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SERMONS AND DISCOURSES

BY

REV. JOHN McQUIRK, D.D., LL.D.

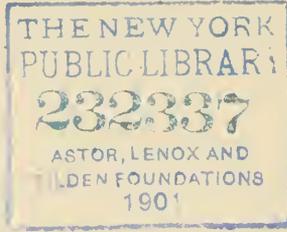
RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,
NEW YORK CITY.

“Now here see, brethren, a great mystery: the sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within. Do not think that any one learns aught from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if He be not within Who shall teach, empty is our noise of words.”—ST. AUG. EPIST. ST. JOHN, TREATISE III.

VOLUME II.

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1901



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To
The People of St. Paul's Parish,
The Flock
So Long Entrusted to his Pastoral Care,
This Volume
Is
Dutifully and Affectionately
Dedicated
By
The Author

Nulli obstat

REMI LAFORT, S.T.L.

Censor

Imprimatur

MICHAEL AUGUSTINE

Archbishop of New York

P R E F A C E .

THE Discourses contained in this Volume have been written by the Author at various times in the course of his ministry. Unlike those comprised in the First Volume, which were almost all written after delivery, these have been all written, and, with but few exceptions, never delivered. Hence they are the written results of the Author's studies and reflection, designed, indeed for public instruction, yet never reaching the public till now.

An error seems to prevail with many that all books of sermons are meant exclusively for the Clergy; that they alone have any need of them. The Author has written on the contrary assumption, believing that it is mainly for the laity that all such works should be designed. He would wish to contribute to the restoration of family reading, a custom once quite prevalent and productive of so much fruit. It would be a sad comment on the state of souls if there were no desire or leisure on the part of the faithful for such instruction and exhortation. And this all the more at a time

when the desire for profane reading is so universal and leisure for it so eagerly sought. While the preaching of the word of God will ever be the chief work of the priest, after the dispensation of the Sacraments, the measure of his success will always depend upon the clearly recognized and acted-upon duty on the part of the faithful of profiting by it.

Accordingly, nothing has been farther from the mind of the Author than the writing of a work bearing the semblance of a pastoral theology. He has never believed that the making use of another's sermons is the best, or even a desirable, means of discharging the preaching office. The principles of theology, dogmatic and moral, with such aid as pastoral theology affords, digested and assimilated, together with the continual perusal of the sense and spirit of the Holy Scriptures, and the knowledge of human nature to be drawn from observation, and, particularly, from one's own heart, and a manner of expression and delivery the most natural, and most adapted to hearers, are the only true means of preparing oneself for the effectual preaching of the word of God. Yet, while the Author's intention has been to write for the laity, he will be only too well pleased if his work may be of any service to his Reverend brethren.

This scope of the book will anticipate, and, perhaps, answer any objection (sure to be made in

this day) to the length of some, if not all of the Discourses. It is believed that, for those who are interested, they will not prove too long, at least if read at intervals. And for this end, divisions have been made in some of the longest by which the attention is rested and opportunity given for reflection. To those not interested, the shortest sermon is long and only an infliction. No complaint is ever heard from anyone of hearing too much about his business, or of what is uppermost in his thoughts or nearest his heart.

The vulgar habit of descanting on the length of sermons which with many seems to be the extent of their critical faculty or even of their understanding of what they reproach, springs from want of appetite, if not from positive disrelish for the word of God. The parable of the sower and his seed is as true and as universal in its application to-day as when first uttered. This defect will be cured not by yielding to it, but by fostering better dispositions, even unto hunger and thirst for the Divine word, in our hearers; and by laboring to make our sermons interesting. For, in truth, there is an interesting side to every subject, if we do but seek it, and there is an interesting way of presenting what in itself may seem uninviting or monotonous. The scissors applied to the manuscript, or the curtailment of the time allotted to the preacher, is not the only means of making sermons short, or profitable to

the people. The short may yet be very long, and the long may indeed be very short: time is truly relative.

The idea of impressing the imagination with an illustration of the lesson taught the mind, introduced in the First Volume, is retained in this, though not to the same extent, owing to the different character of many of the subjects.

Praying that the word of God even as presented in this Volume, may not fall barren upon the souls of those who may read it, and that the fructifying Blessing of Him, Who alone can give the increase, may accompany it, I offer it to the public.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEW YORK,
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THE VALUE OF THE SOUL AND THE NECESSITY OF ETERNAL SALVA- TION.

Then Jesus said to His disciples : If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whoever will lose his life for My sake, will find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels : and then will He render to every man according to his works.—St. Matt. xvi. 24–27.

Knowing that not with corruptible things, gold or silver, ye were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers : but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, spotless and undefiled.—I. St. Peter i. 18–19.

MEN ransack the earth in search of gold, diamonds, and precious stones. And when, with untiring efforts and incredible patience, they find them, with untold industry they refine and polish them ; removing the alloy and baser materials with which they are, for the most part, found. All the while they are unmindful of that treasure which has been placed within the reach of every one, within his very breast ; than which nothing is more intimate to him, which no one can take from him, and which is his, and his alone, for evermore. More precious by far than aught that the science of man has brought to light, or that

earth or sea can contain, or that God has made in this world, or, it may be, in any other, is the immortal soul with which every one has been intrusted. To prepare this soul for its eternal destiny is the only end and purpose of our existence in this world.

The first thing that strikes us in contemplating the soul, and that gives us an insight into its value, is the way in which it comes into existence. It is the direct production of God Himself. Other creatures result from the agency of second causes; God in the beginning endowed them with the virtue of diffusing their species. Not so the human soul: it requires the act of direct creation, the omnipotence of God's own right hand. At the opportune moment, when the body is prepared for its reception, God is present and breathes into it a living soul, that had no previous existence; as in the beginning, when He said: "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness," He breathed into him the breath of life.

The human soul is unlike all things else in nature, outside the angels and spirits, whom it resembles. It is simple, not composite; it is spiritual, not depending upon the body for its most intimate and essential operations. Extension is essential to bodies, which result from a combination of parts. Inextension is of the very essence of the soul, as having no parts; but as existing whole and complete in a manner which we cannot comprehend; because there is nothing like it in nature; and of which we understand rather what it is not, than what it is. We say that it is a spirit,

not because we comprehend what a spirit is ; but it is the only way we have of indicating what the soul must be. It is present in the body, not as water in a vessel, part answering to part ; but whole and complete in every part, according to the needs of the part.

The soul is a perfect image of God, a mirror in which are reflected His nature and divine perfections. All things shadow forth, in their degree, the perfection of their Lord and Maker : but the soul, being the noblest work of His hands, under the sun, reflects, in a higher degree, and after an incomparably more exalted manner, His divine nature and attributes. As God is a spirit, so is the soul ; as He is eternal, so the soul is immortal ; as He is free, so the soul is endowed with freedom of will ; as in God there are three Persons, in the soul there are three powers : the will of man, finite as it is, is yet a type of the Infinite Will : the memory of man, though at an infinite distance, suggests the Divine Omniscience : the intellect of man is as it were a ray of the Divine Intelligence. " Let Us make man to Our image and likeness," was the plan and model upon which the Creator made the soul of man. By the gift of sanctifying grace, which dwells in the soul and by which it is united to Himself in the closest possible of unions, and made, in a manner, a partaker of His nature, the soul is raised to the highest degree of glory. The soul is the image and superscription of the Most High ; His seal is ineffaceably stamped upon it ; its price and value is forever established. Created for eternity, it is to be re-

deemed in time. Created for God, it shall be forever miserable, if it forfeit Him.

By the soul we perceive: the external impressions which we receive in the senses are carried to the soul, the seat of sensation. It is the soul that inhales the sweetness of flowers, that drinks in the melody of music, that entrances or is entranced by eloquence; it is the soul that enjoys all pleasure, that endures all pain, that enables us to study nature, and to look through nature up to nature's God; it is the soul that shall perceive the glory of heaven, and shall share the bliss of the elect; it is the soul that shall endure the misery of hell and the torments of the damned.

By the soul we think and reason. By it we are transported to the bosom of God, and form, if not commensurate, at least not unworthy ideas of the Being and Attributes of the Most High. By it we travel back to the everlasting days of the past, and contemplate Him, when as yet nor man, nor world, nor angels were made, finding in Himself unfailling bliss. By the soul we travel forward and contemplate God in the ages and eternities yet unborn; when He, the Ancient of days, shall be as young and as immortal as in the first dawn of the aurora; when the contemplation of Himself shall be as far from being exhausted as it has been from the beginning; when the soul itself shall be eternally united to Him to share His glory, or be eternally separated from Him to endure His wrath.

By the soul we will: whether for weal or woe,

for good or evil, it is the will that makes us what we are. It is the will that makes the saint; it is the will that makes the sinner. It is the will that urges us to the love of virtue, which the intellect ascertains; it is the will that slackens our efforts and leads us to fall short of this standard, and that makes us lie supine and indifferent in the vices which we condemn, and yet pursue. History is replete with instances showing what is accomplished by steadiness and force of will; the signal triumphs it has won in the Church, in the civil affairs of men, and on the field of battle: how it has created heresies, and yet repressed them; established states, and yet overturned them; lost battles, yet wrested victory from defeat. It is of all faculties, the will that makes man most like to God; image, though feeble, of the Divine Will, which nothing can resist.

The immortality of the soul, even more, if possible, than its spiritual nature, reveals to us its inestimable value. All material objects being made up of parts, by the very law of their being, tend to dissolution. And from their nature we infer their destiny. The human soul, being subject to no resolution of parts, but simple and indivisible, is not subject to disintegration or corruption; by the law of its being, it tends to live forever. From this aptitude, we should infer its destiny. It is the strongest presumption that it is endowed with immortal life. If the soul were not meant to survive the body, there would be no reason why its substance should be of an infinitely higher nature, than that of the body and of all things;

nor can we believe that God would create so exalted a being to serve the brief uses of its existence here below.

The insatiable longing of the soul for perfect happiness, discovers the immortal destiny for which it has been made. It is the essential appetite of the rational soul. It is the impress of God's hand showing the purpose of its being. It is the revelation of Himself which God has made to the soul, as its final beatitude. Destroy this desire, and you destroy the soul. It is the manifestation to the soul, that God wills it to live forever; that for this, He has given to it an aptitude for eternal existence; and that this aptitude has received His promise and pledge of a never-ending duration.

This perfect bliss is not found here below. From reason we should know, that the spiritual nature of man cannot be satisfied with the material pleasure which sensible objects can afford. All human experience confirms this conclusion, and proclaims that no human object can fill the void which God has made in the heart. And yet it must be satisfied: it is not here; therefore it must be hereafter. "This corruption must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality." This life is the period of gestation that precedes our immortal birth in the life to come. God's gifts are past recalling: He destined the soul to immortality, when He raised man to a supernatural state. Immortal bliss shall be the portion of those who are restored to that state before death. Those whose fall from that state is

sealed by death, shall inherit immortal woe. Undying bliss and undying woe are the alternatives extended to the sons of men: either of them is the everlasting future of the soul. Eternity is the sublime destiny of the human race: this the lofty rank we hold in the plan of God's creation. Shall we lose or gain the salvation of our immortal being? Not to gain it, is to lose it; not to enjoy happiness, is to be subject to misery; not to possess God, is to be united to His enemy and the enemy of the soul. From the eternal duration which belongs to the nature of the soul, and has been promised by God, learn the incomparable value of your souls.

He Who created the soul, best knows its value. From the valuation, then, which He has put upon it, can we best learn its true worth and greatness. Call to mind that these souls were once lost and consigned to everlasting misery. It was not in the power of man to redeem them; for no one can pay the price of his soul. An infinite satisfaction was required. Outside of God there is nothing infinite. God in His own proper nature could not suffer. Besides, the atonement should, in some sufficient manner, be the expiation of the race that had sinned. If man was to be saved, it was necessary, at the same time, that Divine Justice should remain inviolate. In all this, we see the inextricable confusion which sin had introduced into the world, and in which were involved the souls of men. In God surmounting these difficulties, and in the unutterable plan to which He had recourse to save mankind,

we see the value which He placed upon the soul.

If I were to say that all the wealth which the earth contains, all the glory of this world's kingdoms, all the productions of human genius, all the great enterprises of human skill and industry, all that the world of nature and the world of man contains, could not, for a moment, be entertained as the price of a human soul, I would say but a human thing, which would have no sort of meaning to declare the value of the soul. If I were to say, that it were less for all the sons of men who have ever appeared on this earth or shall hereafter,—so far as concerns their temporal life,—to perish than that one immortal soul should be lost, I would not in the least exaggerate, and yet would fall far short of the truth. If I were to say, that it were better that some great catastrophe should happen, blotting out forever heaven and earth, and all that God has made, than that one soul should be lost, I would still be but lisping, and would be as far as ever from giving full utterance to a truth which the tongue cannot declare, nor the mind conceive. If I were to say, that, if all the angels and blessed spirits became incarnate and died to save a soul, the price would not be exorbitant, and would really be far less than that which was actually paid.

Lift, then, your minds to the throne of God; contemplate His glorious Being and Attributes: see Him relinquish this throne of power and glory, descend to earth, become man, live a life of suffering, and die a death of ignominy, to pay the price

of our souls, to dissolve the bonds of sin and slavery in which they were enthralled.

Considering this unspeakable price, what tongue of men or angels can proclaim the unutterable value of a human soul! Considering the various plans of reconciling mercy with justice, man's full pardon with God's inviolate justice, a sacrifice infinite with a nature capable of suffering, what intense love does it not all manifest on God's part, for the souls of men! He who best knows their value, did not hesitate to have recourse to these Divine devices, did not hesitate to die, that they might live. Great, indeed, must be the misery from which the soul was to be rescued! Great, indeed, must be the happiness which for the soul was to be purchased! Immortal must have been the bliss, immortal must have been the love reserved for the soul! Beyond all comprehension must the soul be dear to God, when He saved it at so lavish a profusion of His love and blood! Marvellous must be the intrinsic excellence of the soul; unutterable the happiness for which it was made; inconceivable the woe to which it fell; since it was not unworthy of God to die to save the work of His hands: verily did God in its creation show that He could create a being so precious in His sight, that for its sake He would die.

And, now, what is eternal salvation? Salvation is to save one's soul. Every creature that God has made, has been made for some definite end. In this purpose of its being, it will find its real felicity. The soul is made for God. God constitutes its

final destiny and real happiness. As the eye is made to see, and is only happy in the exercise of its faculty; as the mind is made to know, and only finds contentment in the acquisition of knowledge; so the human soul, but after an ineffably higher manner, is made for God, and can only be at rest when it possesses Him. He is its supreme beatitude; without Him it is in supreme misery. Salvation, then, is the repose of the soul, the fulfilment of its aspirations, the realization of its hopes, the attainment of its destiny, the consummation of its happiness. It is the return of the soul to its first beginning. Absorbed as we are with this sensible life, we realize not the innate tendency of the soul to union with God. But let this sensible world sink and disappear, and at once the soul by its essential inclination, disdains all creatures, and seeks its union with God. When the soul is separated from the body, it bounds with all the energy of its nature to God, to be received in His eternal embrace. Not to be saved, is to perish eternally: to be eternally drawn to God, and to be eternally repelled by Him. It is the misery of the soul, the disappointment of the soul's aspirations, the frustration of its final destiny, the loss of its eternal glory. In this matter of salvation, nothing less is at stake than the estate of the soul during never-ending ages. Once created, the soul is deathless forevermore. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but the soul, like the word of God, shall not pass away. All things shall be as if they had never been; man and time shall be remembered but for the momen-

tous and abiding results to which they give birth; the uncounted ages of the future shall run their unceasing round, exceeding all calculation or comprehension; yet the soul shall last forever, happy in God's eternal embrace, or miserable among the lost spirits in hell.

Nor can a man say that he is willing to forego this eternal glory, to sacrifice this prospect for the enjoyment of this world's goods and pleasures. If he is not saved, he is necessarily lost. There is no neutral ground. If the world lasted forever, and if men could dwell upon it without fear of death or termination, there might, perhaps, be found those base enough to place their happiness within its bounds, and seek naught beyond. But this shall not be. In God's eternal designs this earth and the men upon it, shall cease, and shall only be remembered as the scene upon which was shed the blood of the Incarnate God for their souls; that blood whose application has peopled heaven, whose rejection has peopled hell. During life two alternatives are presented, eternal bliss and eternal woe: and of these every human soul must make his election. He cannot decline the one, so as to escape the other. If he merit not eternal happiness, he will deserve eternal misery. Eternal interests are to be decided during the few brief years of life. It is verily "a time that we must redeem."

What would it profit to gain all that the most unbounded desires could covet, and that, not only for the years of life, but for any period howsoever long, which yet should end? That end should

come, those objects should cease. The soul would be in even greater misery than at the termination of shorter-lived felicity. There is no real happiness but what is everlasting.

No human words can fully declare the supreme necessity of eternal salvation. It is sometimes said that salvation is a very important affair; and it doubtless is: but the word fails to fully explain the meaning for which it is employed: salvation is not merely important; it is necessary; nay, it is alone necessary. Important is that which gained, brings to one some great advantage; or lost, brings to one some great detriment. But without salvation, I am utterly and hopelessly undone. I need not become rich, nor famous, nor enjoy any of the pleasures of this life. These things soon pass away, and I am none the less happy for not having possessed them. On the contrary, I am free from the dissatisfaction and regrets which they always leave behind them. The necessity of anything is to be measured by the necessity of the purpose for which it serves as a means. The goods of this life can only serve for our temporal well being. But, as this end is not simply necessary, these goods are not necessary, and their loss involves no irreparable misfortune: besides, while life lasts, there is hope of regaining them. Even if these losses cannot be retrieved, and we are compelled to pass our lives in destitution and suffering, the day of our death shall find us no worse off, than if we had lived in affluence and pleasure. Our salvation is alone inexorably necessary and whatever is necessary thereto.

This lost, we are, beyond all hope, forever ruined ; this alone of all losses, can never be retrieved. .

What ! you will say, is it not lawful for me to seek the goods of life ; is it not necessary that I should supply my wants and provide for wife, children and those who are bound to me by the ties of nature, and all those others who rightfully look to me for support ; can I not take part in life ? Yes ; all this is permitted to you, if you seek it in reference to salvation, the one thing needful. All things have been given to man, as means by which he may accomplish his eternal destiny. So far as they are necessary or useful for this purpose, it is his right and duty to employ them. So far as they hinder or retard this end, it is his right and duty to abstain from them. Following this law, we can indeed seek this world's goods, but only in salvation and for salvation.

As salvation means the union of the soul with God, the law which regulates our love of God should also regulate our love of salvation. As, then, we are to love nothing more than God, nothing even so much as God ; so we are to love nothing more than salvation, and nothing so much as salvation : salvation is to be sacrificed to nothing, but everything is to be sacrificed to salvation.

There are losses which a man may suffer, not only without fault but with great praise. He may give his goods to feed the poor ; he may, for sake of his fellow-man, strip himself of all his possessions ; he may lay down his life for his wife or children, or in the just defence of his country.

But not for wife, nor children, nor country, nor mankind, no, not for sake, if it were possible, of saving all men from hell, could he lose his own eternal salvation. The law of charity which binds him to love himself and, in consequence, to save his soul, is above all other obligations.

But there is nothing which he must not sacrifice, if necessary, to eternal salvation. Loss of this world's goods, loss of those he holds dearest, loss of health, loss of life itself,—no sacrifice is too great with which to purchase eternal salvation. How strong the desires of men for this world! What sacrifices are they not ready to make for it! Consider the seas of blood through which men have waded, the untold treasures they have spent, the desolation they have brought upon their country, the misery they have inflicted upon mankind, for sake of gaining a temporal kingdom; and ask yourselves, what sacrifice is too dear or too great to be made for the attainment of an eternal kingdom,—for the salvation of the deathless soul!

When we look out upon the world and consider the lives and pursuits of men; when we see how eagerly they pursue and how tenaciously they cling to the goods of this life: sparing no labor, stopping at no obstacles, and abandoning them only when death renders it impossible longer to retain them; when we consider how exclusively these things absorb their thoughts: never for a moment from the cradle to the grave, giving a serious thought to that end for which alone they have been created; when, I say, we consider all this, we are almost tempted to think that men

believe not in a future life; that here, and here alone, is to be sought their final destiny and complete happiness. How, otherwise, explain the alarming contrast between men's belief, and men's lives; between what they think, and what they do; between professions so high and so ennobling, and practices so low and so debasing.

If men believe themselves to be immortal and made for a future life, why do they live as if they thought themselves mortal and destined to no other life than that which they now enjoy? Such would be the language of one who, ignorant of the blindness consequent on the fall of man, and of the fell dominion which sense exercises over him, would contemplate the scene which the world, in its length and breadth, presents. Men try to make themselves and others believe that they have a desire for salvation, when they have it not. They are loath to acknowledge, even to themselves, that they are not seeking the end for which they feel they have been created. They deceive themselves. An occasional idle wish which is never acted upon, and which finds no place in their daily life, is not to be taken for that earnest and sustained effort which a real desire implies.

How few are there who have this real, abiding, fruitful desire of eternal life. Such a desire involves a change of life, a ceasing to live for this world, a soul thoroughly penetrated with the reality of a life to come and an acting out of this belief in its daily life. A man seeks pleasure, but for what? is it sought with reference to salva-

tion? Another seeks wealth, but for what? is it to make friends, for the future life, of the mammon of iniquity in this? Still another seeks fame, but for what? is he as desirous that his soul should stand well in God's sight, as he is to gain the praise of men? Thus men give themselves to this world's objects, without reference to their eternal salvation. There is no end to the human desires which fill the heart. From childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age, and from old age till the grave closes upon him, man knows nothing but desires. From Juvenal to Johnson, the vanity of human wishes has been a favorite theme with satirists, and has supplied unfailing food for those who have reflected upon the perversity of human nature and the blindness consequent upon the fall. Not until the soul be penetrated, through and through, with the desire of the end for which it has been made, will these vain desires cease to perplex and puzzle and confound the heart. Until man seeks genuine felicity, he will delude himself with that which is counterfeit.

Mankind will never learn that the goods of this life are but means by which to achieve their salvation; not the final end for which they should live. And this fatal error is owing to the delusion which sense exerts over us. Men come into life with souls all athirst for the happiness which they crave, and for which they feel they have been created. This happiness is none other than that which is to be found in God, the only source of perfect felicity. They look around, and they

find not in this sensible world, the God of their souls. They have not faith, faith strong enough, to break through the veils of this life, and to make palpable the truths which religion discloses. They are blinded by the darkness of sin and error; they are dominated by the tyranny of sense and passion. Not finding the pleasure their souls long for, they seek what is at hand; not finding the pure waters of eternal life, they seek to slake their thirst at the muddy stream of this world's pleasures; and earn and receive the disappointment due to their folly. The desires which fill the breast of man, are but the outlets of the one great paramount tendency of the soul seeking its object. Fill the soul with the delight which comes from the possession of God, and it would no longer hunger after the riches, or the honors, or the pleasures of this life. As it is only because of its estrangement from its final end, that the soul seeks these objects, it is manifest that in them it can never be satisfied.

Instead of making this world and what it contains, the final end of our existence, we should employ them as instruments to lift our souls to their real destiny. If God's creatures are so perfect, how infinitely more perfect must not He Himself be? If we are so ravished and transported with the glory of creation, how shall we not be, with the unimaginable glory of the Great Creator! Every perfection in God's works is contained, in a supereminent degree, in God Himself: it is but the faintest reflection of His own uncreated perfection. Let, then, the glory

and magnificence of the physical world raise your hearts to Him Who has created them; and Who has created ten thousand worlds incomparably more perfect and glorious. Let the beauty which man worships in creatures, raise his heart to the contemplation of Him, the Source and Fountain of all beauty. Let those gifts of mind, which all men instinctively honor, lead them to honor Him Who has bestowed them; and Who possesses them in fulness. Let the riches of this world lift your hearts to the incorruptible riches of the life to come. Let its pleasures excite your ardent longing for the unspeakable delights of heaven. Let your desire for fame enkindle in your souls the thirst for immortal life; of which fame is but the miserable substitute.—In a word, let everything that God has made lift your souls to God Himself, from Whom descends every good and perfect gift. Him alone you should seek, and in Him alone can you be happy.



GOD'S CALLS TO REPENTANCE.

And Jesus answered and spake again to them in parables, saying : The kingdom of heaven is like to a king, who made a marriage feast for his son. And sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding : and they would not come. Again, he sent other servants, saying : Tell those who were invited : Behold I have prepared my dinner : my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready : come ye to the wedding. But they gave no heed, and went away, one to his farm and another to his merchandise : and the rest laid hands on his servants, and treated them shamefully, or slew them. But when the king heard of it, he was angry, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants : The wedding indeed is ready : but they who were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways ; and as many as ye shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants went forth into the ways, and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good ; and the wedding was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests : and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him : Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment ? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters : Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.—St. Matt. xxii. 1-14.

And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying : If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things which are for thy peace : but now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days will come upon thee, and thine enemies will cast a trench round about thee, and compass thee round,

and straiten thee on every side : and beat thee to the ground, and thy children who are in thee : and they will not leave in thee one stone upon another : because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, He began to cast out those who sold therein, and those who bought, saying to them : It is written : My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers. And He was teaching daily in the temple. And the chief priests and the scribes, and the rulers of the people, were seeking to destroy Him.—St. Luke xix. 41-47.

IN these places Our Lord records His dealings with the Jewish people. He tells of their election as the chosen seed, their continual calls to repentance and the warnings given to them by the prophets ; their contempt of these graces ; their stiff-necked obstinacy in rejecting the gospel ; their final reprobation by Almighty God ; the calling in their stead of the Gentiles. He foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, and the judgment which both Jew and Gentile shall undergo when summoned before Him at the last day. God is the king Who, by the incarnation of His Only Begotten Son and the Redemption, to which all are invited, and the Jews first, is said to make a marriage feast. Their refusal to accept the Gospel is the cause of the unworthiness of those who were invited. The command to the servants to go out unto the by-ways to seek guests is the invitation to the Gentiles. The way in which the servants sent by the Master were treated, is that in which the Jews received the prophets and Jesus Himself. The destruction of the murderers and their city signifies the fall of Jerusalem. The king coming to the feast and

finding one without the wedding garment, is Jesus coming at the hour of death and finding the soul stript of the garment of charity; casting him out into exterior darkness, bound hand and foot, is the perpetual desolation and unending suffering reserved for the sinner, who on that day shall be helpless on every side.

His prediction of the fall of Jerusalem was fulfilled to the letter, when forty years after His Ascension, the Holy City was besieged by the Roman armies under Titus and Vespasian: when its lofty towers were dismantled, its temples profaned, its well-nigh impregnable fortifications utterly destroyed, its walls levelled to the ground, when the whole city was laid in ruin, and "not a stone was left upon a stone." During this siege, the most fearful history records, eleven hundred thousand of its inhabitants perished; while the whole population suffered horrors whose recital makes the blood run cold. Mothers to save themselves from starvation devoured their children at the breast; or murdered them to save them from the cruel death of famine. The nation that had invoked upon itself the blood of the Saviour, found but in its desolation a miserable defence against the rapacity and cruelty of its enemies.

The record of God's mysterious providence with the Jewish people, is the record of His dealings with every human soul. The calamities which befell Jerusalem are but a feeble image of the judgment, at the hour of death, of the sinner who during life has contemned God's grace, and

of the eternal malediction that shall follow. As the Jews by their wilful obstinacy spurned the mercy of God and provoked His wrath unto their destruction; so, the sinner despising his patience, and goodness, and long suffering, shall experience His vengeance on the day of retribution. Called as every soul is to eternal felicity, and predestined by its Baptism, fortified by the sacraments, continually admonished by God's warnings and inspirations; yet continually rejecting His invitations; a day will come when it, too, shall be cast aside. Even as Jerusalem was delivered to its enemies that they might, as unconscious instruments of the Almighty, execute His judgment upon it; so shall the reprobate soul become the prey of those enemies whom, by free choice, it made its friends during life: "the principalities and powers, the rulers of the world of this darkness, the spirits of wickedness in high places." To these torturers it shall be delivered until it pays the last farthing. Found without the wedding garment of grace, it shall by them be delivered into exterior darkness. As the Holy City was given to the flames, and beat flat to the earth, and became a perpetual ruin; so, the soul of the sinner shall be cast into perpetual desolation and unending despair. The eternal misery of the sinners shall proclaim the justice of God, and atone for the mercy and salvation which were contemned and sacrificed by the sinner during life. The damned soul shall be an everlasting monument of the justice of God. "Now all these things happened to them in figure, and they are

written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world have come."

God is continually pursuing us with His mercy and offering us His pardon, as He did the Jews of old; and we are continually rejecting His advances, "despising the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering," not knowing or not heeding "that the benignity of God leadeth us to repentance." How, we may ask, how is God thus calling us to repentance? In various ways, I answer: in ways adapted to individuals: some does He call one way, and some another. But if we examine, we shall find that the ordinary methods by which God calls the sinner to repentance are these five: by the preaching of the word; by conscience; by the influence of His grace; by the accidents and vicissitudes of life; by His continual goodness.

God calls us by the preaching of the word. This is the ordinary means, and we may say His established means. This is the way employed by Jesus Himself for the conversion of the world, and which He gave to the apostles: "Preach the Gospel to every creature;" "Faith cometh by hearing." It is the most effectual process of learning: superior far to the dead book are the living words of the teacher. It was this preaching of the word which was made use of in the Old Law. Levites were prepared for this ministry by the continual study of the inspired prophets. Jesus Himself went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath and made known to the people the word of God; and declared that the word which was

pre-announced, was that day fulfilled in their regard.

One may say that this is a very human and ordinary means for the accomplishment of so divine a purpose. But we think that it compares favorably with the other works of God. In the physical world He makes use of the agency of second causes. He does the same in the moral world: He has ordained that men must be saved by the ministry of men: that sin and weakness shall be made instruments of grace and salvation. In nothing does He coerce our free will. He gives us evidence of Divine truth, or provides such means for its diffusion as are amply sufficient; yet not so overwhelming as that those who refuse to believe, may not find some excuse for their unbelief. The evidence of His divinity is not such as absolutely constrains belief; yet it is abundantly sufficient. The proof of God's existence is not so utterly overpowering that no possible difficulty can be brought against it; yet it is abundantly sufficient. He might have employed for the conversion of men, an instrument more irresistible than that of human speech. Yet He could not have done it without, in some measure, coercing our free will: thus destroying the noblest gift of our nature, and from which worship and love draw all their value and efficacy. For there is no homage where there is no freedom.

It is true, too, that the preaching of the word must necessarily be infected with the imperfections of the mind and education of the preacher: yet still it is the word of God. It may be elo-

quently set forth by one, and indifferently by another: yet still it is the word of God. It bears upon it the impress of the character and reflects the style of the preacher: yet still it is the word of God. The apostles were men of varied ability, and of varied degrees of education, and of varied power of expression: it is exhibited in their writings: yet they were all inspired by the Holy Ghost and spoke His word. It was not by the persuasive words of human speech, but by the showing of the Spirit and the power of divine grace working through them, that they had succeeded.

Some may think that if some more striking means were adopted, they would more likely be converted. But no; if the apostles, if Christ Himself—were to return to earth, there would still be those who would find pretexts for not hearing them. One would have married a wife, another would have bought five yoke of oxen, another a farm; and all would pray to be excused. You remember the parable of the rich glutton who begged Abraham that, if Lazarus might not be permitted to give him a drop of water, at least, he would be allowed to return to earth and warn his five brothers, lest they should come into that place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. But he said: No, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise from the dead. And so it is: if you

hear not Moses and the prophets, that is, the priests of God's church, neither would you believe a man risen from the dead.

While the preaching of the word is not a sacramental power, yet, considering that it is the divinely established means for the conversion of souls, we cannot believe that it is destitute of grace, that it is not the vehicle through which God's grace finds its way to the soul. If, then, God's word fails to produce the effects which are its due, we are to seek the defect, not in the instrument itself, but, rather, in the disposition of those who hear it. The failure of God's word to bring forth plentiful fruit of salvation, is to be sought in the indifference and carelessness with which it is received. Upon some hearts, it falls as on the stony ground mentioned in the Gospel, in which it can find no root; in others, it falls among thistles, and soon the cares and troubles of life choke it; with some, it finds a little root; but soon temptation and the devil uproot it. How few listen to the word of God with that humble heart and docile mind without which it is fruitless. How few pray before the sermon the Holy Spirit to come and enlighten their minds and soften their hearts, that the word of God may there find genial soil. Let those who thus listen to the word of God, remember the saying of St. Augustine, which, indeed, would seem to be an exaggeration if not uttered by so great a doctor: "He that listens negligently, or abuses the word of God, is not less guilty than he who would allow the body of Christ to fall to the ground."

God calls us by conscience. Conscience is the light which God has placed in the soul to guide it ; a light that enlightens every one born into the world. Conscience is the judgment which the soul passes when free from all human interest or passion, and in the light of God alone, it considers the truth to be believed, or the duty to be performed, or the object to be avoided. We have no right to do, or to believe, what we like ; liking is the act of the will,—a blind faculty which needs guidance ; but we have the duty to know the truth and to be guided by it. Ignorance, which is the will without light, makes us slaves ; truth which is the acquisition of the intellect makes us free : “ Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

When the sinner falls into sin, his conscience at once reproaches him, and summons him before its tribunal : it condemns him and fills his soul with trouble. It shows him the enormity of his guilt, and how easily he might have avoided it ; how completely his own is the fault. It urges him to rise and seek forgiveness. It admonishes of the state of damnation in which sin has put him ; and that if he dies before repentance, his soul is forever lost. Whether he heeds its warnings or not, it never abandons him ; and although feebler and less frequent with time and new sins, its voice becomes, yet it still makes itself heard at times appealing to the sinner to repent. This voice of conscience is a grace,—not the grace which of itself converts, but which, if heeded, invokes higher graces. Even from the evil of sin does God ad-

duce this preliminary grace. It is a grace that is denied to none. While inferior in value to other higher graces, yet it gives efficacy to all other graces; without it, they could have no effect.

Men try to drown conscience; and for this end, seek society, and the distraction and dissipation of life; but all to no purpose. For, in the midst of revelry, no less than in the solitude of the chamber, it makes itself heard; it speaks to the soul, now in still small voice, now in trumpet tongue. Its reproaches pursue the sinner by day and haunt him by night. It is never more heard than when most resisted: the greater the sins, the greater the remorse; unless, perhaps, the sinner has so far despised conscience, that all grace has been withdrawn, and his soul is steeled and confirmed in iniquity.

Others try to quench conscience by calling in question the truths of religion. Remorse is so great that it cannot be endured. Sin must be abandoned, or the faith abjured. If the sinner can persuade himself of the untruth of religion, especially of those teachings that impose a restraint upon passion, he hopes to find peace. This leads to unbelief. The virtuous man seldom doubts; for the impulse to doubt generally comes from the desire, either to sin without fear or restraint, or to pacify the conscience for guilt already done. To the man blinded by passion and bent on sin, even mathematical truth would be doubtful if it imposed moral duty or restraint. Doubt is rife when passion prevails: doubt ceases when passion is stilled. Repentance and an amended

life, will remove doubt and illumine the mind. By conscience, then, does God call; but many turn away. While fidelity to conscience ensures conversion, resistance thereto is resistance to the Holy Spirit: the sin that shall never be forgiven and which entails, as a consequence, damnation. Sad the state of him who tramples upon conscience; it leads to final impenitence. A resisted conscience pursues the damned, and even in hell becomes their misery.

God calls us by His grace. God is everywhere. In Him we live and move and have our being. He is present to our most secret thoughts. His grace cannot be far from us. He excites and encourages good suggestions and holy inspirations in every one of us. As the physical atmosphere that surrounds us, nourishes and supports our physical life, so there is an atmosphere of grace which is the sustenance and strength of our souls. As our vital breath is drawn from the one, and as we have but to breathe to inhale it; so, the other is the life of our soul, and we have but to ask it and it is granted.

Yet, this grace, gratuitously bestowed, must be corresponded with. Man cannot be saved without his own concurrence. He is a free agent. His eternity depends upon himself while depending upon Almighty God. He begins, carries on, consummates our salvation; yet so as that our will co-operates, and that, in so far as in us lies, we labor for the same end. "Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to thee," saith the Lord. It is in the exercise of his sovereign freedom that man is to be saved or

lost. There is no constraint upon his free will. As a free agent, he decides what will be his eternal state. Grace is the power of God ; but a power that adapts itself to the character of the creature upon whom it is shown. It consults the nobility of our nature, by requiring our concurrence to the end whither it would lead us. Unless grace and free will are reconcilable ; and unless our salvation depends, in a true sense, upon ourselves : if it does not rest with us to harden or soften our hearts, to open or to close our eyes, to hearken, or be deaf with our ears ; all preaching is to no purpose, and in vain are we exhorted : “ To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart ; as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness : when your fathers tempted Me, and proved Me, although they had seen My works.”

To respect the freedom of the will, grace works in the soul according to man's character, inclinations, gifts, faculties, and even occupations : it conforms itself to him in all things except sin. It does not destroy but exalts natural endowments and propensities : it presupposes nature and preserves it intact. Seeking to rule man, it becomes his servant : it becomes all in all to gain all. If accepted, it confers additional graces : if rejected, it stirs conscience and produces the grace of remorse. If delayed at one time, it waits its opportunity ; and at another renews or redoubles its importunity. What may seem but the ordinary vicissitudes of life, are frequently employed by grace for its highest purposes : what may appear but the de-

velopment of God's natural providence, is, in truth, the mysterious working and ordering of His grace and supernatural agency, for the salvation of souls and the glory of His Name.

By the use of grace men are saved ; by its abuse men are lost. As men can, they do, turn away from God and despise His goodness. They steel their souls to its blessed light and influence ; and receive in their darkened minds and obstinate hearts, the wages due to their perversity ; and, consequently, summon upon themselves eternal perdition. The Jews abused divine grace until, by its withdrawal, they no longer saw with their eyes, nor heard with their ears, nor understood, the things that were spoken for their salvation. The philosophers resisting the light of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, and the testimony which all things afforded of the being and perfections of God, were delivered over to a reprobate sense, to do things which are unmentionable, and their foolish hearts were darkened. They sinned against light : the sin against the Holy Ghost that shall never be forgiven either in this world or the next.

Perhaps, you may not be aware of when you are under the influence of grace. Do you ever think of rising from sin, and returning to God? It is grace moving your soul. Does the sudden thought of death enter your mind? It is grace. Does a light as from another world arise in your soul, showing you the deceitfulness and hollowness of all things human, and the all-importance of the one thing needful? It is grace. Do you ever feel the vanity of the world, and fix your heart

upon the life to come? It is grace. All these lights, these suggestions, these inspirations, are the blessed influence of the grace which God sheds abroad in your hearts.

But, grace may be abused, God's voice may be stifled, the heart may be steeled to its compunctious visitings. This abuse begins when one having fallen into sin, it is persevered in, in spite of grace calling him to rise therefrom at once. With every hour of delay and, especially, with every new sin, the difficulty increases, grace diminishes, and the desire of conversion is lessened. Soon the sinner is given over to a reprobate sense in which he no longer heeds the voice of God, and despises grace knocking at his heart; he is confirmed in iniquity, and lost to God. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance, He will destroy thee."

Yet, even the most abandoned sinner should never despair; for the grace of God never abandons him. God's mercy is always in excess of man's perversity. Holy Scripture and ecclesiastical history abound with instances of those who once were immersed in every sin,—sins the most enormous,—idolatry, parricide, impurity, sacrilege; and apparently lost forever to God: and who were afterwards restored to His grace, became by their masterful repentance, great and glorious saints and teachers in His church; and are now numbered among the highest in the kingdom of His glory.

God calls us by the accidents and vicissitudes of life: these events which are continually happening, and with which many reproach Divine providence, what do they teach us but the necessity of being always ready? They are often blessings in the guise of misfortunes, gracious dispensations of God's fatherly goodness. And if they seem otherwise to us, it is because we take too narrow, too human a view of them. We do not, we cannot, rise to the full scope and design of God's comprehensive providence. He rules all things from end to end, and disposes of them graciously. These vicissitudes of life, sickness, death, misfortune, reverses, afflictions,—all are sent to us by God to call us away from the vanity of life, to His love and service.

Take sickness; sickness of ourselves or of relations and friends: what gives us a keener insight into the nothingness of life? Many a man has risen from the bed of sickness, all the better Christian for having felt the icy touch of near death. In health we forget ourselves, we wax strong and proud; sickness brings to us a sense of our weakness and dependence. Even in the sickness of others, or in the presence of some fell disease, with what a different light are the things of life viewed! How many heart-felt prayers, and sincere acts of sorrow, and petitions for mercy, have gone up to heaven from ten thousand homes during the plague with which a part of our country has been stricken! Never do we think of our religious duties, as we do at the time of sickness.

What lessons does not death teach us? What is more calculated to impress upon us the vanity and nothingness of this life, and to fix our hearts and minds upon the life to come? What more powerful incentive to move us to change of soul, and to the pursuit of everything necessary to salvation? How continually does God send us this warning of our danger, this summons to repentance; how often does He send us this visitation of His mercy, by the sudden and unlooked-for death of relations and friends. We may for the moment be awed. We may feel that it would not be well for us to be called away thus suddenly: that our souls are not in the state in which we would wish them at that solemn hour. This salutary thought vanishes as soon as conceived; and we continue our sinful manner of life, as if there were no death for us, or that we had yet uncounted years for life and repentance. Continually, does His gracious providence admonish us that the world is given up to the dead, the dying, and those about to die; that we have here no abiding dwelling-place; that in the midst of life, we are in death. How more effectually could Divine goodness urge us to an abandonment of sin, and to seek forgiveness and mercy while there is yet time!

Finally, God calls us to repentance by His unceasing goodness. "Despiseth thou the riches of the goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, of God? Dost thou not know, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to penance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up

for thyself wrath on the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God."

Consider the goodness of God in the benefit of creation: bringing you into being when He might have refrained from creating you at all: bestowing upon you life, in the form of His noblest being; a soul endowed with divine attributes, and destined unto immortality; bodies deathless, too, when they have risen from corruption, and put on incorruption; fearfully and wonderfully made and joint sharers in the eternal bliss of the soul. Consider the inestimable blessings, temporal and spiritual, which He has lavished upon you from the moment of conception to the present hour; the countless accidents and calamities from which His fatherly providence has saved you: preserving you from merited punishment when you were His enemy by sin; His patience in waiting for your conversion, moving you thereto by the influences of His grace; bestowing upon you, when in open rebellion against His law, His choicest gifts; making His sun to rise and His rain to fall upon the just and unjust; giving you food and raiment in the season of your open contempt of His law and authority.

Consider how the life, and sufferings, and death, of Jesus call you to repentance. Why this life, these sufferings, and this death, except to atone for your sins, and to purchase your salvation? It was the price at which He valued, and which without hesitation and even with the utmost cheerfulness, He paid for your souls. From this

inestimable ransom, learn the insatiable yearning and unquenchable thirst which He has for the salvation of men, and, what is a consequence, the intense desire with which His heart is inflamed, that they should do penance, and correspond with His burning love for their souls. As He lives, He wills not the death of sinners, but that they be converted, and live.

To insure their conversion, and to purchase for them the grace by which it is made possible, and if they so will it, effectual, did He become incarnate and die. Is not this the earnest and assurance that He is incapable of rejecting the prayers of the penitent? "A contrite heart, O Lord, Thou canst not despise." He is the Father, ever ready, with bleeding yet consoled heart, with outstretched hands, to receive and forgive the prodigal child: the Shepherd Who leaves the ninety-nine sheep, and goes in search of the missing one which He snatches from the hireling and carries on His loving shoulders into the bosom of the flock: the Faithful Physician Who declares that He is sent not to those in health, but to the sick. He came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance. The Son of man came to seek, and to save that which was lost. "He so loved the world as to give His only Begotten Son, that all who would believe in Him might be saved." "He came that men might have life, and have it more abundantly." His mission is to the lost of the house of Israel.

By the sufferings of His life, by the agony of His passion, by the blood and torment of His

death, He conjures every child of Adam not to deprive himself of the eternal blessings, bought at so great a sacrifice. He beseeches the sinner by His blood, copiously shed, to seek pardon ; and by the same blood, He implores the Eternal Father to grant it. Verily "is there joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance ;" for it is a triumph of His blood.

He renews the Sacrifice on Calvary daily. From the Altar He calls upon us, even as He did from the Cross, to repent, and be reconciled with His Eternal Father. Behold His patience in sparing the world ! The intense, world-wide prevalence of sin, would be enough to make Him destroy the world, were it not for the Victim Which is daily offered, and has been offered, without an hour's intermission, since the Blood of redemption flowed on Calvary. In this Sacrifice, He places Himself between the uplifted anger of God, and the sins of men ; and calls upon Him, for the sake of His blood, to spare the world, and give men even a longer time for repentance. While this Sacrifice is offered, He is Himself at the right hand of the Father, where He makes continual intercession for us : "Having then a great High Priest, Who is entered into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the profession. For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion for our infirmities : but one tried in all things in like manner without sin. Let us therefore go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for reasonable aid."

How, more powerfully, could He call upon us to repent? How, more feelingly and earnestly, could the Divine goodness and patience, call mankind to penance and forgiveness? And shall this patience and goodness thus scorned, go unavenged? Is not contempt of Divine goodness, wrath treasured up against the day of the just judgment of God? We may decline His mercy, and neglect with impunity His gracious calls to repentance; but we shall not decline His justice. If we fail to be the willing recipients of His love, we shall not fail to become the unwilling victims of his anger. "Because I called, and you refused to hear; I stretched out My hands, and there were none that regarded; behold, I shall mock in your distress and calamity: when tribulations shall come upon you, and destruction as a tempest, shall be at hand; then shall you call upon Me, and I shall not hear."

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD.

Then Jesus said to His disciples : If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels : and then will He render to every man according to his works.—St. Matt. xvi. 24–27.

WHAT does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? If we put this question of our Lord to any ordinary Christian, he will at once answer that it would profit him nothing to gain the whole world, if in the end he lost his soul. He would assure us of his belief, that there is nothing more valuable than his soul ; and that, even if he could gain ten thousand worlds, it would profit him nothing if he lost his soul ; that nothing could compensate him for such an eternal evil. But this is only his theoretic or speculative belief ; the appreciation of the value of his soul as shown in his life and character is very different. Judged by their actions, we would have to conclude that men think it would profit them a great deal to gain the whole world, even with the loss of their souls. With the most correct estimate of

the value of their souls and the necessity of salvation, there is nothing, in point of fact, that people think cheaper than their soul; there is nothing that is not more necessary than their salvation; they are even ready to barter it for every passing advantage, for an hour's gratification, nay, even for a dollar's gain, or the vilest consideration. In practice people give away their souls.

What is the cause of this difference between the belief of Christians as expressed by their words, and as expressed by their acts? It is because we are encased in bodies of sense, in a world of sense; the world is visible and palpable, the soul is invisible and intangible. We can neither see the soul, nor the eternity that lies beyond the grave. We are enthralled by this dominion of sense: it is with great difficulty that we can separate ourselves even in thought from this world. It requires quite an effort of the mind to realize that we are not a part of the world; we come into it as it were by stealth and grow up with it; some, indeed, remain ignorant all their lives of the fact that they do not belong to it. It is only by separating ourselves, by serious and long-sustained reflection, from the objects of sense around us, that we can emancipate ourselves from their bondage, and learn the superiority of our souls. It is only by such thought that we can come to feel the value of the soul and the worthlessness of the world. In proportion as we bring home to ourselves this truth, do we advance in the science of true education.

The question of our Lord is, what would it

profit a man to gain the whole world? Who could gain the whole world? Nobody; because the industry and energy that men show in the acquisition of the objects of this life are the property of men in general: do not belong exclusively to any one person or set of persons. Hence, it would not be possible for any one to gain the whole world; the question does not mean to imply that any one could, but it makes the supposition that if it were possible, what would it profit one, if in the end he lost his soul; if man could make himself the very lord and master of this world and of all that it possesses, what would it avail him if, at the end of a few years, or of a long life, or at the end of a million or ten million of years, he should lose his soul? . No matter how long the period of time, it would at length come to an end; and the longest duration that numbers could calculate would dwindle away, and would be but a mere point, and something that would be forgotten in the untold and interminable ages of the eternity that would be yet to come.

Even if it were possible for any one to become the actual lord of this world, he would be as far from being its master as ever. His hand could never reach the treasures that lie entombed in the earth, or that are buried in the bottom of the sea. While his tenure of time, no matter how long it might be, would cease; and the very consciousness that the end was continually approaching, would be enough to embitter all his enjoyment; the degree of his pleasures would be the measure of the pain that would continually gnaw him by

the assurance of their loss. After a very few years, he would have to renounce the ownership of the world, and then would come eternity, and with it the everlasting bliss or misery of the soul. What profit would it be then to have gained the world which had already passed away, and to have lost the soul which would alone survive.

This world, great as it is in our eyes, what is it after all, in itself, or in the eyes of God, or in the contemplation of the angels. What is it compared with the other worlds which God has made; what is it compared with the countless worlds and systems of worlds that roll in the distant realms of space, so far distant, that light travelling with the rapidity with which light only travels, and sent on its mission uncounted ages ago has not yet reached us, and will not reach us for ages yet to come. What is this world to the infinite creations that God has made; think you that, if it were to disappear and cease forever to be, it would be missed from His works, or would mar their perfect order and sublime harmony? No more than the ray of light shed upon the earth wanes the splendor of the sun, no more than the drop of water is missed from the ocean, no more than the leaves of the forest which fall to the earth in Autumn time, are missed in the return and teeming abundance of the Spring. As little would this earth of ours be missed or its absence remarked in the order of the rest of creation; other worlds would take its place, other universes would revolve, and God's works would be as though it had never been.

However, I apprehend that it is more in accordance with the meaning of the question which we are considering, to view the world not physically but morally,—as man has made it, and as it exists in his own mind as the object of his desire and ambition. What, then, is the world of man? It cannot be too often repeated, that it is but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Human passion, human avarice, human ambition and human glory, human pride,—this is the sum of man's world and the fruitful source of all sin and evil. Now, I ask, what is the value of the world thus viewed, and how does it compare with the value of an immortal soul? If these human objects were of any value, it would be because they are capable of giving content to the human heart. It is this that gives everything its charm, that makes it desired: that it has the power to render us happy; this is the value of all that the world possesses, and of all human enjoyment; without this, it is of no account. Whatever man seeks, be it riches or pleasures, honors or distinctions, glory or power, it is because he therein expects to find the satisfaction of his heart. From the beginning to the end of his days, this is the motive and object of his tireless energy and industry in the pursuit of this world's objects. Every man seeks his happiness; he is not free not to seek it; he seeks it amiss it is true, but even in the act of sin he expects his bliss: for the moment his mind is blinded, his will is made perverse, and in his folly he looks for felicity where, in the end, he is sure to find his misery. The

man of learning would find his happiness in the acquisition of knowledge ; the avaricious man in the accumulation of wealth ; the ambitious in rising to distinction and in the possession of power ; discontent with what is actual, desiring and pressing on to what is ideal, is the motive of every man's effort to improve his condition in life, and is the potent agency in the rise and fall of nations. Collectively and individually, mankind are in incessant pursuit of what seems to them their happiness. God has infused this tendency into the heart of man to direct him to his end ; man cannot resist it. Free in all things else, man is not free to do violence to this supreme and unconquerable tendency of his rational nature. If he ever resolves on that which to others must seem to be his misery, it is because he accounts it his happiness ; all the objects of this world, therefore, that men spend their lives in pursuing, are valuable only because they are capable of satisfying the soul.

Can we, now, obtain these objects? Ask mankind ; consult universal experience. I do not mean, can we obtain some little share of them ; but can we obtain them in such measure as will satisfy the heart? How has it been heretofore? have you more of these objects now than you had years ago? or if you have, have you all you wish or expect to possess, or is your heart any more content with the increase than it was before you obtained it? That a man may gain some small portion of the goods of this life, and of such happiness as they are capable of bestowing, is an

undoubted fact; but for the one that gains them, how many fail to obtain them? we hear of those who succeed, but we do not hear of those who fail. Every man promises to himself, or at least he acts as if he could obtain these worldly objects. He spends his best years in their acquisition; middle age, or even the decline of life may find him where he was, when he first set out in his fruitless pursuit; even when tottering on the verge of the grave, he still promises himself happiness before death. I do not deny that frequently, or even generally, if you will, some little success is attained; but show me the man who obtains all he wants. For the few that are rewarded with this scant success, there are ten thousand that fall by the wayside, or whose life is a continual struggle against destitution and death. For the one who gains distinction, there must be ten thousand content to pass their lives in obscurity; the pleasures of one, must be the misery of others; the riches of some, must involve the poverty of the multitude; the honors of one, imply the obscurity and neglect of most men. And no matter in what degree one's hopes may be realized, he may rest assured that he will never be satisfied; that the eye will never be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the heart with loving; and that with sorrow he will find all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

Yet everyone imagines that happiness will come with the future, no matter what have been the disappointments of the past; everyone expects that past misfortunes will not be renewed, but, on

the contrary, reversed; and that future felicity will retrieve misery already suffered, and bring with it what the heart has always craved but never gained. This is the delusion that haunts us during life; taught by experience that there is nothing except disappointment, we persist in hoping against hope, and find our bliss in looking forward to, what is but imaginary. The past has brought us but poverty: the future will confer riches. The past has left us in obscurity: the future will crown us with eminence. Heretofore ignorance has been our portion: the future will find us enlightened. The past has refused us the gratification of friendship, and it may be the consolation of virtue and conscience: the future will compensate us with the delight and bliss of innocence, and the sympathy and support of devoted friends. Alas, we pursue phantoms for realities, shadows for substances. Hear the words of Solomon: "That which hath been shall be." Our future will be but the renewal of the past; it will glide into it and become part of it; its story will be the same. You may promise yourself every prospect of pleasure and every realization of the wishes you cherish; rest assured that the future has nothing in store for you which the past has not already disclosed; the faculties that God has given you will never be satisfied, the cravings of your heart will never be appeased with the objects of this life. We all confide in the future that is before us; how long this future which is before us, it is not hard to tell. We seem to think that we have longer to live, when in fact we

have shorter to live. The longer we live, the less we realize that our days are being curtailed. Youth is frequently more conscious of the shortness of life, than even maturity or old age itself. All human experience will not be reversed in our behalf; all the children of men have indulged the same hopes, and as they were reserved for the same disappointment, so shall we; we are of the same nature and shall not inherit an unlike destiny. While it is lawful for us to seek to improve our state, yet we should do it in moderation, and in submission to the law of our being; looking always to God for real happiness and placing our reliance on Him.

Even if obtained, these human objects which we seek with such longing and to which we are irresistibly borne, could never make us happy. Ask those who have attained their fullest measure, or more of them than we can ever hope to possess; and they will tell you, that in them there is no real content,—that the soul cannot be happy save in the bliss which comes from God,—save in union with Him in the life to come, and in the present life, in that union which here below is possible. Ask the profligate, in his moments of recollection, when the turmoil of passion has subsided; and he will tell you, that the heart is not satisfied with the pleasure afforded by passion,—that the violation of God's law brings with it a discontent and remorse for which the temporary gratification is no equivalent. You may ascend the throne of the monarch; and all human history will tell you, that happiness is far removed from

those who wear the crown, or who are invested with high authority or responsibility. He who aspires to human distinction and honor will tell you, that the esteem and applause of men, even if received, can confer no happiness upon the soul,—that they exist in him who entertains them, and not in him who is their object. The man who spends his days in the acquisition of learning will say, that he never knew his ignorance until he began to learn: the ignorant, for the most part, are they who are the most contented with what seems to them their knowledge. Penetrate into the vaults of the miser, who seems to find his bliss in counting the hoarded gold; and you will learn that the spiritual cravings of the soul are far from being satiated with the vice of avarice. Ask whom you will, and the votary of every passion and of every pursuit will teach you, that the human heart can never be satisfied with any happiness that this world can confer. Union with God in that way which here below is possible, is the sovereign bliss of the soul. The happiness which human objects at first seem to promise, soon vanishes and leaves but disappointment behind. Soon we learn that the eye is not filled with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the heart with loving. From youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, every child of Adam is deluded with the phantom of happiness now apparently within his grasp, now receding from his sight, appearing ever and anon, and with renewed promise, and, finally, vanishing forever, as he closes his eyes upon this world and its objects and his hopes.

Reason should unteach us this delusion and deceit, without our paying for it the price of a life of fruitless endeavor, doomed always to inevitable chagrin and disappointment. We may rest assured that our lot will not be other or different from that of the rest of the children of man. If they who have enjoyed all human objects in greater measure, than we can ever hope to obtain them, have, in the end, been forced to acknowledge that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, save the love and service of God; we should not shut our eyes to such an incontestable fact, but rather receive into our souls the light with which it must fill them. Reason should teach us that the soul made for the Creator, can never be satisfied with the creature. Pleasures purchased by keen and withering remorse, cannot be a source of happiness. Lust and passion which undermine the strength and induce premature death, cannot bring content. Riches which we may possess, and yet never see but in our accounts, and which shortly we must forsake, leaving the world as naked as when first we entered it, cannot satisfy the longings of the soul. The corpse of the beggar occupies as much of mother earth as that of the millionaire. Human ambition must be chilled in the inevitable prospect that after a few years, glory, honor, station, and distinction must be followed by the eternal silence of the grave. The consciousness of being one of God's elect, and fidelity to that vocation, is here below the only rest of the soul; he who is conscious of losing by his sins the glory and happiness for which he has

been made, can never be rendered happy by any objects that this world affords.

God intended man for future bliss ; his soul, his faculties,—his whole being proclaims it. Never was such a being made for any felicity that this life can procure ; never did God compact the human body, fearfully and wonderfully made, endowed with such marvellous faculties, and breathe into it an immortal soul with its will, memory and understanding, for sake of our few hours of human life. But, when we contemplate man in the light of his future destiny in the life to come, we understand why God has given him such endowments, such capacity of knowledge, such aptitude for virtue ; why life, which issues in eternity, can be so short ; why death, which issues in immortality, can be endured. Without this future prospect of unending glory, man would indeed be an enigma and a mystery. The soul of man is a spiritual substance created by Almighty God and after His own image ; He alone can be its destiny, the bliss alone that comes from Him can satisfy it and its eternal longings. Nothing sensible, nothing savoring of time can fill the void in the human soul which God has made for Himself. It aspires after the infinite : nothing finite can satisfy its capacity. In vain would it be content with the joys and pleasures of this life ; it only seeks them because here below it finds no other. Looking around it, it sees not the good for which it has been made, and clutches at that which alone is at hand. The objects of this life are but the outlets through which escapes, and by which for the

time, it would fain satisfy its inborn desire for boundless happiness. They are but the broken cisterns in which it would slake its unquenchable thirst for the Perfect Good. Our souls seek happiness infinite in degree and eternal in duration. This aspiration and tendency is infused into them by Almighty God to lead them to Himself. It is manifest, then, that it is only the pleasure that comes from possessing God that can satisfy the soul; it is equally manifest that all other objects, be they what they may, cannot satisfy the soul and are of no value. If we lose them, in eternity we are no worse off: but if we lose God we are eternally ruined. Worldly failure may be an eternal success, worldly success may be an eternal failure: he that loses his life in this world will gain it in the next; he that gains his life in this world will lose it in the next: death to this world is followed by life in the next; "What will it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?"

There is another way by which we may be made to feel what the value of the world is, compared to the value of the soul. A man is confined to his bed and sick unto death; but twenty-four hours yet remain to him of life: what would he not give to prolong that day; would he not give riches, honors, pleasures, even kingdoms if he possessed them for a further instalment of time. Kings have been known to be willing to barter all that they possessed for a prolongation of life. But add a further circumstance to his case. Let it be that he knows that at the end of these twenty-four hours, when his soul leaves his body, he will

be condemned to everlasting misery. The light of another world illumines his mind, and makes him feel the sad presentiment of his eternal fate; he seems to hear the sentence of reprobation awaiting him. With what a shudder and recoil does he not shrink and start back from the impending doom, which his life has made inevitable! Not a part of the world, but the whole world, and ten thousand worlds, would he give to escape his sad destiny. What to him now is this world, for which he lived, when he feels it sinking beneath him and the dread reality of eternity ushering in upon him! It is then that his rational soul returns to itself, making him feel the folly of his life and the misery of his future. It is then that lust and avarice and all the other passions of the human heart sink within him, and are as if they were not; it is then in the light of eternity filling his soul, that he realizes to the full, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul."—It is then that he feels with bitter agony the true value of all human objects and pursuits, and the all-importance of his eternal salvation. It is then he feels how happy it had been, if he heeded when the preacher warned him of the hour and of the event which is now upon him: with a remorse that pierces the innermost recesses of his being, he sees that all the human objects for which he lived, were not worth a handful of dust. There is nothing in human speech to enable us to understand the worthlessness and nothingness of the world, to the man who knows, at that hour, that just as soon as he dies, he is

damned. Willingly he would give whatever he has lived most for, whatever he has found most happiness in, whatever he has most highly prized, ten thousand times over, for a little longer to live ;—when he realizes that there is no other life for him, that the life which God had given him to work out his eternal salvation has been wasted ; not merely wasted, but used to defeat the very purpose for which it was vouchsafed. On the brink of eternity he learns, what during life he looked upon as the dream of the preacher, that this life in its fullest and best, cannot satisfy the human soul ; and that God alone for Whom it has been made is its rest and bliss.

If I am an immortal being destined to live forever, of how little account are the vain, perishing things of this transitory world ! If my eternal destiny hangs trembling in the balance of my fidelity to God's law, then all things, except my obedience to this law, are nothing. Of what profit to me are all the treasures of this life, if I lose the immortal treasure of my soul's salvation ! Of what avail to me are the pleasures of this life, if by them I shall lose the immortal pleasure of possessing God ! Of what interest to me shall it be, to have enjoyed all that this world affords, if I am to lose heaven and suffer the misery of hell ! Of what service shall it be to me, to have been immortalized in this life, and to have enshrined my name in the esteem of men, if that esteem shall be reversed by an All-just Judge, and if I shall forfeit the eternal glory of God's approval and reward ! How little will it count, to have

mounted high in this world, and to have obtained its distinctions, if I am to suffer forever the contempt of God and the obloquy of the saints!

But no words of the preacher will ever suffice to arouse mortals to a full realization of their danger, and to impress upon them in such wise as to produce abiding and abundant fruit, the alarming lesson of this discourse;—men will never feel, as they should, the truth that it profits a man nothing to gain the whole world and to lose his soul. It will need the trumpet of the Archangel, and Christ's visible coming in the clouds, to make men adequately feel this divine lesson. Ascend, therefore, in thought some lofty eminence; behold the world shrinking away before the August coming of Christ, its Saviour and Judge; see Him appearing, as He declared, in the clouds of heaven, surrounded with power and majesty; hear the summons calling all men before this great assize of their God, which will terminate the world; behold the lurid flames of the conflagration which will reduce it to eternal ashes; behold the uncounted multitude of the children of men, hastening from all quarters of the world to the valley of Judgment;—what, think you, will be your sentiments on that day? In what light shall appear all the vain concerns and the whole record of this world, then already a thing of the past! What shall be the feelings of the vast multitude of men who are now living, as if that day would never come! How will you who hardly ever think of the future life, and scarcely believe in a judgment, act, when it is visibly before you!

What shall then be the consolation of God's elect, who are now living in this world and dying continually to it, as if that day was even now at hand!

Learn now to entertain the sentiments that shall be yours on that momentous day, decisive of our eternal destiny. Fill your heart and mind with the salutary fear which the remembrance of that day is sure to inspire, and which shall then fill all the souls of men. Render now to your salvation the care and assiduity that you will then wish to have given it. Learn now to understand the shortness of time, the emptiness of this life, the hollowness and deceitfulness of all things here below. Look now to God and to your duty towards Him, in the light in which you shall see them on that day, when Jesus shall come, not to show mercy, but to execute justice, and to reject those who have rejected Him.

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TRUE REPENTANCE.

Now I rejoice: not because ye were made sad, but because ye were made sad to penance. For ye were saddened according to God, that in nothing ye may suffer damage from us. For the sorrow which is according to God, worketh penance unto salvation unfailing, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this very thing, that ye were saddened according to God, how great carefulness it worketh in you: yea excuse, yea indignation, yea fear, yea desire, yea zeal, yea punishment! in all things ye have showed yourselves to be guiltless in the matter.—II. Cor. vii. 9-11.

And He entered into a boat, and passed over the water, and He came into His own city. And behold they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the paralytic: Be of good heart, child: thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: This one blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why think ye evil in your hearts? Which is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say; Rise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the paralytic), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he rose, and went into his house. And when the crowd saw it, they feared, and glorified God, Who gave such power to men.—St. Matt. ix. 1-8.

IT is to be feared that the causes of the frequent relapse of many into sin are to be ascribed, not to the force of temptation, nor to the weakness of their will, nor to any proneness to sin that may not be overcome, but simply to the fact that when they approach the Sacrament of Penance

the necessary dispositions for its fruitful reception are wanting. If it is necessary to do penance, it is no less necessary that the penance be sincere. There is nothing more dangerous or fatal than an unreal repentance: the delusion that the sinner is in God's grace, when his conversion is only superficial or untrue. Such a one is exposed to the greatest risk because not knowing the falsity of his seeming conversion, he feels not the need of a true one. When sin is committed, while we are sure of its reality, we can never, without a special revelation, be absolutely certain that it is forgiven. Yet there are certain signs which afford us such ground of hope as is given by a cause producing an effect. Thus a man lately sick, is known to be recovered by the manifest health which he enjoys. The cure of the leper in the Gospel showed, not only that Christ had power to forgive sins, but in the particular case of the leper, that the benefit of forgiveness was truly received. No sooner had Christ declared his sins forgiven than the leprosy, which was the effect of sin, disappeared. The restored health proclaimed the sincere penitent. In like manner, they who are truly converted will attest it by their changed life. As they have heretofore served sin unto death, "But now being made free from sin, and having become servants of God, they have their fruit unto sanctification, but the end everlasting life."

I do not mean that a true penitent may not relapse into sin: would that, it were otherwise! but such is the perversity of the will, the way-

wardness of passion, the fascination of the world, our proneness to evil, that even the most resolute virtue may be surprised by sin. The strength of our present purpose of amendment, is not to be measured by future trials. But if the penitent who has recovered God's grace falls again, his repentance will show itself by rising immediately, and employing redoubled efforts and more stringent precaution against future relapse. Our life is a trial made up of reverses and victories; not till the end do we gain the crown of righteousness, and are we confirmed in grace. Yet, after making all due allowance for the falls to which even the true penitent is liable, it remains true that a radical change and marked amelioration should follow every true conversion: the contrite heart invigorated by grace, should bring forth fruits worthy of penance: the will resolutely bent on avoiding sin, will at once take measures to shun its occasions. The sick man does not at once by the omission of the necessary or prescribed means, relapse into sickness; above all, does he avoid contact with whatever he believes may have been injurious to his health in the past or contributed in any wise to his former maladies.

Who, then, is the true penitent? who is the man who has all the dispositions required for the valid and fruitful reception of the sacrament of Penance? The true penitent is he whose heart is filled with a bitter, consuming, intense sorrow for his sins; who is determined to sacrifice all the goods of this life, even life itself, rather than to

again offend God by the commission of a grievous sin; who although his sins have been forgiven, yet feels that he has not satisfied the justice of God; and by unceasing prayer and mortification seeks to atone for the temporal punishment that often remains after the eternal is forgiven; who studies to repair all the evil effects caused by his sins: to lead back to virtue the souls he has misled; to restore to innocence those whom he has scandalized; to make restitution for the injury he has done; to repair the reputation he has blackened; in a word, to remove as far as in him lies, all the evil consequences of his sins. The true penitent is a man who studies his own weaknesses; who reflects upon the power of temptation, and guards against its first suggestions; and is careful not to expose himself to the danger of relapse by wantonly frequenting the occasions which may be, or have been fatal to him because of his inherent weakness and their deadly allurements. Such a one has all the dispositions required for true repentance.

Where are we to discover the true penitent? Is it the man or woman who comes to Confession at Easter time, because it is the custom, or to win the esteem of the members of the Church, and who then returns to the evil courses from which, for a moment, they have diverted themselves? Is the true penitent the person who comes to Confession from time to time to quench remorse for sin,—remorse in which God has no part; and who then returns to sin again with a conscience steeled against further compunction by the profanation

of the Sacrament? Is the true penitent the pharisaical Catholic who believes that he will be saved because he is baptized; and who lives all his life in forgetfulness and neglect of God; and who seems to think that a few minutes of sham or enforced repentance at the end of his days, will be sufficient to atone for the sins of a lifetime? Is the true penitent he who would rather lay down his life than deny his faith; who comes regularly to Mass, who contributes his financial share to the support of the Church and its charities, but who never approaches the Sacraments? Is the true penitent the woman who comes Sunday after Sunday to Divine worship, and who appears to advantage by her ceremonious sanctity, but whose heart is full of pride and lust and whose mind is occupied with irreverent and impure thoughts? Is the true penitent the drunkard who comes to Confession to-day, and to-morrow is found in those resorts which he knows by experience have been ruinous to him? Is the true penitent the unmarried man of thirty or forty,—one of that numerous class who are the scourge of virtue, the dread of womankind, and who, it may be, confesses his sins only to renew again his work of murdering the souls, blasting the characters of those who as a rule are more sinned against than sinning? Is the true penitent he or she who comes to Confession, and then returns to violate the pledges that bind them to one another,—profaning the sanctity of the marriage bond, rending in twain the indissoluble union cemented by the grace of Christ's Sacrament? Surely it is not among these

classes of people that we shall find true penitents. Are there, then, none to be found? By no means; they are in every congregation. There are penitents to-day who renew the memories of the great ones of old. The spirit of David, of St. Mary Magdalene, of St. Augustine is not yet extinct. There are, indeed, true penitents; but the majority of Christians do not seem to have any valid claim to this lofty distinction.

There is nothing under heaven more beautiful, or upon which God and the angels look with greater delight than a human soul in a state of innocence,—free from mortal sin. God seeing in that soul a semblance of His own nature, and a participation of His own grace, a reflection howsoever feeble of His own beauty, finds a complacency in it akin to that which He found in His Divine Son when He declared that in Him He was well pleased. Nor is there anything more precious in God's sight than such a soul. Its creation has caused Him an effort of omnipotence, and its salvation has cost Him the shedding of the last drop of His blood. If we could see that soul radiant with grace and beauty, we would be sharers of the delectation of God and the angels. When sin obtains admittance to the soul, it forfeits all this beauty and grace. It is dethroned from its high estate and is cast out forever from the presence of God; it becomes an object of loathing to the angels and of just indignation to God Himself. A fearful condition is that to which mortal sin reduces the soul. Instead of the light and splendor with which, when innocent, it was

filled ; darkness, dismay and despair, of which, that which would ensue were the sun and moon to be withdrawn from heaven were a sorry image, fill and engulf it. How can the soul regain its former condition? how be brought back to its former splendor? God in His goodness has given the necessary means; it is sincere repentance, heartfelt sorrow, unshaken purpose of amendment. But when we consider the height from which it has fallen, the degradation into which it has sunk, and the frightful chasm between the two, we should understand how intense must be the sorrow, how true the spirit of repentance that will be able to rescue the soul, and to restore it again to the favor of its Lord and God. How deep must be its humiliation; how sincere its acknowledgment of its unworthiness; how strong its purpose of amendment.

The Council of Trent declares to us what must be the nature of the contrition capable of restoring to the soul the garment of innocence of which it has despoiled itself. It is manifest that repentance is to undo as far as possible the work of sin. It must, therefore, have for its object the restoration of the soul to that state in which it was before sin was committed, and from which sin has cast it down. It is to repair the evil which sin has accomplished; to remove the injury which sin has done to the soul. It must be a hatred and detestation of past sins, accompanied by a firm purpose of amendment. The word contrition as expressing the grinding and beating of corn between the stones of a mill, indicates the grief and affliction

of spirit, the bruising and wearing away of our hearts by the consciousness of having offended God, which is the very essence of true repentance. Such sorrow arises from an intense and abiding conviction that sin is the greatest of all evils, and leads the sinner to wish from his innermost soul that he had never sinned, and to be willing to sacrifice all things he holds dearest, even life to undo the past.

Such masterful contrition will not be content with regretting even thus bitterly the past. We cannot conceive true sorrow to exist without essentially including the purpose of avoiding sin in the future. Such a purpose enters into the very idea of true sorrow for the past. Morbid regret that broods over the past, and yet remains in sin without purpose of rising therefrom, is useless. He who would undo the past, wishes not to renew the past; and is resolved to avoid sin with all the earnestness with which he regrets it. Contrition is a two-edged sword; it cuts away past sin, by wishing it had never been; it cuts away future sin, by the resolution of avoiding it. This two-fold element is essential to true repentance; one without the other is useless. In vain does he bemoan past sin who is destitute of the purpose of rising therefrom: how does he wish to undo the past who is repeating the past? Such insanity is far from the sorrow that brings forth fruits worthy of penance. The purpose of amendment so enters into and makes one with the conception of true sorrow, that theologians teach that while it need not be explicitly enunciated; yet if the penitent

should advert to the future, it cannot be conceived that he could fail to make this explicit declaration.

It is manifest that it is not with the tongue that this necessary contrition can be elicited. Sorrow is not words without convictions and resolves: no lip service, no expression of the mouth can bring back the soul dead in sin to the life of grace. Contrition must be the conviction of the mind, the resolve of the will; the act of the whole soul. It must be supernatural in character, universal in scope, sovereign in degree, fruitful in effects; undoing the past so far as in it lies; avoiding all occasions for the future that may be dangerous, or that might lead to a relapse. This supernatural, supreme, universal, efficacious, fruitful contrition, is what is necessary to raise the soul from the degradation of sin, and to restore it to God's grace and favor.

Even when sin with its eternal punishment has been forgiven, we should still feel ourselves charged to atone to the vindictive justice of God for the sins which He, in His gratuitous goodness, has remitted, and to acquit ourselves of the debt of temporal punishment which may yet remain due. We come to think lightly of sin, because its pardon is so gratuitous on God's part, and so unmerited on ours. If we inflicted upon ourselves chastisement proportionate, in the feeblest human measure, to the enormity of sin, we would more readily come to realize its weight and heinousness. We grow careless in repressing the motions of lust, and familiar with occasions of

sin. If on falling into sin, we at once chastised the body, we would soon bring it into subjection, and disarm temptation. As it is by our passions we fall, so it is our duty to mortify the deeds of the flesh ; and by watchfulness and self-denial to reduce it to the law of the spirit.

We have heard of the discipline of the early Church in the reconciliation of sinners with God : the severe and long-continued penances inflicted, and willingly borne. It was not to obtain pardon for sin that these penalties were endured, but rather to satisfy the justice of God for the temporal punishment, which generally remains after the eternal is forgiven with the sin itself ; and to chastise the body for the sins of which it had been the occasion and willing instrument ; to mortify the deeds of the flesh that the spirit might be saved ; that the fire of lust and passion might be slackened, lest it should again obtain the mastery. Although this primitive Canonical penance has, in the wisdom of the Church, been relaxed ; yet, sin being now what it always was, the essential duty of appeasing Divine justice, and of punishing the body, and of bringing it into subjection to the law of the mind, and of applying due corrections to sin, continues necessary and inviolate.

We know not what may be the measure of temporal punishment due to sin, or what may be the proportion between this temporal punishment and the sufferings of Purgatory ; consequently, we know not how far our efforts may prevail ; we confidently believe that they will have their value and efficacy ; and, in view of the merits of Christ,

will ensure, if not a full acquittance, such a recompense as Divine justice and mercy shall accord to them. And this all the more, as here below we can work and merit so that little labor may earn an exceeding reward; while in Purgatory we cannot merit, and must suffer the full punishment which is due to the guilt that the soul has contracted, and not discharged.

Sin injures not only God and our soul, but frequently our neighbor: it may be in his soul, or in his body, or in his good name, or it may be in all. True penance will necessarily seek to remove these effects of sin. The sinner will not be satisfied until he has made reparation for the injury. If he has scandalized a soul, or seduced it from virtue, the true penitent will seek by all possible means to undo this lamentable evil, and to bring back this soul to virtue and the love of God. If the sinner has injured his neighbor in body or in credit, he should study to make amends for the injury done and in proportionate degree. If he has injured him in his good name or lessened his standing with his fellow-men, he will not rest until he has repaired the injustice, and restored him to the esteem which he has forfeited. In the more serious case of calumny, justice will require the acknowledgment of the calumny, and the reparation of the wrong that ensued. The intention of retracting calumny is necessary to forgiveness; the neglect of this duty, when possible, will argue either the insincerity of the repentance, or will constitute a continual guilt. No true penitent will continue to enjoy his ill-gotten goods,

the property of his fellow-man. He will find it his first duty to restore them. Still less will he live in luxury, while he whom he has defrauded may be in indigence. The sin cannot be forgiven until what has been unjustly taken is restored. The wages of iniquity, or its profits, cannot be combined with the exactions of true repentance. It were, indeed, an indulgent repentance that would revel in the goods that belonged to the widow and orphans of him from whom they have been unjustly taken.

After all that has been said, it is scarcely necessary to add that a true penitent must have an unshaken resolution to lose everything, to sacrifice even life itself rather than by one mortal sin to again offend Almighty God. He who has not this disposition is in darkness, and the grace of God is far from him. He who is not in this frame of mind, is not of God; he still belongs to the prince of this world. There is no absolution without this purpose. There is no contrition that does not include it. There is a grief, a fruitless repining which frets and broods over past sin, but lacks the hopeful energy that leads the sinner, after due sorrow, to rise from sin and to take those measures that may be needful to avoid it in the future. Such fruitless remorse is not true sorrow, which cannot exist without a firm purpose of sinning no more. The resolution of amendment to be fruitful, should not be too general; it should descend to particulars. The bankrupt is not content to declare that insolvency shall never again overtake him. The victim of

contagion is not safe with the assurance to himself that he will not be again a victim. The bankrupt has his eye to all details, and so conducts his business as to prevent future failure. The victim of disease will never again be seen in the infected locality. So the moral bankrupt and he infected with the moral contagion of sin, will use the utmost vigilance, and diligently scrutinize every occasion that might again superinduce the evil from which, by the mercy of God, they have been rescued. General resolutions of amendment are nothing, and accomplish as much. Generic remedies will not suffice for specific evils. We sin in detail; detailed remedies must be applied.

In every sin there are two things to be considered: the offence of God, and the satisfaction it affords the sinner. No one sins simply because it offends God, but because he prefers the satisfaction of sin to the law of God forbidding it; he would willingly separate the subject-matter of the sin from the law of God; that is, he would unite, if possible, the sin with the law of God, so as to enjoy the one, without breaking the other. Hence, it is necessary that we sorrow for sin not merely in the abstract or ideally conceived; but for sin in the concrete, as it exists in fact and is an object of gratification. We must destroy or remove from us the matter of sin, quench the fuel of sin. If we are content with a notional or speculative hatred of sin, we shall soon be enslaved. Destroying the subject-matter of sin and the body of sin within us, we shall be invulnerable to all its assaults and temptations.

We cannot avoid sin unless we avoid the occasions of sin. Even a saint might fall by exposing himself to such occasions. Even though actual fall may not result from such danger, yet sin is committed by wanton exposure thereto. Not only he that loves the danger, but he that does not shun it, will perish in it. The surest security against sin, is the careful avoidance of its occasions. As it is by degrees that the just man falls, so it is by risking the peril that even the holiest may fall. Every one who wishes to preserve his innocence, much more every one who having lost, wishes to recover it, must avoid not only all occasions which are of themselves dangerous to people in general, whether to individuals or not, but also all dangers which, while not so to most people, yet, are such to individuals because of special weakness or for any other reason. With concupiscence all aflame within us, and blinded with the allurements of sense, and the temptations of the world making continual inroads upon us, and weakened, if not worsted, by the assaults of him who goes about seeking whom he may devour, there is no hope or security for us but in continued flight from danger. Eternal vigilance is the necessary price and guarantee of our security and freedom from sin. Unless we are willing to make the sacrifice which the shunning of occasions requires, we delude ourselves with resolutions of amendment. Purposes of improvement made by one who clings to occasions of sin, are silly and worse. As well might you resolve not to burn your hand, while plunging it in the fire. It is

not in your power to disjoint sin from its occasion.

You may say that it is difficult thus to break away from persons, places, associations, friendships, and bonds, that have been so dear to you. It probably is, yet it must be done. Do you think that, if you were rewarded with a fortune, you would not be willing, and would not be able to make this renunciation? Is there less at stake when you are called upon to avoid these dangers at the peril of your soul? Is eternal life of less value than any worldly acquisition? "What would it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose your soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Perhaps I exaggerate: hear Jesus Christ: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body go into hell."

You have promised in Confession to reform; and yet in a little while you are found, where and with whom, it is morally certain that you will fall again. Why tempt God and abuse His patience by such unreal repentance? You are subject to impure thoughts and suggestions; they have been sinful to you; they are, it may be, the main source of your habitual temptations. And yet you read such books, look at such pictures, frequent such society, as cannot but ex-

pose you to the same dangers. You have fallen, it may be, into the sin of impurity : the result of association too frequent or conversation too prolonged, with those who have been a temptation to you. Yet you still continue to make or receive those visits and keep up those interviews. Does such conduct look like that of those who are bent on cutting away what may lead to a relapse into that vice, which is of all vices, the most stubborn to be overcome, and can only be subdued by instant flight from even remote danger? You have formed the habit of gambling, in which you have squandered what of right belonged to your family, which in consequence is impoverished ; struck by its destitution, or, it may be, by the cries of your hungry children for bread, you swore an eternal farewell to this baneful injustice to those of whom you are the natural protector. In a little while you are a willing witness, and maybe partaker, in those games of chance which you determined to shun forever. Finally ; you have resolved to rescue yourself from the demon grasp of drunkenness : a resolution which you have so often made, and as often broken because you have not abandoned its occasions. And in a few days or weeks, you are again a frequenter of the saloon, where you have so often fallen ; or have again resumed the absurd habits of conviviality with friends which demoralize society, and which you have not the manhood to contemn. Is this true repentance? is this destroying the subject-matter of sin? is this shunning the occasions that have been so often fatal to

you, and must be so again unless forever abandoned? You have made restitution of the wrong done your neighbor in his property, or good name: and again you conduct your business on the same loose principles, you again allow your tongue all its former license. Do you not see that you expose yourself anew to your former sins, with the consequent obligation of future restitution and reparation? Do not say that your practices are those of other people; that you only do as others do. Such practices are proscribed by the law of God; and universal license can never make wrong right. The law of virtue is not determined by the actions of the majority. The majority are not on the way of salvation. You will more likely be on the side of virtue by following the example of the few.

In Confession, and in the advice of the minister of God, you will find the remedies which may be necessary in your case for the avoidance of sin. The priest is not only the minister of pardon, but the physician of your souls. It is his to probe into their wounds; to pour into them the oil of divine grace; to bind them with words of comfort and counsel. Few give him the opportunity of performing this essential duty. They come for absolution, and are little solicitous for the application of necessary remedies. What is to be thought of a man suffering with cancer or with pneumonia, who would content himself to call on the doctor once, and then allow the disease to take its course of development till death ensues? Yet such is the manner of acting of many penitents.

Their souls require continual treatment ; there are sins abominable in their nature, more abominable in the moral order than cancer or leprosy in the physical ; and for which there is no corrective except frequent and continual confession. It is impossible to indulge in sin for any length of time, if this sacred Tribunal is approached regularly, and with the due dispositions. There the sinner will learn the occasions which may be fatal, the company which he is to shun, the remedies which he is to employ. There he will receive grace to avoid sin ; and perseverance and amendment. Frequent confession makes sin scarce ; scarce confession makes sin frequent. It is a virtue of the Sacrament that it not only destroys sin which is past, but prevents sin.

Mere ordinary prudence, such as we employ in the affairs of life, should teach us to shun whatever we find to be productive of sin ; and to apply whatever we find to be its corrective and restraint. Such is our treatment of the body and its ailments. Is not the soul worthy of, at least, the same consideration ?

