

SERMONS ON THE



BLESSED SACRAMENT

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Mary.

With love of
M. G. S.

3rd Sunday
after Trinity 1872

SERMONS
ON THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT.

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SERMONS
ON THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

PREACHED IN THE
ORATORY OF S. MARGARET'S,
EAST GRINSTED.

BY THE
REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D.,
FOUNDER AND FIRST CHAPLAIN OF THE SISTERHOOD.

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

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1871.

TO THE
REV. LAUGHTON ALISON,
CHAPLAIN OF S. MARGARET'S,
THE SISTERS
GRATEFULLY DEDICATE
THIS
LITTLE BOOK.

“DO THOU WORTHILY IN EPHRATAH,
AND BE FAMOUS IN BETHLEHEM.”

Maundy Thursday, 1870.

O GOD, WHO HAST, UNDER A WONDERFUL SACRAMENT,
LEFT US THE MEMORIAL OF THY PASSION, GRANT US
ALWAYS SO TO ADORE THE MYSTERIES OF THY BODY AND
BLOOD, THAT WE MAY CONTINUALLY BE PARTAKERS OF
THE FRUIT OF THY REDEMPTION, WHO LIVEST AND
REIGNEST, WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY GHOST,
EVER ONE GOD, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

P R E F A C E.



IN the teaching and practice of Dr Neale, as founder of S. Margaret's Sisterhood, the Blessed Sacrament occupied from the first a place of paramount dignity ; and while as yet daily Celebrations and Offices in honour of the Holy Eucharist were almost unknown among English Catholics, he taught his Sisters to venerate it with fervent, vigorous love and reverence, and gave them the fullest opportunities of Sacramental worship and Communion.

They consider, therefore, that the Sermons he has left on this subject bear a peculiar interest ; and having gathered them together, they offer them for the use of others. They do not pretend to set forth this scanty collec-

tion as a full course of instruction, which indeed it is not; but they do hope that it may prove an assistance to devotion, and to a deepened insight into the depths of Scriptural and Liturgical mysteries concerning this great subject.

The Sermon last in order was published in the first edition, only, of the First Series of "Readings for the Aged."

S. MARGARET'S CONVENT,
EAST GRINSTED, 1870.

Five additional sermons, found among Dr Neale's MSS., are appended to this Third Edition.

1871.

SERMONS
ON
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.



I.

“ Who is sufficient for these things ? ”—2 COR. ii. 16.

[*Friday, July 11, 1856, before the commencement of Daily Communion.*]

I CONFESS, my dear Sisters, that I sometimes feel almost disposed to ask the same question now. You know what we propose to begin next Sunday ; never, I hope, as a habit, to leave it off again. You know that daily we shall have the King of kings, and LORD of lords, among us ; not indeed as He is, where He shows the honour of His kingdom and the glory of His excellent Majesty to the Blessed ; but as really, as truly, as substantially, as if we beheld Him sitting at the right hand of GOD, instead of under the forms of bread and wine.

You know that daily we shall offer up that tremendous Sacrifice, not only for ourselves, for our own sins, that they may have pardon, and for our own doings, that they may find acceptance, but for the whole Church of GOD ; for the quick and dead, for those who are still running with patience the race that is set before them, and those who, having departed this life with the sign of faith, do now rest in the sleep of peace. So that those words are true of you also—*Ye have not passed this way heretofore.*

Who is sufficient for these things ? We might well come with doubt and trembling—we might well be like David, when he was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the Ark of the LORD come unto me ? If I look into my own heart, do you think that it is possible thus to invite Him, That is our LORD and GOD, to come among us so often, to dwell with us so constantly, and yet have no fear, and yet have no awe ? And so with you. GOD forbid that any of you should not be trying, though, it may be, with many failures, many shortcomings, many mistakes, to do Him service. But yet, the more you are in earnest, the more you will feel that this beginning of His closer worship ought to be the beginning to all of you of greater efforts. And if it be so, what then ?

Then,—what I now want to impress upon all of you, as the most necessary thing for you all. Many of your needs may be different ; but there is

one need you all have. It is not I who say it, it is GOD the HOLY GHOST, That cannot lie, Who declares it. How does Isaiah begin his chief message to GOD's true servants? Does he say, Exhort My people, or, warn My people, or, rebuke My people?—No : *Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your GOD.* And why twice over? Thus : Comfort them for their past sins : *I, even I, am He that blotteth out your transgressions for My own sake.* Comfort them as to future difficulties : *Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.* Here, then, is GOD's command : and if He would but enable me to fulfil it! If the HOLY GHOST, Whose Name is the Comforter, would but speak by me now!

For I know well how discouraging a thing the Christian Life is. S. Paul knew it long before. *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* You all know it for yourselves. And of all discouragements, the greatest is, perhaps, to fall back into besetting sins ; to resolve so firmly, and then so miserably to fail. It tempts one so to say—"I am not getting on at all ; the more I try, the less I do!" Now this particular thought, "I am not getting on at all," is just about one of the most effective of all Satan's temptations. And why? For this reason. It turns, as it were, the work of the HOLY GHOST against Himself : and in this manner. There can be no greater sign that we are

really getting on in the Christian life than increasing hatred of sin, and increasing sorrow when we have committed it. So, a true servant of GOD will feel a far less degree of sin at this time as acutely as he would have felt a far greater degree at this time last year. It is the best sign he can have ; and yet Satan makes it a temptation. You seem to yourself, he says, to have made no progress ; yet you know you have been doing your best. What, then, is the use of trying any more ? You *have* tried ; you have not succeeded. You have pushed onward ; you have not advanced an inch. Better let things take their own course ; better do as the rest of the world does ; better be content with less effort and less trouble. And here is one great use and great blessing of Confession ; perhaps also one great reason why the Devil abhors it as he does. He may deceive *you*, by leading you to believe that the very thing which is a sign of progress—greater hatred of sin—is a sign of no progress ; but he cannot so deceive a bystander. It only requires us not to be ignorant of his devices in this respect, and of his endeavour to fulfil the text : *Let the things which should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion of falling.*

Why do I say this now ? For this reason,—and I say it more especially to you, my dear Sisters,—because, putting you out of the question, this kind of discouragement has been, more particularly, a woman's temptation from the beginning. You

may think that you are not the better for other means of grace ; you know that here is a new means offered to you ; and you may be tempted to doubt whether you will be the better for that either. But we may get good out of all evil. It is most true, that if you are only going to be *present* at daily Communion, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? But then, why should it not be so ? You have set yourselves aside, have you not, for that very end ? You profess, do you not, that you wish to take up, more especially, our dear LORD'S Cross ? You look, do you not, not for comfort and pleasure and ease in this world, but to make sure of that inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which (GOD grant I may say it !) is reserved in heaven for *you* ?

Then, you must remember also : This, to all of you, is more or less a new life. With a new life, you must expect new temptations ; it is in the natural course of things ; and your wisdom will be to find out, as soon as possible, what they are. Not to be frightened at them ; not to be discouraged by them. No, not to be frightened nor discouraged though you had fallen again and again beneath them. All these are not cunningly devised fables. There *is* strength in Holy Communion ; there *is* strength in Absolution ; yes, and there *is* strength in the resolution of serving GOD which you have taken up, and which, ex-

cept by His grace, you never could have taken up.

As soon as I have left off speaking to you, you will all have a time of quiet and prayer. And now I ask you all, as earnestly as I might ask each one of you, were I speaking to her by herself, to pray with your whole heart and strength that these Holy Communions may be for your eternal blessing, and not to your hurt. You all know (perhaps I know also) what your besetting temptations are. Now then, here is a kind of marked place, whence you may resolve to start afresh. Here we are coming afresh, as it were, to the foot of the Cross. Offer up those sins, whatever they may be, there. Let me have the joy and comfort of thinking, when I leave you here, that you are all resolving, with your whole power, to fulfil, to the utmost, your name of Sisters,—to count all things but loss for the prize set before you,—to live, whatever may be the changes and chances of this mortal life, as those should do who desire to devote themselves, soul and body, to CHRIST.

And if you will each of you, from your own wants and your own fears, spare one prayer for me, that, after I have preached to others, I may not myself be a castaway,—that I may not, if I may see you all received to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, be myself shut out from it,—GOD will reward you, as He rewards all prayers of intercession.

Who is sufficient for these things? And you must

all answer : *I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, and will make mention of His righteousness only.* Thus much, at all events, you may all resolve ; thus much, at all events, I may tell you all together. *In the strength of the LORD GOD.* What strength,—except that Body which is Meat indeed,—that Blood which is Drink indeed,—that support and nourishment which has enabled those who had no greater strength than you may have, to do such things, to suffer such things, for the Name of CHRIST? It is my pleasure and comfort for you (I hope it is your own comfort and pleasure too), that you so often have that Name, which is exalted above every name, on your lips, and, as I trust, in your hearts. I rejoice for you, as that holy man of old, Thomas à Kempis, rejoiced for the Sisters of his time, that you do hear it more than all other names, that you take it on your lips oftener than all other names, that you cling to it above all other names. But then, remember what another great Saint tells us—

“ Alone who hath thee *in his heart,*
Knows, Love of JESUS, what thou art !”

These litanies, these Communions, these prayers, these psalms, you *will* not, my dearest Sisters, let them be to your eternal condemnation at the Last Day? You will not force me, when we stand together before that great White Throne, to bear witness against you (witness equally fearful on whichever side I were myself found), that you were

warned, that you were persuaded, that you were entreated? No! GOD grant that then, however unworthy I am, however many difficulties we all may, and we all shall, have to go through, that I may be able to say, *Behold I and the children which Thou hast given me :—Of them which Thou gavest me, have I lost NONE.*

And now, if you have given any attention to what I have been saying, this is my one request: turn it into your own prayer, and GOD, of His great mercy, hear you, and hear us all!

And now, &c.

II.

“What nation is there so great, who hath GOD so nigh unto them as the LORD our GOD is?”—DEUT. iv. 7.

