord's time compared with what it is now; considering that at that time it had attained to the very culmination of wickedness, while now it has been largely leavened and salted by the influence of the Church,—yet now, as then, there is a world to be renounced, a spirit of the world that is opposed to the Spirit of God: there is a worldly principle that to the end of this dispensation will denounce and condemn those whose lives are hidden with Christ in God, and who are not of this world.

That reciprocal crucifixion, speaking meta-

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 1.      <sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 13.      <sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> James iv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Galatians i. 4.

phorically, which took place between Christ and the world on Calvary, is being carried on continually by His spiritual body in the persons of His members, who have individually to be crucified with Christ. So St. Paul said, and we may see now the meaning of his words: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'<sup>1</sup> And again: 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'<sup>2</sup> And again: 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.'<sup>3</sup>

And further, by union of our spirits with Christ's spirit, as in one body, and participation in His nature, we are made partakers of the divine nature. By being reproached, condemned, and crucified by the world the divine nature of Jesus Christ—that nature which belonged to Him because He was of the Father and not of the world—was made manifest. And if we are crucified, with Christ, to the world, and the world is crucified to us, it is because we are partakers of the divine nature.

They who have God's nature have been born of God. And they who are born of God and have the nature of God are superior to the world. 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh

<sup>1</sup> Galatians ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians vi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Galatians v. 24.

the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'<sup>1</sup>

The world is under God's condemnation because of that unlikeness and hostility to God which culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but overreached and convicted itself. An awful day of terrible retribution is awaiting the world. Shall we cast in our lot with the world that crucified Christ, and so become sharers in the guilt of opposing God and crucifying Christ, and fall under the condemnation that awaits the world? Or shall we cast in our lot with Him whom the world hated and crucified, and so escape the condemnation of God, there being 'no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus'?<sup>2</sup>

'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' by which we must understand not love to or for the Father, but the Father's love, a divine love which is begotten in those who are partakers of the divine nature. 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, IS NOT OF THE FATHER, BUT IS OF THE WORLD. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 4, 5.    <sup>2</sup> Romans viii. 1.    <sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 15-17.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A FORETASTE.

WE have yet to consider a statement made by our Lord when He instituted the Sacrament.

MATTHEW xxvi. 29. 'I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

According to St. Luke our Lord was apparently speaking in reference to the Passover.

LUKE xxii. 16. 'I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And again, verse 18: 'I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.'

We have already regarded the Lord's Supper in its *retrospective* and commemorative aspect. And as the Holy Communion we have regarded it in its *present* grace-imparting and spirit-sustaining aspect. The statement we have now to consider gives to the ordinance a *prospective* and anticipatory aspect. The Supper of the Lord, as a Christian feast, is a foretaste of a future more

glorious heavenly feast. While yet at the table the Lord said to His disciples (Luke xxii. 29, 30), 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto Me. That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Surely the eating and drinking in the kingdom of God of the former statement are the same as in this unmistakable reference to the future heavenly state. There may be a partial and anticipatory fulfilment of this promise in the history of the Church on earth. Our Lord may have begun to fulfil it when He brake bread with His disciples after His Resurrection. It may be partially fulfilled by the spiritual imparting of Himself to His people in Holy Communion, and in all spiritual communion of His members with Himself. 'Behold,' He says, in the Revelation, in reference to this life, 'I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.'<sup>1</sup> But He adds, in reference to the life to come, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.'<sup>2</sup> The eating in the kingdom of God of which Jesus spake, and the drinking anew the fruit of the vine in the Father's kingdom, can only have their complete

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 20.<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

and adequate fulfilment in the future heavenly state. The Lord's Supper is indeed a eucharistic remembrance of a past deliverance and redemption from the bondage of the world, the flesh, and the devil, through the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as the Passover was with the Israelites a remembrance of a past deliverance and redemption from the Egyptian house of bondage; but both Passover and Lord's Supper have yet to receive their final fulfilment. And they will receive it when 'the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;' <sup>1</sup> when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come; <sup>2</sup> when the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed <sup>3</sup> with His own self those who being one with Him sit with Him in His throne. Whatever was in the mind of the man who, as he sat at meat with Jesus, exclaimed, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,' <sup>4</sup> in the Lord's Supper we ought to echo in our hearts the words of the angel, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' <sup>5</sup>