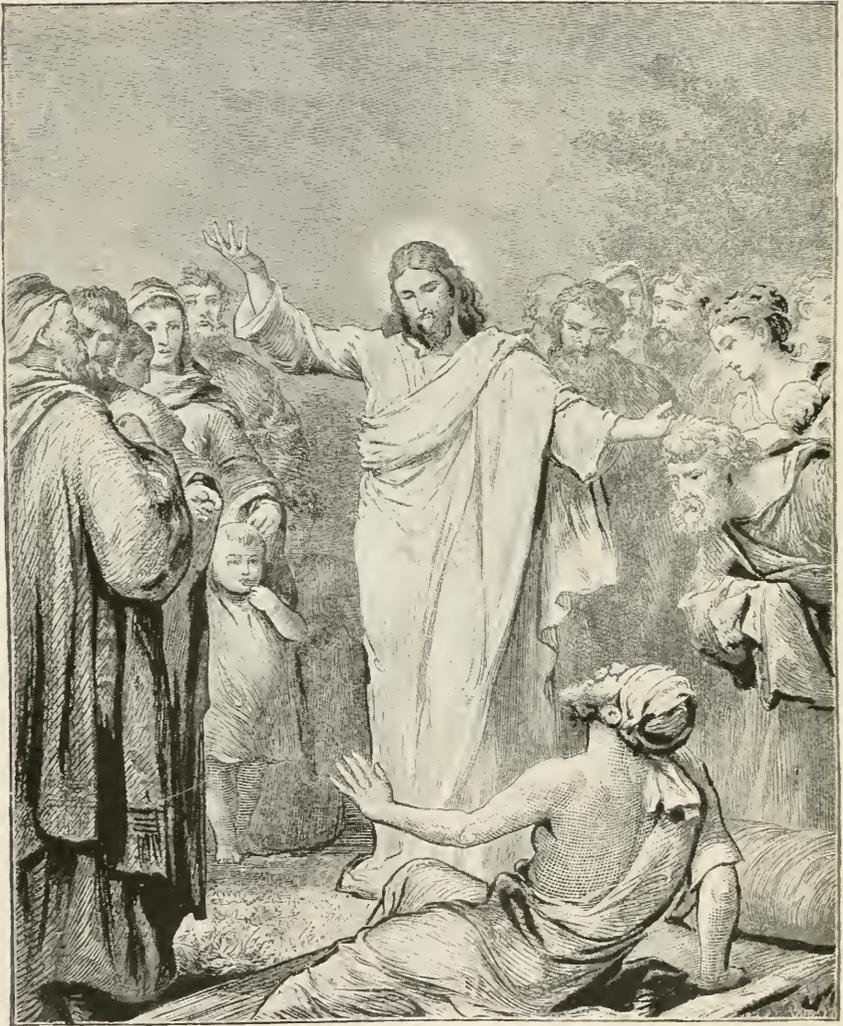
Mere instinct prompts us to decline what we have found injurious to us ; and to seek what has been beneficial. What may be called a moral instinct should lead us to flee from what has harmed our souls, and to disengage ourselves from whatever may prove a snare for our recovered innocence. Every obstacle that may imperil or threaten perseverance in grace should be removed. No sacrifice is too great which an altered life requires. No human consideration should stand in

the way of securing eternal life. With very scant reflection everyone knows how he came to sin; the cause, the circumstances that conspired against him. By experience sadly acquired, he knows his weakness, the force of temptation, and the means by which sin may be avoided. How weak his power of resistance when exposed to strong temptation, his conscience laden with uncounted sins, but too fully attests. Hence it raises its warning voice telling him that he alone can avoid sin, who avoids its occasions; that the measure of his care, will be the measure of his freedom from sin; that neglect of the occasions will inevitably lead to relapse; that the one sovereign security against offending God is to destroy or remove the occasions of sin, and to subdue the passions of the human heart.

Distracted and absorbed as we are by the sensible objects of life, it is with difficulty that we can enter into the consideration of those great truths of religion and eternity which constitute and are the very source of a truly penitential life. Hence it is, that in every age and century, deserts have been peopled and religious houses filled with those who wished to practise true repentance. Such abandonment of the world is no less necessary and salutary now, than ever; sin being always the same, and repentance equally necessary. If circumstances do not allow our renouncing the world in the heroic manner of the saints and penitents of former times, and if we are not called to their masterful repentance, yet there is a way in which we can separate ourselves from it, at

least in spirit and by sustained meditation. We can practise retirement and erect our penitential cells in our homes and hearts, and in the midst of the cares and occupations of life and our daily calling. Retirement of some kind is necessary for all who would keep alive in their souls the knowledge of the eternal truths. "With desolation is the land made desolate, because there is no one who thinketh in his heart."

Jesus Christ "Who was without sin or the shadow thereof," retired into the desert for forty days to set us an example which we should follow; and to teach us the necessity of separation from this world to be able to meditate upon the next. That we might learn to resist temptation, and to remind us that "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the princes and the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness, in the high places," and to supply us with the armor necessary to overcome these enemies, He fasted and prayed and permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan. Faithful following, in this, as in all things else, of Him Who is the way, the truth, and the life, is the price of our salvation. And as He resisted the evil one, and abjured him that he should not tempt the Lord, his God; so, also, will triumph the faithful penitent who by his retirement, fasting, praying, and continual watchfulness to resist the first beginnings of his assaults, models himself on his Divine Exemplar.



ON THE DUTY OF CONFESSION.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.—St. John i. 8-10.

And when He was come down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him. And behold a leper came, and worshipped Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: I will: be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man: but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them.—St. Matt. viii. 1-4.

WHILE it is a matter most consolatory to every lover of souls, and must be a source of continual joy to the angels, that so many are daily, and even hourly, approaching the Sacrament of Penance and receiving therein God's forgiveness for their sins, yet it is most distressing to think of the untold numbers who seldom, or even never, go to Confession. Sad, indeed, it is to know that so many fathers and mothers, young men and young women, and they, too, of those who come to Mass regularly, and are not wanting in some of the other duties of religion, are never seen to approach the Sacrament of reconciliation.

If they who neglect Confession believed that

there was any other means besides Confession, when it is possible, by which they could be saved, there would be less cause for wonder; they would be at least consistent; their neglect would not be condemned by their belief. But they who neglect Confession admit its necessity; they acknowledge that there is no other means under heaven, except Confession, when it is possible, by which they can hope for salvation. We can only reconcile their practice with their belief, by remembering the blindness of the human mind, and the waywardness of the human heart, consequent on the fall of our common humanity.

Let us inquire more particularly into the causes of this neglect. Let us ask the man who comes to Mass, Sunday after Sunday, who seems to be even somewhat eager to hear the word of God, why it is that he never goes to Confession. If we inquire, we shall find that this neglect is due to the same cause as leads people generally to forgetfulness of, if not indifference to, religious duty; namely, the unreality to them of religious truth.

Religion is something unreal to them. Understand me: I do not say that they believe not in religious truth; for they give it the assent of the mind. But yet, to them, it is unreal; they feel it not; they bring not home to their hearts and consciences the truth they receive with their minds; they have no vivid perception, no keen apprehension, no substantial realizing of eternal truths: and the truths of religion to be operative, must be felt. They think of religion in a dreamy, speculative, notional way. They look upon it as something

afar off, and which can give them no present concern. They may admire it in others, but they cannot understand how for themselves it can have any direct or personal interest. Religious truth takes no hold upon them. It is not woven into the texture of their character. It has no influence upon their lives. The certainty of a future life does not penetrate them through and through: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Eternity, are not to them actual, palpable, living facts, which they must be to all those who are to be influenced by them. The man who realizes religious truth, gives to it not only the assent of his mind, but the acceptance of his heart. It enters into and, in a manner, forms part of himself. It acts upon his life. It is continually before his mind and the subject of his earnest reflection. If he is thoroughly in earnest in the pursuit of his eternal destiny, he lives upon the plane and breathes the atmosphere of the life to come. Of all this there is an entire dearth in the heart that realizes not religious truth. This life is enough for it; it seeks nothing more. Worldly affairs fill it and leave but little time and less inclination to think of God or of religious truth. This, then, is one of the causes that deter people from Confession; the want of a realizing faith in religious truth.

What can be the cause of this dearth in the heart of a Christian? It may be the neglect of religious instruction in youth. Religious instruction is as necessary to teach us the unreality of this life, and the reality of the life to come, to point out to us our final destiny, and to incline our hearts to its

pursuit, as mental training is for our success in any worldly calling. It may be caused, too, by iniquity long persevered in; by which our consciences have been seared, our hearts hardened, and God's grace withdrawn, so that we no longer see with our eyes and hear with our ears. Whatever may be the cause of this dearth in a Christian's heart, the remedy is the same: meditation and prayer.

Reflection is necessary to become familiar with the truths of this life: how much more necessary is it to render familiar, truths of the supernatural which is so far above us, and is so far removed from the sphere of our senses? Even for those in whom religious convictions are deep and abiding, and who earnestly bring home to their minds the supernatural order, and who lead a supernatural life, frequent and devout meditation is needed to keep fresh and strong, the knowledge and appreciation they have of religious truth. Fervent and persevering prayer is the sovereign remedy for the inherent tendency to spiritual blindness. As the eye needs the light of the sun to discern the objects of the physical world around us; so our souls need the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, to discern and realize the truths of the supernatural order. This will be given to us only in answer to prayer. God will not send an angel from heaven, or some one back from the dead, to admonish us of the emptiness of this life, and the all-importance of that to come. "If we believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would we believe one risen from

the dead." Blind we must be, and worse than blind, if we do not bring home to our souls, the lessons which God is continually teaching us, by signs and warnings which there is no mistaking.

Death is continually stalking in the midst of us. We see it in the countless funerals which fill our streets, bearing men to their last resting-place. We see it in the earnest appeal made, week after week, for the repose of the souls who, the week previous, heard the same entreaty made for others. Scarcely a day passes but we hear of some one, perhaps a relative or friend, struck down by death. You may escape to-day; but to-day which spares you, those have fallen whom yesterday had spared: to-morrow may count you with the dead. The years of life, short in itself, pass away with fleeting and unperceived speed: youth and it may be middle age have gone as a dream: the future will quickly vanish and will soon be of the past. Relatives and friends, those whom we know no less than those whom we know not, are dying daily, even hourly: we know not how soon we shall follow in their wake. It is high time, my friends, to rouse ourselves from this insensibility and torpor which oppress us,—to throw off this fatal lethargy which is dragging us down to hell; and to be about the work of our salvation, while there is yet time. "This is the day of salvation, this is the acceptable time;" "A day cometh when no man worketh."

There is another class who neglect the duty of Confession: To this class religion is nothing unreal. They apprehend most vividly and most

strongly realize the eternal truths: these are as sensible to their minds as any facts of the physical world. They have so strong a faith in the future life, and so clear an insight into their condition, that they frankly confess, that they are not now in the state of soul in which they would wish to be, if God should call them: they feel that, if they were to die as they are now, they would be lost, irretrievably and forever lost. They look forward to a time when they shall seek and obtain pardon, and do penance for their sins. Sometimes one thing, and now another, but always there is something to make them delay the duty of Confession.

Now, my friends, are you not aware that it is this habit of delay that consigns to perdition almost all who are lost? No one ever yet intended to be lost: putting aside some few exceptions of which we need make no account, no one can resolve on his eternal misery. Consult the damned, and they will tell you, that they intended not to be lost; that the prospect of eternal reprobation was as far removed from them, as it is now from any of you; but that, like you, they delayed repentance from day to day, from week to week, from year to year, until at length the measure of their iniquities was filled, when they were overtaken by a sudden and unlooked-for death, and condemned to hell; there to manifest the justice of Him Whose mercy they had refused to avail themselves of during the time of grace and forgiveness.

Ah, my friends, you have stood by the death-

bed of acquaintances or relations, with whose lives you were but little satisfied; you lamented their sudden taking off after a life of iniquity; you felt in your hearts that they were ill-prepared to undergo the all-searching judgment of Almighty God. The minister of God, not to insult Job in his misery, spoke words of consolation and hopefulness, while in his heart he must have felt how little ground for hope there was. You thanked God that time was yet left you for repentance; you asked God that your end should not be like to theirs; you resolved upon a change of life. Are you changing it? Have you entered upon the work of repentance? have you received God's pardon in the Sacrament of Penance? Or are you still delaying your conversion, putting it off, like your dead friends, to the last moments of your life? shall your death-bed witness the same sorrowful regrets and unavailing prayers on the part of friends, which you have so often expressed for others?

There are others who are kept from Confession because of the trouble or labor involved in making a confession of many years. Admitting it to be a labor, is not the reward worthy of all labor? what trouble is to be compared with the boon of having our sins forgiven? See how men labor for ends merely human; see the anxious days and sleepless nights they pass in the pursuit of human fortune; see how they tax their minds and energies for success in the many walks of life. And is not our eternal salvation deserving of at least the same labor, the same diligence, the same

zeal? What other aim should we have in life than the salvation of our immortal soul? our life time is not too much to spend in making sure of our eternal destiny.

However, the duty of Confession involves no great labor: moderate diligence, ordinary preparation, is all that is required. If there be difficulty in it, it is owing to the peculiar dispositions of the person, or the great number of sins of which he is guilty. Strange as it may seem, there are those who have no scruple in committing sin, and yet are deterred from Confession, by over-anxiety concerning their dispositions. The spirit of scrupulousness seizes them; and, lest they should not make a perfect confession, they make none at all. It is an artifice of the evil one. This solicitude is altogether misplaced. It is well timed at the moment of temptation: then it is that we should be anxious and fearful lest we sin. The fear that closes our mouths in Confession should deter us from sin, not from its confession, and consequent amendment. We should banish from our hearts this idle timidity that keeps us from forgiveness. Do what you can to make a good Confession, and leave the rest to God. He will supply all its defects; He will perfect your sorrow; He will strengthen your purpose of amendment. Nor can there be any great labor arising from the length of time you have been away from Confession, and the number of sins you have committed during that time. It is now, we will suppose, twenty, or thirty, or even forty years since your last Confession. During that time your life

has been about the same : the same sins, the same habits, the same injustices. You have but to confess one year and multiply it by the number of years. Or, if your life has been different at different periods, confess the sins of one year of each, telling the length of such period. In this manner, the task is lightened, and the integrity of the Sacrament is altogether secured ; there is left no difficulty to be dreaded in the preparation for Confession.

There are some who fail to approach the sacred Tribunal, because of the humiliation involved in making known their deeds of shame to a man like themselves ; this is, indeed, a humiliation ; but a salutary one. Is it not right that they who have given way to pride so far as to renounce their Maker and Lord by mortal sin, should be humbled to the very dust, as the condition of pardon ? Small sacrifice, indeed, it is for so great a gain : a momentary confusion followed by an eternal peace. You dread to make known your sins in secrecy to the priest : how will you ever bear the awful disclosures of the last day ?

You fear to lose the esteem of the priest : seek one whom you know not. Lose the esteem of the priest ! Is he not a sinner ? has he not to confess his own sins ? Can he not distinguish between the sinner and the sin ? can he not love and esteem the one, and loathe the other ? Does he not know that God's grace is able out of the mass of corruption and iniquity to raise up saints, patterns of every virtue ? have not some of the saints been the greatest sinners before their conversion ?

Does he not feel that there is not a sin which is confessed to him, of which he might not have been guilty, if placed in the same circumstances and surrounded by the same influences? Far from losing esteem for the sinner, he respects him: he honors the man who has the courage, frankly and humbly, to acknowledge his sin; he knows it is divine grace that moves him to it. Far more congenial is it to the minister of God, to hear the accusation of the poor publican who though guilty of sins black and uncounted, is yet filled with compunction and humility, than of the proud pharisaical Catholic who comes to confession with a heart festering with pride, and whose blindness and self-sufficiency prevent him from seeing his conscience as God and the angels see it.

I cannot conclude without referring to another class of people who neglect Confession. They go not to Confession because they are not ready to give up sin, and to make those sacrifices which a life of repentance calls for. Of course, if they are not prepared to give up sin, it were useless to approach the Sacrament. But if they are not ready, when will they be ready? The work of repentance is as easy now as it will be at any future time. They have realized a fortune by defrauding their fellow-men; they are yet engaged in dishonest practices; they are unwilling to make restitution, and to cease from unlawful gain: they are unwilling to go to Confession. They have calumniated their neighbor; they refuse to humble themselves so far as to make him that full reparation without which there is no for-

givenness : they are not willing to go to Confession. They are held fast by the bonds of unmentionable passion ; they are not willing to put away the person, or abandon the places, which to them are an occasion of sin : they have no wish to go to Confession.

But do they not know that this reluctance to break with sin will increase with time ? If now they are not ready to make the sacrifices which repentance calls for ; when shall they be more willing or better disposed ? shall it be when time has increased the habit of sin indefinitely ? Habit grows by what it feeds on. Far easier now to overcome sin, and to abandon its occasions, than at any future period. Why should it seem easier to overcome sin hereafter, than at the present moment ? If now they cannot bring themselves to make good the reputations which, by their calumnies, they have injured ; how will they do it, when time shall have seared their conscience and the habit of evil speaking shall have rendered it insensible to its guilt ? If now they cannot restore ill-gotten goods, and cease from dishonesty ; how will they do it, when these gains shall have become mountain high to sink them down to hell ? If now they cannot break the bonds of lust ; how will they do it, when this passion shall have forged its riveted chains around their hearts so strongly that nothing can dissolve them, except a grace which they will have no right to expect ? If now in youth and health and vigor, they cannot overcome the repugnance they feel to confess ; how will they do it, when

stretched upon their death-bed, their mind shall be delirious with agony and their body in the throes of dissolution?

Ah, it would seem that nothing can make us realize religious truths.—Not till the shadows of death are gathering, thick and fast, around us: not till we feel its mortal chill coursing through our veins: not till the grave opens to receive us:—not till then, do we feel the emptiness of this life, the deceitfulness of all things human, the all-importance, the absolute necessity of the life to come. Nothing but the light and grace of the Holy Ghost can remove this darkness from our souls. Grant us, then, O God, this light and grace; deign to enlighten our minds that we may know, and move our hearts that we may feel, those truths which it so behooves us to know and to feel.

Break, then, at once, my brethren, the bonds of sin; rise from the lethargy in which your insensibility has plunged you; begin at length your new life in Christ Jesus. You will say that it is not easy thus in a moment to break with sin. Most undoubtedly it is not; and of yourself you cannot do it: by your own unaided efforts, you can never rise from sin. But you can do all things in Him Who strengthens you. His grace is given to you in abundance: it is to be had for the asking. It is within us and around us, like the air we breathe. But you will say, to-morrow, and then again, to-morrow. Why not to-day? why not this very hour? You may remember that remarkable passage in St. Augustine's Con-

fessions, in which he describes the struggles which he had to suffer to shake off the yoke of sin. When, before his baptism, he was one day engaged in reasoning himself into a resolution to conquer his lust, and to seek the truth, hearing a voice saying: "To-morrow, to-morrow;" he, moved by divine grace, at once exclaimed: "Why not to-day, why not this hour?" And thus resolved, opening the Epistles of St. Paul, his eye fell upon the words: "Not in drunkenness and rioting, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and contentions; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its lusts."—Applying these words to himself, and taking them as the voice of God addressed to him, they sealed his resolution. He was converted, and became one of the greatest saints who have illuminated the Church. A remarkable example for all who experience the difficulty of subjecting the law of the flesh to the law of grace.

Make but the effort, and all your difficulties will vanish. Make but the effort, and religion will assume in your eyes a reality which you never before dreamed of; because the gloom and darkness that arise from sin will be expelled from your souls, and will be supplanted by God's admirable light and grace. Make but the effort, and your only surprise and regret will be that you delayed your conversion so long. "O Beauty, ever ancient and ever new, too late have I known Thee! too late have I loved Thee!" Make but the effort, and the labor of Confession will be but a

labor of love; the shame will be turned into joy and consolation. Make but the effort, and all the bonds of sin which now hold you in slavery, will give way before a will unshaken in its purpose of amendment and strengthened by God's grace and light.

It is in this sacred Tribunal, that you will find an antidote for the poison which sin leaves in the soul. In it you will find light in darkness, strength in weakness, a support and stay in temptation. Here it is, that the dishonest man learns the claims of justice, and the necessity of restitution; and becomes an upright citizen and exemplary Christian. Here it is, that the drunkard receives the lessons and graces which enable him to lead a life of Christian sobriety and temperance. Here it is, that the Magdalen receives the guidance and strength which enable her to persevere in her life of recovered virtue. Here in this Sacrament, can all receive true peace of mind: that peace which is but a foretaste of the eternal peace which, I trust, will be the portion of us all in the life to come.

ON THE EFFECTS AND DUTY OF RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven ; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give, is My flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying : How can this man give us His flesh to eat. Then Jesus said to them : Amen, amen, I say unto you : Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life : and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed : and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever.—St. John vi. 48–59.

THE Gospel which I have just read to you is a portion of the sixth chapter of St. John, the chapter in which our Lord promised the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. It was on the occasion of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes that He made this promise. His feeding the multitude miraculously with a few loaves and fishes was a symbol of this Eucharistic banquet in which He

would feed the souls of men with His flesh and blood.

When we consider the Sacrament of the Eucharist apart from the mystery of the Incarnation, and the love of which it is the expression apart from the love which prompted the Incarnation, we are at a loss to understand why Jesus should have loved us after so marvellous a manner as to give us His body to eat and His blood to drink. But when we consider them in connection,—when we consider the Blessed Sacrament in union with the Incarnation and the love shown in the Blessed Sacrament in union with the love shown in the Incarnation, then we have but little difficulty in understanding why Jesus has loved us with such a wondrous love. For we see that the Blessed Sacrament is but the continuation of the Incarnation, a certain lasting abidance of Christ upon earth; and the love of which it is the symbol and pledge, is but the final consummation of the love of the Incarnation. They are parts of one great whole, parts of the same gracious dispensation of God towards man, parts of the same scheme of mercy and love. The wonders of the Incarnation prepare us for the wonders of the Real Presence; the love of the Incarnation prepares us for the love of the Eucharist. Indeed, the one mystery so closely depends upon the other, the one so closely fits into the other, that the Incarnation supposed, we should in a manner anticipate the Eucharist. The love of the Incarnation could never find its limit short of the Eucharist.

They are both but the manifestation of the de-

sire which God has ever shown to unite Himself with our poor humanity. Not to speak of the union which exists between God and us by reason of our creation,—a union so deep and mysterious that no human mind can explore it,—in the Incarnation Jesus came down on earth and became our brother in the flesh. In the Eucharist He unites Himself to us by the closest possible union. He becomes our very food and drink. St. Augustine says that even Divine love and power could go no farther. It is the property of food to be changed into the substances of him consuming it; but it is peculiar to this Divine Eucharist, that it changes the consumer into Itself. And thus humanity by its union with the God-head reaches the highest pitch of glory.

The special virtue and efficacy, no less than the necessity of this Sacrament, is declared to us in the words used by Our Lord in reply to the unbelieving Jews asking, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat :” “Truly, truly, I say to you : Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the Father Who liveth sent Me, and I live by the Father, so He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eateth this bread, shall live forever.”

These words insure to all who partake of this Divine food, true life, union with God, immortal bliss ; or better, true life which is union with God,

and, therefore, immortal. As here below we cannot be united to God in the manner which is to constitute our eternal glory, it remains that we must possess Him in the way indicated in this Sacrament. Indeed, unless we are united to Him in this invisible and inchoate way here below, we shall never be united to Him at all hereafter; our eternal union is to begin here if it is to be at all. This union is effected by grace. We usually think of grace as an illumination, or inspiration, or influence sent from God. It is all this; but it is a great deal more. It is a creation, it is as truly a work of God as anything that He has made; as truly a being as an angel, or the soul, or any faculty of the soul. It is not a substance, because it is not meant to exist by itself, but in another. It is superadded to our nature. It enables it to rise to a height and to do things which of itself it could never reach or do. Human nature could not by itself raise itself to the supernatural order. It has its prescribed limits which it cannot pass. It could not of itself know, much less live, the supernatural life which is union with God,—could not believe in God, hope in Him, and love Him, without this divine help which is grace. As without our intellect we could not reason or perform any intellectual act, so without grace we could not perform one act of that supernatural life which results from Faith, Hope and Charity. Now this grace, which may be said to constitute a new nature in man, is received in various ways. It comes in answer to fervent and persevering prayer. It is the gratuitous gift of

God. Not more free was He in bestowing upon us our human nature, than He is in conferring this new one. We receive it in Baptism and in Penance, as sacraments of the dead, and in the other sacraments proportionately; but in the Holy Communion we receive it in its unfailing fulness and inexhaustible source; not grace alone, but the Divine Author of grace,—not by participation or by measure, save that of our fitness and dispositions.

This Divine food nourishes and sustains the life of the soul. There is a life of the soul as well as the life of the body; a supernatural as well as a natural life; a spiritual world within us as truly as a physical world around us. This life is the grace of God, is the union of the soul with God. It is the necessary consequence of our elevation to a supernatural destiny. As our bodies are subject to weakness, disease, and death, so our souls are liable to spiritual weakness, spiritual disease, and spiritual death. They also have their spiritual enemies, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which carry on an unceasing warfare. All that corporal food does for the body, Holy Communion does for the soul; the effects of corporal food are analogous to the spiritual effects of Holy Communion. Food is necessary to sustain life, to repair our wasted forces; it imparts to us new strength against weakness, guards us against ills, gratifies the taste, fills us with delight, and even by its very expectation causes joy and animates us to sustain many burdens. This Divine food invigorates our

souls, sustains their supernatural life, increasing and strengthening the grace which is its source, and often imparting it. It repairs its energies wasted by weakness, the result of concupiscence, by the inroads of temptation, the assaults of the devil, and the allurements of the world. It fills us with spiritual delight. It advances the soul daily in virtue and perfection. It enamours us of virtue, which it makes easy by the sweetness and savor which it diffuses; it overcomes all enemies and kindles forever our devotion. As the body deprived of nourishment languishes and finally dies, so the soul deprived of this life-giving food is enfeebled and in the end perishes.

We need something more than what is barely sufficient to support the life of the soul,—something that can compensate us for the loss of the original justice in which the race was at first constituted. Then passion was controlled by reason; reason was in harmony with God's law. This elevation and grace were not essential to nature; it could have been made without them; yet their forfeiture has shattered our whole being. While not injured essentially "the whole man has been changed for the worse," to use the words of the Council of Trent. It has been wounded but not unto death. Understanding and will remain intact; but the one has been darkened, and the other made perverse. Our hearts have been enfeebled for virtue, and our moral sense blunted to discern good from evil. Our faculties have been impaired to pursue the one and to decline the other. We are prone to do that which in

heart and by the law of the mind we loath and condemn. Some external strength or lever not of our own nature, but superadded to it, something outside of ourselves and above us must be imparted to our deteriorated nature,—some potent spiritual stimulant or energy which can diffuse itself through intellect and heart and will, through all our faculties and being, and restore to us all that the fall has robbed us of,—which can sustain us against internal weakness and external foes in that new life which we re-enter when regenerated by the water of Baptism. Made one with the body of Christ in this Sacrament,—grafted on the body of the second Adam as the branch upon the vine,—with the blood of the Redeemer coursing in the veins and become the daily nourishment of the soul, we receive all, and more than all, that we lost by the entail of the primal curse.

In common with all the sacraments, Holy Communion increases Sanctifying grace. It does not, except in very extraordinary cases, confer the first grace. It is not for the soul dead in sin but for the soul alive in grace. It kindles habitual into actual charity. Touched with the fire which it communicates, the soul in which dwells habitual charity is inflamed with intensest love of God. As the ocean by its very depth may remain tranquil till stirred by the storm; as the unutterable tenderness of a mother for her child may abide unmoved, and for very fulness never find expression till her heart is rent by its piteous cries of suffering; as the strong, constant love of

a man for his wife finds a vent in frequent passionate outbursts; so do the coals of habitual charity remain smouldering in the soul, until touched with the fire which comes from contact and communion with Christ's body in this Holy Sacrament.

The Holy Communion confers even diviner benefits than any which I have yet enumerated. It unites us with Jesus Christ Himself. It makes us one with Him. It makes it true that it is no longer we that live, but Jesus Christ that lives in us. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in Him. As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same shall live by Me." Every soul in whom lives and glows the grace of this Sacrament is made a member of the body of Christ,—made as truly one with Him by grace, as His own members are one with Him by nature. By this union all the members of Christ's mystical body are firmly knit together, being compacted in His blood by this Divine food, even as the grains of corn in the ear, or the particles of wheat are kneaded in the dough or mass. This Body which is meat indeed, and this Blood which is drink indeed, enters into the body not as the body's nourishment, but to create and to sustain the union of the soul with Jesus. The accidents may indeed, and do produce the effects of substances and follow the laws of substances; but that is not the end and purpose of this Sacrament. It is to melt into one, even as wax is melted, or as the molten iron is welded, the soul

of Jesus and the soul of everyone who receives Him. This is evidently more than a moral union, more even than that which is the result of grace; infinitely and divinely higher and more sublime than that which subsists between the creature and the Creator, "in Whom he lives and moves and has his being." The human soul made one with the soul of Jesus in this Sacrament, is made like unto it according as it divests itself of all human thoughts and sentiments and feelings and motives, and assimilates those of Christ. Then it can truly say with St. Paul, "it is no longer I that live, but Jesus Christ that lives in me."

The fruit of this Sacrament is immortal life. "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever. He that eateth My body and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him, and I will raise him up on the last day. Not as your fathers ate the manna and are dead, he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." It is true that this immortal life is secured for us by the reception of Baptism and of Penance. Yet in these Sacraments we but receive grace by participation and in measure; in the Holy Communion we receive the Divine Author of grace and the Father and Giver of the world to come: grace in all its fulness and in its unfailing source, is the fruit of this communion with the Body of Christ.

Our bodies no less than our souls, by this Divine food, receive in them the mark of their reservation to Divine glory, and the immortal pledge that shall preserve them unto life eternal;—not that they receive any virtue by which, unaided,

they will rise from the grave ; but incorporated into Christ by this Sacrament, they will be known by Him as those in whom “ He dwelt and who dwelt in Him ;” while those that have not this mark of His predilection, will exert no such claim upon His divine recognition.

The Holy Communion was the dying will and testament of Jesus Christ ; the final disposition of the merits of His passion and death. It was the method which He saw fit to employ for the application to our souls of these fruits. It secures our right to them ; by it we enter as heirs upon our inheritance ; without it, we can have no part in the treasures which it insures. By His passion and death we have been saved : by the Communion of His body and blood we are made sharers in His passion and death : its wilful deprivation excludes us from salvation. As we are the members of His mystical body, wherever He is, there we must also be,—where the head is there must be the members. As such we are as truly united to Christ by grace, as His physical members are united to Him by blood. He is gone to prepare a place for us ; He cannot forever be separated from His members,—the fruit of His spiritual loins. When He communicates to us in this Sacrament His body, our eternal union with Him is begun : the union by grace and charity of which this Sacrament is the instrument, is the pledge of union with Him in glory. This inchoate union blossoms and matures in the unending days of eternity. Unless we enter upon it in this life, we shall never enter upon it in the life to come. It

is the closest approach we can make to Him while we are in the flesh. In eternity we shall be united fully and perfectly to Him.

Why is it that Catholics who possess this priceless gift are so indifferent to it? How is it that many who are ready to lay down their lives rather than call its truth in question, are seldom seen to approach the Holy Table and receive this Divine Sacrament, this life-giving food? How happens it that some pass from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age, and from old age to the grave, without even once partaking of this food of angels, this heavenly nourishment of souls? How few are there who receive it at least monthly, according to the advice of theologians? How many are there who fail to receive it even yearly, which the Church requires under her severest penalties and at the peril of their souls? There are many in every congregation who come to Mass regularly, seem to have some hunger for the word of God, and yet are never seen at the Holy Table. How is it that the desire for Communion seems never to enter the hearts of some people, otherwise seemingly worthy and exemplary enough?

If we ask them why this is, they will tell us that they are not worthy. They have at heart the words of St. Paul, "Let a man prove himself and so eat of this bread and drink of this wine. For whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself: not discerning the body of the Lord." So far they do well. It were the saddest of all misfortunes to eat and

drink the body and blood of Christ unworthily. It were better for the man never to have been born. It were the foulest outrage, the blackest crime to profane the body of Christ, by receiving it into a soul stained with mortal sin. But it were well also to bear in mind those other words of Christ Himself. "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you shall not have life in you." Here, then, are two things: one to be done and the other to be avoided: Jesus Christ to be received, and to be so received as not to entail upon us eternal damnation. Must I therefore never or but seldom receive Jesus Christ lest I should receive Him unworthily? Must I never use that which is food and necessary to me, because it may be abused and profaned by those who presume to receive it without the due dispositions? God forbid! Is there no middle course between not receiving Jesus Christ at all, and receiving Him unworthily? Should I not rather receive Him and do it worthily? Should I not rather prepare myself for His fruitful reception? Should I not rather wean my heart from over-attachment to this life, from fondness for sin, separate myself from occasions of sin, enter upon a career of penance, dispose myself to approach the Tribunal of repentance? The obligation of receiving the Blessed Eucharist, becomes an additional motive to repentance. For the Church requires for the fulfilment of this obligation a worthy communion. To make this worthy communion, I must prepare for a good confession; for a good confession I must change my life and begin to do penance.

Worthy, indeed! Why, if you had the sanctity of St. John the Baptist and the purity of the angels, you would not be worthy to receive Christ in this Sacrament! It is not a matter of worth: it is a question of need. Our souls would starve and perish without this Divine nourishment. It is called angels' food: not because it is reserved to the angels; but because they find in the contemplation of the God Whom it contains, their sole occupation, bliss ineffable, joy supreme. But it is meant for men; men struggling for salvation; fighting with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; men with all their passions and temptations and sinfulness and wilfulness. It is the medicine of the soul, the antidote of sin, it extinguishes lust, it germinates in virgins. It is the least degree of worthiness that is required: freedom from mortal sin.

There are others who say that they are deterred from receiving Holy Communion through respect. Respect! fatal respect that leads men from the source of life! fatal respect that sinks love in fear! fatal respect that destroys love by depriving men of its most fruitful source, the burning charity of this Divine Sacrament! Such respect is hostile to the spirit of Christ, and opposed to the mind of His church. It has been condemned by its councils and pontiffs. It was the spirit of Jansenism that would cultivate respect at the price of love. The mind of the Church is reflected in the writings of St. Alphonsus: and all who are acquainted with his works know how little room he finds for respect in the reception of

this Sacrament. Frequent communion is according to him at least four or five times a week, daily, if possible. It is not respect that Jesus seeks in this Sacrament. Had it been so, He would never have established it; or He would have limited its consecration to far fewer priests; or He would have imposed far more exacting conditions for its reception. But it was established in the excess of love: "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you;" "Having loved His own, He loved them to the end." It was love, burning, boundless love that led to its establishment. It is in this spirit that it is to be received. In it He appeals, not to our reason, for He annihilates it; not to our imagination, for He bewilders it; but He appeals to that passion which, for better or worse, is the strongest of the human heart,—the passion of love. His love resulted in the Incarnation, and redeemed the world; by it have been saved and will be saved, all who are to be saved till time shall be no more. But examine your heart, scrutinize your motives, and see if it be respect that keeps you from Communion. See if it is not respect for yourself, respect for your passions, fondness for sin, reluctance to separate from its occasions, unwillingness to make restitution for the injustices of which you have been guilty. See if this is not the respect which makes you delay and neglect to receive this Divine food.

There are others who say they are not yet prepared to receive this Holy Sacrament. Not yet prepared! They have a lively sense of the necessity of due preparedness, and feel they are

not yet in that state which will warrant their approach to the Holy Table. Well, are they preparing? are they removing their unworthiness? Are they seeking to overcome attachment to this world? Are they doing away with occasions of sin? Are they making restitution for the wrongs they have been guilty of against their neighbor in his person, or credit, or property, or reputation? Are they purifying their hearts and cleansing their consciences from sin? Are they disposing themselves for Confession? are they entering upon that new life which will fit them for a worthy Communion? If so, it is well: they are under the influence of grace. But remember that this exquisite preparation is not required. Your very wish to prepare yourself well, is in itself a hopeful earnest of your early preparedness. Do not delude yourself with the wish of extraordinary dispositions at some future time. Do not believe that you will be able to prepare yourself with greater recollection hereafter. You will never be hermits and religious. The occupations of life are not incompatible with the duty of Confession and Communion. Kings and statesmen have found time amidst all their employments to receive daily the Bread of life. It was to them a source of light and strength. Approach then with confidence the tribunal of Penance. God will perfect your dispositions. He will deepen your sorrow, correct the waywardness of your will, give firmness to your purpose of amendment, slacken the fire of concupiscence, lessen the strength of temptation, increase your power of resistance, create in your

souls a loathing for sin, plant in them flowers of virtue blossoming unto eternal life.

While you say that you are not prepared, yet you are not preparing. When then will you prepare? When then will you be better prepared? Will it be the next week, or the next month, or the next year? Will it be when the habit of sin shall have increased and intensified with time? Will it be when your sins shall have been multiplied indefinitely, by reason of the countless injustices you shall further be guilty of? Will it be when sin and passion shall have forged so tightly their chains around your souls, that nothing can break them but a grace which you have no right to expect? Will it be when the minister of Christ shall stand at your bedside, doubting as to whether he can give you the Holy Communion?

However, if we come to inquire further what may be the cause of the neglect of Holy Communion, we shall find it to be the same as renders men indifferent and careless in all other matters of religion; namely, the want of faith. Want of what! you will exclaim; why, we would rather die than call in question this great truth of our religion. But with most of us our faith has been but an inheritance. Men seldom prize what they have received in this manner, as they do what is, in any way, the result of their own efforts. What credit to a man that he has been baptized, if he has never, by any act of his own, sought to elicit in act the capacity for supernatural virtue, which he received in the sacrament. There are Christians whose faith would seem to do credit to an angel; but with

charity so small, that of it, even a pagan would be ashamed. We want a living, practical faith; a faith that gives us a sense in our hearts of what we profess with our lips; a faith that infuses itself into our lives and works itself into our character; a faith that pierces the shadows which separate this life from the next; a faith that makes sensible, palpable, living, the truths of religion. There are two classes of people in the world. The one look upon religion as something good, an ornament of life, a great personal accomplishment; but of its necessity for themselves they never dream; they look upon it in a vague, shadowy, unreal way. The other regard religion as the business of life, to which all things are to be referred; they think of the truths of religion, as others do of the things of this life, with the same keen apprehension and living earnestness; religion is the actuating motive of all their life and actions. They are not understood by the world. No wonder. They live on a higher plane and breathe a holier atmosphere than the rest of men. They, perhaps, as little understand the world, as the world understands them. They are amazed that worldlings can regard this life as a reality: worldlings are surprised that they can regard the future life as a reality. Votaries of the world cannot understand why a man can live for God, and for Him only. They need light. The human eye needs physical light to see the physical world. They need supernatural light to see the supernatural world. But a time will come when this delusion will vanish, when our eyes will be opened to the nothingness

and emptiness of this life, and the all-importance of the future. It will be in that day when, stretched on the bed of death, we close our eyes, for the last time, on this world, to open them to the next.—Then in the light which shall flood our souls, shall we understand the vanity of all we have lived for, and the necessity of salvation which we have forfeited.

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THE NEED OF DIVINE REVELATION.

No one hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.—St. John i. 18.

WHAT is the need of Revelation? By Revelation we understand the deposit of Divine truths which Christ has brought into the world, and intrusted to His church and commissioned to teach mankind. Is not reason as sufficient to teach us supernatural truths as those of the natural order,—everything man needs not only for this life but for the life to come? This question has all the more apparent force, because after two thousand years the Revelation vouchsafed by Jesus Christ, is so confused and blended with the truths made known to us by reason, that it is not easy, at first, to discern the one from the other: natural light and supernatural, have coalesced so as to appear to be one and the same. Hence we easily believe, that that which indeed is knowable only from Revelation, is the product of unaided reason.

We have become so used to the world, coming into it all-unconscious, and advancing in it imperceptibly,—we have become so identified with it, that it is with difficulty we can separate ourselves, even in thought, from it, or realize that we are

not belonging to it. Sense so clogs our spirit, that it is only with the greatest effort, we can reflect upon truths removed from the sphere of sense; nor upon any truth except as conceived in a sensible form. Hence its wonders fail to strike us: the most luminous evidences of the power and omniscience of the Creator, are lost upon minds habituated to them: stupendous manifestations are as if they were not; for they lack the singularity necessary to arrest unthinking minds: for the thoughtful, they must ever convey their lesson.

If a full-grown man, in the full ripeness of reason and possessed of all his mental faculties, were to come into the world, and open his eyes for the first time upon heaven and earth and all the wonders everywhere to be seen: the glorious splendor of the sun, the tranquil beauty of the moon, the uncounted multitudes of stars, the supreme order and harmony everywhere discernible, he would, indeed, be filled with amazement and awe; we cannot conceive the sentiments that would fill, and even overwhelm him. But man, busy with his animal needs, and eager in the pursuit of the phantoms in which he has placed his happiness, and dominated by sensible objects, has little leisure and less inclination, to ask himself, who made this world, or who made man, or why either was made. However, we might ask till doomsday, before reason would be able to answer the questions: the loftiest human genius could never solve the simple queries that lie at the very threshold of human inquiry.

Not stranger would be our feelings, if we contemplated for the first time, the moral world. When we behold this world of man, and consider the mystery that surrounds his origin, and final destiny; when we feel the inborn and supreme tendency of his rational nature to happiness, and its absolute and universal disappointment, at least, in this life; when we reflect upon the mysterious course of Divine providence which permits the triumph of evil and the exaltation of the wicked, the defeat of good and the discomfiture of the virtuous; when we experience the pleasure of the promise, and the bitterness of the realization of passion and sin, the disappointment of the most sanguine hopes, the emptiness of the loftiest human projects and undertakings; when, in brief, we feel that the history of every man is that, he "is born of a woman, lives for a little while, and is subject to much misery;"—all this is a mystery which the highest human reason could never explore. The conjecture, the nearest to the truth, which philosophy divined, was that men were punished here, as in a place of exile, for sins committed in another world.

If we shut our eyes to the external world, and turn them in upon that which exists in the soul of every man, we are filled with a similar sense of mystery. What is this conflict of the spirit which is continually on, this warfare between his superior and inferior natures? How warm an approval of the law of the mind, how abject a slavery to the law of the members; how much praise for virtue, how great a proneness to vice;

how much of the angel, how much of the animal; how much self-sacrifice, how much selfishness; what lofty aspirations, how many low and groveling instincts;—truly, an enigma, a mystery, a contradiction incomprehensible to reason is man.

Revelation is, therefore, necessary to solve the mysteries of the origin of the world, of human existence and destiny, and of the human heart. Nor is it to the purpose to say, that a revelation has been made to man, in the nature and faculties and gifts which have been bestowed upon him and of which he is conscious; and in the physical world, in which the apostle tells us, the existence and power of God have been so clearly manifested from the beginning. While these may serve, and do serve, as infallible evidences of a Supreme Being and of His perfections, they are not the revelation which is necessary; they are rather its preludes: they do themselves necessitate a revelation to unfold and explain them: they are unintelligible and enigmatic without some superadded disclosure.

Such a revelation is so necessary to man, the noblest of God's creatures, that we are led to expect it, to anticipate it. We must, perforce, believe that an All-merciful God will not refuse light in such darkness; when His own love and worship among men, and their life here below, and eternal salvation, so evidently require it.

God is infinite, man is limited: as the finite cannot comprehend the infinite, any revelation that God makes, must contain much that is incomprehensible to man.—Not that he cannot

understand the truth as enunciated, but that he cannot rise to the comprehension of its intrinsic nature. If reason could fathom all things, we would have to say, that there are no mysteries, while mysteries surround us on every side; or that it is equal to God, which is absurd. "Mystery is but the infinitude of God coming in contact with man's finite mind," and not being comprehended by him. God has endowed man with reason, as a light to direct him in things that fall within its scope. It has its place in religion: it is to ascertain the fact, and whereabouts of revelation. This done, it is its duty to cast itself before God speaking, and accept with an immediate and unflinching assent, the truths which He reveals.

Revelation and reason cannot be opposed: they both have the same Author; the light of the one cannot be opposed to the light of the other. The truths revealed are beyond the scope and reach of reason, and cannot, therefore, be judged by it. To be unreasonable or absurd, they should be parallel with reason, and contradictory or contrary to it. Besides, whatever God discloses, must be true; and this we should be aware of before any verdict of reason. As well doubt the science of the heavens, because the naked eye cannot unfold its sublime laws, as reject revelation, because it is impervious to man. Reason needs Revelation to rise to a knowledge of Divine truths. For, by itself, it is weak, unsteady, obscured; and meant only for the natural order: it must be strengthened, steadied, enlightened, and elevated by grace to the supernatural.

The worship that man will render to God, and the morality that will guide his own heart, must needs show the nature and be the fruit of the perfection and attributes which he assigns to Him. As he instinctively feels subjection at all to God, so he feels that the worship which issues from that subjection, must be in harmony with and, some way, reflect the Divine perfections. Unaided human reason has never been able to direct man in this primary duty to his Creator, nor to impart correct principles of morality for his guidance. On the contrary, reason unenlightened by Divine light, has become the victim of the most shocking errors in the adoration of God and in the pursuit of virtue.

Without revelation, men in general would have never known God. And the few who might have come to have some knowledge of His existence, would have known nothing of His nature and attributes, beyond a mere surmise or conjecture; and, therefore, could have never rendered Him a just and acceptable worship. The greater part of men naturally follow the guidance of the few, in what concerns these vital truths; they have neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the ability, to investigate them for themselves. We naturally ask the philosophers, the very flower of human reason, what they have to teach concerning the Divine Being; especially as St. Paul declares, that the existence and power of God have been manifested from the beginning, by the things that were made. While reason is capable of knowing that which is so natural to the heart,

as the existence of One Supreme Being, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-perfect; yet the same apostle tells us, that these philosophers knew not God, and gave to the creature the glory due to Him; thus changing the truth of God into a lie. If such were the sentiments of the lights of the human race, it is easy to infer that the belief of men in general, could not have been more exalted.

Society was sunk in polytheism which stifled the rational conviction of the human soul of one Supreme Being, and the instinctive homage which it pays to Him. To such degradation had men fallen, that they worshipped not only themselves, but the vilest creatures, even inanimate objects, even base brute matter. They attributed to them feelings, and passions, and the most corrupt inclinations of the human heart. Unrestrained lust and flagrant gratification of the worst propensities, were the worship, in many places, offered to God. Orgies unmentionable and utter shamelessness, turned their worship into exhibitions, at once evidence and incitement of the vilest degradation, and their temples into seething cesspools of immorality and corruption. The basest passions were deified, and had their exclusive temples, where shame and virtue never entered, and where acts of unlicensed gratification became offerings to their tutelary deities. Worship whose very object it is, to appease God, and to overcome the vices of men, was, indeed, such as was calculated to invoke His malediction, and to work the corruption of the

heart, by sinking it deeper in guilt. By this miserable and debasing idea of God, they were led to propitiate Him with blood, and to even offer Him human sacrifices.

The corruption of the worship of God was so shocking as to appear incredible. It is scarcely possible for one who lives in the light and influence of Christianity, to realize that man with all his gifts and endowments, was yet so far debased as to worship inanimate creatures, to make gods of wood and stone. Even the beasts that roamed, prone on the earth, were adored. The noblest objects of worship, that reason, destitute of Divine revelation, could discover, were the sun, and moon, and stars. To-day, outside of the regions that have been enlightened by the Gospel, "the glory of God is still changed into a lie," and the creature usurps the throne and worship of the Creator.

Reason left to itself, always shows itself utterly powerless to teach any worship worthy of God; and frequently corrupted with disgraceful errors, that which had been established by God Himself. And from these disgraceful errors into which it fell by perverting what was true, or by substituting what was false, it could never rescue mankind. By itself, human intelligence could never have reached that worship of God in spirit and in truth, which we to-day possess. Plato declared that, to rescue men from the disorders into which reason probing in the dark had brought them, nothing less than a god from heaven would suffice. He thus instinctively felt that some knowledge or power greater than human, was

necessary to redeem the world from error. An ancient philosopher boasted that, with the lever, he could move the earth; but he needed a fulcrum placed outside of it.

From such widespread ignorance of the existence, such erroneous notions of the nature and attributes, such corrupt and corrupting worship, of the Supreme Being, there followed, as a consequence, the thickest darkness concerning those truths the most necessary to man's well-being and proper ordering of his life in this world, and his eternal happiness in the next. With such a being as they imagined God to be, it would be but little loss to man to remain forever ignorant of him, and an incalculable gain to escape eternal union with him, if such were his destiny.

Without Revelation man would have never known his final destiny. He might have conjectured that he was not made for this world, but he would have never risen to the knowledge of his true end. The heart by its surfeit with this life, seeking a happiness not to be found here below, spiritual and eternal, instinctively declared that this world was not its destiny; yet did not declare where or what it was: this, the human mind could never of itself discover. Riches, and pleasures, and honors, and all that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, could covet or supply, could never have satisfied his soul; but what would have satisfied it, was truly beyond human comprehension to conceive or human ability to attain. No finite good could fill the void made for what was infinite.

Yet, what would seem to be more within the capacity of reason, than to determine man's final destiny? Philosophy has never been able to tell why man was made; it was not that it did not try; with what success, St. Augustine declares when he says that its theories were to be counted by the hundred; and these never rose beyond the merest conjecture. Some claimed that man was made for riches, some for fame, some for pleasure, some even for bodily gratification, some for one end, and some for another; but none rose to the sublime truth that man was made for Almighty God as his last end. To such a height, human intelligence could never rise. The imperial genius of a few of the most gifted of men may have been able after laborious investigation and years of thought, to discover the immortality of the soul; but it was reserved to a very few; it never found general acceptance even among the philosophers; while the majority of men had no knowledge of it, save that which had survived from the primitive revelation, or that which they felt in the aspirations and inclination of the human heart.

As man's supernatural destiny was the gratuitous gift of Divine goodness, to which his nature could lay no claim, and without which he could have been created, reason could never have divined it; it was only heavenly light that could inform him of the grant. Even if by the light of reason man could have learned his destiny in God, he could not have raised himself to the supernatural plane that would lead him to it; left to himself, he would forever have remained an

exile from that supernatural life and order. No creature can raise itself above its appointed rank. Water ascends not beyond its level ; the irrational creature cannot aspire to ratiobility. Nothing can abandon its proper place, and assume one not its own, by its own unaided efforts. It needs a power outside of itself. And so, man needed a power, an energy outside of himself, from on high, to lift him from his fallen state back again to his supernatural plane.

The mystery of the Incarnation was absolutely free on the part of God. There was nothing in man that necessitated any such outpouring of goodness and love. In justice, God could have allowed him and his posterity to be lost. Or, if He willed to save them, their redemption could have been effected by what would seem less expenditure of His love and less sacrifice of His majesty. It could never have entered the human mind, even in its loftiest thought, that God would become man for sake of man : as it is, it is as much as faith can do, to believe it. We may with St. Thomas say that the Incarnation was the most congruous manner for our redemption : but this is reasoning after the truth is known to us : the stupendous fact itself we could never have anticipated or looked for. It was truly God's gratuitous mercy. It needed His gratuitous light to inform us of our destiny and redemption. There is nothing more familiar to us now : we learn it from the Gospel.

It is no wonder that philosophy, having failed to ascertain man's final end, fell into the absurd

and debasing error of teaching that he was made for some human destiny. Unable to comprehend his true mission, it clutched at what was sensible and attainable. Knowing nothing of the soul, or its immortality, or its supernatural destiny, philosophers restricted their consideration to providing a purpose for the body and gratification for its proclivities. The Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches more than the loftiest human wisdom of antiquity, which knew not Revelation, or even than the modern philosophy which rejects it.

The unmentionable crimes referred to by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, pervaded and corrupted all society, particularly the philosophers, whose example the less enlightened naturally followed : they were the blind leaders of the blind. The sage of antiquity, Plato would make the procreation of the race an affair of state, and marriage a mere promiscuous intercourse to be renewed with an annual assortment of the sexes. The dark crime of anticipated murder, destroying human life by closing its possibility, or by actual killing when once conceived or born, to prevent over population, or to remove the mentally or physically deficient,—an accursed, crying slaughter of the innocents, which although not unknown to-day in some places, is yet condemned and deplored by the law of society and the conscience of humanity, had the sanction of law and authority upon it. There was no sense of justice, much less of charity or humanity or pity. How could these obligations hold between those who

were not the worshippers of a common God? still less among those who acknowledged no God, or who polluted their worship by orgies which bring shame to the cheek even when read after two thousand years?

The barbarity of ancient civilization, and the utter destitution of the ennobling influences which come alone from Divine revelation, are shown in its treatment of the young, of womankind, of the sick, and of old age. Children who had come into the world in spite of murder, anticipated or actual, were exposed in the squares, and even left to the dogs, whenever their care seemed burdensome to the parent or the state, or whenever the cruelty or hard-heartedness of parents suggested it. Nor is this strange at a time when, even in the enlightened Roman Empire, the father claimed the right of life and death over his children. Woman was regarded the slave of men, to be divorced according to his humor or passion. Even women revelled in the cruelty inflicted upon their servants and slaves; it was to them an inhuman gratification. Sympathy or benevolence for the poor and sick was unknown. It was accounted as a weakness to entertain sentiments of compassion, or to extend a helping hand to those suffering the ills inseparable from our human condition. No hospital or institution of charity existed. Even the word charity was unknown; it had to be coined, when the virtue it explained came into the world. Old age, than which nothing is more venerable or more entitled to consideration, was utterly contemned. The old were

cast out of the community, to some desert or barren island to starve and die.

Such ignorance of God and His nature, such prostitution of worship, such corruption of morals, show the insufficiency of reason, and the consequent need of Revelation. No human power or wisdom or resource could have liberated man from that degradation, and supplied him with the knowledge and light and grace of which he stood in such deplorable need. Such a condition was the inevitable result of the working of reason in the dark, upon objects beyond its sphere. Unaided and untaught by Divine light, reason had debased itself even below its native level. It could never have risen, nor recovered itself from its own fatal consequences; the headlong stream never reascends. Its restoration required a base of support beyond itself: a Divine revelation of light and grace. The fulcrum that would move the world, must be outside of it: the power that would extricate man from his errors, and redeem him, must come from God.

Superstition has sought to bridge the impassable profound which separates man, destitute of Revelation, from his Creator; and to unite them by worship and morals, worthy and acceptable. Egypt and Persia with their occult wisdom and mysterious religious rites, Indian theosophy, Buddhism, Brahminism, Islamism, have essayed this alliance, which the heart of man has always craved and yearned for. How little success has attended their efforts, all history attests.

Reason, too, presumptuous from its ability to

direct him in the natural order, with its pale light dared to attempt to teach man, the true worship of God. But, as we have seen, it succeeded only in involving him in worse error and unutterable crimes. It was never sure of its own teachings, or rather, it always clung with a blind pertinacity to what it held, until some new theory or system was excogitated. It was a perpetual contradiction. To-day it taught one error; to-morrow it rejected it and taught another: always deluded by a specious form of truth.

The teachings of the ancient philosophers were frequently vicious; many of them exalted vice into a virtue. When their professions were irreprehensible and even praiseworthy, they were themselves disgraced by unmentionable sins. Crimes abhorrent to human instinct and violently opposed to nature's ordinances, were the cherished vices of those who pretended to lead men to virtue and to the true worship of God. They were, verily, the blind leading the blind. So far as philosophy could enlighten them, men would forever have remained sunk in darkness and degradation.

Philosophy is unable to lead men to God and to discover His true worship. In it there is nothing stable, nothing permanent, nothing to withstand the inroads of skepticism, the shifting vagaries of opinion, and the assaults of unbelief. It has unsettled the deepest convictions, and destroyed belief in the truths, the most consoling to the human heart. But it has supplied nothing in their stead: iconoclast-like it has pulled down but not built up. It has engendered doubt, uncer

tainty, absurdity, unrest. It could not teach the truth which it could not know. Self-confident ignorance, blatant pedantry, wide-spread unbelief, disdainful indifference, are its legitimate offspring. It is as powerless as a lisping infant to ascertain or to utter supernatural truths. It has done nothing to solve the mysteries of man and of the world, and to satisfy the deep questionings of the human heart. The highest reason is at its best and shows its fullest scope, when it leads men to the Revelation vouchsafed by Almighty God.

The light of mere reason cannot support a man in the pursuit of virtue for any long time; nor compensate him for the hardships and obstacles that lie in its path. No one will continue virtuous during life because of the attractiveness, and still less because of the duty of virtue. Motives drawn from reason may sustain the theory of virtue, but will never avail to sustain its practice. It must have some other sanction. Supernatural motives revealed by God, and divine grace are necessary to bring one safely through the temptations that lay siege continually to the soul. Nothing short of the retributions of the next life suffice.

Even these are not too powerful to restrain from sin, and to stimulate to virtue; even despite these men drawn by passion, can transgress and virtue can be lost, as all experience shows. Yet reflected upon and kept before the mind, with the aid of divine grace, they serve their purpose. If, in spite of them, iniquity abounds, and godliness is rare, what would be the state of the world

without them? there would be no bounds to evil, and goodness could not exist. If men felt that there was no future life and that all ends here below, no future reward, no future punishment, there would be no cause for that self-denial, and that justice and generosity to others, which is the necessary source of all virtue. Self-interest and gratification, injustice and hatred of others, cruelty and tyranny, the fruitful sources of all vice and wrong-doing, would dominate society and turn it into a foretaste of hell. If all things terminate with this life, men would say, and say truly, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. If there were no future life, the just would be of all men, the most miserable: for in pursuit of the future life, they would lose the present: the wicked would at least gain the present, and would escape future misery.

Yet, the light of reason could never have discovered the existence of future rewards and punishment; except, perhaps, it might surmise them in the vaguest and most indefinite manner. But vagueness or indefiniteness or doubt is fatal to sanction as a controlling motive: passion and headlong propensity to sin soon contemns the uncertainty, or persuades the sinner that sure and actual pleasure is not to be sacrificed to doubtful, and, if it exist at all, far removed retribution.

The amiable aspects and natural attractiveness of virtue, are soon lost, when a man assailed by temptation, begins to doubt whether after all there be such a thing as virtue; or persuades himself that he is not bound to that which most men ig-

nore ; or when he is tempted to think that, perhaps, he may be making an unnecessary and profitless sacrifice, in losing the only life he knows, for sake of one of which he has only heard, and which may not exist ; or, if it exist, and be not one of happiness, at least, it may not be of unending misery.

That virtue is to be eternally rewarded, and vice eternally punished, is alone potent to hold a being of passion and evil inclinations, to the dictates of duty, and to abhorrence of sin. Let concupiscence burn within him, and temptation from without assail him : no charm or fascination of virtue, however elaborated, no demand of duty, however exhaustively demonstrated, will bring him unscathed through the fiery ordeal.

There is nothing with which we are to-day more familiar than the possible and actual forgiveness of sin. But, how was it before Revelation was vouchsafed ? By the light of reason we could have never learned that sin is capable of forgiveness : the very idea of getting rid of it could never have occurred to the mind. There is nothing in its nature that intimates any prospect of pardon. On the contrary, so far as its nature speaks, it must be unpardonable : once committed, it is an irrevocable fact, and the sinner is forever a debtor to Divine justice ; God Himself cannot undo it, although He may forgive it. From any analogy we could make between God and man, we would be inclined to believe that God did not forgive sin ; for man never forgives, on his fellow-man craving pardon, but only after

the offence has been expiated in some way ; and then forgives merely as an indulgence and condescension, and not from any sense of obligation.

God could have made man without raising him to the supernatural order ; He could, therefore, have allowed him to remain in the state into which he fell by sin, that is, as he is now born. Of restoration and forgiveness man could not, by unaided reason, even know ; much less, return to his supernatural rank. We could never have even surmised the destruction of sin, which is now in our hands, through and by the power of Divine grace. It has come only from the light that Christ has brought into the world. In process of time this light has blended with that of reason, so that it seems difficult, at first, to tell where the one ceases and the other begins. Hence we sometimes confound that which is divinely revealed, with that which reason teaches, and treat it as if it were human knowledge.

Even if reconciliation with God were possible, and if reason were capable of discovering it, the lapsed would need sorrow, amendment, grace ; and these are not the product of reason ; they are the fruit of grace purchased by the sufferings and death of Christ. If it is as much as reason can do, to believe in the Divine Atonement, it could never have anticipated it : if the fact seems difficult to believe, reason could never have conjectured its possibility.

In every man there is a conscience telling him what to do, and what to shun. He finds the voice of this conscience, in its condemnation, when

he has done wrong ; this is the premonition of punishment to follow : in its approval, when he has done well ; this is the promise of reward. God Himself must be the author of this conscience. Now then, how is he to clear himself of the guilt with which this internal monitor, which is nothing else than God speaking in his soul, accuses him ?

Every man feels the need of reconciliation with God after sin ; at least, the need of peace of conscience. The guilt contracted is always before him ; the prospect of future retribution ever haunts him ; the loss of the quiet of his soul pre-sages the irretrievable loss of its future bliss ; if, at times, he cherishes the hope of its immortality. But the idea or hope of pardon cannot come from the mere light of reason. The Jews had their sacrifices for sin, accompanied with assurance of forgiveness : but this was from the light of revelation. Pagans imitated these rights and worship, but only externally : there were wanting the interior dispositions of which they were but the legitimate expression. Hence they degenerated into mere formalities, absurd superstitions, and even rank irreligion.

Without some infallible authority, it is difficult to understand how the faith can be exercised in Revealed truth, which God has been pleased to exact as a condition of salvation ; and how, consequently, He could accomplish His divine purpose of making known the truth to all men. That God requires such faith in the revelation which He has disclosed, is something which no Chris-

tian will call in question. The error of many is, that this faith alone is sufficient for salvation. As faith is a Divine virtue which rests entirely upon authority, we cannot see how it can subsist without an unerring teacher: for we must know the true signification of that which we are called upon to believe, and its identity with that which was originally revealed.

How can the sense of Divine revelation be unerringly known, if there be no authority capable of determining it? it is not so perspicuous as to be obvious to all; nor are the languages in which it was made, intelligible to all. No human expression of Divine truth, can be exempt from misunderstanding or misinterpretation. The continual existence of heresy clearly evinces, that Divine revelation was never meant to be interpreted by the private judgment of men. The weakness of the human mind, and its inherent tendency to incredulity, the perversity of the human will, which chafes under what will be its restraint, the inability or ignorance which render most men incapable of rightly understanding God's revelation, and the imperfection and inadequacy of human speech, which even in human matters has to be supplemented by the voice of a living teacher, to express the loftiness of the Christian mysteries without doubt or ambiguity,—declare the absolute necessity of some infallible tribunal. The truths of Divine revelation so far exceed human capacity, and so bewilder the mind, that without such an authority, we must always be uncertain as to their just meaning. The mind,

indisposed to believe what it cannot comprehend, but too eagerly seizes upon whatever seems difficult or ambiguous to justify its proneness to unbelief. If this is true of all men in general, what is the state of those who are utterly ignorant of the languages in which Divine revelation has been made, and who have neither the ability, nor the leisure to acquire them? If familiarity with these languages does not secure true knowledge or interpretation of Divine truth, what is to be said of those who have never even heard of these languages?

Besides, to elicit faith in Revealed truth, we need to be certain of the identity of that proposed to our belief, with that which was originally revealed. The original Revelation might have perished in process of time, or been defaced or corrupted by heresy or knowledge merely human, without some infallible authority which can bear witness that what it teaches, is the very truth which was received from heaven, and which it was authorized to teach in God's name. It is obvious that, otherwise, we can have no guarantee of the purity and integrity of that which we believe. The ark preserved for the human race its traditions during the long night of the Deluge: no less necessary has been some infallible custodian and tribunal, to preserve and declare the deposit of Revelation, amidst the darkness and vicissitudes of the moral world, no less disastrous than those of the Flood.

Such an infallible authority is an integral part of the dispensation, by which it has pleased God

to redeem and teach the world. It is a corollary from the fact of a revelation; it is but consonant with the harmony and completeness that distinguish all the works of God. As in the physical order everything accomplishes the purpose assigned to it by its Divine Author, so it must be in the moral order. Without such an authority Revelation would be incomplete, and a violation of the harmony of the rest of His works. It would be absolutely ineffectual for the end for which it was vouchsafed. Of little profit would it be to man, that God should manifest Divine truths, if he were left destitute of understanding with certainty their real signification; and if they were left exposed to the risk of loss or corruption, which is the portion of all human things. The all-gracious and loving design of God in vouchsafing Revelation, would not have been accomplished, by delivering to mankind a book whose meaning and inspiration he might well doubt, and of whose authenticity he could have no real assurance.



THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF DIVINE FAITH.

“ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by this the ancients obtained a testimony. By faith we understand that the world was formed by the word of God, so that from invisible things visible things were made. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained testimony that he was just, God giving testimony on his gifts, and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh. By faith Henoah was translated, that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had translated him : for before the translation he had testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who cometh to God, must believe that He exists, and is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”—St. Paul to the Hebrews, xi. 1-6.

“ And what more shall I say ? For time will fail me to tell of Gedeon, Barace, Samson, Jephthe, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, grew strong from infirmity, were mighty in battle, put to flight the armies of foreigners, women received their dead restored to life ; but some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection : and others had trial of mockings and stripes, moreover also chains and prisons : they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword ; wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, needy, straitened, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy : they wandered in deserts, on mountains, and dens, and in caverns of the earth. And all these commended for their faith, received not the promise : God providing something better for us, that without us they should not be made perfect.”—Idem, 32-40.

“FAITH is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe all that God teaches, because He can neither deceive nor be deceived.”

Faith is a Divine virtue. It is the gift of God, the fruit of His grace. We cannot have it of ourselves; the most gifted and educated no less than the least endowed and illiterate, can not obtain the virtue of faith by any merely human effort or research. Such labors may remove obstacles and foster dispositions for faith, but the soul must forever remain barren of this virtue unless God in His bounty confer it. “Paul may preach and Apollo may water, but God alone gives the increase.” “For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: for it is the gift of God.”—Ephes. ii. 8. As reason and consciousness belong to the natural order, so faith belongs to the supernatural. Our natural faculties have their limit in the natural order. They cannot outreach themselves and attain an end for which they were never destined. No human power can acquire Divine faith. It is something superadded to our soul and to its capabilities. “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but My Father Who is in heaven.” “No one cometh to the Son save the Father draw him.” Grace is the source of faith and its unfailing support. It is as necessary to faith, as the understanding is to reasoning, or consciousness to reflection. Faith is as much the operation and result of grace as any act is the operation and result of its respective faculty. Manifestly, without grace we cannot have faith.

Grace, too, is God's gift and His most precious

one. It is not a mere sentiment, or illumination, or inclination, or assistance ; grace is all this, but a great deal more. It is something real ; it has a being ; it is a creature, as truly such as the soul itself or any faculty or power of man ;—as truly a creation as anything God has made. It is not a substance, because it was never meant to subsist by itself. It was meant to dwell in man, as a faculty superadded to his nature, and to animate the soul,—to constitute and sustain its divine life. We receive the faculty of faith when in Baptism, for the first time, we receive the grace of God ; the germ of the Divine virtue is then planted in the soul. We sometimes marvel that men do not believe ; we find it so easy to have faith in religious truth. But have they received the gift or grace of faith ? As a man without eyes cannot see, or without ears cannot hear, or without arms cannot strike, as no act can be performed without its proper faculty ; so he cannot exercise faith in revealed truth without God's grace.

Faith, then, is by no means to be confounded with any mere rational conviction, or any process of human reasoning, or any mere human virtue of whatsoever kind. It is purely and gratuitously the gift of God,—the fruit of His divine grace poured into the soul either at Baptism, or at some time in our life. All-important is it for everyone to realize that faith is a divine treasure.

Faith is the act of the will as well as of the intellect. We are free to believe or not believe, as we are free to love God or not, or hope in Him or not. There is no constraint upon either

will or intellect. Grace moves the will gently and in a manner conformable to its nature, always respecting its freedom. The will urges the intellect to accept the truth proposed which it cannot comprehend, because of the authority of God revealing it. The intellect finds compensation for the sway which the will exerts over it, by the knowledge that what it believes must be true as God is true. It does not apprehend anything unreasonable in what it believes; it rather feels its own insufficiency to comprehend it. The will cannot incline the mind to believe, unless the will itself be supported and urged thereto by divine grace. Unless there be this inclination or propensity of the will persuading the intellect to accept Divine truth, there is not the grace that is necessary for Divine faith. The influence of grace over the will is rendered nugatory when the will is blinded or perverted or made obstinate by its adhesion to some passion. Such unfaithfulness of the will, is sin against grace. When freed from such trammels it opens to grace. How hard to find an upright will. Hence few believe.

Faith is a Divine gift by which we believe, not by which we understand. It does not explore the truth or fathom the mystery which it teaches. The intellect is not let into the intrinsic nature of the objects of faith. It is, indeed, as St. Paul says, the argument or divine proof of things that appear not, whose evidence is not knowable by reason. It is the realizing and bringing home to the soul, of the eternal objects for which we hope; it is the manifest testimony and unfailing guarantee

of truths which we do not see with our eyes, but which we know through hearing and believing the word which proceeds from the mouth of God. Through faith truths which are invisible become as if visible,—unseen by the corporal eye, plainly seen by the soul illumined with its divine light. While it teaches us the truths of the future life, it so shapes our lives and actions as to animate us with the hope of one day seeing and knowing what we now believe.

Faith is not mere knowledge. To believe and to know are different operations of the mind, and differ in their underlying principle or motive. Knowledge is the fruit of the mind's power of understanding or comprehension: understanding and knowledge are co-ordinate. Faith depends upon the mind's accepting what is revealed, not because of its intrinsic evidence, nor because we understand it, but because it must be true upon the authority of God, Who declares it: faith and understanding are not co-ordinate. There are truths that are at once the object of faith and of reason, each acting according to its nature: reason teaching the invisible things of God, from the visible: faith giving a divine light by which, transcending the visible, we are brought directly and immediately into the presence of the invisible.

Faith is not opinion; for it is infinitely removed from all doubt, resting as it does upon the word of God. Faith is not natural conviction; for it is not the result of any process of ratiocination. Nor is it an apparently irresistible conclusion deduced from certain premises; for it is immeasurably su-

perior to any logical analysis, and is not the product of any investigation. Nor is it a mere subjective persuasion destitute of the assured foundation of objective reality.

We now see darkly ; then face to face : faith will turn into reality. Our belief rests upon the authority of God Almighty. We know that He has spoken, and we believe what He has vouchsafed to disclose. Our human capacity cannot comprehend the truths revealed ; the creature cannot compass the Creator ; the finite cannot exhaust the Infinite. But man, incapable of exploring or fathoming the Infinite Creator and the mysteries that surround His throne, can, at least, prostrate his understanding before Him and accept by faith what otherwise he cannot accept at all.

The adhesion of the mind that we give to anything which we believe, is the most firm and unflinching of all assents. In all things else there is room for doubt or mistake ; even the profoundest investigations are subject to mistake ; the most rigid conclusions of science are liable to err ; mathematics, the most exact of the sciences and which are thought to be incapable of error, can be made to lie and do lie, according to the disposition of him who employs them. While necessarily absolutely correct in themselves, yet when exercised by the human mind, owing to its bias, or blindness, or want of capacity, or some other cause ; even this, the most exact and rigid of sciences, becomes by no means infallible. But the assent which we give to anything we believe, inclined thereto by Divine faith, admits of no possi-

ble error. Not because of any light that is vouchsafed us by which to comprehend the intrinsic nature of revealed truth or mysteries, do we believe; but because our faith rests upon the word of God,—“the same yesterday, to-day, and forever,”—upon God in Whose intellect is the essence of all possible things and Whose power has brought all that is actual into being,—Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Nothing is more natural than that there should be difficulties involved in the truths which Almighty God has revealed. We are finite; limit is essential to us. God is infinite; to be without limit is the exigence of His nature. The revelation of the truth of God, is the revelation of God Himself to our finite intelligence. As what is finite cannot comprehend what is infinite, it is manifest that what reason rises against, is the truth which it cannot understand; and as there is infinite distance between our intelligence and the intelligence of Almighty God, there must be infinite truths, and of an infinite nature, which we cannot begin to understand, much less to fathom or fully comprehend.

No matter, therefore, what the difficulties may be, though countless and overwhelming, that seem involved in any revealed truth,—no matter how apparently inexplicable to human intelligence, they must give way before the truth and authority of God Almighty. When the Lord and Maker of all things,—when Essential Truth speaks, we must, as rational creatures, believe it and prostrate our understanding before His authority. It is

not only reasonable, but an act of the highest reason, to accept with unfaltering adhesion, the truth for which the Divine word becomes the eternal pledge ; whatever our puny reason may suggest, or how little able we may be even to begin to understand how it can be true. This is the assent required by Divine faith.

Faith requires that we believe all that God has revealed. It is not sufficient to believe a part : as His authority is staked for the truth of everything that He has taught, it is for us to believe all. The whole is not of less consequence than any part : the part enjoys the same credibility as the whole. They rest upon one and the same basis. He who accepts one revealed truth and rejects another, shows by the very act that he has no faith at all, and is a stranger to its very conception. For why believe one truth and not another? He believes it to be true because he seems to understand it, or because he finds no seeming contradiction or difficulty in accepting it. This is not faith at all ; this at best is knowledge. We must believe all or none ; and unless we believe all, we believe none. As he who commits one sin, is said to become guilty of all, because he dissolves the principle of the love of God ; so faith is destroyed by rejecting a single truth divinely revealed, because His authority is disowned, and the principle of belief in Him is subverted.

The authority of God is the formal object of our faith ; the material object is that which we are to believe, or the subject-matter of Revelation. That which we to-day, taught by the Church, be-

lieve, is that which she received from the apostles, who in turn received it from Jesus Christ, Who received it from the Eternal Father. The apostles were sent by Christ even as He had been sent by the Father. The Church is the corporate body which they formed ; in which they still subsist, and He was to dwell all days till the consummation ; which received the promise of the continual presence and never-failing assistance of the Holy Ghost. The original deposit of truth, although developed under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, according to laws observable even in nature, and according to the needs of the Church, is still the same essentially. The changes have not been in the truth itself, but in our apprehension of it. As the magnifying-glass does not affect the size or nature of the object to which it is applied ; so Divine revelation continues the same notwithstanding any changes, which only serve to our clearer and more accurate knowledge of it.

St. Paul admonishes us that our faith be rational. This implies that reason has its place in our faith. He cannot mean that it belongs to reason to scrutinize the intrinsic nature or evidence of Revelation ; since faith is, according to himself, "the argument of things that appear not." Our faith will be most rational, when reason is employed to determine the fact of a revelation, and in whose keeping it is to be found. These preludes of faith once ascertained, it will be an act of the highest reason to submit the homage of our understanding, and to accept, with an immediate and unhesitating assent, whatever God reveals through its

duly accredited custodians and teachers; thus reason gives place to faith, for it has performed its full duty in leading us thereto. Once the paramount fact of a revelation and its home are determined, we are brought into communion with God. Led, in a manner, face to face with Him, every instinct of our being revolts at the thought of asking Him, how that can be true which He is pleased to disclose; overwhelmed by His authority, we at once prostrate our minds, and accept all and everything that He teaches.

While the fact of revelation is a matter which we know rather than believe, yet guided by reason to its knowledge, faith in what is revealed consumes any lingering misgiving as to the fact, —the grace of faith removes the obscurity of reason and intensifies its light, pale and glimmering. Just as our knowledge of God, which is properly a subject for reason, is increased by the light that comes from faith; so our knowledge of the fact of revelation is strengthened by revelation itself. Our faith is, indeed, most reasonable, when we submit to the Church, which St. Paul designates the pillar and ground of truth; by which he means that she is the foundation upon which is built and in whose keeping has been placed Divine revelation. The truth of God being God Himself, does not need any pillar or ground on the part of the creature to sustain it; but as it is made known to men, it needs an unmistakable home and an infallible interpreter. All-necessary is it, therefore, for anyone before he enters the Church, to use his reason to determine, with manifest and unshaken

certainty, that God has made a revelation and its whereabouts. Once he is sure of that, it is, with Divine grace, an easy task to believe that what Almighty God has revealed and declared to be true, must be true, and is true, whether we comprehend it or not.

Divine faith requires that we believe everything that God teaches, in whatever way we may learn it, so long as it is clearly brought home to our minds; that it is God who speaks, so long as we hear, or believe we hear, God giving testimony. To Him, the First Truth, we owe the homage of our rational nature. Whatever bears the seal of His divine authority and credentials, we are to embrace. Whenever we are persuaded that it is God's word, wherever we find it, in Scripture, or Tradition, or elsewhere, whatever it may be, or whenever, or by whomsoever uttered, it demands the submission of the mind and the acceptance of the heart. Yet, in discoursing of what we are to believe, we speak particularly of that which is presented to us through the magisterium of the Church. Without her authority, we can easily fall into error and believe something to be revealed which is not: we may be so deluded by the counterfeit as not to discern the true from the false. The Church, which is the continuation of the Apostolic body, God's oracle on earth, illumined by the Holy Ghost to teach Divine revelation, is the proximate rule of our faith. It has received the commission to teach: we the correlative duty of being taught by her. When we treat of Divine faith and what it requires us to

believe, we are to be understood to speak of what this Church proposes to our belief. Without her authority, we can neither be certain of the fact of revelation, nor of its right understanding, nor of its present integrity, after so many ages of contact with the error and corruption of the world.

We have already remarked that the formal motive of our faith is the authority of God Almighty;—no incomprehensibility of the doctrine, no seeming contradiction that the human mind may find, no apparently unanswerable difficulties can countervail His unerring word. God cannot deceive us; it would be against His moral attributes; it would be to affirm that He does not exist. Far easier to believe that there is no God, than to believe that He could lie, and make a mockery of the noblest work of His hands and pour contempt upon man's rational nature. Here surrounded with darkness, not knowing his origin or destiny, with only what faint glimmerings of light reason affords, there is every presumption that the Creator will come to his aid: to rescue him from his misery, and to teach him what may be necessary to reach his destiny. Revelation, then, if granted, will not deepen his darkness to lead him farther astray, and to involve him still more in the labyrinth of doubt and error. It will give him light, point out to him his final end, extricate him from error; in a word, it will be the means to bring him to God.

God's omniscience and power in which and by which were conceived and created all things,—Whose intellect contemplating the Divine essence

beholds all truth and all possibilities, forbid the thought that He could be deceived. That He could be deceived, would be that there is no God. A God not All-knowing is an absurdity. We believe on the word of an Omniscient, All-truthful God: this is the life-giving motive of our faith. The child who knows his catechism, can give as good reason for his faith as the theologian: its knowledge makes them both equal: it reduces the one to the capacity of the child; or, if you will, it exalts the child to the capacity of the theologian.

Now, what is the necessity for Divine faith? Why has God declared that man must be saved by faith? "Being justified therefore by faith," says the Apostle, "let us have peace with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ." Why cannot we be saved without it? Because we need faith to know God: God was not known by men before Divine revelation was made. It is true that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, declares that what may be known of God from His works, is manifest to men; being made known by reason and grace. "For His invisible things, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by those things that are made: His eternal power also and Divinity: so that they are inexcusable." But it is also true, that in the very same place, the Apostle declares that "when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks; but they became foolish in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened; for saying, that they were wise, they became fools." While philosophy could have known

God, absolutely speaking, yet it did not enable the ancient philosophers to form such an adequate idea of Him and His perfections as hindered them from abandoning Him, and giving to the creature the glory that belonged to Him alone. If they, the flower and light of human intelligence, could only form so imperfect a conception of their First Beginning, still less could they learn of Him as their Final End, and of the other truths inseparably connected with His nature and their own happiness. And if they, with all their knowledge, fell into that corruption of heart and perversion of will and blindness of mind; if, in a word, they were given over to such a reprobate sense, what is to be said of the rest of mankind, gifted with less intelligence, and not exempt from the same passions? If what may be called the perfection of human genius was capable of such moral baseness and of such darkness of soul, what must have been the condition of those who had no claim to high endowments, and who therefore, naturally speaking, were even more prone to moral degradation?

Certainly, if there was any truth which could have been easily and naturally known, it was the existence of a First Cause, which all things proclaim. Yet we know that mankind in general had no knowledge of Almighty God; and the most gifted among them, as we have said, had but a knowledge the most meagre and feeble. While as to any knowledge of the immortality of the soul, its simplicity and spirituality, and destiny in the life to come, there was scarcely a glimmering,

except among those in whom the light of primeval revelation was not entirely quenched. How, then, was mankind ever to approach unto God? how could they draw near to Him Whom they knew not? How love Him of Whom they were in the densest ignorance? St. Paul tells us that it behooves everyone approaching unto God, to know that He is, and the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked. So almost universally had the knowledge of the true God been obscured and the reign of Polytheism established, that St. Augustine tells us that no fewer than thirty thousand gods were adored throughout the Pagan world. Not only was it true what St. Paul declared, that the worship due to God alone was given to the creature and inanimate beings; but even the vilest human passions were worshipped and to them were dedicated temples in which they were ministered unto by the most unmentionable gratifications. Philosophy was as impotent then, as it has since showed itself to be, outside of the light of Christianity, to solve the mysteries of religion, or the questionings of the human heart, or to give mankind any knowledge of that state which, by the original transgression, they had forever lost.

Nor is it to be wondered at, that human reason should thus so fearfully exhibit its inability to teach mankind those truths which are so manifestly beyond the range and level of human intelligence. For reason unaided, cannot solve even the mysteries of the natural order,—mysteries within us, around us, and above us. Even the

most ordinary objects in the world and in our own being, present mysteries which we cannot begin to understand. The deepest philosophy is unable to solve the mysteries of our own human condition : the origin of life, the origin of the soul, the origin of ideas, how the substance of the soul, all-spiritual in its nature, can come in contact with and be influenced by the material substance of the body. We cannot understand the secrets of our physical organism : the secrets of the brain, of the nervous system, of the heart, of the blood which sustains our life, how our daily food is transmuted into our body, how this material substance, in due course, comes to be the nourishment of the brain, the instrument of the mind ; and how, it may be, the vilest matter yet becomes through nature's processes, the mind's strength and sustainment in the most spiritual, nay, even angelic operations of willing and reasoning.

We must forever remain almost complete strangers to the wonders of the heavens. Or, if science succeeds in unfolding to our senses some of their phenomena, it is only that reason may encounter newer and greater difficulties. Science at best can declare the fact, the cause it cannot reach. It may discover some of the laws which an All-wise Intelligence has established ; but the cause of these laws it cannot presume to fathom. Science may talk learnedly of the centrifugal and centripetal forces that hold the world together, of the great law of gravitation and of the marvellous laws that regulate planetary motion ; but of the virtue which these laws employ in their opera-

tions, and of their origin and wisdom and power, it must forever remain ignorant.

Even the earth which we walk upon contains abysses that human wisdom will never fathom. The microscope discloses secrets as great as any the heavens proclaim. Littleness is as infinite in the mysteries that it reveals and as fruitful of marvels as the greatest objects we know of: an atom is as boundless in its worlds of intelligence as the most stupendous planet that God has made. Who will tell us how the seed germinates into the stripling, and the stripling into the mighty oak, unshaken by the fiercest storm? or the leaf into the blossom, and the blossom into the flower, filling the atmosphere and our senses with delightful fragrance? Who will explain to us the rotation of the seasons? These and ten thousand other mysteries all around us, show how limited our faculties are; and how little capable we are of delving into the nature of things; and how, perforce, we are compelled to be content with simple appearances and what strikes the senses. If, then, we cannot comprehend the world and ourselves with which we are familiar, how can we comprehend truths of the supernatural order, which is so far removed from us, and to which we can, only by the greatest effort, give sustained thought. If we cannot understand the secrets of nature, much less can we rise to the secrets of God. If a teacher is necessary in the natural order, how much more necessary is Divine faith, to lead to, and preserve in us, a knowledge of supernatural truths.

Even those truths of religion which reason by itself, absolutely speaking, can attain, must be brought home to the great mass of mankind by the method of Divine faith. Faith is the simple, short, and only effectual means by which these truths can be taught to all without exception,—the ignorant and intelligent, the educated and uneducated, alike. By Divine faith alone can these truths be taught in such wise as to overcome the incredulity of the human mind and the misgivings which human passion, impatient of restraint, is sure to create. Many are the difficulties which would render impossible the acceptation of the most primary religious truths, if destitute of the sustaining principle of faith, which alone can secure for them the homage of the human mind and its obedience. The majority of mankind have not the ability which is requisite in the pursuit of truths so abstract in their nature and so foreign to the sphere of sense, in which their thoughts, for the most part, move. They have to depend chiefly upon the guidance of others, even in the most ordinary affairs of life. And, usually, they show their wisdom in following the light of others rather than their own. Even those among them who are by no means to be numbered among the least intelligent, have not the training and knowledge which are necessary to guide them on ordinary matters, much less to equip them for the task of solving problems which have overmastered minds, the most gifted and prepared. The time and opportunity which such investigations would necessarily require, are wanting. Human life,

even the longest, would be short for a work to which in all human experience, the mind, deprived of revelation, has shown itself unequal. Besides, the greater part of the life of man is necessarily given up to securing means of sustenance, to ameliorating his condition, to providing for those whom nature has entrusted to his custody ; hence little time and as little inclination remain after this necessary provision and conservation. We are so constituted that, not even for the future life, will we neglect that which we now enjoy ; whose demands in consequence exercise peremptory claims upon us. Most men can, but with the greatest difficulty, so far overcome the trammels of sense, as to rise to the lofty contemplation of religious truth. The mind indeed would be willing, but the body oppresses and drags it down. The objects of sense incapacitate it for abstract reflection or discourse. Even the most spiritual ideas, to be apprehended by the mind, or to find lodgement in the heart, must be presented under a concrete form or in the image of sensible objects. Besides, with what feeble adhesion will the mind cling to the conclusion to which it has come, when it learns that there is so great diversity of opinion among men upon the same truth ; that what seems to it to be true, has been regarded by others as mere conjecture, or as beset with perplexity and doubt. How can one feel the confidence in his reasoning, and the tenacity in his assent, to insure their just and permanent influence upon his life and character. He will soon waver in his belief of that which to him at one time seemed so sure ; he

will soon come to see that he cannot be so unmistakably certain, where others have had so many misgivings.