[*Wednesday in the ninth week after Trinity, 1856.*]

WE may indeed take up the question of Moses, and ask it of ourselves. What are we, that our LORD should come, in His own dear Presence, daily among us?—What are we, that we should be counted worthy to receive Him under our roof?—Whence is this to us, that the GOD of our salvation should thus visit us? But, at this time, I do not so much intend to speak of the way in which we are to

prepare ourselves for receiving that Body Which is meat indeed, and that Blood Which is drink indeed, as to tell you, my dear Sisters, what are your duties and privileges at those times when, without receiving, you are present, when you assist at the Sacrifice, though you do not partake of the Feast. For you are not to think that then you have no especial duty,—no especial responsibility. I grant, a responsibility not comparable to that you undertake when you receive the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, but still infinitely greater than at ordinary times of prayer. True it is, that such joy and such fear as I always feel,—as GOD, of His infinite goodness, forbid that I should ever cease to feel!—when I give to any of you, as the Prophet speaks, the Bread of the mighty men, and the Wine that blossoms into purity, I cannot feel when you are but kneeling before the Altar, and there making your requests known unto GOD. But I cannot even see those of you who are simply doing this, as I might see you at an ordinary time of prayer.

My dearest Sisters, believe me, it is a very awful thing to stand in the presence of GOD as we stand there every morning. It is a very awful thing to stand before that Spotless Lamb, slain to take away the sins of the world. *But* also a most comforting thing;—when shall we find such acceptance with our LORD? When can we expect such grace to make our prayers aright? When can we

hope that the promise will be so abundantly fulfilled, *Whatsoever ye ask in faith, believing, ye shall receive?*

But now there is, to speak it so, a holy art of employing that precious time to its best purpose. On the one hand, to remember that, when you do not receive, much of the service is not especially for you, and that you had better be earnest in your own prayers than occupied with that. On the other hand, to remember that you are not to be so taken up with your own wants, as to forget what is going on,—how near, how very near, you are brought to GOD.

And now I will tell you how I think you may best endeavour to fulfil both these things. In the first place, whenever each of you does not receive, it ought to give, ought it not, a feeling of humiliation? Were you Saints, you might receive daily. But even more than a feeling of humbleness, ought to be the feeling of effort. “With GOD’S help, this shall not always be so. I can do all things through CHRIST Which strengtheneth me. By His grace I *will* try and try again, harder and harder, till I shall not need to turn away, through fear of rashness and presumption, from the banquet that He has provided me.”

In saying this, I do not forget my own danger; and I ask you not to forget it either. Here we see the fearful responsibility of being a Priest; one of the reasons, no doubt, why it was said by a holy

man of old, that few, if any, Priests could be saved. True it is that we often must undertake risks which we would not let others undertake ; that we must often blame, when we know that we ourselves should have failed much more ; that we must stir up to exertion, where we should ourselves have felt much less disposed to any exertion. And therefore we may well be condemned by our own words at the Last Day. But the comfort is, that we have a merciful and faithful High Priest, Who Himself was tempted, that He might Himself sympathise. And this also I want you to feel. A tie must be mutual. If it is my duty to pray for you, so it is yours also to pray for me. If we have, to a certain extent, a common danger, let our prayers also be common.

It is at the more immediate commencement of the Communion Service, at the *Lift up your hearts*, that the difference between those who are, and are not, to communicate, begins. You have, all, your books which are designed to lead your thoughts to the Lamb of GOD, Whose sacrifice is there set forth before your eyes. But then, of all times, is the best and fittest season for you to come before GOD with your own words, and in your own thoughts. Then the HOLY GHOST is most likely to put into your minds wishes and thoughts acceptable to Himself ; then, also, to hear the prayers which He has Himself suggested. There are three things, above all, which those who assist at Holy

Communion ought to endeavour after. First, to call to mind that great Sacrifice from which all other sacrifices have their virtue ; to do it with all your power of faith ; to forget everything else but JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified: to see that hill of Calvary as it was ; to pray with the poor thief, "LORD, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom ;" to be found, like S. Mary, close to the foot of the Cross. Then, also, to renew your dedication of yourselves, soul and body, to GOD'S service ; to re-make, for that day, that resolution of doing your best for Him, which you wish to keep constantly before you ; to endeavour more and more to say, "Whose I am, and Whom I serve." And then, lastly, that is the best time of any to intercede for all that you love, and for each other. That last, I am sure, is a part of the duty of Sisters. You know already much, and you will daily know more, of each other's trials, and difficulties, and failings, and temptations ; and in this way you can all help each other ; in this way you must all be helped by each other. *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST.*

And here, in these three things, an earnest hanging on the Cross of CHRIST, self-dedication, and intercession, we have those three most blessed of virtues, Faith, Hope, and Love. Faith, to realise that Passion on which all our salvation depends ; faith also, to believe that the memorial of that Passion is no less than the Body and Blood of Him That

endured it. Hope, that often and often as you may have failed before, still GOD accepts your service, still He is willing to receive you as His own (*you*, especially as His own) ; hope, that, after many troubles, you shall enter into the greater rest. And then, Love, which looks beyond each of yourselves,—first to those more especially connected with you, and then, in a wider circle, to all who are runners in the same race, fighters in the same battle, soldiers in the same army. And now I am going to leave you alone with your LORD. You are about to speak to Him, each for herself. This afternoon, make it your especial request for yourselves, and for each other, that you may never be careless and negligent in your own prayers, while the Sacrifice of the Altar is going on, even though you may not, at the time, be about to receive the Blessed Sacrament ; and much more, that you may never so carelessly or unworthily receive it, as to turn it into a curse instead of a blessing. I ask you to do this *now* ; your prayers will be the more fervent if you all know that you are praying at the same time, for the same thing :—a good and pleasant thing it will be, in this sense also, to dwell together in unity.

And my prayer for you all is, that these supplications may go up with acceptance before GOD'S Throne, and bring you down the abundant dew of His grace. So that when, for a longer or shorter number of years, you shall have seen our LORD, veiled under the form of Bread and Wine, you may

see Him face to face, as the Blessed ones see Him now ; when you have gone in the strength of this meat, like Elijah, all the days of your pilgrimage here, you may come to the true Horeb, the Mount of GOD ; when you have received the King of kings again and again into your own dwelling, you may go and live with Him for ever in His, for His own merits' sake : to Whom, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

III.

“Neither was there a man born like unto Joseph, a governor of his brethren, a stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the LORD.”—ECCLUS. xlix. 15.

[1857.]

AND it is even because there never was man like our True Joseph, like Him into Whose soul the iron indeed entered, like Him Who, until the time came that His cause was known, was so sorely tried, like Him Who is now Governor over all the land, it is even because of Him it is written in another place, “Who shall declare His generation?” that you, dear Sisters, are what you are, and pledged to His service as you are pledged. Of Him you hear from every book of the Old Testament. Him we delight

to see, not only in the plain accounts of His actions and sufferings, of His parables and miracles, but also in the actions and sufferings of His servants. This is a life of types and veils which we lead here. The life which you now lead, you may say it as truly as S. Paul, you lead by the faith of the SON of GOD. We see Him daily in that sacramental veil which hallows all other veils and likenesses, and not as yet can we hope to see Him eye to eye, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. And so I think that we are the more fond of these Old Testament types, because they seem to represent to us that our life also must be a type of His; that if it is not, more or less, we have no part nor lot in Him; that the jewels must be marked with the sign of the Cross, or they never will be His in the day when He makes them up.

Therefore, says S. Bernard, let no man tell me that I am to look for the likeness of the King of kings and Chief of chiefs in the annals of the Old Testament only. I look round me and desire to see living types everywhere, not in history, but in action; resemblances, whose future is as yet unknown to me, whether they will become perfectly and for ever like Him, or whether the image of the King, as yet imperfect, shall one day be utterly marred. And sex can be no obstacle to the likeness of His suffering, any more than it can hinder your going forth with Him to His battles. If John stands near the Cross, Mary Magdalene

clings to it; if Joseph and Nicodemus bring the spices from the city, the three Maries enter into the tomb. And he goes on to tell them what I, dearest Sisters, can certainly not say to you—that, let them have erected never so magnificent a church to His glory, unless they are exhibiting His likeness in themselves, its carvings and paintings and beauty will be only hypocrisy in His eyes. Had he been speaking to you, he would rather have said, as I am never weary of repeating, that, let your work be what it may for Him, let your success be as great as even I could wish it to be, unless you are each of you daily being made more and more like Him, all that work, all that success is only like the wood, hay, and stubble, which the fire of the Last Day shall destroy.

A Governor among his brethren. So He was when they little knew it; so He was when they laughed to scorn His prophecies; so He was when they said, “Behold, now, this dreamer cometh.” A glorious Dreamer indeed! who even then beheld the whole world bowing down before Him, and supported by Him, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars doing Him reverence. And so that hard bed of the Cross, that dying bed of the Prince of Life, did not that yield Him a dream, yet only accomplished in part, of the power of Satan crushed for ever, of multitudes of loving and faithful souls brought into His fold, of deeds of faith and courage derived from the virtue of the Cross, and returning

all their praise to it? Dearest Sisters, think how at that hour when there was darkness over all the earth, He saw, through all that intervening space of years, you, few and weak, and beset with difficulties as you are, yet having the power within you of doing and bearing everything for Him, strengthened daily by His Flesh, then torn, and His Blood, then shed: marked with the Cross, which would stamp you as desiring to know and to serve nothing save the Crucified.

This poor little room, from that Cross, He saw; into those hearts, from that Cross, He looked; saw in them, I know, dear Sisters, as well as you do, much sin, much weakness, much unbelief; but I hope, also, much love. Our Joseph, now exalted to be Governor over all the land, sees them still, desires to have them still for His own; and I well trust could, while He thus sees them, say of each of you, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; her weakness, which is exceeding, is strengthened, for she loved much; her sicknesses, which are sore, are healed, for she loved much."