The Lord's Supper is truly a foretaste of the heavenly feast, and is as truly and strictly a spiritual feast. And it is more than a typical foretaste. It is the very same feast. It is the

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii. 21.      <sup>2</sup> Rev. xix. 7.      <sup>3</sup> Rev. vii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xiv. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xix. 9.



heavenly feast already commenced on earth. For the spiritual food that is the sustenance of our spirits in this world is exactly the same as that which will be their sustenance in the world to come. Nothing definite is really revealed to us of the nature of the body, so called,—the house which is from heaven,—with which at the general resurrection the glorified spirit will be clothed upon. But whatever its nature, it will be essentially different to the present mortal body—for ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;’<sup>1</sup>—and it will be sustained by no ordinary food of this earth. But, as far as we know, no essential difference will be produced in the spirit by death and resurrection. Except that it will be completely redeemed from sin, perfected and glorified, it will be in every essential particular the same spirit that it is now. Its sustenance then, as now, will depend upon its being in the Body of Christ, upon its dwelling in Christ and Christ in it, and so dwelling in God: and God in it. The Church, with Christ as its Head, eats now the very same bread of God from heaven that it will find hereafter is the Bread of heaven, and which is in fact the nature of God: and it drinks now the very same wine of God from heaven that it will find hereafter is the Wine of heaven, and which is in fact the life of God.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 50.

And notice, Jesus says that *He Himself* will eat the Passover when it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God ; and that He Himself will drink the fruit of the vine with us in the kingdom of His Father. As He is now, so He will be hereafter and for ever, as the Head of His Body the Church, the eater and the drinker, for us His members, of the heavenly bread and wine, the receiver for us of the divine nature and the divine life, and we shall ever live by Him as He lives by the Father. He the true Vine-tree is now, as He ever will be, rooted in the Father ; and He derives from the Father the divine and heavenly nourishment that He imparts to the branches, whether they be on earth or in heaven, enabling them to bring forth fruit to God's glory, and to work the works of God. And as the food that now sustains our spirits on earth is the same food that will sustain our glorified spirits in heaven, so the part of our being that through Christ partakes of that food and is rendered divine and immortal by it is that which belongs alike to our present and to our future eternal existence. All that the mortal and corruptible body has to do with the eating and drinking which preserve unto everlasting life is that it affords an analogy and supplies types and figures ; and, by association with the redeemed, regenerated, divinely nourished and sanctified spirit, it becomes itself sanctified ; the

body, together with the soul and spirit, is ‘preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;’<sup>1</sup> our life in the flesh is conformed to His life in the flesh; our members become like His the instruments of righteousness; through union of our spirits with His spirit as in one body, our naturally sinful bodies become conformed to the sinlessness of His natural mortal body; and in this sense ‘our sinful bodies are made clean by His (spiritual) body’—clean as was His natural body.

It is in our *spirits* that the Holy Spirit dwells, though because our spirits are tabernacled in the flesh, our bodies are called temples of the Holy Ghost. It is in our *spirits* that we receive the Spirit of adoption; it is as *spirits* that we are sons of God and dwell in God, our bodies being only a temporary charge committed to us. It is as *spirits* that we abide in Christ, and dwell in Christ, and feed upon Christ, and live by Christ, as the members live by the body. And it is as *spirits* that dwelling in Christ and Christ in us we now and evermore dwell in God and God in us. It is as *spirits* that we have already come to the spirits of just men made perfect,<sup>2</sup> and have communion and fellowship with departed saints. It is in no physical sense but in a distinctly spiritual sense that one by one, by

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thes. v. 23.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Heb. xii. 23.

spiritual regeneration, we are being joined unto the Lord, 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. iv. 13.







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