In all this, we see the wisdom of the dispensation of faith for teaching men the truths of religion. And in this necessity we behold the reason why Almighty God has determined upon it as the means for the enlightenment and redemption of mankind. He knew the nature of Divine truth, and the kind of reception which it should receive in the heart of man, to insure its proper fruit. He knew that, if it were proposed to the human mind, destitute of a principle of authority exacting its unflinching assent, it would share the fate and have as little abiding influence as any teaching of human philosophy, or any discovery of science: indeed, its effect would not be as sure and as far-reaching: for these would always be capable of further verification, while Divine truth, proposed as I have indicated, would be rejected, because, from its nature, it could never be further investigated. He knew the weakness of the human mind and all the other obstacles which stood in the way of mankind rising, unaided, to the knowledge of Divine truth. He, therefore, in His wisdom determined to employ a method adapted to every one, and equally capable of bringing religious truth home to the minds of all men. He foresaw all difficulties: He has provided for their removal. Faith places us all upon a level: the enlightened man finds his enlightenment, darkness to comprehend the objects of faith: the ignorant man, by his faith, rises to an enlightenment, to which the

enlightened, without faith, is a total stranger. Possessed of faith, the least gifted of God's rational creatures is at no disadvantage compared with him who may be a very prince in intellectual endowment. Before the world, he may be contemned and human genius may be honored; but, before God, the ignorant believer has a wisdom which will endure when the fashions of this world shall be forgotten and when heaven and earth shall pass away. Human knowledge will with time prove to have been of very limited measure. While the knowledge that comes from faith will show itself to have been the only true wisdom which was in this world; and the necessary preparation for the knowledge and light with which the soul shall be filled when united to God.

If, then, God has made a revelation, it is plainly man's duty to accept it; if God has chosen the dispensation of faith as the means of its acceptance among men, it is clearly their business to embrace it; if this has been God's choice for the enlightenment of the world and for leading mankind to their eternal destiny, it were folly and sin to reject it. We must believe everything that God has disclosed in this manifestation of Himself; and we must do everything which He therein declares necessary to our immortal salvation. The establishment by Him of a definite means for the attainment of any end, precludes all other means. The Protestant in rejecting part of the Divine revelation, is as much in error as the infidel who rejects all. The infidel, however, is even more consistent; for he refuses to believe the fact of revelation;

and, therefore, cannot be expected to believe that which it contains: while the Protestant admitting the fact, and accepting some of the truths of revelation, rejects others; because, forsooth, they do not harmonize with his preconceived notions of what God can reveal. He forgets that once he has believed any mystery which God teaches, there can be no reason why he should not believe all. If the infidel himself looks about him, he will find that he is, also, involved in the same contradiction as the heretic. For, while he may reject the fact of a Divine revelation, he cannot shut his eyes to that revelation, no less Divine, which his own existence, and the existence of all things, necessarily involves; and which perforce he must believe. Let him explain the mystery of the cause and beginning of all things, the mystery of eternity, the mystery of the origin of his soul—to omit many others, if he is not satisfied with the explanation of these truths which Divine revelation vouchsafes. If he cannot believe that God created the world, let him explain how it came to create itself, or if it came at all into existence. As, therefore, God has decreed to save mankind by faith, it is the paramount duty of every man to believe all the truths which He has revealed. Once God has bestowed this supernatural light and knowledge, it is by this light and knowledge we must be saved. Our works must be the result and fruit of this Divine revelation. To what purpose would God have vouchsafed a revelation, if we were free to reject it with impunity? It was granted because in His wisdom He saw its necessity: can men in

their unwisdom declare it useless, or unnecessary, and follow their own ignorance which they call light? The mere fact that God has made a revelation implies the obligation that lies upon us of believing and embracing it in its integrity.

By this Divine revelation we have been made the children of God and co-heirs with Christ; we have been raised to a supernatural order and made partakers of a supernatural life: human nature has been raised beyond itself, and ennobled with gifts to which, of itself, it had no rightful claim. All the virtues which we practise in this supernatural state, must partake of its supernatural character and be the result of the new grace and life into which we have been admitted. Natural virtues, or such as we might have exercised outside of this supernatural order and which could have been deserving of a natural reward, are of no avail for the purpose of this new life. No good works, the result of natural motives, will suffice: no matter how excellent these may be, they cannot attain the reward which is reserved for those which are done in the supernatural life and are the fruit of grace. To a natural reward they doubtless may lay claim; for a supernatural reward they are by their very nature insufficient. Hence it follows that faith is necessary, as the animating principle of all works that, in God's goodness, may have a claim to a supernatural reward. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Think not that you are going to be saved because you believe. Think not that salvation is your reward for believing that which heaven

teaches unless, at the same time, you practise those virtues and pursue that course which heaven declares to be necessary. While faith was meant to inform the mind, yet its primary purpose was to influence the heart. It was not to make us eminent professors that Revelation was vouchsafed; but to render us most excellent practitioners. Faith simply teaches us what we are to believe, that we may know what we are to do; creed is to be reduced to deed. It is certainly lost on those who are content to abide in its knowledge, without actually doing that which it enjoins. Faith without works is dead; it may yet exist as the tree struck by lightning exists; but like it too, it is barren of fruit. Faith is necessary only as far as it leads to action. St. James tells us that we are saved by works; he means works that are the result of faith. St. Paul tells us that we are saved by faith; he means faith that works by charity, and of which, works are the legitimate outcome. In other words, we are saved immediately by works, the growth of faith; mediately by faith which is the principle of works. "If I have faith to move mountains," says St. Paul, "and have not charity it profits me nothing. And if I should give my body to be burned, and have not charity it profits me nothing." Charity perfects faith, and is its very life. By faith we believe in God and know Him: by charity we love Him Whom faith thus discloses. What the soul is to the body of man, constituting its very life; such is charity to faith,—its life-giving and sustaining principle.

The Council of Trent has declared that, "Faith is

the beginning, the foundation, the root of our justification." Each word has a broader signification than the preceding. Foundation is more than beginning, and root is more than foundation. A beginning implies a consummation to which it is to be carried; if foundation implies an edifice to be built thereon, root implies trunk, branches, and flowers, to be produced. Thus, faith is the beginning of our justification to be perfected in charity: faith is the foundation upon which the edifice of Christian perfection is to be built: faith is the root from which are to spring the virtues and graces and ornaments of the supernatural life, which is one day to blossom into the fruition of Almighty God. "Now there remaineth these three, Faith, Hope, and Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity." The faith that saved Abraham was the faith that not only taught him to believe God, but impelled him to that act of sacrificing his son Isaac; the greatest sacrifice that a parent could be called upon to make.

How foolish, then, to think that we are to act as if faith alone—a dead and barren faith—can save the soul. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. Far from saving us, it will only insure our condemnation; for we have sinned against light. You believe that Christ has shed His blood as a ransom for your souls: but faith without works is dead: tell me, do you live that manner of life which evinces that your soul was worth any such price? You believe that life is very short and that death is very sure: but faith without works is dead: do you not live as

if life were without end and as if death were never to come? You believe that eternal woe and eternal bliss are the alternatives to the bad or good use of the few years we pass here below: but faith without works is dead: do you live as if you had the least thought that such dread issues are at stake? In a word, while you believe as an angel, do you not live as if you had no other nature or destiny than the beasts of the earth or the lowest of God's creatures?

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

And now I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me : that they may be one as We also are. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept : and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee : and these things I speak in the world, that they may have the fulness of My joy in themselves. I have given them Thy word, and the world hateth them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. I pray not that Thou wouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself : that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in Me : that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee : that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them : that they may be one as We also are one. I in them, and Thou in Me : that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou also hast loved Me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me : that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou lovedst Me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world knoweth Thee not : but I know Thee : and these know that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known, and will

make known Thy name to them, that the love with which Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.—St. John xvii. 11–26.

THERE is no truth better established in Scripture than that Jesus Christ willed His church to be one. He declares it in the figures under which He represents her, in the form of constitution which He gave her, and in words so explicit that there should be no possible doubt of their meaning. His church is a sheepfold, a family, a kingdom; all of which imply unity of government. Of the apostles one was appointed Head in order that all occasion of discord might be removed. St. Paul compares the Church to a human person, which expresses the notion of many different members bound together in the strongest and most perfect unity. In another place he declares that there is but “one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.” “Jesus died that He might gather together in one the children of God, who were dispersed.” John xi. 52. Before Christ suffered He uttered that solemn prayer: “Holy Father, keep in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me: that they may be one as We also are one. Not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in Me: that they all may be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me.” John xvii. 11, 20, 21. “One body and one spirit . . . until we all meet in the unity of faith . . . doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow in Him, Who is the head, even Christ: from

Whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation of the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity." Eph. iv. It is, then, manifest that Christ willed His church to be one ; and that, too, with no ordinary unity, but to resemble that which exists between Himself and His eternal Father.

When we contemplate the countless sects into which those who profess to be His followers are divided ; when we consider the various and conflicting doctrines which they believe ; when we see rejected by some as non-essential, what others cling to most tenaciously,—what some regard as the most sacred ordinances of the Christian religion, cast aside by others who profess to be no less faithful believers ; when we behold the very vitals of Christianity eaten away, the very Divinity of its founder called in question in consequence of the exercise of private judgment ;—when, in a word, we observe the followers of Christ split up into conflicting sects, pursuing each other with an acrimony abhorrent to Christian spirit, we are almost tempted to believe that the purpose of Christ for the Unity of His church has not been accomplished, that His solemn prayer has not been heard.

As Christ willed and prayed that His church should be one, it is obvious that He must have supplied some means of preserving this unity ; some principle of authority capable of removing discord and securing the unity in which He built

it. He did not declare His church to be a family, and supply no head; a kingdom, and leave the throne vacant; a sheepfold, and name no shepherd. He that wills the end provides the means: Jesus Christ must have supplied the necessary instrument of creating and sustaining the unity of His church. Such provision He has made in the supreme authority which He has imparted to the headship in His church, His own visible representative on earth. In the divinely established primacy of St. Peter, as the Vicar of Christ, do we find an authority potent enough to preserve the most perfect unity. This authority necessarily implies the correlative duty of submission and obedience on the part of those over whom he has been placed.

If unity does not exist among Christians, it is because this duty has been discarded; the authority is not weak or inefficient, but perversity of will has made many become rebels to it. As even the retributions of the next life do not seem to be sufficient to deter many from sin, and to hold them to the practice of virtue, so the supreme authority of the Church cannot restrain those who, in the freedom of their will, rise against it and contemn it. In this, as even in the matter of eternal salvation, no restraint is put upon the freedom of the will. The errors, contradictions, and absurdities which thence result are to be ascribed to themselves. The efficiency of the means provided for the securing of the Church's unity is exhibited in the great body of Christ's followers who are faithful to it. When we be-

hold the Catholic Church rising majestically above the ruins that strew the earth of the countless sects that have spurned her authority, we are forced to believe that in her is to be found that Unity which Christ declared should be the foundation and mark of His church,—that in her is fulfilled His prayer, “Holy Father, preserve those in Thy Name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are one.”

Everything that God has made, He has made in some degree, at least, in His own image and likeness. He has bestowed upon every work of His hands some part of His own divine glory. Everything shadows forth, however feebly, something of the power and wisdom and perfection of its great Creator. There is no perfection in the creature which did not pre-exist, virtually, or in a fuller and higher degree, in God; at once the archetype and maker of all things. In proportion as He has communicated to any work of His hands His own divine glory,—in proportion as it reflects His divine perfection, does it rise in the rank of creation and approaches God Himself.

Thus the human family with its three-fold relation of father, mother, and son, is suggestive, though at an infinite distance, of the Adorable Trinity. The operations of the human mind have been employed to illustrate the mysterious relations that exist between the same Adorable Three. Of all created nature after the angelic, there is nothing that God has made more like Himself, than the human soul. Its spiritual substance, made like unto the nature of God Himself,

raises man above all other creatures and marks him at once as the masterpiece of God's hands, and the noblest reflection of the Divine nature. The Christian catechism reminds us, too, that our souls are like to God, in that as there are three persons in God, so there are three powers in our souls; will, memory and understanding. Thus we might contemplate all the works of God, and we would find them all fashioned upon and reflecting, more or less, His own uncreated excellence.

Unity is God's most essential attribute; we cannot conceive an infinite being unless as one. The two ideas, one and many, in the same sense, involve a contradiction. Infinity must exist in unity if it exists at all. Unity is as necessary to our conception of God as His self-existence. As we cannot conceive God except as existing, so we cannot conceive God save as absolutely one. The unity of the Godhead is the source of His boundless perfection. It is His most essential prerogative and greatest glory.

It is upon this unity that God has modelled all that He has made. He has bestowed it upon all creatures according to the capacity of their nature. To everything He has assigned its end. Everything has received a virtue or impulse which leads it thereto. Though it may be manifold in its nature, yet it is one by reason of the oneness of its end. This unity is the origin of all the perfection that all things possess. Unity in variety is the essence of beauty. Part answers to part and all conspire to a given purpose.

We behold this unity in the angels, who though countless in number, are yet one by reason of the harmony and order and subordination of the seven choirs into which they are divided. We behold the marvellous unity of the whole universe, and its each and every part and law and motion, all conspiring to one harmonious and stupendous whole. We might survey all that God has made, and we should find the same semblance of God's own unity in everything that has proceeded from His hands.

These considerations would lead us to anticipate, if we knew nothing of the fact, that when God condescended to establish His church on earth, He made it one; that unity was its most essential quality and characteristic note. Its oneness should be analogous to its nature, and to the end that He had in view in its creation. As it pleased Him to establish a church on earth, it was to carry on the work which He Himself had begun. It was a prolongation of the great work of the Incarnation and of the mystery of our redemption. His church took His place and is, so to speak, an abidance of His own Divine Person on earth. As He came to teach us the true faith, and to impart to our souls through the sacraments the grace purchased with His blood, the Church must continue to teach the same faith and to impart the same sacraments. As the Church, then, is a certain continuation of Christ among men, or His kingdom upon earth, it must needs be one in its government, one in its communion, one in its faith. In this unity of faith, this unity of com-

munion, and this unity of government does the Unity of the Church consist.

If the Church is the guardian and teacher of Divine faith, it must needs be one, even as God Himself is one; for what is Divine faith but the reflection in man's intelligence of the truth of God,—the truth of God disclosed to man by God Himself. But what is the truth of God, but God's own nature as known and perfectly comprehended by His Divine intellect. As the Divine nature is one, the truth of God is necessarily one. The Church, then, which has received this truth in the faith that she has to teach to all men, must needs be one.

The Church is an organized body, even as our physical bodies to which St. Paul compares her; a comparison expressive of the strongest and most indissoluble unity. "But acting truthfully in love, we may grow in all things in Him, Who is the head, Christ: from Whom the whole body, fitted together and connected by every joint which supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of each member, maketh the increase of the body unto the building of itself in love." Eph. iv. 15, 16.

The Holy Ghost is the soul and life of this body, even as the human soul is the life of the human body. The Holy Ghost was infused into the Church on Pentecost day and became its animating principle; till then it had not been fully organized; as it is the union of soul and body that forms the human person, so it was the union of the Divine Spirit and the human elements pre-

pared for His reception, that formed the Church of God. As it was the same Creator Spirit Who, in the beginning, created the marvellous world which we behold and impressed upon it some shadow of His own Divine perfections ; so in like manner, on Pentecost day, the same Divine Spirit descended upon the apostles and gave birth to the Church, bearing upon it the unity, the holiness, the universality, and all the other features of its Divine Parent. The Holy Ghost having taken up His abode in the Church, was to remain with it all days, even to the end ; what the soul is to the body, is the Holy Ghost to the Church ; even as the human soul is to be united forever to its human body, so the Holy Ghost once united to the Church, will never leave it till it shall have run its earthly course.

It is from this indissoluble union of the Divine Spirit with the Church as its animating principle that proceeds its admirable and indivisible Unity. It is, at the same time, in the same unfailing Divine source that it finds an unfailing support of this same unity. The human person is one because of the oneness of its soul ; the Church is one because its soul, the Holy Ghost, is one. From this constitution of the Church it must be necessarily one ; and that, too, with a unity so absolute, that, outside of God Himself, there can exist none more so. " That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee : that they also may be one in Us." The Epistles of St. Paul are replete with passages in which this essential unity of the Church is most explicitly required. Eph. iv. 3-6. " Careful to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God, and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all." Same, 11-14. "And He gave some indeed apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and others pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; until we all meet in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ; that we may no more be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, in craft according to the contrivance of error." Eph. ii. 19-22. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners; but ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the chief corner stone being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom all the building framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom ye also are built together for a dwelling of God in spirit." I. Cor. i. 10-13. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfect in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been reported to me of you, my brethren, by those of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith: I, indeed, am

of Paul: and I of Apollos: and I of Kephas: and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" I. Cor. x. 17. "For we being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread." Christ declares that His church is a house, a kingdom, a family, a sheepfold; all of which figures imply the essential unity of His kingdom on earth. "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." Those, then, who are to be heard as Christ Himself, and contempt of whom is to be accounted contempt of Christ, must teach the one truth; as otherwise they could not represent Christ, nor be entitled to be heard under pain of His displeasure. "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." "With the heart, it is believed unto justice; with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

There must exist in the Church of Christ oneness of communion. This union will be found in the participation of the same sacraments, and in the same Divine worship. The sacraments are seven; and all are to receive them, each one according to his needs. "He who is baptized shall be saved:" "Confess your sins to one another:" "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you:" "Marriage is a great sacrament; I speak in Christ and in His church:" "Is any man sick among you? Let the priests of the Church anoint him with oil:" the apostles or-

dained those who were to co-operate in their work and they received the Holy Ghost: the necessity of these seven sacraments implies the union of all those who are to receive them; all such recipients are necessarily one by this sacramental bond. I. Cor. x. 16, 17. "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of the Lord? for we being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread." Here the apostle says distinctly that we being many, are made one by the participation of the body of Christ. He argues that as many grains combine to form the bread which is changed into the body of Christ, which is one; so the individuals of the mystical body of Christ being many, are made one, by their reception of this Divine sacrament. This unity of communion is not that mutual, personal love of one another which our Lord would always have to exist among His followers. Such love, indeed, is to be cultivated; but it could never be regarded as an essential quality and characteristic note of His church. If it were such, she would have long since been destroyed; it would be in the power of any one to destroy her essential unity; the incestuous Corinthian would have been fatal to it already in the days of the apostles. Such charity has never existed, and could never exist universally in the Church. The human element has not been supplanted by the divine.

The third essential element of the unity of the Church, is the unity of its government: the union

of the faithful with their bishops, and the union of all with their visible head, the Vicar of Christ. Power given to many can never be supreme; it is necessarily limited. Fulness of power can be given to only one. While many are required for the government of the Church, there must be one supreme ruler; otherwise, there would be as many churches as there are bishops; "one must be head that all occasion of schism be removed." All the bishops of the Church could never coalesce in unity, save in and by means of one supreme head whom all are bound to obey. If there is to be a unity of government, there must be a central authority, at once its origin and support. As long as the Church exists, must this supreme authority last; Christ declares it: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." St. John tells us that, "Christ died that He might bring together in one the children of God who had been dispersed." In the seventeenth chapter of the same evangelist, Christ earnestly commended to His eternal Father those whom He had given Him, that they might be one even as They are one: "Not for these only do I pray, but for those who through their word shall believe in Me, that they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us." A sheepfold cannot subsist without a shepherd; a kingdom without a king; a family without a head. No society could continue long without a supreme authority to which all should be subject, and which would have the right of exacting obedience from all. Ephesians iv. 15, 16. "But acting truthfully in love, we may grow in

all things in Him, Who is the head, Christ: from Whom the whole body, fitted together and connected by every joint which supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of each member maketh the increase of the body to the building of itself in love." As many members coalesce to form one body, so the many members of the Church conspire to make it one. The Church increases by the working of each one of these members. St. Paul, I. Cor. xii. 12, 13. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are nevertheless one body; so also the Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bondman or free: and into one Spirit we all have been made to drink." V. 20. "But now there are many members indeed, yet one body." V. 27. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members of member." To declare the unity of the Church, St. Paul uses the similitude of a house, Ephes. ii. 19, in which he makes all the faithful, parts of the Church, and Christ the foundation of the house or Church: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners; but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the chief corner stone being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom all the building framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom ye also are built together for a dwelling of God in spirit."

This three-fold unity of faith, communion, and government is not self-producing, or self-sustain-

ing; it needs some adequate means for its production and maintenance. He Who has established this essential unity of the Church, must have provided some power by which it may be created; and this can be no other than the principle of authority, which alone can secure unity among men. There must be such a supreme authority in the Church, by which this unity of faith, government, and communion may subsist and be sustained; and by which every breach of this triple bond may be overcome or even rendered impossible. As we cannot believe that Christ left His church destitute of what is so obviously necessary to the preservation of the unity in which He established it, it is manifest that that cannot be the Church in which this divine instrument is wanting. To resist this authority is to violate the unity of the Church. Only by acquiescence in such an authority, divinely established, can the faith of the Church remain one, can its bond of communion remain unbroken, can the unity of its government remain inviolate. Heresy can be overcome only by oneness of faith. Schism by oneness of government. Breach of communion by oneness of the sacramental bonds that unite together the souls of the faithful.

Christ has established this principle of authority, in the Primacy which He has set up in His church. In the 16th Chapter of St. Matthew we read that, "Jesus came into the district of Cesarea Philippi: and asked His disciples, saying: Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they

said: Some John the Baptist; and others Elias; and others Jeremiah; or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, Who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ had already changed Simon's name to Cephas, which means rock, in emblem of the foundation which he was to be of the Church to be built by Himself. It was a frequent thing in the Old Testament to change the name of one destined for any high office. Christ then promised to build His church upon Simon as a rock: and He declares that against His church built upon this rock, the gates of hell shall never prevail. It was not because Christ was ignorant of the opinions of men, or of that of his disciples; but He wished to give occasion for Peter's professing his faith, that He might declare him the rock-foundation of His church. Why shall not the gates of hell prevail against His church? Is it not, that, being built upon such a foundation, it shall have the strength and resistance to withstand all the assaults of the gates of hell? Christ is not the foolish man, whom He Himself condemned, that built his house upon the sand. But about to establish a Church that should withstand the vicissitudes of time, and the storms of the moral world, more

disastrous by far than those of nature, He will begin by laying broad and deep and strong in Peter, by reason of his faith, the mighty foundation that is to support His imperishable church. If the gates of hell, that is, the powers of darkness, were to prevail against the Church, it would, assuredly, be by destroying its unity; for in this unity does its essential security and eternal permanence and duration consist.

Christ, therefore, decreeing that His church shall last for ever, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it because of its foundation in Peter, clearly manifests that in him He has provided the means by which its unity in faith, communion, and government may be for ever conserved. The gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church: they shall never, therefore, prevail against the faith of the Church. It must, then, be from its foundation upon Peter, that it shall ever derive its unfailing faith, and the cohesion that shall unite all its parts, and the power of resistance that shall render it invulnerable to its external foes. The rock which is to support the infallible Church, must be itself infallible; that the house be strong, its foundation must be immovable; if the rock be not infallible, neither is the Church which it supports; if the foundation be not immovable, the super-structure cannot be steady; if it be subverted, the house cannot stand; if the powers of hell could prevail against Peter, they could also prevail against the Church itself. The powers of darkness shall never divide or corrupt the faith of the Church; hence as a means to an end, the

foundation of the Church was made infallible. The oneness and integrity of its faith constitute its most essential unity, and its unflinching security against error and heresy: its sundering or corruption would involve the Church's disruption and ruin, and render it an easy victim to all enemies. It would be, indeed, a kingdom divided against itself; which of course could not stand, and would be brought to desolation. It would nullify the prayer of Christ, that the Church should be one, as He in the Father and the Father in Him are one. In constituting Peter, therefore, the foundation of His church He must have provided an effectual means for the maintenance of all unity and for the removal of all discord; and at the same time an instrument by which every possible disagreement could be adjusted.

Our Lord further says in this place, "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." By these words are obviously understood an absolute and supreme power, and one that is not shared with the other apostles; and to specify more particularly the nature of the power expressed by this conferring of the keys, He adds, "Whatever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." These words considered in the metaphor which they imply and according to the manner of speech and the mode of conception of those who heard them, mean the supreme power of opening and shutting the Church: dispensing and command-

ing, settling controversies, teaching with authority, binding by ecclesiastical penalties, ruling with the unrestricted power of the Head, and forgiving and retaining sin. All these powers clearly indicate that he who is possessed of them, is the divinely constituted means by which the unity of the Church in its faith, communion, and government is to be forever preserved. He who is to be the unfailing source of the unity of the Church's faith, is to be at the same time the principle of the unity of its government, and the authority by which the unity of its communion is to be sustained.

In St. John xxi. we read, that Jesus addressed these words to Simon Peter: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." By these words Peter is constituted the Supreme shepherd of the whole flock of Christ, bishops and people. Here is fulfilled what our Lord had in view when He declared, that He would make him the unshaken foundation and Supreme authority in His church. It was after His resurrection, and when in a few days He

would return to His heavenly Father; it was, therefore, necessary that He should provide a visible Head and supreme Teacher for His church. He would fulfil His own word, that the other sheep which He had, and to whom He personally had not been sent, should be brought together with those to whom His own mission had been confined, and that thus there should be one Fold and one Shepherd.

After each of Peter's solemn assurances of his love, Christ imparts to' him his commission as supreme Shepherd and Ruler of His flock. By thus constituting Peter, our Lord unmistakably intimates the unity of faith, government, and communion, which it was His will should ever exist among His followers and hold them all forever together. The nature of the similitude evidently expresses this. The Greek word which our Lord used in authorizing Peter to feed the flock, even more clearly shows His mind; for the word "to feed" means to do so with authority, to do so as one having power. His office as Head clearly expresses the duty of obedience which he could exact from those over whom he was placed. Authority in one, clearly implies submission in the rest; and authority and submission are the very essence of the unity of government.

It belongs to the office of the supreme Shepherd of the flock to hold them in the bonds of the same communion; to nourish them with the same food, and to require all to partake in the great Sacrifice and sacraments which were to be dispensed by the Church of the New Law. Even

as the faithful pastor protects his flock from poisonous growths and leads them into safe and healthful pastures, so will it be the duty of this supreme Pastor to protect, unimpaired and undiminished, the sacraments by which divine strength and nourishment is to be conveyed to the souls of the faithful. The sacraments established by Christ are necessary for all. Participation in the Sacrifice which is at once the renewal and commemoration of the Sacrifice on Calvary, must be the bond by which are united, and by which shall be known all His true followers.

Besides, the supreme Teacher of the faithful, to effectually discharge his duty, must be endowed with inerrancy in what he undertakes to teach. It is for him to nourish his flock with the true faith, to teach it the correct principles of morality, to shield it from error. It will be for the flock to receive these lessons with submission of the heart and mind; if the teacher is to teach, the flock must be taught. If Christ requires us to believe the teachings of our supreme Pastor, He owes it to Himself that we should not be taught amiss, that we should not receive error for truth. Christ Who came into the world to teach men the truth, and Who has established His church that His work may be continued, could not lay upon mankind the obligation of believing any but an unerring guide and teacher; besides, as all faith rests upon authority, we could not receive with the promptness and confidence which it requires, truths taught by one liable to err in what he teaches. The nature of the human mind forbids

us to give full and unqualified assent to teachings proposed by an authority less than infallible. If the human mind could be required to believe on such an authority, it would be possible for the Church to fall into error ; consequently, the gates of hell would have prevailed against it. But as the faith of the Church shall never be destroyed or corrupted, it must be for its integrity and purity that Christ provides in the passage which we are considering ; by constituting Peter the universal Teacher and supreme Pastor of His flock. Thus established, the Head and Foundation of the Church must last forever. His prerogatives did not die with him ; they were for the everlasting good of the Church ; they should, therefore, last as long as the Church itself : therefore, does Peter live in his successors : therefore, must his faith be as imperishable as the Church it was destined to nourish and support.

The ample provision which Christ made for the unity of His church is further shown in the words of St. Luke in which He assigns to St. Peter the duty of confirming all his brethren in the faith. It was the very night before He suffered ; it was at His last supper. There was contention among the disciples as to who should be the greatest. He rebukes them with the admonition that, " He who is the greatest among them, should be as the least, and the leader as he who serves ; and that they should be even as He had been, as he who serves." He tells them that the pomp of power and lust of rule should be far removed from them and the kingdom which He assigns them, in

which they shall eat and drink at His table, and sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. With this reference to their reward and with this reproof to repress their pride, the Lord said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath sought you, to sift you, as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail: and thou when thou turnest, confirm thy brethren." Now, as Jesus is nearly at the close of His temporal mission and is about to leave the world, He intimates to the apostles that Satan had already begun the mighty assaults which in Matt. xvi. He had already indicated the powers of darkness would forever carry on against the Church; but which should never prevail because of its impregnable foundation. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat;" that he might scatter you to the winds: he has sought your absolute destruction, for he has assailed nothing short of your faith, the root and source and foundation of all. It is your faith that he has attacked; because it is for your faith that I have prayed, that it may never fail, nor be in the least shaken. And when thou shalt have risen from the fault into which thy weakness is about to betray thee, do thou confirm thy brethren. The faith of all is attacked: but I have consulted for the faith of all in praying for the faith of thee; their security shall be in clinging to thee. Thus does He provide an instrument by which the designs of hell against the faith of the apostles and through them against the Church, may be forever overcome: "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy

faith fail not; and thou once converted; confirm thy brethren."

Here we see the infallible power which Christ has set up in His church to guard the deposit of Divine revelation in all its original purity and integrity. Here we see the divinely ordained means by which the assaults of hell against the unity of the Church's faith shall be forever frustrated. Here is the all-powerful prayer of the Son of God by which the foundation of the Church shall forever remain unshaken, and by which the supreme Head and Teacher of the Church shall be forever guarded against all error. Here we see the abundant and unfailing provision which Christ has supplied for the maintenance of the Church's unity in faith, communion, and government: to the fountain and source whence the Church shall be ever nourished and strengthened in its faith, do we naturally look for the bond of its communion and the centre of its government. Peter at once the rock-foundation of the Church, and its supreme Shepherd, and Teacher, and the unfailing Confirmer of his brethren, and through them of the Church, in the faith, is at once the origin and centre of the unity of its government, its communion, and its faith.

St. Jerome in his work against Jovinian says: "One is chosen that by the appointment of a head, all occasion of schism may be removed." And to Damasus: "Away with envy; let the pride of Roman ambition be humbled; I speak to the successor of the Fisherman and the disciple of the Cross. Following no chief but Christ, I

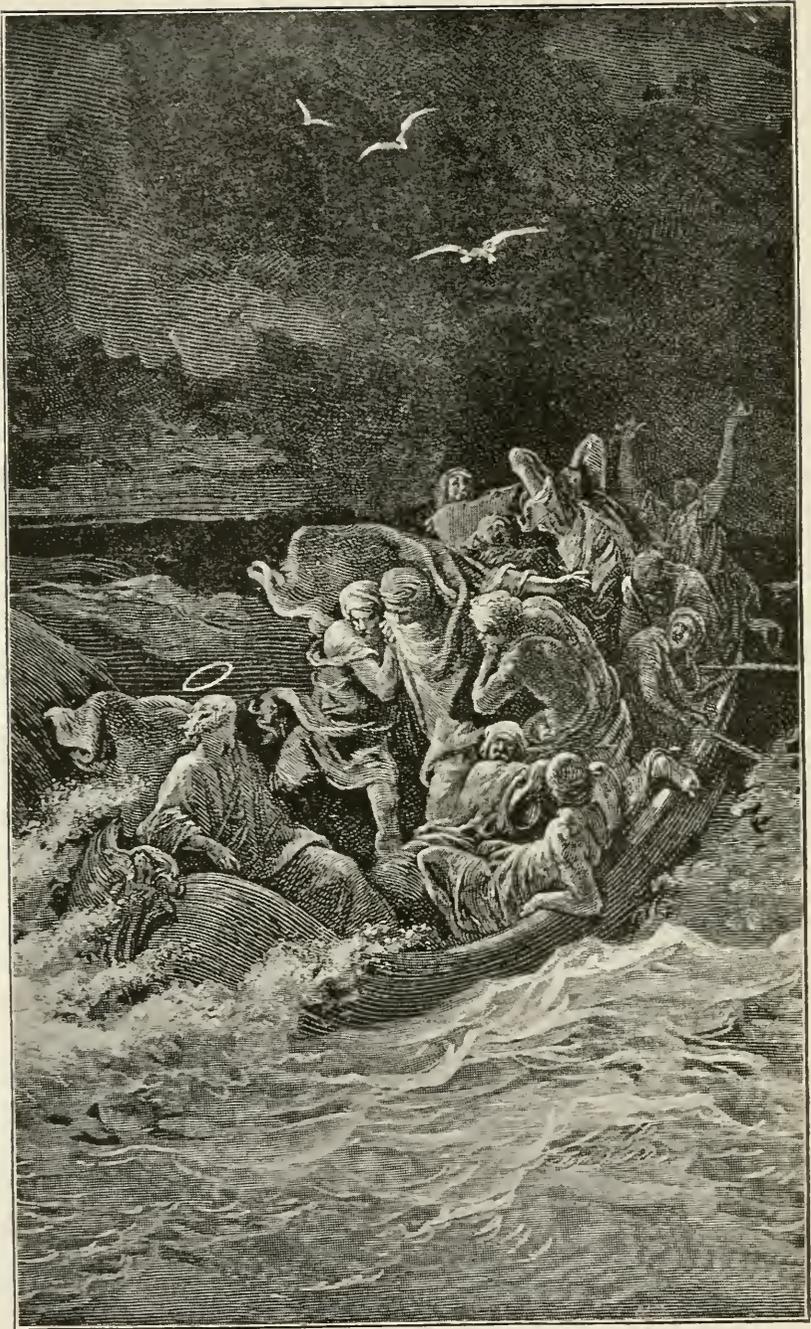
am united in communion with your holiness, that is, with the chair of Peter. I know that on that Rock is built the Church: whoever will eat the lamb outside of this house is profane; whoever is not in the ark of Noah will perish in the flood." St. Cyprian writes: "The Lord said to Peter: 'And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My church.' He builds His church on one; and although after His resurrection, He gave equal power to all His apostles, saying, 'As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you: receive ye the Holy Ghost'; yet to display unity, He disposed by His own authority the origin of this unity, which had its beginning with one." Optatus Milevitanus: "It cannot be ascribed to ignorance on your part, knowing as you do that the episcopal See, in which, as Head of all the apostles, Peter sat, was first fixed by him in the city of Rome; that in him alone might be preserved the unity of the Church, and that the other apostles may not claim each a chair for himself; so that now he who elects another in opposition to this single chair, is a schismatic and a prevaricator."

The Primacy of St. Peter was the divinely constituted means for the preservation of the unity of the Church. It should, therefore, last forever; it cannot have died with him as did the Apostolate with the other apostles; but as necessary to the Church till Christ shall come again, it must have been transmitted to his successors. If such a headship was necessary even in apostolic days, how much more so when charity grew cold, when

error and schism impiously sought to rend in twain the seamless garb of Christ's mystical body? Christianity, distracted and torn by countless conflicting sects, and professing contradictions, shows the need of some centre of unity in the Church, to which all should yield with internal consent and unflinching obedience. Christ knew what was in man. He provided, therefore, an instrument capable of preserving the most absolute unity among all who would believe in His Name. Schism and heresy are not to be ascribed to the want of a sovereign power in the Church adequate to preserve its unity; but to the perverse hearts and perverted wills of those who refuse to yield to this divinely constituted authority. In this, as in all things else, man is free; God will not coerce the human mind. As the evidence of the Gospel, while abundantly sufficient to deserve the consent of all reasonable men, may yet be declined by those who do not wish to receive it; so, likewise, may be the authority established by Christ to create and to sustain the unity of His church.

Peter endowed by Christ with Primatial authority in the Church, was free to choose his Primatial see; and there to affix forever his power and prerogatives. Such a choice once made and sealed by the Apostle's life and death therein, would become by divine right the Primatial see of Christendom. The divine right of his successors would be determined by the human fact that they were the rightful occupants of that See. Accordingly, St. Peter having spent seven years

in Antioch in the exercise of his prerogatives, by divine inspiration, as it is believed, chose the city of Rome, the centre of civilization, as his Primatial See, and the capitol of the Christian Church. This exercise of his power could never be altered except by his own act. The divine prerogatives of the Primacy once affixed by him to this particular city, could never be transferred. He who alone could remove that See, had passed away; no power on earth could undo the election which he had made. The priest is free to select the host that he will consecrate; but the choice once made and the consecration uttered, it is unalterable forever. The divine power is determined by the human fact of the priest's choice. Exiled from Rome, the Popes were always consecrated by their bishops; and by virtue of their episcopate succeeded to the exercise of all their rights and prerogatives as Vicars of Christ and Heads of His church. It is only through the Roman episcopate that the Primacy of the Church can be reached.



THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE CHURCH.

But ye are come to Mount Sion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the company of many thousands of angels, and the Church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than Abel.—Hebrews xii. 22-24.

For all that is born of God, overcometh the world : and this is the victory, which overcometh the world, our faith.—I. St. John, v. 4.

[The following discourse was delivered at the Dedication of the Church of the Sacred Heart, Albany, 1881.]

MY DEAR BRETHREN : I am sure that joy must fill your hearts this morning,—joy that your efforts for so many years have at length been crowned with success,—joy that this splendid monument of your zeal is now about to be dedicated to the service of Almighty God. I am sure that this joy is tempered with the purpose to continue the good work which your piety has begun. I am sure that your earnestness and generosity are but the promise of, and incentive to, your co-operation in the future with your zealous Pastor in liquidating the debt which has been necessarily incurred.

It must be a joy, also, to your beloved Pastor ; joy that he has at length brought to completion,

the great undertaking which for so many years has been his labor of love and his source of consolation. He at length has triumphed over the many obstacles which beset one who undertakes so great a work as the building of a church, with the slender resources of such congregations as are, for the most part, to be found in our country. None but those who have passed through the ordeal can at all realize the trials, difficulties and perplexities, the sleepless nights, the days of fatigue and heart-ache, that are the portion of the founder of a new congregation. But God's blessing is always on the undertaking and by His kind providence it is seldom that it fails. It is, then, with feelings of honest complacency and pure satisfaction, mixed with deep gratitude to the Almighty Who has watched over his work and crowned it with success, that your untiring Pastor now looks upon his years of labor and zeal. He will not be forgotten in your prayers. Youth will revere him, old age will bless him. The souls to whom this Church will be a means of salvation will plead for him before the throne of God. The good done by a priest who builds a church is incalculable. It would seem, at first sight, to have but little to do with priestly duties. Yet it is the first of them all. The good accomplished by such a priest ceases not with his life; it passes on to generations yet unborn. Posterity will be benefited by the sacrifices and labors of those who have built this Church.

The erection and dedication to the service of God of every church, is a step in the progress of

religion and in the building up of a diocese. Hence the present occasion is one of unalloyed satisfaction to your Right Rev. Bishop. It was at his suggestion that it was inaugurated; his fatherly solicitude has watched over its growth, and to day he is here to honor you by his presence, and to bless this Church, one of the first-fruits of his labors among you. The growth of Catholicity throughout the country is something marvellous; but in no diocese has it been steadier or less interrupted than in this; in none have risen greater monuments of a people's faith and piety, and none gives greater promise for the future.

I have said that the dedication of a church to the service of Almighty God marks a step in the growth of religion; and it is true. The erection of the material temple is a triumph of the Church of Christ; hence on this occasion I am led very naturally to address you on this very subject of the Triumph of Divine Truth. In the words of my text, "this is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith."

Divine truth; something of its nature, something of its necessity, something of its trials and triumphs, shall form the subject of our discourse this morning.

There are two ways by which man may arrive at a knowledge of truth,—reason and revelation. Reason is man's natural gift, and is meant to direct him in the natural order. Revelation is a supernatural knowledge freely vouchsafed by God, to direct man in the supernatural order.

Each is the work of God; each is given for an appointed end; and each fully accomplishes its purpose. They are not opposed to one another; they blend together in one harmonious whole. To show that they are opposed, it would have to be shown that the truths of revelation are on a level with reason, and condemned in the light of reason. Each has its specified sphere. Reason concerns matters that fall within the cognizance of sense and the knowledge derived therefrom. Revelation concerns truths far removed from the sphere of sense and reason. We cannot quarrel with reason because it is unable to teach us what it was never meant to teach us; we have no need that revelation should make known to us natural truths knowable by reason. We find no fault with the unaided eye because it cannot reveal to us the wonders of Astronomy. Reason is weak, unsteady, and insufficient; it is to be strengthened, steadied, and illumined by revelation. It is the office of reason to ascertain the fact of a revelation, and then prostrate itself and adore.

The need of revelation arises from the fact that man was constituted in a supernatural state when first created; that by sin he has fallen from that state; and that never by reason could he come to a knowledge of that state. Man was not created as he is now born. He is now born in an abnormal state. In the beginning he was placed on a supernatural plane; a supernatural destiny awaited him. By sin he fell; he forfeited his supernatural felicity; yet he did not lapse into a state of pure nature. Such a state had never ex-

isted ; he could never raise himself from that fall ; he could never, by light of reason, even know of the state from which he fell. As a bird cleft of its wings cannot fly, as a being destitute of rationality cannot reason, as water cannot rise above its level ; so man, fallen from a supernatural state, could never again ascend to it by his own unaided efforts. By the revelation and regeneration of Jesus Christ has he been raised once more to this supernatural order ; once more has a supernatural destiny opened upon him.

If any further proof were required, it would be found in the fact that reason, while quite sufficient to direct man in the natural order, is yet unequal to the task of understanding all the truths of even that order. We do not understand ourselves ; we know not how these wondrous bodies, and these still more wondrous souls were formed and created ; we know not how our nourishment is transmuted into our body and blood and being. The deepest philosophy cannot explain the union of soul and body, so intimate and mysterious, that the pains and pleasures and even the eternal destiny of the one, become those of the other. Who will unfold for us adequately the nature of the brain, the instrument of thought ; the secrets of the nervous system originating in the brain, and diffused by its myriad fibres in every part of the body ; the wonders of the heart, the most faithful of organs, whose vibrations begin with life and cease only in death ; above all, who will fathom for us the nature of the soul ; declare to us the mystery of its origin ;—the soul,

which gives life and energy to all these faculties, and without which the body becomes corruption and inanimate clay? Who will explore for us the mysteries of the heavens; teach us the origin of the planets and of all the other heavenly orbs; calculate their number; make known their nature; describe their marvellous motions in such unrivalled harmony and supreme order; and analyze their mutual influences, the centrifugal and centripetal forces, sustaining and controlling them? Astronomers can give us the reason of nothing; they may discover the fact, the cause they cannot fathom; or, if they succeed in some seeming explanation, it is only to encounter new and greater mysteries. One secret explored leads to a multitude unfathomable. We need not go to the heavens to seek the mysteries of God. Pascal says, there is greater infinity in littleness than in greatness. How does the seed dropped to-day into the earth, in a few years become the mighty oak unshaken by the fiercest storm? How does spring-time, with its variegated forms and the sweet perfume of its countless flowers, come forth from the frosts and snows and universal death of winter? Who will disclose for us the latent forces of nature which give rise to the course of the seasons, pursuing one another continually? What mind will declare to us the worlds of intelligence which the microscope reveals in the smallest atom of matter or in the scarcely perceptible drop of water? In the vilest insect which we trample under foot there are secrets that the wit of man will never know; there is a wisdom to which all

human wisdom is as nothing; an organization and a workmanship that beggars the proudest triumphs of human genius.

If, then, reason in its highest and most gifted form is unable to explain the mysteries of nature, how utterly powerless must it not be to rise to a knowledge of, or, much less to explain, the truths of the supernatural order.

Look at the state of religion before Divine revelation was made. Even that truth, of which St. Paul tells us testimony was given from the beginning, by the things that were made; the being and power of God;—a truth, therefore, which reason discovers, was unknown or almost effaced from the knowledge of men. They changed the glory of the Creator to the creature. In the wanderings of reason, and in the excesses in which they gave their hearts unrestrained license, they forgot God, and worshipped His works. They would not have God in their thoughts; so their foolish hearts were darkened that they knew Him not. Not the wisest sage of antiquity in the loftiest flight of his genius, ever dreamt of the truth contained in the second question of the Christian Catechism; countless were their theories regarding man's final destiny. What to us are trite axioms, made familiar from our very infancy, were to them, unknown and unheard of. No Plato, no Aristotle, no oracle of ancient philosophy ever taught his disciples that man's highest duty, as it is his final destiny, should be to love the Lord, his God, with his whole heart and soul and mind; that for this was

he born, and in this would he find his bliss. The whole world was in the state so fearfully described by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians; "Without God, and without hope." The sacrifices of Judaism confessed the consciousness of the original fall, and the assured hope of a restoration. The sacrifices of Paganism betrayed the same consciousness, and implied the need of propitiation, if not the prospect or hope of reconciliation. The human heart by its surfeit and disgust with the happiness of this life, seeking a content which this world did not afford,—a felicity far removed from the sphere of sense, all spiritual in its nature and eternal in its duration,—should have proclaimed man's final destiny. The human soul longed to know and to be reunited to its God. The human intellect, thirsting for truth, sought to satisfy its questionings in the rites of superstition; and to divine the future by consulting the entrails of animals, or watching the courses of the stars. To such a depth, had reason without the light and support of revelation sunk, in its mad quest after the truth. Human philosophy sought, as it has ever since sought, to solve the enigma of life and the secret of man's existence; but to no purpose. This was the condition of the human race, discarded from the presence of God and destitute of heavenly truth,—eager in the pursuit of truth, obscured with error, made perverse by sin, longing for God and worshipping a lie.

Considering this hunger and thirst of man for the truth, one would think that when, at length,

it came into the world, it would have found favor and acceptance everywhere and with all. But no; since the fall, man's mind has been darkened and his will weakened and perverted; while not injured essentially, his "whole nature has been changed for the worse;" there has always been in the world, since then, a wisdom of its own, called, emphatically, the wisdom of this world. To this wisdom the Gospel was opposed; the manner in which it came into the world was altogether at variance with the received notions of men: it contradicted all their universally received maxims. It was to the Jews, who looked for a temporal king with all the splendors of royalty, a stumbling-block and a scandal; and to the Gentiles, who prided themselves upon their human knowledge, a folly and a weakness; though in its subsequent history it has shown itself to be, verily, the wisdom and the power of God.

If we reflect, we shall find that, even now, this opposition of the way in which Divine revelation has come into the world to human wisdom, is one of the causes why it is rejected by so many. Put the wisdom of man to work, and it is not the sufferings and death of a God that it would have ordained for the world's redemption. Nor would the Cross of Christ, with all its humility and meanness, have been its powerful instrument for making known Divine truth. Ostentatious power, irresistible strength, would have been its instrument for effecting salvation and teaching the Gospel. But God, in the exercise of His

wisdom, ordains a God made incarnate, a life of suffering, and a death of shame, for the accomplishment of redemption. To carry on and to consummate this work, He selects folly to confound wisdom, and weakness to confound power, and the things that are contemptible and that are not, to bring to naught the things that are.

Such is the essential opposition we should naturally expect to find between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man. The wisdom of man is limited by his limited intelligence, and sees not beyond the narrow span of his brief life. At its best, it is made up of the false principles and corrupted maxims of a fallen race; selfishness is its animating motive and the measure of all its success. God's wisdom, on the other hand, knows no limit. It extends from eternity to eternity. It is the intelligence of an infinite being; love and goodness are its animating principles. Man, the creature of an hour, longs to see, in his own day, the results of his designs and enterprises; he is impatient of delay: he cannot await their future development. God, Who inhabits eternity, with Whom all centuries are but a day, with Whom there is no past or future, tranquilly awaits the issues which His Divine providence, gradually working by the agency of second causes, evolves out of all things and events. That which to man has not yet taken place, is, to God, as if it had already been. Hence, between the designs of God and the counsels of man, we must expect to find the difference which exists between God's works and man's works. See how imperceptibly, slowly

but infallibly, the great forces of nature produce their prescribed effects; you see in this the comprehensiveness of God's wisdom. Behold man eager to see to-morrow the fruit of his labors to-day; in this you see the shortness and impatience of his wisdom and designs. In all this we behold sufficiently why the Gospel came into the world in a manner contemptible to human eyes, and according to the measure of human wisdom the most insufficient; and why the instruments employed for its diffusion and perpetuation among men, were destitute of that power and strength with which human wisdom would have surrounded it; why, in a word, the Divine plan for the redemption of man and the spread of revelation was so humiliating to human pride and contradictory to human wisdom. It arises from the essential variance of infinite wisdom and wisdom merely human.

God could have manifested his power in the redemption of man, and in the promulgation of the Gospel, in such wise as to force assent from every mind and to do violence to every will. But in this, He would have destroyed human freedom; He would have subverted the economy which He had established from the beginning. Faith would have been impossible; charity a necessity; obedience no longer free, would have been blind. The plan of the moral world would have been essentially changed. Free will was the grandest prerogative of man; upon it depended the whole merit of his fidelity. God wished to make known Divine truth yet so as free will might remain in-

violate. He would place no compulsion on our freedom. Our reception of the truth would depend upon our own assent ; He would save us yet so as our salvation would, in some sufficient sense, depend upon ourselves. For this purpose, the Gospel was proposed as it was, with evidence abundantly sufficient, yet not absolutely irresistible. By prophecies fulfilled, by predictions uttered and to be verified, by miracles, "by the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection," by the descent of the Holy Ghost, did Jesus show that He was sent into the world, the Incarnate Word, to redeem the world and to make known the truth. There is as much evidence that Jesus was God, as that there is a God at all ; and the existence of God is most manifest. Yet, by turning the mind from the evidence which all things afford of the Divine Being and by perversion of the will, one may come to ignore the existence of God. No prophecy that Christ fulfilled, no prediction which He uttered and which was afterward gloriously accomplished, no miracle that He wrought, not even His resurrection from the dead, was as potent to prove His Divinity, as the revolving sun in heaven, or the existence of the material world is, to prove the being of God ; yet man, by shutting his eyes to this evidence and busying his mind with the difficulties against this primary truth, may come to disbelieve it. In the same way, in spite of the evidence of Christ's Divinity and by dwelling exclusively upon the arguments against it, he may end by rejecting his Saviour. The Divinity of Christ, the Divine mission of His

church, her providential history, are no more open to objection than are the primary truths of natural religion, which no one thinks of questioning; they are established by arguments as valid and by reasoning as unmistakable. The Church falls no further short of perfection than does the material world. The finger of God is no less discernible in her history than it is in the world.

Let pride cease, let scepticism be laid aside, let the voice of rational nature assert itself, let human passion no longer oppose an obstacle to what would be its restraint, and the humility of the Gospel will no longer hinder its acceptance among men. To those who expect to find truth to be presented in a manner conformable to the preconceived notions of human wisdom, it will continue to be folly. To those who expect it to be surrounded with human power, it will still be weakness. But those who are prepared to accept it with docile heart and willing mind, will find it to be indeed, "the wisdom of God and the power of God." He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Those who to-day refuse to accept the Catholic Church, would have been of the number of those who believed not in Christ; and who would call for further proof of His power and mission. Now as then, it is not the learned or powerful or great of this world who submit to the Church, but the poor, the lowly, those destined to be great in the life to come, the simple of heart and mind. "Unless men become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

II.

No sooner had the Gospel appeared in the world, than the enemy of mankind, employing as his instrument the perversity of the human heart, sought to stifle it in its very birth. From that day to the present has this dread conflict been carried on by the gates of hell against Christ and His gospel; but, owing to the promises which He made His church and the divine virtue which He imparted to her, they have never prevailed. She has shown herself invulnerable to these dire assaults and proved herself the victor. When persecuted, she conquered; when apparently defeated, she has triumphed; in the end, the victory has always been on her side. As in the beginning, the blood of the martyrs proved her fructifying seed; so later, from one persecution has sprung a thousand triumphs, from one death uncounted lives. The Church has been considered as a continued incarnation of Christ on earth. Certainly, His life has been verified in hers; His passion and subsequent triumph have been continually re-enacted. Like Him, she has been calumniated, persecuted, and her children condemned to suffering and death: but like Him, too, has she demonstrated her imperishable life, and her Divine character and mission, in passing through her trials not only unscathed but glorified by suffering; and by not only not yielding to destruction and death, but by rising glorious and immortal: showing herself to be impregnable to all human assaults,

superior to all human vicissitudes, and the conqueror of the gates of hell ; as little subject to the dominion of death as was Christ, her Founder.

Her first persecution was the model of all subsequent ones ; the victory which she then won was an earnest and pledge of those which she was ever destined to obtain in her unceasing conflicts with human pride and power. Scarcely was the infant Church founded, when the Jews met to devise means to destroy the work of Him Whom they had already put to death. Saul was sent to Damascus to apprehend the Christians and to bring them bound to Jerusalem. Lo ! on the road, the light of heaven shone about him, and the voice of Jesus was heard : “ I am He Whom thou persecutest.” The hot zealot for the traditions of his fathers and the undaunted persecutor, was transformed into the intrepid soldier of Christ, the Apostle and Doctor of the Gentiles. Thus, he became an invincible proof of the truth of the Gospel and of the Divinity of Christ, and the first-fruits of the Church’s conflict with human power. In every persecution and in every trial, and where, to human eyes, there did not appear aught but discomfiture, she has gained lasting fruit and permanent triumph. During the first three hundred years of her existence, did the power of this world rise up against the Church, and by every means which the perverted ingenuity of man, instigated and spurred on by the prince of this darkness, could devise, sought to exterminate her ; and to banish and destroy from the hearts and minds of men the truths which she

would teach them ; and to frustrate the mission which she had received from on high. All human resources were called into requisition to supply instruments for this purpose. Wealth, honors, and the pleasures of this life, were the blandishments offered the followers of the Gospel to abjure the Christian Name. Human genius was called upon to devise even more subtle and dangerous instruments: sarcasm, satire, raillery, were levelled against the truths of religion, to bring them into contempt, and to seduce those whom the fascinations of the world had failed to move. Then was that plan, not unknown in these modern days, of excluding Catholics from public office, and of imparting education without religion and of closing Christian schools, resolved upon as the most effectual way of destroying Christianity. From the beginning, persecution and sufferings, whose recital makes the blood run cold, and stirs shame of our common nature, were inflicted: death amidst the most excruciating sufferings, death under the most awful forms that human cruelty could employ, were inflicted upon those who refused to renounce the name of Christ. Imagination cannot picture the horrors which were let loose upon Christ and His saints. It were impossible to calculate the untold multitudes who perished in these dreadful persecutions. No place was spared. The whole Roman Empire was saturated with the blood of Christians. No age, no rank, no sex, no condition of life, could claim immunity. The young, the old, the noble, the high born, delicate virgins, were

all subjected to the same alternatives of renouncing the name and service of Christ, or of sealing their faith with their blood. All this continued until the Roman Empire, drunk with the blood of the martyrs, and falling under the malediction of Him, Whom it had assailed and persecuted in His church, was forced to acknowledge through the mouth of the apostate emperor, "Thou, Oh Christ, hast conquered."

This glorious triumph of the Church, thus acknowledged by Julian dying on the field of battle and casting his heart's blood to heaven, is the most resplendent proof of her Divinity, and of the fulfilment of the promises of her Founder, that the gates of hell should never prevail against her. Her mere survival, under such crushing blows of persecution and suffering, had been enough to indicate her Divine origin, her mission and her destiny. Yet, she not only survived, but prospered and flourished; and was spread throughout the earth. After each persecution she seemed, like her Divine Founder after His passion and death, to rise to new life and energy, and to be all the more rapidly diffused because of the very efforts made for her extinction. Even already in the time of St. Paul, he could say, that "the faith had gone forth into the furthestmost parts of the world." Already Pliny the younger, in the second century, could write to the Emperor Trajan, that "the new superstition had spread through not only the cities, but even the villages and hamlets; that already the Pagan temples were abandoned and their sacred rites inter-

mitted." Justin the Martyr could say: "There is not so much as one nation, either barbarous or civilized, or by whatsoever other name they may be called, whether living in tents, or destitute of a home, or tending flocks, among whom prayers and thanksgiving are not offered to God, the Creator of all things, through the name of Jesus Crucified." And Tertullian exclaimed: "We are but of yesterday, and we fill every place,—your cities, your islands, your camps, your municipalities, your councils, your palaces, your senate, your forum; we have left you but your temples."

It is not so much the material spread of Christianity, as its diffusion, under the circumstances, that constitutes the irresistible argument of its Divinity. Add to this, its peculiar nature which requires the unhesitating submission of the mind to its teachings—a sacrifice so humiliating to pride,—which restrains the strongest passions of the heart and which men hold the dearest—a sacrifice so mortifying to the heart;—this is the strength of the argument. The spread of another and one more congenial to human pride and passion, would have been matter of little wonder. Other religions have spread throughout large regions of the earth. Mahomet with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other, teaching that one day's fighting was worth months of prayer; and yet presenting no truth to the intellect which it could not easily receive, and imposing no restraint upon the heart which it did not compensate for by other licenses, easily fought his way and extended his empire through a great

part of the East. Yet, it never reached beyond the limits which it attained in his own life-time. But that the Gospel, bridling the strongest passions of the human heart and humbling to the obedience of faith the pride of the human intellect, should have spread throughout the world in so short a time, and that, too, in spite of persecution and suffering; and by means so contemptible, and according to the wisdom of this world, so impotent, is the miracle of miracles, and the most conclusive evidence of its divine origin, and the manifest triumph of divine truth under the superintending providence of Almighty God. All men have acknowledged the sublimity of Christian morality; its most deadly enemies have been filled with amazement at its austerity and self-denying character. All men have owned the loftiness and ennobling influence of the truths of Christian faith; they lift man even above himself and make of him a new being. That by his own unaided efforts he could never attain to a knowledge of them, is willingly admitted. That the mind should accept these truths, and that the heart should be purified by these precepts, is to raise man to a state more than human, and to enable him to live even a life angelic in the midst of passion and sin. This is clearly the victory of divine grace; no human resources could be commensurate with such a result.

These were not the only trials which the Church had to undergo. Fearful as were the persecutions which she suffered, and the external adversaries which she had to conquer, yet her worst enemies

were those of her own household. When external warfare was over, internal relaxation set in; the bonds of unity, tightened and strengthened by common impending outward dangers, were eased and loosened. Schism arose to rend in twain the seamless garb of Christ; heresy arose to corrupt her teachings; faith and charity, strong and ardent in time of peril, grew languid and remiss. Heresiarchs arose, and in imitation of their prototype, drew after them one-third of the elect. How often, to human eyes, did she seem about to sink and upon the very verge of destruction, owing to the ingratitude and treason of her own children.

Moreover, she, had to overcome the barbarism which filled Europe, and which accelerated the fall of the Roman Empire; against it, she had to preserve the Christian civilization which she had formed. In the moral convulsions incident to that fall and to the barbarism which overran Europe, she not only preserved the deposit of Revelation, but whatever yet remained of civilization. In the midst of universal desolation she preserved the germs from which a new and better civilization was to spring. As a mother with extended arms, she received those fierce barbarians, Goths, Huns, and Vandals as they poured forth from the North; she embraced them, imparted to them the light and grace of the Gospel and made of them humble and docile Christians.

Her whole history is but the record even until now, of the persecution and suffering which she has had to endure from the power and pride of this world. It is but the record of her unceasing efforts

to impart to all men, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, knowledge of the truths of salvation; and to raise all men, even the lowest and most degraded, to the standard of the Gospel; and to make every human being partake the blessings of redemption. All other institutions have passed away with time, whose creatures they were. All the works of men have failed, and are as if they had never been. Human vicissitudes have changed the face of the world, and obliterated governments that once seemed permanent and to human foresight gave promise of perpetuity. But the Church has survived all other institutions; she has shown herself superior to all calamities; and has outlasted all the governments of men. She has overcome even time, which destroys all things, and which has evinced her imperishableness. Her victory over all her enemies, internal and external, manifests her divine life, her utter indestructibility. It is but the fulfilment of the Divine promise, that the gates of hell and the powers of the world shall never prevail against her. No other explanation would be adequate to account for her marvellous preservation and triumphs. The Almighty power of Him Who established her and sent her on her mission, has never been absent from her; continually abiding within her, He has imparted to her strength to withstand and overcome all enemies, and light and grace to perpetuate among men His divine work.

III.

Divine truth has triumphed over the opposition of the human heart. It is the heart which makes a man what he is; it is not the intellect with its arid speculations; it is not the imagination with its glowing pictures; it is the heart that gives character and shape to every man's life, makes him what he is, for good or evil. The heart is the great motor of humanity. The affections control the whole man. Everyone is drawn by his pleasure, says the poet. We believe what we like, we disbelieve what we dislike. Let the heart be right and all is right; let the heart be wrong and all is wrong. Passion is slow to accept what will be its own restraint; and if it accept it, it chafes under it, rebels against, and will, in the end, cast it off.

This repugnance of the human heart to accept the Gospel, because of its crucifying morality, has always been the greatest obstacle to its diffusion. And the victory which it has won over the heart, has been the Gospel's greatest glory, the most luminous evidence of its divine character and mission. Nature is unwilling to practise its precepts; therefore, unwilling to believe its truths. Withal the splendid conquests that the self-denying character of Gospel morality has gained over the human heart, yet see the immense repugnance to it that still exists on the part of those who have not accepted it; and how little faithful to its precepts are uncounted numbers of those who have believed and professed it.

What, you will exclaim, talk of the Gospel overcoming the heart, with the immense mass of sin which we see even in the Church herself! Yes, I answer, the Gospel of Christ has overcome the hearts of men. The uncounted multitudes of martyrs who with their blood have sealed their faith in Christ, marvellously attest the hold that the Gospel has taken of the souls of men. Human nature can pay no higher testimony to the truth than the sacrifice of life for its sake. The truth alone proclaims the martyr; a man may die for what he knows to be the truth, but no man will die for what he knows to be a lie. Behold the martyr mount the scaffold or the funeral pyre, meeting death in its most awful form; and tell me, if you can, that he is a hypocrite, that he believes not the truth for which he is about to lay down his life. The untold millions of those martyrs not of the blood but of the heart, who have spent their lives in crucifying their passions, divinely show that the Gospel has overcome the hearts of men. Those myriads, which no man can number, of faithful and holy souls which the Church has continually brought forth to Christ and with whom heaven is filled, gloriously proclaim the victory of the Gospel. Even those who live not up to the standard of the Gospel, pay an unconscious homage to its truth by withdrawing themselves from its influence. They feel that it has the power to sanctify even their souls if they submit to it; they wish it not, and refuse its grace and obligations. They feel its superiority and purifying power; they confess their own perversity; and in this

does the Gospel condemn them,—that they will to remain the slaves of sin and ignorance.

Divine truth has triumphed over human wisdom, the folly of the Cross has more than matched the wisdom of the world, the weakness of the Cross has shown itself stronger than the power of men, the things that are contemptible and that are not, have overcome the things that are. Divine revelation exalts the intellect by supplying it with the truth. Truth is the object of the mind, it is the magnet to which it tends, it is its very bliss; without it the mind cannot be at rest; it rejoices and expands in the truth. Every power of the mind, and every faculty of the body, has an object for whose attainment it has been endowed. There can be no opposition between reason teaching us the truth which falls within its sphere, and Revelation which bestows upon us a knowledge superior to that of reason, and which reason by itself could never reach. Reason and Revelation are both the work of God, are both His instruments for our attaining truth. Reason ascertains the fact of revelation; reason teaches us to accept the Revelation sought and found; thereupon, Revelation becomes the guide and teacher of reason. All truth being the knowledge which the Divine Intellect possesses of the Divine Essence, is necessarily one. Hence the truth which reason teaches, and the truth which revelation discloses, must be one in the mind of God. The teachings of the one and the other are supernatural, or natural, according to the rank of the intelligence which apprehends it: the natural and the supernatural mingle

into one in the Divine Mind ; or, it may be, in an intelligence inferior to the Divine, but immeasurably superior to the human. There can, therefore, be no discord or variance between the teachings of reason and those of Revelation, because of this oneness of truth, which admits of no variance.

That the union of reason and Revelation constitutes the perfection and happiness of the human mind, is to be seen in those who, moved by faith, accept Divine revelation with submission and cling to it with tenacity. They feel their reason even strengthened and invigorated by the light of Divine truth ; they enjoy a mental freedom of which the sceptic and unbeliever know not of ; they “know the truth, and the truth makes them free ;” they feel it to be an act of the highest reason, to submit their understanding to the authority of Almighty God, or to that of the Church, His oracle on earth, and to accept with perfect docility and unflinching adherence whatever is Divinely revealed. They are secure from all error, because they rest upon the Lord ; “He that walketh after Him, walketh not in darkness.” The mental disquiet, the longing of the mind after something which it feels it should have and which it knows it has not, in those who refuse to accept Divine revelation, clearly evinces that, destitute of it, human intelligence is in an abnormal state. It suffers misery and is clouded with ignorance, no matter how high its endowments or how rich and varied its affluence of knowledge merely natural. Compare the mental distress of those converted to the faith, before they accepted it,

with their perfect content and bliss when the grace of Christ has moved their hearts and illumined their minds to embrace it.

While there is complete accord and unbroken harmony between Revelation and reason; yet, when reason refuses to accept it or throws off the obedience of faith, then human incredulity, stimulated by passion and scepticism, makes of reason the antagonist of Revelation. Of itself, the human heart because of its perversity, and the human mind because of its ignorance, are prone to unbelief and to a rejection of the Supernatural. It is utterly destructive of belief in Divine truth, when reason, forgetting its proper office, raises itself to a height which it was never meant to reach, and seeks to scrutinize and to comprehend the intrinsic nature of the mysteries of God. It is the sin of the angels, when reason, elated by pride, pretends to or assumes a confidence in itself to explore the secrets of the Godhead. Reason with the timidity that ought to characterize it, should be able to learn that the mystery or truth which seems to contradict it, is, indeed, not against its light but beyond its level and scope; yet, filled with pride and unconscious of its own limits, it recklessly rejects or proscribes as untrue or impossible, what it cannot comprehend. Nothing but an infallible authority can control reason in its vagaries and protect Revelation from its assaults. The innate scepticism of the human mind, and its inherent proneness to doubt everything but what falls within the cognizance of the senses, has destroyed the primitive Revelation

made to mankind and obliterated its traces almost everywhere. This same tendency, working havoc even among those who once accepted the Gospel-revelation, but who have thrown off the yoke of authority, has substituted scepticism and rationalism even among nations once foremost in Christendom. Among them the original deposit has been frittered away as if it were a mere philosophic system, and its most fundamental doctrines openly questioned and impugned. The seamless garb of Christ has been sacrilegiously rent in pieces.

Divine revelation came into the world presenting its credentials for acceptance among men. It sought to inculcate truths and mysteries unknown to human intelligence, unless, perhaps, some knowledge of them had been bestowed upon our first parents : glimpses of some of them were discernible among even Pagan nations, notwithstanding the ignorance and almost universal effacement of primeval revelation ; and in spite of the perversion of will, corruption of heart and darkness of mind, superinduced by the fall. Revelation having proved by extrinsic evidence, its mission to teach mankind, required the unhesitating submission of the mind to the truths which it propounded. It declared to men that they must believe ; it allowed no compromise between human wisdom and the truths which it was to declare ; it allowed no explaining away of their mysterious character, and no scrutinizing, with a view to their acceptance, of the truths revealed. It was God's message to His creatures. Its Divinely appointed teacher, the Church, rested her

claim to obedience and belief upon the Divine character of her founder. His Divinity had been demonstrated by the miracles which He wrought, by the prophecies which He uttered, by the predictions which He fulfilled, by the holiness of His life, by His resurrection from the dead, and by the Descent of the Holy Ghost, as the crown and seal of all.

Human reason at once assailed Divine revelation, and by every resource and strategy attempted to discredit and drive it from the world. Pagan philosophy, with all that the perfection of human speech could contribute, sought to undermine and turn to ridicule its Divine maxims; the glories of Paganism, and the insignificant origin and as yet brief history of Christianity, were contrasted. The wisdom of the world and its power disdained to yield to what St. Paul had designated as "the wisdom and power of God;" and which proved "a folly to the Gentile and a stumbling-block to the Jew." Even among those who accepted the subjection of faith, there arose those, too, who chafing under the restraint, cast it off and spurned the authority of the Church. The whole history of the Church has been but one long record of the rebellions of reason against Revelation; of the inroads and onslaughts on it of human scepticism and unbelief; and of their unceasing repulses and repression. Heresy, and its growth and extinction, have been but synonyms for the unslackening conflict between the finite human mind and Divine intelligence; and of the ultimate complete triumph which has always fol-

lowed. The Councils of the Church, the Decrees and Constitutions of the Sovereign Pontiffs, and the uncounted assemblies of bishops and doctors that have been held in every part of Christendom, abundantly evince the continual warfare of doubt and unbelief, passion and sin, against Divine truth; and the fruitful peaceful victories which the Church, under the superintending providence of God and by virtue of the promises of Jesus Christ, always obtained.

Divine faith has shown itself more powerful than human sophistry and unbelief. The Church has triumphed by the principle of authority: exacting belief as the visible representative of God on earth, and claiming the mind's unhesitating submission; affording no knowledge that would enable it to comprehend, but requiring it to accept and believe simply on Divine faith. It is only by this simple, short, and comprehensive rule, that the truths of Revelation can be protected against scepticism and incredulity; and brought home to the minds of all men,—the ignorant as well as the enlightened. It is only by this principle of authority that the pride of the human intellect can be repressed, and reduced to the obedience of faith.

All the enemies which the Church has encountered and overcome in her long career have passed away; she and her precious deposit of Supernatural truth, in all its original integrity and purity, yet remain. To-day she encounters foes arising from the special circumstances and discoveries of the age, as has always happened:

science, or, at least, some of the so-called theories of the time, raise their voice against the Church, and would establish a conflict between the revelation of God as manifested in nature, and His revelation as made known by the Incarnate Word. These new adversaries will pass away; it will be found that science has discovered nothing that invalidates Divine revelation; but that it, too, will bear tribute to Jesus Christ, and testimony to the truth. The Church's triumph over all her enemies, present and to come, is assured: she rests upon the unfailing promise of Him Who has pledged His Divinity, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her; that the Holy Ghost will teach Her all truth; and that He Himself will abide with her forever. In the future, as in the past, she will be found standing upon the word of Him Who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; and, like the God Who established her, her record is from generation to generation.

I must conclude. Remember that the faith which overcomes the world, and which we must have for salvation, is not the assent merely of the intellect to its truths; but we must also yield to it the obedience of the heart. It is not a speculative assent; but a positive, living influence upon our lives. Its truths must be woven into the texture of our character, and give meaning and shape to our actions. It must be a faith instinct with works; little would it serve to believe the truths of faith, and yet refuse to practise its precepts.

The object of faith is two-fold: to exact the as-

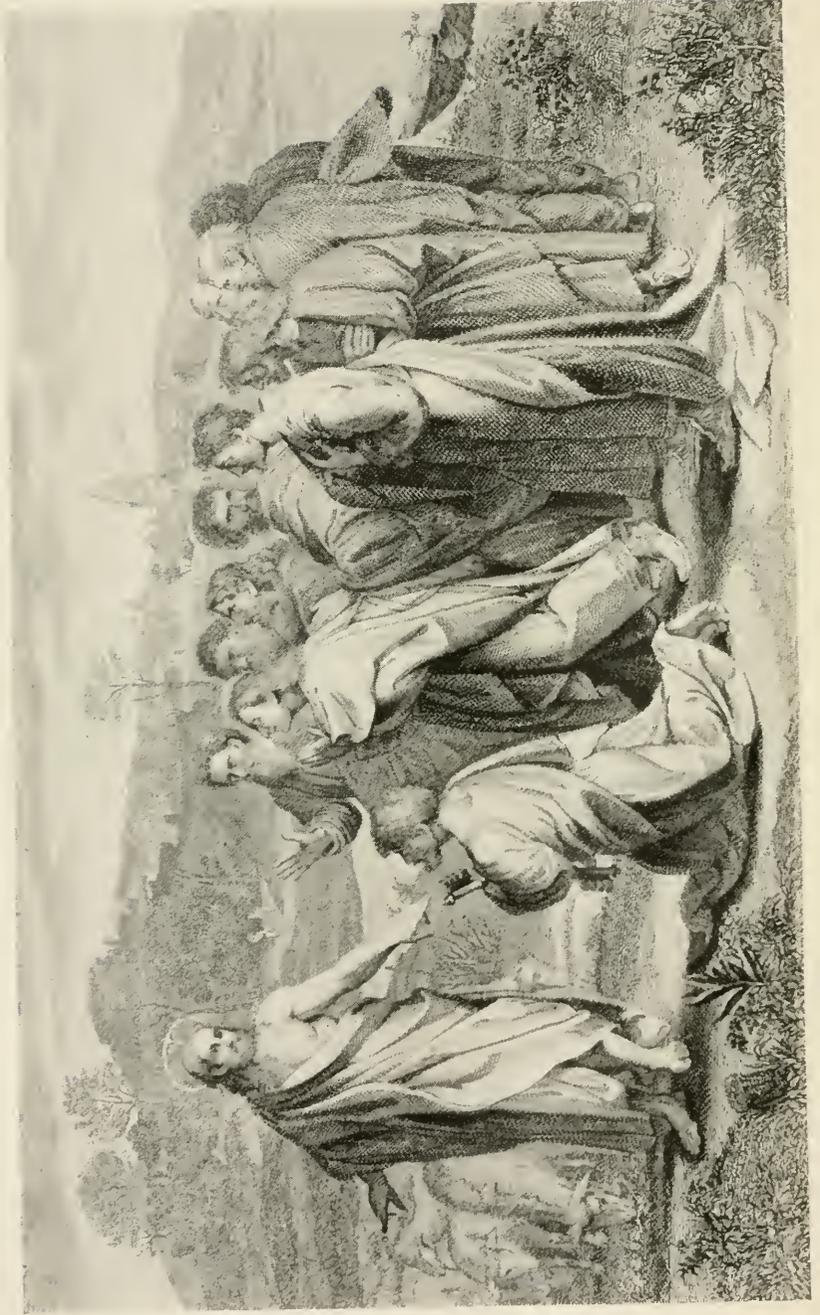
sent of the mind and to require the faithful adherence of the heart to its precepts. According to this two-fold object will it save us or condemn us: save us if we receive it with a docile and humble mind and practise its precepts: condemn us, if we refuse to believe it, or even if believing, we neglect to practise it. St. Paul calls "Faith the substance of things to be hoped for; the evidence of things that appear not;" that is, the realizing, the making living, palpable, substantial, the truths of religion; and the proof of what is not on its face evident. We must make the future life a reality, as it were, of sense; something which we can see and feel and touch; not something afar off of which we only hear and dream. We must do away with the thin partition which separates us from the future life; live on its level, live in its light, and breathe its atmosphere and influence; we must act as if it were before our eyes. Most people regard this life, and this life alone, as a reality; the future as a dream. But to the man in whose heart the Holy Ghost dwells, this life is the dream and the future the reality. Pray that this abiding consciousness of the emptiness of this life, and the all-importance of the hereafter, may be ever with you and direct you.

Remember that, "Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost:" "For if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, will not He Who raised Jesus from the dead, resuscitate your mortal bodies because of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them?" Yes, your souls are the im-

mortal temples of the Holy Ghost. This material temple shall share the fate of other and even greater churches; its walls shall be levelled to the earth; the "plough-share of time" shall unearth its foundations; all the works of man shall perish; the monuments erected to perpetuate him and his glory, shall be but the ashes they are intended to immortalize; the great oceans shall dry up, the mountains fade away, the solid earth itself shall dissolve into its original nothing; other worlds shall roll and new systems shall, perhaps, prevail on high; yet, the human soul, the temple of the Holy Ghost, shall alone survive the dissolution and withering away of all things else; shall alone escape unscathed from "the war of jarring worlds" and the chaos and confusion of a universe hastening to its doom: ages of ages shall come and go, eternities of eternities shall roll round the throne of God; but the human soul shall abide forever, young in its immortal vigor, and happy in the embrace of its God; or miserable forever among the lost powers and principalities of hell. Build ye up, then, the spiritual temples of your souls. What care you have employed upon this material temple, let it be the pledge and earnest of your zeal in preparing your souls for their immortal destiny.

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THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

And the Lord said : Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath sought you, to sift you, as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail : and thou when thou turnest, confirm thy brethren.—St. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

WHAT do we understand when we say that the Pope is infallible? Precisely what we mean when we affirm the Church itself to be infallible. His Infallibility is none other than that of the Church. It embraces the same objects, enjoys the same extent, is circumscribed by the same limits; in every respect it is of the same character; in fact, it is identical with that of the Church. The Council of the Vatican defined that the Pope's Infallibility is one and the same with that of the Church. Hence, to understand the nature of the one, we have only to understand the nature of the other. The Infallibility of the Church does not imply the impeccability of the hierarchy in which it is lodged: Papal Infallibility does not imply the sinlessness of the Pope. It is a gift which belongs to him not in his personal, but in his official character as the Head of the Church and Universal Teacher of the faithful. As the Infallibility of the Church does not extend beyond matters of faith and morals and what has a necessary con-

nection therewith, so the Infallibility of the Head of the Church goes not beyond the same limits. It is not claimed that his Infallibility is the result of any inspiration, or special illumination. It is the ordering of Divine providence over him in his Teaching capacity, guarding him against error, and insuring to him knowledge of the truth. This does not mean that he receives any new revelation. All truth necessary for the enlightenment and redemption of the world was once delivered to the apostles; hence, there is no need of any further revelation. It were almost needless to remark that this gift is not for his personal exaltation, but for the good of the Church of which he is the Head. His Teaching office may, in a manner, be compared with that of our Supreme Court;—with the addition, however, that the decisions which are the result of his Infallibility are not only final and binding, but liable to no error, while those of the Supreme Court may be erroneous. The Pope is infallible whenever he speaks to the whole Church, from the Chair of Peter, and teaches it what it must believe as Catholic truth, and what it must avoid as false; and whenever he points out to the flock committed to him by Christ, the virtues to be practised and the vices to be shunned. Not to those things which he does as a man, or as a prince, or as writer, do we ascribe the gift of Infallibility; but only to those actions which he does as Head and Teacher of the Church. When we would learn what are the nature, extent, limits, and effects of Papal Infallibility, we have only to consider that

of the Church itself, and all questions will be solved; because it is one and the same.

It is sometimes said that the Infallibility of the Pope militates against the civil allegiance of a Catholic. If this were so, Catholics could never have been faithful citizens; because the Church was always recognized as infallible, and was as likely and as capable of decreeing to the detriment of the State as is the Pope. If in the past they could be good citizens, and yet faithful believers in an Infallible Church, they can be so now; for the Infallibility which has been explicitly defined as lodged in the Pope is none other than that of the Church. It is only when the laws of the State are opposed to the conscience of the Catholic, that he feels himself released from observing them. As he had conscience before the definition of Papal Infallibility, and as the State, prior to that time, was capable of making wicked laws, it follows that he has no greater license now than formerly. Non-Catholics will not deny that conscience is to be held paramount to all unjust laws that wicked men may make. A Catholic, then, can be as loyal to the State as the non-Catholic; with the difference that the Catholic will have an unerring guide to inform his conscience, while a non-Catholic, in obeying his conscience, will have to rely on his own judgment, being deprived of any such support and enlightenment.

St. Peter was made the Primate or Head of the Church of Christ. This has always been the received belief of the Catholic Church. This Holy

Scripture teaches, tradition recognized, General Councils defined, and the sense of the faithful always instinctively felt. We quote the words of the Council of Florence declaring this to be the prerogative of St. Peter and his successors: "We define that the Apostolic See and Roman Pontiff hold primacy over the whole world, and that he is the successor of St. Peter, and Head of the whole Church, and the Father and Teacher of all Christians; and that to him, in blessed Peter, was delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ full power of feeding, ruling and governing the Church of God; as is likewise contained in the acts of General Councils and in the Sacred Canons." This office of Primacy which St. Peter thus holds in the Church of Christ, certainly carries with it the strongest presumption of his Inerrancy; which many have believed was virtually contained therein, and as theologically certain and a logical consequence therefrom. To them it has seemed that in this decree of the Council of Florence, Papal Infallibility was virtually defined, and was a consequence from the Headship of Peter. This, certainly, has been the opinion of some of the ablest theologians, and found many advocates among the bishops of the Vatican Council.

The object which Christ had in view in establishing Peter's Primacy was to secure the unity of the Church; or, in the words of one of the fathers, "that a head being constituted, all occasion of schism might be removed." No unity could exist or even be imagined, unless with some head which all the rest of the faithful, both pas-

tors and people, should obey. The unity of the Church consists essentially in unity of faith, according to the words of St. Jerome : " The Church is made up of many persons, and yet it is said to be one, on account of its unity of faith." Even the external unity of the Church, or the bond which unites together pastors to their bishops, and bishops to their Head, depends mainly upon this oneness of faith. Christ, then, endowing Peter with this office in His church, must have invested it with the prerogatives efficient to preserve this unity ; He must have supplied him with the means necessary to this purpose ; without sufficient authority in the Head of the Church, its unity cannot be preserved. Whatever, therefore, was necessary for the end for which it was set up, essentially belongs to the Primacy ; and was conferred by our Lord. We are aware, of course, that the external unity of the Church would only require authority in the Head, and obedience in those over whom he is placed. But this external bond does not fulfil the adequate definition of the unity of the Church, which cannot be conceived to exist without unity of faith. And unity of faith implies Inerrancy in him authorized to teach it. Unless his decision is unerring, he cannot forbid doubt. It is not, then, difficult to see that, so far as the Primacy of Peter was meant to secure oneness of faith, without Infallibility it is absolutely impotent to preserve it. It may be sufficient for all purposes which require only obedience and submission ; it suffices for the external unity of the Church : authority only is required for govern-

ment; Inerrancy is required for teaching. That the authority vested in Peter's primatial office includes Unerringness, is further shown in the Decree which we are considering: for it recognizes in Peter and his successors full power of feeding, that is, teaching the flock of Christ; it also designates him as the Supreme Teacher. The power of teaching, not to speak of the full power of a teacher who is supreme, certainly indicates a prerogative to which nothing is wanting; it also implies the right of exacting the assent of the mind to what is taught. The Council of Florence indicated what it thought of Papal Infallibility, when it defined the Pope to be possessed of a Primacy to which it seems to cling, as an inherent and inseparable prerogative. It recognized in him as Supreme Teacher full power to feed with the word of life the Church of which he is the Foundation and Head. It added, that this belief did not originate with itself; but that it was contained in the Acts of the General Councils that had preceded and in the Sacred Canons.

In the XVI. Chapter of St. Matthew we read that, "Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi; and asked His disciples, saying: Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said: Some John the Baptist; and others Elias; and others Jeremiah; or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed

it to thee, but My Father, Who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever thou shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

Here Christ gives His apostles an opportunity of declaring what belief they had of Him. St. Peter, the spokesman of the others, assured Him that they believed Him to be the Christ the Son of the living God. Christ then declared Peter by reason of, and as a reward for, his profession of faith in His Divinity, to be the rock upon which He will build His church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

The mind of our Lord in using the similitude of a house and its foundation for the building of His Church is manifest. What the foundation is to the house—its essential support—Peter is declared to be to the Church. If the foundation endures, the building remains firm; if the foundation totters or is shaken, the house falls: the firmness of Peter will be the firmness of the Church; if Peter fails, his failing involves the ruin of the superstructure. Unlike the foolish man, whom He condemned, who built his house upon the sand, and the winds blew and the rains fell, and beat upon that house, and great was the fall thereof; but as the wise man, whom He praised, who built his house upon the rock, and the storms came and the rains fell, and beat upon that house, and it fell not because

it was built upon a rock: so, our Lord, about to build His house that will endure throughout all time, that will withstand the gates of hell leagued against it, that will defy the vicissitudes of fortune, and overcome the storms of the moral world, more disastrous by far than those of nature, begins by laying broad and deep and unshaken, the mighty foundation on the rock of Peter, that is to support His imperishable church. Our Lord adds, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, for the reason already given: because of the strength and solidity of its rock-foundation. This is the necessary and indissoluble connection and cohesion that must always exist between the Church and its foundation in St. Peter.

It is, therefore, from this foundation that the Church is to derive the unfailing strength and power of resistance against which the gates of hell will in vain contend. The rock, then, which is to support the infallible Church, must be itself infallible; the house that is to stand, must have its base immovable. If Peter be not infallible, neither is the Church that he supports; if the gates of hell can prevail against Peter, they can also prevail against the Church itself: if they cannot prevail against the Church, so, likewise, they cannot prevail against Peter; who, therefore, must be infallible.