And now think of that Joseph of old, seated on the throne of the governor, and selling corn to all the nations of the civilised world; of the great crowd which had come from all lands, and now fixed its eyes on him, and him only; of the earnest expectation with which they waited his orders; the eagerness with which they watched the opening of his granaries, and the distribution of their

treasures. And then think how, at this very moment, our true Joseph, Lord, not over the land of Egypt only, but over heaven and earth, is about, by the operation of the HOLY GHOST, to supply thousands and thousands of His priests and of His people with the True Bread which cometh down from heaven. *The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O LORD, and Thou givest them their meat in due season.* They wait upon Him now, when from east to west the Church is about to offer her daily Sacrifice, to claim her daily bread. We are but one of a great company that no man can number, who, like Stephen, are steadfastly looking up to heaven, and by faith beholding the glory of Him Whom with the eyes of our sense we shall soon behold, under that humble form of bread and wine, on earth. In how many a little parish church, known only to Him, at this very moment that I am speaking, the single priest and the two or three worshippers are expecting the Bread of children! In how many a religious house are they who are vowed to the same service with yourselves about to feed on Him Who will hereafter reward them, Who now loves them, as His brides! There is no fear lest the granaries of this Joseph should be exhausted: even the hired servants of our Father have bread enough and to spare; much more shall you, His true and dear children, though in the land of exile. The famine is sore in the land, but we know there is corn in

that heavenly Egypt. Joseph sold it to the inhabitants of all countries ; our Joseph proclaims, "*Come ye, buy and eat : yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.*" We must follow Jacob's advice. We must take of the best fruits of the land in our vessels, and carry to this Man, the Man Who has exalted our human nature to the right hand of God, a present—the one only present that He desires—namely, love. His compassions, as the Prophet says, are renewed every morning, as we see them to be this day, in that He still satisfies the multitude of His servants here in the wilderness : in that He will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way to the Heavenly City.

Yes, the wise man may well go on: *A stay of His people*—a stay in their way, and a support to His Church, as she looks to Him for the food of another day. But a stay indeed in every kind of sorrow, or difficulty, or trial. Dear Sisters, you have daily to learn what is the strength of that stay ; you have daily to learn to lean more wholly upon it, to trust nothing to your own strength, but confide everything to that. Then, how could you have any feeling of weakness, if the Everlasting Arms were underneath ? Then, how could I ever hear of any falls when you kneel by me here, if that Hand were holding you up ? Can you wish to love Him so much, and yet trust so little to the love He bears to you ? Can you not trust Him if,

as Joseph tried his brethren and made himself strange for a while to them, so He should seem to act to you? In His own good time He seeks to make Himself known to you most perfectly and eternally in that Beatific Vision, which we can name indeed, but beyond naming can do no more. In the meanwhile, again and again He makes Himself known to you in the breaking of bread. *A stay* indeed He is. "Neither you nor I," as S. Bernard, in a certain place, says, "could know what that support is—the Everlasting Arm—unless we could unite in ourselves all the suffering of all the Martyrs, all the endurance of all the Confessors, all the purity of all the Virgins, all the learning of all the Doctors; unless we could experience, not only what they were enabled to do, but also what they were strengthened to resist—all by that one Arm, all by the virtue of that one touch, which even to this day can cure all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Oh, most wise and happy soul, that can so rest upon that! For its strength cannot be overthrown, its tenderness cannot be surpassed. It was stretched forth in benediction on the Cross; it lays hold, for our sake, on shield and buckler in the valley of exiles. This is the Hand which writes the names of the victors in the Book of Life, and which will trace the new name on the forehead of each dear child returning to its home."

It goes on: *Whose bones were regarded of the*

LORD. So it was that in that Paschal Sacrifice of the world He kept all His Bones : not one of them was broken. *Thus far, but no farther!* the Divine Wisdom said to the murderers. Let that blessed and spotless Form be crowned with thorns, torn with the scourge, be smitten and buffeted, fall under the Cross, and be nailed to it, be pierced with a spear, be given to drink of vinegar and gall ; but a bone of Him shall not be broken. As the Bride says, *His legs are pillars of marble, set upon sockets of pure gold.* His companions in death shall have their legs broken : that pure and spotless marble shall remain uninjured. Even to Him, dearest Sisters, in the agony of the Cross, one thing was spared ; even from Him Who accomplished all suffering one thing was withheld. How much more, in your little crosses, will His loving care be upon you ! how much more will He never give you one needless pain, one stroke too much, one trial beyond the exact measure that must be accomplished if you would work out your own salvation.

And now, then, in common with all the congregation of His brethren through the world, let us draw near to Him for our daily Bread. The scoffing lord on whose arm the king leaned, said, *“Behold, if the LORD would open the windows of heaven, might such a thing be ?”* Behold, GOD does open the windows of Heaven, and the manna is about to descend around the tents of His people.

I said : let us draw near in common with the others. But you, dearest Sisters, have more especial need than others ; yes, and have more especial claim upon Him than others. You need more strength, not for yourselves, but for Him ; you need more love, because you would more set forth His glory. Fear not but that He also will allow these claims. Fear not but that, miserably unworthy as you are, nevertheless His love is yearning over you, as it was with Benjamin of old. Fear not but that, miserably weak though you are, this Bread of GOD can strengthen you to more than victory. Fear not but that, as those then trembling, afterwards happy, brethren of Joseph, were privileged at last to fall on his neck and to kiss him, and after that to talk with him, so for you also that most loving petition of the Bride will be fulfilled in you : *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine !*

And now, &c.

IV.

“ And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna ; for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.”—EXOD. xvi. 15.

[1857.]

OF this most wonderful type of a nobler food than itself, we were speaking last night. But now, in

the quietness and stillness of our own little Oratory, let us see again how GOD the HOLY GHOST has taught the Saints and Doctors of His Church to understand this shadow of good things to come ; blessed in itself, in that it supported a fainting and weary multitude of six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children, during their forty years' journey in the desert ; much more blessed in that it shadowed out that wonderful Food of which if a man eateth he shall never die : that Food which, till the lips that spake as never man spake had first revealed, could not even have been conceived by the human intellect : that Food of which it is so truly and admirably written, What nation is there so great, who hath GOD so nigh unto them, as the LORD our GOD is to us ?

Dearest Sisters, none can be more interested in these Old Testament types of our daily bread than you ought to be. There are no words, when we remember this feast of fat things made for you every day—there are no words which can express what ought to be the holiness, and purity, and devotion of your lives. None can be more trusted than you are, each of you, to say when they are conscious to themselves of anything which ought to keep them away from that Body and that Blood. In your self-examination at night I know you would not willingly fail. But, remember, every morning you ought to put to yourselves, however shortly, at least more strictly, that great question, Is there any

one thing since I last received the Blessed Sacrament which ought to hinder my receiving it now?

But, assuming this—trusting in GOD, as I do, that you do so try to examine yourselves—then, my dearest Sisters, it is a delight and a privilege indeed to me to give you the Food of Immortality day by day; to think that your hands are, as it were, sanctified to works of mercy, by holding that which suffered for you on Calvary, by touching that Body as truly as Mary Magdalene touched it when she anointed it with her ointment and wiped the feet with the hairs of her head, or as Thomas, when he touched the precious wounds of the Hands and of the Side. Those hands of yours, dear Sisters, ought indeed to be specially hallowed to every work of love; whatever they find to do ought indeed to be done with all your might, for the sake of Him Who was so mighty, as well as so loving, to save you.

And now, what shall I first tell you of the manna? First, I think, this: We are apt to look upon it, not only as a most astonishing miracle, but as a miracle which was perfectly new, of a kind never heard of before, of a perfectly distinct species from anything that had elsewhere happened. But it is not so. You know that to this day, in that desert manna falls—in very small quantities, just here and there, not in sufficient abundance to support even one man's life; but yet it does fall. GOD, therefore, did not altogether create a new

wonder ; He took, as it were, a natural provision, and so increased and multiplied it that it became a miracle of miracles. See now how this is His way. It might have pleased Him that nothing should have been placed on the Altar, and that, at the words of Consecration, the Body and Blood of His dear SON should have appeared of themselves. This would have been in reality no greater miracle than that which we behold ; nay, holy men have not feared to say that it would not have been so great a marvel. But He bids us do our part. We give the bread and wine ; He transmutes them into our LORD'S Body and Blood. So He did when He was about to feed the five thousand, and again the seven thousand, in the wilderness. He might, by one word, have created all that food. Not so : He multiplied it from the provision that there already was. At Cana of Galilee He might have filled the empty waterpots with wine by one word, or without one word. By no means : He commands them first to be filled with water. Or again, when His disciples said, "LORD, teach us to pray," He might have made for them a prayer absolutely new, of which not one word had been used in prayer before. You know that He did no such thing. Every single clause in the LORD'S Prayer is to be found in the Temple service of the Jews. He merely chose from that ; He vouchsafed, so to speak, thence to extract the material, but to form and shape it Himself into the perfect model of all prayer. And,

dear Sisters, there is a lesson for you in all this. What is it? Surely this: GOD, in accepting your self-dedication to Him, undoubtedly will give you grace that shall direct every action to His glory. But also, undoubtedly, it is by the powers or talents that each of you have by nature that His grace will principally work, that you must expect it to work, that you must look for being made the instruments of especial good. That it is which so blesses and transfigures knowledge of any kind, influence of any kind, accomplishments of any kind, nay, and such things as a pleasing manner and general tact. Dear Sisters, of these also it may be said, *The LORD hath need of them.*

Next notice about the manna, that it was like the hoar-frost. Think for one moment of this, and you will see how exquisite a type it is of our True Manna. We know how gloriously beautiful is the hoar-frost when the sun shines on it, when it glitters with such purity and freshness, when it glows with the colours of the rainbow, when it arrays the hedges with a loveliness that Solomon, in all his glory, never attained. But at the very moment of its highest perfection, what does it do? It melts and ceases to exist. Now, my dear Sisters, you who feed on the manna, are you not bound to reflect all the rays of the Sun of Righteousness in holy and beautiful lives—in lives that give out to sight, as it were, the sevenfold graces of the sevenfold SPIRIT—in lives that shall have

attained the very perfection of this beauty at the very moment of their end? And again, see how the hoar-frost turns the meanest things into loveliness, sheds softness over the sharpest, veils over deformity, hides impurity. So this heavenly manna again with you. It, too, must elevate every work you have to do; it, too, must beautify every thorn you have to feel; it, too, in an impure and naughty world, must keep you pure and faithful. And yet one thing more. Every crystal of frost, if you look at it through a microscope, presents the figure of a Cross—each crystal its own figure—some more, some less lovely, but all the Cross. Dear Sisters, I need not interpret that parable to you.

But what came with the manna? for that too nearly concerns us. *In the morning the dew lay round about the host.* And this has two meanings for us. We all know that, as each Person of the ever-blessed TRINITY has His own proper office in the work of man's redemption, so it is the part of the HOLY GHOST to effect the change in the elements now, as He once effected the Incarnation of the Word made Flesh. And He is indeed the Dew, so pure, so soft, coming so silently, giving life and refreshment and beauty everywhere, coming in a way that none can understand, coming invisibly, coming in the night of affliction. The dew and the manna still, then, come together, and GOD grant that they may remain together; that His work may still go on with you and by you, when

you have received that Heavenly Food ; that His peace may dwell in your hearts, His strength give you vigour, His love kindle your whole soul to love Him Who first loved you !

Then notice that the Jews here asked a question which was not answered. When they thus saw it lie on the face of the earth, they naturally said, "Manna?"—that is, What is it? Now, when Moses gave his first message from GOD to the Twelve Tribes, he had expressly inquired by what name GOD would make Himself known to them ; and he received as answer, *I am that I am*. Here the people inquired, but they had none other than the general reply, *This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat*. And thus see that for this Blessed Sacrament there is no one such distinctive name as to swallow up the rest, there is no one especial type which stands prominently forward above all others. See how here it is the manna of the Jewish desert ; see how, in the History of Samson, it is the honey in the lion's body, as the anti-type was that heavenly sweetness instituted for us at the death of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah ; see how, under the old law, it was the shew-bread, set forth as an acceptable offering in the Holy Place ; how, in Jotham's parable, it is the wine that cheereth GOD and man ; how, in Elijah's story, it is the cake of bread and the cruse of water, in the strength whereof he went forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the Mount of GOD ;

how, among Elisha's miracles, it is the meal which, cast into the poisonous pottage, made it wholesome ; how, in Solomon's teaching, it is the banquet and the wine which Wisdom makes in the house of her seven pillars ; how, in the words of Solomon's mother, it is the wine to be given to those that are ready to perish ; in those of Isaiah, the wine and the milk without money and without price ; in those of Zechariah, the bread of the valiant, and the wine that blossoms into virgins.

Still we may ask the same question, What is it ? And still we find it so adapting itself to all our needs, so our safeguard against all dangers, that to us, as of old time, no one reply can be made to the question. It is, during our pilgrimage, the nearest approach to the Beatific Vision ; it is, so far as anything can be in a land of exile, our all in all.

And then notice its falling early. Were there no other reason, dear Sisters, this very type should make us rejoice that our manna falls early in the morning there also. I think there could be no better habit for all of you than, with reference to this, to say, while dressing, those two Psalms, taken together, which we do say at Lauds every night—the 63d and the 67th. For see how they speak of it : *O GOD, Thou art my GOD* ; that is, even so, even under the form of Bread and Wine, even thus vouchsafing to come among us again, as once in Thine own form, when Thou didst walk upon earth. *Thou art my GOD* : others may question, others may de-

ride, others may blaspheme, but we know and are persuaded that Thou art the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world. *It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our GOD ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.*

Early will I seek Thee : and the earliness of the day, dearest Sisters, should but be the type of your obeying in everything at the first call, pressing forward at the very soonest opportunity. I need not go through the Psalm for you : you can do it for yourselves. Every one of you, dearest Sisters, will receive the Bread and Wine of Immortality tomorrow. Do now as I have told you, and try to throw yourself into the true spirit of those Psalms : to realise, *Thus have I looked for Thee in holiness* : to endeavour to say, *As long as I live will I magnify Thee on this manner*—vowed specially to Thee, and separated from all things else : to think of your daily banquet, and to say, *My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness* : to say, as I hope you will be able to say, *Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking ?* to promise that, so far as you are concerned, *the King*, your King, your Beloved, *shall rejoice in GOD*, because in you He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied : and then, in the next Psalm, to unite yourselves with the Communion of the Saints, fed with the same Bread, united in the same Body, while you say, *Let the people praise Thee, O GOD ; yea, let ALL the people praise Thee.*

And yet again. If the manna, which fell in the morning, was the type of this our Christian food, the quails, which came up in the evening, were equally the type of Jewish ordinances. Notice, therefore, that the quails only covered the camp, because in Jewry only was GOD known : His Name was great only in Israel. But the manna fell round about the camp, because the Church that our LORD came to found was to have dominion from the one sea to the other, and from the flood unto the world's end ; because then and thenceforth the earth was to be the LORD'S and the fulness thereof. But there is something beyond this. The quails, throughout the Books of Moses, were the type of worldly desires ; they were the answer sent in anger to a wrong petition : they were a fatal gift ; and the end of them was Kibroth-hattaavah, the Graves of Lust. Notice, then : these quails came into the camp ; they were to be taken without any trouble ; they were in the midst of the bustle and confusion of everyday life : the manna, on the other hand, lay in the stillness and solitude of the desert, and it had to be gone out of the camp after. Yes, dear Sisters, and so it is still. Worldly pleasures, such as they are, you may have without labouring for—you may have in the turmoil of the world : this heavenly food you must seek with care : you must *come out*, as GOD says, from among others, *and be separate* ; you must, as S. Paul speaks, *go forth with your LORD out of the camp, bearing His reproach*.

And much more I might show you of the way in which that Israelitish manna is a type of the Bread of GOD, which cometh down from Heaven. But after all, my dear Sisters, the chief thing (for let me end as I began) rests with yourselves. As our numbers increase, this ought to be more and more our earnest prayer for each, that here, where of all places we most desire to honour that Blessed Sacrament,—here, where in an unbelieving and unloving world, we desire to be faithful and loving,—here we should not dishonour it more than others, because, with such professions, a little fault among you is so far worse than the avowed and open carelessness of the world.

And now I can only say to you, as Moses to the Israelites, *This is the Bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.* Oh! what miracles of grace may I not look for from all of you, if you only come to such a banquet as those who by their very profession should come, who are the LORD'S alone. Nothing, I know it well,—nothing but the wonderful grace of GOD, and not your own strength, would enable you so to work as your very life will often require, for all its self-denial, for all its difficulties, its few encouragements, its many sorrows. Sufficient grace for that you have: and, but by your own fault, He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of JESUS CHRIST.

Oh, dear Sisters, that it may be so! That this Bread of all strength may give you ever-increasing

might till your final victory: that this manna of all sweetness may, as of old, continually lie about your tents here, till that blessed day when, the Jordan having been passed, you shall eat new corn in the true Land of Canaan!

And now, &c.

V.

“For ¹how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.”—ZECH. ix. 17.

[*October 1857.*]

IN speaking to you, dearest Sisters, as I do, week after week, and that so often in each week, and with the knowledge that, except from me, you cannot hear from any Priest of those things which are nearest and dearest to you, those things which are entwined with your heart of hearts, those things which make your life what it is, I cannot but feel a responsibility in thus alone endeavouring to lead you and to guide you, that might well, if I trusted to myself, discourage me and humble me to the dust. But I know that our dear LORD can make choice of whom He will to speak to your hearts by. I would gladly call in others sometimes to take my place in thus talking to you in His Name; but, since He has not been pleased to give me that

opportunity, I am bound to believe, and so are you too, my Sisters, that He can and will make use of my words to give His message to you. Only remember, that if you do not constantly pray for me, you cannot expect to have any blessing by my means ; whereas, if you do, if you pray perseveringly, as well as earnestly, GOD can employ the feeblest instrument to the most glorious end. Of this, which is never out of my mind, I must sometimes speak to you. Now let us turn to the text, and see what GOD the HOLY GHOST will teach us from that.

As you have just heard it, it runs thus: *How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty ! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.* But we will rather take it, as it has been taken by such multitudes of Saints from the beginning, as it has been preached on by such multitudes of holy Doctors, who have long since drunk fully of the source of all wisdom, as it has been held forth to those who have chosen that same path of chastity which, as I earnestly pray, may some day set you all before the presence of the Great King. "For what is His Goodness, and what is His beauty, save the Corn of the Mighty, and the Wine that blossoms into Virgins?" None ever doubted that it was spoken of the blessed Eucharist. This prophet, in the old dispensation, saw under another type the loaf and the water of Elijah, the cake of barley bread that fell into the camp of

Midian, the manna which lay every morning round the host of the Israelites.

And, first of all, it is as though our LORD had summed up all His goodness into this one great gift. He began His ministry with a type and earnest of it, when in Cana of Galilee He turned the water into wine. And now He closes the ministry of His mortal life by not only performing one of the greatest (I might say, the very greatest) of His miracles, but by delegating a power to all His Priests to perform the very same till the consummation of all things. Himself, in His own dear Presence, could not tarry longer with the Apostles. His place at the Right Hand of the FATHER had to be assumed : His intercession for His toiling and struggling people had to be begun : His reign, which must last till He had put all enemies under His feet, had to be inaugurated : the HOLY GHOST had to be sent down : it was expedient for them that He should go away. But yet His love found out a way whereby, though separated from His own, He should abide with them still ; though exalted far above all principality, and power, and dominion, He should still be seen in great humility : yes, and did not disdain (though CHRIST, *being raised from the dead, dieth no more : death hath no more dominion over Him,*) to expose Himself to the insults of a wicked and unbelieving generation, rather than withdraw that Presence, which is to our churches what the Shechinah was to the Jewish

temple. What is His goodness, indeed, if it be not this?—That He still enters into miserable hovels, to be the Viaticum of poor and distressed creatures; that He goes into hospitals, and there infuses His own grace and strength into many a dying Lazarus, now laid at His gate,—that gate which is always opened to them that knock,—that rich Man's gate Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think,—laid at His gate full of sores, but presently to be carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. Think of the perpetuity, the unfaillingness of that goodness: the millions of times when, since that First Eucharist, He has thus come down to visit His people: think, to come nearer ourselves, of the daily blessing He gives us here. What is His goodness, indeed, if it be not this?

And then notice that other expression. *And what is His beauty?* I know very well it may mean, *His* beauty, the beauty bestowed by Him through this Heavenly Mystery, the beauty of His Saints and Elect, the glorious wounds of the Martyrs, the tears and labours of the Confessors, the purity and love of the Virgins. But I had rather take it in the other sense, and by way of reply to that which has gone before. What is His Goodness, the goodness which He bestows? What is His Beauty, the beauty which He receives? See how all the art, all the wealth, all the skill of the Church have been expended in

beautifying the place of the LORD'S Sanctuary : for this very reason, not that it is the House of Prayer, not that it is the House where, among the two or three that are gathered in His Name, there is He by His SPIRIT : but because on His Altar He comes down, Body, Soul, and Divinity. If the Incarnation be the source and fountain of all Christian art, the Blessed Eucharist, which is indeed only the extension of the Incarnation, is the chief employment of it. What is His goodness, and what is His beauty, save this ?