The power and office of Peter cannot have ceased with him; they should endure as long as the Church, the foundation should last as long as the building; they should, therefore, last forever. Wherefore must Peter live in his successors, and

his faith be as imperishable as the Church it was destined to nourish and support.

In the XXII. chapter of St. Luke, we read these words: "And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath sought you, to sift you, as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail: and thou when thou turnest, confirm thy brethren."

Here again our Lord refers to the assaults of the gates of hell against the Church, of which He spoke in the passage which we have just considered; and where He said that because of its rock-foundation they should never prevail against it. Now, on the eve of His passion, and nearer to His departure from this world, He again refers to this warfare which hell would forever wage, and which had already started against the apostles, by attempting to undermine their faith, to sift them as wheat. By destroying their faith hell would destroy the faith of the Church itself. But He assures them that He has provided a means by which these assaults will be overcome: He has prayed for the faith of Peter upon whom He has promised to build His church. All have been tempted by the evil one. But He has provided for the faith of all by praying for the faith of Peter, their Supreme Pastor and the Head of the Church: their security will be in clinging to him; for, to him He has imparted the duty of confirming them and the whole Church in the faith. It was by the destruction of the apostles that Satan sought to destroy the Church. He struck at, not their charity nor their hope, but the beginning,

the root, the source of their justification. Their faith once blasted, all other virtues would be irrecoverably lost. Faith surviving, other virtues though blighted could revive and re-flourish. It is for your faith that I have prayed, and it is the faith of others that I impart to you the virtue to confirm. He had declared that hell should never prevail against His church; that, founded upon the rock of Peter, it would last forever. He, therefore, must supply it with power to overcome the assaults of hell, which had already begun. He does so; He prays for Peter that his faith may never fail, that it may be the everlasting source and strength of the Church's faith: and to him, when he shall have risen from the fault into which he was about to fall and received the virtue of the Holy Ghost, He imparts the duty of confirming the faith of the Church and protecting it against the assaults of the evil one. Praying for Peter, He provided for the safety of all. He prayed for Peter in particular, although He declared that all had been and would be tempted, because he was the Foundation of the Church and the Supreme and Infallible Teacher of all. This is the power by which the Church shall be rendered forever invulnerable to the powers of darkness. How now could Peter discharge this duty, unless infallible? can the weak confirm the weak? can the blind lead the blind? He must have supplied Peter with the necessary means to fulfil his duty: he who requires an end, provides the means necessary thereto; the only sufficient means is Infallibility.

To the obligation put upon Peter of confirming the faith of the whole Church, responds the duty, on the part of the Church, of faith and obedience. If Peter was to confirm, the apostles and faithful were to be confirmed, and to submit to his doctrinal decisions. What right would he have to exact this submission, if he be as little infallible as those whom he teaches? if the shepherd be as liable to go astray as the sheep, what right has he to presume to direct them, and how ill provided for is the flock whose shepherd has no more intelligence than itself?

Jesus, then, by His prayer for Peter and by assigning to him the duty of confirming his brethren, must by virtue of that prayer have made him infallible. Otherwise He would impose upon him an office to whose exercise he would be unequal, which is absurd. This duty was given to him not personally, but as a part of his office in the Church; and as he was to live forever in his successors, so this prerogative was to subsist while there was faith to be professed or prayed for, or Christians to be confirmed. Necessary as was this duty in the days of the apostles, and when as yet heresy had not sought to split the seamless robe of Christ; still more necessary at a later period, and now, when there is no unity of belief except among those who listen to the voice and are assured by the unerring authority of him for whom Christ prayed, and who lives in his successors. At all times, experience has attested the need of a confirming power in the Church. If it is necessary it must exist; for Christ left His church destitute

of nothing indispensable to its existence and perpetuity.

Unceasingly have the successors of St. Peter confirmed the faith of their brethren, and preserved in all its purity and integrity the faith once delivered to the Church. In the efficacy of Christ's prayer the Church has always found its assurance against error, and its triumph over the powers of hell and darkness. General councils have assembled for little else than to hear the teachings of Peter uttered by his successors. No council has ever yet been recognized as ecumenical which was not convoked by Peter, presided over by Peter or his legates, confirmed by Peter. From the Council of Jerusalem in which when Peter spoke silence prevailed, and his decision was acquiesced in by all; from the day when St. Paul went up to Jerusalem to submit his teachings to Peter, "lest he should have run in vain," to the present hour, all history reveals the Supremacy and Infallible authority of the Vicar of Christ virtually acknowledged by all the Councils, and throughout the whole tradition of the Church.

We cannot omit the interview which Christ had with His disciples, after His' resurrection, on the banks of the sea of Tiberias. It is related by St. John xxi., in the following words: "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I

love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep."

In these words Christ speaks of His church under the metaphor of which he was so fond, that of sheep and their shepherd; "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: and those also must I bring, and there shall be but one fold and one shepherd;" "The good shepherd lays down his life for his flock." He now employs this figure for the last time. He has risen from the dead; He will soon return to the bosom of His Father; His mission is nearly finished.

On this occasion Christ calls upon Peter to declare his love, as He had once before called upon him to proclaim his faith. And as that profession of faith was the prelude to the promise made by Christ that upon him He would build His church, so this declaration of love is to be followed by the fulfilment of the promise: his office as Foundation and Head of the Church, and his power to confirm the faith of his brethren, are about to be verified and re-affirmed by Christ making him the Universal Teacher and Supreme Shepherd of His flock. After each assurance that Peter gives of his love, Jesus imparts His commission: to his thrice-repeated profession of love, Jesus answered with His thrice-repeated injunction of feeding His lambs, and feeding His sheep.

By these words the fathers of the Church have always understood to be meant the whole body of the faithful, bishops, pastors, and people. According to them Peter is the Shepherd of shepherds and Pastor of pastors.

What are the duties of a pastor, what are the obligations of a flock? do not the one and the other suppose him to be unerring? How can Peter, constituted the Supreme Pastor of the whole Church, feed it with the wholesome food of sound doctrine, guard it from the poisonous or noxious weeds of heresy and error, nourish it with the true faith, lead it into the safe pastures of revealed truth and morality; in a word, how can he perform all the duties of a good and faithful shepherd and dispenser, if he be destitute of the gift of Infallibility and be liable to err in the performance of his duty? It is to be remarked that in Scripture the word "to feed" means to rule or govern, with all that the right implies. Always he that feeds, expresses him that rules and governs with absolute power. From this emphatic meaning of the word "feed" as used in Scripture, no less than from the general power which the office of shepherd and the duty of a flock involve, it is manifest that Peter, constituted the Supreme Pastor, must have been endowed with Infallibility. If the blind lead the blind, will they not both fall into the ditch?

And here recurs the argument which we have made use of in considering the words of Christ authorizing Peter to confirm his brethren: he who wills the end supplies the means: power

given to authority implies submission on the part of those subject. We need not pursue this argument further than to add that, when Peter received the authority and duty of teaching the whole flock of Christ, there was imposed at the same time, upon the flock the correlative duty of obedience and belief; this reciprocal duty means that his teachings possess, and are to be received, with the certainty of faith.

The nature of faith requires Infallibility in him who assumes the office of teaching it. How can it be received as the word of God, if not assured of freedom from all error? Faith requires the assent of the mind and the acceptance of the heart: this is incompatible with liability to err in him authorized to teach it; there must be a positive guarantee that he who has a right to command this assent is fortified against error by Him who has invested him with this right. God Himself could not require this interior acquiescence of the soul to a teacher destitute of Infallibility. The nature of the human mind forbids an absolute assent to a truth which is not evident: the truths of Divine faith are not in themselves evident, but only in the light of the authority and veracity of those who teach them. They shine, so to speak, with a borrowed light: their intrinsic evidence is wanting. We believe Revelation on the word of God making it; Peter is His Vicar and our declared Pastor; God has imposed upon us the duty of believing him; and that, too, on the pain of our eternal salvation. God, therefore, must have rendered him infallible

in teaching those truths or enunciating those principles which we are required to believe or to practice.

It must ever be borne in mind that this doctrine of Papal Infallibility is nothing new ; that it is as old as the Church ; that it is one of the truths delivered to the apostles. The Church has no power to create new dogmas. She can define and declare what has always been in the deposit of Revelation intrusted to her ; she but explicitly formulates what has always been virtually believed. Like the astronomer who creates not the planets he discovers, she but makes known what has always existed. Nor can she be said to discover these truths : for, by the living, abiding presence of the Paraclete within her, she is always conscious of what is contained in the deposit of Revelation. When, then, she defines as a dogma what she has always believed, she but directs her Divinely illumined vision upon her consciousness of the truths intrusted to her keeping, and instinctively yet infallibly enunciates what she would teach, or condemns what may be contrary thereto. We might begin with the Council of Jerusalem, and pass on to that of Nice, Ephesus, Constantinople, Florence, and Trent, down to the Vatican Council ; we might review ecclesiastical history from the day that Christ ascended into heaven down to the present hour ; and throughout its length and breadth, in all the mighty conflicts and innumerable discussions there recorded, it would be seen that this truth of Papal Infallibility was always virtually acknowledged, and contin-

ually acted upon. In every doubt that has ever disturbed the faith and minds of the faithful, in every schism and heresy that sought to rend the Church of God, she has spontaneously turned to the successor of St. Peter to learn what she was to believe, and what teaching she was to shun. As a flock, by the very prompting of nature, seek and follow their shepherd; so the flock of Christ has always looked to the Supreme Pastor, and accepted his decision as indeclinable and infallible.

We may add, also, that the successors of Christ have always shown that they were conscious of the gift and power which they had received of teaching and confirming all others, both bishops and faithful, in the faith. This consciousness of the gift evinces its existence. For it is manifest from the passages of Scripture which we have considered, that Christ constituted Peter the Head and Foundation and Infallible Teacher of His church. It is equally manifest that this prerogative was to last as long as the Church; and that the Church was to last forever. Wherefore, it is clear that there must exist to-day on earth this Church, with its Head authorized to confirm forevermore in its faith. Wherever this Church and its Head exist, they are conscious of their prerogatives. Now, then, no institution that exists, or that ever existed on earth, makes or has ever made such claims, save the Catholic Church, and its Head. What is more; no one would ever, in the wildest fancy, imagine that such claims could belong to any church or religious institution, save that Catholic Church which claims to be, and which men

in their better moments, must acknowledge to be, the corporate body established by Christ, and its Head to be His Vicar and representative.

All history confirms the truth which we have established from Holy Scripture and the tradition of the Church. If there were a single instance of a Pope who, in his Magisterial capacity, taught error in faith or morals, the claim for Papal Infallibility should be forever denied; it could be the prerogative of the Church herself, but not that of her Head. Of course, in that case, error would have to be demonstrated against him in the sphere in which he is infallible: that he erred as Supreme Pastor teaching faith or morals. The fact that no such error is recorded on the page of history, luminously confirms the truth of his Unerringness. Any instance of a Pope erring, should be certain in order to invalidate his Infallibility; it should be equally certain that he erred in his Teaching office. We have proved that this prerogative in the Pope is absolutely certain; and that it is only exercised in his office as Teacher of the Church. It is by such form of teaching that the unity of the Church in faith is secured and it was only for this end that Infallibility was vouchsafed. It was as the Foundation of the Church, as Confirmer of the faith of his brethren, as the Supreme Shepherd, that Jesus Christ invested him with this power: but it is only when He speaks Magisterially, that He performs these functions; therefore, it is only then that he possesses Infallibility. These two conditions are fatal to the pretension that any Pope ever erred. Any

fact that can be adduced in which the Pope may seem to have erred is either uncertain in point of occurrence, or it was not in his Teaching capacity. In the most commonly adduced instance against Papal Infallibility, Honorius declares that he does not intend to define any thing as of faith, to be believed by the Church. Moreover, his letter complained of is just as capable of an orthodox as of a heterodox explanation.

We dismiss, as unworthy of our attention, what is sometimes urged from the exceptional character or morals of some of the Popes. It should be unnecessary to remind any intelligent person, that such objections can, in nowise, militate against their official acts and utterances. If these depended for their value upon private integrity, there would have been long ago an end to all authority and law and justice in the State, no less than in the Church. Power conferred on those constituted in authority, is not for their personal exaltation, but for the welfare of those over whom they are placed. As it is not bestowed for the reward of personal merit, it calls for no standard of virtue or special type of character for its valid exercise. When Judas baptises, Christ baptises, says St. Augustine. If the sacramental power of the priest were to be determined or measured by his degree of personal holiness, the reception of the sacraments would be forever a matter of doubt and uncertainty. If the decisions of a court should require for their binding force, personal worth in the judge, justice and law to secure it, would forever fail. The

power of the successor of St. Peter to teach the faithful may be compared to the sacramental power of a priest to dispense the sacraments, or to the power of a judge to distribute justice. It has been transmitted through the long line of his successors, unstained by any human imperfection: the sun's rays penetrate the most hideous recesses without defilement. It is not in human depravity to subvert the work which Christ has made eternal. The Church was not destroyed, nor the redemption of man impeded by the perfidy of Judas: it was rather the human occasion that delivered up Christ for the Sacrifice to the Eternal Father, for which He had come into the world. Christ Himself instructed the Jews to listen to the Pharisees who had sat in the chair of Moses, notwithstanding many of them were stained with grievous imperfection: "Do what they say, but do not what they do, because they have sat in the Chair of Moses." In like manner, we should abide by the teachings of those who have sat in the Chair of Peter, and have been, however unworthily, the representatives of Christ.

I.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Gospel which God had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son Who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord.—St. Paul, Rom. i. 2-4.

WHEN Jesus Christ came into the world sent by His Eternal Father, the bearer of a Divine revelation to men, they had a right to demand, and He a duty to proclaim, who He was, whence He had come, and by what authority He spoke. He had no right to exact, and they had no duty to yield, faith and obedience until He had exhibited His Divine credentials. The Jews, on hearing of John the Baptist and the work which he was doing, sent to inquire who he was; was he the Messiah, or were they to look for another? John recognized the justness of their inquiry and proclaimed with unmistakable openness that he was not the Messiah, that he was "but the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" he called upon them "to make straight the path, and to prepare the way for Him Who was to come, the latchet of Whose shoe he was unworthy to loose." John

exercised the same right of inquiry when in prison hearing the wonders that Jesus wrought, he sent to Him asking, if He was He Who was to come? Jesus as openly answered: "Go and tell John what ye have seen and heard; the blind see, the deaf hear, the poor have the Gospel preached unto them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me;" by these words declaring as He subsequently declared in the course of His mission, that the works which He did, gave testimony that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Afterwards, when "to fulfil all justice," and in spite of John's protest of his unworthiness, He was baptized by him in the Jordan, God Himself acknowledged the right of mankind to know who He was and whence He had come. For the Holy Ghost was seen visibly descending upon Him, and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven proclaiming that He was His only-begotten Son in Whom He was well pleased, and calling upon the sons of men to believe in Him as such.

Christ was conscious of His Divine nature, as every man is conscious of his human. If man cannot be mistaken in his knowledge of what he is, still less could the Incarnate God. His consciousness resulted from the intercommunion of the Divine and human natures; and revealed the reality of both. From the beginning to the end of His career, Jesus Christ never failed to manifest this consciousness of His Divine character and mission.

Certainly, if men would know whether He

was really God, it is Himself they should ask ; no being external to Himself could know. While the miracles which He wrought and the Divine power which He exhibited, must have come from God ; yet the precise truth for which they vouch, must be learned from Himself. When He declares that He is the Son of God, and to attest this truth, performs miracles and otherwise shows power which is Divine, it is clear, either that He is God, or, what is the same, that the Eternal God sanctions His claim of Divinity. If He had performed only works which called for a power which God could have imparted to a creature, and if He had made no claim of Divinity, He could have been as Moses, who wrought miracles ; or as one of the prophets, who by Divine power were allowed to see the future.

We read in St. Matthew that “ Jesus came into the district of Cesarea Philippi : and asked His disciples, saying : Who do men say that the Son of man is ? And they said : Some John the Baptist ; and others Elias ; and others Jeremiah ; or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them : But who say ye that I am ? Simon Peter answered and said : Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him : Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona : because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, Who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Here Peter declares, as unmistakably as human

language can express, his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. And Jesus Christ declares, in a manner as unmistakable, that Peter spoke the truth; He endorses the truth of Peter's utterance, and pronounces him blessed in that he knows this truth, and knows it not from flesh or blood, that is, from human discernment or human persuasion, but from the revelation of the Eternal Father, Who has imparted it to him by the gift of Divine faith. Moved by Peter's hearty acceptance of the truth and, as if to reward the faith which has been vouchsafed to him and which he has so willingly received, Christ tells Peter who he is, and what will be his office in the Church: "thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In St. John we read that Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us." "So long a time have I been with you," replied Jesus, "and you have not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father? Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" He declared that, "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting. He who believeth in Him, is not judged: but he who believeth not, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." St. John iii. 16-18. When Jesus taught the Jews that the truth would make them free, they answered that

they had "never been the slaves of anyone;" whereupon He said: "Amen, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin, is the slave of sin. The servant does not remain forever in the house: but the son abideth forever. If therefore the Son make you free, you will be free indeed." St. John viii. 32-36. Thus Jesus Christ as the natural Son of the Father, declares His right to invite into the household those whom He will and to restore them to liberty. He declares that, "no one hath ascended into heaven unless He Who hath descended from heaven, the Son of man Who is in heaven;" thereby proclaiming His heavenly origin and future glory, and that He is at the same time both in heaven and on earth. "How long," asked the Jews, "dost Thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus replied: "I speak to you, and you believe not. The works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me. I and the Father are one. The Father is in Me, and I am in the Father." These words declare the identity of His nature with that of the Father, and which the Father had communicated to Him by eternal generation. The Jews then took up stones to stone Him for what they designated blasphemy. Here Christ declares that the works which He did in the name of the Father, proclaimed His Divinity and that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. He declared the truth, and the Eternal Father by the accomplishment of works which none but Divinity could accomplish, placed the seal of Divine attestation upon it. "If I had not

done," He said, "works which no one else had done, they would be without sin; but as I have performed works such as no one else hath performed, they are without excuse and their sin remaineth."

When brought before the tribunal of the high-priest, Jesus is abjured by him in the name of the living God, that He tell if He is the Christ, the Son of God. He, tranquil in the consciousness of His Divinity, makes answer that He is; and at once confirms His acknowledgment by assuming an attribute of the Godhead and declares His right to sit at the right hand of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead: "But I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high-priest understood Him as the Jews who went about stoning Him because of blasphemy, in that being a man, He made Himself God; and as the apostles who enlightened by the Eternal Father, had declared Him to be the Son of the living God. "What further need have we of witnesses?" exclaimed the high-priest. "Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you? And they condemned Him as worthy of death." He is condemned to death because He says He is the Son of God. They understand His meaning fully.

When He is brought before Pontius Pilate, the priests seek to urge Pilate, reluctant because he sees no cause to condemn Him, by reminding Him that they "have a law and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son

of God." "Art thou a king? Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, that I should bear witness to the truth." The very mockery of the people as He hung upon the cross, shows that He was put to death for declaring His Divinity: "Vah, Thou who destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost re-build it, save Thyself: if Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross."

If the human mind is capable of apprehending the truth, and if human language is capable of expressing it, and if punishment is inflicted for a definite charge, it is impossible not to understand that Jesus before His apostles, before the people, before the tribunals that tried Him, did declare His Divinity, and was so understood by them all: the apostles glorying in His declaration; the people stoning Him for blasphemy; the tribunals declaring Him guilty of death; and His executioners, and priests, and people, mocking at Him, and challenging Him, by virtue of His claim, to descend from the cross.

Not alone by formal and explicit affirmation sealed with His blood, does Christ declare His Divinity. But He assumes to Himself all the attributes of God. He is one with the Father: "I and the Father are one;" "the Father is in Me and I in the Father;" He "will send the Holy Ghost." He declares his equality with God: all men are to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" "whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, that He will give unto you." Omniscience

belongs to Him: "He is the Word and Wisdom of the Father;" "In Him is all the knowledge of the Godhead corporally." He is Almighty: "All things were made through Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made." He is everywhere: "Where two or more are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." His is the unchangeableness of God: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." He teaches His eternal generation from the Father: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He is the dispenser of life and immortality: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day;" "He that believeth in Me, even though dead shall live;" "I am the resurrection and the life;" the eating of His body bestows a Divine energy that insures immortal life; "No one cometh to the Father save through Him." He declares His eternity: "Amen, amen, I say to you before Abraham was, I am." He had already said that "Abraham, their father had rejoiced to see His day," and, in prophetic vision, "saw it and was glad." "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Abraham and the fathers are dead. What makest Thou Thyself?" He replied: "Before Abraham was, I am;" not that He was, but that He is; assuming to Himself the everlasting present which belongs to God alone, with Whom there is no past or present or future: assuming to Himself the "I

am" which was the very designation of Jehovah among the Jews, and under which form philosophy expresses its highest conception of the nature of God. He is the Judge of all men, and will condemn the reprobate, and give eternal bliss to the elect: "But I say to you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

That the Jews understand Christ to claim to be very God, is manifest from the way in which they received His words. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then doth He say: I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered, and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, unless the Father Who sent Me, draw him, and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets: and they shall all be taught of God. Every one who hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me." St. John vi. "But Jesus answered them: My Father worketh until now, and I work. Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus answered, and said to them: Truly, truly, I say to you: The Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." St. John v. He reminds the Jews that John the Baptist had given testimony of Him;

that His Father's voice was heard from heaven ; that the miracles which He performed are even a greater testimony than that of John ; He challenges them to search the Scriptures, for they give testimony of Him. St. John v. If Jesus were not God, and if the Jews only misapprehended Him, He should have corrected their error. Instead of correcting, He reaffirmed the sense in which they took His words. It was because they understood Him to claim to be God, that they would stone Him to death. If He had claimed to be only a man, there would have been no cause for their indignation.

Jesus Christ claimed the supreme adoration which belongs to the Eternal God alone. As adoration is rendered to no creature and is the incommunicable property of the Deity, and as it is absolutely strange to all our knowledge or experience, it is difficult to define its essence or nature. It is not any mere external homage, or empty acknowledgment, or bodily posture. It is the prostration of the mind with all its understanding, of the will with all its powers, of the heart with all its affections, of the whole soul and being ; it is a complete surrender or annihilation of one's self before the unutterable majesty of God: transcendent in His nature and attributes, in His perfection and goodness, and in His absolute dominion over all creatures. St. John declares in the Apocalypse, in language, perhaps, as expressive of the truth as human speech permits, the sense of annihilation on the part of the creature, and the recognition of God's greatness, in-

volved in the act of adoration, when he declares that on seeing Jesus in His glory, he fell prostrate as one dead. If we analyze the essence of adoration, we shall find that it results from the soul being overwhelmed with the infinite perfection of the Godhead, creating in worship unbounded honor and esteem : with the infinite goodness, calling for gratitude and love : and with the infinite dominion and power, necessitating subjection and obedience. This, as far as we can declare it, is the nature of the adoration which the creature owes to God, and to Him alone.

Now, Jesus claims for Himself this supreme adoration. He must, therefore, claim the perfection, and goodness, and authority, which alone could entitle Him to it. And this claim He makes not only as a consequence of what He taught concerning His nature and mission, and from His assumption of the Divine attributes, but in explicit and peremptory language.

Did He declare the truth? No possible reason can be assigned to show that He did not. No religious teacher who has ever come into the world, save Him, has claimed to be Divine. Such a claim, except founded in truth, is too impious for the most reckless human ambition : too grotesque for the most disordered human imagination : too absurd for the most insane fanaticism : too chimerical for the human intellect to conceive : too extravagant for even the most ungovernable pride of the human heart. Nothing but the truth could have forced Christ to declare His Divine character. He openly challenged men to convict

Him of sin ; and no one then or since has accepted the challenge. Yet, if He had falsely professed Divinity, He would have been guilty of sin, the most shocking and shameful.

Now, Jesus Christ claims this adoration which belongs to God alone. His hearers and apostles all understood Him to claim the self-same honor ; and they all rendered it to Him and taught others to do the same. "The Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." St. John v., 22, 23. Jesus Christ calls upon the Eternal Father, to "glorify Him with the glory which He had with Him, before the world was made." "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," was the adoration,—at once a confession of his own sinfulness, and of the unapproachable holiness of Christ,—rendered by St. Peter. "My Lord and my God," was the tardy expression of faith and worship, wrung from the incredulous St. Thomas, by actual contact with the risen body of the Redeemer. St. Stephen stoned to death by the Jews, with his dying breath, worshipped Jesus by commending his spirit into His hands : Whom the opened heavens revealed standing at the right hand of the Eternal Father. The centurion likened the power of Christ over nature, to his own over his soldiers : each had the right to command, and each was entitled to and received obedience. Christ accepted the acknowledgment and implied homage : "Amen, I say to you that I have not found so great faith in Israel." And the Lord of nature exerted his dominion, and

the fever left the centurion's servant, without his even being seen of Him. St. Paul declares that, "he who believes not in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is already judged;" and pronounces anathema on him failing to love Him. His writings, as well as those of all the other apostles, inculcate the duty of believing in Him, hoping in Him, and loving Him as "God blessed forever." "At the name of Jesus, every knee must bend of those who are in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth." "There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved." St. Paul acknowledges the Lord Jesus to be, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the Author of grace: "Grace be with you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ;" "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." He believes in the Lord Jesus, he confesses Him, he prays to Him, he trusts in Him, he invokes Him, and loves Him, as the living God, and calls upon all men to do the same, every page of his writings evinces. Not content with this: "Let the angels of God adore Him," he exclaims. And, as if in obedience, St. John in the Apocalypse declares: "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and the animals and the ancients and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb Who was slain, is worthy to receive power and Divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and praise. And everyone which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and those which are in the sea, and which are in it, I heard all saying: To Him

Who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, praise, and honor, and glory, and power forever and ever. And the four animals said : Amen. And the four and twenty ancients fell on their faces and adored Him Who liveth forever and ever." It is thus evident that even the angels adored Him, as their God, by this worship which they were seen so gloriously to render to Him, as the Lamb of God, as the Redeemer of men, and as the true and living God.

Jesus Christ could not have claimed this Supreme worship and adoration, unless He was conscious of His Divinity ; if conscious that it did not belong to Him, He could not have accepted it. He could not have permitted the children of men to fall into so base an idolatry : He Who professed to have come to unteach men their errors, and to rescue them from the slavery of sin, and to point out to them the road that leads from this world of sense and deception, to the kingdom of truth, and the possession of the true God. Or, if we imagine, for a moment, what is absurd, that He was misunderstood by those who believed that He claimed supreme adoration, and who rendered it to Him, can we think that He would have permitted them to remain the victims of so foul an error ? Can we think that he failed to do that which any honest man, with the least pretence to uprightness and rectitude,—what any man, save the most debased impostor, would not have failed to do?—to let them know that He claimed no such adoration, and that He was but a man like themselves. Can we believe that He was less

true to the dictates of honesty, and the commonest instincts of our nature, than were the apostles Paul and Barnabas, who, when the Lystrians would have worshipped them as gods who had come to them in the form of men, declared that they were but men of like passions with themselves, and no-wise entitled to the incommunicable adoration of the Eternal God? If it were through a mistaken apprehension, that “the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He called God His own Father, making Himself equal to God,” could He, without the most flagrant contempt of the truth, have continued to argue, as He did, the sameness of His nature with that of the Father, from the oneness of their works, and the identity of their honor? could He have declared? “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom He willeth;” “And the Father judgeth no one, but hath given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, as they honor the Father; he who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father Who sent Him.”—Could such language have been uttered by one who knew that he was not God?

The readiness with which Christ Jesus, if but a man, would have corrected such an error on the part of His hearers, and at once summarily repressed the impetuosity that would adore Him as God, was illustrated by the angel in the Apocalypse, who, when St. John, overcome by his glory, fell prostrate before him, at once made known that he was but a creature like himself.

II.

Which of you shall convict Me of sin? If I say the truth of you, why do ye not believe Me?—St. John viii. 46.

IN the first part of our discourse we saw that Jesus Christ affirmed that He was God; that He assumed to Himself the attributes of the Godhead; that He claimed as His own, the worship which belongs to God alone.

We come now to show that Jesus Christ did not lie. This once evinced, it will irresistibly follow that He is truly God.

The holiness of Christ forbids the thought that He spoke not the truth. Everywhere in the life and character of Christ, do we find evidence of His holiness. He is the exemplar of the most absolute perfection, the personification of all virtue. The unerring judgment and all-seeing knowledge, the upright will and moral rectitude, which, according to their measure, are characteristic of human perfection, were His in a manner never before vouchsafed to any son of man: in the highest degree of which human nature is capable. They were the result of His infallible mind and impeccable will. Every man is conscious of what he is, and in countless ways proclaims it. Christ's consciousness of the highest moral integrity, of the most complete innocence, is always manifest. In vain will you seek anything suggestive of conscious guilt of even the least sin. Conscious of His immunity from sin and of His inamissible innocence, He challenged

His enemies to accuse Him of sin ;—openly and defiantly He threw down the gauntlet to those who would have willingly accepted it, if they could. It was a summons to all men to study His character, to scrutinize His career, to investigate His conduct and actions, past, present, and to come ; and if they could find aught therein savoring of sin or moral delinquency, or anything which failed to come up to the lofty character which He claimed, it would at once be fatal to His claim. Or, if He did not exhibit the virtue and innocence which were to be expected from the inalienable sanctity of a Man-God, it would at once destroy His unparalleled pretension. But they never dared to reproach Him with aught that was sinful. And this was not because they sought not in all possible ways to discover what might be injurious or fatal to His claim of being the Son of God, or which He maintained to be heard and obeyed by all.

Prophet, priest, preacher, apostle, and saint,—all are ready to confess their personal failings and sins ; “ For a just man falls seven times, and rises again.” The prophet while bemoaning the sins of his people, finds time to grieve over his own. And while he declares that “ the lips of his people are unclean,” acknowledges that his own are unclean. The priest while compassionating with human infirmity, and offering sacrifices for the sins of men, is not unmindful of his own, for which he makes continual and simultaneous intercession. The preacher is but too keenly conscious of the counterpart which his

life presents, to the perfection which he inculcates. The holier he is, and the nearer he comes to the standard to which he exhorts men, the greater is his distress at the contrast between the ideal, and the actual realized in his own life. The Apostle Paul is continually repenting of his infirmities, and yet glorying in Christ, for his triumphs. He feels the power of sin and temptation; and trembles lest, having preached to others, he might himself become a castaway. He who was exalted to the third heavens, and heard what it is not given to him to utter, feels a sting of the flesh, the angel of Satan which was allowed to buffet him. So severe was the trial that he thrice besought the Lord for its departure. But he is admonished that "power is made perfect by adversity." His fellow-apostle Peter declares himself "a sinful man." The saints filled with fear of their frailty and their proneness to fall, have their sins continually before them, and never cease to lament their sinfulness. They feel themselves to be nothing in God's sight, but what His grace has made them. The cry of anguish for past sins, and of purpose of amendment, is the predominant trait of their lives.

All these different characters and every other servant of God realize,—and their perfection mainly consists in this,—the impassable interval and insurmountable contrast between the transcendent ideal which they inculcate, or aspire to, and that which they actually attain themselves. And however strenuous may be their efforts, and howsoever far in holiness fidelity to grace may

carry them, they yet feel how far short they fall. No matter how acceptable to God, or how full of His power and gifts, no human being ever felt himself exempted from the yoke of sin and downward tendency. This dissatisfaction with their actual spiritual progress increases as they advance in holiness; and to themselves they seem to deteriorate, while, in truth, it is owing not to their retrogression, but to the widening and expansion of the horizon of their holiness, and their increased susceptibilities to moral defect and sin.

But in Jesus Christ there is nothing of all this. Scrutinize His character as you may, explore His life to the smallest incident, and you will find nothing that indicates or betrays the least consciousness of sin, or the absence of the most absolute perfection. He, at once, Prophet, Priest, Preacher, Apostle, Saint, never once indicates that He is one in sin and guilt with the children of men to whom He has been sent. If, in Him, the apostle intimates, we have "One Who can compassionate with our infirmity, being like unto us in all things," he at once adds, "except in sin;" "for in Him there is neither sin nor the shadow of sin." For it was fit that we should have such a High-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: Who hath no need daily, as the priests, to offer victims, first for their own sins, afterwards for those of the people."

The apostles sent to preach the Gospel felt their unworthiness, and continually declare it; particularly St. Paul. St. John the Baptist, the

Precursor of Christ, declared his unfitness to discharge even a menial service toward Him "Who is to come after him." If Christ were but a creature sent into the world by the Eternal Father, as He Himself sent the apostles to preach salvation to men, could He have been a stranger to their humility, and so filled with self-appreciation, as never by a word to indicate the infinite distance there should necessarily be between Himself, a creature howsoever highly privileged, and the Eternal God, Whose servant He could only be?—as never by a hint to intimate the essential difference between His perfection, which, as that of a creature, could be only an imitation, and the uncreated and inimitable holiness of the ever-blessed Godhead? Where does He indicate any such discrimination? Nowhere.

If but a creature, He was conscious of this inferiority; but where does He relieve Himself of this sense of His comparative unworthiness, as did the Baptist and the apostles in their day? Everywhere "He is One with the Father;" He "will send the Holy Ghost," the Spirit of sanctification, "Who will not speak from Himself, but what things He had heard" in the eternal communion of the Triune God,—these He will announce. Think of a mere creature assuming the prerogative of sending One of the Divine Persons; and that, too, to finish his own work!

Jesus Christ, the Prophet, came into the world denouncing the sins of men in language to which the prophets were strangers. But where does He indicate that He is one with the men

whom He denounces, or a sharer in the sins that provoke His indignation or inflame His zeal? While He continually calls Himself the Son of man, where does He indicate self-consciousness of the weakness, or sins, or passions, of men? As a Saint, and as the best of men, He could have done so without derogation to His holiness. Such a confession would have only indicated that He was not God. Where, with Isaias, does He implore the Lord, "to purify His lips with a coal of fire, that He may be worthy to announce His word?" where, with Jeremiah, in faltering accents, does He exclaim: "Lord God: behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child?" or where, with Ezekiel, does He fall upon His face, until commanded to stand upon His feet? Where, in a word, does He indicate that His cause is one with those to whom He preached, or that He is tender to sin, because Himself not immune from it? or that His own salvation rests upon His observance of the truths He inculcated upon men? Nowhere does He imply that, like the captain of the shipwrecked crew, His cause is only one with those whom He would save from sin, and lead to heaven. Everywhere is He the Lord and Giver of Life, and the Father and Dispenser of the world to come.

If the Baptist, "greater than whom had not been born of woman," as Christ declared, could, notwithstanding his unrivalled eminence, humiliate himself, saying, that he "was but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and that he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of the shoe of Him

Who was to come after him ;” so could Christ, if He were less than God : yet He never uttered a word of self-depreciation. Christ must have been more than human, therefore Divine, when John, the greatest born of woman, was unworthy to perform toward Him a menial office. Christ Himself invoked the testimony which John had given of His mission and divinity.

Christ came preaching a standard of moral excellence for all, and of evangelical perfection for some, of which the world had not till then heard. But He nowhere pays tribute to human nature in His person by acknowledging, as the holiest of his followers and preachers in their own case have felt constrained to do, His inferiority to the virtue He inculcated, or the least dissonance between His character, and the sublime ideal upon which He would re-create and remodel that of men. He is not a disciple, but the Master and Exemplar of Divine perfection: “He and the Father are one;” “He is to be honored as the Father;” thereby He avows His own absolute perfection. His life is at once the concrete form of His preaching, and the perfect realization of the perfection which He sought to establish in the souls of men.

Such a course is in direct and fatal conflict with a character merely human. It is the very expression of the absolute identity which He felt existed between His own virtue and character, and that which He preached: it was the necessary outcome of the transcendently perfect Godhead become man and teaching those who are at once

His creatures and fellow-men. All this explains how promptly and safely He could challenge any accusation of sin. With all this, is utterly irreconcilable that which would be the most shameful of sins—the false claim of Divinity.

In the defiance to accuse Him of sin, which Christ issued to the Jews, and through them, to all mankind; in the consciousness of freedom from sin and holiness of life, of which He ever evinced such unmistakable signs; and in the complete absence of discrepancy between His own perfection and that which He preached, or in the absolute identity of the two, we find the most unanswerable arguments for the absence of fraud, and for the truth of the consciousness of the Divinity which He professed, and sealed with His blood and death.

When we consider the character of Christ, we find that it was such as constitutionally, and in the sense of mankind, is incapable of imposture, and which finds its development only in the atmosphere of truth. For, there are natures that seem to find their proper level and sphere in deceit and dissimulation. There are other characters of a diviner texture, and which show their predestination, by rising above this world, and seeking their element and full activity in honesty and truth.

The mind of an impostor is necessarily base, ignoble, and deceitful. If he who dissimulates the vices which he has, and simulates virtues to which he is a stranger, is the very definition of a hypocrite, how are we to designate him who

claims to be sent from God or to be Divine, when he knows such claims to be false? Such a one cannot be moved thereto except by the most intolerable vanity, or the lowest human motives. It cannot be that he seeks the welfare of mankind by such specious fraud, and which only requires time to be detected. It is the very consummation of the rankest selfishness and nauseating egotism. That the very slime of the earth, in the form of the creature-man, should seek to be esteemed his own Creator and the Lord of all, would be an instance of pride for which we could only find a parallel, and a remote one at that, in Lucifer and his companions. Such an aspiration after distinction and glory, could only spring from the most grovelling instincts and the most depraved nature. Such ambition would be the grotesque expression of a character the most ignoble. Such a nature, if endowed with conscience, and if not utterly blind to its light and steeled to its reproaches, in rendering an account to it, could only allege to justify or palliate its black and baneful deceitfulness, its self-delusive ambition, and the direful wrong inflicted upon mankind, the most contemptible and worldly motives, and the most mercenary instincts of selfishness and self-worship. Such a nature could not rise to the contemplation of motives beyond the range of human passion or uncircumscribed by the limits of this life. It would be as impossible for such a being to conceive and enunciate the sublime morality and the divine excellence of the Religion which Jesus taught, as it would be for the untutored savage

to appreciate the loftiest production of human genius, or for the meanest capacity to aspire to angelic intelligence.

Because of His omniscient and infallible mind, to Which, as the Divine Mind in Whom and through Whom and by Whom all things have been conceived and created, all truth was present and manifest, Christ, not after the manner of men, not circuitously and by inference, saw the truth; nor with uncertainty and hesitancy, did He announce it. Reasoning, while the highest act of man, is yet an act which marks the limit and confesses the weakness of our mental scope. Divine Intelligence or even angelic, transcends this necessity. Christ saw the truth directly, and, as a consequence, announced it as no human teacher could. Verily, as the people said, "He spoke as one having authority;" as One Who had but to express His consciousness, to declare the Eternal Truth. With the same ease with which He penetrated the hearts of men, or recalled the past, or divined the future, did He make known truths which, till then, had been hidden, or if vouchsafed to a few, "had been detained by them in injustice and iniquity;" for, because of pride and passion, the mind of man was darkened and his heart was made perverse.

Christ reclaimed the morality first given to men, and restored it to its pristine integrity. Not only he who has done the act, "but he who looketh after a woman to desire her," is guilty of the sin. Moses, "because of the hardness of their hearts," had permitted the bill of divorce. But Christ declares that, from the beginning, it was not

so: He promulgates anew the unity and indissolubility of the marriage tie. "It has been said: Thou shalt love thy friend and hate thy enemy. But I say to thee: Love thy enemy, and pray for them who persecute and calumniate you." Thus did He not only make known a new revelation, but rescued from Pharisaical and heathenish corruption, that first imparted to the race. Emphatically, did "He speak with authority;" and by this authority bespoke His divine mission.

Yet, in teaching men the loftiest truths, He adapts Himself to His human condition, and the condition of those whom He taught. By striking parable, or easy similitude, or familiar figure, He brought home to their minds, truths which the highest human philosophy had never reached; and which, even yet, are unknown where the Gospel has not been preached.

Socrates and Plato rose to moral conceptions the highest, probably, which the human intellect is capable of; yet they were stained by many vices and falsehoods, showing, if by nothing else, their human origin. Yet they sink before the manifest truth and unutterable grandeur of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His teachings as being so absolutely superior to that which human intelligence could conceive, proclaim at once their Divine source and Author. To us, to-day, this morality, after two thousand years, has so entered into our minds and hearts, has become so thoroughly familiar, that unless we reflect, we are apt to mix it up with lessons merely human, or even to believe that it is the product of the unaided

human mind. Like all truth, it is so simple, and answering our needs, it is so well adapted to our condition, that we would almost think it was always with us, and that it never came from above. What false prophet bent on deceiving mankind, ever rose, or could rise, to conceive the truth contained in the lessons: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole soul and heart and mind; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Outside of Moses, who received it from heaven, and Jesus Christ Who proclaimed it as the law for men, you will find no such expression. It is the solemn announcement of the eternal Law-giver, Whose presence in the heart of every man, his conscience attests. What degenerate self-seeker could ever conceive, or enunciate, those divine maxims whose very expression breathe the atmosphere of heaven, and which Jesus taught in His sermon on the Mount? "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil

against you, untruly, for My sake ; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven : for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." In human literature, the style of composition is said to proclaim its author. The form of conception and speech being the very image of the mind, and this in turn being individual, so that it cannot be the same in many, is regarded a safe criterion to discriminate between authors. If we apply this rule to the words of Jesus Christ, we cannot fail to be persuaded that they are the product of a mind more than human. Rousseau declared that the majesty of the Scriptures filled him with awe : the grace of God, or rather, his fidelity thereto, should have carried him farther, and enabled him to see that they were the words and work of God ; as he had acknowledged that "the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

Bear in mind what I have said must be the character of an impostor, and add to it whatever your own thoughts invest him with ; and then believe, if you can, that such a one could have ever conceived or uttered such sentiments as these : "Come to Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;" "In My Father's house there are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you ;" "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost ;" "He that confesseth Me before men, him will I confess before My Father in heaven ;" "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory

of His Father with the holy angels." Let the human heart answer whether this be the language of a conscious impostor, or the language of a teacher conscious of His Divine power and authority. If we are faithful to the light of our understanding, and if we listen to the dictates of our hearts, we cannot for a moment abuse the one or pervert the other, with the belief that such utterances ever proceeded from one bent on the deceit of mankind, or the gratification of his own insatiable vanity.

The impostor from his very nature, cannot possess the simplicity of soul and affectionateness of disposition which always accompany a truly great character. Greatness is always simple and childlike. To the degree of greatness are these virtues always proportionate; in other words, greatness is the very measurement of simplicity. Greatness conscious of itself, seeks not to appear great: littleness conscious of itself, always seeks the appearance of greatness. Where the real is, there is no need of the counterfeit. True greatness is coincident with true humility, and is content with being known to be what it really is. So identical are greatness and simplicity, that God, being alone great, is alone truly simple. The lower the being is, the higher it wants to seem to be: the higher the being is, the less it cares what others may think about it; in other words, it prefers to be, rather than to seem, great. The impostor with feelings dried up with his own pride, and with heart filled with himself, and with mind charged and overtaxed with his

projects for self-worship, or self-aggrandizement, or bodily gratification, or worldly glory, has no inclination for the ingenuous play of the emotions and sympathies, which results in a loving disposition or in affection for his neighbor. He who has scarcely thought or love sufficient to gratify his own egotism, has none to spare for others: he who is so completely filled with himself, can have no room for his fellow-man. His heart is steeled against the noblest emotions of his nature, and is rendered insensible to all feelings of pity and sympathy. In seeking the honor of mankind, something of which he is not worthy, he begins by paying exclusive honor to himself and seeming to believe that none exist save for him, and in the measure which may minister to his vanity.

How unlike all this is the character of Jesus Christ. What simplicity and yet greatness of soul! What affection and yet purity of disposition! How gentle, yet how authoritative in His dealings with men! Invited to the marriage feast, He performs his first miracle to relieve the embarrassment of his host. He permits Mary Magdalen to anoint His feet, declaring her sins forgiven because of her great love. He chides the apostles for not allowing little children to come unto Him; and declares that the kingdom of heaven is of such, and the necessity of every one to become as a little child, who would enter therein. He had not come for those who are in health, but for those who are sick. He bestows His praise upon Nathaniel as an Israelite in

whom there was no guile. He puts Himself under the similitude of the hen gathering her chickens under her wing, and of the bridegroom waiting for the bride, to declare His love for Jerusalem; little as she deserved it as having killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her, and in spite of her final ingratitude now about to be seen in refusing to accept, and in even putting to death, the only Son of the heavenly King, Whose messengers she had so often before rejected and destroyed and Whose gracious invitations she had continually spurned.

In this simplicity of character, as opposed to the complex and complicated variety of motives, and to the tortuous windings and twistings of duplicity and selfishness, which are the very essence of the heart of an impostor; in this childlike affectionateness of disposition, as pure in its enjoyment as it is exalted in motive, as opposed to the insufferable self-seeking, or, if it finds an outlet, to the animal gratification in which it revels, do we find the loftiest evidence that Jesus Christ was no impostor; but that He was conscious of the truth and was forced by His consciousness to declare that He was, indeed, the Son of the Most High. The vices of the impostor find no place in the character of Him Who is accounted, even by those who do not acknowledge His Divinity, to be the most perfect ideal of humanity which the world has ever seen.

The impostor always relies upon human agencies for the spread of his imposition; what other resource can he have? Mahomet declared that

he valued a night's fighting for the spread of his imposture more than a month's prayer. Even the héresies which have broken loose from the Church, have relied for their countenance and support on civil government, and frequently, too, on force of arms. All teachers of religious error have placed their reliance and only hope in the favor of princes. Every religion human in its origin, must employ human agencies for its support and diffusion. Jesus Christ made use of no human means for the spread of His Gospel, or for its acceptance in the hearts of man. Although He, as the Author of civil government, which is as much His work in the natural order as Revelation in the spiritual, could have taught and insisted that the state had its duty toward His gospel: to cherish and propagate it, to defend it against its enemies, and to promote it for the safety of society and the salvation of souls; yet He did not ask its aid, and was content with teaching the need of "rendering to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that were God's." Thus He preached submission to constituted authority, even as Daniel had taught the Jews subjection to Persian rule, and as St. Paul, the Christians under Nero, that "every soul should be subject to higher powers as they are of God."

Jesus Christ, then, did not rely upon the support or influence of human government: He did not rely upon any human resource; far from seeking such human aids, He contemned them. Even such means as one not inclined to seek the

favor of human governments might justly seek, and whose employment the most ordinary human wisdom would seem to require; such as learning, eloquence, human gifts, and accomplishments,—all these did He contemn. The manner in which He sought to spread His doctrine was the farthest removed from that which the wisdom of this world would suggest. In it He seemed to pour contempt on the maxims of human policy and the dictates of human prudence.

Nor did He seem to entertain the slightest misgivings as to the sufficiency of His method and means. He had the most implicit confidence in the success of His mission. Never once did He intimate the least doubt of His final triumph. Although Satan had buffeted the apostles and sifted them as wheat, had sought to destroy their faith; although He knew that their chief would deny Him, and Judas would betray Him, and all would be scandalized in Him; nevertheless, He declared His ultimate success, and that the gates of hell would never prevail against His church. He knew that His Divine will and purpose thwarted on every side and at all times by the unbelief of men, and the passions of the human heart, would yet triumph; and that, too, without destroying or lessening the freedom of man's nature, in whose spontaneous service alone God can find honor and glory. Like the husbandman who with careless hand but unfailing trust, scatters the seed in the furrows which he has made, knowing that the fertility of nature will do the rest; so Jesus Christ cast the seed of His word

in the hearts of men, ordaining that under His grace and all directing providence, it would indeed produce the harvest. "Fear not, little flock, for I have overcome the world;" "of those whom the Father hath given Me, I have lost none, save the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled;" "No one cometh to the Son, save the Father draw him."

In this neglect of human means for the spread of His Gospel,—in this contempt even of the ordinary rules of the most ordinary human prudence, we find unmistakable evidence of a character more than human in Jesus Christ; in it we discern none of the marks of the impostor. In this lofty superiority to all human wisdom, and yet supreme and inflexible confidence in Himself, and in His final triumph, in spite of all opposition that death and hell and the world could inflict, do we find testimony amounting to absolute demonstration, that Jesus Christ was conscious that He was God,—that He spoke the truth, when He declared it; and that He relied upon Divine wisdom and power as more than a match for the wisdom of this world, which is but ignorance, and the power of this world, which is but weakness. Before this transcendent testimony, the spectre of an impostor which incredulity might have conjured up, must forever vanish; and human reason must exclaim with St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

III.

Above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that to come. Eph. i. 21. Being made so much greater than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say : Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again : I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.—Heb. i. 4, 5.

JESUS CHRIST is the most majestic character that has ever appeared in this world, the most transcendent exemplar of all virtues. Others there have been who have placed their statues in the temple of fame, and filled the minds of men with their greatness: warriors with the exploits of their arms; statesmen with their far-seeing and far-reaching projects; philosophers and orators and poets with the endowments of their genius; philanthropists with their deeds of beneficence; religious teachers and reformers of mankind with human gospels or with distorted versions of the revelation of God. But they must all acknowledge the Divine superiority of Jesus Christ; and sink in the shade or are lost in the dust before the radiant lustre of His unapproachable perfection. They may have dazzled the imagination of men with all that is lofty or great in our fallen nature, and which aspires not beyond the limits of this world and of time. But Jesus Christ has ravished the souls, and forced the homage, of men by presenting to them the

personification of the resplendent virtues of which an unfallen nature united to the Godhead is capable,—virtues which rise immeasurably beyond time and sense, and which have their origin in heaven and their reward in eternity. Besides being the incarnation of the Godhead, Jesus Christ is the incarnation, in the loftiest degree, of all the virtues of which human nature is capable. All that the human imagination can picture of the perfection of angel or cherubim, pales before the splendor of the virtues which He, in His life and death, exhibited. He had taught the loftiest standard of human perfection: He had called upon men to “be perfect, even as their heavenly Father is perfect.” And He, beyond degree, surpassed that which the noblest nature in its efforts to execute His command, could have possibly reached: He was as perfect in His human nature, as the Father in His Divine. Wherefore He is to be honored with the same honor as the Father. As man, He merited the glory which He received. It was the reward due to His virtues and holiness and sufferings. “Did it not behoove the Son of man to suffer these things, and so enter into His glory?”

It is by His virtues not less, but even more, than by the miracles which He wrought, and the prophecies which He fulfilled, and those which He uttered afterward to be fulfilled, that Jesus Christ has won for Himself an eternal sanctuary in the hearts and consciences of men. Even His enemies and those who have not acknowledged Him as God, have rendered the most unfeigned

homage to His virtues, and confessed that He was the personification of the highest human perfection. Yet, this praise cannot be accepted. For, if His virtues were not those of God, he necessarily sinks, we had almost said, to be less than a man.—He who, not Divine, would persistently proclaim his Godhead, and call upon men to believe in him as such, and who would seal this black lie with his blood, would, indeed, be but a sorry specimen of even the most ordinary human perfection, or rather, a sad and sinful specimen of human nature itself. To find such a type of character, we would have to search among those who were cast out of heaven, because through pride they would make themselves gods.

What burning love of God, does Jesus Christ, in every feature of His character, and in every incident of His life, disclose. As a child, “He should be about His Father’s business:” and “He was found in the temple disputing with the doctors and asking questions.” What harmony between His will, and that of His Father: He “seeks not to do His own will, but the will of Him Who sent Him;” this is His daily food and solicitude; “Who is My brother, and sister, and mother?” “He that doeth the will of My Father.” What profound submission at all times to that will; what inflexible conformity thereto, when the flesh recoiling from the prospect of suffering, and His soul sorrowing unto death, He prayed that, if it be possible, the chalice might pass away from Him, yet so that not His will, but the Father’s might be done.

Is this the character of one who would rob God of His glory, by impiously assuming it to himself? thereby incurring the curse which His own apostle declared God had inflicted upon those who, knowing God by that which was revealed of Him in nature and in their conscience, had not honored Him, as such; but had detained His truth in injustice and had rendered to the creature the glory which was due to Him alone. In what would Christ differ from these philosophers who were faithless to their conscience, and to the evidence which all things afforded of an Eternal Being? Blinded as they were, and perverse of heart, we do not find that they taught their own Divinity, or that they were to be honored with the same honor as God Himself. Jesus proclaiming His Divinity, and yet knowing that he was not God, would not have improved on the example of these pagan philosophers, but would rather have been guilty of a worse crime and baser perfidy.

How deep and inexhaustible is the love which Jesus shows for men, His brethren in the flesh. He speaks of His Father as their Father: "One is your Father, Who is in heaven:" "Our Father Who art in heaven;" thereby proclaiming His own fraternity with men, and the universal fatherhood of God. "When ye pray, use not many words, for your heavenly Father knoweth before hand what ye need." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else shall be added unto you." "The lilies of the field are clothed with a raiment more glorious than

that of Solomon ;” “ the hairs of your head are counted :” if, then, Providence so provides for the least of His beings, “ how much more for you ?” Human wisdom had never dreamed of the bond of brotherhood uniting men to one another which Jesus preached, and of which His daily actions gave so Divine a sanction. His heart was filled with the purest human sympathy for His fellow-men and with the most tender compassion for their sufferings ; He burned with a zeal for their salvation that knew no quenching, short of the shedding of His blood. It was the poor and suffering, and a desire to relieve their misery, that invoked the miraculous power which proved His Divinity. This evidence of His sympathy with suffering, He gave to the messengers from John, as the sign that He was the Messiah Whom they expected : “ Go, tell John that the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” He paid tribute to God, the Creator of our nature, in the tears which He shed over the tomb of Lazarus ; and imparted to his sisters a foretaste of the consolation of the general resurrection, in restoring to them their brother, and His friend. He pitied the widow of Naim for the loss of her only son, and gave him back to her fond embrace. The hungry famishing in the desert made their appeal to Him, and He fed the multitude bounteously with a few loaves and fishes. Their hunger surfeited, more was left than had been put down ; thus indicating that no creature of His hand should ever perish for want of the means of life, and that His Father

has provided, unless frustrated by human greed and avarice, a plenteous profusion for all. He declares His tender compassion and longing affection for the conversion of sinful souls, under similitudes the most moving and persuasive: "Even as the bridegroom waiteth for the bride:" "Even as the mother cannot be unmindful of the fruit of her womb:" "Even as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings;" even so does He love sinful souls and long for their return.

Is this the character, or are these the sentiments of the fanatic or visionary or worse, who would lead the souls of men astray, and place himself as a false god between them and their Creator and last end? Is this the character, or this the conduct of one who would involve the children of men in an apostasy from God, which could only find a counterpart, and even then a feeble one, in the fall of the angels, or in the original estrangement of our race? If this were so, he would be a second Adam indeed; but not as the Father of humanity redeemed and restored, but as the deceiver of humanity again destroyed, and involved in consequences more fatal and irreparable than those which were caused by the first. If this were so, we might believe that Satan had not accomplished his full purpose in the original fall of our race, but that it was reserved for a false messiah, and a false god, to degrade it still further and deeper, by causing it to worship as its Creator and Redeemer, one who was capable of uttering a lie.

If there is anything trying to human feeling,

and which is an unfailing test of virtue, it is patience under insult, resignation to wrong, and forgiveness of injuries. How difficult to preserve tranquillity of soul, to govern passion, to check resentment, to control vindictiveness, under contumely and exasperation! Where is the patience that is equal, always and under all circumstances, or that can be insensible, to such galling spurs? How feebly can we discern, when blinded by passion or stung to anger by such trials, the providence of God which permits them; and to which, when feeling has subsided, we know we should conform. Never do we more keenly realize the wellnigh impassable gulf between what we know we should do, and what we feel like doing, — between what we would preach to others, and what we are inclined ourselves to perform. Jesus taught that, struck on one cheek, we should turn the other; that we should forgive our enemies, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate us; that we should do good for evil; that not seven times, but seventy times seven times, we should forgive our brother. A Divine ideal, truly! a lofty standard for flesh and blood! Yet an ideal and standard which He as easily reached and practised as preached; there was no interval or discordance between the law as announced by His lips, and its realization as shown in His life. What mildness, and patience, and forgiveness, and resignation, does He not always exhibit? Struck and spat upon by the servants of the high-priest, He meekly replies, “if I have spoken evil, testify to

the evil ; if well, why strikest thou Me?" What a contrast to Peter drawing his sword and cutting off the ear of the servant of the high-priest! This was human nature, and, according to the wisdom of men, human virtue. Jesus's meek reproof to Peter, and the healing of the ear, are the expression of a virtue all-Divine. What patience in enduring wrong in every circumstance of His passion, from the "ingratitude more strong than traitor's arms" of Judas's perfidious kiss, to the moment when the centurion opened His side with the spear to test His death. In the midst of all this, praying for His enemies whom He recognized as blind instruments of God's providence in the work of reconciling the world with Himself. Dying, He invoked blessing and forgiveness on those who were putting Him to death, "for they knew not what they did." What unshaken resignation to the will of God, which He had come to fulfil, culminating in that mysterious cry which forever proclaimed the reality of His sufferings, and His abandonment by the Father: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and at the time, His absolute and undying confidence in Him, expressed by His last words: "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." By this fearless and unquenchable trust, did He manifest the consciousness of His Divinity and Messiahship; and that His death was in attestation of their truth. This consciousness was the source of the tranquillity of soul and of the virtues which He showed under trials and wrongs which would have proved fatal to any merely human

virtue. How He loved the truths which He had preached, He evinced by the fidelity with which, to the end, He practised them. He sustained to His dying breath, the character which He claimed.

Among the virtues most difficult to the human heart and the most repugnant to the pride of our nature, is that of humility. When it exists it lies close to the heart of man, and is of difficult discernment. Human nature seeks loftiness and superiority; when it is conscious of not possessing these, it wishes to appear to possess them. It always wishes to seem to be more than it is; it recoils from the estimation that would value it at its just price. It can scarcely endure to be lowered below what it really is. Humility is essentially founded in the truth; and where the truth does not correspond with the vain wishes of the heart, pride chafes under it, and seeks to remove what it regards as its ignominy; it usually seeks compensation in increased self-esteem. Hence it is, that there are few who wish to be known to others, as they are to themselves. It requires the virtue of humility to make us content with recognizing ourselves, such as God has made us and the truth discloses. Humility was unknown before Christianity; it was accounted the mark of meanness and pusillanimity. To-day it is rare even among those who have received the heritage of the example of Christ's humility. It is always a virtue to be cultivated, an acquisition to be gained; it does not flourish spontaneously in the human heart; assiduity and grace are the price of its production.

This virtue, so completely unknown to the philosophers of old, and so little practised among men, was pre-eminently the virtue of Jesus Christ. And this from His very nature: for He, conscious of His Divine and human greatness, had no need that men should account Him other than He was: the truth of His mission and the Divinity of His character raised Him above all thought as to what men thought of Him, except in so far as the recognition of these verities was necessary to the end for which He had come into the world. He could not exalt Himself by any of the contrivances of human vanity, nor by any of the honors which men could have bestowed upon Him. What an example of utter indifference to human applause and praise does He present! When they wanted to make Him King, He fled. When He was transfigured on Thabor and the glory of the Godhead shone visibly about Him, and the apostles, transported out of themselves, wished to remain on the Mount forever, He charged them that they should tell no man till He was risen from the dead. To fulfil what had been written, He entered Jerusalem in triumph; and in the midst of the jubilation, He wept over its prospective fate. When He performed some of His greatest miracles, He forbade that they should be noised abroad. In the choice of those into whose custody He placed Himself, on coming into the world,—the humble Virgin and humble tradesman; and in the choice of those to whom He intrusted His Gospel, and upon whom He relied for its diffusion,—preferring the poor to the rich,

and the ignorant to the learned, and the foolish to the wise;—in all this, did He show His predilection for that virtue of humility of which He was the Divine Exemplar.

How would this virtue comport with His character, if He were not Divine? In the belief of His Divinity, do we find in Him this incomparable virtue. But how could we find it, in the assumption that He was not God, but a mere man? Humility, as I have remarked, is founded upon truth; it teaches the truth; it is fatal to falsity and vain glory. If Christ were not God, what humility could be discerned in him who declared that he was the Messiah and the true God?—What humility in him who declared that he was to be honored as the Father; who taught that to him alone was given the power of judging; who affirmed that he was sent from the Father, with Whom he was one, and that he in turn would send the Holy Ghost, thus making himself one of the Persons of the Adorable Trinity; who sent the apostles to teach the word, as he had been sent by the Father; who promised his eternal abidance with them and their unfailing security against the gates of hell; who taught that men were to be baptized in his name; that prayer was to be offered to him; whose body was forever to feed the souls of the faithful, thereby to be made partakers of immortality; that men were to believe in him, and hope in him, and love him as the living God, Who he asserted was manifest in him by the works which he did; who affirmed that he was the Lord and Giver of

life; the judge of souls before whom on the Judgment day all mankind shall be assembled to receive from his hands immortal happiness or everlasting misery;—in all this, I do not ask, what trace of humility can be discerned, but what must be the rank and startling pride of one who could dare make these stupendous claims, and seal them with his blood and ignominious death, if they were false and he were not what he affirmed? In very truth, if Christ were not God, so far from there being the remotest or feeblest iota of humility in his character or being, that even the pride of Lucifer would be feeble, if not virtue, compared to that which dominated him, and which rendered him the insane fanatic or deluded visionary or infatuated victim unto death.

In reading the Gospels, one cannot fail to observe among the prominent traits of character which Jesus exhibited, were His outspokenness and downright sincerity. This trait bore two important results. He never allowed His hearers to remain under a misapprehension of His meaning. If such a mistake occurred, He always, then and there, corrected it, either by explaining away the misapprehension, if such there was; or by reaffirming what He had already stated, if there was no mistake, or if the apparent error arose only from their incredulity or wilful blindness. It also led to His declaring, openly and unmistakably, the convictions of His soul fired by indignation and zeal at the hypocrisy and iniquity which He saw everywhere around Him. In Him

there was none of the duplicity and disguise that weaker men and those attached to the world and its objects, are wont to regard and designate as discretion and wisdom. With such men, sincerity is the mark of a foolish, if not disordered mind: outspokenness and the condemnation of wrong are always inexpedient; at best, they can do no good, and are the sure incitement of trouble and loss to him so rash and heedless as to indulge in them.

Such is called the wisdom of the world. If Isaias had been faithful to it, he would not have been sawed in two; and Daniel might have escaped the lions' den. If John the Baptist had not given way to this extravagance, he might have been spared his head. If St. Chrysostom had heeded less the voluptuousness of the empress, and shown his zeal on humbler persons, he might have escaped exile and died in his See. But the saints had anticipated, or inherited, the zeal of Jesus Christ, and His lofty contempt for the ways and maxims of worldly experience. Christ showed His sincerity of soul by the fearful denunciations that He employed against the sins and sinners of His day; nor did He stop to trim or measure His language: "Ye whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of rottenness and dead men's bones;" "Ye hypocrites, which of the prophets did not your fathers kill and persecute;" "Ye serpents, brood of vipers, how will ye escape the damnation of hell?" With lashes did He drive the money-changers from the temple. This is but little of the language which the sincerity and simplicity of the soul of

Jesus conceived. Yet from it can be seen the honesty and outspokenness of His nature. He had nothing of simulation in His character; for He had every virtue and grace. He had no vice or weakness to dissimulate. Pretence, or disguise, or concealment, was abhorrent to every instinct of His being. He was independent of the world; contemned its censure as He contemned its praise. Verily, He "had come into the world to bear testimony to the truth." Hence He could well afford to speak His mind openly, and without measure. He sought not His own glory, but the glory of Him Who sent Him. It would be utterly inconsistent with such a character, that those who heard Him, should suffer from misapprehension of His teaching or claim.

Now then, if Jesus were not God, what becomes of all this honesty, this sincerity, this outspokenness? Could he be really sincere, who, while he spoke as with the authority of God, and declared unmistakably that he was God, yet all the while was conscious that he was a mere man? Could he have been honest in his denunciation of vice and in exposing the hearts of sinners, while at the same time, by studied phrase or ambiguous language, he sought to make men believe, or even to allow them to fall into the error of believing, him to be God? With what candor could Christ have denounced the Jews for the murder of the prophets, while he, at the same time, sought to palm himself off as the Messiah Whom they expected? How empty and hypocritical his denunciation of the vices of the Pharisees,

while he himself sought to lead Jew and Pharisee and all mankind into the crime of idolatry ! With what falsity would he have threatened to the Jews the downfall of their nation, and the ruin of their temple, as the punishment of rejecting him, an impostor, as he must be if he were not conscious of his Godhead ! With what truth could he have sealed with his blood, the truth of the charge that he was God, if at the same time, in his innermost soul he felt that he was but the first of the false prophets who he said would arise in the future,—the antichrists who would deceive, if possible, even the elect.

If Christ were not Divine, when he saw that the Jews understood him to declare himself as such, what was the first duty that the honesty and frankness of his character, and his obligation as a public teacher, should have led him to adopt ? If he were not God, and even if he were but a mere novice in the virtues which we have pointed out as inseparable from his character, he would have been beside himself with amazement, and his soul would have flamed with indignation, when he saw that the Jews understood him to claim to be very God. How could he with meekness and resignation and patience, have gone to the death which he knew was meted out to him because he had claimed to be God, and because disciples, and Jews, and judges had so understood him ? How could he in the face of such a blasphemy have dispensed, as its Lord, paradise to the penitent thief ; forgiveness to the Jews, as their God ; and commended his soul into the hands of

the Eternal God, as his Father; if, at the same time, he knew that he was not God, and that he only suffered just punishment for the blasphemy of which he had been guilty? If honesty has a meaning, and if a public teacher is bound to teach aright, and if everyone has a duty to defend himself against false charges, then Jesus Christ owed to his character, to his hearers, to mankind, and to the Eternal God Himself, to declare, and to declare unmistakably, that he had been misunderstood and that he did not claim to be Divine.

They had sought to entrap Him in His speech: asking Him, which is the first and greatest commandment; whose would she be in the Resurrection who had been wife to two brothers; was it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar; and in various other ways. But Jesus knew what was in man; and penetrated the wicked guile of their hearts. They had sent spies to watch Him in His life, and to detect aught which they might reproach in His speech. They were so chagrined that one should claim to be the Messiah, Who was so much opposed to their prejudices and preconceived opinions, that they were determined at any cost to rid themselves of Him; Whom in their hearts they wished to be, and to discover an impostor. Hence the false witnesses, distorting His words and perverting them to suit their own malicious designs, declared that they found Him subverting the nation, claiming to be the King of the Jews, teaching disloyalty to Cæsar; and wrested into a charge, even the very proof which He had given them of

His Divinity, "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I rebuild it."

Nor could they allege that He had spoken in secret, where they could not hear Him; nor that His life had been passed where they could not reach. He had associated during His public career with all sorts of people: the poor and the rich, the lofty and the lowly, the learned and the illiterate, with princes and with priests. In the temple and in the market-place, on the water and on hill-side, in the crowded city and in the barren wilderness, had He spoken to them the words of life: "Daily was I with you in the temple, and in secret I have spoken nothing," was He able to rejoin, when they falsely charged Him, and He challenged them to the proof.

"Have nothing to do with that just man!" was the warning of Pilate's wife, "because this day I have suffered much in a dream on account of Him." She was in a way to know the public belief as to the charges brought against Him. The apprehension that He would be unjustly treated, evidently preyed upon her mind, as it induced a dream in His regard. Pilate, the Roman governor, having heard all the testimony against Him and the contradictions of the false witnesses, declared that "he found no guilt in Him;" yet, seeking to unite his conscience with his interest, delivered Him to be scourged; feigning belief that with the idle ceremony of washing the hands, he could clear his soul of the guilt of the blood of Him Whom he had declared innocent.

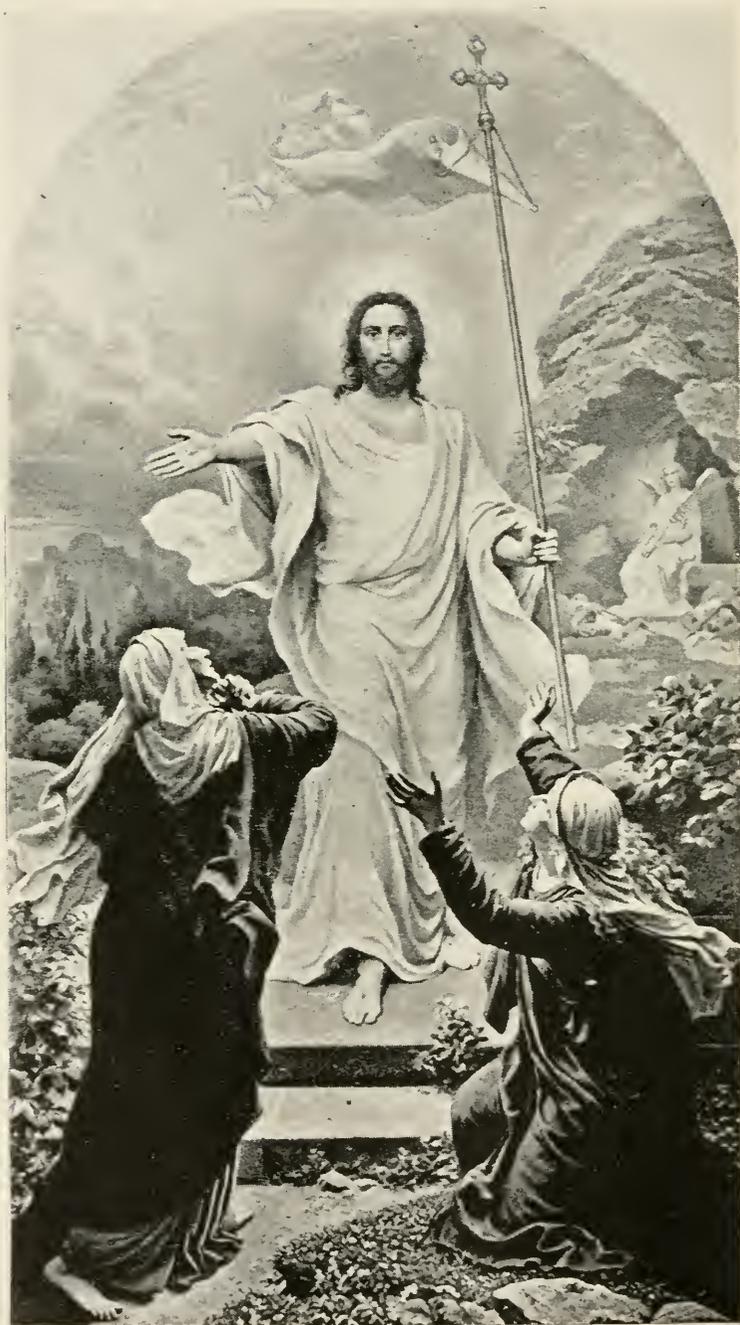
This verdict of Pilate that Jesus was a just man,

and clear of all the charges brought against Him, shows that the blackest malice, and the most perverse ingenuity, and the most malignant purpose of destroying Him and His claims, had been unable to convict Him of sin. THIS man, then, free from all sin, and giving evidence in His character of a virtue and holiness evidently more than human, appearing at the time when the Messiah was expected, declares that He is the Messiah and the Son of God ; and with His blood He seals the truth of the affirmation.

In the form of a syllogism we may put the argument that we have pursued at length : Jesus Christ declared that He was God : Jesus Christ did not lie : therefore He is God.

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THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

And at the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And through fear of him, the guards were panic-stricken, and they became as dead men. And the angel answered and said to the women; Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, Who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen: and behold, He will go before you into Galilee; there ye will see Him. Lo, I have told you.—St. Matt. xxviii, 1-7.

Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord.—St. Paul to Rom. i, 4.

AMIDST all the desolation and abandonment of His passion, Jesus Christ failed not to manifest His Divinity, by the fulfilment to the letter of the prophecies which had been declared concerning Him; by the uttering of predictions which were in due time verified; by the working of great signs and miracles, as the restoration of the ear of Malchus, the appearance of the angel who comforted Him in Gethsemane, the darkening of

- the sun, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, the resurrection of the dead, the sundering of the veil of the temple, the conversion of the penitent thief, the acknowledgment of the centurion, who from what he saw was forced to exclaim that "this truly was the Son of God;" not to speak of the unalterable mildness and meekness, the unconquerable patience and fortitude, the profound submission and resignation to the will of His Eternal Father, which He exhibited;—by these heavenly virtues and visible tokens of omnipotence did He manifest His Divine character.

If this is true, what are we to say this morning when we behold Him rising from the dead, triumphantly leading captivity captive; thus proving Himself the author of nature by suspending nature's laws, and manifesting Himself to be very God, by a miracle which none but God can accomplish: considering this every doubt must vanish, every heart must believe, and every tongue proclaim that He is, indeed, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, made man to save mankind.

The Resurrection of our Blessed Lord was not, absolutely speaking, necessary to evince His Divinity. By the prophecies which He had fulfilled, by the miracles which He had wrought, by the predictions which He had uttered and which had been already or were shortly verified, and by the attesting voice of His Eternal Father heard at His baptism and on Thabor, and on the eve of His passion, had He proved that He was very

God ; “ that He was in the Father and the Father in Him.” But the Resurrection was necessary because He had declared that He would rise again ; He had given it to the apostles and the Jews as the decisive proof of His Divinity ; He had, so to speak, staked His veracity upon it. If He was God, it became absolutely necessary that that promise should be verified ; if He failed in this, He would not be God. “ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples, that He must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the nation, and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter taking Him aside, began to rebuke Him, saying : Lord, be it far from Thee : this shall never befall Thee. When He turned and said to Peter, get behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal to Me : because thou savorest not the things of God, but the things of men.” “ An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign and a sign shall not be given it, save that of Jonah in the whale’s belly ; for even as Jonah was three days in the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days in the bosom of the earth.” “ Destroy this temple,” He spoke of the temple of His body, “ and in three days I will rebuild it.” This three-fold declaration thus explicitly referring to His Resurrection, should be absolutely redeemed.

When He was transfigured on the Mount, and frequently when He performed miracles, He referred to His future death and Resurrection, charging that they should not be made known till He

was risen from the dead. Thus it is seen that it was the will of our Blessed Lord that His Resurrection should be the crowning proof, the irresistible argument of His Godhead and mission. That declaration, at once a prophecy and a promise, and the highest expression of the impossible among men, should be absolutely verified. The Resurrection is the very basis of religion; without it Christianity does not totter, it falls and is forever destroyed.—Salvation through Christ becomes a delusion, the Messiah has not come; desolation and despair are the portion of the children of men. There is no forgiveness, there is no atoning sacrifice for sin, there is no hope of salvation. “If Christ be not risen,” says St. Paul, “our faith is vain, and our preaching vain, and we are yet in our sins.” Belief in Christ’s Resurrection has been the irresistible means by which the Gospel has from the beginning found acceptance and lodgment in the human heart. Of all the proofs that Christ could give, none was more suitable to obtain the acquiescence of the human mind.

And what greater argument of Divinity could be bestowed? to raise from the dead has ever been accounted the very exercise of omnipotence, the realizing of the impossible, the suspension of those laws which men have come to regard as unyielding and unexceptional. And no wonder; the dominion of death, to the eyes of men, has been absolute, inexorable, and universal; never has it relaxed before any power less than the very power of God. It is true that others have been brought back to life. The prophet Eliseus had resuscitated

the son of the Shunamite widow, the prophet Elijah, the son of the widow of Zarephath, Christ Himself had raised the dead, the apostles in His name had done the same. But in all these cases it was still the exercise of the very power of God, communicated to man ; and, therefore, no less indicated omnipotence. But in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we behold the dead raising Himself to life by His Own Almighty Power. For it is the same thing to say that Christ raised Himself to life, as that He was raised by the Eternal Father. If He raised himself, He was clearly God ; if He was raised by the Father, He was as evidently God ; for then He was raised by the Divinity common to both. Jesus Christ declared His Divinity, and gave as its proof His Resurrection from the dead. If we were to imagine that His affirmation were not true, and that He were but a man, as it was only through the power of God that His Resurrection could be effected, we would have to say that the Eternal God had not only countenanced a lie, but had actually lied, and deluded men with an imposition and idolatry the most revolting that can be conceived. The Divinity never abandoned the lifeless body of Christ ; even in the sepulchre it remained united to it. And on the third day by the power of this Divinity, soul and body, sundered by death, were re-united ; and Jesus Christ rose triumphant, glorious, and immortal from the dead, to die no more.

The fact, of such tremendous importance, so pregnant with eternal consequence to the race,

upon which our hopes and salvation, our despair and perdition hang trembling, must be incontestably demonstrated. How, then, are we to know that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? The Jews had realized its transcendent importance by not allowing, through any fault of theirs, the subtraction of the body of Christ from the tomb. They had provided against any such possibility. "On the next day," says the Scripture, "that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and said: Sir, we remember that that seducer, while He was yet alive, declared that in three days He would rise from the dead. Secure His grave then that the disciples come not and steal away His body, and the last error be made worse than the first. And Pilate said to them: ye have a guard, go guard it as you will. They went and sealed the tomb and a guard was placed around it." Thus the Jews had anticipated any such measure as that of the apostles stealing His body. The sepulchre was hewn in the solid rock, and a great stone was rolled against it.

If, therefore, Christ be not risen from the dead, He must, on this third day, be still therein confined. Visit then the tomb of Jesus. The stone is rolled back, the vault is empty, We see there the habiliments of the grave, the winding sheet with which He was covered, the bands with which He was bound, the napkin which was around His head; yet no longer serving their purpose, they are laid carefully aside. But where is the body? It is no longer there; it has burst the trammels of

the grave. An angel is present in custody of the spot where the Lord had lain. He anticipates your question, saying: "I know Whom you seek, Jesus of Nazareth; He is not here, He is risen from the dead; go and announce to His disciples." His glorified body had passed through the sepulchre yet sealed and secured; the rock was rolled back to enable the women to see that He was no longer there.

The first witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, and our first informants are the angels of God. Angels had announced His coming in the flesh, and had sung glory to God and men. We shall see that they will signalize His departure from earth, and return to heaven; and will declare that His future advent shall be like unto that of His visible ascension. It was but beseeming that His triumphant Resurrection from the dead should be announced to men through the same heavenly intelligences.

There were on that Easter morning different apparitions of angels. One of surpassing brightness and with clothing white as snow appeared to the soldiers guarding the tomb: the earth trembled and the stone which sealed the sepulchre was rolled back: the soldiers were filled with terror and put to flight. One was seen by Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, in the sepulchre, who declared to them that Jesus of Nazareth Whom, it knew, they sought was no longer there, but had arisen from the dead. They had gone to anoint His body, showing that till then they had no knowledge of His Resurrection. The angel declared to the women most explicitly

all that they would know: that Jesus of Nazareth Whom they sought, Who was crucified, is arisen, that He is no longer in the tomb, that they can see the place where He had lain, that they are to announce to His disciples and to Peter, that Jesus had gone before them into Galilee where they shall see Him. We read also of two angels who were seen by Mary Magdalen, the one at the head, the other at the foot of the place where He had lain. To her also the risen Lord vouchsafed to reveal Himself; Whom at first she took to be the gardener, and Who forbade her to touch Him, because He had not yet ascended to His Father and her Father, to her God and His God. It is, then, from these accredited messengers of the Most High, that we first learn that Christ is risen from the dead, according to His promise.

Even the earth itself gave its mute though expressive testimony: the convulsion which took place and the rolling back of the stone, declared the Resurrection of Jesus.

In Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and the other holy women, we find competent witnesses that they had seen the Lord risen from the dead; which was evidently contrary to their expectations. And they further declare that they had received the same glad tidings from the angels.

The soldiers themselves, by their frivolous answer, pay unconscious testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus: "His disciples came while we were asleep, and stole the body." Never were words more evidently the expression of false-

hood; never did human speech betray such a consciousness of feeble pretext.

Would the disciples who themselves needed confirmation of their belief in Christ's Divinity far more than the Jews who never had this faith, and who fled when He was seized, have been bold and resolute enough to overawe the guards, and to defy the high priest?—thus to summon upon themselves the anger of the Jews, and the contemned authority of the Roman Pilate. When the soldiers were asleep, indeed! The punishment of sleeping at their posts was instant death. These Roman soldiers, thoroughly disciplined, and filled with the spirit of blind obedience and military ardor of which the Roman soldier was the synonym, would be the last to disregard such a punishment, especially when they knew that they had been put there to guard the sepulchre against robbery by Jew or apostle; and when, moreover, they knew, as they must have known from the care of the Jewish priests asking Pilate to guard the body, "lest it should be stolen by the apostles, and the last error made worse than the first," that the synagogue and all Jerusalem were strained with anxiety to know if the "seducer," true to His word, would rise again the third day from the dead. But if the soldiers slept at their posts, was it in human nature to avow their recreancy to duty, and thus invite just punishment? That they slept at their posts! How could they know, in their sleep, that it was the apostles that came and stole away the body? could it not have been the Jews or some one else

for aught they knew, blinded in sleep? They could not tell. Is it likely that the soldiers would confess that they had slept, and thus afforded the opportunity for the very thing which they had been placed there to prevent? that they had allowed their sloth to overcome the high duty imposed upon them? The soldiers never would have dared to give such a frivolous and contradictory answer, except they had been instigated thereto by the priests who had bribed them, and who they knew would back them up and support them. This the evangelist declares: the chief priests and ancients went to the soldiers, when they had heard of the Resurrection of Christ, and bribed them to say, that the disciples came by night and stole the body while they were asleep. Otherwise, the soldiers would have never avowed their own treachery to their trust and contempt of their duty, by acknowledging that they had slept at their posts.

If placed on guard of the sepulchre, they had failed to do their duty, they were guilty of a grievous military offence; besides, they had enabled the apostles to steal the body of Jesus—an occurrence which the Jews were most anxious to render impossible. Why, then, did not the Jews reproach the soldiers with their neglect of duty? Why was no investigation made? why did they not convict the soldiers of the frivolous and contradictory answer which they gave? Their sleep must, indeed, have been deep, and the outrage of the robbers must, indeed, have been conducted with an impossible quiet, if that huge

stone could have been rolled back, and the body clothed, and stolen, without even one of them being awakened or disturbed. It was scarcely the act of thieves who were bent only on securing the body, to fold the garments of the dead and to leave them in perfect order. Evidently, the soldiers and the priests were in collusion: those were corrupted; these, resolved on discrediting Christ's Resurrection, had given out the story that the disciples had stolen His body. True to their old blindness of resisting the evidences of Christ's Divinity, which had led them to make even the resurrection of Lazarus, the occasion of the apprehension and death of Christ; so, now they would distort His own Resurrection into a midnight theft of His body by the disciples. From the contradictions and absurdities of the soldiers, we find a virtual and emphatic proof that the disciples were not parties to such an act and fraud; and, as a consequence, that the body of Christ was not stolen, but that He truly rose from the dead.

Unless the priests were conscious of the truth of Christ's Resurrection, why did they bribe the soldiers to say that the disciples had stolen the body? If they really knew or believed that such a theft had taken place, there would have been no occasion to induce them to declare what was the fact, and which would naturally of itself have come to light. If the Jews really believed that the body was taken by the apostles while the soldiers slept, it would have been more in keeping with their character and usual mode of ac-

tion, especially in so supreme a matter, to institute proceedings against the soldiers for neglect; and by their neglect conniving at the very thing which the Jews had anticipated as a great misfortune, a "worse error than the first;" an error, also, to hinder which the guard had been obtained from Pilate, with the injunction "to go guard it as they knew." Such disastrous neglect would never have passed unrepined by the Jews. Their craven and pusillanimous bribing of the soldiers to say, that "the body was stolen while they slept," is a manifest proof that they knew there had been no such flagrant dereliction to duty. If such had been the case, and if the soldiers had spontaneously avowed it, they need not have been bribed to declare the truth.

The Jews were evidently conscious that Christ had risen: if they believed that the apostles lied in proclaiming the Resurrection, why did they not accuse them of the lie, and call upon the soldiers to authenticate the robbery? why did they not proceed against the apostles, for so daring an imposture? If the body of Christ were stolen, it must be in the custody of the apostles, or of the soldiers, or of the Jews themselves: why not compel the apostles to produce it? or the soldiers? why not bring it forth themselves? Let the dead body only be produced, and the imposture is at once laid bare, and the unreality of Christ's Resurrection is established. But, that the lie was on the side of the Jews, and that Christ rose from the dead, their whole manner of acting evinced. As they

had always sinned against light, so now they cling to their old time blindness and contemn the evidence of Christ's Resurrection.