And what is this ? *The Corn of the Mighty.* And now, why Corn, rather than Bread ? Why, the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Angels, the Bread of GOD, but the *Corn* of the Mighty ? And doubtless for this reason : bread, without any further co-operation of our own than receiving it, necessarily and infallibly supports us ;—not so with corn. When we have that, it still asks labour on our part. It asks the mill, the kneading, the fire, before it can be our support and strength. Do not misunderstand me. *Let GOD be true, though every man be a liar.* Let but the LORD'S own words be said ; though Priest and people all be wicked, all unbelievers, nay, even if they were all blasphemers of this Heavenly Mystery, still this meek Lamb gives them His Very Flesh to eat, His Very Blood to drink, as much as He ever gave them to the greatest Saint. His Flesh and Blood indeed, but to their condemnation, not to

their salvation. They derive no strength from it; they cannot resist temptations by its virtue. They take it, but it is to judgment; they take it, but it is to weakness; they take it, but it is to infirmity both of soul and body; they take it, but, unless they repent, it will be to shame and everlasting contempt. *Corn* indeed! The gift, to all, is His. The use we make of that gift depends on us. And, *Corn of the Mighty*. Well says one of our old poets—

“ Oft have I seen brave spirits, when they rose
 From this great banquet, filled with generous rage,
 Flie in the face of sin, and nobly choose
 Against its stoutest ramparts to engage
 Their heavenly confidence: nor has their high
 Adventure failed to draw down victory.

“ Oft have I seen them smile in sweet disdain
 Upon misfortune’s most insulting look ;
 Oft have I seen them kindly entertain
 Those guests faint human nature worse can brook.
 Oft have I seen them enter single fight
 Both with the Peers and with the Prince of Night.”

“ O JESUS CHRIST,” S. Bonaventura cries out,
 “incarnate for my sake, incarnate in my nature !
 O JESUS CHRIST, That didst take that nature and
 glorify it, and dost thus return it to us under the
 form of Bread and Wine, taking ourselves, and
 giving us Thyself; what hast Thou not wrought
 in Thy Saints, when thus Thou dost enter into
 them, incorporating them with Thee, making them
 bone of Thy Bone, and flesh of Thy Flesh ! How

hast Thou not triumphed in Thy Martyrs: impassible Thyself, but suffering a second time in them! How many dungeons hast Thou not filled with heavenly comfort and light, like the brilliance of the Eternal Throne! What long years of mocking and cruelty and imprisonment hast Thou not endured in them that confessed Thee bravely! What love hast Thou not infused into Thy Brides! causing them to be stayed with these apples, vouchsafing that they should be comforted with these chalices! And to Thee, thus incarnate, to Thee, thus veiled, I draw near this day; I, all sin, to Thee, all holiness; I, all want, to Thee, all supply; I, all sickness, to Thee, all health; I, all pollution, to Thee, all purity. But not to my condemnation! not, for Thine Agony's sake in the Garden! not, for Thy great Passion's sake on the Cross! not, for the nails' sake that pierced Thee! not, for the spear's sake that wounded Thee! Not to my condemnation, O LORD, but to my exceeding and everlasting strength!" Thus prayed the Seraphic Doctor. And how, dearest Sisters, ought we not to tremble, how ought we not to pray, lest the greatest gift of the LORD Whom we love should bring down a curse on us, and not a blessing?

The Corn of the Mighty, and the Wine that blossoms into Virgins. And first, that expression, so strange and yet so beautiful, that *blossoms* into Virgins, calls our thoughts to those lilies among which the

LORD of the Garden feedeth, to that Garden wherein He so often walks ; that Garden which is to bring Him forth so many, and those so beautiful flowers. It takes us back to those chapters in the Song of Solomon, of which I have so often spoken to you ; and it turns your thoughts, dearest Sisters, to your own life, to your own vocation, to the better part which, like Mary's, shall never be taken away from you. It is of His mercy, my own Sisters, that He has put the wish into your hearts ; it can only be His grace which can give you perseverance in it to the end. But then, only remember : having done so much, receiving so much, what ought you not to become ? Those that receive the LORD almost daily, how ought they not to be transfigured into His Image ? how ought they not to reflect somewhat of His Love and Beauty ? And those that, for His sake, have chosen the higher and holier estate of chastity, for what perfect purity is He not to look in them ? How ought not these temples to be entirely sanctified to His service ? What would it be to consecrate such a shrine, and then by negligent or careless thoughts to despise it ?—to invite such a Guest, and having invited Him, to slight Him ? As I thus look on you, knowing the work which you have all taken in hand : knowing that you can none of you do it for her Sisters, but each must labour for herself : knowing how Satan would triumph, and a wicked world would rejoice, at any

one unbecoming word or action : knowing that as it was with your dear LORD of old,—*They watched Him*,—so now of you, most emphatically : could I ever cease to fear for you, did I not continually hear those most sweet words, *My FATHER, which gave them Me, is greater than all : and no man is able to pluck them out of My FATHER'S Hand?*

And now this Corn of the Mighty and this Wine that blossoms into Virgins, is about to descend from Heaven for you. For you, too, must have a share in this mightiness, as well as in this purity. You, too, have need of the whole armour of GOD ; as deep need as had ever any of His servants in this world militant. Let that lovely antiphon of last night which we shall hear again and again till All Saints, be fulfilled in you, *The sun shone on the golden shields, and the multitude of the Gentiles were terrified*. Let your armour, dearest Sisters, so reflect that Sun of Righteousness, that your spiritual foes may indeed be terrified : that they, too, as well as earthly eyes, may take knowledge of you, that you have been with JESUS. And GOD grant that, after beholding the glory of the LORD, as in types and riddles, here, you may, in His own good time, be changed into the *same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD*.

And now, &c.

VI.

“He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.”—S. JOHN vi. 56.

[*S. Margaret's, Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1858.*]

WITH the Blessed Sacrament thus set before us, with the LORD of Glory in His very Flesh and Blood presented to our eyes, how satisfied is Faith! how satisfied is Love! Hope only remains for the present unsatisfied. How satisfied is our Faith! for what greater, what more glorious truth can she be called to embrace? Here she may put forth all her strength and energy: sight fails, understanding fails. “*How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?*” and Faith answers, “*Be not afraid; believe only, and thou shalt be made whole.*” Love, too, is satisfied; for what greater proof of responsive love than when that Eternal Wisdom proclaims, “*Come, eat of My Bread, and drink of My Wine that I have mingled,*”—than when man shall eat Angels’ food, and He sends us meat enough? Enough to supply all our wants through the desert of this world: enough to satisfy the hundred thousand congregations who have this day received the Body that was taken of Mary, and drank of the Blood that streamed down from the Cross: enough, by a miracle, infinitely surpassing that of the five loaves, multiplying this celestial food a million of times, that the Church may be

supported during one more day of her pilgrimage. But Hope yet remains unsatisfied. This is not the end and the sum of her wishes. She desires to see, as well as to believe; to look on her LORD face to face, and not under the shadow of a sacramental veil: she desires that the Master should reveal Himself to her under His own dear form, in the garden of Paradise, as once to S. Mary in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. That, too, will be in time,—but not till the time when Hope itself shall have met with its own blessed end. Then will be heard those most happy words, *Behold My Hands and Feet, that it is I, Myself.*

Dearest Sisters, how those who have never been taught this most blessed of all doctrines can drag on in their Christian course, I, for one, cannot guess. This I know, that we all, who find in our Sacramental LORD our chief strength, who put in our Sacramental LORD our best and warmest hopes, we all find the Christian battle as much as ever we can fight, the Christian race as much as ever we can run. Take away that from us, and we should perish. But then, if we fail, if we walk unworthily of this great privilege, if He comes to His own, and His own receive Him not, what manner of danger do we incur here? of what manner of punishment shall we be thought worthy hereafter?

We can never hear the truth too often: let me speak to you once more of this blessed Eucharist.

You may regard it as a Sacrament, which makes CHRIST present; or as a Communion, which makes Him received. In so far as it is a Sacrament, it was instituted by the LORD that He might be *with* us; in so far as it is a Communion, it was instituted by the LORD that He might be *in* us. In the Sacrament, He tabernacles on our Altars; in the Communion, He tabernacles in our hearts. Therefore, the Communion is, so to speak, a further stretch of that love which instituted the Sacrament. Love brought Him down from the Eternal Throne, and placed Him on the Altar, that we might there embrace Him as a Mystery of Faith; greater love brought Him from the Altar to the Heart, that we might there hold Him fast in a mystery of love.

Dwelleth in Me, and I in him. Why this double declaration? And those holy men who have written on the Sacrament tell us that the twofold assertion refers to a twofold union: the immediate union which we have with Him: the immediate union which we have through Him with each other. What was the first prayer that was offered after the first institution of the Sacrament? Think of the Garden of Gethsemane; of the low whisper of the trees in the spring night-wind; of the silent advance of Judas and his band across the valley of Jehoshaphat: think of the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, now drawing near to the sorrow of all sorrows, to the grief

beyond all griefs ; and then listen to that prayer, "That they all may be one!" He asks, it would seem, an impossibility ; therefore He asks it of the FATHER, to whom nothing is impossible ; therefore He uses a comparison, that only the FATHER could understand. *That they all may be one, as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee.* He asks it by virtue of that Sacrament of Oneness, which alone can render it possible. "Who can tell," says S. Cyril of Alexandria, "the incomprehensibleness of the love which can so warm our poor cold hearts, so soften our miserable hard hearts, so mould our unholy stubborn hearts as to make them one, not only with Him, but, miracles of miracles, with each other?" "If I had not heard the LORD Himself," says S. Augustine, "I could not have believed. That He could pass through the closed doors : it is marvellous, but my faith yields ; that He can change perishable bread and wine into His imperishable Body and Blood, it is most miraculous : but my belief wavers not ; that He should unite us with Himself, it is a miracle of love : but my credence still holds out ; but when I hear those words, *That they all may be one*, I fall down and worship, and cry out with tears, LORD, *I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.*"

And yet, see how, in the very materials of the Sacrament, in those visible accidents which, even after consecration, are alone visible to our earthly senses, the same unity is taught. The grains

which composed the flour came from different stalks,—maybe from different fields, maybe still, from different parts of the land,—watered by different clouds, fed by different soils, reaped by different hands; but now all one. The grapes from which that wine was pressed grew on different trees, hung from different props, swelled and grew under the sweet feeding of different dews; now they are mingled in one wine.