It would have been consistent with the spirit of the Jews, and the precaution which they showed in having the tomb sealed and the guard placed around it, that, if they did not feel that the body of Christ was sufficiently secured against the theft of the apostles, they would themselves have stolen the body, and put it where it could not possibly come into the hands of His followers; that thus, as they said, "the last error might not be worse than the first." This, certainly, would not be an unlikely proceeding on their part. But if they had resorted to this strategy, why did not they declare it? And where did they place the body? So long as they would keep the body thus hidden, they were countenancing and giving support to the truth which the apostles declared of Christ's Resurrection. It is not at all probable that they would even thus seemingly fulfil Christ's own prediction; if they knew where His body was, they beyond peradventure would have exultingly produced it. The apostles are proclaiming Christ's Resurrection from the dead, and are performing miracles in His name. Let but the Jews bring forth His body, and the falsehood is at once exposed, the apostles are confounded and put to shame, and driven from the face of the earth. The Jews never claimed that they thus secreted the body of Christ; they always maintained that the apostles took it. Yet, it must be acknowledged, as I have already said, that the

Jews would have adopted this course, if they had felt that the tomb was not sufficiently guarded, or if it were otherwise necessary to belie the fact of the Resurrection. And they would have transmitted the knowledge of the location of the body to their children, that they, too, might always have at hand the evidence of the deception sought to be practised by the apostles. That they did not do so, is proof that they knew that the sepulchre was so fortified, and the soldiers so vigilant, that there was no possibility of the apostles' capturing the one, or eluding the others. And it may be added, that this secured and guarded state of the tomb shows that there was as little possibility of any body emerging therefrom, except glorified and impassible.

If we wish to ascertain Christ's Resurrection from the dead, it is not the priests, His avowed enemies, their hands stained with the blood of Deicide, and who will never acknowledge the truth that condemns them, that we should ask; but it is His apostles and disciples, who knew Him intimately during life, and who must have heard Him declare, although, perhaps, without fully realizing His meaning, that He would rise from the dead, the third day. If we would learn the truth of the Resurrection, it is not the Jews who invoked His blood upon themselves and their children, that we should ask: for even if they saw Him rising from the dead, they would never acknowledge the guilt of His blood. Nor is it the judges who condemned Him of blasphemy, that we should question: for even if He reap-

peared, they would not own the iniquity of their sentence. Nor should we interrogate the people for whom He had done so many good works, for which even during life they were minded to stone Him : for if He again appeared in the midst of them, they would not confess their ingratitude and blindness in their treatment of Him Who, in the event, has shown Himself to be their God. If the Jews, and the high priests, and the executioners, and all Judea, with one voice, acknowledged that Christ had risen from the dead ; and if all the apostles, and the disciples, and the holy women, who were with Him during life, with one voice, affirmed that He had not risen from the dead ; and that redemption was as far from them as ever ; that the Worker of miracles, Who had saved others, could not save Himself ; that He Who had given life, had Himself been conquered by death ; and that all their hopes had been nailed to the cross with Him : which of these should be believed ? which of these would be the better qualified to decide the stupendous question ? It is manifest that the testimony of even one who knew Him intimately, would be of more value than that of ten thousand who knew Him only by repute ; that the testimony of those who had seen Him, would be far more decisive than the testimony of those who had only heard of Him ; that the testimony of those upon whom He had performed miracles, would be far more acceptable than the testimony of those who took up stones to cast them at Him ; that the testimony of the Marys who received Him and of

Mary Magdalen who anointed His feet, would be far more satisfactory than the testimony of the Pharisees who argued against Him, because He received sinners ; that the testimony of one Lazarus, or of one widow of Naim, or of one leper whom He had cured, would have more weight in the matter of recognizing Him risen from the dead, than the testimony of all those who argued that His works were those of the evil one, and that by the devil He cast out devils.

It is, then, beyond all possible question most manifest, that the apostles and His former friends were alone competent to give irreproachable testimony as to whether He had risen from the dead. They had been with Him for three years; they had seen Him in all the relations of life; they had travelled with Him ; they had eaten with Him; they had talked with Him; they had been instructed by Him. They only needed what any witness needs to declare the truth: knowledge of what they testified to, and truthfulness in declaring it. To have the knowledge of the fact of Christ's Resurrection, they only required the use of their senses. It was not a matter that required any profound research, nor any close weighing of circumstances or probabilities, no scrutinizing investigation, no anxious discrimination; a plain fact they were called upon to determine: that of recognizing the friend of years with Whom they had been in the closest personal daily intercourse, and Whom they had seen for the last time but a few days before. They had opportunities for forty days; they resumed with Him the familiar

relations which preceded His death ; they heard Him speak ; they ate and drank with Him ; they touched and handled Him to see that He was not a spectre ; Thomas placed his hand in His opened side, and his fingers in the print of the nails in His hands and feet ; all their senses were exercised upon Him : seeing, hearing, feeling ; they engaged by speech in that communication of soul with soul, which even more than sense, discloses identity, and reveals one man to another ; He continued with them His former teachings : He imparted to them the knowledge of all the truths which they were to announce to mankind. Under such circumstances, and in such close intercourse, the most ignorant could determine the truth of Christ's bodily Resurrection. With such opportunities for determining a fact which only required the ordinary use of the senses, and which no preconception could influence, it were absurd to think that the apostles were prejudiced, and partial to the Resurrection of Christ, and, consequently, too ready in believing Him to be risen from the dead. Such feelings, if they existed at all, could not alter the decision which they were called upon to give in a question of an external fact, and one to be determined by sense alone.

In matter of fact, however, the prejudices and feelings of the apostles, far from favoring, rather disposed them against His Resurrection ; and led them to be slow and needlessly circumspect, wary and even skeptical in believing Christ's Resurrection. This is implied in the words of Christ to the two disciples whom He met on the way to

Emmaus. They did not recognize Him at first, but only afterward in the breaking of bread. They had already heard from the women who had gone to the tomb the visions of the angels, and that Christ was risen; yet they spoke as if they had lost faith in Him, Who, they hoped, was to redeem Israel. Jesus then reproaches them: "O foolish and slow of heart to believe all which the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things, and so enter into His glory?"

The apostles were Jews; they were imbued with the expectations of their countrymen; in the Messiah whom their later traditions taught them to expect, they saw a temporal conqueror who would restore to them their kingdom with prosperity and glory. They were disappointed and disheartened, when Christ, "Who they hoped would redeem Israel," was seized and condemned. They were all scandalized in His death, as He had forewarned them: Peter who declared that though all should be scandalized in Him, yet he never should be, thrice denied Him; Judas had betrayed Him; but one was with Him at the cross; they had all fled ignominiously. His Resurrection the third day had been pre-announced to them; but they had no keen sense or actual apprehension of what was meant; like so many other predictions which they had heard, it was only perfectly understood when verified by the event. On the morning of the Resurrection, they were surprised and amazed on hearing that Christ had risen from the dead. Peter and John rushed

to the sepulchre to see if it was, indeed, true. We have already seen that even later in the same day their incredulity continued; for which Christ reproached them. Even after He had appeared to ten of the apostles assembled together, Thomas, who was the absent one, declared that he "would not believe it until he had put his hand into the opened side and his finger into the print of the nails." It is very clear, then, that the prejudices and sympathies and hopes of the apostles did not predispose them to accept too promptly, but, rather, rendered them slow to accept, if not entirely to reject, the truth of Christ's Resurrection.

II.

We know not how often Jesus appeared to the apostles after His Resurrection; we know that He appeared as many as eleven times to some of them; but we cannot say that all His appearances are recorded. As the apostles were content with recording in substance, and not in detail, His conversations with them on the occasions narrated, saying, that He instructed them in the mysteries of the kingdom of God; so it is highly probable that they recorded only His principal apparitions to them. As already remarked, Thomas was not present when Christ first appeared to them, and on hearing it, declared that he "would not believe, till he had seen in His hands the print of the nails, and had put his hand in the opened side, and his finger in the place of the nails." Christ,

on His subsequent visit when Thomas was present, called upon him, saying: "Put thy finger in hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but believing." Thomas, doing as he was bade, uttered that profession of faith, so fatal ever since to the skeptic and unbeliever: "My Lord, and my God." "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou believest: blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe," was the loving rebuke of the Risen Saviour. St. Paul tells us: "That He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen by Kephas, and after that by the eleven; then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, but some are fallen asleep: afterwards He was seen by James, then by all the apostles: and last of all, as by one born out of time, He was seen by me also."

Finally, in the presence of the apostles, He visibly ascended into heaven, "and a cloud received Him out of their sight." They were so filled with amazement at His glorious ascension, that they continued looking up into heaven after Him; when the angels themselves bore witness to its truth and reality, and at the same time to His Divinity, exclaiming: "Men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up into heaven? This Jesus, Who hath been taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

During the forty days that He spent with the

apostles, He instructed them in the truths which they were to announce, in the sacraments which they were to dispense, in the economy of salvation which He had conferred upon men; in a word, in all the secrets of the kingdom of God. He prepared them for the coming of the Holy Ghost, Whom He promised as their Comforter, and as the Finisher of His work.

Their state of mind after His Resurrection contrasted with their state of mind after His crucifixion, showed the consciousness which filled them of the truth of His resurrection: nothing but its reality can explain this wonderful transformation. Now they are filled with faith in His Divinity, and they go forth and resolutely announce that Jesus Whom the Jews had crucified is, indeed, risen; and that they have seen Him, touched Him, ate and drank with Him, conversed with Him, and dwelt with Him. What but the manifest fact of His reappearance among them, could have re-created their failing faith, and revived their lost courage?

While at first, owing to their unspiritual and gross apprehension and worldly ideas, they had been slow to understand Christ's predictions concerning Himself, and His passion and death and Resurrection, no less than the prophecies which He fulfilled; yet now, in the light of His Resurrection and their consequent fulfilment, they understand them all. Those prophecies thus gloriously fulfilled, become the confirmation, if confirmation were needed, of the palpable fact of the Resurrection which for forty days stood before them.

As the faith of the apostles rested upon the truth of the Resurrection, it were the height of absurdity to imagine that they formed a dark and infernal conspiracy to delude men, and to impose upon them what they knew to be a lie and an imposture, which, in its effects, could not fail to introduce into the world, error and evil and superstition far more noxious and reaching, than that from which they knew their Leader and Teacher professed He had come to rescue it.

The faith of the apostles had been well-nigh destroyed by the apprehension and crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Satan had, indeed, "sought them, to sift them as wheat." And he would have succeeded but for the efficacy of Christ's prayer in which He provided for their faith. "We had hoped," said they, "that He was about to redeem Israel;" but this was the third day, and they had well-nigh given up hope. If Christ had not risen, they would naturally have lost all faith in Him, and abandoned His cause: He could not be God. What else could they believe, if they saw that the promise that He would rise, the third day, was unredeemed; if that pledge upon which He had staked His character and mission, should prove but an idle and preposterous boast? They would soon have relapsed into the incredulity of Thomas.

Contrast their state of mind after His death with their state of mind after the Resurrection, and, especially, after the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Nothing short of the reappearance among them of their former Lord and Master, could have

changed that unbelief and despair and pusillanimity into abounding hope and undying faith and self-sacrificing zeal and valor. It were sheer madness to think that such a transformation could be the result of the stealth of a dead body, and of a most horrid deceit of their own devising.—Or, that their blasted faith and fallen courage and blighted love and quenched hopes could be revived by such deceit and imposture. It would be no less against every law of nature, that such effects could be wrought upon the apostles by a dead body whose presence covered with eternal infamy Him, Who had promised what till then the wildest fanaticism or hallucination or the proudest self-exaltation had never conceived, than that the apostles would have dared to propagate what they knew was a lie.

Even if the apostles wanted to deceive mankind, deception would have been impossible, especially under the circumstances; and utterly inconsistent with their manner of action. If they had left Jerusalem without announcing the Resurrection of Christ, and in some far-off country there first announced it where there were none to question its truth and no knowledge of it beyond their word, it might be said that they had resorted to this strategy, not daring to divulge it where and when those were living by whom the imposture could have been at once detected, in order that it might have acquired a certain standing and recognition before they dared to proclaim it to the Jews, whom it could only reach after years, when those were dead who alone could have determined

its truth. Such would have been the method of those bent on deceit and imposture. Such was not the course pursued by the apostles. They went resolutely to Jerusalem, the very place where Christ had been condemned, and to the very presence of those who had condemned Him. They reproached the priests and Pharisees and Jews, with having crucified the Lord of Glory ; and declared to them that He Whom they had put to death, had risen and appeared to them. How anxious must they not have been to acquit themselves of the crime of Deicide ; how eager must they not have been, at least, to justify themselves for the blood which they had shed, as they could so easily have done by the exposure of the plot of the apostles, if such they felt it to be ; and what an opportunity did not the apostles offer them, to detect it. How easily could the high priests have found, at least, one among so many to betray the secret. If among twelve they found one to betray Jesus Himself, how easily could they have found a few or one among hundreds of disciples, who would not have hesitated to betray such a conspiracy : a conspiracy, too, which would have been an explicit acknowledgment that Christ had deluded them, and was not God. In their weakness and cowardice, and when they knew and had confessed that He was God, they fled at the sight of His passion and death : when they saw He was not God, as the project of conspiracy implies, they conspired to proclaim His Divinity ! Such absurdity !

The apostles did not allow years to pass before

they proclaimed that Christ was the Son of the living God. If they had, it might have seemed that they had waited until all public interest in Jesus, and in His death and Resurrection had subsided ; till the facts had been lost or obscured ; till those had died who might have been able to refute their testimony ; and that they in the meanwhile had had abundant opportunity to concoct their scheme, and to present it with plausibility to a generation which had had no part in, nor even been contemporary with, the death and Resurrection of Christ. As a consequence, they could not be so easily confuted. But they made no such delay : no sooner had Christ ascended into heaven, and had they been endued with the virtue of the Holy Ghost, Whose coming they awaited in obedience to Christ's command ; and even while Calvary was yet bedewed with His blood, they went to Jerusalem, to Jews and Gentiles, and proclaimed that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. There was no time or opportunity for organizing a conspiracy : they were still alive who had taken part in the death of Christ, and His burial in the guarded tomb ; and were familiar with all the circumstances of His Resurrection. Hence, the apostles could have been triumphantly answered.

In the manner in which the apostles announced His Resurrection, there was no sign of secrecy, no indication of collusion, and none of that prudent or economical management, which, meant to conceal, almost always discloses, the dark and mysterious ways of conspiracy and conspirators, and

of those who assuming themselves to be wise, are betrayed even by their own artfulness. They promulgated Christ's Resurrection with all the ingenuousness of honest men, and with an authority born of the deepest conviction and a certainty which they felt nothing could contravene. With power and persuasion clearly the gift of God, and irresistible, they called upon the Jews who had crucified Christ, but yet in their ignorance, to believe in Him Whom the Lord had raised from the dead. They declared the witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, and appealed to the five hundred who had seen Him. How easy would detection have been? Where were the apostles and disciples when Christ gave up His spirit on Calvary? but one was with Him. And now, the apostles and disciples in a multitude, and who would have had as much interest in making known the truth as the rest of mankind, come forth and proclaim that Jesus Christ had returned to life!

We need not stop to descant on the absurdity of a secret which should be kept by a multitude of men, numbering more than five hundred. A secret may be kept by two or three; but he who knows anything of human nature: the deceitfulness of the human heart, the various motives which in it find play; the unforeseen circumstances, continually arising, which persons pledged to the most inviolate secrecy feel relieve them of their obligation; the mutual interests, mistrusts, and jealousies, which dissolve secrecy even among a few; all which considerations are multiplied in progressive proportion to the increased number

of parties ;—will easily understand the absolute impossibility of a secret being observed by five hundred people ; and that, too, in such a cause and under such circumstances. If the few soldiers who guarded the sepulchre of Christ were not proof against Jewish corruption, how easily could, at least, a few of the five hundred, or even one, have been found to betray the secret ; particularly, as such betrayal would have been only the candid avowal of the truth.

Bear in mind what was the object of the apostles' preaching Christ's Resurrection from the dead ; and reconcile with it, if you can, the idea that they were impostors.—It was the enlightenment of the world, the overthrow of the dominion of Satan, the establishment in the hearts of men of the kingdom of God, the revelation to mankind of those truths which the soul desires to know, and of the destiny to which they unceasingly aspire.—It was the conquest of passion and sin, the casting out of the prince of this world, the realization of the hopes of the prophets and of all mankind.—It was the disclosure of God's anger against sin and the sinner, manifesting the Sacrifice that they had rendered necessary.—It was teaching mankind that it were better that sun and moon should fall from heaven, and all things cease to be, than that God should be offended by the commission of one deliberate sin. Believe, if you can, that all this was based upon an imposture, and was the work of liars!

If the apostles did not believe in Christ's Resurrection, why should they have sought to make

others believe in it? there have been others in every age who did not believe in it; have they ever undertaken to make mankind believe that that was true which they felt to be untrue, or even doubted? Why, then, should the apostles, out of all men, pursue this singular course,—and so strikingly show themselves to be the children of him who was a liar from the beginning,—of making the world accept a lie for the truth? No one lies without some compensating motive; no one is a liar or impostor out of love for the lie or fraud in itself. Of all the base and black and flagitious lying that takes place among men, there is always something which seems to the liar an equivalent: some profit to be gained or some loss to be avoided: some good in the form of evil, or some evil under the guise of good. If we reflect, we shall find that the apostles could not have had even this delusive inducement of the liar.

That men may sacrifice salvation and the life to come, for sake of this world, is a fact continually before our eyes: that men may sacrifice this world and all that it contains, for sake of that which is to come and their immortal happiness, is a fact which the Gospel teaches, and which every saint attests. But, if the apostles undertook to preach a lie and deceive mankind by falsely announcing Christ's Resurrection, they could not promise themselves the life to come; while at the same time, in so doing, they certainly made sacrifice of this world: consequently, they lost both, and were worse off than the liar, who always finds some remuneration for his base-

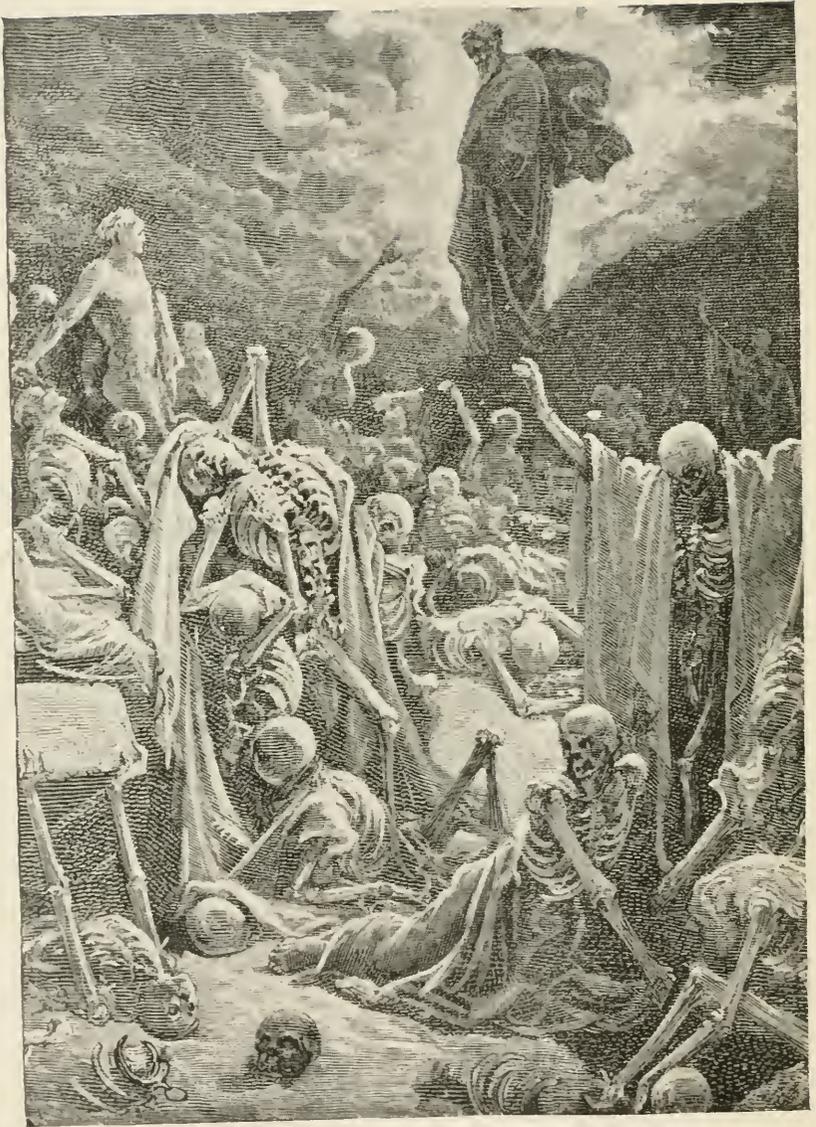
ness. The apostles, far from having motive to lie, had every motive against it. As I have said, they forfeited this world: they exposed themselves to persecution and death; they knew that whatever was to be gained, was to be gained by abandoning the cause of Christ; whatever was to be lost, was to be lost by defending that cause; they abandoned father and mother, sister and brother, race and kindred; they cast to the winds all considerations of wealth and power and influence; they trampled human respect under foot; they courted persecution on every side, and suffering of every kind; hunger and thirst and the sword and death itself had no terrors for them in proclaiming that Christ had risen from the dead and they had seen Him; finally, they sealed their faith with their blood: gave this supremest of all testimony to the sincerity of their belief, and to the truth of Christ's Resurrection. The unshaken constancy, and undying love, and unquenchable zeal even to the shedding of their blood, with which they preached the gospel of Christ, no less than the lofty virtues which they practised and their lives of labors and self-sacrifice—the fruit of the coming of the Holy Ghost—become the strongest guarantee of their sincerity and truthfulness.

They travelled unto the ends of the earth and preached everywhere the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They wrought the most stupendous miracles in the name and in testimony of their Risen Lord. Men prostrated themselves before them, seeing the divine power which was

dispensed through their hands. They renewed the miracles of their Divine Master; and, according to His mandate and prediction, did "even greater works." They exercised the power which He imparted to them of healing the sick, cleansing the leper, raising the dead, and casting out demons. The world believed in the Resurrection of Christ, on the veracity of men who were so evidently filled with the Holy Ghost and the chosen instruments of the Most High, and on the divine evidence and sanction which miracles wrought in the name of Jesus Risen from the dead, afforded. The Resurrection of Christ was the motive and basis of their faith. They were living exemplars of the doctrine which they preached: the miracles of sanctity which they exhibited, no less than the miracles of power, sanctioned and illustrated it. Their blood became the seed of the Gospel: it fertilized the souls of men: it confirmed the truth of their mission. God in His own time, gave the increase.

The Resurrection of Christ has always been, and must continue till the end of time, the foundation of the faith of all true believers.

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who sleep, that ye sorrow not, as even the others who have no hope. For if we believe, that Jesus died, and rose again ; so also, those who are asleep through Jesus, God will bring with Him. For this we say to you on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself with command, and with voice of archangel, and with trumpet of God shall come down from heaven : and the dead, who are in Christ, shall rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so we shall be always with the Lord.—1 Thess. iv. 12-16.

Behold I tell you a mystery : We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall arise incorruptible : and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption : and this mortal put on immortality. But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, which is written : Death is swallowed up in victory.—1 Cor. xv. 51-54.

DEATH to the body, and, worse than that, death to the soul, death to our deepest and holiest aspirations, was the penalty of the first transgression. Death is the wages of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and by the sin death, and so death passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned." From that sin till now, the dominion of death has

been absolute and universal. Mortality is the lot of the children of man. They hasten to it as to their appointed termination; the process of death begins with the process of life; the activity of the creature never ceases until it is exhausted in death. Even yet, since the restoration to life and immortality through Jesus Christ, the original penalty of "dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return," is inflicted upon every son of Adam. For Christ has not destroyed death, in the sense that it no longer takes place, but in the sense, that He has made it of no avail,—that it is swallowed up in the victory which He has won for us over it, by His resurrection, the principle and type of our own.

The whole earth is a vast scene of death, a field of conflict in which death is sure to conquer; it is given up to the dead, the dying, and those about to die. What family or congregation has not felt its ravages? how few hearts that hear me, have not ached with the sting that death has left? How few are here to-day, who were here a generation, or even a few years ago? But a little while suffices to change the face of a congregation or community. A short time since, and others sat where you now sit; yet a little while, and you in turn will yield to others. Man with all he is, and all he seeks after,—the endowments of genius, the enterprises of industry, the projects of ambition, the search for wealth, his visions of glory, await their final issue in death.

But all this is changed in the light of the glori-

ous revelation of Christ. Our doom is reversed; the sentence against us is blotted out, the tyranny of death is broken, the universal darkness is dispelled, the thralldom of Satan is overthrown, death—the wages of sin—is destroyed forever. It is no longer death to body, death to soul, death to our hopes; but it is resurrection and life and immortality to soul and body; it is fulfilment and eternal fruition to all our hopes and aspirations.

These heavenly souls, how dreadful to think that they had never been created! That loss is not diminished because we would have never known it, for it would be known in God's sight. Unspeakable loss that the soul should have forever remained in the desolation of nothingness. The least actual creature is greater than the most glorious ideal world. Still greater the calamity of having once tasted life, and then be condemned to death. Better never to have been born, than being born, to die forever.

Sad to think that the holiest aspiration of the soul,—the desire of perfect happiness including every good, excluding every evil, and lasting forever, the supreme tendency of our rational nature,—should be forever doomed to disappointment; that we should be like the beasts of the earth, or the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is not. But in the resurrection of Christ, I see that my hopes are to be realized, that I am to find the yearnings of my soul in union with God, its Creator and final destiny, in the life to come.

These bodies fearfully and wonderfully made;

fit receptacles of an immortal spirit ; in which God Himself did not refuse to dwell ; whose pains and pleasures are those of the soul ; instruments of salvation or instruments of perdition ;— we love them, we cling to them, we dread their natural dissolution, we recoil from the prospect of the grave, we shudder at the termination of our days. But now, in the light of Jesus rising from the dead, should we start back ? for we know that our sinking into the grave will be but temporary ; that we shall come forth from the mass of corruption, from the grave of ashes to enjoy God for evermore. “ For if the Spirit of Him, Who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you ; will not He Who raised Jesus from the dead, resuscitate your mortal bodies, because of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them ? ” “ And a day shall come, when those who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life and some to the resurrection of judgment. ” “ Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead, he that eateth this bread shall live forever, and I will raise him up on the last day. ” “ Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. ” Christ’s rising from the dead is the fruit and reward of the grace which He had purchased for all men by His sufferings and death. Sharers in the grace, are we not to be sharers in the fruit of the grace ? Christ is our brother in the flesh ; He rises the first-fruits of them that sleep ; He but precedes those who are to follow : where He is, there also must we be. He is the restorer of our

lost humanity. He has destroyed the bondage of the slavery of sin; He has vanquished death; He has delivered us into the liberty of the children of God; He has won back for us our lost inheritance. He is to humanity restored, what Adam was to humanity fallen: as in Adam we all died, so in Christ we were all made to live.

A day shall come when those who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man summoning them to justice. A trumpet sound shall go forth unto the ends of the earth, calling all the children of men before the tribunal of Him, Who, as He was once sent into the world as their mediator, shall then come as their judge charged with the interests of Divine justice. The omnipotence which revealed itself in the resurrection of Christ, shall be again exerted, and the members of Christ's mystical body shall gather around their Head, and their Brother in the flesh. The sea and land shall yield forth all those who lie within their bosom; and all shall arise with identically the same bodies that they had in this life: those of the just only shall be glorified: for "the body of our lowness shall be reformed unto the body of His glory." The word resurrection implies this identity of body. Job says: "In my flesh I shall see my God, Whom I myself shall see and mine eyes behold, and not another." This corruption must put on incorruption. The vision of the prophet shall be verified, and the dry bones of men will be again re clothed with their flesh, and reanimated with their souls. Quicker than thought can conceive it, bone will

unite with bone, sinews shall clasp them, ashes will again become flesh, and all shall once again receive the breath of life. Our bodies will be similar to that with which Adam was created. The body of Christ, as it rose from the grave, will be the model upon which ours shall be rebuilt, and reformed: "Our Lord when He shall appear, will not only call up our vile bodies from the dead, but so change them, that they shall be no longer vile, but become like unto His own glorious body, according to the workings by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself." Science can decompose substances and make of them new ones; and again destroy these and restore the original substances. Can we deny to God, the Creator, that which is even within human agency? or shall we not rather say that He can effect incomparably greater results? If He can make out of nothing, how far easier to evolve or make out of what exists, or bring back what formerly existed. He upon Whose word light was made, and all things came into being, can, assuredly, restore that which, in His providence, has only temporarily passed away. He Who created all things, and of Whose works not an atom is lost, can reproduce that which He has, for a season, confided to the bosom of the earth, at once our sepulchre and our mother.

The formation of the human body is slow, even as is its dissolution: death itself carries on its ravages gradually though incessantly. But in the general Resurrection these slow processes will be contemned, and the bodies of men shall arise at

once, and in the full measure of their strength and vigor and beauty, deprived of every defect, every missing member replaced, every maiming that may have been caused by the accidents of life removed, restored to the absolute integrity which belongs to our nature. Nor will the order of their death determine the order of their rising, the first to die will not necessarily be the first to rise; those who have been moldering for ages in their graves, will not take precedence of us, nor of those who shall be alive at the last day. Nor, as the apostle says, "will those who are alive at the last day, go before those who have slept:" there shall be but one hour for all those who have slept from the days of Adam, and those who shall be born even at the sound of the last trumpet. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet, shall this universal restoration of humanity be accomplished.

This Resurrection will be absolute and universal; not the resurrection of the just only, the saints of God, of every time and nation, but the resurrection of the unjust; the unbeliever, the reprobate, will not be allowed to escape the terrors of that dreadful day. As the bodies of the saints, without exception, will rise to be reunited to their souls, to enjoy never-ending felicity; so also the bodies of the sinful, without exception, shall rise to be joined to their souls, to suffer never-ending misery. The bodies of the saints shall arise glorified and endowed with wondrous gifts; the bodies of the reprobate shall arise unchanged: "We shall all rise, but

we shall not all be glorified." The state of the bodies will bespeak the glory or misery which is to be their eternal lot.

This consoling truth is clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures: it is taught by Christ in His dispute with the Sadducees; it is illustrated in the Old Testament by the restorations of life wrought by Elias and by Eliseus; and in the New by the raising of the dead by our Lord and the apostles. The prophet Daniel speaking of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, says: "Some shall awake to eternal life, others to an eternal reproach." In the time of the apostles there were those who denied the Resurrection of the body, urging that those passages from Scripture which seemed to speak of it, are to be understood of the soul's rising from the death of sin to the life of grace. In condemnation of this heresy the apostles embodied in the Creed this Divine truth. St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv., speaks most profusely of the Resurrection; also in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

When we contemplate the physical order in nature, or the moral order among men, we find nothing but change, continual and never ending. The sun and stars sink and disappear but to return; the seasons follow one another in an incessant chase, dying only to give way to new life, and each returning in its allotted time. The vegetable world withers and dies, but provides for its perpetuity in the bountiful profusion of seed with which it enriches the earth. Nations rise, flourish, decay and fall; schools of philosophy, forms of

government, last for a time, and are succeeded by other systems and other doctrines. In a word, all things are continually changing and dying, and yet coming to life again. However, in the midst of this universal change and death, nothing is withdrawn from existence; annihilation has no place in this moral or physical dissolution. It is but the forms, not the essences or substances, that are subject to these continuous vicissitudes. Continual death is followed by continual life. Life is even indefinitely multiplied by this unceasing death; the seed must die before the flower or fruit is produced. So, in like manner, with the human body. Our bodies sink into the earth there to decay and be resolved into their own elements, before they become incorruptible and immortal. "It is sown a corruptible body," says St. Paul, "it shall rise an incorruptible one." The apostle refers to the very process of nature, to illustrate the change that shall take place in our bodies in their Resurrection from the dead.

Even in the political world, to die and to be formed again, seems to be a necessary condition for the progress of society, and the improvement of government. Everything seems to symbolize man, who lives for a while, then dies, like all things else, to be again resuscitated. We cannot believe that he is to be exempted from the law so universal in the moral world which his own mind makes and in which he lives. We cannot believe that material nature is to be preserved, while man must perish. It could never enter into the design of God, that His noblest work should last but a

few days, to have no other or higher destiny than brute or inanimate nature: a being endowed with wondrous gifts and capable of living forever will never sink into the earth to perish as if he had never been. Man is capable of creating that which, by untold ages, may survive himself: God in creating man must have destined him to a longer life and more lengthened duration than the work of man's own hands. If brute or inanimate matter is to survive man's spiritual nature and gifts, and if he is to be consigned to the grave, never to rise therefrom; how, or in what, can man, the master-piece of God's hands, be said to be superior or equal to the material nature of which he is the lord and master? It is against every dictate of reason, that beings and objects made for man's use and benefit, should be endowed with the power of perpetuating themselves for all time, and yet man himself be deprived of it. Matter cannot be endowed with the permanency denied to spirit; the slave or instrument cannot be crowned with a glory greater than that of the master himself.

Hence, nature itself teaches man's future Resurrection. The very excellence of the human body teaches the same lesson; for, after the human soul, what is more excellent or nobler than the body which it informs; what is there in nature more deserving of preservation; what is there that discloses a loftier wisdom, a diviner-skill or workmanship? Other beings may be endowed with greater strength and activity; but none more perfectly show forth the glory of God; in none are more legibly discerned the lineaments of the

Divinity. Man alone walking erect, and with a countenance that reveals the intelligence of the indwelling spirit, alone looking up to heaven, whence he came and to which he feels he must return, proclaims himself the lord of creation and the only fit symbol of God on earth. The tabernacle of the immortal soul, the human body, is formed with so surpassing a wisdom, that in contemplating the mysteries it discloses, we are lost in admiration ; we are overcome with a holy dread when we reflect on this wondrous structure of our members, devised by no human agency, but by the omniscient and all-pervading power of Him, Who made heaven and earth, and all things that they possess. If the objects of material nature around us only die, to rise again to a newer and better life, to a more extensive usefulness, can we believe that this human body which God Himself thought so well of, as to make of it a tabernacle in which He did not refuse to dwell,—can we believe that it is destined to remain and rot in the grave of death, without hope of Resurrection? On the contrary, what else can we believe than that it will one day be reunited to the soul, and with it enjoy the happiness, or suffer the misery, reserved for the soul according to its well or evil doing? Should we not love to believe that, as God rose again from the dead, His body made all glorious and immortal and with it ascended into heaven, He will make His resurrection the type and pattern of our own ; not allowing us to remain forever in the grave, but raising us from the dead ; “ reforming the body of our lowliness, making it like

unto the image of His glory?" St. Paul tells us that, if there be no Resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen, and our preaching is vain and our faith is vain, for we are yet in our sins; but now as Christ is risen, the first-fruits of them that sleep, there must be a future Resurrection.

The soul of man is fitted for his body, his body for the soul; "A body thou has fitted to me, O Lord." The body is built for the soul, the soul is created for the particular body which it informs. They form together a human person endowed with consciousness and life. The body without the soul dies; the soul deprived of the body is incapable of performing some of its most essential operations. Not one thought can be entertained by man's soul, at least in its present state, without the aid of the body. They are bound together in a union so close and indissoluble, that the deepest philosophy is unable to fathom it. The pains and pleasures, the weakness and disorder of the one, are those of the other. They are mated for an eternal union with each other; their companionship is eternal either in hell or heaven. One cannot be separated from the other forever, without God's work being marred and disjointed. Meant for the closest union, one cannot ever be supremely happy without the other. Separated, the body would continually yearn for the soul, the soul for the body; neither would be at rest, because neither would possess what is necessary for its felicity. God has made spirits various in kind and in degree. Those lofty intelligences with which He has peopled heaven are indepen-

dent of sense in their operations, and were never meant for union with material organism. But the spirits which He has made in this world and with which we are familiar, are meant for union with our bodies: their union is indispensable to their nature, and by this union spirit and matter are made one, heaven and earth are united. Whatever may be said of the nature of spirit in itself, or of the nature of heavenly spirits, of which we know so little, we do know that the degree of perfection which He has seen fit to confer upon spiritual nature here below, requires its union with frail perishing matter, and that, too, for the performance of some of its most essential functions. In perfect harmony did soul and body dwell, until death, the wages of sin, broke up the concord. It was sin that destroyed the celestial concert. Jesus Christ came into the world and destroyed sin. He has, therefore, abolished death; and, death abolished, soul and body should be reunited to enjoy their former union and companionship. Death once triumphant, but now subdued and cast out, should no longer be permitted to keep asunder what God hath joined together; should no longer be allowed to mutilate and destroy the admirable union of soul and body. They both with one voice cry out to God, their Maker, that now as their arch enemy death is destroyed, they be again reconciled to each other, and enjoy together the glory of which they were meant to be joint sharers.

The body is partaker in the sin or virtue practised by the soul; hence it is to be rewarded or

punished with the soul. Think not that our bodies are without their responsibility for the good or evil to which they minister. While it is to the will alone that sin is imputable, yet we know that it is the obedience or disobedience of the body, that is the occasion of sin or virtue to the soul. We do not what we will, but what things we will not, these things we do : the flesh allures us from doing what the spirit tells us we should do. We see in all our members a warring against the spirit, and captivating us unto the law of sin. The lust of the flesh is our greatest enemy, the source of innumerable sins. The body shares in the pleasure of sin, which brings death to the soul. As, then, the body by its fidelity to the law of the mind, or by its infidelity, becomes an occasion of merit or demerit, it is right that it should be made sharer of the eternal happiness or misery of the soul. As the sufferings of Jesus Christ inflicted chiefly upon the body, and endured by the soul, became, by reason of His human nature's union with the God-head, of an infinite price and purchased our salvation ; so, in some such way, do the acts of virtue or the acts of sin, performed by means of the body, entail upon them an eternal reward or an eternal chastisement. As the body, then, is to be punished for lusting against the spirit and being the very subject-matter of its sin, so is it to be rewarded if obedient to the spirit, it becomes the very occasion of its virtue and its acts of well-doing. It is obvious that, unless the body rise again on the last day, to be reunited to the soul, it can never share in this reward or punishment.

Whatever might be the happiness the soul could enjoy without the body, it could never be complete or satisfactory: the soul would still yearn for that union for which it was made, and which is one of the elements of its nature; it would be as a whole without one of its parts. As nature is said to abhor a vacuum, so the soul would abhor the void in its nature, caused by its separation from the body. We may, then, conclude that Jesus Christ will judge our bodies no less than our souls, and will assign to them their due deserts. Even as He assumed our body no less than our soul into union with the Deity, so will He become the Judge no less of one than of the other.

Our souls and our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Not merely by His influence or grace, but by His real and substantial presence does He dwell in them. He comes into them by Baptism and by Confirmation, and attests His abidance in them and His claim to them as His own, by impressing upon them an indelible character. He never abandons our souls and bodies until cast out by grievous sin. Nor can it seem an exaggeration to say that the Holy Ghost dwells in our mortal bodies, when we reflect on the words of St. John, that "in God we live and move and have our being." If we live in God and He is the source of our being and every movement, how easy to believe that in the spiritual order the Holy Ghost, the Eternal Love of the Father and of the Son, abides in us. As the Holy Ghost possesses the soul, He rules and controls the body. As He directs the soul, the soul moved

by Him governs the body. He it is Who inspires the acts of mortification and self-denial which the body performs. It is by the body that we put into execution all deeds of virtue ; it is by its agency that we practise all works of self-sacrifice and generosity in relief of human suffering, and to fulfil the obligations of Christian charity. It is the Holy Ghost working through the soul Who urges the members of our body to co-operate in all the virtuous aspirations of the soul.

Nor should we think that the human body is an unworthy tabernacle for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. It is far nobler and far more divine than any temple that human hands have ever dedicated to His service. What more exalted than this living sanctuary, whose members have been set in order by the invisible hand of Him Who made heaven and earth, and whose living principle is the very breath of the Omnipotent Himself. It is at once the temple and the adorer. It is unlike that made by human hands. It prostrates itself and with outstretched arms adores and supplicates the living God. Behold the body of man incasing the soul intent in contemplation or glowing in prayer ; what temple more worthy than this of God ! The Holy Ghost can dwell in our bodies and yet be unblemished. The sun's light penetrates even into the most hideous recesses and thickest darkness. The sacraments are not contaminated, although their grace is forfeited, by the unworthy recipient : even when the Holy Ghost is driven from the soul by sin He departs unstained and all-pure.

As, then, our bodies are the dwelling-places of the Holy Ghost, we must believe in their future Resurrection: "For if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in you; will not He Who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, resuscitate your mortal bodies because of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them?" As even among men amidst all the horrors of war, amidst tumult and carnage, the material temple escapes profanity and destruction, because it is dedicated to the service of God; so the temples of our bodies shall survive the dissolution of all things else and be made immortal, because they are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ promises this future Immortality of the body to those who eat of His flesh and drink of His blood. He declares that the union begun in this life between Him and those who eat His body and drink His blood, shall be consummated in the life to come: "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you shall not have life in you;" "He that eateth My flesh, abideth in Me and I in Him;" "Not as your fathers ate the manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread, shall live forever: and I will raise him up on the last day." These are the very words of Christ. Here is the pledge of the verity of our Resurrection. Could human language declare more unmistakably its truth? On the last day, the bodies that during life are nourished with the flesh and blood of Christ, will present a claim to immortal life which all others cannot have. Not that the union which the body of Christ

takes up here below with those who receive it, invests our bodies with any power by which they can, of themselves, rise; but it bestows upon them a moral right founded in the promise of Christ, to rise from the dead and to live forever. The body of Christ is the Divine food which nourishes the seed of immortal life. The body of Christ in Holy Communion is His last will and testament, by which the merits of His passion and death are conveyed to the souls of men. It is true that we are made partakers of His redemption through the other sacraments; but it is in the Holy Communion that we are made sharers of these merits, especially and in their greatest fulness.

Adam by his prevarication brought sin and death into the world: Christ by His passion and death brought grace and life. He came to destroy sin, therefore, death, its wages. He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly. "He died for our sins, He rose for our justification." His resurrection is the first-fruits of our own; partakers in the grace purchased by His death, we are partakers of His resurrection, the reward of His death. The gifts with which His body arose endowed, are the gifts with which our bodies also shall arise on the last day. He is our brother in the flesh. He is the Head of humanity restored. Where the head is, there the members also must be. He wills that where He is, there also must we be. He has gone to prepare a place for us at the right hand of the Father. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge of our Resurrection. It was to purchase

for us the right to rise from the dead, and to be with Him forever at the right hand of the Father, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification. In the reasoning of St. Paul, our Resurrection rests upon the same foundation as Christ's own resurrection from the dead. If He rose we shall rise; if we rise not, neither has He risen, and we are yet in our sins.

Our bodies shall rise immortal. They shall no longer be subject to pain, suffering, sickness, and death. The principle of dissolution, which is inseparable from our nature here below, will be turned into a never-dying vitality and unfailing youth; "He shall cast down death headlong forever." We shall regain the immortality which we lost in Adam. Even "the wicked shall seek death and shall not find it, shall desire to die and death shall fly from them."

The bodies of the just shall rise incapable of suffering. They shall be exempted from weakness or sickness or the decrepitude of old age. They will be unassailable to all external violence. The bodies of the just will rise glorified, and shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. This glory will be the effulgence of the supreme bliss of the soul united to its God. "One will be the glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of stars, for star differeth from star in glory;" so also in the Resurrection, each one will shine with the glory proportionate to its sanctity. Yet all will be without spot or any such thing.

In this life, we feel the body to be a weight

dragging the soul to the earth and frustrating its aspirations to God, the Good and the True. The soul would fain think of eternal truths and heavenly thoughts, but the body and its concupiscence chain it to what is low and unworthy ; it would travel to the uttermost bounds of the universe, but soon its transport is broken, and it finds itself where its body is. It will not be so on the last day ; then the body will be obedient to the soul ; and soul and body will pass with the quickness of thought from place to place, will roam at pleasure throughout the vast domain of God's creation. " It is sown in weakness, it will rise in power." Our bodies will be spiritualized, made so much like unto our souls, that at the bidding of our will, they will be present at once in the extremest part of creation ; and will never experience weariness or disgust in thinking of God and things spiritual. " It is sown a natural body, it will rise a spiritual body." It will be holy in its feelings, desires, wants—conforming itself in all things to the will of the spirit. These are but a few of the endowments with which our bodies shall be enriched in the day of the Resurrection.

What should not be our gratitude to God, that He has vouchsafed to disclose these consolatory truths—truths which were so long unknown to men, and which, even now, are hidden from the wise and prudent, and reserved for the lowly who receive them on His word. At the remembrance of the glorious destiny that awaits us, all the sorrow and sufferings and tribulations of this life should be assuaged, and even turned into joy, as

being the marks of our predestination. In this assurance of the future Resurrection of the dead, we should find support to bear with resignation the loss of these who have been near or dear to us. All immoderate grief should cease, when we call to mind that we shall again see them, in the very bodies in which they were known, and conversed with us.

If, therefore, this is our eternal destiny, we should recognize our exalted rank in creation, and seek to make ourselves worthy of it. If our souls and bodies are thus one day to enjoy the glory of heaven, and to be forever united to Almighty God, it is manifest that we should not seek to satisfy them with the possession of anything that this world can afford. We should try to realize that as eternal bliss is the destiny that awaits us, so eternal misery is our portion if we fail to reach it. If we but realize and bear in mind, the destiny of our bodies in ministering unto God, the angels, and blessed spirits, we would never use them in a manner unbefitting their end ; we would be mindful of the words of the apostle, who beseeches us by the love of God, "that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to the Lord." These eyes which are one day to behold the unblemished purity of God and His unutterable Majesty, should we allow them to look upon anything suggestive of impurity, anything capable of sin? These ears which are to hear forever the concert of the heavenly spirits, singing the praises of God, should we permit them to listen to lasciviousness, revelry, detraction or any

manner of evil speech? These tongues which are one day to glorify God, should we defile them by foul speaking, uttering obscenity, or in any other way, by which our souls, or the souls of others, may be scandalized? Shall we, in the words of the apostle, "make the members of our bodies the members of harlots?" These hands to be raised in prayer and holy benediction, shall we make them the vehicles of dishonesty or injustice? The gifts which God has given us for our eternal happiness are not to be turned into the instruments of our eternal misery. No part of our being which is to be united one day to the Godhead, in eternal bliss and joy, should we, even for a moment, permit to be defiled by any manner of sin, or by anything that can be a displeasure to Almighty God.

THE HOLY GHOST.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him : but ye shall know Him ; because He will abide with you, and be in you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatever I have said to you.—St. John xiv. 16, 17, 26.

I have yet many things to say to you : but ye cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will teach you all the truth.—St. John xvi. 12, 13.

WE are required to have an explicit faith in the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity. Far from us should be such ignorance as that which St. Paul found among certain Ephesians, who on being asked if they had received the Holy Ghost, replied : that they did not so much as know that there was a Holy Ghost. It is to be feared that many Christians are content with repeating the name of this Divine Spirit, without any real knowledge of His nature and gifts, and without any realizing faith in Him as God. The conduct of the apostle on the occasion referred to, is the example for both pastor and people ; to kindle the zeal of the one, and to bestir the other and perfect their knowledge of, and to strengthen the faith which they may have

in this Divine Person. We read that having taught them the being and nature of the Holy Ghost, the apostle imparted to them the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The mystery of the Adorable Trinity is the foundation of our Christian faith. It is the very essence and soul of the revelation made by Christ Jesus. "No one has ever seen God: the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."—John i. 18. "Because from God, and through God, and in God, are all things: to God be glory for all ages."—Rom. xi. 36. By which words the apostle signifies the Trinity of the Persons and the Unity of the Nature, which since it is one and the same for each Person, accordingly there is due to each, as to one and the same God, the same eternal glory.—Encyclical Leo XIII. We adore One God in a Trinity of Persons, and a Trinity of Persons in One God. As each Divine Person has with the other two the same Divine Nature, to each as to one and the same God, do we render the same eternal praise, worship, and glory.

There is nothing in nature that can explain the mystery of the August Trinity and the relations of the Divine Persons to one another. Hence it is utterly impossible for the human mind in its loftiest flight, to rise to a conception of this inscrutable mystery. And yet it is given us under the guidance of the saints and doctors of the Church, to form to ourselves, at least some imperfect idea of this foundation of our faith. The very effort, by elevating our minds and fixing our

thoughts, will serve to impress upon us the greatness of the mystery ; seeing that it is so great that it cannot at all be comprehended. Thus inspired with sentiments of the unutterable majesty of God, our devotion will be kindled and increased. Not, then, to scrutinize the profound depths of God, nor to indulge in empty and lofty speculations, should we raise ourselves thus to His very bosom ; lest we be overwhelmed with the Divine glory, and should seem to be unmindful that it is far more excellent “ to do the will of the Trinity, than to talk learnedly of the Trinity.” As St. Augustine tells us, that everything that God hath made, bears upon it, in some measure or degree, the image or reflex of its Creator, it may be that nature will supply some illustration, howsoever imperfect, to enable us to form this desired conception.

Theologians seem to have found it in God’s noblest being, in the spiritual part of man’s nature. The human mind reflects upon itself, upon its nature and operations, its knowledge and its own consciousness. From this reflection, it forms to itself an idea, or conception, or comprehension of itself. It passes on to a further act : it is pleased, or displeased, with the conception thus formed. Its complacency, or its opposite, is the result of the mutual influence of the mind upon the conception, and of the conception upon the mind. In some analogous manner, the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, contemplating His Divine nature and essence, reflecting upon His consciousness, forms to Himself a perfect knowledge or comprehension of Himself. This adequate com-

prehension, this word and wisdom of the Father, is the Second Adorable Person of the Trinity. This consciousness or knowledge of Himself is endowed with personality. The Father contemplating Himself in this personal reflection of Himself, and the Eternal word as the Reflection of the Father, are filled with mutual love, one for the other. From this eternal love of the Father for Himself, as reflected in the Son, and of the Son for the Father, as reflected in Himself, proceeds the Holy Ghost, the Third Adorable Person of the Trinity: He is the Infinite expression of the eternal love engendered between the Father and the Son. This mutual love is invested with personality. And thus is completed the mysterious inner life of the Godhead.

By a mode of speech borrowed from our human knowledge, we say that the Second Adorable Person is the Son; because we would declare His eternal generation from the Father; and it is only by such generation that we can conceive nature and essence to be communicated. But as we have nothing in nature to make known to us how nature and essence can be communicated by love, we are compelled to designate the Holy Ghost by no proper name, but by one in itself equally applicable to any of the Divine Persons; we characterize His going forth from the Father and the Son as from one principle, as the Eternal Spiration or Procession.

As God never existed without this knowledge of Himself, which is the Word, and without this mutual love which proceeds from Himself and the

Son, which is the Holy Spirit, it is manifest that each of the Three Persons, being in the same nature and substance, is equally eternal and perfect ; in a word, is equally God. The Son, “ the figure of His Father’s substance and the splendor of His glory,” by His eternal generation from His Father, is consubstantial and co-eternal with Him. The Holy Ghost by His eternal spiration and procession from Father and Son as from one principle, receiving His nature and essence, is equally consubstantial and co-eternal with both ; Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified. The Holy Ghost, then, is God as truly as the Father and the Son ; and distinguished from them as they are distinguished from one another, and from Him, save only by the relation of personality. This truth is explicitly declared in Holy Scripture: Peter said to Ananias: Why hath Satan tempted thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. Acts, v. 3, 4. “ There are three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three who give testimony on earth: the Spirit, and water, and blood: and these three are one.” I. John v., 7, 8. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that sins are forgiven: “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” The same praise is given in the doxology to the Holy Ghost as to the Father and the Son: “ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.” Baptism cannot be ad-

ministered in the name of any creature : yet it is to be conferred in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Those who had been baptized with the baptism of John, were re-baptized in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Scriptures declare the Holy Ghost to be the Sanctifier of souls, the Life-giver, the Searcher of the depths of God, the Inspiration of the prophets, to be present in all places, to dwell in the hearts of men, which are His very temples ; all which profusely shows that He is true God.

All the external works of God are the result of the joint action of the Three Divine Persons : all these works, and all the attributes and perfections which they contain, are common to the whole Trinity ; which undivided in its essence, is as little divided in its works. Yet the external works of God, by reason of the attribute which shines in them, are said to be the work of one or other of the Divine Persons : we ascribe them to that Person Whose distinctive attribute they seem to possess. Thus, to the Father we ascribe those works which are especially the manifestation of Divine power ; for He is the efficient cause of all things : to the Son, those works which are the special exhibition of Divine knowledge and wisdom ; for He is the type and exemplar upon which all things have been made : to the Holy Ghost, those works which especially show forth Divine love and goodness ; for all things have their final motive in, and result from, the infinite love, of which He is the Personal expression. The creation of the world as illustrative of Divine

power, is the work of the Father ; our redemption as illustrative of Divine wisdom, is the work of the Son ; the salvation and sanctification of souls as illustrative of Divine love and goodness, is the work of the Holy Ghost ; although they are each and together the work of the Divine Nature, as little divided in its works as in itself.

The creation of the world, considered as the work of Divine love, is assigned to the Holy Ghost, "Who in the beginning brooded over the vast abyss and made it pregnant;" from Whom it came forth, bearing upon it the lineaments of its Divine parent : the immensity, the power, the order, the harmony, and the laws which sustain it. In a word, all the perfection and glory of the world is but a communication and shadow of this Divine Spirit, Whom the Church salutes on Pentecost, as the "Creator Spirit," Who in the beginning adorned heaven and earth with His divine gifts.

However, it is more to the purpose of our discourse to speak of the Holy Ghost as the Creator of the supernatural world, which faith reveals and into which, by His grace, we have been born. From Him came the state of original justice and sanctifying grace, in which our race was at first established ; of His gratuity was the supernatural rank to which Adam was raised, and the inheritance of eternal happiness which was reserved for him. It would have been entirely worthy of God, and no degradation to His goodness, if He had made man in a state of pure nature, destitute of immortality and of the blessings which immortality brings with it ; nay more, He

could have created man even as he is now born. There was nothing in man's nature to exert any claim to be raised to a destiny, other or better, than that which he might find within the limits of this life. His elevation to a supernatural rank was the result of the gratuitous goodness of God; and, therefore, is justly ascribed to the Holy Ghost, Who is the Personal expression of Divine love and goodness.

When man in his blindness fell from this state, the Holy Ghost did not forsake him; but instilled and kept alive in his heart the promise and hope of a Redeemer to come. By the anticipated grace of this Redeemer, He continued to save and to sanctify the souls of men. That Redemption, unspeakable in its nature and unlimited in its application, was as powerful thus applied by anticipation, as it was subsequently by actual application. The gifts of the Holy Ghost shed abroad into the hearts of men, invisibly and in less degree, were as real as those which He poured out in visible and plenteous profusion, when He descended upon the apostles on Pentecost. By grace He dwelt in the hearts of men in the long interval from the fall to the redemption. As truly as God, the Creator, is everywhere present, and gives to everything its essence and its being,—“For in Him we live and move and have our being,”—as creatures we cannot doubt that in the Holy Ghost our spiritual life subsisted, was nourished and had its being: God, the Sanctifier, did not abandon those whom God, the Creator, still continued to create and to sustain.

When in the fulness of time it pleased Almighty God "to send His only begotten Son, that all who would believe in Him might not perish, but might have life and have it more abundantly;" when the appointed period had come to redeem the world and restore mankind to the state and destiny which they had forfeited, to the Holy Ghost, as to the Love of the Godhead, was assigned the office of accomplishing the unutterable mystery of the Incarnation. He it was Who overshadowed the Blessed Virgin, and by Whose mysterious operation the Son of God was made incarnate: for "The Holy Ghost will come on thee;" and "Thou wilt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus:" "For that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."

Thus it is that this Divine Spirit, moved by the misery of men, would undo the original fall and extricate them from the wanderings of passion, and their blindness of mind. He would restore their shattered hopes, and lead them forth from the ruin which the first sin had caused; nay more, true to God's eternal providence, He would evolve good from evil, and make of the original fall that "happy fault" which would result in a greater manifestation of mercy than would have been vouchsafed, if man had never fallen. We might have learned the goodness of God from the creation of the world and from the making of man; but we would forever have remained strangers to the amazing love which the Incarnation attests, unless mankind had fallen. Without this mys-

tery, humanity could never have reached, nor could there have ever dawned upon it, the glorious possibility of its personal union with the Divine Word. That God should become man, and that man should be glorified by his union with the Godhead, was something that not even angelic intelligence could believe possible ; and yet this was the transcendent fruit of the fall of Adam, which the Holy Ghost came now to repair with so great a prodigality. The Incarnation, as the outpouring and as the very consummation of Divine love, was beyond all expression the work of Him Who draws His nature and essence from the Father and the Son, by way of love,—Who is the Infinite and Personal expression of their eternal love.

When the Word was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin, and the soul was united to the body of Jesus, the Holy Ghost was present and anointed that union with all His sevenfold gifts. All graces of whatsoever kind and degree : all the graces and more than have ever been bestowed upon the children of men, singly or collectively : graces which the angels only know of, and which even they cannot realize : all possible virtues and holiness, all wisdom, and counsel, and knowledge, and piety ; in a word, all the graces of the Holy Ghost, and “all the treasures of the wisdom of the Godhead,” were infused into that soul. With such a profusion was the soul of Jesus prepared for its temporal career ; for the prophecies which He was to utter, for the miracles which He was to perform, for the virtues and holiness which He was to practise, for

the fortitude which in His passion He was to evince, for His resurrection from the dead ; for all this, did He in the moment of His conception receive into His soul the Holy Ghost. "By the Holy Ghost He offered Himself immaculate to God the Father." Heb. ix., 14. The Holy Ghost never abandoned the Lord Jesus during His career on earth. It was through Him, that by the holiness of His life, no less than by His resurrection from the dead, and the visible coming of the Holy Ghost, He was predestined or manifested to be the Son of God.

While on earth Jesus had promised that He would send this Divine Spirit, that He would not leave them orphans, that He would send to them the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Who when He would come would teach them all truth, would bring to their minds all that He had taught them, and would abide with them forever. It was expedient that He should go: for if He did not, the Paraclete would not come: but if He went, He would send Him to them. "And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not in Me: and of justice, because I go to the Father; and ye will see me no longer: and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged."

Many are the reasons assigned by theologians for the coming of the Holy Ghost. Of course, they must all be traced back to their origin, the inexhaustible goodness of Almighty God. This goodness is of the very essence of God: it con-

stitutes His very life : from the eternal contemplation of His essential goodness is generated the Eternal Word in Whom it is expressed : from the eternal mutual love which this contemplation excites in the Father for the Son, and in the Son for the Father, proceeds the Holy Ghost, Who is its infinite expression. The goodness of God, then, and its contemplation, and the love which it inspires, constitute the inner life and eternal employment of the Godhead. The Divine Goodness is manifestly infinite, since from it proceeds the Infinite Person of the Word, and the Infinite Person of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, goodness is necessarily diffusive of itself ; it cannot remain absorbed or centred in itself. It must go forth and communicate itself ; its communication must be proportioned to its nature : infinite goodness calls for a manifestation, if not infinite, at least sufficient to proclaim by its magnitude that it must have come from an infinite source. God could not, outside of Himself, manifest an infinite goodness. It would be exhaustive of His power ; which is impossible. But short of the infinite, the Divine Goodness has gone far beyond that which human, or even angelic, intelligence could conceive as possible. The creation of the world and of man, was the first great exhibition of the infinite goodness of God. The Incarnation of the Second glorious Person of the God-head, was the next great outpouring of the same Divine goodness. The coming of the Holy Ghost must be accounted the final manifestation to creatures of the illimitable love of the Creator.

Thus the Three Divine Persons become, so to speak, the very property of man: he is united to God the Father by creation: to God the Son by redemption: to God the Holy Ghost by sanctification. The Eternal Father was not satisfied with the love exhibited in creation; He sent His only begotten Son, by Whom the bonds uniting Him to His creatures were more closely and strongly drawn, by the greater depth of Divine love which was shown. Not satisfied with even the Incarnation, which has been regarded the consummation of Divine love, the Eternal Son before His return to the Father, promises mankind that He will send into the world and into our hearts the Holy Ghost, the Infinite expression and Personal emanation and embodiment of the eternal goodness and love which subsist between the Father and the Son; and Who, in the words of St. Bernard, is the very heart of the Divine Trinity. Inexhaustible as is the will of God and His love, it would seem that His goodness could not prompt Him to go further; and that even His wisdom would refuse any further possibility of displaying His love, once the Holy Ghost had become the soul of His mystical body, the Church.

This Divine Spirit came into the world to illumine it with the light that can come only from Him. He cleared the moral atmosphere of the darkness and error which the fall of our race and the sins of individuals had induced. He renewed the face of the earth. He enlightened the consciences of men. He broke the tyranny of him who held the world in bondage. He extirpated

error. He planted the seeds of all virtues blossoming unto eternal life. He re-established the standard and laws of morality. By His grace He enabled those who have the will, to live up to these; or failing therein, they will be condemned by the guilt of their own conscience. We need the light of the Holy Ghost to discern the things of God, invisible to mortal sight; just as we need the light of the sun to discern the objects of sense visibly around us. By His light we are taught to know and to feel the misery of sin into which we have fallen by original guilt, and by our own individual lapses: from what height fallen, into what depth sunk; what bliss and glory forfeited, what woe and ruin entailed: how deteriorated and degraded our moral faculties by the withdrawal of primal justice and sanctifying grace, and even the positive injury thence resulting by which "the whole man has been changed for the worse." By the same Divine light the soul is made to feel its own individual misery; to realize the strength of temptation and of the assaults of Satan, its proneness to sin, its slavery to passion, its aversion to what is heavenly, its abject tendency to what is earthly. Teaching us all this, the light of the Holy Ghost imparts to us grace and power by which the soul is illuminated and strengthened to rise superior to it all, and to overcome its threefold enemy, the world, the flesh, and the devil. He came to form "an acceptable people, a royal race, a people of benediction;" and to impart to all, collectively and individually, the graces necessary for eternal sal-

vation. That such divine effects followed the advent into the world of the Holy Ghost, is easily known to those who are familiar with the state of the Pagan world, and that which succeeded. The wonderful influence which He wrought upon the apostles, and by His continued abidance till now in the Church, is attested by the transformation wrought in them, and by the salvation and sanctification of souls effected by the Church.

The Holy Ghost condemned the world because it did not believe in Jesus Christ. He had given ample testimony that He was the Son of God sent into the world to save mankind. If men did not believe Him, they should, at least, have believed in the works which He did ; for they gave all the assurance that men could expect of His Divine character and mission. The voice of the Eternal Father had been heard from heaven proclaiming, and calling upon men to believe in Him as His only begotten Son ; the same Divine voice was heard declaring that He had glorified Him, and would still further glorify Him. Jesus in proof of His character, had suspended nature's laws ; had evinced that He was the fulfilment of all prophecy ; and had Himself uttered prophecies, then and afterward, gloriously verified. Finally, He had given the supreme proof : " Destroy the temple of His body and in three days He would rebuild it : " and they destroyed the temple of His body, and on the third day, He rose glorious and immortal from the dead. Before He suffered and died, He had promised that He would send the Holy Ghost : in fulfilment, and in Divine

attestation of the truth, the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles on Pentecost. Manifestly, the Holy Ghost convicted the world of sin and of judgment, because it had not believed in Him; manifestly, because of their incredulity, men are condemned. The Holy Ghost bears ample testimony to the hearts and consciences of all who love the truth, of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

He had declared that when this Divine Spirit would come, He would convict the world of justice. He had manifested His Divinity not only by the works which proved that He was in the Father, and the Father in Him; but also by the holiness of His life: challenging the Jews to accuse Him of sin. The Holy Ghost, by coming into the world, declares His holiness and justice. The promptness of His coming, in obedience to Christ's promise and prediction, indicates the immediate and personal relations of the Incarnate Word to the Godhead. It vouches for the holiness and justice of Him Who felt warranted in declaring that the Holy Ghost would attest these virtues in Him. The confidence with which Christ declares that He will go to the Father as to His reward, and that His place on earth will be taken by the Holy Ghost, shows that this claim was indeed true. The coming of the Holy Ghost also evinces the Divinity of Christ, by showing that He withdrew from the world to go to the Father. He came to fulfil the series of proofs which St. Paul gives as demonstrative of Christ's Divine character: "Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the

spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord," and, we may add, by the coming of the Holy Ghost. This attesting advent put the seal of Divine authenticity upon the life which Jesus led, upon the miracles which He wrought, upon the prophecies which He fulfilled, and those which He uttered, and upon the reality of His glorious resurrection from the dead. It has taught us that the teachings of Christ were truly those of salvation; that "men detained the truth of God in injustice," by not receiving them. It discloses to us the bonds of gratitude which Jesus has placed upon mankind for these teachings, and the unworthy recompense which they have evoked,—teachings, too, consecrated by His sufferings and blood. It exposes the stiffnecked incredulity and hardheartedness of those who have not received their Saviour. Truly, it was expedient for them that He should go: for if He did not go, the Holy Ghost could not convict the world of justice.

The Holy Ghost convicted the world of judgment. His coming sealed the condemnation, which it had invoked on itself by the rejection of its Redeemer. The world has always shown an invincible hostility to the truth, because it has been, for the most part, dominated by Satan, the prince of darkness and error, and a "homicide and a liar from the beginning." He and his kingdom are identical. They share in the same retribution.

Christ sought to teach the apostles, and, through them, mankind the truths of Divine revelation.

While He was received by many, He was rejected by many more ; and continues to be rejected, save by those who are called to Him by the Eternal Father. " He came unto His own, and His own received Him not ; but to as many as received Him, He gave power to be made sons of God, to those who believe in His name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They were not ready to submit their understanding to the obedience of faith and to render the homage of the mind which it calls for. As little as they were disposed to believe what they could not comprehend, they were still less inclined to forsake passion and sin, and to practise the self-denial which the acceptance of such truths would render obligatory. Even the apostles themselves, destitute of the grace of the Holy Ghost, were hard of heart and slow to comprehend the design of Christ, and to believe the mysteries and truths which He came to teach. The gifts and graces which the Holy Ghost poured forth in profusion upon the apostles and faithful, forever established the truth of His teachings and the Divinity of His character and mission. Men saw how unmerited and unjust were the sufferings and death inflicted upon Him. For this resistance to the truth and the crime of Deicide, the world was condemned. Satan crushed and his kingdom overthrown by the redemption of Christ, his condemnation was proclaimed by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

While the advent of the Holy Spirit condemns

those who have not believed, it bears testimony to the fidelity of all who in the beginning, or since have received Christ and His faith, and who by their manner of life have justified their Christian profession. At the same time, He has condemned those who having believed, have disgraced their belief by the character of their lives: unworthy Catholics whose lives have but little correspondence with their belief, fall under His censure no less than infidels who reject Him, or the Jews who crucified Him.

THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE APOSTLES.

And when the days of Pentecost were completed, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, and it sat upon every one of them : and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when this voice was spread, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying : Behold, are not all these who speak, Galileans ? And how hear we every man our own tongue wherein we were born ! Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, also, and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians ; we hear them speak in our tongues the great works of God.—Acts ii. v. 1-11.

THE completion of the work of sanctification was reserved for the Holy Ghost. Christ, for some mysterious reasons, had left the Church in an inchoate state. He had laid its foundations ; He had gathered together those who were to be its first elements ; He had sown the mustard seed. They still wanted “ the quickening power to give

the increase." They were as yet but a rude and uninformed mass. They needed the energizing and life-giving principle of the Holy Ghost to inform and animate them, to make of them a living power, a corporate body, in which, and by which, He would continue forever the mystery of Redemption begun by Christ, and apply to the souls of men the ransom and merits of His blood. In this office He will abide with them until the consummation of the world. Hence He did not come until Christ had entered into His glory in the bosom of the Eternal Father.

In God's counsels it was ordained, that the Holy Ghost should not make His abode among men until Christ had finished His temporal career, but should be sent by Him on His return to heaven the Liberator and Redeemer of mankind. His coming was to be the recognition by the Father of Christ's sufferings, and their reward before men. By His birth, life, and death did He, even as man, deserve to enter into His glory: by the same claim did He, even as man, deserve that the Holy Ghost should come into the world, to carry to completion the work which He had begun. By His mediation before the Father, in behalf of the children of the fallen race of Adam, did He obtain this priceless boon. In fact, Christ intimated to the apostles in leaving them to send this Divine Spirit, that His chief reason for going was, that He might send the Divine Paraclete from Whom they would receive so great benefits: "It is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Holy Ghost will not come; but if I go, I will send

Him." As one God with the Father, does Jesus promise to send the Holy Ghost. And yet, as the Holy Ghost is equally God with the Father and the Son, will He come freely and of Himself. Because His eternal procession is from the Father and the Son, His temporal career will also be from them: from Whom He derives His essence will He draw His mission.

In conformity with the promise of Christ, ten days after Christ's Ascension, this Divine Spirit descended upon the apostles and disciples, awaiting His coming in an upper chamber in Jerusalem, in compliance with the instruction of Christ. He came to teach and inspire them with the knowledge and virtue necessary for their Divine mission. "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will teach you all truth. For He will not speak of Himself; but whatsoever things He hath heard He will speak, and the things which are to come, He will show you." "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." He reinvigorated their faith, weakened by the scandal of the cross, to a degree of constancy which neither the violence of persecution, nor the fury of their enemies, nor the fear or infliction of death itself, could overcome. He filled their souls with a fire of charity which consumed every desire, save that of self-

sacrifice for their Lord and Master. He poured into their hearts zeal which could withstand all obstacles, even the most insurmountable, and opposition the most deeply rooted and stubborn, and which no obstacle or opposition could overcome or extinguish. He imparted to them the gift of tongues, so that of all the strangers assembled at that time in Jerusalem from all parts of the world, there was no one that did not hear the Gospel announced and the wonders of the life and death and resurrection of Christ, everyone in his own tongue. At first, they took this effusion of the Holy Ghost for the result of new wine with which they thought the apostles were filled. They were no longer the same men; they were transformed; they were made worthy to be the foundation of the Church of which Jesus was Himself the chief corner-stone.

As this Divine Spirit, when He formed the body of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary, anointed His soul with the seven-fold gifts and graces and invested it with all the treasures of the God-head; so now is He present at the formation of His mystical body, which had issued from His opened side. He pours forth upon it all His divine gifts and chrisms, strengthening it with all grace for its career among men, and its conflicts with the flesh, the world, and the devil. He adorns it with His own beauty and holiness, that it may be wholly acceptable to God the Father; "that He may present to Him a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." As this Divine Spirit was the Divine progenitor

of the material body which Christ assumed in the womb of Mary, as it was this Creator Spirit "Who in the beginning brooded over the vast abyss and made it pregnant," and there came forth the glorious world which surrounds us; so now we behold Him the parent of Christ's mystical body, its life-giving and life-sustaining principle. He rests upon the apostles and in them forms this mystical spouse; He broods over these first elements of the Church and impresses upon them His own divine features and attributes, by which it may be forever known, and bestows upon it a never-failing fruitfulness.

If the Holy Ghost had not come upon the apostles, they would never have succeeded in their mission of converting the world. And this because they would have been destitute of the necessary arms for the spiritual conquest of men. They who would undertake the conversion of mankind to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, must possess virtues, and gifts, and graces, which can come only from the Holy Ghost: truth, wisdom, holiness, fortitude, and power, to manifest their authority and mission.

They must possess and be masters of the truths which they have to teach. The apostles were as yet, in a manner, strangers to these Divine truths; they had not as yet a profound and expedite knowledge of Divine revelation. It is true that they had been three years in the school of the Redeemer, and yet had not the full perception and realization of the truths which they had been taught. Their minds were filled with ideas alto-

gether at variance with what they had heard from the lips of their Master, and, consequently, these Divine lessons received but a very slow and unwelcome lodgement in their hearts. The worldly Messiah whom they had in latter years come to expect, disqualified them to receive Him Who actually appeared, and led them to a very inadequate conception of His Divine mission. They lacked the relish and love of truth and virtue, without which, they find a reluctant entrance into the soul. They needed the illuminating grace and strengthening influence of the Holy Ghost, to embrace supernatural truth, and to practise the virtues which it calls for. They were carnal minded and filled with the spirit of the world; they had but little savor for spiritual things. Hence they barely understood, and did not at all realize, the lofty teachings of the Redeemer, and His fulfilment of what the prophets had announced. They were not prepared for the truth: prejudices were not abandoned; selfishness and worldliness, which are essentially contrary to lessons of sacrifice of self and detachment from sense, were yet strong within them; the spirit of error yet ruled them; love of truth, and the purpose to follow it at whatever sacrifice, was yet unknown to them. This is only saying that the Spirit of truth had not yet come,—that Divine Spirit which can remove all obstacles, and bend all wills without coercing them or lessening their freedom. Our Lord implies this want of preparedness in the apostles, and their ignorance as yet of the truth: “I have yet many things to say to

you, which you cannot now bear ; but when the Spirit of truth shall come, He shall teach you all truth, and bring to your minds all that I have taught you." It was, indeed, "expedient for them that He should go ;" for otherwise the Holy Ghost, Whom they so much needed for themselves and the success of their Apostolate, would not come.

They who would continue the work of Christ, should possess wisdom,—the chief of virtues. This wisdom will comprehend the knowledge of the deep things of God ; and the spirit of understanding, in which, as in a receptacle, it may reside ; and the spirit of counsel, which will suggest those enterprises and modes of action necessary to avoid discomfiture and defeat, and to secure perseverance and success, in the lofty scheme of making known to men the truths of the Gospel and their salvation through the sacrifice of a Crucified God. If we guard against the too frequent error of contemplating the apostles only after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and consider them as they were before it, we shall find them destitute of this true and necessary wisdom. In truth, they had no claim or pretension to this wisdom and knowledge, this understanding and counsel. They were far from fathoming the deep mysteries of God in the redemption and salvation of men. They expected a temporal Messiah who would bring them glory and prosperity ; they were imbued with the spirit and traditions of the synagogue which had lost sight of the spiritual Redeemer promised to and longed for by their fathers. Dull and indocile

and worldly, they apprehended not the predictions of the prophets; the word of knowledge was hidden from them. Nor did they understand even the prophecies of Christ Himself. It was only when they saw them fulfilled in the event, that they realized their meaning. They had no more knowledge of religion than would naturally fall to the lot of men such as they were: fishermen, tent-makers, custom-house collectors. They were especially wanting in a spirit of understanding: they were three years in the school of a Teacher such as it was never before given to men to hear; and yet, had failed to attain any just conception of His character and mission in the world. Verily, "did He choose the ignorant to confound the wise, and the things that were contemptible to bring to nought the things that were." As to erudition, or eloquence, or any other human acquisition or endowment, with which to present the truth to men and to recommend its acceptance, and which as a rule Providence does not disdain to employ, they were entirely destitute. Certainly in their case, human abilities, attainments, accomplishments, were not counted on for the success of the Gospel. In view of their subsequent holiness and enlightenment, we are very apt to forget their ignorance and selfishness. Their first and last thought was for themselves; as much as it was afterward for the glory of Christ and the spread of His gospel.

There is nothing more necessary to the successful missionary, than the spirit of holiness and an utter detachment from this world. He must

evince by his manner of life, that he practises what he preaches. He who preaches a doctrine other than he lives by, can avail but little with men. But nothing so compels the will, and wins the heart, as the example of him whose life is the living realization of the truths which he professes to believe, and which he calls upon others to accept. It is not so much its abstract as its concrete exhibition that moves men in general to embrace the truth. "Behold how these Christians love one another," was a more irresistible incentive to the pagans to believe the Gospel than the most powerful argument. The apostles before the descent of the Holy Ghost, were strangers to this holiness, had no aspiration for this perfection, and were indeed very indifferent models of even ordinary human excellence. They were imbued with the spirit of the world, which is always opposed to the spirit of God. They sought riches, distinction, and glory; and, disciples of Him Who was the meekest of men and Who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, they burned with the desire of revenge. They demanded fire from heaven to consume the cities which received them not, and Peter in his hot indignation cut off the ear of Malchus. How different the spirit of Christ which restored it, and rebuked the assailant. James and John wanted to sit, the one on the right, the other on the left of Jesus in His kingdom; while the others were filled with envy and indignation at the proposal; whence ensued a contention as to which should be the greatest.

In vain did Christ teach them, and enforce, by the example of washing their feet, the lesson that the great should be as the least, and he that is ministered unto, as he that ministers. They were mercenary and sought what reward they would have in His kingdom—they who had left their nets, and their counters, and their poverty. Far from being detached from this world, they were dazzled with the glory of the kingdom which they thought Christ had come to establish, and blindly looked for the advantages they imagined it would insure them. Selfishness, and failure to appreciate Christ and His mission and teachings, were their dominant tendency and characteristic.

The virtue which is essential to the missionary and martyr and distinctively the mark of his character,—the spirit of fortitude, was far removed from the souls of the apostles. The lesson of self-denial which Christ had so impressed upon them in the words, “He that will come after Me, must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me,” had found no response in their hearts; the humility and sufferings of Christ were scandal to them. The readiness to face obstacles, and to make sacrifices, and to forfeit even life itself, which He had inculcated when He declared that He had come not to send peace but war, and to put variances between husband and wife, parent and child, was something that they had not even seriously thought of. They had not reflected upon the parables in which was declared the ignominy of him who began to build, without

counting the cost ; who had declared war, without numbering his soldiers ; who had put his hand to the plough, and looked back, and in consequence was not worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Judas denied his Master in spite of his consciousness of the innocence of the blood he betrayed. Peter declared that though all should be scandalized, yet he would never be : that very night before the cock crew, he denied Him thrice, at the sound of a servant's voice. Valiant man ! James and John could not watch one hour with Him. Where were they on the morning of the Crucifixion ? The cross was, in fact, a scandal to them. But one of the eleven stood on the hill of Calvary. They had indeed fled ; routed and utterly discomfited. The Resurrection had done much to restore their faith. Yet, even after it, Jesus had to reproach them for their slowness to believe, and their incredulity to the women who had already seen Him at the tomb. Thomas declared that he would not believe, till he had put his hand into the Saviour's open side, and his finger into the print of the nails. After the apprehension of Christ, every man of them, John excepted, sought his own security, and concealed himself at once from the anger of the Jews. Even very ordinary men would not have allowed their leader, though but one of themselves, to be led as a lamb to the slaughter ; and abandon him when he had fallen into the hands of his enemies. Just something of the human spirit that prompted Peter to strike the servant of the high priest, would have been creditable to them, as men.

The very perfidy of Judas, as the fulfilment of Christ's own prediction, might have impelled them to show zeal and loyalty, lest they should seem, in any wise, to imitate his example.

There was another power which the apostles had not yet received, and which was truly necessary to secure the success of their ministry in preaching the Gospel of the crucified God. They were to announce Christ risen from the dead. How were they to prove it? Christ after His resurrection did not reappear to the Jews in general: to none, save to certain predetermined and infallible witnesses. Still less did He appear to all men throughout the world. Withal if He had reappeared to all the inhabitants of Judea, very few indeed would have recognized Him; and these could be only the comparatively few who had beheld Him before His death. While the most of these, having seen Him but casually, or, at best, having with Him but slight acquaintance, could not be absolutely certain of His identity; another might have been substituted in His stead. None could infallibly know Him, except those who had been familiar with Him during life. Those who had never seen Him while yet alive, could not recognize Him when risen from the dead. The Jews, therefore, and all men were required to believe in His resurrection upon the testimony of the apostles, and of those who had seen Him during the time that elapsed before His ascension into heaven. Nor in this were they compelled to do anything more than, but exactly the same as, succeeding generations would

have had to do, if Christ had appeared to every human being after He rose from the dead: that is, to believe on the testimony of those who had seen Him.

It was the purpose of God to employ but a few men, and these of themselves weak and impotent, for the conversion of the world; yet, the fundamental proof of the Divinity of the Gospel was Christ's resurrection from the dead. They could only establish this truth, by appealing to the testimony of those who had seen Him after His resurrection. But these witnesses could not be transported by the apostles to every part of the world. It is manifest that they could convince mankind of Christ's resurrection only by working miracles in His name, and thus calling upon the Eternal God to testify to its truth: miracles which none but God could operate; and thus, by His co-operation, necessarily putting the seal of Divine veracity upon the truth of the Resurrection and of the Gospel founded upon it. Hence Christ promised them the power of working miracles, so essential to their success. During His life they had received it only in a limited degree, because it was to be imparted to them in fulness by the Holy Ghost.

We have thus considered in detail the state of the apostles before the coming of the Holy Ghost. It is obvious that in this state of spiritual and even mental destitution, with none of the gifts of the Spirit, they could never have converted mankind.

Behold them after the coming of the Divine

Paraclete; and in the marvellous transformation which ensued, behold the need of His coming. Truly, they were no longer the same men. Now possessed of all truth, enlightened with all wisdom and knowledge and understanding and counsel, filled with all holiness, animated with all zeal and fortitude, endowed and strengthened with the gift of miracles.

They are made the depositaries of all truth. The Holy Ghost brings to their minds all that Jesus had taught them. These lessons and truths come back to them with new light and meaning. They announce the Gospel not in the persuasive words of human speech, but with an eloquence and a showing of power all divine, and knowledge greater than that of Solomon. The Jews whom they did not convert, they confounded and left without excuse for their unbelief. The Gentiles given to Christ as His inheritance, fulfilled the prophecies; and faithful to His grace, entered the Church in multitudes. These apostles, unlettered in human science, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, immortalize the life of Christ and the truths of the Gospel, in a Book, before which pale the productions of the loftiest human genius. They proclaim the Gospel, by the marvellous gift of tongues, in every language spoken among men. They who formerly knew but their own, are heard to speak to Parthians and Medes, to Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes. All heard them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. So marvellous was this gift

that they were at first thought to be drunk with new wine.

They are filled with the spirit of Divine love which the Divine incarnation discloses. They are taught all that they have to announce to mankind. What was incredible to the human mind, becomes credible, when announced by them and under the influence of the grace which accompanied their words. They are replete with the knowledge of the mysteries of God. All things lie open to their illumined vision. The kingdom of God dwells in their hearts and souls. Purified with the life-giving grace of the Holy Ghost, detached from this world, animated with the love of the truth, their only ambition is to make it known to men. The teachings of their three years' schooling under Christ, at once mature into perfection. They realize that He was the true Messiah. Filled with the spirit of holiness, they long for the things of God. The glory of Christ and the spread of the Gospel is their only ambition. They at once understand all prophecy, and are made wiser than the prophets; they see and realize what the prophets had only foreseen. Their knowledge extends far beyond the traditions of the synagogue; the whole dispensation and providence of God in the creation and fall of man and his redemption, are manifested to them. All the mysteries of the kingdom of God in the souls of men, are revealed. All knowledge of Divine revelation is impressed upon their consciousness. Their wisdom is not of this world, which with God is folly; but the wisdom of God, which with man is

folly. Their minds, quickened by the Holy Ghost, readily apprehend the designs of God and the truths which His revelation discloses; for the spirit of understanding is theirs. They display the admirable spirit of counsel which the Holy Ghost had breathed into them, in the prompt and ready dispositions and undertakings which they make and project for the conversion of men. No longer envy, nor contention, nor temporal kingdoms, nor riches, nor power, nor what shall be their reward, agitate or disturb them. They seek no other reward than immortality, no other glory than persecution and martyrdom. Pardon for their enemies, patience in themselves, usurp the vindictiveness that invoked fire from heaven and drew the sword on Malchus. The Gospel was their very life; no longer themselves, but Christ living in them.

They were utterly detached from the world and all that it affords. They at length realized in themselves the lessons of their Master: "He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." They were heroes in their contempt of the opinions and esteem of men. Riches, distinction, and glory, were no longer the prizes which they sought, but which they contemned as the dust of the earth. They all sought to be as the least. They were living embodiments of the divine beatitudes which Jesus had inculcated as the summit of Christian virtue. It was their manner of life that gave them influence with men; nor has that influence yet ceased, nor will it ever cease. The holy and perfect in every age turn to

them, as their models and masters in every Christian virtue and in the love of Jesus Christ.

Animated by the spirit of fortitude, which had once been so foreign to them, they seek nothing more ardently than to diffuse the blessings of the Gospel to every creature; to whom they feel themselves debtors. They have counted the cost of following Jesus Christ, and they resolutely meet the sacrifices and suffering which it has entailed. They realize the words in which He declared the penalties of being His disciples. They understand that He has come not to send peace, but war. Willingly do they embrace the penalties, and glory in the sufferings and even martyrdom which the war, carried on between themselves and the world, necessarily involves. Filled with the spirit of fortitude, Peter goes forth, and tells the Jews that they have crucified the Lord of Glory; and in one sermon converts three thousand souls. They preach the Gospel everywhere. They hasten to the farthest parts of the earth: Peter to Antioch, Thomas to India, John to Ephesus, James to Jerusalem. Undismayed by obstacles to human eyes insurmountable, the evil passions of men rise up against them, persecutions rage, power and pride frown upon them, philosophy scorns them. Unarmed save with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the virtue of the Cross, they overcame the world and planted the Gospel everywhere in the hearts of men. After lives spent in unceasing trial and untold suffering, facing death in its most hideous forms, they heroically went forth to meet it, and sealed with

their blood the truth; thus rendering to it the highest testimony that man can give, and the supremest test of the sincerity of their lives. It is the truth alone that makes the martyr. One may die for what he knows to be the truth; no one will die for that which he knows to be a lie. Eleven out of the twelve sealed their lives and the truth which they taught, with their blood. If John did not die the martyr's death, he did not therefore lose the martyr's crown; for he was miraculously saved in the cauldron of boiling oil into which he was cast, outside the Latin gate at Rome.