And now, I want you to see how S. Paul speaks of the want of union among those that have eaten of the same Flesh and drunk of the same Blood. You have read the words a thousand times: I wonder if you ever, dear Sisters, traced their connection? If not, see how you should weigh each sentence, each junction of sentences, if you would come at the whole meaning. *First of all, when ye come together in the Church, that is, to celebrate the Liturgy, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it. FOR there must also be heresies among you.*

Heresies! but what have they to do with the subject on which the Apostle was speaking? Did any one in those days venture to give our LORD the lie direct, and to affirm that when He said, *This is My Body*, He meant, “This is *not* My Body,”—that when He promised, *The Bread which I give is My-Flesh*, He meant, “The Bread which I give is *not* My Flesh”? Certainly not. A thousand years passed before that doctrine was

taught in the Church ; and then, like a poisonous serpent, it was crushed, and lay apparently lifeless for five hundred years more.

Then how *heresies* ? Heresy is a sin against the faith : disunion is a sin against love ; how, then, can disunion be heresy ? Because it was disunion among those that had eaten of the same Body, and drunk of the same Chalice. There are heresies which are *spoken*, and there are heresies which are *done*. Heretics, in their obstinacy, affirm that the Sacrament is not a Sacrament ; and Catholics, in their disunion, bring to pass that the Communion is not a Communion. *That they all may be one*, saith the LORD Himself : “ We will not be one,” say the servants. Ah ! if we ever sin in that way, we are in some sort worse than heretics ! Heretics say that the Sacrament is not a Sacrament, but it remains one, for all that : but we, if we disagree, actually make the Communion not a Communion. They may blaspheme it, but we destroy it ; they deny its essence, we deprive it of its virtue. *This*, as S. Paul says, *is not to eat the LORD’S Supper*.

When we were reading the Book of Genesis, my Sisters, we came to that part where Abraham is commanded to offer a particular sacrifice to the LORD. A heifer of three years old, a ram of three years old, a she-goat of three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. The beasts he divided and laid in pieces on the ground ; the birds

divided he not. And why not? Because the birds, produced not from the earth, but from the water, the birds that soar up towards Heaven, the birds that cannot rise without making the sign of the Cross with their wings, are types of the Christian: and then comes in the LORD'S prayer, *That they all may be one.* Divide the beasts, if you will, the birds never: *the birds divided he not.*

And now, my Sisters, to speak to you more definitely and more individually. Who ought to be bound more closely together by this most blessed bond of union and love than you?—you, by your very name, Sisters: you, by the very Cross you wear, hanging alike over, hallowing every breast (what if it should hang over hearts not perfectly in unison?): above all, by the One Body and One Chalice which, day by day, you receive. Oh, sin grievous beyond all grief,—oh, proof how sadly, sadly vain are my words, here or in Confession, if there is anything which mars the brightness of that golden chain of Sisterhood! If there be, in any case, and from any reason,—if there ever be any one single feeling which is not all love towards your Sisters, towards them whom He, your GOD and King, loves equally with yourselves, who are His Brides as much as you are,—oh, how fearfully dangerous to stretch out the hand for that glorious and immaculate Flesh, to clasp in your fingers the Chalice of perfect love. Better, a thousand times better, that you should draw back from

it altogether, than that you should in effect say, "Thee, O GOD, I desire to love with all my heart and soul and strength. I desire to become bone of Thy Bone, and flesh of Thy Flesh; but her, though Thou hast chosen her, though Thou hast sealed her for Thine, I will not have for mine own. I will acquiesce in it, because I could hardly do otherwise: I will tolerate, but I will do no more!"

Remember, dearest Sisters, in speaking so to you, all the time, as S. Paul says, *I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak.* But we all know that Satan's great aim, since the very beginning of Sisterhoods, has been to sow discord and doubt between their members. He always has tried to do it; he always will try to do it. Let us be prepared for it. We are not to expect to be free from what the Saints have endured, and we are not to think ourselves worse than others, and so be discouraged, if he thus attacks us.

And this again I would have you all remember. We are drawing close to the end of the Church's year. Advent is rapidly approaching; now is the time when we should be beginning to make up the accounts of our stewardship. You are now nearly the largest of any Sisterhood in the English Church. Of all, your work is the most difficult: it is also the most to His glory. And, oh that He would give us more and more grace to remember that the time is short, and the work to be done

very, very great! All to persist in laying aside every weight, all to resolve on running with more patience the race that is set before us! Oh, what marvellous strength belongs to us, strength which He has given; nay, rather, strength which He is! When I look round on all of you, there is nothing that I can despair of effecting. When I think of what GOD has brought you through, when I remember what, in one place or another, He has given you grace to attempt, ay, and to succeed in, I would not, GOD be my witness, change my office as regards you for any other work that could be offered me. I know that I must have, I am prepared to meet, many occasional discouragements among you. I know that you will not always run as by GOD'S grace you sometimes do; but I comfort myself with this hope,—that your failures you all more and more try against; your efforts you all strive longer and longer together to keep up.

For remember the text: *Dwelleth in Me, and I in him. Dwelleth in Me.* The Lamb was the Temple thereof. In that most pure and safe Temple you are invited to live for ever. "O most dear LORD," says S. Bonaventura, "what an hyperbole of love is this! Thou That didst make the glory of the heavens and the beauty of the earth; Thou That didst form every tree and flower; Thou That didst stretch out the curtains of the clouds and the pavement of the grass, Architect of all things, couldst Thou not have built an house for

me, Thy sinful and unprofitable servant, far beyond all my deserts, far beyond all my hopes? Most surely, O LORD, Thou couldst. But this did not satisfy Thy love. Thou wouldst have me live, not in any work of Thine, but in Thee Thyself. In Thee, to Whom, but for Thy loving-kindness, I could not venture to look up, in Thee to dwell. Is this after the manner of men, O LORD GOD? And that Thou shouldst take up Thine abode in me, in a cottage so mean, so unworthy at its best for a monarch, and besides that, so defiled, so polluted, so stained by a thousand corruptions! But since Thou wilt have it so, come to me, O most loving LORD! since Thou vouchsafest to enter my poor, mean, little dwelling, help me to welcome Thee as Thou wouldest be welcomed there! Help me to remove every scrap of leaven from the abode, before the Paschal Lamb takes up His sojourn in it! Bestow on me Thyself the purity wherewith Thou wouldest be welcomed, the holiness wherewith Thou wouldest be detained! Send Thy messengers to prepare the way before Thee; those sweet messengers, Faith, Hope, and Love. They know how I should prepare for Thee: they know how I should receive Thee. Come then to me, for I am Thine! Come to me, for Thy vows are upon me! Come to me, for Thou hast promised to dwell with me! Even so, come, LORD JESUS!"

And now, &c.

(See Prayer on Unity in note at the end.)

VII.

“And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer, and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”—S. LUKE xi. 5-8.

[October 1858.]

THERE is one sentence in this parable which I always feel most deeply applicable to myself; perhaps more than ever now, when I am about, if it be GOD'S will, to speak to you oftener than I have lately done. *A friend of mine is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him.* Or, as it is in that miracle, *Whence shall a man buy bread that these may eat?* You can judge for yourselves, how your hopes and wishes, your trials and temptations, the aim of your life, the strength by which you attempt to reach it, remaining always the same, it is very difficult for a Priest to speak to you again and again, without again and again uttering the same sentences and thoughts, and wearying you instead of helping you. There is but one remedy: to go to the Great High Priest,—Him of Whose fulness have all we received; Him

Who *can* satisfy here in the wilderness ; Him in Whose Temple the shewbread is fresh, not every week only, but every morning. To carry out, that is, the spirit of this parable : and let us, as the HOLY GHOST shall help us, see what that is.

Now the first thing I notice is this : that a parable, coming between the LORD'S Prayer on one side, and the LORD'S most precious promise on the other,—*Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,*—would be likely, one should say, to be one of the most precious of parables. And so indeed it is. There is a fulness of meaning in every word of it, which holy men of old have delighted in dwelling on ; and if it leads me once more to speak of the same subject on which I spoke to you on Sunday evening, it matters not. Of a nobler, we cannot speak till that day, when all sacramental veils shall be torn away, and we shall see the King face to face, not under shadows, but in His Beauty.

Now, when we hear of a petition made for loaves, especially when it comes directly after, *Give us this day our daily bread,* we can think but of one kind of food : *the Bread of GOD is He Which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* For remember, however that word came to be translated Daily Bread, it is not so in the Prayer as our LORD'S lips pronounced it ; —“Give us this day our *supersubstantial* bread,”

it is in the original. And whatever be the first original meaning of that word, one meaning must be the very true Body of our LORD ; the Bread of Angels, the Manna that cometh down from Heaven. Well, then, the petition is here for that. But why three loaves rather than one? Israel ate of one manna : Israel drank of one rock : why then three here? And the answer is easy. Because each of these loaves represents one essential of the Holy Eucharist. In it we receive, it is true, the Flesh of our dear LORD : but not that only. We receive Him as He is now, glorified and incorruptible, Body, Soul, and Divinity. These are the three loaves of which the parable speaks. And that reminds me (though it be not exactly a part of our subject) to give you one piece of advice in regard to teaching the poor. When you speak of our LORD's Person and Nature to them, I know that you will generally find, if you get to the bottom of their belief, that they consider Him so to have taken our manhood, that the Divinity supplied the place of a human soul. I believe that the heresy is unconsciously held by many, whose knowledge ought to be far beyond such very elements of the Christian faith. I remember when I was a child, having so fully imbibed the idea, that it was with no small difficulty, when I began to wish to believe as the Church believes, I could drive it from my mind. Here, however, the parable sets forth to us the Catholic Faith in all its fulness : *lend me three*

loaves; and that not merely as a subject of speculation, but as something with which we are immediately connected: for these three loaves are for *us*.