The apostles preached the Gospel throughout the world; the Holy Ghost co-operating by the working of miracles. This power, so necessary to their mission, as we have pointed out, was bestowed upon them by the Divine Spirit, on His descent. Without these miracles their preaching would have been in vain; for they spoke to men who had never seen Christ, nor them who had been the witnesses of His resurrection. They healed the sick, they cleansed the leper, they raised the dead, cast out devils, and performed the most stupendous works, in the name of Christ risen from the dead. They renewed the miracles performed by the Redeemer Himself: virtue goes forth from them, people fall down and would worship them because of the wonders they wrought. This was proof of Christ's resurrection, such as could be brought home to all—those who had never seen Him no less than those who had. In this there was no room for mistake or decep-

tion. The uncounted multitudes whom the apostles converted, were induced to the Faith by these Divine attestations of Christ's resurrection, and consequent Divinity. Nothing less would have been sufficient to impel them to give up the religion of their ancestors—to sacrifice of goods and property, to the certainty of persecution and suffering, to the peril of shedding their blood for abandoning the gods which the state worshipped. Thus were verified the words of Christ: "And these signs shall follow those who believe. In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." "But they going forth, preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with the signs which followed."

The miracles which the apostles wrought were more effectual to conciliate, and even to compel belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, than even His manifest reappearance among men could have been. Such a return would not have overcome the incredulity of those who had obstinately and perversely resisted His claims to be the Messiah, and put Him to death. Even as they had attributed His miracles to Beelzebub, the prince of devils, so would they have found a pretext for rejecting Him, if, on rising from the dead, He had come again amongst them. For there is no Divine testimony which hardened unbelief and wilful doubt, unrestrained and darkness-loving, cannot

evade or contemn. Christ's permanent abidance on earth (if we were to imagine it) would have destroyed free-will: consequently, God's worship, which to be worthy of Him must be free; and man's salvation, which depends upon his uncoerced faith and spontaneous service.

THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH.

But I tell you the truth : it is expedient for you that I go : for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you : but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment : of sin, because they believe not in Me : and of justice, because I go to the Father ; and ye will see Me no longer : and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you : but ye cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will teach you all the truth. For He will not speak of Himself : but whatever things He hath heard, He will speak : and the things which are to come, He will show you. He will glorify Me, because He will receive of Mine, and show to you. All things whatever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said that He will receive of Mine, and show to you.—John xvi. 7-15.

THE Holy Ghost did not return to heaven after His descent upon the apostles on Pentecost Sunday : He only began among men His temporal mission which was to last even until time shall be no more. Christ had promised that the Divine Spirit would abide with them all days even to the consummation of the world : He would teach them forever all truth and bring to their minds all that had been delivered unto them by Him during His life with them. As the lives of the apostles were not prolonged beyond the ordinary span of human life, it is obvious that the abidance of the Holy Ghost was to be with their

successors: that the apostles were constituted a moral body, a corporate institute which, continually replenished, would last forever.

Christ did not organize His Church before He left the world. The Holy Ghost came to finish the work which, for reasons inscrutable to the human mind, was reserved for Him. It is to the great advantage which His Church would receive by the coming of the Holy Ghost that Christ refers, when He says to the apostles that it is expedient for them that He should go; for if He went not the Holy Ghost would not come, but if He went He would send Him. It would seem that it was the will of God that the Divine Spirit, Who had begun the work of the Incarnation by conceiving the body of the Redeemer in the womb of the Virgin Mary, should consummate the mystery of Divine goodness, which peculiarly belonged to Him, as the Personal Expression of the goodness and love of the Godhead. It would seem also that the coming of the Holy Ghost was to be the recompense and crown of the Redemption wrought by Christ; and was only due when Christ's temporal career was ended, and He had entered into His glory: hence the Holy Ghost awaited the return and glorification of Christ. Our Lord in the words which I have just read, states very clearly that the apostles were not even yet prepared to hear and to understand all that He had then to say to them: "Many things I have yet to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when the Holy Ghost shall come, He will teach you all the

truth." Christ had but prepared the way for the organization of the Church: He had only formed a nucleus of the elements of which it was to be composed. The Holy Ghost will come to perfect its organization, to impart to the apostles His choicest gifts, and to dwell forever in it, as its very soul. The Church was Christ's mystical body, of which He Himself was the Head. He had but prepared it for the reception of the Holy Ghost, just as the human body is prepared for the infusion into it of the soul. The Holy Ghost was to be to the Church, the Creator Spirit which He was in the beginning of the world, when He "brooded over the vast abyss and made it pregnant," and there came forth the glorious world bearing upon it in its perfections, the lineaments of its Divine Maker; or as when He overshadowed the Virgin Mary and by His miraculous agency there was conceived in her womb the man-God upon Whom He poured His seven-fold gifts in all their fulness; so now, in like manner, does He brood upon and overshadow the elements of Christ's mystical body, which had been brought together, and from the hearts and minds and souls of men there comes forth the glorious Catholic Church—the very continuation among men of the great mystery of the Incarnation.

The Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles and their successors, to become the animating and energizing principle of the everlasting corporation which they were to constitute; He was to become its very life and soul. Until He came, they were, so to speak, but an uninformed mass;

they needed a life-giving and sustaining principle. Even as the human body needs an informing principle for its life and growth and perfection, which is the soul, so the corporate body of the Church needs a sustaining and energizing principle for its Divine life and development, and its diffusion throughout the world; that principle is the Holy Ghost. From Him, as from an inexhaustible source, it is to draw its unfailing life, its unceasing energy, and untiring activity. What the soul is to the body, that, and more than that, is the Holy Ghost to the Church. As the soul informs the elements of our bodies and makes of them living beings, so the Holy Ghost informs the human elements of the Church and makes of them the very mystical body of Christ. As the soul is the source of all our life and operations, so the Holy Ghost is the source of the Divine life and workings of the Church. As the soul is the origin of the energy and multitudinous and multiform activities of the body, and as, without the soul, the body at once dies; so the divine energy and perennial activity of the Church of Christ, proceed from the Holy Ghost. If it were possible for Him to abandon the Church, it would at once die, or become like a human institution. As in nature we find everywhere, even in beings and objects the most insignificant, evidences of the tireless energy and unfailing fruitfulness of the Divine mind, so in the Church and in the supernatural order are discernible the most manifest fruits of the continual presence and agency of the Holy Ghost.

The Church of Christ thus formed by the Divine Spirit, has become forever His dwelling-place and sanctuary on earth. This alliance, while meant to perpetuate Christ's union with our humanity, is yet different from it. Unlike that Hypostatic union which superseded the human personality, in this union of the Holy Ghost the human personalities remain, yet the union itself is as inviolable and indissoluble; not more intimate to the human body is the soul, than is the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church. Unlike the union which He assumes with individuals, in whom He remains according to their will or disposition, His dwelling in the Church is wholly irrespective of the qualities or dispositions of its human elements. He abides in it independent of any human will or human faithfulness; alone upon the Divine Will does He depend. As His presence is not because of their virtues or deserts, so He does not abandon the Church because of their vices and infidelities. He receives no defilement from the weakness or sin of the human part in the Church. Priests and even bishops may be faithless to their trust; multitudes may apostatize; heresy may, for a time, seem to rend in twain the seamless robe of Christ; nevertheless, the Holy Ghost remains incorporated and made one with the Church, by a union absolute and inviolable. His abidance with the Church depends alone upon the will of Christ, its Divine founder and head; from Him as God, He came when He was sent. By His passion and death, Christ merited the eternal presence of the Holy Ghost in His mysti-

cal body. His will is expressed in the absolute promise, that the Holy Ghost will abide with it even to the consummation of the world.

We have said that all, and more than all, that the soul is to the body, the Holy Ghost is to the Church. By Him are evolved or bestowed, and preserved all its ineffable gifts and graces and endowments: its unity, its faith, its unerringness, its holiness, its apostolicity, its universality, its imperishableness, and all its other divine prerogatives.

The Unity of the Church is the unity of the Holy Ghost Himself; and this is its vital principle. Every human person is absolutely one because the soul, his life-giving and sustaining principle, is one. The unity, which is the necessary outcome of the oneness of the soul, cannot be multiple. As every human individual, although made up of body and spirit, is one; so the Church of Christ is One, although made up of human members or elements, and a Divine soul, which is the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit dwelling in the Church and constituting its very life, cannot be divided; it cannot cling to a part or section. Branches may be lopped off from the body of the Church, but the soul does not follow them, any more than the human soul follows the member which is amputated from the body. When a limb is cut off, it loses its life, its vital spirits are dried up; the soul continues its functions in the body, it has no further relation to the dissected member. In like manner, the Holy Ghost continues to reside in the Church after heresy or schism has been cast out.

He no longer communicates to it vitality or the life-giving principle, which it enjoyed while united to the main body. He continues to discharge His original and organic functions in the main body.

It is after this image of a human person, that Jesus Christ has established His Church. This the apostle teaches, writing to the Ephesians: "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; until we all meet in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ. But acting truthfully in love, we may grow in all things in Him, Who is the head, Christ: from Whom the whole body, fitted together and connected by every joint which supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of each member, maketh the increase of the body to the building of itself in love." The Church, accordingly, formed as a human body, with Christ Jesus for its head, and the Holy Ghost for its soul, and the faithful for its members, must possess all the endowments of a human person. Fundamental among these must be its absolute and indivisible Unity, according to the words of St. John: "Holy Father, keep in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me: that they may be one as We also are. And not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in Me: that they

all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us." It is manifest that this Unity must be the fruit of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the mystical body of Christ, and that He must be the sustaining principle by which it is preserved, in spite of heresy or schism. The essential Unity of the Church must consist of oneness of faith, by which all believe the same, and oneness of communion, by which all are bound together in the same unity or bond of government. These are obviously the gift of the Holy Ghost, no less than the principle of authority by which alone they can be cherished and supported. Without this necessary means, Christ could have never willed that His Church should be one in its faith and communion.

By the unfailing light and guidance of the Holy Ghost is forever bountifully preserved in the bosom of the Church, that reflection of the truth of God in man's intelligence, which is called Divine faith. Without Him, this faith would soon perish from the Church, as from an institution merely human. The consciousness which the Church has of this faith, once delivered to her custody, is the very consciousness of the Holy Ghost Himself. It is by Him, that she has ever been filled with the knowledge of these truths, with the light and grace by which she understands and defines them, and has been enabled to preserve them in their purity and integrity. Knowledge of the truth, and unerringness in defining it, are no less necessary to the Church than her Unity. As her Unity is absolutely indivisi-

ble, so the knowledge she has of the truth, and her prerogative in teaching it, must be absolutely infallible. Truth and unerringness are no less a product of the Holy Ghost than Unity. Hence, we must believe that the Church receives from the Holy Ghost, the Divine illumination to know all the truths with which she was entrusted by Jesus Christ, and which she has to announce to men; and by the same supernatural agency to enjoy perfect immunity from all error, whenever, either as a witness of the past, or a judge in controversy, or by her continual ministry, she seeks to inculcate them.

The Holy Spirit is the never-failing source of the Holiness of the Church. Christ died that He might sanctify the Church: He elected us, that we might be holy and unstained; and gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people acceptable, the pursuer of good works. This Holiness of the Church consists in the supernatural life which subsists between her and the Holy Ghost. Its exterior manifestation is seen in the doctrines capable of sanctifying, which the Church teaches, in the sublime holiness of uncounted 'multitudes of her children, in the practice of the evangelical counsels, in the outpouring of the unutterable graces of the Spirit upon the saints, whom in every age the Church has not failed to produce, in the power of miracles which has never ceased to abide with her, in the marvellous fecundity with which, from infidels and barbarians and every manner of men, she has continually brought forth

children to Christ, in the gifts of prophecy and tongues, with which her apostles have always been endowed, when necessary for the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of souls. The vast load of sin and the uncounted multitude of sinners, that may exist within her fold, detract nothing from the Sanctity of her who is dedicated and consecrated to the Holy Ghost: the abuse or neglect of the sacraments does not diminish their sanctifying power for those who apply to their souls these channels, by which they are made clean and holy in the blood of Christ: the blindness and stubbornness with which her miracles are viewed by many, do not render them less the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the lights by which so many others come to receive and believe the truth: the blood of the martyrs which serves but to harden many in incredulity, is no less the seed of the Church, and the means by which these martyrs are washed clean of all sin, and admitted at once to the presence of God. The unholiness of so many in the Church, is not to be ascribed to her, but to corrupt nature, to the waywardness of passion, and to the perversity of will that refuses to be sanctified. Even these bear witness to her sanctifying power; they feel their weakness and inferiority; they confess her grace of cleansing and purifying; but they will it not, and withdraw themselves from the sphere of her influence and the operation of her sacraments. They are unholy because they wish to be unholy. In the exercise of their blind will, they refuse to submit to her. She cannot force them to be that

which they do not wish to be. She, not unlike God Himself, places no constraint upon man's free-will. Their unholiness, proceeding from their disobedience, but illustrates that holiness must be the fruit of obedience and submission. She points to those who do apply to their souls the means of sanctification which she affords, as the testimony that she has power to sanctify all souls. It is they who constitute her the mother of "a holy generation, an elect people, a royal priesthood." It is not, then, that every member of the Church is holy, but that she is capable of making everyone holy, and proves this capacity by the actual holiness of such uncounted numbers of her children.

We are far from intimating that outside the Church there are no holy souls. "The Spirit of God breathes where He will." The soul of the Church is far more extensive than its body: multitudes, whose consciences are known only to God, belong to this soul. Multitudes belong to the body of the Church, who are not united to its soul. God alone can see the heart; we cannot penetrate thereto. Very often that which seems holy, is unholy before God; and that which seems unholy, is holy before Him Who penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul, and before Whose sight all things are open. Frequently, too, virtues that are but natural, are supernatural in our eyes; and those that are supernatural before God, may be but natural in our estimation. We cannot fathom the motive; and He alone Who can weigh the motive, can determine the value of the act.

From the same Divine source of the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church, flows her Apostolicity. To the Church of to-day is as applicable as to the apostles, the Divine commission, "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you : go ye, therefore, and teach all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Church is to-day, what she was in the beginning, the new Jerusalem whose wall rested upon twelve foundations, and in them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. It is united to them by an unbroken succession in which, by the imposition of hands, the power imparted by Jesus Christ to His apostles has been handed down from age to age, till now. By the same Divine agency, the Church to-day believes what in all ages she believed : what she received from the apostles, and what the apostles received from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself. It is by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church, that have been preserved this unbroken succession, and this identity of belief from the beginning. In Him and by Him, the Church possesses to-day the Apostolicity of those who were her first foundations ; the light which was infused into her on Pentecost has never been quenched or dimmed. Her faith has been preserved free from all defilement of heresy ; He has not allowed the fair features of Divine truth to be marred or rendered undiscernible by ignorance or error. He has, indeed, taught her all truth. He has insured the succession of her

bishops from the least interruption that would have proved fatal to it.

The original Revelation may have changed its form, but its essence and integrity have remained the same. The development which has taken place, and which seems to be a necessary law of all God's works, has been rendered necessary by the vicissitudes of the Church and the exigencies of the truth in its warfare with error; and has always been under the light and guidance and operation of the Holy Ghost. With His essence, the Holy Ghost draws from the Father and the Son, all truth, which He has imparted to the Church, and enabled her to cherish the germs and unfold the deposit of the original Revelation. As the rational soul is infused into the body long before there is necessity for the exercise of all its faculties, which come into requisition only according to the needs incidental to its development; so the original Revelation was entrusted to the custody of the Church, that it might be applied and expanded according to her wants in evangelizing the souls of men. The visual power of the eye, augmented by the lens, while enabling us to trace more clearly the object which is placed under it, does not change its nature or distort its lines or figure.

By the all-pervading action of the Holy Ghost, is the Church made Catholic or Universal. She exists everywhere throughout the world. If she does not exist everywhere simultaneously, she has shown that she is capable of it, by actually existing everywhere at some time. Morally speaking,

she exists throughout the world, at one and the same hour. This Universal dwelling is heightened by the consideration, that she is the same, absolutely and without qualification, both as to Faith and Communion, at all times and in all places. She embraces in her fold every nation, every tribe, every tongue, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. No human condition is foreign to her. She is exalted above all human states and kingdoms, which are necessarily circumscribed by the bounds of physical nature, or by the limits which human authority or arms has imposed. Her mission is to the whole world: to preach the Gospel to every creature. Her sound has gone forth unto the whole earth, and her words to the bounds thereof. She fructifies and increases in the entire world. She has received the nations for her inheritance and her possessions are the ends of the earth. In her, verily, have all the races and generations of men been blessed, no less than in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Like the morning sun, she extends from the East to the West and fills the earth with her light and glory. "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us through our God a kingdom." To her belong all the assembly of those who are built upon Christ Jesus, as the cornerstone, and who are destined to salvation in His blood. Prefigured by the ark, she has by the circumstances and vicissitudes of her career, justified the symbolic resemblance, and in her final triumphs, evinced the superintending providence

of God. She exists in spite of circumstances the most unfavorable and hostile, and shows her potential adaptation to situations the most untoward and embarrassing. Always throughout the ages, and everywhere throughout the extent of her domain, does she preserve identity of belief, identity of communion and government, identity of worship and sacraments; and this Divine Unity has resulted from the life within her and cohabitation of the Holy Ghost.

It is to the organism with which Christ endowed His Church, as a corporate body or moral person of which He is Himself the head and whose soul is the Holy Ghost, that she is indebted for the essential qualities and characteristics, marks and divine prerogatives, which she possesses, and which have distinguished her from all institutions that have ever existed. In vain will you seek such an organization among the sects which have been cut off from her, or among any other of the governments or establishments of men. It was the mind of Jesus Christ that the Church would take His place in evangelizing the world, and in applying to the souls of men the graces of Redemption. It was through her that He was to work, and through her that the mystery of His incarnation was to be perpetuated for all generations until the end. Hence, the Church has been deemed the continuation of the Divine incarnation. From this conception of the Church, and from the contrast which it presents to all the institutions of men, she has ever been visible in the world and easily discernible by all. She has been

as the City on the mountain-top, unto which all nations and peoples could flow. Meant for the salvation of mankind, she should easily be recognizable, that men may believe in her teachings and accept her graces. She has been continued in every age, and is imperishable by her very nature: for the Holy Ghost has been with her all days and will be to the end of time. She has the Divine assurance of being built upon an everlasting foundation, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The Holy Ghost is within her, as an unfailling light and teacher. By His Divine assistance, she overcomes all obstacles and trials, and rises superior to all human vicissitudes. Representing Christ and being His very body, conscious of her Divine mission, she speaks with authority, and commands submission to her decisions and obedience to her laws. "As the living Father hath sent Me, so also I send you:" "He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me:" "Whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." She is endowed with every power and prerogative that belong to a complete and independent society.

The Church of the living God, and His authority and representative on earth, has always exhibited to men the reflection of His own immutability. She has always remained the same: she has never lost or changed the nature and constitution with which she was endowed by her Divine founder. Mere visibility and perpetuity would

not have been sufficient : she should be visible and perpetual in her original nature. Permanence in her essential attributes, is essentially necessary that she may be one with the Church established by Christ. Mutation in these attributes would be the very synonyme of error, the infallible proof that she was of man, not the work of Him Who is essentially immutable. Truth alone is unchangeable : error is of its nature changeable.

If the Church came from Christ and was to continue His work, she should be recognized and known of men. As the marks, by which she is to be known, are the outward exhibition or reflection of her inner nature or essential qualities ; if in those there were change or defection, these too, would be changed ; and men, for whose salvation she was established, would be led to doubt, or could not at all recognize, her identity. The continual presence of the Holy Ghost, in fulfilment of the promises of Christ, has assured her against all essential mutation. Without this support, she would have long since shared the fate of all human things. The human element, whether in the form of passion or pride or error, may have never failed to show itself ; but this is inevitable from her human condition. It never became identified with or stained her authorized teachings and acts. In worship, in morals, in the sacraments, and in teaching the Gospel, she cannot fail, nor fall into error. Even the error which she condemns, may cause the truth itself to be more clearly understood, and made more prolific.

The Church, one in her nature, one in her faith, one in her communion, one in her government, infallible in teaching, apostolic in succession and doctrine, universal in extent, perpetual in duration, visible always, authoritative, holy, indefectible, and unchangeable,—and all this, the result of the abidance in her of the Holy Ghost, is luminously the creation of Almighty God, the spouse of the Incarnate Word, and the habitation of the Holy Ghost.

We cannot fail to recognize the power of God in the Church, as we cannot fail to recognize it in the world. His gifts and graces, so copiously shed upon her, prove her to be a divine work, no less than the material world around us. Looking upon some admirable contrivance of skilful mechanism, we discern the genius which has devised it: from the power of conception and expression of some masterpiece of art or literature, we come to know and render homage to the author: contemplating the glorious physical world, we rise to the adoration of Him Whose wisdom and power it shadows forth; so, in like manner, considering the Church and her divine prerogatives, we must be blind to the light of evidence and sin against the intuitions of our soul, if we do not distinguish her from the works of man, and at once know her to be the Church of the living God,—established to last forever, and which must to-day exist somewhere on earth.

From the word of Christ by which He declares, that His Church will last forever, and that the Holy Ghost will abide with her till the consum-

mation of the world, it is manifest that He established a corporate body which was to exist until He should come again. Unless we are prepared to question His veracity and power, or, which is the same thing, to impeach His Divinity, this corporate body, at this very day and hour, exists in the world and is known of men. Such a body must be conscious of its nature and mission, and endowed with a principle of authority capable of preserving Divine revelation, and of exacting faith therein, and obedience to her laws.

It is obvious that, outside of the Catholic Church, there is nowhere this consciousness, which is the fruit of the Divine intelligence illuminating the Church; and no principle of authority, such as must belong to the Church established to perpetuate the work of Christ, and to take His place on earth till the end of time. All men, not blinded by prejudice, instinctively recognize, that the Catholic Church must be the institution whose perpetuity Christ has pledged. She alone lays claim to its charter, and mission, and Divine prerogatives. No body or sect which she has ever lopped off, could make a serious pretension to be this everlasting corporation. As, then, such an institution, with the Holy Ghost as its soul and teacher and guardian, must exist; and is not to be found elsewhere, it must be this very Catholic Church. This negative conclusion derives an irresistible force, when it is added, that she claims to be that very Church, and supports her claim by the most positive proof. To this is to be further added, that all other denominations are

slow to admit, that they are not part of her. The cast-away is unwilling to confess her degradation. They pay an unconscious tribute to her authority, and recognize the need they feel of belonging to her, by this claim of being within her fold.

THE DIVINE EXCELLENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

I.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid in those who perish: in whom the god of this world, hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, may not shine to them. For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord: and ourselves your servants through Jesus. For God, Who said that light should shine out of darkness, hath shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us.—St. Paul, II. Cor. iv. 3-7.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God to salvation to every one who believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. For in it the justice of God is revealed by faith unto faith, as it is written: And the just man by faith liveth.—Idem, Rom. i. 16, 17.

IN the Divine Author of the Gospel were lodged all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of the Most High. Whatever we know of the mysteries within us and around us, is owing to the Revelation which He has brought into the world. Human philosophy could never have solved, or thrown any but the faintest light on the dark questions of our life and destiny. The light of



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Revelation has blended with the light of reason, so that we almost think we have learned from ourselves what, by ourselves, we could have never learned. The child of to-day has a wisdom of which the sage and philosopher of antiquity never dreamed. The gropings in the dark of human speculation have been illumined by the noon-day splendor of Revelation. Even to-day, where the light of the Gospel has not reached, there exists the same dense ignorance as existed everywhere before the coming of its Divine Author.

Yet, men sometimes find difficulty in believing the truths of the Gospel, because they seem at variance with the teachings of reason. But, as all truth is one and comes from God, that which is taught by reason cannot be opposed to that which is taught by Revelation. All truth is an emanation from Him Who is essential truth. Reason and Revelation are but the means by which it is made known and brought home to our minds. Men are content with a superficial knowledge of truth; they imbibe not the deep and long-drawn potations in which alone true wisdom is found. They do not enter the temple in which truth is forever enthroned, and where they would find all harmony and without contradiction. They stop at the threshold; they are content with appearances; they are staggered by the contradictions and difficulties which their superficial knowledge engenders; they imagine unanswerable what is only such to their unwisdom and limited capacity; and, finally, probably give up faith in Revealed truth.

It is not deeper knowledge, but deeper ignorance ; not greater light, but greater darkness, that leads men away from the Gospel.

It is sometimes imagined that mystery is a presumptive argument against the truth of Revelation. If this were so, it would be because God cannot reveal what is mysterious, or because there are no mysteries—because reason is able to comprehend all things. On the contrary, mystery bespeaks the Divine origin and character of the truth which it accompanies. As reason was meant mainly to direct us in matters of the natural order, it cannot be expected to explore for us the truths of supernatural religion of which the Godhead is the object. We have no quarrel with any faculty because it cannot do what it was never meant to do. The eye is not imperfect because it cannot reveal the wonders disclosed by the telescope. No one who has any knowledge of himself, or of the ordinary phenomena of nature, can for a moment say that there are no mysteries. They surround us on every side : man and nature are filled with secrets that reason shall never fathom. Does the mystery of the origin of this world which we inhabit, and the origin of all the worlds which we see with our eyes, or the uncounted universes which science has discovered buried to our vision in the distant realms of space, change or lessen for a moment the fact of their existence? Will reason solve for us the mystery which we experience within our hearts,—the law of the mind approving and commending the better things, while the body, in abject servitude to

the law of the members, pursues what the mind condemns? Or, if reason looking out on the face of human society and seeing there so much that indicates the abnormal condition of the race, conjectures some original calamity, can it explain the nature and consequences of this primal alienation from the Creator? Now, if there are mysteries within us and all around us in nature, which reason cannot solve, how reasonable to believe that there must be impenetrable mysteries connected with God and the Divine Nature, which mere reason cannot explore. A religion teaching mysteries would seem to bear upon it the emblem and presumptive truth of its Divine source. We cannot comprehend God, because He is infinite and we are finite. The finite cannot contain, much less exhaust, the infinite. As the human eye is blinded by the dazzling splendor of the sun, as this earth of ours cannot consume its heat and light, so God's truth dazzles even to blindness our mind's eye, and is too great for the capacity of our limited nature. Mystery, then, far from being against, is an argument for the truth of Revealed religion.

The truths of Revelation so far exceed all human comprehension that it is impossible that human reason or the human imagination could have ever discovered or conjectured them. This is acknowledged by even the adversaries of Revelation who claim that reason is opposed to these truths. It is obvious that human capacity cannot discover that which it cannot comprehend. The human mind may be able to understand that

which is the result of its own investigation. Human imagination may indulge itself in speculation upon that which the senses or reason discover. But the truths of Revelation must have been disclosed to men by God Himself. Without such a Revelation, these truths would have been never received by men, because of the opposition which they offer to the pride of the human intellect and the passions of the human heart. These truths, so humiliating to the human mind and calling for its profound and unhesitating submission, and inflicting a burdensome restraint upon the human heart and sacrificing its dearest desires to the self-denial of the Gospel, would have been rejected by men with lofty disdain had they not come from Divine authority.

The marvel of their reception by men in spite of all this, is increased when we consider the inadequacy of any human means for their promulgation. Not by arms, nor by eloquence, nor by the influence of the great, nor by the learning of the philosophers, nor by civil legislation, was the Gospel diffused among men; "to the Gentiles it was a folly, to the Jews a stumbling block." It was by the Divine virtue of Christ, issuing from His Cross and shed abroad upon all flesh, that these truths found acceptance and lodgement in the hearts of men.

The excellence of Christian doctrine is shown in the exalted conception it affords of God's nature and attributes. It teaches that God is a Self-existent Being, drawing existence from nothing external to Himself, nor even from Himself as from

a cause; that He is Almighty, Omniscient, Eternal, without beginning and without end; Immutable, the "same yesterday, to-day and forever;" the Munificent Creator, and Supreme Provider, and Final End of all things; Whose power brought them into being, Whose all-pervading energy is to them a continued creation, Whose goodness leads them to Himself as to the Only End for which He could have created them. It teaches us that the Majesty of God is sovereign, that His justice is unapproachable, that His immutability is inexorable, because His will is ever conformable to the law and wisdom which His intellect finds in the contemplation of the Divine essence: and this wisdom is the source of these Divine prerogatives; without it God could not exist.

All the truths which the human heart desires to know are imparted by the Gospel; truths which as belonging to an order far transcending that of mere nature, reason at its best could never attain to. It solves the mystery of man's present condition by pointing out his origin and primal endowments, his fall, and forfeiture of his supernatural destiny. While God could have made man as he is now born, yet it pleased Him, in His infinite goodness, to confer upon him not only a nature perfect in its order, but to make him the sharer of immortal gifts and the heir of a supernatural destiny. The alienation of the race from God, and the consequent moral disorder of which we find so great evidence in the human heart and in human society, is due to the original prevarication of our first parents. The mystery of our

present being, while it has led the superficial and sceptical to Atheism, led Plato and the wisest men to recognize some original calamity to the race: and this the Gospel declares to have been original sin.

God required from man, on his creation, absolute obedience. He could not divest him of this duty, as the law of his being and the necessary relation of the creature to the Creator. God loves the eternal order which He finds in His Divine essence. Therefore, when He makes a creature and endows it with reason and free will, capable of knowing and following this eternal order, He must exact that this creature obey the eternal order reflected in its heart and mind. God could not hold Himself indifferent to its contempt and transgression.

Little would it profit man to know these vital truths,—to understand to what descent and from what height fallen, unless at the same time he received the power and grace to reascend to his former supernatural state, and to be again made partaker of the blessings of which, through Adam's prevarication, he had been deprived. Hence the Gospel proclaims peace between man and God: it supplies us with the grace with which we may purchase reconciliation with Him and come again by our lost inheritance. Peace to the soul of man by the suppression of passion, peace with the Creator by the superabundant merits of the Redeemer, is the lesson of the Gospel. It undoes and pardons that which, of its own nature and by itself, can never be undone and is unpardonable. He who knew not mercy for the fallen angels, has

had mercy upon man and his miseries. They fell through their own malice. Man fell, foiled and circumvented by the stratagems of those angels seeking by murderous designs to destroy the work of God. By the humiliation of His birth, by the suffering of His life, by the agony of His passion, and the voice of His blood, He beseeches the Eternal Father with groans unutterable to have mercy, and to bestow pardon upon the estranged sons of men,—to save those for whom He does not hesitate to come into the world, become man and die.

By the efficacy of His death, He cancels the original sin of our nature, and becomes in His own person the moral head of restored humanity. "As in Adam we all died, so in Christ we all have been made to live." His atonement more than compensates for the primal guilt, and has rescued the race from all the evils of which it was the fruitful source. In the inscrutable providence of God, sin, far from injuring or destroying our nature, will prove to be the "happy fault" by which man will be raised to even a higher pitch of glory and be made partaker of the Divine Nature. He shall be exalted to union with the Deity and sit at the right hand of God forevermore. Even as Jesus Christ in His human nature became the natural Son of God, so are we become members of Christ's mystical Body, His adopted sons: "Ye shall be as gods, and ye shall be sons of the Most High."

We have already remarked that God could not be indifferent to virtue and vice; for the order which differentiates the two, is an emanation of

the essential order of the Divine Nature. Hence there must be some sanction to sustain virtue and to punish vice. Even human lawgivers teach that this principle of sustainment is essential to all law,—that without it, law is ineffectual and ceases to be. God, then, as the Sovereign Legislator, must have supplied some principle to encourage the virtuous, and to reward them; to punish the vicious, and to dissuade them from iniquity. Accordingly, the Gospel teaches that God has deemed virtue in this life to be the condition of future happiness; and eternal misery to be the wages of sin and disobedience persevered in till death. Thus it is that the Gospel teaches that death and punishment came into the world, as the penalty of sin, and should continue as long as the disorder of which they were meant to be the retribution and corrective. Nor can it be said that sin is an absolute disorder, so long as there exists its sovereign remedy. Law and authority rule the state notwithstanding outrage and riot, so long as there exists vindictive and corrective power. If there were no punishment for sin,—if it were committed with impunity; if there were no reward for virtue,—if it received not just recognition; then, indeed, there would be moral anarchy justly attributable to the absence of adequate sanction. When there is retribution for sin, eternal order is preserved, even though by the act of sin it is violated. The perversion is readjusted by the infliction of condign satisfaction.

The Gospel proclaims the unswerving justice

of God and the essential malignity of sin, when it teaches that, of its own nature, it is irremissible; that God does not forgive it arbitrarily, and that no expiation can exert a mandatory claim upon His justice. Such forgiveness would impeach the holiness of God, and would argue indifference to virtue and vice; or, what is the same, would destroy or deny the essential difference between them. Nor should God forgive sin upon man's repentance only. For it is not in the power of man to undo the evil of sin. Any satisfaction that he can offer is, of itself, nothing. It can only be acceptable in view of the expiation of an infinite Sacrifice made in his behalf. The Gospel teaches that God has been pleased to require a full expiation, a condign atonement for the sin of our first parents and for our own. Man himself could never have made such a satisfaction. "He in Whom there was no sin nor the shadow of sin," took upon Himself our sins, and by His vicarious sufferings atoned for them and blotted them out forever.

In the grace purchased for us by His blood, He has supplied us with an unfailing means by which our sins may be forgiven, passion subdued, and the law of God observed. He has endued us with the potent energy by which the conflict which we find in ourselves between the law of the mind and the lust of the flesh,—this contradiction which to-day proposes the amendment, which to-morrow is forgotten—may cease, and we may be forever faithful to the law of the spirit. He gives us grace destructive of sin. If we relapse,

He gives us grace to rise again ; and, if we will, to persevere forever. Even in heaven, He still makes perpetual intercession for us. He is the Great High Priest, Who standing at the right hand of God, can yet sympathize with us in our weakness and obtain pardon for us by the merits of His life, sufferings and death.

In the mystery of the Incarnation, as set forth in the Gospel, we behold a love and wisdom and justice truly Divine. We see in it that the Divine Majesty outraged by sin, receives all the reparation that It could require. While God pardons man, He declares His eternal justice, in requiring an infinite satisfaction for sin. For the atonement which Jesus offered was infinite by virtue of the Divinity, which was united to His human nature that suffered. At the same time, He shows His wisdom in devising a means by which man could be saved, yet so as that Divine justice should be inviolate. He relinquished not His right to man's perfect obedience ; but exacted it of His only begotten Son, Who assumed our nature and became one of us, to render to Him the debt of obedience contemned by Adam ; and that His satisfaction might be accounted the satisfaction of the race that had offended. Thus, in His prodigious love and mercy He forgot not His holiness, His wisdom, and His justice.

All the virtues which man by sin had despised, are inculcated as indispensable to our restored salvation : faith in Jesus Christ, which is the foundation of our worship ; entire and abiding conformity to the eternal Law announced by

Him; hope for salvation in Him and through His merits; charity leading us to prefer God to all things, and compelling us to make every sacrifice rather than sin against His law, and enforcing the love of our fellow man for God and in God.

In this covenant of mercy we behold, too, all the resources that God could give to enable us to secure salvation, without changing our nature or subverting the providence which He had already established. There we find continual forgiveness of sin, unceasing means of repentance, unfailing grace, life-giving sacraments, support in temptation, strength to overcome in our moral warfare with all spiritual enemies.

And yet, inestimable as were the benefits which Jesus purchased for us by His redemption, the manner of that Redemption surpasses the greatness of the benefits. The love and mercy shown in the Incarnation,—becoming man, suffering and dying in the midst of excruciating torments, manifest a love worthy of God and incomprehensible to the human mind. Infinite, indeed, is the charity of God, Who sent His only begotten Son into the world to die, that by His death men might have life. “Although omnipotent,” says St. Augustine, “and all wise, He knew not how to give us more; although infinitely rich, He had nothing more to give us.”

II.

Christian doctrine perfects the human mind and fulfils its aspirations. Knowledge is the very object of the mind; its acquisition is its essential function; its possession is its bliss. What seeing is to the eye, what love is to the heart, knowledge is to the understanding. See the student plodding all night in the solution of some problem, because of the pleasure that the result will afford him. See the feverish unrest of the man who is involved in doubt, because he wishes to be certain of his knowledge. See the disquiet and anxiety of those who have not been born in the true faith; and their peace and tranquillity once they are brought into the bosom of the Church. Why? because the intellect hates doubt, is in unrest with uncertainty, and longs to be sure of that which it would know. It would fill and illumine its deep and inmost recesses with knowledge. There is no pleasure to be compared with the delight found in every new accession of knowledge. Christian doctrine imparts to the intellect the knowledge that it seeks most, which it craves with unquenchable thirst; it teaches it not, indeed, everything, but all that is necessary; and puts it upon the way of one day possessing all truth when it will see God face to face.

Man forgets for a while his traffic, and tears himself away from the tyranny of sense; gives himself to serious reflection and asks his soul, what is

this world of men, this animated spectacle which he sees around him and of which he forms a part? whence has it come? whither is it going? What is this material world? who made it? what is its destiny? The Gospel answers that the world and all things have been created by an All-wise God for the manifestation of His glory; that it is, principally, through man, endowed with reason and capable of knowing the works of God and directing them to their final end, that this object is to be attained.

It not only teaches the origin of the physical world, but it reveals the moral world, shattered in the beginning by the fall of man. To this original disorder it ascribes the conflict of good and evil which every man feels in his own heart, and which makes of him an enigma which reason could never solve. Adopting the sense of Pascal, we may say: Man falls, yielding to the senses; rises again, acknowledges the cause of the fall; perseveres for a time and falls again. This is the life of man. It is the perversity and blindness consequent on original sin and estrangement from his God. Religion sheds light on the origin of evil by defining its true nature. It justifies God's providence by making known future judgment and just retribution, as an integral part of the economy upon which He has constituted human existence, whose least portion we see in the brief days of this life. It points out to man his eternal destiny. It teaches him that this life is but a dream; that his stay here is short; that at its end the real life—eternity, begins. Thus, Christian doctrine answers

the deepest questionings of the human heart, and solves the darkest mysteries of human life ; which, otherwise, would forever remain unanswered and unsolved.

The human soul comes to loathe the pleasures and riches and distinctions and ambitions of this life, because in them it finds not the content it craves. It is surfeited with them and turns away from the unsatisfactoriness and emptiness of all that this world can afford. It aspires to a happiness spiritual in its nature and eternal in duration. Revelation discloses its supreme bliss in God, the All-spiritual and Everlasting, in Whom it shall find true riches, immortal happiness, incorruptible pleasure, undying glory,—all for which it feels it has been made and to which it unceasingly aspires.

The source of all sin is an undue love of self and over attachment to sensible objects. We prefer our own advantage to the rights of our fellow men: hence ensue all sins against justice. We prefer ourselves to the extent of being unwilling to make a sacrifice for our fellow man: hence all sins against charity. The world blinds us and dominates over us. We all are under its tyranny even from the cradle. We have not the fortitude to cast it off, and in the light of religion to rise to the contemplation of the truth ; it is only death that solves its spell. With difficulty can we separate ourselves, even in thought, from the world ; we come into it by stealth, we grow up with it, we seem to ourselves to be a part of it ; with many, actual flight from its occupations and dis-

tractions has been the means by which they have come to realize their distinction from it. From the lust of the eyes and this slavish subjection to sense and selfishness, come all the miseries of life and all the sins of men.

The Gospel rectifies this two-fold disorder. It teaches us how little we are to think of all those contrivances of sensuality which most men pass their lives in seeking, and which it is the fulfilment of their ambition to attain. How little sanction to human affluence, pomp, and indulgence, in the austerity inculcated by the Gospel! What a contrast between its lessons and the dictates of human policy and the maxims of human wisdom! How little account does it make, for its diffusion among men, of all that worldly wisdom regards as necessary to any great project or undertaking! In what light appears all attachment to sense, when the Sovereignly Rich becomes meanly poor, and passes His life in profound detachment from all sensible objects! Who can have the heart to cherish sentiments of self-love, when he beholds the unutterable self-denial, such complete self-forgetfulness as that shown by the Divine Teacher of the Gospel! "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice and all things shall be added unto you," is the secret of right living. "Do wrong to no man, but show him all charity;" "Seek not the things of this world for they soon pass away, was the wisdom, till then, unknown among men.

Man trembles at the thought of death, is startled at the dread penalty: "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return." We shrink from

even a passing reflection upon this law of our mortality. To cease to be,—to take an eternal farewell of friends and relatives with whom we have been from infancy, and in turn to be forgotten by them; to shut our eyes upon this world, and to lose interest in the objects that have engrossed us during life; to sink into the earth, and in a little while to be as if we had never been:—this is a prospect from which the bravest of men have shuddered and recoiled. There is nothing from which we start back with such horror as from the open grave. Even the saints who during life only learned to die, and who died daily to themselves and to the world, have been filled with alarm and pain at the approach of the natural dissolution of soul and body. We all cling to life, even they who have enjoyed but little of what it affords. The crippled beggar who has passed his years living upon the unwilling alms of others, is yet disposed to prolong his dying life, and clings to it with a tenacity which we should expect only in those who found some pleasure and advantage in it.

We sometimes hear it said that such and such persons were not afraid to die; that death had for them no terrors, that they even courted death; and were surprised that surrounding friends could imagine that they had any fear of it. Can it be, Lord Jesus! that the insensibility which during life they had shown to the truth of an hereafter, was continued even unto the awful moment when they were on the verge of entering thereon! Can it be that they were so destitute of

the habit of introspection as to find nothing in their conscience and heart, with which to reproach themselves, when about to stand before Thy All-seeing tribunal! Can it be that they were so filled with self-sufficiency, as to be unconscious of aught that could offend Thy infinite purity! Or may it not be, that they were lulled to forgetfulness by some potent drug, of which modern medicine is not slow to avail itself, to ease the passage from life and pain, to death and eternity? Or may it not be, that the poison of death, coursing through their veins, benumbed and paralyzed their faculties; so that, if not bereft of consciousness, they were no longer capable of reflection, and with minds so darkened as not to realize the truths which religion teaches as to the future life? No human being who feels that eternity hangs trembling in the balance of faithfulness or unfaithfulness, during life, to God's law, can be without solicitude in that hour when the soul is about to be sundered from the body and ushered into the presence of the Ever-living God.

It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which has stripped death of its terrors. It is He Who has destroyed death, in the sense that He has rendered it of no avail. It is but a transient pain, not a permanent infliction. A time shall come when those who are in their graves, shall come forth from corruption and ashes to eternal life. It is He Who by His own death has taught us how to die; and has assuaged the griefs which death invariably inflicts. If we can with any degree of resignation submit to that penalty, which is

assured to every child of Adam, or with any fortitude undergo its pains, it is because our Lord and Master by word, and His own example, has taught us how to do so. It is He Who has declared that the dead are but sleeping; that he who believes in Him, though dead, shall live; and he who believes in Him, shall not perish forever; that this corruption shall become incorruption; that death shall be a source of life; that even as the flower must wither before the fruit is formed, so the human body must decay before it blossoms into immortality. It is He Who pours into the ears of the dying the consolatory words: Fear not, child of Adam, He that eateth Me shall live by Me; you who have eaten My flesh and drank My blood, shall abide with Me forever, and I will raise you up on the last day. No matter how long the reign of death and its accompanying privations may last, the soul is at peace because it knows that its salvation is secured, and that it shall one day enter into Everlasting Life.

The human heart, with all man's moral faculties, is subdued and perfected and ennobled by the virtue and law of Christian Charity as laid down in the Gospel. This divine duty was unknown to the pagan world. It could not subsist among those who had not the knowledge of a common God,—its necessary foundation and support. When the Gospel taught that all men are sharers of the same nature and creatures of the same God, destined to return to Him as they have come from Him, a knowledge was imparted to the world which had never dawned upon the sage

of antiquity, and of which there was but the feeblest trace in the life and relations of mankind in general. It commanded men to believe in, hope in, and love God, and to cultivate these virtues toward Him. It enjoined upon them that they are to do unto others that only which they would have done unto themselves. It declares the inexorable duty which every one owes to himself of making his eternal salvation his one supreme object in life, and of employing all things for this paramount purpose. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else shall be added unto you." With such a law, our perverted hearts may be brought back to their first integrity.

To the votaries of this world who are enslaved to the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, the Gospel preaches its saving admonitions, again and again repeated. To the impure: "Seek not the things of the flesh; for they who sow corruption shall reap corruption." To the avaricious: "Seek not the things that are seen, but the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal." To the proud: "Unless you become as one of these little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "He that is the greatest among you, let him be as the least; and he that is ministered unto, as he that ministers." To the votaries of sin, and to those who seek unbridled license in its gratification, it proposes the true liberty of obedience to God's eternal law; this is the source and home of

true freedom: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The liberty of sin is the liberty of the fallen angels. There is no sovereign liberty that belongs to man: it is the attribute of God alone. And even God's freedom follows the order and harmony which His divine intellect contemplates in His divine essence. Man's true liberty is found in subjection to God and in obedience to His law. Of this duty he can never divest himself, nor can even God exempt him.

Nor is the Gospel content with this. But to those who will be perfect, it proposes Jesus Christ Himself as the Exemplar. To the favored few who propose to themselves a higher perfection than the keeping of the commandments, it says: "Go sell what thou hast, and follow Jesus Christ." To those who wish to heroically overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and to follow Christ in, at least, some of His sufferings and sacrifices, it proposes the three Evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It invites them to take up their cross and follow their Master. "He that will come after Me, must take up his cross and follow Me. He that loses his life for My sake, shall find it."

The Gospel knowing the weakness of human nature and its proneness to evil, the power of the temptations that assail us on every side, and the fierceness and persistency of the enemy of our salvation, "who goes about seeking whom he may devour," reveals to us the seven sacraments; through which the life-giving grace of Jesus Christ is conveyed to our souls. By these the fire

of concupiscence is slackened, the blandishments of the world exposed, detachment from sense fostered, and the artifices and power of our enemy destroyed. These are the heavenly means by which we are to contend and be sustained in our spiritual warfare;—particularly by that Sacrament in which our souls are nourished with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is, indeed, the unfailing stimulant which invigorates our moral faculties rendered languid by continual conflict with passion; the antidote against all sin and corruption; the powerful weapon which overcomes the enemy of our souls.

We have seen that the Gospel solves for us the mystery of human life: it teaches us no less how to live,—the lesson which men are ever seeking to learn and yet refusing to be taught and to obey. It proclaims unmistakably the purpose of our present being, the manner of its attainment, the principles which should guide us in our manifold relations and duties to it. It teaches us to pursue this paramount object through the devious paths of this world and to contemn its alluring bewitchments; to seek our eternal salvation at whatever cost or sacrifice it may involve. It leads us through the darkened mazes of passion and the inextricable labyrinths of error which proceed from the human heart and mind. It lights up this dark and mysterious passage of a dying life, and conducts us by the right hand into the immortal life and bliss which it discloses as our destiny. It gives us strength to bear the trials and burdens which befall us, and to rise superior to calamities

and tribulations which would, otherwise, crush and overwhelm us. Though sore disappointment and sad discomfiture may attend noble purposes and heroic efforts; though friends may betray us; though misfortune and every manner of evil may be our portion; though calumny may cloud us, and men may persecute and revile and speak every evil against us, untruly;—blessed are we, for so the world persecuted the prophets and men of God in every age. “Though the earth were removed, and the mountains cast into the sea, still should we not fear; for the Lord is our refuge and our strength, our very present help in trouble.”

To compel men to give up their most cherished beliefs, and which had, so to speak, become part of their nature, and to accept teachings inexplicable to the human mind upon faith in those authorized to announce them;—to reclaim men from passions the most ineradicable and insatiable of the human heart, and to captivate them to virtues the most austere and self-denying,—is as truly the work of God as to restore sight to the blind, health to the sick, or to recall the dead; it is as truly an exercise of omnipotence as the suspension of any law of nature. This power can only proceed from Divine grace: it can, therefore, show itself only in testimony of truth and virtue: no delirium of mind, no vagary of heart, no hallucination of the imagination, nothing less than Divine truth can invoke and obtain this Divine recognition and sanction. It is the very sign-manual and seal of a heaven-sent message.

With Jesus Christ came a condemnation of irreligion and paganism, passion and iniquity, which rived the human heart as with a lightning stroke. His Gospel at once pervaded society, and has never ceased to be felt. It was the light of heaven chasing away the darkness of a world smitten and cursed by original sin and all the sins of men. If it has not entirely destroyed these evils, it has forced conscience to acknowledge that they are such. Ever since has humanity been seeking to reach its lofty standard. The terrible arraignment which St. Paul makes of the pagan philosophers, in his Epistle to the Romans, exhibits the lamentable state of society before Christ came: the iniquity and licentiousness in which it was sunk. For, if the philosophers,—the intelligence of the world—revelled in crimes unmentionable, what must have been the condition of the bulk of mankind? “if the light was darkness, what must not the darkness itself” have been? Verily, “mankind was without God and without hope.”

The Gospel at once converted the hearts of uncounted multitudes and even of whole communities. Truly, the grace of God was shed abroad into the souls of men. Even in the days of the apostles, its sound and grace had gone throughout the world unto the uttermost bounds. Universal amelioration followed wherever it was preached. Supernatural virtues became the mark of Christians; their lives were a heavenly contrast to the lives of those who remained sunk in paganism. And if the perversity of nature, in its freedom of will which the Gospel left intact, still

resisted its advance and clung to evil, the evil itself was condemned in the conscience and heart of even its own votaries. Surely, though necessarily often slowly, like the seed cast upon the wall, which in the end shivers it to its foundations, did the Gospel lay siege to the hearts and minds of men, and by the grace of Christ overcome all opposition. Even they who lapsed from its exalted standard, and who sought to rise again, paid homage by this willingness; while those who abandoned it in despair, proclaimed its excellence by their own pusillanimity.

It was the mysterious grace forever attached to the Cross, under the ordering of Divine providence, which wrought this wonderful transformation,—this greatest of miracles. It was the merits of the passion and death of Christ that rendered the Cross of Christ and its preaching so potent an instrument of salvation unto the nations of the world.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord : because man is head of the woman, as Christ is head of the Church : Himself is Savior of His body. But as the Church is subject to Christ ; so also women to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also hath loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the laver of water in the word of life. That He Himself might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and without blemish. So also the men ought to love their wives, as their own bodies. He who loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hateth his own flesh, but he nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ the Church : for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great, but I say in Christ, and in the Church. Nevertheless let you also severally each love his wife, as he loveth himself : and let the wife fear her husband.—St. Paul : Ephes. v. 22–33.

HUMAN society is made up of the union or congregation of many families. What the unit is to the multiplication table, the family is to human society, which is the accretion or development of the family. Whatever tends to the happiness of the family, tends to the happiness of society. Whatever is essential to the existence of the family, is essential to the existence of society. Whatever promotes the well-being and prosperity of one, promotes the well-being and prosperity of the other.

Whatever is detrimental to the interests of the family, is thereby detrimental to the interests of society. Whatever is destructive to the elements, is, at the same time, destructive of human society itself. Whatever lessens the happiness and prosperity of the family, lessens the happiness and prosperity of society. In a word, whatever affects the component parts affects the whole. The manner, also, in which this influence is exerted, manifests itself on society.

Now, there is nothing more essential to the existence of the human family than the Marriage contract; its sacramental character, its unity, and the purpose for which it has been instituted. Accordingly, there is nothing more necessary to the welfare of society and even its existence, than inviolable regard for the sacredness of Marriage as instituted by Christ. There is nothing more fatal to its happiness and existence, than contempt or disregard of the holy Ordinance.

Matrimony, according to the Catechism of the Council of Trent, is "The conjugal union of man and woman between legitimate persons, which is to last undividedly throughout life." In a perfect Marriage there must be true consent, its outward expression or external compact, the obligation and tie arising from the contract, and the marriage debt by which it is consummated. But the obligation and tie inherent in the contract and expressed by the word "union," alone have the force and nature of Marriage. By legitimate is meant those who are lawfully free, and hindered by no impediment from entering into this con-

tract. By conjugal is meant the distinction between this union and any other contract or union that may exist.

The essential nature of Marriage, considered as a sacrament, is declared, when it is said to be the undivided union between man and wife, for the purpose for which it has been established,—the procreation of offspring. It is, at once, a contract which is a sacrament, a bond of union which cannot be sundered, and the Divine ordinance by which the propagation of the race is provided for.

Marriage was established by Almighty God while our first parents were yet in a state of innocence. Its consummation, however, did not take place till after the fall. From the beginning it was a natural and civil contract. Even as such, yet principally for the due provision of the offspring, it possessed all the qualities which belong to it as a sacrament,—unity, indissolubility, perpetuity, and excluded everything contrary to these. Moses, it is true, had permitted to the Jews a bill of divorce; yet Christ, Who restored it to its first rank, declared that this was because of the hardness of their hearts, and that from the beginning it had not been so: for “He Who made man from the beginning, made them male and female, and said: for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.” Thus Christ undertook to restore the ordinance of Marriage to its pristine integrity. Hence, what may be regarded as His first public appearance, and which was the occasion of the performance of

His first miracle, was His assistance at the marriage feast in Cana. By His presence thereat He declared Marriage to be sacred; and He afterward raised it to sacramental dignity.

Marriage is justly regarded as something sacred, because it had God Himself for its author, and because of its restoration to its first rank by our Lord, and, principally, by reason of His exalting it to the dignity of a sacrament. It confers the grace, which is necessary, that the married couple may love one another, and bring up their children in the fear and love of God. St. Paul declares that it "is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in His Church." Even as Eve, destined to be the companion and helpmate of man, was made of the rib taken from the side of Adam, so from the opened side of the Second Adam on the Cross there came forth His mystical spouse, the Church. The union of Christ Jesus by His incarnation with our humanity, was prefigured by the holy ordinance of Marriage: the figure of such an alliance could not fail to be itself holy and grace-giving. The still more mysterious union of God with the soul, by means of sanctifying grace, finds also a fit emblem and expression in this Divine institute by which two souls are knit indissolubly together.

The marriage of Adam and Eve was meant to propagate the race unto eternal life; but because of the fall, they were indeed propagated, but unto death and misery. The object of the mystical espousal between Christ and His church, is to generate a heavenly race, according to the order

of grace ; and they are indeed generated unto life and immortality. Human marriage works in the order of nature ; the spiritual marriage between Christ and His church works in the order of grace. No wonder that the apostle declared the Sacrament of Marriage to be a great sacrament ; because it is the emblem and type of this mystical marriage. Two in one flesh, finds a counterpart in the Divine nature and the human united in the same Divine personality. As, according to our human nature, we are the children of Adam and have inherited his curse ; so, according to the order of grace, we are children of Christ, Who is our brother in the flesh ; we are the offspring of His mystical spouse, the new Eve, the Church, by which humanity is again regenerated. Through her, as through a channel, His blood is conveyed to our souls ; and thus we obtain grace and pardon. In this Divine ordinance the priest, who is the dispenser and minister of the mysteries of God, has no necessary part ; the parties themselves are, so to speak, consecrated priests, to administer to themselves this holy rite.

Among Christians there is no such thing as a mere natural or civil marriage. Such marriage ceased to exist when Christ raised it to a sacramental character : it still exists for those who have not assumed the law of Christ by the sacrament of Baptism. For all Christians the Contract of Marriage is identical with, and not to be distinguished from the Sacrament ; they are one and absolutely the same. This is the unerring teaching of the Church.

Now, how is this Sacrament regarded among Christians? I speak not of their belief, but of their practice. They profess, indeed, to know that it is a sacrament; but do they act as if this belief had any practical weight with them? How many are there who would shudder at the thought of profaning any other sacrament, and yet appear to have so little scruple as to the manner in which they receive This? You are filled with alarm at any suggestion that, even unintentionally, you have made an unworthy Communion; you would die, rather than openly profane the body of Christ. You always have in mind the condemnation pronounced by St. Paul on those who fail to discern the body of Christ in the Sacrament of His love: how can it be that you are so careless and filled with so little fear, lest, by unworthy dispositions, you abuse this great channel of His grace?—this great Sacrament which is the type of His union with the Church, of His union by grace with our souls, and of His union with our humanity. It is as much a sacrilege to abuse the grace of Christ as to abuse His body. How can you expect that your married life can answer to its object, if entered by so flagrant a contempt of the divine grace of which it stands in continual need? Christ knew its burdens and responsibilities, and made provision for them, by the copious outpouring of grace which this Sacrament insures to those who receive it worthily. You frustrate His purpose, and deprive yourself of this necessary assistance, by wilfully contemning it. Can we doubt that it is owing to this negligence

that marriages which seem to promise so much happiness, so often end in misery and unavailing regret? Can we marvel that the children of such unhallowed unions, so often bring discredit on their parents, and are so little worthy of the purpose for which it was established?

If a sacrament which may be repeated, should be approached in freedom from sin, and in a certain holiness of life, and with supernatural motives; with how much more perfect dispositions, if possible, should this holy Sacrament of Matrimony be approached, which cannot be renewed but by death, and upon which depend such irretrievable consequences? Withal, people enter this holy state without ever reflecting upon the important step which they are taking, and without adverting to the abuse of which, by their unworthy dispositions, they may be guilty. They never consult God in prayer before receiving the Sacrament; they seem to take it as matter of course that they are to be married. They do not stop to think that the grace of God, which is the fruit of prayer, is necessary in order to enter this holy state in the spirit in which it was founded. How often is it entered without the conscience being examined and any stain of sin removed by the sacrament of Penance, and the soul fortified by the participation of the body of Christ? Without this necessary preparation, it were the rashest presumption to undertake the responsibilities of this state whose object is one and the same with that of the union of Christ with His church,—the bringing forth to Him of a heavenly offspring,

members of His mystical body, and destined sharers with Him in the glory which He has with the Father. Nothing but just retribution can they expect who thus profane this holy Sacrament and debase it from its lofty height, perverting it from its first purpose to make it the means of bestial gratification.

Marriage is the emblem of Christ's union with His church. Such should be the conjugal fidelity of the husband to his wife and of the wife to her husband,—the perfect reflection of Christ's holy and ineffable alliance with His mystical spouse. Christ's love for His church is one, it is not divided; it is perpetual, it knows no divorce; it has continued from the beginning, it is incapable of suspension, it will continue to the end. In the bonds of holy matrimonial love, the husband should love his wife, and the wife her husband: the wife obedient to her husband, as the Church is to Christ; the husband loving his wife, as Christ loves the Church. The passion of love is the holiest that God has implanted in the human heart. I speak not of any sensual feeling that, by abuse, is called by that name; nor of any sentiment created by mere external appearance; nor of any of those feelings whose source is mere concupiscence. Love is far exalted above the suggestions of flesh and blood. It elevates the creature even beyond himself, and gives him a foretaste of that unutterable bliss to be found in the possession of God Himself,—the source and fountain of all true love. I speak of a love which proceeds from a union of souls: of an affection that draws to-

gether in eternal embrace, two beings so completely one in feeling, interest, and desires, that each finds in the love of the other, its truest satisfaction and purest felicity. It is this mutual love that the Sacrament of Marriage consecrates; it is, as it were, its necessary matter, and from it draws its enduring foundation. All other love, sensual and ephemeral, is unworthy of it. Such love, strengthened with the grace which the Sacrament imparts, will enable each to bear with the shortcomings of the other: the defects of temper, the impulses of passion, the mutual annoyances that spring up between the best individuals, arising from contrariety of character and disposition, and from so many other causes. It will enable both to show mutual forbearance; suffering with patience their common faults, knowing that a cheerful endurance of these will be the means of winning the love of the other, and sanctifying one's own soul. They will endure with resignation the trials of life, the bearing and bringing up of children, their support, religious training, and education. All the responsibilities which their state puts upon them should be shared by both, each doing what he or she can to relieve the weaker one: the woman, by her sympathy and kindly disposition and loving intuitions, anticipating the needs, and relieving the cares that press upon her husband; and the husband, by his stronger and more masterful character, supporting the weaker will of his wife. In this way, Christian marriage becomes the emblem of Christ's union with His church.

It is of the nature of this Sacrament that it confers grace to sustain and to cherish the love, and the duties springing therefrom, which we have thus indicated. For, from its very definition, it imparts grace to the husband and wife to love one another, and to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. It is for this end, that Christ raised the natural or civil contract to the rank of a sacrament; thereby enabling husband and wife to live a oneness of life, and to discharge those common duties which, till then, they could with difficulty perform. Every sacrament imparts grace over and above that which its object necessarily implies; it gives the grace which is the proper object of its nature; it also imparts an increase of sanctifying grace and many other graces. Thus, the Sacrament of Matrimony confers light and grace, that the parties may be enabled to sustain the weighty burdens which are peculiar to their state. It strengthens them to live such a life as makes Matrimony, in truth, an emblem of Christ's union with His church. It urges them to love one another, with the same kind of love as that with which Christ loves His church. As the love of Christ for His church renders it "without spot or stain or any such thing," but wholly perfect and acceptable to God; so matrimonial love can render them wholly pleasing to God and acceptable in His sight. In the married state the loftiest perfection can be reached; saints are numbered in the Old Law and in the New who have been sanctified by the graces which are peculiar to it.

Such conjugal love as we have described, is

absolutely fatal to whatever may be opposed to its unity and indissolubility. Such love can never think of abandoning the heart in which alone it finds its happiness, can never think of sharing itself with any other creature. Such thoughts would show that he who held them, had not the fulness and intensity of love which is the very foundation of Christian marriage. Far from such love is polygamy or polyandry; "We are not, as Tobias says, as the nations who have no God." Nor could such love tolerate the idea of any future dissolution or sundering of its bonds, for any conceivable cause. The unity and perpetuity of Christian matrimony are the necessary outcome of marriage as a contract; but, particularly, as a sacrament. It is fearful to contemplate the evils resulting, if the idea of plurality in marriage or the possibility of dissolution be entertained: plurality, which would divide the love that in its nature is indivisible, that would lavish upon more than one, a love which God has ordained should exist in the sacred sanctuary of two hearts devoted to each other and living for each other. Nothing but the worst evils can result from the perversion of God's ordinance. Imagine a father's love divided between many, or a mother's love, and what becomes of home or family? what confusion! how can that love be solid or enduring which is shared among several, or which is the result of some extrinsic consideration, and which may last but for the hour? can the children of such unions know their parents, or they know their children? How can matrimonial love be

perfect if husband or wife believes that their union may be dissolved, whenever beauty fades, or caprice or passion or interest may suggest? No love is perfect which does not give promise of perpetuity; any transfer of this love must be ruinous to the peace and existence of the family. Think of a father divorced from a mother: they have been parents; their first love has dried up, and one has left the other, the partner of a stranger; to whom do the children look as their rightful guardian? are they supported by strangers whom the parents have admitted to their affections? how unjust? or, if supported by their own parents, how absurd that they live and are nourished in a stranger's family? Matrimonial love, therefore, no less than the matrimonial contract, requires unity and indissolubility. The evil consequences flowing from plurality and divorce are to be seen around us in society,—divorce which had better be called legalized adultery.

It may be said that seldom among Catholics are found instances opposed to the unity or perpetuity of Marriage. This is indeed true, particularly as compared with their alarming prevalence among denominations calling themselves Christian, and the absolute impunity with which they are practised by those who lay no claim to the Christian name. Nevertheless, can we say that the vices that are disguised among others under these specious names, are unknown among Catholics? While there may be formal and open denunciation of these vices, are not the vices themselves often practised? How frequently do we

hear of infidelities which are not the less such, even if not followed by separation? How often do we not hear of separations preceded by infidelities? Nay more; it has become no unfrequent occurrence for Catholics to openly contemn the Ordinance of Christ, and to contract marriages which, in their conscience, they know to be open violations of His law. How often does the husband act, as if there were one code of morality for him, and another for his wife? does he not seem to persuade himself that the bond which holds him to be faithful to his wife, is, somehow, less sacred than that which holds his wife to him? Human custom or human iniquity can never prescribe against the precept of God. No matter what form the passions of the human heart, and the corruptions of the world, may take, the Divine law is the same for the husband as for the wife; there is no indulgence to either; they are to be absolutely faithful to each other. The matrimonial union profaned by infidelity, the heart alienated from its counterpart, does not realize the union of Christ with His church: that union can never, for one moment, be dissolved. Nor is the infidelity less flagrant because known to God alone. There must be an explicit disavowal of whatever is opposed to the unity and perpetuity of Matrimony; but there must also be an inviolate abstinence from act or sins contrary thereto. The holy state which typifies Christ's union with His church, permits no such base profanity. Whatever that Divine union bespeaks or calls for, is required in this Sacrament of conjugal

love,—so exalted above the slavery of sensual attachment.

The third duty of Marriage is the procreation of offspring;—an offspring to fill the earth, and thus fulfil the Divine mandate of increasing and multiplying; an offspring to fill heaven, and thus supply the places of the angels who fell. Behold the two-fold purpose of Divine providence, in this holy Ordinance. As the ravages of death are continually repaired by the natural fecundity of the race, which this Sacrament blesses and supports; so heaven is continually augmented by the immortal souls which the Church, in its heaven-given fruitfulness, continually brings forth to its Divine Spouse. Humanity was first created to repair the loss of the angels. If all the children of men do not reach their sublime destiny, it is because, in the exercise of their free will, they prove themselves unworthy.

How corrupt our nature, how slavish the tyranny that concupiscence holds over us, since it is, that we can, with difficulty, speak upon the holiest matters without evil forcing itself upon the mind. In heaven there is nothing more sacred than the origin of human life: on earth there is nothing that is a more fruitful source of sin; in heaven there is nothing more worthy of the praise of angels: on earth there is nothing a more frequent theme of obscenity and evil suggestion. Ever, then, keep in mind Christ's union with His church, as the emblem of Christian marriage, and we can never fall below the sacredness of our subject, nor utter a word unworthy of this sacred

place. Whatever the object of Christ's union with His church, in the order of grace, the same is the object of holy Matrimony, in the order of nature. This order of nature is the indispensable prerequisite to the supernatural order, in which human souls are prepared for their eternal union with their bodies, for the enjoyment of God in the life to come.

We have said that Marriage was established by Almighty God between our first parents while they were yet in a state of innocence, and that it was not consummated until after the fall. To it then was added, as a secondary purpose, the restraint of concupiscence. Even thus it was barely sufficient to subdue this fire, which the loss of original justice had kindled in the human heart. A more powerful grace was given when Christ restored Marriage to its first condition, and also raised it to a sacramental character. Concupiscence inclines to sin, and unrestrained, leads to sin; but in Matrimony, under the influence of conjugal love and Christ's grace, this evil becomes a good, and the source of immortal beings, to fill the earth in time and heaven in eternity. Thus God's providence defeats the design of Satan, and turns to the glory of humanity that which he meant to be its ruin. But, woe betide those who make the secondary design of Marriage its principal purpose and primary signification. Sad, indeed, it is to think that so many seem to assume this holy state, as if it were meant for the gratification of passion. What other can be the thought of those who enter it, and who are nevertheless unwilling

to fulfil its obligations? All are free to embrace it, or not; upon no one is the burden placed; they "to whom it is given," may prefer a life of celibacy. But they who take upon them the state of Matrimony should live up to its duties. They should count the cost, lest afterward when too late, they may find its demands too burdensome for their inclinations, or in excess of the spirit of self-denial, or it may be of self-sacrifice, which they possess, and which they may be called upon to exert. They should be able to say with holy Tobias; "And now, Lord, Thou knowest, that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which Thy name may be blessed forever and ever." Tobias, viii. 9.

How little in accord with the spirit of Christ in this Sacrament, are those who having taken upon them its obligations, far from seeking to fulfil, seek rather to destroy them! How many are there who fail to realize, that murder invisible to human eyes is yet visible to God; and that murder inflicted upon the unconscious is steeped in as black dye as that which deprives of life a being in full maturity of time and reason? How many are there who seem to be unaware that human life begins with human conception; and even if it did not, that to close the gates of life or preclude the possibility of existence to a single human being, is a sin that cries to heaven for vengeance, because it deprives God of an immortal creature, and deprives an immortal creature of its God? Mere animal feeling or instinct will lead the parents to discharge toward the child the duty of

feeding and clothing it. They scarcely need to be taught that which the lowest of God's creatures do not fail to perform in regard to their offspring. While pride, or cruelty, or some other perverse disposition, may render a parent callous in this respect, yet it seldom happens; the vice is rather on the side of excessive indulgence in feeding or clothing,—the one injuring the body by sapping its health and strength, and the other injuring the soul by instilling into it a love of luxury and undue display.

The duty of forming, or having formed, the mind of the child is not usually neglected. If no higher motive actuates them, human motives will not be wanting to urge the parents to train the child that it may be able to provide for itself hereafter, and may be, to fill some place which will bring it honor or distinction or affluence;—in a word, the parent will only be gratifying his own instinctive self-interest or vanity, in having his child educated. Yet, in all this, parents should remember that not for this world or its pursuits, has the child come into being. They should temper their ardor for the child's success in life, by remembering that we are to "seek, first of all, the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else will be added."—That to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, is the foundation and summit of all knowledge, both for parent and child.

The supreme duty which paternity imposes, is the preparation of the child's soul for its eternal destiny. While yet young, even with the first

dawn of reason, it should be filled with sentiments of love for God; and, later on, its heart should be fashioned to the love and practice of virtue. The impressions received by the soul in its first moments of consciousness, are ineffaceable. The parents should seek to impart, or to have imparted, to the child, true religious training, which consists more in the soul being penetrated with the truths of religion, than in the mind being taught to remember, or even to understand, them.

This, then, is the third purpose of the Sacrament of Marriage: the bringing forth to Christ of an immortal offspring who will one day enjoy His presence, and glorify and bless His name forever. No one, accordingly, should enter this holy state who is unwilling to correspond with its lofty aim, or assume accountabilities which he has not the purpose and virtue to discharge; no one should sacrilegiously degrade this Divine ordinance into a mere vehicle of sensual gratification. As no man should receive the priesthood save him who is called by God, so likewise, the duties which the Sacrament of Matrimony imposes, are for those alone who have that degree of virtue as will enable them, even at the loss of life, to promote the purpose of its Divine author. No one, therefore, should undertake it, unless prompted by the lofty Christian motive which alone is worthy of its nature: the fixed and abiding resolve of living according to the ends for which it was instituted. Wanton passion should not dare to defile this Holiest of institutes; the emblem of Christ's wedlock with His church, the

instrument of His choicest graces, heaven's ordained means for the accomplishment of the sublimest purposes. Not for the acquisition of wealth, not for the gratification of passion, not to provide a livelihood, not for any worldly advantage, not for any base considerations whatever, should this holy vocation be embraced ; but only to carry out the purpose which Christ has in His union with the Church : the procreation and salvation of immortal souls.

Those about to enter the state of Marriage should imbue themselves with the sentiments of holy Tobias, in whose words we shall find all that is to be done, and all that is to be avoided, for its holy reception. "For we are the children of saints ; and we must not be joined together like heathens, who know not God." viii. 5. Also, in the words of his spouse Sarah : "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and that I have kept my soul clean from all lust. Neither have I joined myself with the wanton : neither have I made myself partaker with the lascivious. But a husband I consented to take with Thy fear, not with my lust. And either I was unworthy of them, or they were not worthy of me : because perhaps Thou hast kept me for another man : for Thy counsel is not in man's power." iii. 16-20. "For they who marry in such manner as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power. But when thou shalt take her, go into thy chamber, and for three days keep

thysself continent from her, and give thysself to nothing else but to prayers with her." vi. 17, 18.

People sometimes marvel at the spirit of detachment from the world, at the degree of self-denial of body and will which those exhibit who assume the profession of evangelical perfection. They justly feel that such obligation should not be undertaken, except after long and anxious deliberation, and only by those who feel that they are divinely called to that lofty state. If they reflect, they will find that the obligations of Marriage are such as call for no less sedulous care and heavenly vocation; for there are obedience and poverty and chastity to be cultivated in Matrimony as well as in religion. In religion these bonds are absolute and unyielding: in marriage they are relative and limited. And to many it would seem a far easier task to practise them in the former manner, than in the latter. Total abstinence from gratification would seem, for many reasons, to be more easily practised than partial indulgence. The total surrender of one's will is far easier, than qualified surrender; complete renunciation of the world's goods, than their partial possession; contentment without that which we know not at all, than contentment with that which we know only in part. As the religious knows not the delight which riches bring with them, nor the license of an unrestrained will, nor the gratification of intemperate passion; so, with comparative ease, he is led to make and to sustain a complete renunciation of all these objects. Not so in Marriage: objects quite incompatible with each

other, are to be brought together and harmonized; a human creature is to be loved with the highest love, yet so as not to impair the supreme love which is due to God; the objects of this life are to be sought for a family, yet so as not to hinder the pursuit of the kingdom of God and His justice,—the one thing needful; conjugal liberty is to be practised, yet so as that conjugal chastity may not suffer. Here, then, is a task which will require a degree of virtue, a strength of character, and a profusion of Divine grace, which they alone can expect who enter the state of Matrimony, called by God and who bring to it Christian dispositions.

Besides, the vows of religion, however sacred, may always, for just cause and by proper authority, be dissolved. If a religious, not in Holy Orders, discovers from experience, that it is not given to him to be chaste, or if he finds the yoke of obedience too galling, or that poverty is incompatible with the duties which he owes to others, he may be relieved of these obligations and resume his former freedom. But there is no dispensation from or diminution of the burdens of Matrimony; no circumstances, no grievances, no power on earth, can dissolve that mysterious bond: it is as indissoluble as Christ's Personal union with our humanity, or His mystic wedlock with the Church: it is eternal.

Holy Scripture supplies us with illustrious examples of what Christian marriage should be. Ecclesiastical history is replete with the lives of those who have attained therein the highest Chris-

tian perfection. Nor are there wanting instances of the curse and misery which many have entailed upon themselves, by the profanation of this mysterious Ordinance. We read in the Book of Tobias, that the devil strangled seven husbands because they presumed to enter this state, dominated by lust. The punishment reserved for those guilty of infidelity in this holy state, is typified in the chastisement meted out to King David, who, because of his sin and the murder by which he sought to conceal it, was deprived of the child, the fruit of his crime, and was reduced to the peril of losing his kingdom, by the defection of his son Absalom.

Marriage with those outside the faith of Abraham, was not permitted among the Jews: they could not seek alliances with those of nations that knew not God. Thus we are taught, in anticipation, how deserving of condemnation are those children of the Church, who seek marriage with those outside its household. The evils thence resulting are beyond number or description. All this is declared to us in the example of Solomon. Solomon, who began so gloriously, and who ended so ignominiously: who began by seeking from Almighty God the gift of wisdom, which, next to Himself, is the choicest gift He can bestow; and who ended his days in a darkness the most slavish: Solomon, who began his career with dedicating the Temple to the living God; and who ended his days with building temples to the vilest passion of the human heart, and to the concubines whom he had taken from surrounding paganism:

Solomon proclaims for all time the inherent evil and untold misery of marrying outside the holy Faith. No matter how well or how auspiciously such marriages may begin ; they can never begin as well as he : it cannot be a disappointment if their end is like unto his.

How necessary is it that Christ Jesus be invited to the Nuptials which any Christian is about to celebrate ? Or, perhaps, more truly ; how necessary is it that no one presume to celebrate these Nuptials, unless invited by Him from Whom must come the grace which is required for their worthy celebration ? How can they who dare to receive this Sacrament, without consulting Him in prayer, expect to receive His blessing ? how can they justly complain, if, left to themselves and destitute of the aid which it confers, they are unequal to the responsibilities, and are overcome by the burdens, which it involves ? In a matter of grave importance, we should not omit to ask light and direction from on high : how reckless the presumption, to undertake this most decisive of steps, and one charged with fearful accountabilities, and consequences that shall know no end, not only without prayer, but as a matter of passion, caprice, or an hour's humor ? Eternal salvation, it may well be, depends upon the choice that is made : God knows the partner with whom one's eternal destiny may be most easily and surely accomplished : should we fail to solicit from Him a knowledge of this person ? Salvation may most certainly be imperilled by union with others : should we fail to solicit from Him direction by which they may be

avoided? It is of supreme importance that God point to us the one to whom, in His eternal counsels, we are to plight our fealty forever.

In thus consulting for our eternal salvation, we shall, at the same time, be providing for our largest possible happiness on earth. Since the union which secures our happiness hereafter, must necessarily secure our happiness in this world. For, if eternal happiness will be the reward and consequence of our manner of life while in the flesh, it is clear that that manner of life must have been what God would have it; acceptable to Him, it must in itself have been true and blissful.

In making choice of a helpmate, the party who consults God in prayer, should make but little account of the extrinsic considerations of form, or fortune, or feature; for, with time and circumstances, all these rapidly pass away. But he should always hold in the highest esteem, and as alone entitled to consideration, the intrinsic advantages of character, of the moral qualities, and of Christian virtue; because these alone outlast all vicissitudes and are the unfailing test of worth. Caprice, fancy, cupidity, or some other passing feeling, is no foundation for Christian marriage: it will never stand the trials of time, nor outlast the ordeal which every marriage, sooner or later, undergoes. Such base and transitory love is not commensurate with the Divine love which exists between Christ and His church: and upon this love, must the love of husband and wife be forever modelled. The love founded on vanity and sensuality will vanish with its empty and ephem-

eral motives. But true matrimonial love,—two souls knit together by the blessing of Christ's Sacrament, will overcome all assaults, will conquer time, and will find its bliss and glory in eternity.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

IF it be permitted to say of a Being infinite in His nature, that one attribute is greater than another, we must say that the goodness of God is the greatest of all His perfections; "The mercy of God is above all His works," says the Scripture. The goodness of God is the motive of all that He has done outside of Himself. Goodness is naturally diffusive of itself; of its own nature it cannot be confined within itself; it must needs communicate itself to something external to itself. It was His goodness that induced God to create the world; it was that there should be some one to share His goodness that He made man. But it is in the mystery of the Incarnation, that the goodness of God is most wonderfully manifested. This great Mystery is inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that it was the result and complete expression of the love and goodness of God: especially, as redemption could have been effected in other ways, even without the shedding of Christ's blood, are we forced to believe that this voluntary Sacrifice was the final consummation of Divine love: the one infinite act of charity for God and man, that this world has ever witnessed.

Had God never become man, we should have never known His love; we should never have

known that the attribute of Goodness, enters into the other infinite attributes of the Godhead. We would have known His power ; for the things that were from the beginning, proclaimed His eternal glory and divinity. We should have learned His justice ; for the retributions of the next life, would have impressed upon us its just conception. But this idea of Divine power and justice, would never have disclosed His goodness, nor kindled in our hearts sentiments of His love. Among men, the idea of justice and power never teaches or excites love ; on the contrary, it is apt to forbid the thought of goodness or of any of the milder virtues. We would, then, forever have remained ignorant of the goodness and strangers to the love of God, had not the Incarnation taught us that these attributes of God are as great as, even greater than His power and justice.

Goodness, then, is the greatest attribute of the Godhead ; and of man, the noblest of His creatures and made in His image and likeness, it is the grandest prerogative. No man is truly great unless he be truly good : in proportion to his fidelity to the law of Divine goodness written in his mind, and to its suggestions in his heart, does he rise to some faint emulation of his Lord and Maker ; Whose attribute it is to be essential goodness from the very conception of His essence. We may marvel at the other gifts and qualities that man possesses : the extent of his intellect and its capacity for the acquisition of knowledge ; the freedom and power of his will, which leaves him the arbiter of his destiny, and enables him to over-

come obstacles seemingly insuperable, and his mighty energy and fearless resolution ; but our highest and sincerest homage, must be given to the innate goodness of the human heart, and its inclination to deeds of benevolence.

There are names recorded in history which fill the mind with awe ; and which we are apt to regard as very types of human greatness : warriors who have filled history with the exploits of their genius ; statesmen who have guided the destinies of nations by their consummate wisdom ; philosophers who have discovered new worlds of thought and action, by their patient research and untiring meditation ; orators and poets whose names have come down to us the very synonymes of everything perfect in human speech, and who in their day ruled the hearts and minds and fortunes of their fellow-men ; and who even now, by their unequalled authority, exert a loftier and more universal influence than they ever dreamed of during life ; yet, these men excite in the heart no sentiment of love except so far as goodness was shown in their actions, or inculcated in their writings ; they must yield to the tribute which is paid to the truly good ; their names fade away, their brilliant actions or writings are obscured by the transcendent lustre reflected by those benefactors of their race whose names have become identical with human goodness. Other names may fill the mind, but it is only the names of the good, that fill the heart of man ; others may be feared or wondered at, but it is only the good that are loved ; it is only they that receive the homage of the heart,

and whom, in our conscience, we recognize as alone entitled to the epithet of good. It is not the mind with all its faculties, nor the will with all its powers, but the heart with its inborn goodness and its irresistible tendency to benevolence, that draws the tears, stirs the emotions, and enkindles sentiments of love; it is the generous, even the rash and thoughtless, outpouring of the heart that stirs the profoundest feelings of our nature. The goodness of man is that point in which he most closely resembles God Himself; it is, therefore, his noblest characteristic and highest glory.

What, then, is this goodness? like so many things with which we are familiar and which we perfectly understand, human goodness is not easily defined; we know what it is, we recognize it at first glance, by instinct we discriminate it from the baser metals that sometimes circulate in its name; but when we attempt to define it, we find no little difficulty. It is not the dictate of duty, it is not the hope of reward, it is not the movement of gratitude, it is not the prompting of self interest, it is not even the consolation that the act of giving bestows, it is not the human praise which it almost always obtains; it seeks not its own, it looks not for a return; it is not overcome by baseness and ingratitude, it is never more ready to give than when the giving is least deserved; it excludes every thought of self, its primary and most essential characteristic is its pure and absolute disinterestedness; it consoles the afflicted, sympathizes with the suffering, succors the miserable, lifts the unfortunate, helps the needy,

remedies actual, provides for future, misery ; and in all this, it acts because it feels that it is but obeying the law of its nature, that it is but satisfying the demands of the heart.

Of course, we are speaking of perfect human goodness, free from the imperfections and shortcomings with which, in fact, it is almost always found ; we are speaking of goodness, abstractedly ; considered as it is in the very conception of its nature,—not as it is found in the concrete, in the individual, mixed up with, and its beauty, in a measure, marred, and its usefulness lessened by human passion and defect. We speak of goodness, purè and unalloyed ; of the pure gold of human goodness, separated from the dross in which it is almost always found imbedded in the human heart.

Cicero was not ignorant of the true conception of goodness: “ Among human virtues nothing is more beautiful than union among men, than this association, this rendering their interests common, this love of the human race, which, commencing with the family, progressively extends itself abroad to parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, citizens, allies, and finally to the whole human race.” “ What better, what more exalted than goodness and beneficence ! is it not a grave error to qualify as weaknesses such noble virtues ? Is there not among the good a kind of natural charity ? The name even of love, whence that of friendship comes, indicates a disinterested affection ; for to love either for one’s self, as we love the meadows, the fields, the flocks from which we draw profit,

is traffic and not love ; the characteristic of charity, as well as of friendship, is to be gratuitous."

The inborn sense of, and proneness to, goodness which we find in the human heart has been planted there by God. It is a participation of the Divine goodness. It is God Himself Who puts into our hearts the feeling of pity and the instinct to benevolence and well-doing ; He has fashioned our nature after His own image and infused into us something of His own goodness. We all feel this to be one of the holiest emotions of our being. Who is not moved at the sight of misery ? who does not sympathize with suffering ? who is a stranger to the inclination to pity and sympathy ? who would not, if he could, relieve the indigent ? Who that is true to his best instincts, does not fire with indignation, at the wrongs inflicted upon the friendless and the indigent ? What pleasure to be compared with that experienced in the act of benevolence ! How often do we feel dissatisfied with ourselves, when we allow an opportunity of doing good to others to pass away neglected ! No human heart is insensible to these emotions ; and if we do not feel them, it is because pride or cruelty or some other passion has hardened it, steeled it to the voice of misery, and suppressed the fundamental instincts of our nature ; left to itself, the human heart instinctively expands and goes out in pity and deeds of benevolence.

With what unmixed satisfaction and honest complacency, do we contemplate the acts of benevolence practised by our ancestors or fellow citizens, when some great pestilence or visitation

occurring, the great heart of our common humanity was stirred to its lowest depths, and welled forth a generous and, it may be, inexhaustible supply of the holiest sympathy and abundant charity! It is at such times that we learn of what great things our nature, with all its misery, is capable; how much nobility is found with so much meanness; how that, with all its proneness to earth, with all its downward tendencies, it can still look heavenward and is filled with holy aspirations. These instincts of our heart discover to us the great law of human goodness, no less clearly than the slower conclusions of reason.

Reason too, teaches the duty of goodness and mercy. In proclaiming the common origin, the common nature, and common destiny of mankind, it proclaims the common duties that should exist among them. It were surely unpardonable selfishness, the basest cruelty, for man to hoard his substance or live in luxury, while he sees his fellow-man, his equal in all respects save the accidental one of human fortune, destitute of the necessities of life; especially as he himself, by a caprice of the same fortune of which his fellow is the victim, may experience the same sad vicissitude.

If it be allowable to distinguish between the light of reason, and the voice of conscience, we must say that the law of goodness is made known to us by this. We find in our souls an intimate persuasion of our duty in this matter; it is not so much the result of demonstration; it needs no reason; it anticipates the slow process of ratiocination.

nation. It is one of the original intuitions of our being ; it is inborn in the soul and heart of man ; it is one of the axiomatic truths which we receive without hesitation, and which it does not occur to us to doubt. We hear the applauding voice of conscience in the contentment and self-approbation which follows a deed of benevolence. We see its condemning frown in the distress and regret which is the result of a failure in this regard.

I have told you what human goodness is ; I have shown you how its law is made known to us by the instinct of our heart, the dictates of reason, and the voice of conscience.

Perhaps you may think from the praise I have bestowed upon this human virtue, that there is, and can be, nothing more excellent, nothing more admirable.

Is there, then, anything nobler or more exalted than pure disinterested human goodness and benevolence? Yes, Christian Charity is infinitely higher and better. In all that I have said of human goodness, I have not yet touched upon Christian Charity. I have been but approaching from afar, clearing the way, laying the foundation, for what I have to say of this Divine virtue. After all that has been said of human goodness, yet it is but a human virtue ; the noblest product, it is true, of the human heart ; but yet human. Natural in its origin, natural in its motives, and, like all things merely natural, limited in its scope, and inconstant in its action. Besides, it is vitiated, and its influence lessened, by the human faults with which it is commonly accompanied.

But take human goodness in its best and noblest form, take the pure gold of human goodness, purge it from the dross of the defects with which it is almost always found ; raise it to the rank of a supernatural virtue, by making its animating principle the love of God, and the love of man in God and for God ; let it be efficacious: dwelling not merely in the heart but going forth in deeds of active benevolence and abundant generosity ; let it be constant : abiding while there is an object upon which it can be bestowed ; let it be universal in its scope : knowing no limits save the limits of our common humanity ; let it dispense every form of relief, spiritual and corporal, according to the needs of its objects ; let it be compassionate : bestowing not merely material relief, but doing it from tender feeling for the poor ; let it be disinterested : seeking no reward save the consciousness of duty discharged, to be followed by the possession of the God, Who has ordained the duty, and made Himself its reward ;—do all this with human goodness, and you have Christian Charity, the Divinest of virtues, first brought from heaven on earth by Jesus Christ ; the sacramental bond by which He has united us to one another, and to God, as the children of a common Father, endowed with the same nature and sharers of the same destiny. Of this charity the pagan world never dreamt. He alone Who taught mankind the knowledge of the true God, made known also at the same time, the principle which alone could establish and sustain such a bond among men.

It is easy to see the essential difference between goodness merely human, and Christian Charity : the one is founded upon the innate disposition of the heart to deeds of benevolence ; the other regards suffering man as the image of God, and loves that image in God and for God, it springs from the love of God. We mean not a word in depreciation of human goodness ; in its own order, it is the gift of God ; but Charity, as in an order incomparably more excellent, is incomparably superior ; we should not confound God's boons. The essence of Christian Charity is so identical with the love of God, that its animating principle is the very soul of Christianity,—from this divine and inexhaustible principle flow all its attributes.

We have said that this Divine bond of union between men, was first introduced into the world by Jesus Christ. The New Testament inculcates charity on every page : “With what difficulty will those who have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Yet, in reply to the query, “Who then can be saved ?” He adds : “The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.”—Luke xviii. “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven : and come, follow Me.”—Matthew xix. “But Zaccheus, standing, said to the Lord : Behold, Lord, I give to the poor one-half of my goods ; and if I have wronged anyone of anything, I restore fourfold. Jesus said to him : This day

is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham.”—Luke xix. “Religion pure and undefiled with God and the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep ourself unspotted from the world.”—James i. “Come now, ye rich, weep and howl, for your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted; and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are cankered: and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and like fire it will consume your flesh. Ye have treasured up for yourselves wrath for the last days.”—James v. “In this we know the love of God, that He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He who hath the substance of this world, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels against him: how doth the love of God abide in him?”—I John iii. “Then will the King say to those on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsting, and ye gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye covered Me: sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came to Me. Truly, I say to you, as long as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it to Me.”—Matthew xxv. “Ye have heard that it was said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you: and pray for those who persecute and calumniate

you: that ye may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if ye love those who love you, what reward shall ye have? do not even the tax gatherers the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more? do not also the heathen so? Be ye therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.”—Matthew v. “But love your enemies; do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Most High: for He is kind to the thankless, and to the wicked. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.” “Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom: for with the same measure with which ye measure, it shall be measured to you again.”—Luke vi. “Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall have failed, they may receive you into the everlasting mansions.”—Luke xvi. “But woe to you rich: for ye have your consolation.”—Luke vi. “Whoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”—Matthew x.

Charity draws its strength and unfailing support from the supernatural principle of the love of God: love of man flows from, and is an essential attribute of, the love of God. It loves man in God and for God; it looks upon the work of God

made in His image and redeemed in His blood. It knows that in loving the creature, it is but showing love to the Creator. It seeks to be united with its God, and finds no closer manner of union, than by joining itself in love and benevolence to the poor; in its duty of loving God, it discovers its duty of loving the poor. And as it finds in the love of God, more than compensation for all things else in the world; so it finds in the same love, more than an equivalent and support for all the gifts, self sacrifices, and generosity, which it metes out to the poor.

Charity is, then, founded upon a principle, the strongest known to the human mind or that can influence the human heart,—a principle supreme in its nature, inexorable in its obligation,—a principle from whose operation man cannot free himself, but at his eternal peril; and from which God cannot dispense him. The teachings and the duties springing therefrom may, indeed, be contemned, but not with impunity. It will survive the world, and assert itself in the eternal glory of those who shall have been faithful to it, or in the eternal shame of those who neglect it.

The principle which is the foundation of Charity, is that which binds man to his God, as the First Cause from Whom he came, and unto Whom he must return; as the Sovereign Benefactor Who brought him out of nothing and conferred upon him all that he is and has; as the Supreme Intelligence and Perfection infinitely deserving of his love:—all of which, is annunciated in the law, “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy

whole heart and mind and soul; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself for God's sake."

Think not that charity needs not all the unfailing efficacy and sovereign power which it derives from such a sanction. Real charity is not as easily practised as some think. It has to contend with and overcome countless obstacles, both in the recipient, and even in the giver: thriftlessness, ingratitude, and worse vices, in the recipient; selfishness, avarice, jealousy, vindictiveness, hate, in the giver. But real charity assumes the universal character of the charity of God, Who makes His rain fall and His sun shine on the good and the bad, and on all creatures without distinction, Who clothes even the lilies of the field with a raiment more glorious than that of Solomon, and Who feeds even irrational creatures with ever-teeming profusion. It sees only God in the creature; and overcomes all its own obstacles, knowing that the sacrifice is for God. As it practises not charity for sake of the good and amiable qualities of the recipient, so it is not disarmed by his evil or forbidding ones. He who practises charity feels that he must love God on earth, to be united with Him in heaven. He must, therefore, imitate Him: how imitate Him, if not in his love and goodness for the creatures which He has made? how love the Father and not love the children? "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "This is the law and the prophets"; "do this and thou shalt live."

Charity to the poor conduces to the salvation of the rich, in enabling them to lessen, if not de-

stroy, the anxieties and attachment to the world, which riches almost always inspire. It conduces to the salvation of the poor themselves, by raising them from that destitution which in its way is too often a hindrance in the pursuit of virtue. The truly charitable will never fail of eternal salvation: for they make unto themselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, who will receive them into everlasting tabernacles. They will never want even what is necessary of the goods of this world: for they seek the kingdom of God, and His justice, and to them all things will be added.

Charity is universal: universal in that it brings relief to every form of distress both of soul and body. The charity which consults for the soul, is, beyond comparison, more excellent than that which seeks the welfare of the body. The soul which endures forever, is superior to the body which perishes; heaven eternal is better than earth which is transitory. Charity is universal, inasmuch as it embraces all men. Nor race, nor nation, nor creed, nor class, can oppose a barrier to the unrestricted scope of Christian Charity. Every human creature, the image of the Creator, and washed in the blood of the Saviour, is our brother in the order of charity, and is entitled to its offices. "Who is my neighbor?" asked Jesus of a doctor of the law, "this Samaritan whom the traditions of thy people teach me to curse, as well as this Jew whom thy law commands me to love."

Christian Charity is compassionate. It is the spirit of Christ; His spirit was one of tender,

moving sympathy for the people. He went among the poor, enriching them with the good tidings of the Gospel, curing their infirmities, working unspeakable miracles among them. "He had compassion on the multitude," lest they should faint with hunger; He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, thus paying tribute to nature, and affording consolation to the relations of His dead friend; He grieved with the widow over the loss of her only son. It is this interior disposition, this compunction of soul, that gives charity much of its meaning and value; that makes it an act of religion, pleasing to God, acceptable to its beneficiary, and profitable to the giver. It is the same with acts of other virtues: penance, mortification, worship, all external acts, are only valuable in so far as they proceed from, and are the result of, the corresponding disposition of the soul; excepting so far as they are the fruit of the interior union of the soul with God by faith and hope and charity. Divorced from this they are profitless, like the body without life and without the soul. External charity, destitute of this animating principle, does not rise to the rank of the supernatural: "Although I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing: though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal: though I had the gift of prophecy, and should understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I had faith to move mountains, and have not char-

ity, I am nothing." And I may add, that neither the tongue of man, nor of angel, ever uttered a more sublime eulogy or diviner praise of charity.

Charity is active and efficacious. It does not suffice that it resides in the heart and issues forth in active benevolence and abundant generosity and well-doing. Charity is pre-eminently God's own virtue, and makes man like unto Him. As produced by man, it must, therefore, be similar to that manifested by God. In all ways He is supreme action; tireless and inexhaustible activity is His very essence. Every true sentiment or conviction must express itself in act or work. To no purpose shall we profess our love of God, if we behold our brother in want and close our bowels of compassion upon him. All the duties of religion are of their very essence, practical and operative. Faith is not merely the assent of the mind to religious truth, but is as much the assent of the heart: faith is living, working, in its character; it should be instinct with good works; it should weave itself into our being, and give shape to our life. It should make substantial, things that are hoped for, and palpable, those that appear not. Love is not a mere speculative preference of God to all things; but a practical preference that makes one willing to lose all things, even life itself, rather than to be separated from Him by sin. In like manner, charity manifests itself in deed, and in work. It is active and efficacious in the supremest manner and degree.

Charity is disinterested. We have already said that it seeks not its own; that it not only studies

not self, but sacrifices self ; that its first and most essential mark, is pure and absolute disinterestedness: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, nor thy neighbors who are rich, lest, perhaps, they also invite thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, because they have not wherewith to make recompense." "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them ; otherwise, you shall not have a reward of your Father, Who is in heaven. But when thou doest an alms, let not thy right hand know what thy left doeth, that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee."

Christian Charity can seek no other reward than the eternal recompense, promised to those who practise it. This reward is the possession of God in the life to come. To obtain this end, union with Him in this life, in and by the love of our fellow man, is an indispensable condition : the union with God which is to last throughout eternity, must begin here, by our union in Charity with those who here below bear God's image. The eternal union which is to constitute our beatitude, is sown in the imitation of Divine love for the poor. Charity, then, can seek, and be satisfied with no other wages than eternal happiness hereafter. If it falls from this high motive, if it is prompted by pride, vanity, ostentation, human applause, amen, it has received its reward ; it is not charity ; it is selfishness, it is but traffic. The

beneficiaries of such benevolence instinctively feel the base and unworthy motives of which it is the fruit. They do not hesitate to abuse a charity which springs from considerations so mercenary, and which costs the giver so little, or which only serves to minister to his own sinister purposes. But when charity is prompted by its essential motive, the love of God, they intuitively feel its genuineness and loftiness, and regard it even as the visit and beneficence of God Himself; they are filled with gratitude and would think it a sacrilege to abuse it. If charity be planted and flourish in the love of God, ever-teeming and inexhaustible beneficence will flow from it, even as a stream from its source or as heat from fire.

Charity is constant: it abides while there is an object to which it can be devoted; its necessity only ceases with the unending period assigned to the existence of its objects: "The poor you have always with you;" so long as poverty continues charity has its mission. There are those who would wish to practise charity, and then be forever done with it. They would have its forbidding visage removed from their eyes; they would relegate it to the alms-house or asylum, where individual freedom is lost in the common rule, and where personality is merged in the multitude. Sad fate, indeed, that would deprive a human being of his inalienable rights, as a creature, for sake of the morsel wherewith to support or nourish life.

In this need of persevering constancy, we see the insufficiency of the sensible pleasure of doing

good, or of the beauty and attractiveness of goodness, destitute of supernatural motive, for continuance in well-doing. There are those who, when their feelings are buoyant and cheerful, when the day is one of sunshine and comfort, when the object is one whose amiable qualities draw them and give them pleasure, are inclined to show benevolence and to dispense generous alms; such is not true Charity. Even when the heart is full of gloom, when the feelings are depressed, when the day is one of snow and storm, when the forbidding qualities of its recipient would repel and repulse, charity that never fails, pursues its mission; the life of a good Christian should be one unceasing work of mercy and active charity.

It would be a very inadequate charity, which would restrict its actions to the relief of only actual misery. The greatest evil of poverty is not its positive privation and suffering; the greatest evils, and those most to be feared, are those to which poverty gives birth, when it has become indigence or habitual destitution. Then all bodily energy is lost; the stress and anxiety of living from hand to mouth and to obtain the next meal, incapacitates the mind, and consumes the time for seeking employment. No man can reflect judiciously, with the certainty of starvation before him: in the alternative of starving, or of sacrificing honor and virtue, temptation overmasters him, and he is placed in the almost certainty of sin. In such circumstances, momentary relief certainly cannot be the full duty of charity: a

hunger assuaged to-day to revive to-morrow, is not properly met by a charity that extends a pittance which can only provide a meal, or which is soon spent. In such a case, true Charity will place the poor man in the way of bettering his condition, by giving him an opportunity by his own work and thrift, to rise from such abject misery, to independence and security. It should endeavor to eradicate the causes of poverty, and to enable the poor not to live on charity as a profession, but to provide for themselves. It should seek not only to relieve actual misery, but to anticipate its recurrence.

More than real charity is required to destroy poverty, or to remove its causes: enlightened government, wise legislation, the removal of political and social grievances, the extinction of unjust claims and of tyrannous exactions, the abolition of usurious interest and engrossing monopoly, the repression of unreasonable demands of employers,—all these will be potent agents for the removal of misery, and the substitution of comfort and independence. If there be places or countries, such as Ireland, in which industry is discounted and energy taxed; and for every improvement in his holding, and for every effort one makes to better his condition, there is a corresponding increase of taxation, it would be in the line of the highest charity, by all legitimate means, to redress such wrongs; and to bring the government, and those who are benefited by such laws, to a juster and healthier consideration of the rights of their fellow-men. It is in accord with the highest spirit of

Christian Charity, or benevolence, to encourage agriculture, to foster the manufacturing interests of which a nation's resources are capable, to stimulate commerce and the laws of trade between different nations, to give suitable compensation to labor, to encourage thrift, and the desire which exists in the heart of every man to improve his condition; in a word, to promote all the resources and energies by which national and individual prosperity is secured, and by which the misery of poverty is proportionally lessened; if, as it seems, it cannot be entirely removed.

In thus seeking to lessen the evils and wretchedness that poverty almost invariably produces, we must never allow it to escape our minds, that the object of the Divine Charity introduced into the world by Jesus Christ, and always inculcated and practised in His Church, is entirely supernatural: mere worldly or temporal beneficence, dispensed or exercised for an end merely natural, does not rise to the lofty scope and divine purpose of Jesus Christ, in establishing and insisting upon this virtue.

It was not His design to absolutely destroy poverty, but to lessen its evil, and to ameliorate the condition of the poor. He made it the means by which the poor might be sanctified, by their willing submission to its exigencies. He made it the way of salvation to the rich, inasmuch as by their generosity to the poor, they might earn the kingdom of heaven: out of the mammon of iniquity, He gave them opportunity to purchase friends who would receive them into everlasting

tabernacles. He accounts charity done to the poor, as service rendered to Himself: "Amen, I say to you, even as you rendered it unto one of these, ye rendered it unto Me." He declares that even a cup of cold water, given in His name, shall not go unrewarded. He declares that religion before God and man, is to visit the widow and the orphan in their tribulation and want; and to extend to them what they may need. He affirms that the poor we shall always have with us; thus implying the permanence of poverty, and the unceasing occasion of merit and well-doing, which it would afford to them who suffer it, and to them who relieve it.

It was not Christ's purpose to revolutionize the framework of society, nor to essentially change its social organization; in more than one sense, He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. While affirming His kingship, He affirmed that His kingdom was not of this world. He propounded no doctrine that was in conflict with the actual forms of government which then existed, or have since existed; His sovereignty being above all, was compatible with any; He would have us render to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's; and to God, the things that are God's, He was no social reformer. His mission and His aims were altogether supernatural. He would make use of human affluence, or human destitution, alike; each according to its nature, and each in suitable degree for the salvation of souls, the purifying of hearts, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. He teaches the poor that their poverty

is short lived ; to be followed, if borne well, with an everlasting reward. He teaches the rich that they are the almoners of His bounty to the poor ; and that upon their faithful discharge of the trust, depends their eternal salvation.

It was far from the purpose of such a Teacher, to establish universal comfort and independence, and to abolish, everywhere and forever, suffering and misery. Such social aims would be in utter conflict with the teaching which blesses poverty, which blesses the poor, which blesses the suffering, which blesses the sore-covered Lazarus, lying at the rich man's gate. They are declared blessed, because their reward shall be great in heaven, not because pleasure and affluence will one day, even in this life, supersede their suffering and wretchedness. It is in heaven, that He admonishes them to seek riches, "where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal." "Take no thought what you shall eat, or drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed ; for after all these do the heathen seek. Which of you, by taking thought, can add to your stature one cubit ? Behold the lilies of the field : they neither toil nor spin ; yet not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. If, therefore, your heavenly Father thus clothes the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven : how much more you, O ye of little faith ?" "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things else shall be added unto you."

Such teachings are utterly antagonistic to those

who say that it was any part of our Saviour's mission, to re-establish the natural freedom and equality which may have existed at the very beginning of human society. It was universal and individual spiritual welfare in this life, as the condition of eternal felicity and union with God in the next, that He came to bestow upon mankind, by the grace purchased with His life's sufferings, and His death; to teach mankind how to attain these eternal blessings, was the essence and scope of all His teachings.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY (*continued*).

THE TRIUMPH OF CHARITY.

OUR discourse would not be complete, if we failed to say a word on the Triumph of Charity : of the great and universal vices and evils which it has overcome, if not entirely extinguished ; of the virtues which it has planted in the human breast ; of the inestimable benefits which it has conferred upon society. Yet, the scope of my discourse and the length of time which I have already detained you, will require me rather to indicate, than to exhaust, the various considerations which present themselves under this aspect of our subject ; volumes would be required, and volumes have been written on this very important inquiry. I shall, therefore, be compelled not to dwell at any length upon what cannot, possibly, be fully presented within the limits of a lecture, even though it were confined to this one consideration.

We have already remarked, that the Polytheism which everywhere prevailed before the coming of Christ, was destructive of those feelings and

In this part, the author acknowledges his indebtedness for many facts, reflections, and quotations to Chastel's "Charity of the Primitive Churches."

convictions, which are summed up in the word Charity, and which Jesus Christ consecrated by this divine virtue; those to whom the common God was unknown, had no principle that could unite them in a common bond of divine fellowship. At the present time, we can form no idea of how feeble a sense of Charity, or even of justice, pervaded the minds of men, in that darkened period which, in the emphatic language of St. Paul, was "without hope, and without God in the world." Justice was almost obliterated from the minds of men. The claims of charity would be regarded, if at all comprehensible, as a weak delusion; when the voice of charity would be heard in what would seem the feelings of nature, paganism would repress them: they were accounted weakness or irresolution. The idea of universal benevolence never entered into the minds of those who worshipped as many gods as the human heart contained passions; yet, even then, amid all the darkness, nature at times asserted itself, and those who practised benevolence were admired and praised by the multitude. For this reason, Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, could not lift his mind beyond the thought, that this benevolence was practised as a means of popularity. Some few of their philosophers had, indeed, ideas not unworthy of a Christian; they were but few out of an unlimited number.

Pass in review those objects which are the natural and legitimate purposes on which charity is spent; reflect upon them as they were among the pagans, and you will see how little generosity,

not to speak of Charity, was shown toward them. If you recall the treatment of womankind, of childhood, of slavery, of the poor, of the old, of the sick, of the maimed ; and then contrast it with the treatment that these same states have received and are now receiving, at the hands of Christian Charity, you will find it hard to believe, that we to-day are of the same race, as those of that former period : so complete, so divine a revolution has been effected in the minds and hearts of men : the benign and heavenly influence of Christian Charity, first brought into the world by Jesus Christ. It was consecrated in His blood : from the mysterious grace of His passion and death has gone forth a power and an energy that has renovated our nature.

We should easily picture to our minds the state of woman before the coming of Christ, if we remember that Venus, as the goddess of unholy passion, was everywhere worshipped ; that the basest propensities of the human heart, were gratified under the patronage, and as an act of worship of some god or goddess who was believed to be specially placed over each. Even temples were erected and dedicated to the most unhallowed desires. Ovid admonishes young women to keep away from the temples of the gods. The very act of debasement was witnessed, in some of them, as a part, for shame ! of their worship. People of the highest rank devoted their daughters to the unholy service ; the most dissolute practices were performed with religious rites.

Woman was abused, and then debased even into slavery. She was not regarded as the equal of man, but of an inferior race; not as his God-given companion, but as the slave of his passions. St. Chrysostom gives us an idea of the harsh treatment, the brutal inhumanity shown to womankind, when he challenges the pagans to visit the porches of the public baths, where so many unfortunate ones, stretched upon straw or upon filth, some even without clothing, trembling with cold, tormented with pain or hunger, sought to move the passers-by with the spectacle of their woe. All the misery and destitution of womankind, was, of course, to be ascribed to the universal reign of impurity, to which we have already referred. When human passion was adored, there could be no limit put to the degradation of womankind thence resulting. When the conscience, public or individual, was so utterly obdurate to the feelings of the human heart, or stifled or quenched by unrestricted gratification, that vice was no longer accounted as such, but even as a virtue, there was nothing left to condemn human excess and to bring it back to the dictate of reason.

Another efficient cause that contributed to the general corruption of the human heart, was the almost utter obliteration of marriage as, in the beginning, divinely established. Polygamy and even polyandry were universally practised. Pederasty was the passion of even the philosophers and great teachers of morals, to whom, naturally, the rest of mankind would have looked for light and guid-

ance, and for a faithful and God-condemning arraignment of the pagan world for its abuse of the sacred and mysterious ordinance for the procreation and perpetuation of human life. Even among the Jews the institution of marriage had fallen from its primitive integrity: Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, had permitted them the bill of divorce.

Where the divine ordinance of marriage is contemned, woman must necessarily be degraded; and when her degradation begins, there is nothing to stop its downward course. If not acknowledged as the equal of man, she will soon come to be regarded as even of an inferior race; as she was held in those darkened times. What the state of woman was in the mind of antiquity, is shown in Plato, who taught that women should be treated as irrational beings are dealt with. He would also destroy marriage and permit a promiscuous intercourse among human beings. He would have the sexes paired every year, and children given to wet nurses appointed by the state.

How true it is, that there is no extreme, to which the human mind, destitute of revelation, may not wander; that there is no passion so base, to which the human heart, freed from a sense of duty and fear of retribution, may not sink; that there is no excess of abuse, even that of being treated as animals, to which woman, unprotected by marriage, may not be reduced.

It is to Christianity and its Divine Author, that woman is indebted for her rescue from this woful

and inconceivable corruption, and restored to her rightful place in human society, as the equal of man. This restoration was principally owing to the ordinance of marriage being brought back to its primitive integrity as established by Almighty God: "Amen, I say to you, from the beginning, it was not so," said Christ to the Jews, arraiguing and condemning the custom of permitting divorce. "He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female, and said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." St. Matt. xix. The Sacrament of matrimony is the very corner-stone and safeguard of society: if it is held inviolable, society is strong and pure: if it is desecrated, society weakens and becomes immoral. It is one of the seven potent agencies or sacraments which Jesus Christ has established for the renovation of human society, and by which His grace is poured into the souls of men.

Womankind was elevated, too, by the essential part and lofty rank which it pleased Almighty God to confer upon her in the work of our redemption. The Virgin Mother rising upon the world, drove before her and chased away forever, the worship of Venus and the reign of impurity, even as the morning sun expels the darkness and fills the world with light and glory. The teaching of the Christian Church holding marriage to be, indeed, God's sacred institution, and assigning

it as the holy state of life for the great bulk of the human kind, and yet reserving its highest praise for holy virginity, was among the most powerful influences by which the impurity of the pagan world was repressed, and, as a consequence, woman and her sphere restored to their proper state, and even exalted above that which it had ever been since Eve forsook paradise. In every age of the Church, and in every nation, countless have been the multitudes of those who have risen superior to the strongest passion of the human heart, and aspiring yet higher than the state of holy Marriage, have sought to be one with Christ and His Mother, in the profession and practice of holy virginity. Although in the flesh and surrounded by all that could allure to its gratification, they have ascended, with God's special grace, beyond their native condition and strength, and led lives altogether angelic.

We pass naturally to consider the condition of childhood before the coming of Christ. To place in a striking light and yet not to depart from the truth, in order to show the treatment that was bestowed upon it, we need but adduce the fact which cannot be called in question : children were offered in sacrifice to the gods ; they were placed in the arms of the brazen statue of the god Moloch, which bending downward, received, and cast them into a blazing furnace at its feet. Of this we can read in the Fourth Book of Kings. This horrid custom yet prevailed in the time of Christ, and is noticed by St. Augustine and Tertullian. It is to this that Milton refers,

when he describes Moloch as one of the fallen angels :

“ First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents’ tears ;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children’s cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol.”

Infinitely horrible and inexpressibly abhorrent to every parental sentiment, and every rational conviction, as was such treatment of children, yet, it did not result so much from the little regard which was had for them, as from the mistaken idea of the worship which was due to a deity. When the most monstrous and disgraceful errors prevailed as to the nature of God and our duties to Him, it was only natural that men should render to Him a worship commensurate with their error, and manifest an ignorance of true and due worship, as absurd and abominable as the conception they entertained of the Supreme Being. It is to be supposed that it was under the influence of an error as benighted and sacrilegious as the human heart can conceive, that the pagans offered their children, as the most precious sacrifice they could make, to propitiate and to gratify their false gods.

The utter disregard and complete abandonment of children, and their horrid dedication to the vilest purposes, which prevailed in antiquity, and of which we are about to give some instances, must be traced to the degradation into which womankind had fallen, and to the clear effacement

and contempt of the institution of marriage, which everywhere prevailed, no less than to the conviction, that the wife is different by nature from her husband, even as, Plato taught, "The slave is different by nature from his master; and in his mind there is nothing sound or complete." In Greece, which, of course, was the most highly civilized and enlightened nation of antiquity, according to Aristotle the exposure of infants was a universal practice; and if in some places, as in Thebes, children were not thus cast forth, and if care was employed upon them, it was to make them slaves for life.

We know not what to believe of countries less enlightened, or of people less gifted: whether to argue, that if in the midst of enlightenment, such abominable, unutterable evils prevailed, still more universal must they have been: or, whether fidelity to natural instincts and obedience to the voice of conscience increased, in proportion as the enervating and sinful influences of corruption were removed.

But the facts of ancient history would seem to indicate the former; and we are justified in believing, that the exposure of infants was practised almost everywhere. This might appear incredible, if, even now, contemporary history did not bear testimony to the prevalence of this crime in nations unenlightened by the Gospel. The grave Roman historian Tacitus narrates it as a marked peculiarity of the Jewish people, that they accounted child-murder as a crime; thereby obviously implying that the Jewish conscience was exceptional in this matter to that of the other nations known

to him, and, as he supposes, to his readers. St. Justin the Martyr and Lactantius reproach the pagans with their conduct toward children; and contrast it with the care which Christians show their offspring. The former tells them that Christians look with horror upon their treatment of the young; and accuses them with often gathering them into flocks, as oxen, goats, sheep, from which seraglios are supplied. To the pagans pleading a false pity, as reason for the exposure of children, rather than to see them die before their eyes, Lactantius answers, that "it is as cruel an act of murder to cast the fruit of their wombs where dogs may devour them, as it would be to strangle them." And to them saying, that some may, perchance, take pity on the outcast, and keep and feed them, he further remarks: "What, then; you have consigned your own flesh and blood to either slavery, or prostitution."

From these few testimonies and facts, reflecting the belief and indicating the practice of antiquity concerning children, we see the shameful degradation into which the pagan world had fallen respecting this, the most primary duty of society: it is in complete harmony with, as it is an actual derivation from, the low esteem in which woman was held, consequent upon the effacement from the human mind of her proper place as the equal of man in the natural and supernatural order, and also upon the utter forgetfulness and complete contempt for the divine institution of Marriage, as the sacred ordinance for the procreation of human life and the diffusion of human society; and the

substitution in its stead of beastly gratification and promiscuous intercourse, conducive, alike, to the extinction and ruin of society and the misery and moral perversion of the individual.

Christian Charity came into the world, and sought to call humanity back to a sense of its duty, and to restrain this monstrous disorder of the human heart. From the day in which God incarnate manifested Himself under the form of a little child, the sentiment of paganism was reversed and condemned; childhood assumed an exalted rank; that which should have been the most easily understood and intuitively felt duty, was brought home to men by the all-marvellous fact, that childhood was sanctified, and raised even to the Deity, in its assumption by Him, Who came to redeem mankind from sin by His blood, and to enlighten their ignorance by His grace and teachings. This Divine Child, born of a Virgin Mother, formed an image which filled the souls of men: from it went forth a sanctifying influence that cleansed their hearts, and raised them to a lofty realization of the proper rank of childhood and of woman; and taught them their duties to both: it created a new atmosphere in the world, which men breathed, and received new life: it inspired an illuminating and invigorating grace, by which were dissipated forever the dark and poisonous teachings of paganism. From the day in which Christ Jesus admonished the apostles, to "allow little children to come unto Him, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," and declared that "unless men became as little children, they should never enter therein," the tran-

scendent interest and heavenly dignity of childhood was forever lodged in the hearts of men.

His Church has inherited His spirit and ever shown increasing solicitude in their regard: from the very beginning she has always accounted the religious care and education of children as her paramount duty, and the object of her untiring zeal and profound love. Not only orphans, deprived of their natural protectors, but those neglected by parents, have shared her unstinted maternal anxiety and generosity. There is no duty that she insists upon with greater urgency, than that which parents owe the immortal souls which have been placed in their hands. She teaches them that their office is truly priestly; that they have been anointed for the building up of Christ's mystical body, by the Christian rearing of their offspring; and that for this chiefly has Christ established the sacrament of Marriage and enriched it with the grace, by which husband and wife may love one another, but yet mainly in their children. St. Vincent de Paul gathering little children, the fragments of Christ's mystical body, into institutions where they might be sheltered; and while their bodies were nourished and clothed, their souls might be formed to virtue and filled with the love of God, is but a figure, a living embodiment of the inexhaustible charity of the Church of Christ, in all ages and places, for the cause of childhood. When the number of these little ones became so great, that they could not be provided for in the families of the early Christians, institutions or orphan asylums were erected and

everywhere supported by the alms of the faithful. To-day, this care of the young, is the first duty to which she, Samaritan-like, gives herself, on beginning the conversion of a pagan country: even before the erection of the temple, even before the establishment of a native priesthood, does she seek to gather together and to bring unto Christ, these little ones who constitute her first substantial hope of eventual and permanent success.

I cannot stop to speak of the neglect of the fallen, of the profligate, of the blind, of the sick, of the aged of both sexes, that everywhere prevailed before the coming of Christ; sufficient to say that no care was taken of them. To the pagan mind there could be known no motive why it should seek to correct the wayward, to reform the profligate, or to reclaim from sin and guilt and misery; it was too destitute of even the feelings of humanity, to think of relieving the sick or providing for the aged. If childhood had no voice to evoke sympathy in the pagan breast, still less could the cry of pain, or the anguish of sickness, or the faltering steps of those in the vale of years or on the brink of the grave. In vain will you seek in all the records of antiquity, for the establishment of one single hospital or home where sickness could be ministered unto. The sentiment of paganism as regards the aged, is echoed in the teaching of Cato, who would relegate them to some desert island, there to end as best they may.

Before the coming of Christ, slavery everywhere prevailed; nor was it restricted by the

mark of color: there was also white slavery. The conviction of antiquity with regard to slavery, was founded upon the teaching of Plato, already referred to: the slave was not of the same nature as his master: he was as a mere beast of burden, or as any chattel or merchandise. His treatment would be, of course, according to the idea of his nature and use, which generally obtained. As the universal conviction was so radically erroneous, it is obvious that there could be no limit to the abuse and cruelty which were reserved for him: if the conscience and belief, individual and collective, saw nothing in the slave, that could entitle him to the consideration of justice, or even of charity, if he was as a mere brute, destitute of every shadow of a claim of right, if the master had over him the most absolute and unrestricted authority, almost necessarily there could be nothing to restrain wanton passion or merciless treatment. If there was no conscience to restrain the lash of oppression, or to condemn it and punish it when inflicted, we may imagine the inexpressibly abject misery and inconceivable servitude, into which a part of mankind, under the name of slaves, had sunk.

Says Guizot: "One is confounded on seeing the imperturbable coldness with which Aristotle analyzes the nature of this property (a slave) as he would any object of natural history, without any scruple of humanity troubling for a moment his sad analysis and staying his pitiless deductions. The slave is in some sort an animated property; he partakes of reason only to the degree neces-

sary to modify his sensibility, but not enough to permit one to say, that he possesses reason ; thus, according to him, nature makes men free and slaves, according as she makes animals and men, souls and bodies."—Preface to Works of Plato, vol. vii., p. 83.

When the slave became old, he was sold as old cattle or iron, or sent to some barren island to starve or end his days as he might. In his vigor and youth, he was shielded by no law, consigned to labor, beggary, or prostitution, at the will of his master ; scourged or put to death, according to his wanton cruelty or whim, for the least offence ; dead, was thrown to the animals. In one word : he was treated as cattle, from which he only differed by speech. This was the state of a large portion of the human-kind, when Christ came into the world : thus did one part of the children of men, hold another in a servitude far viler and blacker than any Egyptian bondage.

It is to be remembered, that slavery was far more universal in its extent, and entered far more essentially into the fabric of society, at the time we speak of, than has ever since existed, or of which we at this time can have any idea. Whatever civilization subsisted, or whatever measure of prosperity, such as it was, men enjoyed, was built upon slavery, as its very corner-stone. Hence its sudden, utter extinction, if it were possible by the Church, comparatively without power at that early day, would have destroyed civilization and convulsed society to its very foundations : the bonds that held men together in political and social in-

tercourse, would have been disrupted, and they would have returned into their primitive condition, or, what would have been worse, would have fallen victims of a slavery far greater and more degrading than that whose abolition was sought.

Hence, the Church, not by solemn edict, which would have been of no avail at the time, not by force of arms, which she had not, and which would have been incompatible with the spirit of her mission, but gradually, and it may be, sometimes even imperceptibly, endeavored to destroy this slavery, which had become grafted into the social organism, and cankered in the human heart. In her destruction of slavery, she imitated the course of nature, which, not by sudden convulsion and radical change, fulfils its scope, pursuing, and, finally, attaining its purpose. The Church planted the truth of the equality of men, in the human conscience, which with time, and under the superintending providence of Almighty God, was to extirpate forever the property of man in man: and this would be effected without the moral cataclysm which sudden abolition would have infallibly entailed upon human society.

From the day in which St. Paul declared, that "In spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free, for you were all children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ; there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you were all one in Christ Jesus," the death knell of slavery was sounded: such teaching as this, was wholly fatal to the belief hitherto

prevalent, that slaves were of an inferior nature, and destined by nature for slavery. As this error had been the source of all the deplorable evils and effects of slavery, so the Church begins by establishing the truth; that from it may result the cessation of all wrong, the repression of all abuse, and that, in time, the freedom of the sons of God, may be bestowed upon this unfortunate part of His creatures. She declares the equality of the slave with his master. She admonishes the master to show humane consideration to the souls for which Christ died. She knew that in the long run, truth would have as wide a career in vindicating the rights of the slave, as error had had in enslaving and degrading him. Hence, by her teaching she would enlighten the pagan conscience and inform it of the rights of the slave, and the duties of the master. Heretofore no one had ever heard the word "right" applied to the slave; no one had ever dreamt of a duty pertaining to the master with regard to his slave.

Once the human conscience was corrected, there would always be a power to condemn cruelty, even when passion dared to stir it; the cruel treatment of slaves would become as any other sin, possible indeed, but yet to be grieved for and to be forgiven. Lest the assertion of the master's rights should foment dissatisfaction and rebellion, never yet did she admonish slaves to be faithful to them, without, at the same time, admonishing masters of their obligations, and of the perfect equality of both before God. Those who were unfaithful to the conscience which she had estab-

lished in their hearts, with regard to the rights of slaves, and who unjustly subjected them to punishment, she in turn, condemned to severe penance, and even cut them off from her communion, and refused them the sacraments.

The Church did all that lay in her power, to induce the slaveholder to ransom his slaves and to restore to them the freedom, to which, as Christians, she felt they had a right. It was an act peculiarly acceptable to her, when the master could be induced before her sanctuary, to liberate his slaves. She always maintained inviolate the emancipation which they had received, and forbade their reinslavement. The liberation of their slaves, she recommended to the dying, as an act pleasing to God and meritorious to their souls: Macaulay says, "she conjured the dying to remember their brethren for whom Christ died." Those who were taken captives in war or otherwise, she regularly ransomed. She did not hesitate to use her own property for this purpose: she felt with St. Ambrose, that, to free the captive from slavery, or, it may be, from the death that awaited him, even the sacred vessels were not too precious to be broken up and sold. The blood of Christ was not too precious to be shed, to save the souls of sinners from the slavery of sin and Satan: the material treasures of the altar were not too valuable, to save though but the bodies of Christ's redeemed, from cruelty and wrong. She, moreover, ennobled slavery, and invested it with a certain reverence in the minds of men, and insured for it a consideration which it could not have otherwise enjoyed,

by admitting slaves to the priesthood, after full freedom had been obtained.

To the Church is justly ascribed, the abolition of slavery that has resulted from her influence, no less than if it had resulted from positive decree or enactment: no legislation favorable to the destruction of slavery, could avail, if the spirit of charity had not prepared the human mind to acknowledge its justice, and the human heart to yield to it submission. Charity performs its mission and exercises its influence, by persuasion rather than by mandate; its spirit is much more far reaching, than the efficacy of any positive ordinance can be.

From St. Paul beseeching Philemon for a slave whom he calls his son, and begging him "to be received, as his own bowels, no more as a slave but as a dear brother;" to St. Augustin teaching, that "God has ordained that reasoning creatures, made according to His image, shall rule over only creatures devoid of reason; He has not established the dominion of man over man, but that of man over the brute;"—to St. Thomas teaching, that "in the slave there is no inferiority of nature, but a scourge inflicted upon humanity by the sin of the first man;"—to St. Vincent de Paul selling himself into slavery, to rescue captives;—to the establishment of religious orders whose aim was the ransom and rescue of slaves;—to the decrees of Popes repressing slavery and vindicating the equality of men; the teaching of the Christian Church has invariably been, that all rational creatures are equal before God, redeemed in the same

Blood, the sharers of the same destiny ; and that man cannot claim as his property, his brother, equal in all respects, save the accidental misfortune in which his lot has been cast.

By every means consistent with her heavenly mission, has she sought to inculcate this doctrine among men, and to restore to the slave his equal rank and freedom, as a son of God. Not by war, not by bloodshed, not by political revolution, not by sudden social transformation, all which, while they might confer liberty, were sure to entail worse results than slavery itself, has she sought to destroy this evil, as she has all others. No opportunity by which the condition of the slave would be ameliorated, or his freedom secured, without the disintegration and chaos of society, has escaped her watchful and unremitting zeal. In this, as we have already remarked, she has imitated the slow but sure, and wonder-working agency of nature itself : in this, too, has she followed the gradual, yet unfailing working of Providence in the order of grace, no less than in that of nature.

It is no argument against the influence of Christian Charity, and no refutation of anything that I have said in ascribing to it the destruction of the evils which disgraced pagan civilization, to say that many of these wrongs and iniquities yet exist ; that abortion and infanticide are not unknown ; that woman is sometimes as formerly degraded to a condition similar to that which was hers in pagan times ; that slavery in many countries still prevails ; that the poor, the old, the sick, the maimed,

are not seldom now neglected. This is only to affirm that sin all along subsists ; that it is, in our condition, more than a match for the atonement that has been made for it, and for the grace and power of resistance which that atonement has poured into the souls of men. As the Church with her Sacraments, has not entirely obliterated sin, which will last till Christ shall come again, so it is no disparagement of Christian Charity, that it has not entirely uprooted from the human heart, those passions which are the ever-fruitful sources of the crimes that predominated in paganism ; and which will only cease with human nature. The glory of Charity is, that it has destroyed these vices, in the main and in their universality ; and has condemned them in those whom it has not been able to bring under its influence. It has established an individual and world-wide conscience which abhors them, and which does not hesitate to inflict upon them deserved reprobation and chastisement.

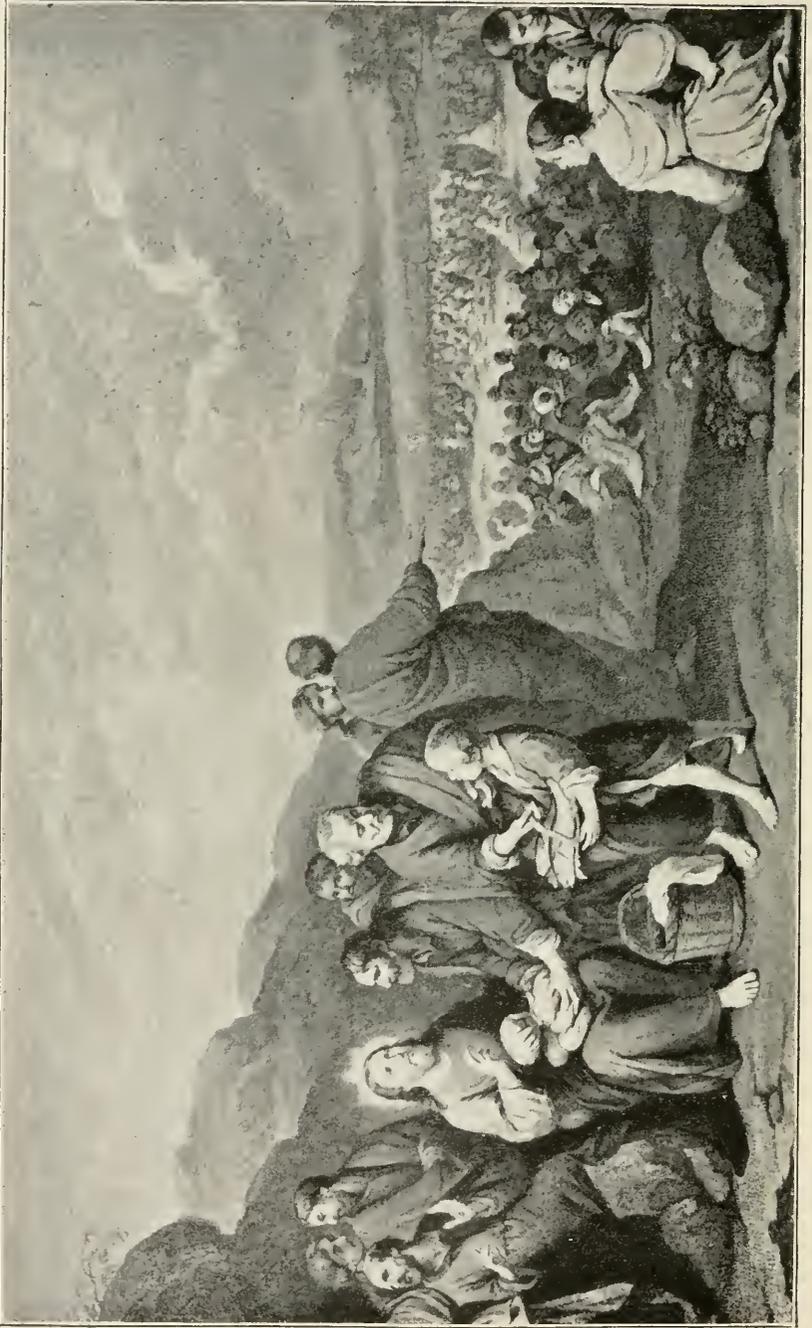
That these evils in some degree yet exist, is only because the human will is still free ; because the license of sin has not been withdrawn ; because human passion can still run counter to the dictates of reason and the obligations of duty. Christian Charity has enlightened the world with a true conception of the magnitude of these wrongs : it has revealed the lamentable errors and fatal beliefs of past times : it has created a divinely instructed conscience, hostile to these iniquities, and planted in the human heart virtues altogether opposite to them : vices once practised

with impunity are now condemned as the most direful wrongs and blackest sins of which man can be guilty.

If these evils thus far exist, they exist as exceptional vices to be removed, as burdens to be lightened, as grievances to be redressed. But the rule and standard to be followed, is what charity dictates: its great law has been proclaimed, and in its light and in its measure, all these sins and misfortunes are utterly condemned. However, men remain free to fulfil, or to contemn, its divine maxims. The mission of charity no less than the mission of the Gospel, is not yet finished. May we pray and hope that with its gradual progress and assured triumph, all these calamities of our race, incident to our fallen human state, will diminish and, perhaps, even entirely disappear.

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THE REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and died. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever : and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, disputed among themselves, saying : How can this man give us His flesh to eat ? Then Jesus said to them : Truly, truly, I say to you : Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you. He who eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life : and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the Father Who liveth sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eateth this bread, shall live forever. These things He said teaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum. Many, therefore, of His disciples hearing it, said : This saying is hard, and who can hear it ? But Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them : Doth this scandalize you ? What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before ? It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words which I have spoken to you, are spirit and life. But there are some of you who believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said : Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me, unless

it be given him by My Father. After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will ye also go away? Simon Peter, therefore, answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.—St. John vi. 48-70.

WHEN we consider the marvellous love shown in the mystery of the Incarnation, it would seem strange if our Divine Lord should leave the world without establishing some means by which that Incarnation might be forever continued among men; and if the love of which it was the final consummation should have been confined to those of His own generation, and not transmitted to all future generations until He shall come again. Accordingly, our Blessed Lord, the very night before He died, established the Divine Sacrament of His Real Presence in which the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of His life and death are made perpetual; "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end;" "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you." He longed for the day when He would establish this Sacrament by which His life on earth is made everlasting. On this solemn farewell occasion, when His earthly career was the next day to close, He established an eternal abidance among men, by giving us His body and blood as our food and nourishment. He commanded His apostles that they should renew this Mysterious banquet in commemoration of Him. He declared that "unless we become partakers of His body and blood, we shall not have life in us."

Faith teaches that in this Sacrament we receive, in very truth, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

By virtue of the words of consecration, the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of the body of Christ, and the whole substance of the wine is changed into the whole substance of the blood of Christ. Although the taste, color, form, and whatever strikes the senses, remain, yet no particle of the bread or of the wine exists in the Sacrament after consecration. The body of Christ is not with or in the bread, but instead of the bread, which is transubstantiated into it: the one substance becomes the other, not by change of place or creation, but by conversion. A change of form into another, is justly designated transformation: change of substance into another, is, with equal right, termed transubstantiation. As the direct result of the words of consecration are present the body and blood of Christ. As the result of necessary union and because of things which are naturally and actually united, where one is the other must be, or concomitantly with the body and blood, every thing is present that belongs to Christ as man and as God; for He is both. His body is a living body; hence where His body is, His blood must also be and Christ entire: where His blood is, there must also be His body and Christ entire. As our soul is not divided, but being indivisible, is whole and entire in every part of the body, independent of the laws of place; so, after the manner of existence which is proper to a spirit, Christ is

whole and entire not only under each species, but in every particle of the bread and wine. At the last supper, each of the apostles received Christ whole and entire, although there was but one bread and one wine consecrated, not a separate portion for each. This living bread is the body of Christ as now in heaven; hence, soul, life, faculties, heart, bones, sinews, veins, nerves—everything belonging to a perfect human being. Christ is not only man but God: where His humanity is there must also be His Divinity, hence His Godhead is present in this Sacrament. As the Divine Son cannot be separated, because of the unity of the Divine Nature, from the Father and the Holy Ghost, these Divine Persons must also be present in this Mystery; even according to His own words, “Where He is there is the Father,” and “He who seeth Me seeth the Father also.”

This is a summary of the truths which faith teaches us touching this August Sacrament. I shall not stop to speak of the wondrous mysteries which these truths involve, or of the series of resplendent miracles which Christ's Sacramental Presence necessitates. I shall be content to have declared the doctrine as enunciated by the Church. St. Thomas says that, “It is a compendium of all miracles.” It is the most marvellous of all God's works.

It will be profitable to us to dwell upon the testimonies which Holy Scripture gives concerning the institution of this Divine Sacrament.

The first testimony which we find is in the Sixth Chapter of St. John; there our Lord promises that

He will give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, as the food and nourishment of our souls. "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." The Jews and the disciples who were standing by heard these extraordinary words, "And the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." Struck with amazement, they disputed among themselves, saying: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Manifestly, those asking this question understood our Lord to speak literally in the words He employed; if they had understood Him figuratively or symbolically, there would have been no meaning in their surprise or question; but they understood the words of our Lord, as the Catholic Church has ever since understood them, in their natural obvious sense. Even this very question put by the Jews, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat," is to-day put to the believing Catholic by those who have taken the place of the incredulous Jews. It is clear that the Jews understood our Lord to speak of His real body. If, then, they misunderstood Him, and He really meant to speak figuratively, it clearly was His duty as a public teacher and as the Saviour of souls, to correct the mistake into which they had fallen. He owed it to Himself and the souls of men, which He had come to enlighten and to save, to remove this grave misapprehension which would involve in its consequences, not only the Jews who entertained it, but all ensuing gener-

ations. And this all the more, as it was our Lord's custom to correct His hearers when they misunderstood Him. When Nicodemus, hearing of the necessity of Baptism in the words "unless a man be born again," understood them literally, and asked "How can a man enter again into his mother's womb and be born again," our Lord said to him, explaining, "Unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In eleven other places in the New Testament in which our Lord was misunderstood, He removes the misapprehension and gives His hearers His real mind. It was, then, the rule of His public life, as it is the duty of every public teacher, not to suffer misapprehension, but always to seek that error be not imbibed for truth. How easy, then, would it have been, when the Jews asked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat," to correct this misapprehension, if such it were? One simple word had removed their darkness, as it had set right the mind of Nicodemus. Far from correcting the meaning which the Jews attached to His words, He repeats them six times, in equivalent phrase and with increased emphasis. "Truly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you." Again: "He who eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Again: "For My flesh is true food and My blood is true drink." Again: "He who eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him." Again: "As the Father

Who liveth sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." Again: "This is the bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eateth this bread, shall live forever." Instead then of correcting the Jews, He but repeated His original declaration six several times, in words as corroborative of what He had already said as language is capable of; with the asseveration that eating His body and drinking His blood, was a condition to eternal life.

The Jews heard the answer which our Lord made to their question, and understood it. The disciples heard it, and evidently understood it: replying, "this is a hard saying and who can hear it;" and they went out and walked no more with Him. Jesus saw them depart, no more to return, scandalized at His hard saying. Is it possible that He Who had come into the world to teach mankind the truths of religion, to enlighten and save the souls of men, would have allowed His followers to forsake Him, and all through an error on their part regarding His meaning? Nothing could be more inconsistent with the love and mercy which induced Jesus to become man. To allow such an error on the very threshold of the establishment of the New Dispensation, would be to destroy the Church which He was to establish and to subvert the work which He had come upon earth to accomplish.

The apostles were standing by; they, too, had heard the words that Jesus had uttered of giving His body to eat and His blood to drink. They

saw how these words were understood by the hearers; they had heard their objection proposed; they had heard the answer vouchsafed by the Lord,—the original declaration six times renewed; they had heard the disciples saying: “This is a hard saying and who can hear it;” they had witnessed their departure, and they had seen the Lord permit them to forsake Him, sooner than to withdraw, or to extenuate, the words which He had uttered. Jesus looking at the apostles, said: “Will you also leave Me?” as if to say, I am prepared to allow even you to depart rather than to retract the words, or explain away the truth and meaning of what I have uttered. Then Peter making answer, said to Him: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.” They remained and believed.

Jesus reasoned with the disciples, asking: “Does this scandalize you; that I will give you My body to eat and My blood to drink? What if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?”—arguing from that which, in their eyes, was greater, than giving His body to be their food. On another occasion, to prove that He as man had power on earth to forgive sin, He performed the really less, but to their minds, greater miracle of curing the man of the palsy, commanding him to take up his bed and go into his house; so now He appeals to the mystery of the Ascension, far less in reality, to reconcile their minds to this Mystery in which He will give them

His flesh and blood to be the nourishment of their souls. He adds: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."—It is the light and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, not the flesh—human discernment, human knowledge—that avails to believe so great a Mystery. As He had formerly pronounced Peter blessed in that not flesh and blood, but His Father in heaven, had revealed to him the truth of His Sonship of the living God, which the apostle professed, so now He says, that it is the spirit of God and the light of the Holy Ghost, that quickeneth the soul to receive the words that He had spoken; human nature, of itself, being incapable of it. "No man cometh to the Son, except the Father draw him." Even now human intelligence is unable to lead men to a belief in Christ's real presence in this Sacrament; and he who relies upon his understanding shall never come to accept it. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

The promise of the institution of this Divine Sacrament, which we have been considering, was made on occasion of Christ's multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the hungry multitude. It cannot be doubted that this miraculous feeding of the people was meant as a prelude to the promise of feeding the souls of men with His body and blood. It was to prepare their minds, by what was sensible and palpable, for what would be no less real, but at the same time entirely invisible and spiritual. It was to argue from what was manifest, to that which could only be received by faith. It was to reconcile them, by that which

was really less, but to their seeming greater, to that which they could know only by trust in His word and power. If, now, Christ did not mean to give them His true body and true blood to eat and drink,—if He spoke figuratively, there would have been no need to prepare their minds by this miracle of feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes. He would have been working a stupendous miracle to reconcile them to believe that which was no miracle, which was a mere symbol that called for no Divine power for its establishment.

Christ said, on the occasion before us, that the bread which He would give, would not be as the manna that their fathers had eaten, and had died; but that he who would eat of this bread should live forever. This bread, therefore, as insuring immortal life, must be superior to the manna which had not prevented the death of their fathers who had eaten it. The bread, accordingly, that He will give could not have been a mere figure; else it would have had no excellence over the manna. If the bread that He would give, were a mere figure, the manna itself would have been superior; for it descended from heaven; it was the miraculous gift of the angels; it nourished the bodies of those who ate it, during forty years in the desert. No such virtue would have belonged to the figure, if figure it were, which Christ had promised. That, then, which should have been the embodiment and fulfilment of the figure implied in the manna, would have been inferior. The reality would have been less than the type, the substance less

than the shadow, the victim less than the emblem of the sacrifice. But we know that the manna was but the figure of the heavenly manna to be established by Jesus Christ, in which we would receive His body and blood, for the food and nourishment of our souls.

We come now to consider the words in which this Heavenly Sacrament was instituted. It was at the last supper. Jesus had already begun to suffer the agony of His passion; the sufferings of Calvary, the dereliction on the Cross, were already before His eyes. He had finished His mission in the world; the ransom for man's salvation was about to be paid. "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take and eat: THIS IS MY BODY. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD of the New Testament which shall be shed for many, unto remission of sins." The words of institution are narrated by St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke; St. John does not record them, as he wrote only to supply what the other apostles had omitted. He was content to give the promise of this Sacrament, which we have already examined. St. Paul, as one writing out of time, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, declares that he himself had received a revelation from Christ Jesus disclosing this Divine mystery. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night on which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and said: Take

and eat: this is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also He took the cup, after the supper, saying: This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. This do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of Me."

In considering the words of institution of this Sacrament, we first remark the number of writers who record them. The supreme importance of perpetuating, for all time, the language employed by Christ ordaining this tremendous Mystery was evidently realized by the Sacred writers. Their account was written while the other apostles were living; hence their narratives, uncontradicted and unimpeached, become the testimony of all. If in the mouths of two or three, every word shall stand, we, assuredly, cannot refuse to accept the testimony afforded us by this large number of writers, and of such a character, and with such corroborative circumstances. We are also struck with the remarkable concord that exists between the records of the evangelists describing the establishment of this Sacrament. They are almost identical; evidently they were impressed with the transcendent importance of exactness and fidelity. Writing at different times and under different circumstances, not simultaneously and in consultation, and one giving his own special revelation, nevertheless, they scarcely permit themselves to depart a hair's breadth from the same language. Similar care always characterizes formal statements of facts important in themselves, or pregnant with great consequences, and whose signifi-

cation depends upon their faithful record. Nor was there any mutual agreement between the apostles to employ the same words; but each one for himself instinctively felt the need of the greatest exactness and the risk of deviating therefrom.

If each of the evangelists had not the same understanding of the words of Christ, as the others; if each had not understood that the Sacrament contained the true body and true blood of Christ; or if any of them had known that the words of institution were to be understood figuratively or symbolically, what was more natural than that they should have made this explanation? Could they have permitted the Church, which was to be founded upon them, to fall into an error on such a subject, where a passing word of explanation would have removed the one, and established the other in the truth? The apostles had learned the meaning of Christ's words from His own living voice, and were assured of it by that mutual understanding which always exists between a living teacher and his disciples. They were illuminated by the Holy Ghost, so that they knew the truth and could not fall into error. Besides, they were wont to explain their meaning, in what they spoke or wrote, when they feared any misapprehension. Under these circumstances, it is absurd to suppose that they would have expressed themselves on this subject as they did, without one word of explanation, if they did not really mean the natural and obvious import of the words.

Christ on the solemn occasion when He instituted this pledge of His love, was about to

give us His last Will and Testament. All men realize the necessity of absolute exactness at such a time. When one is about to dispose of all his possessions to those whom he means to constitute his heirs, knowing the various possibilities that may arise after his death, and the unjust and spurious claims that may be made, unless the meaning of his dying statement be unmistakable when it shall be no longer possible for him to correct it, he realizes, to the full, this necessity. Jesus was about to establish in His blood the New Testament. The Paschal Lamb was to be eaten for the last time; the types and figures of the Old Law were to give way to the realities of the New. If, on this momentous occasion, when was to be fulfilled all that the prophets had predicted and the symbols and sacrifices of the old law had typified, Christ were to have given us no more than a mere figure or symbol, the Church to which so much had been promised, would have received nothing more than the Synagogue; the New Testament would have been no more real and glorious than the Old; and it would have been as destitute of a True and Acceptable Sacrifice. Hence, therefore, we must believe that Christ meant more than a mere figure, in the establishment of this Sacrifice of the New Law,—the complement and fulfilment of all the sacrifices of the Old. His words, “This is My body, This is My blood,” clearly express the reality which, from the nature of the occasion and the termination of His earthly mission, we naturally expect. These words of institution are as simple

and sublime as the words of God, when He said: "Let light be." And light was.

Every rule of interpretation requires that words be taken in their natural and manifest sense, unless there be something in the circumstances or subject-matter that forbids it. When Christ says, "I am the vine, you are the branches," He uses a figure; but when He declares, "This is My body, This is My blood," there is nothing that suggests a figure; and the circumstances and the subject-matter exact the acceptance of the words in their obvious sense. It is to be borne in mind that the apostles who were present at this last supper, were likewise present on the occasion, recorded in the Sixth Chapter of St. John, when He promised His flesh to be their food and His blood to be their drink. They had heard, and understood fully the meaning of this Divine promise. They had seen the disciples go away, scandalized at what they deemed a hard saying; they themselves had remained, for they knew that He "had the words of eternal life." All this was fresh in their minds when they saw the Lord, about to fulfil this promise, take bread and bless it, saying: "This is My Body;" and taking the chalice, saying: "This is My Blood." Prepared, then, as they were by this promise, and hearing the plain and absolute words in which it was fulfilled, they entered fully into the mind of Jesus and understood perfectly His meaning and design.

On that day, before He suffered, when He prayed that His apostles and all those who through their word should believe in Him, would be one,

as He and the Father are one, He, looking into the future of His Church, foreknows how it will ever understand the words that He is about to utter; He foresees that the apostles and their successors, and all who through their word shall believe in Him, even unto the end of time, will accept these words in their literal sense, and as the Jews and disciples had formerly understood them: in His Divine prescience, He sees that apostles, and Church, and all His followers, are irretrievably deceived, are led into invincible error, and become partakers in idolatry, if the words of institution which He is about to utter, are not to be taken in their natural and manifest sense. Can He be wanting to those for whose faith He had prayed? can He be wanting to the Church which He has declared built upon a rock? can He abandon the lambs and sheep whom He has placed in the custody of the Shepherd? can He forsake the Supreme Pastor whom He has appointed to feed His flock?—in a word, can He frustrate His own work? Can He be untrue to Himself? can He belie the mission of love and mercy, which He claims to have received from His eternal Father? From these considerations it is plain, that our Lord meant to give us His Real Body and His Real Blood, when He established this Sacrament.

Consider the words of St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night on which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and said: Take and eat: this is My body, which

shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also He took the cup, after the supper, saying: This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. This do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye shall show the death of the Lord, until He come. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the cup. For he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself: not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore many infirm and weak are among you, and many sleep." In these weighty words of the apostle, we see how little ground there is for the belief of those who say that in this Sacrament we receive but a figure or symbol. The apostle says, that the unworthy communicant is guilty of the body and blood of Christ; that he eats and drinks damnation to himself. Would he be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, who would profane but a figure? would he deserve an eternal malediction, who abused but a symbol? How could he discern the body of Christ, if the body of Christ were not discernible in this Sacrament? Faith teaches us to recognize the truth which exists, not that which has no existence; mere belief cannot create the objective reality. What truth or mystery could there be in this Sacrament, to be discerned by the receiver under pain of condemnation for its unworthy reception,

unless that of Christ's Real Presence? Why should a man before eating this bread and drinking this cup prove himself, examine himself before the tribunal of his conscience,—a duty so strongly implying the need of confession and repentance, if the food and drink were but symbols or figures? It could only be the True body of Christ whose profanation would deserve such punishment, or prerequisite such scrutiny: if the Sacrament were but a mere figure or emblem, its unworthy partaking would not provoke so dreadful a judgment as is implied in eating and drinking his damnation. What great crime is it not to apprehend what is not apprehensible; not to realize what is not present? what fault not to distinguish the body of Christ, if it is but bread and wine which the Eucharist contains? Would it not rather be a merit, and the result of enlightened faith, to fail to discern what does not exist and to apprehend exactly what does? But if the body of Christ is really present, then, indeed, he who receives it unworthily incurs a guilt to be avenged with an eternal chastisement, and rigid scrutiny of the conscience would be but just precaution against so great a sacrilege.

The apostle adds, that “many infirm and weak are among you, and many sleep,” because they did not sufficiently discriminate the body of Christ. By sickness and bodily ailments, and even by death, did God show His displeasure, and chastise those who dared to abuse this Divine Sacrament: all of which ill comports with the belief that it contains anything less than the body of His Son.

We also see that the apostle declares that he has received a special revelation making known to him this ineffable Mystery. The matter is of such transcendent importance that the Lord does not hesitate to make a special disclosure to the apostle, as to "one born out of time." In this, he scarcely departs from the very words in which the three evangelists had already recorded its Divine institution. If there had been any misapprehension in the minds of the faithful, here was a new opportunity in which the apostle Paul, recently converted and divinely illumined, could have corrected the error and declared the truth.

The apostle asks the question: "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of the Lord?" Could words declare more explicitly that he believed the Sacrament to contain the real body and blood of Jesus Christ? He knows it is a sacrament and the heaven-ordained means by which we are to be nourished with the body of Christ. With what exactness in the use of words all the sacraments have been established, the same is the apostle's care in speaking of this. If there is no room for figure in the words, "I baptize thee," or in the words, "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven," as little is there in the words, "This is My body, This is My blood." The most guarded care should be employed in expressing what is to be the form and matter of one of Christ's sacraments, as it is a channel through which grace is to be conveyed to the

soul. What is the difference, or, rather, what is the identity of form between the words of Christ declaring the need of Baptism, and His words declaring the need of this Divine Sacrament!—"Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:" "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, ye shall not have life in you." Every precept should be declared in plain and unequivocal statement. There is no precept of the decalogue expressed in clearer language than those words, six times repeated, in which Christ, replying to the objection of the Jews, "How could He give them His body to eat and His blood to drink," declares to them the absolute need of this Sacrament.

The universal testimony of the fathers of the Church leaves no room to doubt the belief of all antiquity in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I might quote from their works, century after century, and we should see that they all declare, in unmistakable words, each the belief of his time. Never was it called in question until Beringarius in the eleventh century arose to disturb the universal belief of the faithful, from all antiquity. No sooner had he broached the new heresy than councils were held, condemning his audacity, confuting the innovation, and declaring the sense and teaching of the Church.

The Nestorians abandoned the Church in the fifth century, and although heretics they never lost belief in the Real Presence, in spite of schism and error. They still remain; there are now more than two hundred thousand of them in the

East. These sectaries discern the body of Christ in the consecrated elements, and adore them as we do. If belief in Christ's True Presence had not existed in the Church prior to their withdrawal, how could it have gone with them? If introduced at any subsequent period, they should, manifestly, have forever remained strangers to it.

The Greek Church fell into heresy and schism in the eleventh century, in which it has till now continued. To justify itself, it then and since has brought various charges against the Church. But it has never reproached her with idolatry, or heresy, or with any innovation upon the teaching of the apostles, for adoring the body and blood of Christ truly present in this Sacrament. The Greeks although in schism against the authority of the Church, and in heresy in several matters of faith, believe as we do in this Mystery. And they have this Sacrament as truly as we, since theirs is a validly ordained priesthood, with an unbroken succession from the apostles. If belief in the Real Presence of Christ were something introduced into the Church after apostolic times, we naturally ask, when did the introduction take place? what were the circumstances and the occasion and the time, when such an innovation in the belief of the faithful was first known? No such event or period or novelty can be pointed out. On the contrary, no sooner was belief in this doctrine called in question, than the universal Church with just indignation arose to repress such an unheard-of heresy. Thus we see what has been the belief of the faithful in all ages, touching this Sacrament.

It may be asked, how can Christ be present in the Eucharist, considering the difficulties which such a sacramental presence involves? However, this question was asked of Christ Himself, and was not answered. He did not undertake to prove to the satisfaction of his questioners, that it was a physical possibility, or to show to them how it could be, or, in any manner, to remove their objections, or to lessen its inherent difficulties; He but reiterated what He had already said, with renewed emphasis and amplification: "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you shall not have life in you." To-day, the Catholic Church imitating His example makes no explanation, but repeats His words. The little child has as much understanding as to how this great miracle is wrought, as the profound theologian. Faith makes them both equal: it either exalts the one to the level of the other, or reduces the theologian to the capacity of the child. Our faith does not depend upon our knowledge. It depends upon the word of Jesus Christ; "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." "To whom shall we go, Lord? Thou hast the words of eternal life." We believe not because we understand, but because we do not understand; knowledge of how Christ is present, would supersede faith in this Mystery. Faith is the knowledge that comes from believing the word of God, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived; Who knows all things, and Whose veracity is pledged for His word.

Difficulties are no arguments against revealed truths. No number of difficulties can militate

against anything that rests upon the unerring word of God. Even in human matters, when a truth is incontestably established, difficulties cannot shake it; they may or may not be explained away, but the truth remains. We may not be able to answer them, yet we know that they can be answered. What rests upon the Divine word is metaphysically certain. Nothing that human genius or human ignorance can excogitate, can avail against it. Before its authority it is our duty to prostrate our understanding, and to accept with unflinching faith whatever it teaches. It is an act of the very genius of reason to acknowledge the limits of our mind, and to believe what we cannot comprehend. If we believed nothing but what is free from difficulty, we would have to give up many of those primary truths which no one thinks of doubting. There is nothing surrounded with greater difficulties than the existence of the world, or the existence of God, or even the existence of man himself; and yet there is overwhelming evidence for all. The atheist who refuses to believe in God, encounters greater difficulties than the theist; the agnostic who is sure of nothing, therefore not of himself, than the believer who is sure of his knowledge because he believes; the infidel who scorns Revelation, than the Christian who is taught by it; the pantheist who confounds God with His creations, than the worshipper of a Personal God. The Protestant who believes not in the Real Presence of Christ because he knows not how it can be, should explain how there are Three Persons in One God,

or how the child born to-day, incurs the sin committed by the progenitors of the race. But as our faith does not rest upon arguments, neither can it be shaken by difficulties. The words, then, spoken to you are "spirit and life;" they require the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; flesh and blood, that is, human discernment, cannot make them known. "No one comes to the Son, save the Father draw him." No one believes in the mysteries of religion, except those enlightened and taught by the Spirit of God. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven." In these passages from Scripture we see why many fail to believe in the Real Presence. They seek to acquire, by reason, the faith which is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus in this Sacrament is the very essence of religion; the very soul of the Catholic Church; the source and sustenance of the spiritual world within us and around us; the unfailling fount of all the graces entrusted to the Church for the salvation of souls. It is in this Sacrament that the soul finds the grace necessary to sustain its supernatural life against its own inherent weakness, and the assaults of the flesh, the world, and the devil. It is in this Sacrament that the sinner finds as in its source the grace by which, with penitential tears, he washes his sins away, and perseveres forever in his recovered innocence. It is in this Sacrament that the martyr finds zeal and fortitude to lay down his life for the God Whom in it he adores. It is in this Sacrament that the virgin finds solace

and support in her life-long martyrdom of passion and in pursuing an angelic virtue on earth. It is here that the apostle and all those who have left father, and mother, and brother, and sister, for Christ's sake, seek strength and constancy to persevere in the service of the Lord. Belief in the True Presence of Jesus Christ, is the inspiration of the beauty and majesty of the material temple, of the deep care of the Church's liturgy, of the pomp and splendor of her ceremonies. The saints were once compelled to adore Jesus as we do now, as a hidden God, by their unshaken faith, ardent hope and burning love : such, likewise, during this life must be our worship, if we are one day with them to adore Him as a God made manifest.

Let us, then, with childlike docility, with an unhesitating and unflinching faith, embrace and believe this holy Mystery, so full of consolation and so expressive of the wondrous love of God for man. It is a Mystery which is a compendium of all the works of God ; which is a certain continuation of the Incarnation, because in it Christ abides continually on earth, and is re-born daily in the unworthy hands of the priest. Others, with the Jews, may say, " How can He give us His flesh to eat ? " or, with the disciples, " This is a hard saying ; " and, scandalized, may depart from Him. —Let our part be with faithful Peter, " Lord, Thou hast the words of eternal life ; " and with him shall we be blest, because we relied not on flesh and blood but on the word of the Eternal Son, and were led by the light of our Heavenly Father.

ON DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, MOTHER OF GOD.

And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. Because He hath looked down on the lowliness of His handmaid: for behold henceforth all generations will call me blessed. Because the Mighty One hath done great things for me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. He showeth might in His arm: He scattereth the proud in the conceit of their heart. He casteth down the mighty from their throne, and exalteth the lowly. He filleth the hungry with good things: and the rich He sendeth away empty. He hath received His servant Israel, being mindful of His mercy. As He spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.—St. Luke i. 46-55.

As we look upon some great painting or statue, the work of some great artist, we are filled with wonder at the perfection of the ideal which he has formed and of the skill with which he has reduced it to fact. Frequently we are lost in amazement, and can with difficulty believe that it was human genius or ability, which gave to these works the life and reality which they seem to possess. Hence, we sometimes speak of the living marble or animated bronze. In contemplating these masterpieces, our mind does not rest exclusively upon that which we see before us, but it at once instinctively goes out to him

whose brain has conceived and whose hand has executed them. We never think of honoring the picture or the statue in itself; all our admiration is reserved for him who has produced it, and the praise which we bestow upon the work is meant for its author.

This is a principle which holds good, in even higher spheres than those of science or art. It regulates our devotion toward the saints of God. We admire the life and character of some great saint; and in this admiration, our thoughts bear us away, in spite of ourselves, to the great Creator Whose power and grace have formed the saint whom we contemplate. We feel that he is a masterpiece of God's handiwork; in honoring him, we know that we are only honoring God in His saints; "We but praise the Lord in His saints." As every block of marble has been said to imprison an angel, until the hands of the sculptor release it, so we may say that every block of human nature, every block of flesh and blood inhabited by a soul, is the material which God's grace can model into the saint; the reflection on earth of His own holiness and perfection. We honor, then, the saints of God because they are the product of His grace, His own unequalled workmanship, who, if left to themselves, would never have been anything but what by nature they were. It was His profusion of grace and good gifts, which rescued them from the common mass of our humanity and made them what, in the end, they became. Hence it is, that there is nothing more entitled to our homage than a saint of God;

and there is no creation of His in which His power is more unmistakably shown, than in the production of those noblest works of His grace. We need not fear to worship them, because we are worshipping God; we need not fear to praise them, because we are praising God; honor of the saints is praise of God.

Far above the honor which we are called upon to pay the saints, is the worship which the Church decrees to her, who is the greatest of the saints, the Queen of angels, the Blessed Mother of God; at the same time, it is infinitely inferior to that which we are to render to God Himself. Although Mary was filled to overflowing with divine grace, yet, of herself and without Almighty God, she could lay no more claim to it, than the least of God's saints. She is His handiwork no less than the angels: He poured into her soul all the graces and gifts and glory which she possessed, and which we honor in her. We honor her not so much for her own sake, as for sake of Him Whose mother she was; as in the saints we but praise the Lord, so all the honor and worship and love we bestow upon the Blessed Virgin, result from our love and adoration of God Himself. The Church's love of Christ is so exalted and unlimited, that it overflows and reaches all who had any relation with Him. She presents to our mind the two together—Christ and His mother. She wishes that they shall always be present together in our minds, and joint sharers of our love and devotion.

How natural that, after the worship which is

due to Christ alone, we should honor her of whose blood His sacred body was formed, and who, in God's eternal counsels, was predestined to be the fitting tabernacle in which the great mystery of the Incarnation was to be effected. It is, then, because of Mary's intimate relations with this august Mystery, that the Church has always cultivated toward her, the most tender and lofty devotion: her prerogative, as Mother of God, raising her, as it does, above all the saints, and beyond all the seraphim and cherubim, entitles her to a worship inferior to that alone which we pay to God Himself. The graces which the Blessed Virgin received to prepare her for this sublime dignity of Mother of God, also entitle her to the lofty homage which we render to her.

We honor the Blessed Virgin because she is the Mother of God incarnate. Such she was in very truth. Such she was recognized by Jesus Himself; such she was recognized by the apostles and their immediate successors; the worship of Jesus and the worship of Mary were simultaneous. The sentiment of the woman who exclaimed in His presence, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which gave Thee suck," was the sentiment of all the first followers of Christ. The devout instinct of the early Church recognized its filial duty toward her who had been declared its mother, and whose child it willingly acknowledged itself to be. She had been given to the faithful in the person of St. John at the foot of the Cross. No sooner was the Divinity of Christ preached throughout the world, than honor sprang

up everywhere to her to whom He was indebted for His human nature. The love and veneration shown to her, during her life on earth, by the apostles and disciples of Christ, has been continued in every age, and even augmented by the faithful. From the very beginning, churches were erected in her honor, her intercession was invoked, religious communities were established and placed under her patronage. The Church of St. Mary, in Ephesus, was established by St. John in her honor. It was in this Church, at a later day, that her prerogative of Mother of God was infallibly defined.

In those early days, the belief of the faithful that Mary was the Mother of God, was not so much the result of any logical analysis or theological argument: instinctively they felt the obvious truth, that, as Jesus was God, and Mary was the Mother of Jesus, she, by the very fact, was, at the same time, the Mother of God incarnate. For four hundred years they remained firm and tranquil in this belief. It was not till about the end of that time, that this exalted rank of the Holy Virgin was called in question by Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. He, under the guise of zeal for the purity of Christian faith, attempted to degrade the Divine maternity; not seeing, or not heeding, or even probably purposing, the virtual denial of the mystery of the Son of God becoming man through Mary, which was involved. But the faithful, who instinctively knew their faith better than their pastor, at once detected the unsoundness of the new doctrine, and

the innovation upon the truth which they had received from their fathers; they saw that it was contrary to the belief which had been taught them by St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory, St. Basil, and by their predecessors up to apostolic times. The novelty of the heresy spread everywhere throughout the world, and fired all Christian hearts with holy indignation. The faithful of Constantinople rejected the teachings of the heresiarch, who, in spite of the influence of the civil government, was forced to abdicate his See. Councils were called in various parts of the world, to condemn the unheard-of novelty; great teachers arose who demonstrated the untenableness of the perversion; venerable witnesses who could easily trace the doctrine which they had been taught, back to the apostles themselves, denounced it as at variance with the faith which had been delivered from the beginning. Then arose the great St. Cyril to become the champion of Mary's Divine maternity, as the long-suffering St. Athanasius was raised up at another time to defend the Divinity of the Son of God. In all the councils held for the purpose of condemning the new heresy, particularly in the General Council of Ephesus, the truth that Mary was the Mother of God incarnate, was decisively proclaimed, and the new error universally and infallibly condemned.

Not to have determined explicitly, what had been the universally received faith of the Church from the beginning, would have undermined all belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Mary's Divine ma-

ternity is the bulwark which shields this Mystery against all the objections to it. From the beginning there had been those who denied that Christ was God; there had been those who denied that He was even man; but, when Mary is declared to be His mother, His Divinity and Humanity are at once proclaimed, His twofold nature is safeguarded: as Mary only could be the mother of God, by His assuming human nature. The office of maternity belongs to the production not of the body alone, but of the complete person, body and soul; although the creation of the soul far transcends the parental office or any human agency, and is the direct work of God Himself. Once it is granted that God became man and that Mary was His mother, she becomes the mother of God, as truly as the parent is the mother of the whole child, although she does not confer upon it a soul; Mary was the mother of God because she gave Him His humanity in her virgin womb. In Jesus Christ there was a Divine nature and a human nature. These two natures were united by His Divine Personality. The human nature of Christ never did exist for one single moment, save in union with His Adorable Person. In the very instant in which the human nature of Christ was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost, the Divine Person took possession of it, even as the soul takes possession of our human body; and, as Mary was the mother of the human nature, she, therefore, and simultaneously, became the Mother of God personally united to that human nature. As, then,

the human nature which Christ took in the womb of the Virgin Mary, never subsisted without the Divinity, Mary, truly, is the Mother of God made man.

Certainly, anyone whose mind is not blinded by prejudice or thwarted by bigotry, cannot fail to recognize the manifest fitness of honoring her who is thus exalted to be the Mother of God incarnate: should we refuse to honor her whom God Himself hath honored in so marvellous a manner? We honor the mothers of illustrious men, simply because they were their mothers: and shall we not honor her who is the Mother of God incarnate? God Himself must be pleased with the devotion which has for its object, her whom He Himself has honored, and the motive of whose honor, is His own worship. If we revere those persons who saw Christ during His life, and if with holy emotion we visit those places sanctified by His foot-prints, how infinitely greater should be our love and worship of her, of whose body and blood His own was formed and impacted! She who was thus chosen to the most sublime dignity to which even Almighty God could raise her, is certainly deserving of all the veneration and all the love which we can pay her: whom the Creator has elevated to the highest pitch of glory, is entitled to the most heart-felt homage and warmest love of the creature. It is difficult to see how we could hesitate, even for a moment, to yield to her this just veneration; to refuse it would seem to be a denial of Christ's very incarnation. That she was predestined from everlasting

to be the Mother of the Redeemer, is enough to justify the deepest devotion and the supremest honor which it is possible for us to render her. Mother of the Redeemer, she at once and by the highest title, becomes the mother of the redeemed, and is entitled to all their filial piety and love.

When we consider the glorious rank which Mary always held in the eternal counsels of God, we must begin to appreciate the devotion which the Church has always decreed to belong to her, because of the part which she had in the great work of our redemption. As the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, in the Divine Mind, so Mary, Mother of the Lamb, must have been present to the Divine foresight from everlasting. On the day in which Almighty God declared to our sinful first parents, the hope of a future restoration, through a Redeemer Who would be born of the seed of a woman who would crush the head of the serpent that had inveigled them, Mary was in the Divine Mind, and received all the glorious attributes that were necessary to fit her to be the Mother of Him Who was to conquer the evil one, and to ransom, and to rescue from his grasp, the human race.

The marvellousness of a conception in the womb of a virgin mother, against the whole order of nature, well comports with the mystery, that it is the Eternal God Who becomes man. This transcendent fact, which indicates the sublimity of the Divine counsels regarding the Divine incarnation, had been revealed to Isaiah: that the Saviour,

Emmanuel, God with us, should be conceived the Son of a Virgin. Mary's answer to the archangel Gabriel declaring to her that she should conceive the Divine Son, "How shall this be, for I know not man," would indicate that she was not aware of the ineffable privilege which God had reserved for her. On learning from the words of the heavenly messenger, that she was to be a mother and yet a virgin, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, she exclaimed, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." As thought is expressed by utterance without breach or defilement of the mind which conceives it, so the Son of God was conceived in Mary's womb without sacrifice of her virginity. It was no less the manner of its accomplishment, than the mystery itself which had taken place within her, that Mary celebrated, when by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, she declared: "He Who is mighty hath done great things to me, and all generations shall call me blessed." It was in entire harmony with her privilege as Virgin Mother, that the archangel addressed her, as "full of grace;" full not only of the virtue which is the result of freedom from sin, but of the virtue which is the fruit of every perfection.

Indeed, it is true to say that Mary, because of her office as Mother of God incarnate, has become, so to speak, a joint mediatrix with Him in the work of our redemption. We were redeemed by the sufferings which Christ endured in His human nature; this human nature was formed of the very flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary. Her body

was in His that hung upon the Cross, as truly as the body of the parent is in the child. Her blood was in His which was shed so profusely in every stage of His passion and death; with His own it flowed from His opened side, even when dead. Our redemption depended upon Mary. The mystery of the Incarnation waited for her consent. There was no constraint placed upon her free will, when the angel Gabriel awaited her acceptance of the Motherhood of the Incarnate Word. She could have refused to be His mother. She would not sacrifice that which, prompted by His love, she had already dedicated to His service. She showed her freedom, in hesitating to give her consent until she understood how she could become the mother of God, and yet remain a virgin: that it would be by the overshadowing and miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost. God respects the free will which He has Himself created. He leaves us free to choose between eternal bliss or eternal woe. As upon the free obedience of Eve rested the destiny of the race, so upon the free consent of Mary rested its redemption. With the holiness, and submission of will, which God had foreseen and prepared in her, she exclaimed, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." In that instant, the Holy Ghost descended upon her and the body of Jesus Christ was formed within her. It is, then, true to say, that as the incarnation of the Word depended upon her consent, so, likewise, the redemption of mankind.

As the sufferings that Jesus was one day to un-

dergo, were always before His mind, so they were always in the soul of the Blessed Virgin. From the moment of the Divine Conception, she suffered a life-long martyrdom, because of her foreknowledge of the passion and death of Him Who had come into the world to suffer and to die. She followed Him on the road to Calvary; she stood by His cross; she witnessed all the torments and agony of His death, and His unspeakable dereliction. We may even believe that as His body was not formed in her womb without her consent, so it was not until her consent was received, that Jesus consented to die. She stood there as the high priest, so to speak; and because of the knowledge which she had of the necessity of that sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, she conformed her will to the will of the Divine Victim, as she had consented to the will of the Eternal Father, in the moment of the Annunciation. Hence, we believe that it is true to say, that Mary was a joint mediatrix with her Divine Son, in the plan of our redemption. She whose consent was a necessary factor in this work of mercy, contributes as well as He Who actually performed it.