Then again: notice when the request was made. At midnight. And it was a little before midnight that this Blessed Sacrament was first instituted. But perhaps rather we are taught by this that here lies our great comfort in the darkest affliction: here lies our best support in the blackest temptation. That let the trouble be what it may, the Sacramental Peace still passeth all understanding: let the sorrow be never so heavy, in that Blessed Eucharist is the promise chiefly fulfilled: *Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

And then further: see the way in which the petition is made. FRIEND, *lend me three loaves.* It is love that must ask, if we are to gain. You are taught as much every night. If it is not, O GOD, *Thou art my GOD*, it is no use to go on, *Early will I seek Thee.* If it is not, My LORD and my GOD, it will never be, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Yes, dear Sisters: if you do not know this, you know nothing. Here is your all. If your hearts, when you kneel at those desks, are not on fire with love, better not kneel there at all. Especially for us,—us who are privileged to find so large a proportion of our prayers in the Psalms, is this true. I do not at

all wonder, when people set to work to compose offices for themselves, that they have so large a proportion of prayers and so few Psalms : so much of their own poor miserable words, so little of the direct phrases of the HOLY GHOST. See how exactly contrary is the practice of the Church. It is not too much to say that at least nine-tenths of her devotions are taken from the Psalms, directly or indirectly. Here the love of her children has, age after age, been poured out ; in those expressions, faith, hope, and charity, have each, for so many centuries, found their own language and their own meaning, and so it will be to the end of time. Those, says one of the Fathers, love GOD well, that love the Psalms well. And though I am afraid that that is rather too sweeping an assertion, yet this, I think, we may safely say : those have made but little progress in the Christian life, who do not love the Psalms well. Then always remember the preface which is pre-supposed : *Friend. FRIEND, lend me three loaves.*

Lend me, notice, not *give* me. Exactly as the dew and rain are lent to the earth, and returned in the beauty of the flowers, in the luxuriance of the grass, in the richness of the fruits, in the glory of the trees, so of that Blessed Sacrament. And so more especially, dearest Sisters, with you. These three loaves are lent to you over and over again here. You go forth, and then is your special time for paying. I, in our LORD'S place, lend them

here: they are repaid to our LORD, not in His own Person, but in the person of His poor. And I believe that we may carry this out a great deal further than we do. S. Thomas especially tells us, that though the Blessed Sacrament was not instituted for the purpose of giving bodily strength, or warding off dangers and diseases, yet, *per accidens*, to use the technical expression, yet, *per accidens*, it may have that effect too: just as Baptism sometimes also has. Yes, it is a beautiful thought that here is that lent which is to be repaid in far distant towns and villages, to our LORD, not then under the form of Bread and Wine, but under the shape of the poor. And of this I am sure: that the more any of you have been privileged to do, the more you will be disposed to say, *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the praise, for Thy loving mercy, and for Thy truth's sake*: the more you will see how little even that *much* was, compared with what it might have been, had you put out the gifts to the utmost usury. *Friend, lend me three loaves.*

Well, thus far all is easy: what follows will give us more trouble. *He, from within, shall say—* What? *I will rise and give them?* Not so. *Trouble me not; I cannot rise and give thee.* And is this after the manner of our LORD, of Him Who giveth to all men liberally, Who hath said, *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find?* Yes, it is. Consider what that verse, which you will

find in the Office of S. Mary Magdalene, says, no less deeply than beautifully—

“Oh how strangely Thou eludest
 Those, dear LORD, that have believed !
 Yet eluding, ne'er deludest,
 Nor deceiv'st, nor art deceived !
 But excluding, then includest ;
 Fully known, art not received.”

Only this is not spoken of the Sacrament, which certainly may be had without any such agony of supplication, but of that Virtue of the Sacrament, only to be obtained by earnest prayer. He refuses, that He may be asked the more earnestly. He says, *Let Me go*, that we may reply, *I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me*. He says, *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs*: that we may answer, *Truth, LORD ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table*. Therefore we must not be astonished that the parable thus continues : but rather we must thank GOD, and take courage, that what we have so often felt and known in ourselves is the very thing which He Himself has said shall be.

But then attend to the reason : *The door is now shut*. What door? That door, that vast, glorious, azure door, which shut upon Him when He was taken up into Heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Yes! that door is now shut. Those blessed Feet do not now walk upon this earth ; those blessed Hands do not now cure all

manner of sickness and all manner of disease. We cannot now see Him as He is; we cannot hear the words of those lips that spake as never man spake. The door is now shut.

But what is this that follows? *My children are with me in bed.* My children, the long line of Saints from the first Martyr till this day, have slept the same sleep that I did. I lay in the grave: they lie in the grave; that was My bed till the morning of My Resurrection: it is their bed still. They have fought the fight; they have run the race; they have entered into rest, they sleep in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. *Trouble me not.*

It is true, and we cannot deny it. We do not expect that that Blessed LORD will descend from Heaven till the morning shall come; not during this midnight in which we are petitioners for the Three Loaves. But the very fact that it is so only strengthens our petition, if we press it heartily with a good courage. *Because, as the Apostle said, the Heavens have received Him till the times of the restitution of all things;* therefore, for that very reason, He has left this way of being with His people. Because He cannot, consistently with His own foreordained plans, come to us, therefore He has appointed the Mystery of the Three Loaves. Why else? The children that are with Him in bed, those who are enjoying the perfect repose of eternity, need not the Sacramental Presence. For

albeit to them the Beatific Vision is not as yet vouchsafed, yet more of Him they behold, yet nearer to Him they are. It is we who are yet constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have our habitation among the tents of Kedar, who stand in need of this food, who must perish if we go not in this strength.

But yet see the reason which the petitioner urges. *For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to give him.* Ah! and what a rule of GOD'S providence does that teach us! We must not come to our dear LORD at all, unless we can call Him Friend; and we may not call Him Friend unless we also call the poor our friends. Now, dearest Sisters, how exactly this suits you! Why do you need, so often, so more than others, the Three Loaves? Because so often, so more than others, your strength is expended among the poor. *Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come unto me, and I have nothing to give him.* Nothing, indeed, of yourselves; everything, if you can but prevail in this your petition.

He will not, because He is his Friend. Will He not? Then perhaps He will if you call on Him as your Brother. For so indeed He is; by Incarnation, Bone of your bone, and Flesh of your flesh; so He rejoices to be called, as when you heard Him the other day, say: *We have a little Sister.** *He will not, because He is his Friend.*

* Referring to a sermon on Cant. viii. 8, 9.

Then He will, if you call on Him as your Husband. Then the answer will be: *What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? and it shall be granted thee, even to the half of My kingdom.*

Yes; *He will come and give him as many as he needeth.* Not once only, but again and again. Not in one midnight of trial only, but as often as you shall have occasion to cry to Him. Only, dearest Sisters, whenever you come to this Blessed Sacrament, and there desire its virtue and efficacy, whenever you kneel before your LORD and your GOD, under the form of Bread and Wine, remember these things. How you are to call on Him: Friend;—When: in any midnight of sorrow or temptation;—For what: His Whole Self, Body, Soul, Divinity: the Three Loaves;—In what way: that they may be lent;—Why: because you have nothing of your own: and on what further plea?—that those for whom you seek are your friends. So ask, and you shall indeed receive; so seek, and you shall without doubt find.

That you may so find here, that is my heart's desire and prayer for you all. And then, that hereafter you may find, as the Queen of Sheba of old, that even in this Blessed Sacrament, and all its glory, the half of the True Glory of the Heavenly Temple had not been told you!

And now, &c.

VIII.

“Where the word of a king is, there is power.”—

ECCLES. viii. 4.

[1860.]

Where the word of a King is. The Word, as Moses says, is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, as it is this day. So nigh, that you have each of you this morning handled, that you have only to lift up your eyes and you will now behold, the very Body of the SON of GOD. His most Holy Flesh has touched your lips this day; and, I will not doubt that it has also been received in your hearts, as they must receive it to whom it is to be the savour of life unto life. This Word, this Good Word which the FATHER indited; this Word, which came down as the rain and the snow from Heaven, and returned not thither until it had watered the earth; this Word, that is to be a lantern to your steps, and a light to your paths; *that Word*—to use S. Peter’s own language—*that Word, I say, ye know.* Not long ago we heard the difference between the *Voice* in the wilderness, and the *Word* in the Kingdom; the *Voice* that *cried* in the Desert; the *Word*, of whom it is written, He shall *not* strive, nor cry. *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power.*

And then it follows, does it not?—that if anywhere there be not power,—then the Word of the

LORD cannot be there. And this is a most fearful thought for all of you. For see. If you are suffering yourselves to be the servants of one temptation, or of many;—of one, that you will not resolutely say to it, *Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea*,—namely, the infinite Ocean of GOD'S mercy: my way to Heaven lies through and over this, and through and over it I will go: or, again, if a great number of vexatious little temptations cling round you, fettering you here, perplexing you there, tying and binding you everywhere,—the seven green withes with which Samson was bound; and you will not, for your LORD'S sake, keep on in ridding yourself of them, how can it be said that the Word of a King is with you? And yet most surely He is and has been: is renewed among you every morning, as your manna for that day's wilderness journey. And is not that a miserable condition? *Who* has such privileges in regard to the most blessed of all Sacraments as you have? In that respect, what could have been done more for this or for any vineyard, that GOD has not done in it? And with what result? Is it to be with this result,—that there is weakness instead of power in all you do? a helpless, shiftless way of trying for a little, and then falling back into apathy? Endeavouring for a day, and then giving up for a week? Sometimes trying without praying, and at others praying without trying? And remember: it is not as if the power came first,—and *then*

you having it, proceeded to make the effort. No : the power comes by means of the effort : the poor impotent man is commanded, *Stretch forth thy hand* : and at the moment of the endeavour, the paralysed nerves are strengthened, the contracted muscles are made strong. Ask yourselves then, What can I do to prove this power this very evening? what fetter can I break? or to what prize can I look forward?