Exalted beyond all comprehension, as Mary thus was by her office as Mother of God and joint mediatrix with Jesus Christ, she is still more transcendently ennobled, and more entitled to our worship, because of the surpassing endowments and inestimable gifts which she received, to make her a tabernacle not unworthy of the Divinity. Predestined from the beginning to be the Mother of God made man, with what sanc-

tity and grace must she not have been provided? It will not be too much to expect, that everything that God can confer, He will not think too much for her whom He decreed, in the fulness of time, to make His mother: she must have been, in the Divine intention, endowed with all the virtues and graces necessary or suitable for her unapproachable dignity. By reason of these unspeakable gifts, and as the depositary of the choicest graces of the Most High, she is deserving of honor even more than by her election as the Divine Mother. Christ Himself declared that she who hears and observes the word of God is more blessed, than she in whose womb He would be conceived or whose paps would give Him suck; and that, although greater than John the Baptist had not arisen among men, yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Mary, said St. Augustine, was greater in receiving Christ's word than in conceiving Christ's body. As we honor the saints because they are the reflection, howsoever feeble, of God's own uncreated sanctity, so we honor the Mother of God because she possessed sanctity far greater than that of any saint, or of all the saints combined. She began where they ended; she was more radiant with holiness even in the beginning of her life, than all the saints and martyrs, with the accumulated merits which long lives of suffering and virtue, or the blood of martyrdom itself had purchased for them. Yet, this unlimited holiness was not forced upon her, nor was her will in any way coerced; nor was she confirmed

in grace, so as not to have the power of sinning. She co-operated with grace vouchsafed; and by her prompt co-operation won still greater graces. She was holier in her girlhood than in her infancy, holier in her womanhood than in her girlhood, holier in her motherhood than in her virginity. She was as united to God, her Son, in spirit and in love after His death and resurrection, as in His previous life and the days which He spent with her. Absolutely speaking, she could have sinned, she could have fallen: her sanctification, no less than her salvation, was in her own hands.

Due consideration for what is befitting to the Lord, in the person of His mother, forces the conclusion that Mary was conceived immaculate. The stain of original sin would have ill assorted with the glory of the Mother of God. The very least that we should expect is, that such a Mother, in her origin, would be unlike the rest of the children of men; as she is unlike them in the singular and unparalleled honor to which she was raised. They are born in original sin,—upon them is entailed the curse of the first prevarication: how reasonable to believe that Mary was spared from this original defilement, to be “our tainted nature’s solitary boast,”—that she was never, for an instant, under the dominion of Satan whose murderous work she came into the world to undo and to destroy? And this not so much for her own sake, as for sake of Jesus Christ, Whose mother she was to be. Jesus Christ was not born in the human way; He was the Eternal God. But Mary was born like other human

beings; she had a father and a mother. However, in her passive conception, which is the union of soul and body, we believe that her soul was created free from all stain,—that God's grace anticipated sin and claimed it as its own. Redeemed, indeed, she was, as well as all the children of Eve; but the manner of her redemption was different. The redeeming blood of Christ is applied to every individual soul; to some it comes, as it came to John the Baptist and the prophet Jeremiah, as a sanctification in the womb; to others it comes, as a ransom from original sin actually incurred; to others, we may say to all, as a cancelling of actual sin; it is imparted by the sacraments, and in unceasing and uncounted visitations of the grace of the Holy Ghost; to Mary, as the first of the innumerable and inestimable graces which God bestowed upon her, it was vouchsafed in the form of an exemption from original sin, whose entailment in her soul, it forestalled and precluded.

As she was to be the second Eve, the mother of humanity restored to grace; so she should be unlike the first Eve, the mother of humanity dead in sin. As Jesus Christ, the second Adam, was without sin, in antithesis to the first Adam with sin; so Mary should be without sin, in antithesis to Eve with sin. God could have saved her from the original defilement: we must believe that God did so save her: what is fit or necessary, God always does; Mary must have been the first fruits of the conquest of Jesus Christ over sin and Satan.

By the analogy of faith, we can rise from what is clearly revealed, to that which may be obscurely made known; or, to what may be necessary or proper, from the nature of what we know. Revealed truths so coalesce and harmonize, that from one we may easily infer another. Now, we know that God always confers graces and gifts commensurate with the rank or office to which He raises any one. If St. John was sanctified in his mother's womb, to be the precursor of the Lord; if the prophet Jeremiah probably enjoyed the same priceless privilege, that he might proclaim His word; it is obvious to infer that, as Mary's rank and prerogatives were incomparably more exalted than theirs, so, likewise, should be the gifts which she received to prepare her for them. We must believe that when, in the day of Eve's prevarication, Almighty God pre-announced the future restoration of the race through the seed of the woman, He meant that this woman should never be involved in the sin and tyranny of Satan, which she was meant to destroy.

While it was because of its union with His Divinity, that the blood of Christ had power to destroy sin and redeem the souls of men, withal, that blood, even as a human means, should have a source unstained with sin.

The sense of the faithful and the tradition of the Church have always been, that Mary was possessed of all possible virtue and holiness; not only the virtues that come from abstinence from sin, but all positive virtues, and holiness greater by far

than that which human nature, except in her, has ever reached, and even surpassing that of the blessed spirits in heaven. Mary, therefore, and, she alone, among all the children of Eve, was free from the original defilement of our race; and this, because of the grace of God given to her in such plenteous profusion since she was to be His mother.

It is but in harmony with the exalted rank of the Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God, and the transcendent endowments and graces necessary to fit her for this sublime office, that the end should correspond thereto—that the sequel should be commensurate with such a life—that a glorious Assumption should consummate and crown such a glorious exaltation. She should die, because her Son died; and she should be made, even in death, like unto Him. Her soul was separated from her body, and took its flight before Jesus, her Judge, her Son, and her Saviour. Her body was placed in the tomb; but it was not allowed to remain there. It has always been the well-founded belief of the Church, that, shortly after her death, it was gloriously assumed into heaven by the ministry of the blessed spirits. Just as her Divine Son, by His sufferings and death, merited, even as man, to enter into glory, so the Blessed Virgin, by her sufferings and virtues, in which she was made like to Him, was made like to Him also in glory; and was triumphantly taken up into heaven, and is there enthroned above all saints and martyrs, far above the loftiest cherubim and seraphim, at the right hand of her Son. Her glories here on

earth, tempered and augmented by her trials and sufferings, and hidden by her humility, should be manifested in heaven, where alone they could be seen, and where all probation is at an end.

Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, is truly our mother. Children of Eve, in the natural order, we are children of Mary, in the supernatural. From the one we have received the heritage of sin and condemnation; through the other we are sharers of the grace and justification purchased by the Fruit of her womb. Jesus Christ is our brother in the flesh: "I will not call you friends but brethren;" "Woman, behold thy Son! Behold thy mother!" are the words by which Christ designates our kinship with Him. As Jesus Christ is the natural Son of God the Father, we are His adopted sons: it is by the grace of the Holy Ghost and His voice speaking in our hearts, that we call Him Father. As, therefore, we have God for our Father, we have Jesus Christ for our Brother, and Mary as our Mother.

We cannot doubt that she has a mother's love for her children. Not only for our common nature's sake, but for Jesus' sake, and because of the sufferings with which He purchased our souls, she has for us not less love than a mother in the natural order. She loves every soul for which Jesus died. She knows the value of souls far better than any one else, because far better she estimates the price that was paid for them. We know the marvels of a mother's love. Among the strongest emotions of our nature, and the most moving incidents of history, are the depth and intensity of

the maternal instinct and the deeds which it has wrought. We may have entire confidence that our heavenly Mother is always ready to listen, and to make intercession for us; more desirous to be sought, than we are to seek her. Her exalted rank and sublime office and unutterable graces—raising her as they do immeasurably above all creatures in heaven and on earth—give her with Almighty God a special influence and an unequalled intercessory power. Because of these gifts, there is nothing that Almighty God can refuse her, if she were capable of asking what He could see fit to refuse. Hence it has been said, that by an immutable decree of Divine providence, every grace for the salvation of souls passes through the hands of the Blessed Mother of God. In darkness and temptation, in weakness and distress, she will extend to us her powerful and maternal intercession.

Nevertheless, our confidence should not savor of presumption. Our manner of life should not be such as will turn God away from us and render Him deaf to our prayers, unworthy of Him. We are not to lie in sin, indifferent to our state, trusting that she will not allow us to perish. This were to insult God; to abuse and turn to a reproach, her protection. Sinners yet in sin, may, with profit, seek her help to rise therefrom. God hears sinners, and so will His mother. They need Divine aid to overcome habit, to shun the occasions of sin, to destroy its slavery, and to guard against relapse. But, to seek to unite sin and the pleasure of sinning, with security in her protec-

tion, were indeed impious and superstitious. While we dishonor Jesus by sin, we cannot be children of Mary. We cannot unite her honor with His dishonor; such devotion she rejects. True love will lead to Jesus, through Mary. We cannot love her, so long as we remain in sin so displeasing to her.

The most successful means of imitating Jesus Christ will be to study and imitate the character and virtues of Mary; her example makes this easy. She reproduces in human measure and example His uncreated holiness and Divine perfections. This imitation will alone be true devotion; for true devotion must always lead to true imitation. At the same time, it makes sure our predestination. The very desire to imitate her who was foreordained from all eternity to be the Mother of God, and who, therefore, received, in the fullest measure, all the graces that constitute the highest predestination, must itself be a sign of predestination. Besides, the least measure of success in imitating the Blessed Virgin, will result in the keeping of the law of her Divine Son, and in the avoidance of all grievous sin; and thus is verified the saying, that no one devoted to the Blessed Virgin can be lost. God must look with especial favor and delight upon those who seek to form their life and character upon her transcendent example. He alone could put such a desire into their hearts. He will not, therefore, refuse them the graces by which it may be preserved and matured; and, finally, He will crown them with the gift of perseverance.

We should not think that her virtues are too high for our imitation. In their germ or principle, they are quite level to our capacity. We can imitate her purity ; which she valued so highly that she did not consent to be the Mother of God incarnate, till she knew it was to be without sacrifice of her virginity. We can cultivate her spirit of patience ; by which she submitted to the suspicion of St. Joseph, until an angel was sent to remove it. We can cherish her spirit of poverty ; with which she bore the hardships of her lot in life and her destitution of all the comforts and conveniences to which she might have felt she had a rightful claim. Finally, we can make our own of her spirit of humility ; by which she hid her royal descent from King David, and the glorious privilege of the Divine maternity. She alone among the daughters of Israel, had never dreamed that this honor would be hers. While every Jewish woman held marriage in the highest esteem, because she hoped that in God's providence she might be the mother of the Messiah, Mary precluded such a hope by voluntarily entering the state of virginity. And for this very reason, did God make choice of her : He hath regarded the humility of His hand-maid, and all generations have called her blessed.

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H. ADOLPH

THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST.

My God, my God, look upon me : why hast Thou forsaken me ? the voice of mine offences keepeth Thy deliverance far from me.

O my God, I cry in the daytime, and Thou hearest not : and in the night season—and still it is not foolishness in me.

But I am a worm and no man : a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn : they shoot out the lip, and shake their head :

He trusteth in the Lord, let Him rescue him : let Him deliver him, seeing He delighteth in him.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like melting wax in the midst of my bowels.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws : and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

For many dogs have compassed me : the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me.

They have pierced my hands and my feet : they have told all my bones :

They look and stare upon me.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. From Psalm xxi.

For the love of Christ constraineth us : because we thus judge that if one died for all, then all were dead : and Christ died for all : that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but to Him Who died for them, and rose again.—II Cor. v. 14, 15.

THE Holy Narrative tells us that when Christ was nailed on the cross, the sun was darkened, the rocks were rent, the graves were opened and the dead arose; that even those who crucified Him, seeing these signs, acknowledged that He was truly the Son of God; and that the women and others who stood by the cross, moved by the self-same tokens, returned to Jerusalem, smiting their breasts, and saying the self-same words: "This man truly was the Son of God."

If even brute, inanimate nature should thus attest, in its own way, to the emotion which agitated it on this stupendous day, decisive of the fate of our race, we might naturally expect that even the recital of Christ's crucifixion, would have some sensible effect upon those who hear it. It would not be too much if we were to expect that the hearts of the faithful who have seen not only the crucifixion, but the resurrection and two thousand years of history in the confirmation of the Divinity of Christ, should be rent; that they should be visibly agitated; that they should with tearful eyes realize the solemn scene which to-day took place upon the hill of Calvary. In fact, if the lofty vault of the church, like the veil of the temple, should be rent asunder, and the graves should again open and the dead arise once more, it would be only in harmony with the amazing fact which we are to-day to consider.

Yet, what is the actual effect? We find by experience, sad though clear, that the recital of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ has but little influence upon those who hear it; that it may, at most, ex-

cite only a present emotion or draw a passing tear ; whilst the permanent feelings remain the same. The spirit of indifference to the sufferings and death of Christ, teaches us to-day what we should not expect, yet which, alas, owing to the infirmity of our human condition and the dominion that sense exercises over us, is indeed too true, that their effect upon the many always is what it has been and what it will be to the end.

What is the reason, then, why the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ have so little permanent influence, I do not say upon the feelings, but upon the lives and characters of those that hear them recited? Our Holy Faith tells us that Christ suffered and died for our sins. We have heard the story from our earliest years ; we have grown indifferent to it we have heard it so often ; and it has become, in a manner, a matter of very rote. We believe it ; we give to it what may be called the notional assent of our minds ; but we fail to feel it, to realize it, to let it pierce our hearts, in such wise, that it may have any lasting effect. If we were to hear for the first time, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God-incarnate, suffered and died for our sins, it would probably strike us with amazement, and doubtless we would be deeply moved. But, as I have said, we have grown familiar with it. It is as a tale continually told ; it is as a lesson always taught yet never learned. And why is this? Because religious truth to be efficacious, must be deep-felt, must be actualized. It is not sufficient to assent to the truth, and believe it ; but we must bring it

home to ourselves as any of the physical objects that surround us. Unless religious truth assume this definite, tangible, sensible effect, it is powerless to influence our souls or conduct.

If we were to hear, for the first time, that, out of love, a man had died for us, it would cause us profound emotion, if not anguish. If we were told that this man, perfect in his human nature, was God—yea, God made man, it would almost stagger us, so that we would refuse to believe so inconceivable a fact. We could not, as it were, take it into our minds, could not grasp it; and we would be disposed to cast it aside as a palpable exaggeration, as something that it would be unworthy of human nature to believe. Yet, there are different ways by which this truth may be made, at least in a measure, to penetrate and subdue the mind and soul.

What would the mother think, whose infant child should be seized by some brutal man, maltreated, tortured, afflicted in various ways; or, if you will, if this child, this infant child, should be extended upon a cross and crucified; what would be the feelings of the mother of that child? What would be the feelings of any mother, of any woman, of any man, of the whole community? Would they not be fired with indignation at the thought, that so dastardly an act could be committed by anyone wearing the human shape?

What if some ingenuous person, in whom there was no guile, innocent beyond all expression, who had never done harm to anyone; if this young, honest, candid person should be cruelly outraged,

flogged, put to death amidst the most excruciating agonies, what would be the exasperated, outraged feelings of the community? I leave it to your own general conception. Your own hearts will suggest to you what would be thought of such an outrage, better than any detail with which I can make it known to you.

If a saint, grown old in the love of God and in the practice of all virtues, or a philanthropist who had passed his life in doing good, against whom naught of evil report could be brought, who had deserved well of human society, who had spent his days in deeds of self-denial, and of generosity toward his fellow-man; what would be thought, if robbers or other evil persons would seize upon this saint, or this philanthropist, and cruelly abuse him, spit upon him, crown him with thorns, lash him at a pillar, insult him, strike him in the face, treat him with every manner of contumely, and then leave him to die in the midst of the most revolting torments; what would be thought of such an outrage, and what would be the punishment that we would feel should be meted out to them who could be capable of such unheard-of cruelty and wrong?

If our feelings at such instances of barbarity would be poignant and indescribable, and if punishment, sure and swift, would be visited upon those who had inflicted such torments, what should be our sentiments to-day, contemplating the agony and death of Jesus Christ—this innocent Lamb of the Most High, this young man Who had never done evil, but had always done good; Who had

gone abroad everywhere well-doing : giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, consoling the afflicted, ministering to the poor ; nay, even raising the dead, and promising all who would believe in Him an immortal life ; what, I ask, should be our sentiments against the transgressors who have done this wrong to Jesus Christ ?

Whatever, then, those feelings may be, turn them against yourself. It was not the Jews who crucified Jesus Christ : it was your sins. It was not Pilate and Herod who mocked at Jesus Christ : it was your sins. It was not the fear of the Jews that agonized the heart of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane : it was rather the prospect of your ingratitude. It was not the executioners who nailed the Lord of glory upon the wood of the cross : it was your sins, your guilt, your wrongs. The Jews knew not what they did. We have the authority of Jesus Christ for it : “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” They were but the instruments of Divine Providence. They were but carrying out the work of Divine reparation necessary for your souls. Not the Jews, then, but those monsters of the human heart called sins crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It was you that made Him a “ very worm of the earth and an outcast from men.” This innocent Lamb of God, in Whom there was no sin nor the shadow of sin, became for our sins the necessary atonement, the vicarious sacrifice ; our atonement and our sacrifice because He willed it. Turn, therefore, the anger that you may think you are justified in feeling for

the Jews, against your own hearts, and your own iniquities, and you will have the real culprits.

There is nothing more necessary in religion, than that they who would profit by it, should not be content with repeating the sublimest truths without seeking to apprehend, to give them their full and true meaning, and to impress them upon themselves. By such illustrations as I have suggested, we can, at least approximately and in the measure of our human infirmity, come to compass what is meant, when we say that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, agonized in Gethsemane, was maltreated, and contumeliously, in the hands of the Jews; and, finally, gave up His soul upon the cross.

We cannot doubt that Jesus Christ truly felt all the sufferings which the Holy Narrative tells us He underwent. While He was God, He was also perfect man. The presence of His Godhead did not detract from His sufferings. The Godhead and Its glory He doubtless enjoyed in some high region or superior powers of the soul; but His lower nature, or that which may be called the inferior powers of His soul, assuredly endured all the agony and suffering of His passion and death. His Divinity did not diminish His suffering, nor did His suffering diminish the glory of His Divinity. He had a real human soul, as truly as we have; He had a true human body such as we have. He was at the same time God and man. His human nature and His Divine nature were united by His Divine personality. He was as capable of suffering as any of us. He hungered after He had fasted forty days. He thirsted, when He sought

to slake His thirst in the vessel of the woman at the well. He was subject to all our human feelings, save those of sin ; and yet only in the degree which His Divinity permitted. Truly man, therefore, and capable of suffering. We should not fall into the heresy of those who, in the early days, taught that Christ only appeared to suffer. This would be a fatal error: this would be to make void the atonement of Jesus Christ. He must have truly suffered ; as truly as any man can suffer. He voluntarily suspended the glory of the Godhead from His soul. Either the Divinity retired into Itself, or betook Itself to some higher region of the soul ; or, by some means which could not be unknown to Him Who was capable of separating the soul and the spirit, He put aside the influence of the Divinity upon His soul, and of His own will gave His soul to suffer.

He denied Himself even the consciousness of innocence which He necessarily had, that He might suffer to the full and drain the chalice of affliction to the dregs. This was a satisfaction which would have done much to assuage His mental agony and bodily torture. Innocence is the great support of a man under trial. This consciousness is enough frequently to sustain a man during, it may be, a life of calumny and misrepresentation. It is enough to cause a man to endure with resignation even death itself. Besides, Christ, in Whom there was no sin nor the shadow thereof, knew that He was but the Sacrifice for the sins of others, and that His sufferings were to be followed by the increased glory of God and the salvation of countless souls. Yet

this consciousness of guiltlessness did He forego voluntarily all through His passion, beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane. And this He did that He might be that which the Eternal Father had ordained: the victim for the sins of men; for all the sins that have ever been committed and that will be committed until time shall be no more. This knowledge of His innocence and speedy triumph was by His own act put aside by Christ that He might endure all the load of pain that sin could inflict upon His soul.

We also know that to the martyrs and others who have suffered for Jesus Christ, there has been often, if not always, vouchsafed a joy and consolation that did much to sustain them in their torments. We read that St. Stephen the Martyr, being stoned to death, "saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father." What a support this must have been to him! St. Paul declares that in all his trials, he rejoiced and was glad, although his sufferings were so great, that he felt "he was supplying that which was wanting to those of Christ Jesus." Again, he declares, that "in the midst of his sufferings, he was filled with consolation." All such consolation Christ cheerfully denied Himself, in order that He might, as I have said, endure to the utmost, all the punishment which the Eternal Father had decreed to Him, the Vicarious Sacrifice for all the sins of mankind. The consolations given to St. Stephen and St. Paul, and to all the other martyrs for His name, were unknown to Himself because of His own voluntary surrender thereof.

Doubtless, then, Jesus Christ truly and indeed suffered. He suffered voluntarily ; He could not suffer, unless He willed it ; “ He was offered because He willed,” said the apostle. “ No man can take My life from Me,” He declared ; “ I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again.” He offered Himself as a holocaust for the sins of men. There was no constraint upon Jesus Christ ; He suffered of His own will, and did not suffer until the appointed time had come : “ Now is your hour and that of the powers of darkness,” said He, just as He was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane. Christ could not suffer unless He willed it. He willed it, and, therefore, He suffered ; and when the Gospel tells us that “ He was made obedient even unto death,” this does not mean that there was any constraint placed upon His will by His Eternal Father. It is true that He required Him to suffer ; but He did not require it except for the knowledge which He had that the Son was willing to suffer for His Father’s glory. He could have escaped the Father’s will if He had seen fit. He could, so to speak, have sought immunity from this Divine will ; but it was not necessary. The Father knew that the Son was yearning and longing to die for the souls of men. Primarily, for the worship of Almighty God and His glory ; and, secondarily, for the sins of men and their salvation, did Christ suffer ; suffered truly, suffered heartily.

No want of accord was there, even for one moment, between the will of the Eternal Father and the will of Jesus Christ ; nor between the

Divine will of Jesus Christ and His human will. His inferior powers, His lower nature, recoiling at the prospect of suffering, led Him to exclaim in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me." This does not express any lack of harmony between the will of Jesus and the will of the Eternal Father. It only shows the natural repugnance that Christ's inferior nature had to suffering. But, at once, He expresses His real will, "Yet not My will, but Thine be done." Hence, the will of the Father was always the will of the Son ; but owing to His human condition, and to the existence in Him of human feelings as in us, there was the intrinsic reluctance to suffer that every man feels. Just as the man who is about to have his arm amputated, would say, "I would willingly save this arm if I could, but this arm I cannot save," and at once exposes it to the knife of the surgeon. The real will he shows by submitting to the amputation ; the inferior will by the fact that he would gladly escape the amputation, if the health of his body would permit him. Christ, therefore, suffered truly ; He suffered willingly : He suffered in obedience to His own will, and at the same time in conformity to the will of the Eternal Father.

As to the amount of suffering that Jesus Christ endured, it shall never be known until the Judgment day. Not until the damned shall see the Sacrifice which they spurned ; not until the just shall see the Blood which has saved them : not until then, shall we realize fully the incalculable,

unfathomable suffering which Jesus Christ underwent in His agony and death. There are theologians who maintain that Jesus Christ suffered more than God required for the satisfaction due to Him for the temporal punishment of all men together; that He merited more by the bodily pain and mental anguish which He bore, than all men together could merit to expiate this temporal punishment. I speak not of the eternal punishment due to sin, and which is reserved for the unforgiven soul when it shall have left this world, nor of the infinite value that even the least of Christ's pains received because of His union with the Divinity, but of the temporal punishment that every man must suffer in this life, or in Purgatory for the sins that he has committed. And we are told by St. Thomas, that Jesus Christ endured more than all men together could endure, and merited more than all men together could merit, in expiation of this temporal punishment due to their sins.

Christ experienced torture proportionate to the end for which He had come into life, and for which He voluntarily undertook to die: the freedom of mankind from sin. He did it spontaneously, and, therefore, He did not do it stintedly or by halves. He Who could have redeemed mankind by one moment of His agony or one drop of His sacred blood, who will assign the limit, to which He did not go? who will say that He did not fill up the measure that was due to Divine justice?

It is always to be borne in mind that Christ, in dying for mankind, was dying also for the glory

of His Eternal Father, and that He was no less desirous to repair the Divine glory injured by sin than He was to redeem the souls of men. Albeit men are lost in spite of all that has been done for them, His sufferings have not been lost; they have made the most glorious and satisfactory atonement that God Himself could devise for His offended majesty. Coming into life then to suffer at all, we may assume that Christ suffered in proportion to the ransom that was necessary for sin; and as this was the greatest of all evils, that He rendered satisfaction the greatest that was possible. Because He wished to repair the contemned honor of His Eternal Father, He did not stop short of that degree of suffering which would render to Him the full equivalent for the outrage which the sins of mankind had until then offered, and would to the end of time offer to the majesty of His glory.

The sufferings of Christ were heightened by His susceptibility of suffering. Pain is measured by the capability of enduring it. One person bears pain more tranquilly and with less anguish than another. Other people shudder and tremble, and are almost driven mad, and often are driven mad, at the prospect of suffering. Why is this? Because of the different organization of their bodies. Those that are strong of nerve and of tough texture, can sustain pain from which the gentle, the nervous, the sensitive would recoil. The body formed with exquisite perfection, and which is extremely delicate and refined, is capable of feeling pain far more than one of rougher calibre.

Now then, what must have been the sufferings of Jesus Christ, considering the perfect organization of His body? It was formed by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost; and those works of God that are the result of a miracle, are always more perfect than those that are the effect of second causes, or His ordinary agency in the production of creatures. It was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary; and from the purity of her blood, her freedom from all taint of sin, and the Divine power of its Author, it must have been the most perfect body ever vouchsafed to any of the children of men. It, therefore, possessed a perfection, an exquisiteness unknown in other bodies.

Besides, Christ's body was formed to suffer; hence it was formed that it might suffer more than the ordinary human body. "A body, Thou hast fitted to Me." The body of every man is fitted to his soul: the soul to the body. This union is meant to be an eternal one. The body shall return to the dust, but in the Resurrection, it shall arise all glorious, and be reunited to the very soul whose habitation it was during life. The body of Christ made up of such pure material, organized with such harmonious combination of parts, and with such sensitiveness of feeling, was susceptible of suffering, incalculably more than we can at all realize: in it there was, so to speak, a subjection to pain denied to all other human bodies. He must have endured pain with a keenness and intensity of which we have no conception; and this, whether we consider the bodily inflictions or the

mental agony with which He was tortured from the first moment of His passion.

The perfection of the soul of Christ increased indefinitely His tortures, mental and physical. It harbored every pain that He received, and anticipated all that was to come. He did not forget the past in the pain that was actually upon Him; but the perfection of His memory concentrated all the pain which He was actually suffering with that which He had already undergone and that which He was yet to undergo throughout His passion and death. The more perfect the soul is, the greater the torment that is felt from the bodily infliction.

There are souls and bodies so adjusted, that the soul can be seen in the body, speaking from it. Such souls cannot conceal their feelings, every emotion is manifested. They cannot lie without being detected; they cannot practise dissimulation. They are open, honest. Their bodies are spiritualized in a manner: completely are they controlled by the soul. Just as the notes or strings of a musical instrument yield to the touch of the skilful player, so these bodies bid responsive to the influences, the promptings, the emotions of the soul which pulsates in every expression. This is the result of the splendid combination of a perfect soul and a perfect body. In proportion to the perfection of the combination, is the sensibility of suffering pain.

Now the soul of Christ, no less than the body, was the most perfect ever bestowed on man. Created as our own souls, by the immediate act

of Almighty God, it possessed perfection, grace, and beauty, to which our souls are utter strangers. Besides, like His body, the soul of Jesus Christ was created for the express purpose of suffering pain. What, then, must not have been its sensitiveness to mental agony, and to bodily torture? For, the blow or injury which is received in the body is not felt by it; it is felt by the soul; it is borne on to the soul, the seat of sensation, by the nervous system and by the countless fibres and sympathies that mysteriously unite soul with body. The soul of Jesus Christ, therefore, more than that of any human being, was most keenly susceptible of suffering, mental and bodily.

II.

What were the sufferings of Jesus Christ? We have but to read the Gospel, but to peruse the details of the Passion. He was afflicted in every sense and sensibility: in his hearing, by the mockery and taunts with which He was greeted; in His feelings, by the hate and bitterness and ingratitude of those for whom He had done so much; in His taste, by the vinegar which embittered His tongue; in His sight, by the contemptuous looks and insulting gaze of the insolent mob and blasphemous priests; in His honor, by being treated as a fool and evil doer; in His reputation, in being classed among the wicked, and executed between thieves and disturbers of the peace; in every perception in which He was wounded, did He suffer.

The bodily torments of Christ I have no power

or words to describe. His head, in which the Divinity and true Kingship of men sat enthroned, was crowned with thorns, in derision of Him as a pseudo king of this world. His hands that had only dispensed blessings and deeds of beneficence reaching even to the miraculous, were pierced with cruel nails. His feet that wearied in pursuit of the lost sheep of Israel, and in going around doing good, became the sore support of a body that was sorer still, and supported the double torture of the nails, and the weight of the body that pressed upon them,—one great mass of suffering. His body, the fairest born of woman, was lacerated and flogged at the pillar until there was no sign of comeliness in it. His tongue that spoke only the salutary words of truth and salvation, was parched with the thirst that comes only from death.

All His senses and every part of His being suffered a torment peculiar to them, and peculiarly adapted to produce pain without relief and agony unutterable and unquenched thirst and burning fever. The dreadful pain caused by being stretched upon a cross, the weight of the body dragging the hands or resting upon feet dug through with spikes, no one can fathom. If He rested upon His feet, the pressure brought Him agonizing pain; if He sought relief by depending on the arms, the suspension was truly intolerable. He was a mass of suffering, from the top of His head to the soles of His feet; pain and agony in every pore and particle. Hence it has been said that He was suspended by one complete wound

upon the cross. There is no language of man, or power, by which we can at all adequately perceive what the sufferings of Jesus were upon the cross. The bitterness and versatility of His pains were beyond all expression or enumeration: agony of mind, torture of body, anguish of every power, at least of every inferior power of the soul, torment of every one of the senses, and of every part of the body,—of His head, of His hands, of His feet, of His whole being; there was no perception, no faculty of His, that did not have its appointed punishment.

The sufferings of Christ are entirely beyond us. We cannot make ourselves familiar with them, even by long and sustained contemplation. There may be tortures that appeal more strongly to our imagination; but those of Jesus Christ included pre-eminently all other inflictions. Just as the ocean receives all the rivulets and streams that flow therein, so all other sufferings that human nature is capable of, were concentrated in those of Jesus Christ. Hence it is that He was overwhelmed in suffering, as in a sea.

What was the quality of the distress and pain that He endured in His soul? Even bodily wounds must be felt in the soul to be felt at all; but there are sufferings that strike directly and immediately the soul, not through the intervention of the body,—suffering in one's honor, in one's rational self-esteem and self-respect by the pangs of contumely, and contempt, and mockery. All these are sufferings that primarily offend and afflict the soul.

Bear in mind the burden which Christ had to endure and sustain in His passion and death: the sins of mankind; each one in itself, each mortal sin in itself; not one or two sins, nor one thousand, nor ten thousand, nor ten thousand times ten thousand; but all the sins of all mankind. The sins of those who lived before the Flood, the sins of those who lived from the Flood to the days of Redemption, the sins of all the generations of all mankind, the sins, black and uncounted, that shall be committed till the end of time, all the sins of which the human heart is capable and which the human mind can conceive,—all this was the load which Christ came into this world to support and to expiate, and to extirpate, and to make amends to God for. If the punishment of mortal sin for a human being, is a hell eternal in its nature, inconceivable in its intensity, what must not be the chastisement that is to be borne by Him Who voluntarily undertakes to atone, not for one sin, but for all sins, past, present, and to come? No wonder that He agonized even unto blood. No wonder that He prayed the Eternal Father to allow the chalice to pass away from Him. What marvel that on the cross, He exclaimed, “My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?” The load was, apparently, greater than He could bear. This, therefore, was the torture that our Blessed Lord endured, and the pain which our sins, and the sins of all men, had deserved.

Not only this. Yet other sufferings did He endure, and of a different kind. He looked forward to the future. He saw the countless martyrs who

would die for His sake, who would shed their blood for their faith in Him. He must have felt most keenly the excruciating torments of these confessors. He saw that heretics and heresiarchs would arise, and would fain corrupt His teachings, and rend in twain the seamless garb of His Church. And the prospect must have deluged Him with grief. He had but to cast His eyes upon His apostles, and He would find those who would deny Him, and betray Him. There was Judas who had sat at the same table with Him, whom He had destined to the highest glory in His Church, and in the world to come, who was to sit with Him at the right hand of the Father, to judge the nations of the earth, who had been selected from all the children of men for the unparalleled honor of being one of His apostles and co-operators in the salvation of the world: He saw that Judas would betray Him. Who can estimate the pain that ingratitude causes, not to the ingrate, but to him to whom it is shown? We are told of Cæsar, that, when slain, and on the point of expiring, seeing Brutus for whom he had done so much, "Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms, quite vanquished him, then burst his mighty heart." What must have been the feelings of Jesus Christ when He saw that Judas had gone to the high priests, and betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver, for seventeen dollars! And even Peter: Peter who declared that though all should be scandalized in Him, yet he would not be scandalized; even Peter who had declared his faith in Him as the Son of the living God, was so pusillan-

imous as to deny the Dispenser of the words of eternal life, at the sound of the voice of a maid-servant. What must have been the affliction of the soul of Jesus Christ by this treachery of Judas, and this pusillanimity of Peter? Every anguish and sorrow which His memory could evoke from the past, or His Divine prescience could foresee in the future, was present to Him, not only during His agony in Gethsemane, but during every hour of His passion until He expired upon the cross. Suffering, therefore, in body and suffering in soul, was the bitter cup which Jesus Christ drained to its last dregs.

How long did the sufferings of Christ last? To-day a man condemned to death suffers but for a few minutes; and it is the continual study of benign and merciful legislation to abridge the duration, even the shortest, of necessary punishment. But the sufferings of Jesus Christ were continually before Him. They lasted not only from the moment He was seized, until the moment when He gave up the ghost; they were always with Him during the whole period of His life. From the first moment of His existence, during the years of His infancy, of His childhood, of His adolescence, of His manhood, during His Apostolic career, His Divine knowledge of what was to ensue and for which He had come into the world, was always present to Him. During His whole life, the agony of Gethsemane and the abandonment on the cross were never absent from His mind. But actually all these sufferings were upon Him during the long night and the greater part of the

day which passed from His apprehension in the Garden until he breathed His last, and yielded His soul into the hands of His Eternal Father. And this anticipation of suffering was intensified indefinitely and its duration virtually prolonged by the power which He had, owing to the exquisite organization of His body and the perfection of His soul, of concentrating, in every moment, the pain already inflicted and the pain that was yet to come. It is not strange that He predicted four times, that He should suffer and die. The prospect accompanied Him from heaven; it was "His Father's work which He should be about;" He frequently referred to it, as men always do refer to that which is uppermost in their souls and absorbs their thoughts.

If our Lord could have been sure that His passion and death would result in the salvation of each and every human being, it would have been a consolation of which He was entirely destitute, and an unspeakable, if not ample, compensation for all His sufferings. But He foreknew that, in spite of His passion and death, in spite of that Sacrifice which we cannot comprehend, in spite of the Father's amazing love and the Son's redeeming mercy, in spite of all, men, and it may be, the greater part of men would still be lost. All this was bitterness and disappointment and soul-consuming anguish that we cannot at all rise to comprehend, even after the faintest manner. For Christ, in suffering for mankind, did not change the nature of man. He had been endowed with free will. Redemption put no

constraint upon this sovereign freedom. Grace invigorated man's moral nature; but did not coerce it. He could be saved in the exercise of his freedom, or lost. It pleased God not to place any compulsion or necessity upon His noblest boon to our nature. He did not repent of having made man as He had made him, with the sovereign ability of saving himself, or of losing himself. He wished to save man, but He wished the salvation to be man's own act. He foresaw that, notwithstanding all the atonement He would make, men, in the exercise of their free will, would still rush madly to their destruction; and that, while He died for every man, and endured for every man as much torture as if He had died for him alone, uncounted numbers would still condemn His atonement, and would be lost. This it was principally that agonized the soul of Jesus Christ, in the Garden of Gethsemane and forced from Him the sweat of blood which bathed His whole body.

If Christ intended to save mankind, by constraining the human will and irrespective of their efforts, that would be to declare that there was no difference between vice and virtue, between right and wrong: that the vicious were as acceptable to God as the virtuous. If vice and virtue be identical, why, then, there was no need of Christ suffering and dying at all: He could have saved Himself the humiliation of His birth, the labor of His life, the agony of His passion, and the torments of His death. It was because of the inherent, indestructible difference between vice

and virtue, that He came into this world and suffered and died. It was because of the inherent, indestructible difference between good and evil, that it was left to man's free option to save himself, or to damn himself. No coercion is put upon us; but, at the same time, there rests upon every one of us the responsibility, whether we will be lost, or whether we will be saved.

No human language can adequately describe the enormity of the sufferings of Christ. They are best left to your general conception: every one can best feel them by his own efforts. All men had a hand in their infliction: enemies and friends, Jews and Gentiles, laymen and priests, the Roman governors and soldiers, the inconstant and bloodthirsty rabble, the lying and mercenary witnesses, the mob of base sycophants and spies who hung around the priestly courts, the time-serving Pilate, the foxy Herod, the evil-designing Caiphas who hid his motives under the disguise of zeal, the members of the Sanhedrim, the types of Judaical perfidy and ingratitude and envy,—every kind of men, and every kind of vice had a share, and, in a manner, imbrued themselves in that Sacred Blood. And those, too, who should have been present to console the dying Saviour, by their absence filled His soul with pain, and incurred the reproach of abandoning their Lord in the hour of His desolation, when He was reconciling the world with His Father, and purchasing their salvation. Where were the apostles? Some had denied or betrayed Him; all, but one, had fled and abandoned Him.

There stood by the cross, two whose absence would have been a greater consolation to Jesus Christ than their presence. For we cannot but believe that the sight of His Blessed Mother agonized still more the tender heart of Him Who had wept at the tomb of Lazarus and over the ill-fated Jerusalem. And if there were any from whom he would willingly have hid His torments, it was this Blessed Mother and the beloved disciple John, whom He had allowed to lean upon His breast at the last supper. Willingly would Christ have spared them the soul-crushing agony which the sight of His crucifixion should produce. But the sword of grief was to pierce their hearts. The work of redemption was to be completed in their presence. She was to receive another son; John was to receive a mother. We know what cruel tyrants have done in by-gone history to increase the tortures of those whom they put to death. They have had these victims tortured and executed in the presence of parents and brothers and sisters; and no more cruel pain than that can be devised, to wrench the souls of those who suffer, and of those who see them suffer. The mother of the Maccabees was present when her sons were slaughtered. She exhorted them to be true to their God, and by her motherly fortitude, inspired their own. We must believe that she was filled with untold anguish in beholding the dying torments of her faithful children. Not less, surely, was the agony of the Blessed Virgin; not less, surely, was the agony of Jesus Christ Himself, in knowing that these torments went

through her soul. "Who is the man that would not weep, if he saw the Mother of God in such affliction?"

It has happened in history to men condemned to punishment and even to death, and may be unjustly, that much has been done to lessen their sufferings by the way in which they have been inflicted. To-day when capital punishment is visited upon a criminal, everything that is possible is done to diminish the pain and anguish. The law is satisfied with his death, and objects not to any means of rendering the infliction tolerable or even easy. Every gratification is allowed consistent with the sentence. There is a certain magnanimity and generosity in dealing with these victims. In the treatment of Jesus Christ there was none of this. If He had been guilty of the charges alleged, He should have been punished according to law; but because He was not guilty, but innocent, and put to death because He was innocent, His barbarous executioners felt that they had a right to inflict with impunity all kinds of torture and suffering upon Him.

What occasion was there for the manner of His apprehension, by the mob, led by Judas and the servants of the high priests? "Ye are come out, as if to a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me. I sat among you daily teaching in the temple, and ye did not lay hands on Me." He was thus treated as a thief, as a trespasser, as one of those between whom He was executed: no regard paid to His inalienable rights as a man not yet convicted of wrong. All this was because

the Jews knew that He was innocent; and being innocent they tortured Him: torturing Him because He was innocent and, therefore, having no right at all to molest Him or to cause Him pain, they felt no restraint upon them, no limit to their barbarity, and did Him all the wrong they could. Many good works had He wrought among them. For which of these did they persecute Him? He had healed their sick, He had cured every manner of disease, He had even raised their dead. How could He have deserved such treatment? Or was it that the debt of gratitude which they owed Him was too great to be borne, and that they resolved to destroy the sense of obligation, in reckless and cruel ingratitude, by an instinct not unknown among men?

Christ suffered in His good name. He was calumniated. He was charged with that which was manifestly untrue. No more treacherous lies ever proceeded from human lips, than those which the Jews brought against our Lord and Saviour. "He wished to make Himself king," they said. The very opposite was true. For, when they sought to make Him king, He fled. We found "This man declaring that He could destroy the temple of God and in three days rebuild it." If our Lord had said that He could destroy the temple of Jerusalem and in three days rebuild it, He would have spoken only the truth; but He had not spoken of the Jewish temple. Challenged for a proof of His Divinity, He had given it: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "But He spoke of the temple of

His body." The false witnesses departed but little or scarcely from the words used by Christ; but they departed altogether from their sense: and this was the rankest calumny. It was a species of slander that many people would fain persuade themselves they can employ without sin. They pretend that so long as they confine themselves to the words, or to the words but slightly altered, which they delate as a crime or offence, they are guiltless. Calumny consists not only in charging with what was never uttered, but in imputing a meaning to words uttered that was never intended. Therefore calumny may be closely allied to seeming truth. Sometimes the greater the literal truth, the greater the lie. It is seldom that words pass from mouth to mouth without, at least, unintentional change. Hence the danger of misrepresentation. Let this be but intentional, and you have the sin of defamation, from which effects grievous and irreparable so often issue.

If there ever was one who endured contumely, or insult to the face, it was our Blessed Lord. And this is one of the things most trying to human sensibility, and most apt to make the blood boil, and to goad one to resentment and deeds of vengeance. Contumely was shown to Him in the manner of His seizure; contumely in His treatment before Annas and Caiphas; the vilest contumely, when "They spat in His face, and buffeted Him; and some struck His face with the palms of their hands.—Saying: Prophecy to us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" Among the others,

by one of the high priests' attendants, to whom He meekly replied: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me?" Contumely by the soldiers taunting Him and making a mockery of Him: clothing Him with the purple cloak, crowning Him with thorns, putting in His right hand a reed as a sceptre, bowing the knee before Him and saluting Him as the king of the Jews,—all in supremest derision. Contumely when brought before Herod: treated as a fool and compelled to assume the white garment of a fool. Contumely when He endured the opprobrious, blasphemous language of those who passed by, wagging their heads at Him, and saying: "Vah, Thou Who destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thyself: if Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." And when greeted with the same reiterated ironical challenge by the chief priests with the scribes and ancients and robbers: "He saved others; himself he cannot save: if he is King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." There is no parallel in history for the contumely and opprobrium which were heaped upon Jesus Christ in every moment and in every stage of His passion and death. There is nothing, less than manifest miracles, which so clearly exhibits His Divine character as the imperturbable tranquillity and lofty serenity of mind, and utter humility and resignation and patience, with which He bore these multiplied and exasperating insults and outrages.

III.

Jesus Christ was condemned as innocent and because innocent and not because guilty. Sad, indeed, is it for even the guilty to be condemned to death. There is something in it that moves the sympathy of even the most ardent lover of justice. There are those who would cheerfully abandon capital punishment, convinced that the interests of justice would be better secured by some less penalty. Desirable, indeed it would be, that the reformation of the culprit, the security of life, and the welfare of society, could be ensured by some chastisement other than that of death. But who will measure the height and depth of the injustice of a man dying because He is innocent and because He is adjudged innocent? Who can declare the anguish of the soul of any man who, innocent, is condemned to any punishment, much more if condemned to death? Who would not be willing, if aware of such an instance, to do all in his power to rescue such an innocent victim? But this was the case of our Divine Lord. He was innocent. He was declared innocent. Pilate asked, "What evil hath He done; I find no guilt in Him. Look you to it." Pilate's wife admonished him: "Have thou nothing to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered many things in a dream this day concerning Him." Even His enemies acknowledged His innocence; even Judas who betrayed Him came and cast the thirty pieces of silver before the high priests, con-



THIS IS THE PRICE OF THE SOUL.

fessing, that "he had sinned by betraying innocent blood." Innocent beyond all manner of doubt was He in Pilate's and in Herod's mind. "Nothing worthy of death hath He done," was Herod's judgment. "And he spurned Him, and mocked Him, and sent Him back to Pilate." Like Judas, Pilate was looking out for temporal advantage, and being a politician did not dare resist the Jews, for whom indeed he had no love, lest they should report anything against him to Cæsar.

Looking upon Jesus, the Roman governor was overcome by His heavenly demeanor and the sublime tokens of innocence which shone in Him. He believed that He was, truly, the King of the Jews; since he presented Him as such to the people, and afterwards refused to accede to the demand of the priests, to qualify the inscription which he had written to be placed over His head. He was alarmed when he heard Him declare, that "His kingdom was not of this world," and that "Everyone that is of the truth heareth His voice." "And he went out again to the Jews, and said to them: I find no guilt in Him." Lest Jesus should be such as He proclaimed Himself, Pilate was only too anxious to release Him and to shun the responsibility of His death, putting it on the chief priests; saying: "Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him: for I find no guilt in Him." But hearing the ominous cry of the Jews, "If thou release this man, thou art not a friend of Cæsar: for whoever maketh himself king, speaketh against Cæsar," after a little further parleying

with them, "he delivered Him to them, to be crucified." After thus sinning grievously by his consent, although reluctant, and imbruing his hands in innocent blood, he at once sought to purify himself with the idle ceremony of washing them, as if that material ablution could cleanse his soul from the rank guilt of failing to assert himself as the dispenser of justice and the defender of outraged innocence. Even as the sworn magistrate of imperial Rome, whose jurisprudence in the administration of justice has been the admiration and example of the world, he was ignominiously derelict. He met the death of a time-server: like Judas, he died by his own hands.

All these torments of mind and body, which Christ underwent, and others which He could possibly endure, though countless, and untold in agony, were small and not to be compared with still other sufferings that He with unutterable patience and submission bore, out of love for men and to redeem them from their sins. His passion and death were self-imposed. He could not suffer, as I have already said, unless He willed it. "He was offered, because He willed it." "Christ, through the Holy Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, to cleanse our conscience from dead works, to worship the living God." "So Christ was offered once to take away the sins of many." He died indeed for all: He took away **the** sins of all who willed it. "Behold I come, to do Thy will, O God. By which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

once." He voluntarily suspended the consciousness of innocence that filled His soul and felt Himself to be that which He could never be,—as laden with sin, and an outcast from the Eternal Father because of His own sins. He suffered not only from men: He suffered from Himself, and He suffered from the Eternal Father. How willingly He subjected Himself to the horrors of the crucifixion and how utterly bent He was on draining the chalice of suffering to the bottom, is seen in the sublime self-denial of refusing the wine and gall which they offered Him before the execution, and which would have stupefied His faculties and rendered Him, in some measure, insensible to pain.

On the hill of Calvary, Jesus Christ was raised between heaven and earth, as the Divinely appointed atonement for the sins of men. The Eternal Father looked down upon Him as such. He had sent Him into the world to suffer and to die. He did not abandon His purpose nor lessen the penalty, when the hour had come; but allowed the full measure of His vengeance to fall upon Jesus Christ, as the Divinely chosen expiation for the salvation of mankind. The Psalmist tells us that, if God's curse falls upon the sinner, it penetrates into his entrails as water and passes into his bones as oil. This is the very type of the sinner accursed by Almighty God. Jesus Christ took the place of this sinner. He in Whom there was no sin and could be no sin, took the place of all sinners, and God let fall upon Him the full extent of His indignation. He, as St. Paul says,

in "Whom there was no sin, was made sin for us"; and the anger of Almighty God did cover His body as a vestment; the anger of Almighty God did penetrate into His entrails as water; the anger of Almighty God did pass into His bones as oil. Every measure of the torrent and deluge of Divine anger reserved for the sinner, fell upon Jesus Christ Who had taken his place. On that day, where was the Eternal Father Who, three times at least during the life of Christ, had declared that He was His only begotten Son? "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." "I both have glorified My name, and will still glorify it." On Tabor, the voice of the Most High had been heard proclaiming that Jesus was His beloved Son. But where was this voice on Calvary's hill? where was there a sign of Divine protection? Elias did not come to liberate Him, because the work of man's redemption was not to be frustrated by the taunt of the chief priests: "Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." And even if He had come down from the cross, they would not have believed Him. It was performing as great a miracle as that of coming down from the cross, that gave occasion for His apprehension, and sufferings, and death. It was because He raised Lazarus from the dead, that the priests became alarmed, and declared that all the people would go after Him, unless something would be done; it was, I say, because of this stupendous miracle, that Christ was apprehended, and persecuted, and, finally, put to death.

The Jews did not deprive Christ of His life. He deprived Himself of it. It was not through weakness that Christ died. It was by an effort of His omnipotence. He was both priest and victim. He showed His strength in the loud voice with which He gave up His Spirit. He showed that He had died even before the usual time, by the surprise of Pilate that He was already dead; it was before the average time lived by those executed on the cross. He had "power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again." And "no man could take His life from Him." "He died because He willed it." The executioners were but the instruments which Divine Providence employed for the sacrifice. Christ Himself had suspended the Godhead from His soul; and when He exclaimed, "Eli, Eli, lamma sabachtani?" or, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He proclaimed, for all time, the depth and reality of His sufferings. And thus the Father visited upon Him all the punishment, and received from Him all the satisfaction, that was due from the race of men. Jesus Christ, the Divinely appointed Victim, the all-sufficient Atonement, offered up His soul into the hands of His Eternal Father in obedience to the Father's eternal will and counsel, and to His own.

Sin did it: sin of which we think so little; sin with which we are so familiar; sin upon which we never reflect; sin that to so many of us is as the air we breathe. Sin is rebellion against God; it is that which, if it were possible, would cause the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things,

to cease to exist; sin would annihilate God; and when the Divine Victim for its expiation came into the world, sin clutched at Him, and destroyed Him in so far as it was given to it to destroy. Christ suffered for all sin, original, and actual in its different kinds and degrees. The powers of hell revelled in the thought of Christ's sufferings; "This is your hour, and that of the powers of darkness," said Jesus Christ. Sin destroys our eternal life; sin entails upon us eternal woe. The only fit satisfaction for sin, is the eternal punishment that God has prepared for it in the next life. Sin is an evil which the human mind cannot conceive; no one but God can realize what it is, because it is an infinite and everlasting disorder. He alone Whom it assails can comprehend it; hence He alone can declare what sacrifice or atonement is necessary to expiate all guilt, and to make amends to His Divine Majesty for the irreparable insult which it offers Him.

However, we behold what sin is, in the fact that it destroys, eternally, our soul. Eternal punishment is the just requital for sin; nothing less can satisfy the justice of God. If sin is so great an evil that it kills the soul, and inflicts upon it everlasting misery, it is easy to see that nothing less than the death—not the eternal death, but the temporal death—of God-made man is a sufficient equivalent for the eternal death and woe that sin brings with it. The temporal death of Jesus Christ is, owing to Divine indulgence, sufficient compensation to the justice of God, for the eternal punishment that sin inflicts upon everyone that commits

it. He that yields to sin seeks after a pleasure that is unlawful. He introduces into the moral world a discord and disturbance; the equilibrium that God has established is destroyed. Harmony can only be restored by something that will destroy the strange disorder of sin; and that is suffering; that is pain; that is punishment for the forbidden pleasure of transgression. There must be inflicted chastisement sufficient to satisfy the justice of God for this anomaly of sin and disordered gratification. Behold the reasons for the passion and death of Jesus Christ. By His sufferings, the harmony or even adjustment of the moral world is restored. All the evil of the world comes, as St. John tells us, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: human glory, human passion, human attachment to sense. Jesus Christ enduring the pangs of His agony and the anguish of His death, brings a curative to this threefold source of all evil. If Christ had shown Himself self-indulgent, if He had shown Himself prone to the pleasures of this life, what a reckless encouragement would not all human passion have received? In the circumstances of His birth and life, and, particularly, by those of His agony and death, Christ shows us how to correct this threefold source of all evil: read in their light, how unprofitable and contemptible are all the pleasures of life, all gratifications of the body, all the acquisitions of avarice, all the desires of worldly honors, all attachment to human life and length of days! In the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, we find a threefold sovereign remedy for

all sin; for the lust of the eyes, for the pride of life, for the lust of the flesh.

We may ask ourselves, were the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ necessary for the redemption of mankind? and we answer, with St. Thomas, that they were necessary in order to fulfil God's eternal counsels; for the Lamb was slain from the beginning, in God's eternal fore-knowledge. But we may go farther and ask: Could man have been saved at any less price; and, if so, why had God foreordained so great a ransom? We answer that it is impossible for us to scrutinize the wisdom and the mysteries of Almighty God. We cannot tell what may have been the depth of the Divine purpose, in decreeing from everlasting, the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. We cannot tell what design, known only to Himself, may have thus determined His eternal wisdom. It is not in human comprehension, to understand the height and depth and breadth of the Divine economy. We know that man could have been saved at a far less sacrifice. Why God, then, did not require a far less sacrifice, is a mystery which it is not given to mortal, nor to angelic intelligence to fathom. We might meditate upon the subject all the years of life, until our mind would sink under the task, and the only answer we could find, is that of St. Thomas; namely, that God from everlasting foreordained the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, as the result of His goodness and love. Just as when He made the world to reveal His power, He made the illimitable world which we see around us; and

as when He would exhibit His justice, He opened the deep abyss to be filled with fallen angels and reprobate souls. When God works, He does not work by measure: so, when He would redeem man, He redeems him infinitely: with a boundless, an unutterable, a Divine ransom.

Whatever may be understood about the inscrutable purposes of the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, which, I say, it is not within the compass of the human mind to explore, there can be no doubt that this Divine Sacrifice was the most fitting expiation for the redemption of mankind. It was the manner worthiest of God. It was worthy of Him that, when He would manifest His infinite goodness, He should manifest it in an infinite manner. And, therefore, by the incarnation and death of His Divine Son, His goodness was revealed in this unlimited, incomprehensible way.

It was worthy of Jesus Christ thus to suffer: thus to atone for the sins of men, and thus to redeem their souls. Think not for one moment that it was unbecoming that the Eternal Son of God should become incarnate and die. Bear always in mind, that the main purpose of Jesus Christ in this unutterable Mystery, was to vindicate the glory of His Father, to make amends to His insulted majesty, to undo the evil consequences of sin, and to destroy sin itself, by making it of no effect, and by evoking from it greater good to men and increased glory to God. Christ saw that the evil of sin had been introduced into His Father's creation. He saw that no satisfaction could be offered that would be a full equiva-

lent for it; that no one man, nor all the sons of men together, could wash out the malice of that sin, by offering themselves as an expiation. He determined that it should be destroyed, and in such a way that man's redemption would be even greater than man's perversity: that is, that more glory would redound to God from man's redemption, by the shedding of His blood, than had been offered insult and outrage from man's transgressions. Bear in mind always that it was not primarily for man's sake that Christ died: it was for God's sake and for man's sake, in order that the Divine glory might be shielded and advanced. Worthy, then, was it of Jesus Christ to suffer for His Eternal Father.

Our Redeemer, in His life and death, gave to mankind an example of retirement, of patience, of purity, of humility, of obedience, of detachment,—of every virtue; and this example was necessary to render the redemption fruitful of virtues in the souls of men: to undo the evils and vices that had been engendered in the race by the sin of our first parents and the sins of mankind in general. Whatever, then, may be said about the absolute need of the passion and death of Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind, there can be no doubt that it was the most condign atonement to compensate the justice of God, to vindicate His glory, to atone for the sins of men, to sanctify their souls, to declare the enormity of sin and the truth of the existence of eternal torments.

Jesus Christ died for each and every one of us. He did not die for mankind in general. This is

not saying enough. Each and every one of us was present to Him as He agonized in Gethsemane or as He hung upon the cross. Just as He gives His body and blood, not to all men in general, but to each man in particular ; so did He impart the merits of His passion and death : no one received more ; no one received less : because all received, it does not, therefore, follow that anyone received less. Just as the glorious in heaven all see God : because all see Him, no one sees less of Him ; each one sees as much, as if no one else were there to enjoy Him. In the same way, Jesus Christ died, not for all men in general, but for each and every man in particular.

We have dwelt upon the passion and death of Jesus Christ ; and we may now say to ourselves, how hardened must have been the Jews to thus inflict suffering and death upon Him Who was innocent. But, my brethren, let us not blame the Jews over much. Look a little more closely, and we shall find that it was not the Jews ; they were but the instruments. It was the sinner that crucified Jesus Christ. Christ Himself upon the cross, besought His Eternal Father, to “forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And we have the authority of the whole Church, when we say, that it is sinners who crucified Jesus Christ, and who do know what they do. They know that Jesus was our Divine Master ; not only our Master, but Son of God ; not only Son of God, but Son of God Who died for us sinners. The sinner knows that the Son of God died for his sins. It is not, then, the Jews : it is ourselves : it is our

sins that have crucified Jesus Christ. Speak not, then, too hardly of our brother, the Jew; but look closely into ourselves, and we shall find that we are the real culprits: the Jews were but the mere physical instruments, carrying out the purposes of a providence which, probably, they little understood.

We, too, forfeit the passion and death of Jesus Christ, we render it of no avail to ourselves, not only this, but we make it positively injurious to us, if, by our sins, we recrucify the Son of God. For Christ, while He has redeemed us, still expects that we correspond with His design of saving us. As St. Augustin says, "He will not save us without our co-operation." If, then, we fail to apply His merits and grace to ourselves, we not only derive no benefit therefrom, but we render ourselves more guilty. Hence, it were far better not to have known the truth, than, knowing it, not to live up to it. Far better never to have known Jesus Christ, than, knowing Him, to have recrucified Him by our sins. How do we recrucify Him? Who does not know? How many insult Him to His very face! He was once sold for thirty pieces of silver. Ah, how many sell Him still, for one piece of silver! You curse the Jew who sold him for filthy lucre; and at the same time you commit mortal sin and recrucify Him, for a day's profit or an hour's gratification! You say that Judas deserved the words of Christ, that "it were better for him not to have been born." Well, what do you deserve? for you sell Him for even less than Judas received.

How often are the Church and its interests sacrificed for worldly considerations? The crucifixion of Christ is renewed daily by mortal sinners; and His mystical body is persecuted, even as His own body during His passion and death.

The Eternal God receives more glory from one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ, or from one moment of His agony, than He receives insult from the greatest of the reprobate. Hence, though mankind persist in sin and in being lost, God is already glorified by the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, offered to His offended Majesty. Again: though you should have deserved hell, and ten thousand hells, one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ, one moment of His agony, is greater before God than your guilt; and it is capable of blotting out your sins. The incarnation, life, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ were more than abundant to save all mankind; more than abundant to forgive all the sin done from Adam to Christ, and from Christ to our own time, and from our own time until time shall be no more. If each one of us were laden with this incalculable, insupportable weight of sin, one hour of Christ's agony, one hour of Christ's suffering upon the cross—what did I say—one hour of His agony, one hour of His suffering? no; one moment of His agony, one pang of His pain, would be enough to cancel our sins and save our souls. One tear shed by Jesus Christ, one groan or aspiration of His to the Eternal Father, would be potent enough to destroy all the sins of men and of fallen angels. With what unutterable consola-

tion and unshaken hope, should not this fill us! with what unlimited confidence should we not throw ourselves into the arms of Jesus Christ, knowing this Divine power of even one drop of His blood, one stroke of the scourge, one moment of the agony, one sigh of His sent up to the Eternal Father! any one of which would be enough to turn the blackest sinner into the most glorious saint. This, then, is the holy trust with which the passion and death of Jesus Christ should inspire each and every one of us; at the same time we should be filled with alarm, lest we be unfaithful to this Divine ransom. Ever bear in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us: died for us; that is, for those who will have Him die for them. The blood of Christ will save us; the blood of Christ can damn us:—save us if we be faithful; damn us if we be faithless.

Eternal Jesus, Lord of infinite Majesty, Saviour of souls, Avenger of Divine justice, Incarnate Love of the Father, grant that we may not be of the number of those who make void Thy Atonement.—Still less, that we may be of the number of those to whom, as to the Jews and Gentiles of old, Thy death is a stumbling-block and a folly. Grant that we may never by our sins renew the blows and the scoffings and the contumelies which Thou didst receive in the course of Thy Passion. Grant that we may never by our sins renew, in the least that in us lies, the agony of Gethsemane and the dereliction on the cross. Grant us, Lord Jesus, that we may now, at length, learn to imitate Thy Divine example: to imitate

Thy patience and mildness and resignation in Thy anguish and death. Grant that we may learn from this hour the enormity of sin and the displeasure it causes Thee and Thy Eternal Father. Grant us that the lessons we have received this day may sink deep into our souls and abide there forever.

THE ETERNITY OF HELL.

And they shall go out, and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished; and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh.—Isaiah lxvi. 24.

For an example of the just judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which also ye suffer: if yet it is just with God to repay tribulation to those who afflict you: and to you, who are afflicted, rest with us in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power, in a flame of fire, inflicting vengeance on those who know not God, and on those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power: when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to appear wonderful in all who have believed, for our testimony to you was believed, on that day.—St. Paul II. Thess. i. 5-10.

SACRED Scripture declares in language than which plainer or less unequivocal could not be employed, the eternal character of the pains of the damned. “The sinners in Sion are afraid; trembling hath seized upon the hypocrites. Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”—Isaiah xxxiii. 14. “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach to see it always” (according to one version) “to shame and everlasting contempt.”—Daniel xii. 2. “And if thy hand

or foot scandalize thee cut it off and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.”—Matt xviii. 8. “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of God and from the glory of His power.”—St. Paul II. Thess. i. 9. “But the angels who kept not their principality, but forsook their own dwelling, He hath reserved under darkness in everlasting chains for the judgment of the great day.”—Jude 6. “Then will He say to those on His left hand: Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.”—Matt. xxv. 41.

In these passages the punishment of the damned is designated everlasting fire, as identical with that of the fallen angels, everlasting chains, everlasting darkness, everlasting destruction, as that to which loss of life or limb is as nothing, everlasting reproach or contempt, everlasting burnings, devouring flames. Could human language be more explicit? What possible escape to the license of sin does it afford? Could unbelief seek for terms plainer, or less ambiguous? If Scripture wanted to declare that the torments of the damned would be eternal, could it have employed other or less unmistakable words?

Holy Scripture denies all end to the duration of the eternity of the damned, or any termination of their sufferings. This negation is stronger than any affirmation; and, in a matter which so far transcends all finite capacity, brings home to the mind the truth enunciated; in fact, it is the most

emphatic form of which human speech is capable. When revelation would teach men the unlimited duration of hell, it could not do it more effectually, than by declaring that its torments shall never end. This is a more definite and vivid idea than any attempt to declare, positively, the length of that duration. Christ declares three several times within the compass of a few sentences, that the fire of hell is unquenchable: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."—Mark ix. 43, 45, 47. St. John the Baptist declares: "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."—St. Matt. iii. 12.

The words which spontaneously rise to the mind as declarative of eternity, and which may be accounted its universally received definition, Holy Scripture applies to the duration of the torments of the damned: "And the smoke of their torments shall ascend forever and ever, neither have they rest day and night, who have adored the beast and his image, and whosoever hath received the mark of his name."—Apoc. xiv. 11.

How blind must not they be, who would think that there can be any end to the torments of the damned. Let them reflect upon the punishment of the angels, and its eternal duration. Let them ask themselves, if there has been any interruption of their punishment, or will there be any termination of it in the future? We nowhere read that they have had any redemption; we are assured that they will have none. St. Paul tells us that

“Christ did not take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham”: under the figure of one pursuing fugitives, does he represent Jesus Christ taking hold of human nature fugitive from its God, by the estrangement of sin, to redeem it. The meaning of the apostle evidently is, that Christ did not take upon Himself the redemption of the angels. Even if we were to understand the words to mean, that Christ did not assume angelic form, the meaning would still be the same: He did not take such nature, because it was not His purpose to redeem it; nor could He redeem man by assuming it and suffering therein. His atonement should be that of the race that had offended; the nature to be redeemed is the nature to be assumed. As, then, there has been no redemption for the reprobate angels, there shall be no redemption for reprobate men. While in this life there is full redemption for all the sons of man who will; after this life there is redemption for none; once the portals of life close, the damned become sharers of the fate of the fallen angels; the same sentence is uttered; they are condemned to one and the same punishment: “Depart from Me, ye wicked, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.”

We read in the Holy Scriptures that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting. Matt. xxv. 46. Who doubts that, when life eternal is awarded to the just, the word “eternal” is used as meaning never-ending, infinite in duration from the moment it is entered upon. We fondly cling to the idea of our hap-

piness being eternal ; nor, if the sense of the passage required it, would we willingly relinquish so pleasing a thought, so consoling a future. Our aspirations would confirm our judgment in its meaning of the word. But the meaning of the word is not to be determined by what we would wish, but by what we know. There is no doubt that in this place eternal life means that duration which shall know no end. It is equally true that the same word applied to the punishment reserved for the reprobate, has the same meaning of an endless duration. Willingly would our feelings and passions suggest that the word in the latter case should bear the meaning of a limited duration ; but it is against all the rules of sound judgment, and all the canons of interpretation, thus to shift the meaning of words according to our caprice. Whatever eternal means as applied to the reward of the righteous, it has the same meaning as applied to the punishment of the wicked. The same word cannot be employed in senses so essentially different, in the same sentence,—literally in one breath, a trope or figure in the next. Besides, it is absurd to suppose that a judge in declaring sentence would employ ambiguous language, and assign punishment to the wicked in words capable of being misunderstood, and rewards to the just in language admitting of no mistake. If there should be any difference in the language employed to the just and to the wicked, respectively, it should be even more unmistakably exact to the latter, as importing so grievous a penalty. St. Chrysostom says: “ Hell is threatened in the

Gospel oftener than heaven is promised ; and although so frequent is the mention of hell, and so various and multiform are the descriptions of the punishments that await the damned, yet never is it indicated, either explicitly and openly, or implicitly and obscurely, that what is said of fire and of flame and of everlasting burnings, is to be understood metaphorically." Comment., Ps. vii.

Perhaps, some one may say, " What if the sinner should repent and sue to be forgiven : can the mercy of God resist his cry for pardon ? " Certainly, if there were any prospect of future forgiveness, this conversion and repentance would be an indispensable prerequisite. But they amuse themselves with folly, who indulge such idle speculations. Hell shall not be for probation, or repentance, or reformation. This life is the land of probation, this the season of repentance, this the opportunity of reformation. Mercy, hope, and pardon extend over its whole length. Here God is to be sought and the merits of Christ applied to the souls of men. All this ends with life : the reign of justice then begins. The damned have been cast out of His kingdom into exterior darkness, where forevermore there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Their fate is irrevocably sealed ; they have been cursed with an eternal curse. Neither the goodness nor mercy of God, despised during life, can be applied to their souls : the Sacrifice of Christ, the price and ransom of every human soul, shall have no imprecatory power for those who, during the time when salvation was to be wrought, made void for

themselves that atonement and grieved forever the Holy Spirit of God. He bears so necessary and intrinsic a hate to sin, and love for virtue, that there can be no conversion or liberation of the reprobate in hell.

The Blood of the Lamb was shed from the beginning in God's eternal counsels. If either the goodness of God, or the redeeming merits of Christ, would ever abbreviate or extenuate the torments of the damned, they would never have entered that abode of misery. It would have been as powerful to stay their entrance, as to rescue them in eternity. If the blood of Christ were to exhaust the malice of the sins of the damned and to be exchanged for the unending fire of hell, it had been equally powerful to save them from all torment in that place of punishment.

The damned could not correspond with grace, even if vouchsafed. They are, in a manner, confirmed in iniquity; their perverse will is obstinate and unalterable in sin. They may fear and tremble, like the devils; but conversion is as far from one as from the other. By choice and adoption, they are the children of the devil; they resemble their parent; their will and works are one with his. Far from loving,—the more they realize the loss which they have endured and the impossibility of recovery, the greater their despair: the greater their despair, the greater their hate and bitterness and rage against the Lord. The more they understand of His perfections and attributes, the more vividly do they feel the greatness and the irreparable character of their punishment.

While acknowledging the justice of God which they suffer, they cannot love Him Who makes them miserable ; exclusion of Divine love is one of the greatest tortures of the damned.

There are those who say that, even granting the eternity of hell to be explicitly revealed, nevertheless, we must not believe that God, infinitely good, will ever visit so condign and mysterious a punishment upon His creatures: that Divine goodness will constrain Divine justice to alleviate, and even to terminate, the sufferings of the damned ; and that after, what they term, suitable expiation and purification, all shall come to be saved and to enjoy the happiness of heaven. They tell us that these threats of eternal punishment are only meant to intimidate the wicked, and to urge and hasten them to repentance ; and to express the malice of sin in itself and its hatefulness to God, when viewed apart from His goodness ; which, however, will save the sinner from an eternal doom. If the revelation of the just judgment of Almighty God may be likened to the hasty language of an irate parent, or the harmless threats of the nursery, we must remark that they perform a very ungracious and sinful task, who try to frustrate the Divine counsel and to hinder these threats from accomplishing their purpose. If God uttered these denunciations for the purpose alleged, is it ours to cross His design, to expose His hidden purpose, and to render nugatory what He would have been pleased to ordain ? But, away with such trifling. God will infallibly do what His wisdom has decreed and His truth is pledged to.

The word of God is not as the word of man. It is the same forever. He reveals nothing but what His Divine intellect contemplating His Divine essence knows to be true. And He knows that mortal sin calls for eternal punishment.

Even if hell were not eternal, I fail to see what license the sinner should thence draw for sinning. Be it as short as the sinner would have it, all the sinful delights of this life could never compensate for its sufferings. One moment's agony in hell would be a sorry exchange for unbridled and lifelong gratification in sin. Though the tortures of hell were to last but a thousand, or even one hundred years, nay, even one year, it were sheer madness to undergo them for all the sin that this world affords. I never understood that men were reconciled to pain, even in this world, by the assurance that it would last but a few years; and still less by the consolation that it would not last their lifetime. The certainty that it would last but a few minutes, or a very short time, may nerve the sufferer to undergo a painful operation; but tell him that the operation will not last for years, or his lifetime, and he will think you mock him. Few would have a tooth drawn if it required three hours' torture. The thought that suffering will not last forever should be a poor solace for those suffering. Its not being eternal would be an absurd reason for contemning the pain of hell. The shortest day in hell will be more than enough for the sinner. Silly in the last degree would he be who would give a loose to sin simply because its punishment would not be everlasting.

In contemplating the works of God, we should not regard them in the light of a wisdom merely human. The wisdom of God is infinitely higher than that of man, and is, frequently, entirely opposed thereto. What may be wisdom with man, may be folly with God; and Divine wisdom may appear little short of folly to those who do not reflect that there must necessarily be an essential difference between the intelligence of an eternal being, infinite in His nature and all-powerful in His works, and man, His creature: the being of an hour, finite in himself, and finite in all his conceptions. The very meaning of mystery is nothing else than the inability of man's limited intelligence to comprehend the infinite nature and attributes and works of the God-head. Human intelligence would never have conceived as possible, or approved as wise, the plan upon which it has pleased Almighty God to create man; it would never have been able to reconcile with its ideas, that he should have been endowed with free will; that, in consequence of this free will, he can fall into sin and forfeit his eternal inheritance. —That it would have required all the wisdom and love manifested in the Incarnation to rescue him from the consequences of his ill-used freedom; and that, in spite of the plan of redemption had recourse to, most men would, probably, in the exercise of the same freedom, and by the abuse of the graces of redemption, be forever and irretrievably lost. Nevertheless, this is the very plan which Divine wisdom has seen fit to establish; whatever human wisdom may think to the con-

trary. Let this reflection be applied to the subject of the eternity of hell which God in His omniscience has established, and by His revelation made known to us as a place of torment, unending in its duration, for those who transgress the moral law and depart this life with these transgressions inexpiated. However little we may imagine such punishment to be reconcilable with our notion of His infinite goodness, He has revealed such retribution; therefore, it is just and in entire harmony with the Divine goodness. We should square our idea of goodness with this revealed fact; we cannot reject the fact because it seems not to harmonize with our notions.

We hear it sometimes said that a finite being is incapable of infinite punishment. We must correct our meaning of words: when we apply infinite to the pain of the damned, or eternal to its duration, we are not to be understood as using it in its strict philosophical meaning; as it can be applied to God alone. It is only in conception that we can separate infinite or eternal from the being to whom it belongs. As eternal means without beginning and without succession and without end, it evidently appertains to God alone. As hell has had a beginning and has succession and will have no end, it is clear that the word infinite, as applied to it, means, rather, indefinite, or infinite in a loose and general sense. A finite being is not capable of enduring pain infinite in degree of intensity; but a finite being is capable of enduring pain indefinite in duration, or pain which, although it has beginning and succes-

sion, yet shall be without end; and it is in this sense, that infinite or eternal is to be applied to the torments of the damned.

It is sometimes said that God is too good to punish the creature, eternally. Again our ideas are confused: we should not think of Divine goodness after our notion of human goodness. In man, goodness is the result of his constitutional tendency and the product, frequently, of mere feeling or sympathy. It is often opposed to what wisdom and justice would dictate; in fact, the more it is opposed to justice, the greater, frequently, is supposed to be the goodness. God's goodness is not, thus, unevenly balanced with His other attributes. While He is essential goodness, He must ever remain the Being of infinite wisdom and justice; and even as human justice, viewed as such, is often the very ideal of human goodness, so in God what seems at first to be inexorable justice, may be the very ideal of the loftiest goodness. God's attributes cannot war with one another. Let those who are astonished that He should inflict torments upon the guilty, look around them, and they will see that the permission of suffering, even upon the innocent, is not in conflict with the laws of His goodness. Contemplate the hell that is continually going on in this world, and which His gracious providence permits. How often do the innocent undergo the greatest wrongs, and even death! What a glimmer from hell is seen in the outrage of the young, the confiding, the unsuspecting, and in the murder that may be committed to choke this crime crying to heaven for ven-

geance! Consider how frequently the good endure the most grievous want, while the wicked revel in affluence, or are raised to the highest posts. Behold the profound ignorance of true religion, the infidelity, scepticism, superstition, the untold slavish immorality, the abject and hopeless misery, in which a great part of mankind lies engulfed! We are still suffering the effects of original sin in which we could have had no personal participation. All the evil, moral and physical, which our race has ever suffered and will suffer to the end, is to be ascribed to that original estrangement. If the world is such a hell, with the knowledge of God and His retributions, which are not wholly extinguished in the souls of men, into what a hell would society be plunged if the knowledge of God were entirely blotted out, and if the retributions of the next life and other restraining influences were entirely cast aside, and everyone gave unbridled license to the longings and lusts and licentiousness of his corrupt heart! Yet, no one blames God or impeaches the laws of His goodness, for the permission of these so great evils. If, then, in the soul of the individual, or in the body of human society, He can permit this pain and agony and wrong and disorder, which are a foretaste and a prelude of hell, why may He not permit a hell after this life, infinite, if not in intensity, infinite, at least, in duration? The punishment of the damned cannot for a moment perturb the peace of God, or interrupt the happiness which He finds in the contemplation of His Divine essence. He rejoices in the execution of His laws,

not with any such feeling as men sometimes find in contemplating the misfortune or punishment of their enemy, but because He sees in the sufferings of the damned, the fulfilment of His justice and the vindication of His providence in creating man to manifest His glory.

We must ever bear in mind that God's nature and attributes are infinite; while His actions are not exhaustive of His power, yet they all shadow forth His infinity. Whatever He does, He does in a supreme, infinite manner. When He would show forth His omnipotence, He creates the vast illimitable universe. When He would proclaim His love, and redeem the souls of men, He bestows upon us a copious, inexhaustible redemption and ordains the incarnation and death of the Godhead. When He would manifest His justice, He casts the angels from heaven to everlasting suffering. When He would declare His horror of sin, He condemns not only the sinner but all his posterity. What wonder if, as the eternal retribution of sin, He would create hell with its unending duration and inconceivable torments, at once to indicate His sovereign displeasure at sin and to deter the sinner; or undeterred, to avenge His justice? The greater the love and mercy we condemn, the greater the wrath that we invoke. If He can pardon without limit, He can punish without limit.

In human society men are punished with forfeiture of goods, perpetual exile, and attainder of blood. The good government of society has been found to require such punishments. The highest

human wisdom and virtue have approved of them. Can we deny to God the rights whose exercise we approve in man? If human government has found such punishments necessary, why should they not be necessary to the moral government of men? If they have been productive of great good in the former case, why should they not be in this? And if no one has blamed human authority for the infliction of such chastisements, nor called in question its right to employ them, why should we impeach the providence of God in ordaining them to secure the course of His providence, or call in question His absolute right to inflict them?

In human society men are frequently punished with death. This is a punishment as eternal as man can inflict, because human power extends not beyond the deprivation of this life and can only kill the body. It is eternal, because it may exclude him from eternal life by closing further opportunity of earning it. It is eternal, as well because it is an irreparable infliction: no human power can restore what it takes away. Human wisdom cannot conceive, nor can human power execute, a greater chastisement. If, then, human legislation for the good of society can ordain so grievous a penalty, can we deny to God the same power, or dare to reproach the wisdom which ordains it? If human wisdom can inflict a punishment infinite in proportion to its power, why may not God inflict a penalty proportioned to His infinite nature?

Who would be deterred from a long life,—say seventy or eighty years of pleasure, by the fear

of an hour's or a moment's suffering? Who would not summon up all his courage to endure the temporary punishment, in order to obtain the long course of gratification and delight? Yet, if we are to conceive the pains of the damned to have an end, their longest duration, if limited, would be incomparably less to the eternity that would yet remain, than would be one moment's suffering in this world to the longest period of human life. If hell were to cease after ten million of ages, there would yet remain an eternity as long as if no diminution had been made. What would have passed away, would be incalculably less to what would still remain, than would be one hour or one moment of human life to the seventy or eighty years which usually compose it. As, therefore, a man would not be deterred from seventy or eighty years' pleasure for one moment's suffering, so neither would he be deterred by a punishment limited in its duration, and which would be but a point compared with what was to follow,—which would be infinitely less in the interminable ages of eternity, than any period however long in the course of human life.

Eternal punishment alone proclaims the infinite Majesty of God Whom sin offends. Every sin should be punished in a manner proportioned to its nature. A finite offence calls for a finite punishment. Every offence assumes a gravity commensurate with the rank of him offended. But, as God is of infinite rank, sin assumes an infinite malice; and, therefore, deserves an infinite punishment. No other punishment can make amends to His

outraged dignity, and at the same time exhaust the infinite malice of sin. An insult offered to God is not to be accounted as an insult offered to man. Accordingly, the punishment of such an offence is not to be measured by that due to man's violated honor. Sin would, in its nature, dethrone God if it were possible,—it is levelled at the Lord and Maker of all things. Behold the punishment inflicted upon the angels, upon Adam, and the ransom that had to be paid for our sins; and learn the enormity of sin and the punishment which it deserves. Consider what must be the malice of sin and the hatred God bears it, in the sufferings and death of Christ, viewed as the necessary and Divinely appointed means of our redemption; and, in consequence, what must be the gigantic evil of sin, and what must be the punishment prepared for it by Almighty God. Consider, if a hell, eternal in duration, and inconceivable in suffering, is too much for an evil which shed the Blood of the Incarnate God!

Every evil irreparable in itself and in its effects, is necessarily eternal in its character. Such an evil calls for a chastisement proportionate; which, therefore, must likewise be eternal. It must never be forgotten that mortal sin, in itself, is irremediable and has no claim to pardon. It introduces into the moral world a disorder which, of itself, it can never remove. As virtue, which is the observance of order, has an eternal merit; sin, as its opposite, must have an eternal repugnance to God as the Author of order. No satisfaction or expiation that can be offered for sin

can undo the past and render it as if sin had never been committed. If pardon is vouchsafed, it is not because sin is entitled to or calls for it ; it is the gratuitous goodness of Almighty God. Sin once committed is, in itself, sin forever ; and even a Divine atonement can exert no absolute or peremptory claim for its forgiveness. The sinner is a debtor to Divine justice forever. We are so familiar with the Expiation that has been made for sin, and because of that Expiation, the idea of pardon has become so intimately woven with the idea of sin, that it is difficult for us to separate the two, and to conceive of sin in all its horrid, native deformity, and as irremissible by its very essence. During this life, the season of probation, owing to the ineffable goodness of God, there is pardon for sin : before the Redemption, either actual or anticipated, there was no such pardon. Impossibility of pardon is the normal condition of sin, viewed in itself. After this life sin will resume this normal condition, pardon being restricted to time. He, therefore, who passes out of life with sin unforgiven, passes into that state in which there is no pardon. As there shall be no pardon, the guilt shall remain, eternally calling for an eternal punishment.

By mortal sin is destroyed the sanctifying grace which is the life of the soul, and the very essence of its union with God. The soul no longer belongs to the supernatural order ; it can be no longer sharer of the supernatural destiny which is the outcome of that order. Clearly, by its own unaided efforts, it can never rise again to that

elevated state. Thus, we see that the first and most essential effect of mortal sin is irreparable.

By mortal sin man chooses the creature to the Creator; this world to the world to come; his pleasure to the law of God; time to eternity. This perversion of his heart cannot be corrected by his own unhelped strength. If death comes upon him in this state, it seals forever and renders unalterable the choice which he has made. Thus, again, is mortal sin irremediable in this, its second most essential effect.

He who deliberately inflicts death upon his body, knowingly bids adieu forever to this world and to all that it possesses; he can never reconsider his choice and bring back the life of which, by his own will, he has robbed himself. He who inflicts death upon his soul by mortal sin, willingly deprives himself for all eternity of the happiness of the life to come; he cannot, of himself, reconsider his action and restore that life and re-establish himself the heir of the immortal kingdom which, by his own will, he has cast forever away.

He who commits mortal sin, and, particularly, he who dies in it, may be said to have the will of sinning forever. He may be said to have the will of constituting himself forever the enemy of his God. For, before he committed the sin, he understood what it was; the consequences that it entailed upon him; the insult and affront which it offered his Maker; its irremissible character; or, if pardonable, only by the indulgence of infinite mercy; the eternal punishment which was reserved for it; he realized that he had no security

of his life, and that he might die the moment after he sinned, or while he remained in it, and be eternally lost; yet, knowing all this, he resolutely risked it all and committed the sin. Besides, he found in sin a pleasure which he would have willingly prolonged to days or even years; it may be, that time itself would have been insufficient; the moment of sin he would have made eternal in its length. This unchecked pleasure he multiplied by the multitude of sins with which his life was filled. He would cheerfully have made up his mind to live forever without his God, if he could compensate himself for the loss, by an eternity or a long-continued period of sinful gratification, and in the enjoyment of the creature. He sinned to the last day of his life; it may be, to his last hour. He neglected repentance, and even if on his death-bed he went through any pretended reconciliation with God, he would have returned to sin if he had survived. Thus he showed that he had the abiding disposition and virtual purpose of sinning forever, if he lived forever. He would willingly contract an eternal guilt; he should, therefore, willingly undergo a never-ending punishment.

It cannot be questioned that the punishment of the sinner should be as long continued as his guilt. Guilt, as an evil implying violation of Divine law, is a grievous disorder; and as such invites and necessitates, as long as it subsists, a compensation or corrective which may restore the equilibrium which it disturbs, and make amends to the sovereign majesty of the Legislator Whom it offends. But the guilt of mortal sin, as we have too well

seen, abides forever ; it is an everlasting evil. If in this world it is not forgiven, it is not forgiven in the life to come. If not forgiven here, why should it be forgiven hereafter ? What is there in sin that would call for such future forgiveness ? what claim or expectation can the sinner have that any such hope awaits him ? What is there to make us believe that the wisdom and mercy of God will ever cancel it ? Unless you say, that sin is entitled in this world to a longer license ; or, that eternal punishment is excessive for mortal sin ; or, that, during this life, God does not show love sufficient, or is capable of an injustice in restricting pardon to the limits of time ; or, that the sinner's repentance in hell, if repentance there were possible, should move the mercy of God ;—unless, I say, you claim it for one or other of these reasons, there can be no possible expectation of pardon in hell. But it is folly to think, for one moment, that God's wisdom and mercy will improve by the sufferings of the damned, or that His omniscience did not understand the force of these claims, long before He decreed eternal damnation to the sinner. As to the remark of the possible repentance of the damned, we know it to be impossible ; and, even if possible, it could never alter the fact that the sinner had contracted an eternal debt to Divine justice ; and had neglected the season of pardon ; and had passed into eternity with that sin unforgiven and that debt undischarged. It is clear, therefore, that there shall be no pardon for sin in the life to come. It shall become an eternal guilt ;

and as such, as we have remarked, shall keep exacting punishment as long as it subsists. But the human soul into which this guilt is branded and which is its subject, is immortal. The guilt and the punishment, therefore, shall be as undying as the soul itself.

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