Now, though I could tell each of you, as you know very well, of some sin or temptation against which to-day, while it is called to-day, you ought to exert yourselves,—some uncircumcised Philistine that defies the army of the Living GOD, the little army of GOD'S Grace, in your heart : that is not for this time ; that is even for a yet more solemn moment,—when I shall learn how far there has been the Power which ought to go with the Word of a King. But of one effort I may speak openly to all of you. None of you can need this Strength more than that dear Sister who is about to undertake [new work at a distance] for a season. That is just a case in point. It is said to her, as it was said to the Israelites of old, *If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us.* There it is : “if the LORD delight in us :”—the Bride able to do anything if she have the Bridegroom's ever-present love,—but woe to her if she goes forward in her own strength : or if, while she distrusts that, she distrusts His also,

As Rupert says : "Strength enough and to spare : fountains of strength, not to be fathomed by the imagination of man ; abysses of strength, to which all the difficulties that all evil spirits can stir up are nothing." *I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, and make mention of His Righteousness only.*

Now, for all your sakes, let us go to one of these fountains of strength,—a place where of old the mighty men were gathered together,—the place where they still love to be collected. *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power.* Well, then, the Word of a King has ascended to His Triumphant Throne on the Cross ; the LORD is reigning from the Tree : the Word of the King indeed, *JESUS of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.* We are wont, and most rightly, to see, in that glorious place, the perfection of all love ; where, because the LORD could give us no more, therefore He gave us Himself : where He wrote that large letter of love which never can be read through to the end of Eternity. But not the less are we to see in it the perfection of all power ; and in those streams which thence are parted, and go out to water the whole Church of GOD, the fountains of all the mighty deeds that ever have been done, or ever will be done, to the consummation of all things. And so the hymn says very well—

"Wherefore, sinner, haste to these Fountains of Salvation ;
Strength thou mayest gain therefrom and illumination."

I have told you, I think, before, how holy men

have seen in these, the upper springs and the lower springs which every faithful soul must, like Achsah of old, make petition for from the True Caleb. The Wound in our LORD'S dear Side the upper spring, because not inflicted on Him till He had already won the victory; till He was already freed from the Valley of the Shadow of Death; till He had already passed through the vale of Baca—a spring belonging rather to the fulness of joy in the next world, and the infinite perfection of strength, of which the Prophet speaks:—*And it shall come to pass in that day that he that is feeble in you shall become as David, and the house of David shall be as GOD.* But the other Four Wounds are the four rivers of the earthly paradise: rivers without which no good work can prosper, no victory can be gained, no power manifested.

And see how it was on the Cross; how there went out marvellous power in every saying delivered from that glorious pulpit. Then, more than ever,—then in a sense far exceeding anything before, He taught them as one having authority. FATHER, *forgive them.* Was there no power in that petition, the first which the Immaculate Lamb made from the Altar, the first which the Acceptable Priest made on the Great Day of Atonement? Pass but a few days, and the three thousand and then the five thousand shall bear witness to the force of that intercession. *The people, it is written, shall be willing in the day of Thy power.* And

what was the day of His power, but the Day of the Cross? Again: *Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.* That, too,—was there no power in that word? which in one moment dismissed the Cherubim with the flaming sword which turned every way, and once more opened the passage to the Tree of Life—opened it, not to the wise or the holy, but to one poor thief in the last hour of earthly misery! Truly, one might quote what the multitude had said before, *What thing is this? What authority is this? for with power He commandeth the spirits, and they obey Him.* Yes, and we may say too, that the expression of human weakness, *I thirst,* was not less the expression of Omnipotence. “Henceforth, O poor sufferer, I consecrate bodily infirmity to my work. Disease, weakness, hunger, thirst, I have made them Mine: My true servants, My messengers who shall do My bidding. I, the GOD of omnipotence, have hitherto been adored in My strength; now henceforth, I will also be worshipped in My weakness, yes, and for it.” And yet once more: what was the mightiest word that ever was spoken, since GOD first said, *Let there be light, and there was light?* Is it not that which was uttered from the height of the Cross, *It is finished?* and by the utterance of which He brake the gates of brass, and smote the bars of iron in sunder? The gates that Satan had reared up from the beginning of the world, the bars which

that Old Serpent had forged when he deceived Eve at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So, my Sisters, you have seen where strength is to be found when you need it; and you know how more especially they, who are best read in the Book of Calvary, have explained the four streams of Eden of the lower springs which gushed from the LORD'S Body; how, for example, in Pison, the river which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, that is, misery, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good, they saw the glorious Wound of the Right Hand; by which we are to pray to be strengthened in all deeds of self-denial, in all actions carried on aggressively for God's sake, that by our own misery and suffering, we may gain for Him the gold of good works done for love. That is the river which our Sister, who is going out to-morrow, has need of to follow her continually: praying that she may not care though the name of the land is Havilah, so the gold of that land be good; so that Bdelium, the sweet incense of praise—and the onyx stone, which signifies perseverance, may there be found. But we have another Sister, called not to action, but to suffering. Is there none of these Wounds, is there none of these springs, that would meet her case? Most surely. Our great King does not confine His power to one class or set of circumstances. The second river is Gihon: *that is it*

which compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia; that parched land, which has no refreshing dew, which is always burnt up by a fierce sun and an iron sky. True type, then, of pain and bodily suffering. And so answering to the Wound of our LORD'S Left Hand, the left side being always accounted that of affliction and trouble. And so I might go on; but enough already to show how on the Cross, where the Word of a King was, there was power.*

And where else is the Word of a King? Where, but in the Blessed Sacrament which is now before your eyes? There is power indeed. In that pure white circle are contained the germs of all graces which the greatest Saint ever manifested;—are contained all the collective good works of All Saints. In that circle, so formed as to symbolise the sum paid down for the price of our Redemption, all the power of the King is hidden,—all the strength that He displayed on the Cross,—all the

* [Hiddekel, *i.e.*, the swift river, may be taken as applying to the Wound of our LORD'S Right Foot, and reminds us how *Thy Word runneth very swiftly, rejoicing as a giant to run his course*. So the Right Foot will figure our LORD'S Divinity, and the Left His Humanity. So the mighty Angel set his right foot on the sea, the abyss of Godhead, and his left on the earth, the lowliness of manhood. For Euphrates signifies "fruitful," and He, the Sower, came to plant good seed in a guilty world, and to water it with His own blood, even in *the land of Egypt, where Thou sowedst Thy seed and wateredst it with Thy foot*.]

might by which He overcame the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Dearest Sisters, did you ever think of this? that probably, in one year, you receive that Blessed Sacrament oftener than many Christians, many earnest Christians too, in the whole course of their lives? And if so—not only, what ought you to be? but—what must you expect, if you fail to stir up this grace of GOD? I confess it terrifies me sometimes lest any of you should come unprepared to this feast, and very habit should tend to make you careless. Oh, how earnestly I pray—it is no mere figure of words!—oh, how earnestly I pray, that this may never be so!

And then, if it is not so,—if you are receiving the strength of the Sacrament with the Sacrament itself,—why then, feel, why then, show, that nothing is impossible, nothing really difficult, to you! Either what I am telling you is true beyond truth, or the foulest of falsehoods. You know, in your heart of hearts, how true it is. And so, what follows? but *Try!* Try with yourselves, if the difficulty lies in yourselves; try with the world, if the task be in the world; but, anyhow, so try, so pray, that, as here it is true—*Where the Word of a King is, there is Power*, so in the next that dear prophecy may be fulfilled—*The LORD their GOD is with them, and the shout of a King is among them.*

And now, &c.

IX.

“And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of GOD. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.”—1 Sam. iv. 3-5.

[*Festival of Corpus Christi, 1861.*]

THIS Chapter formed the lesson for the first Sunday after Trinity long before the institution of Corpus Christi. Therefore the marvellous teaching it contains with reference to that festival is, so to speak, a mere coincidence; only we know that *all these things worketh That One and the Self-same SPIRIT.*

And what is the lesson? Your own hearts will already have told you. It is a warning lest we should employ the Ark of our Covenant as the Jews did theirs; and so, instead of finding it a savour of life unto life, and the leader to victory, we should learn that it only entails on us bitterer defeat, and more certain condemnation.

Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before

the Philistines? No great need in those elders to ask that question, when they knew the horrible profanation of the tabernacle. Only let us take care that when we ask the same question about ourselves as regards our spiritual Philistines, we do not break off in the middle, as these Jews did here : but ask again and again till we come to the true reply. I have told you before now that Elisha made especial inquiry where the axe-head had fallen, before he threw in the piece of wood ; and so must we,—where and how we have suffered the water-flood of temptation to overwhelm us, and the billows of transgression to swallow us up, before we can venture to put our faith in that dear Cross, itself to sink that we may rise.

Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us? Dear Sisters, we have reasons enough,—have we not?—why it should please Him that we should be defeated,—why we have so often fallen,—why, but by His great goodness, we may fear to fall again ! Think,—when we have known that some especial temptation would assault us, how little pains we have taken to stand on our guard against it ; think, when some post has had (we knew it in our consciences) to be won, we have said, as the spies did about Ai, *Make not all the people to labour thither, for they are few.* Think, too, how little we realise to ourselves the need we have of grace every hour and every minute, till we find, when we are left to ourselves, that never was sick person weaker, never

was child more helpless. So, partly in anger, partly in love, we are defeated by our enemies, as the Israelites by theirs.

But yet there is something good in the question too. It was not, Wherefore have the Philistines smitten us to-day? but, *Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines?* Yes; and so, for our comfort, when we have fallen, we may nevertheless say to the temptation, whatever it were, that carried us away, *Thou couldst have had no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* For our fault, doubtless; but still, given; given, as distinctly as the power to afflict Job was given in the assembly of the sons of GOD. And truly I think that, could an inhabitant of another world be suddenly introduced to this, told of the invincible strength GOD has provided for us,—in the Sacraments, in His promises, by His own incorporation with our nature,—that the first impression would be one of wonder that we ever could fail. See how it was in the case of Ai. The Jews, always accustomed to conquer (except on the one occasion at Hormah, where Moses had prophesied their defeat), were even more amazed than afflicted at their loss. *O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs upon their enemies?* Might not our True Joshua utter the same words? He That trod the wine-press Himself alone: He That, all power being given to Him in Heaven and in earth, puts it likewise into our hands through the

suppliant almightiness of prayer. What must He have said when from the watch-tower of the Cross, He saw His Israel so often vanquished, yes, and even for a season trodden down, by their enemies? What must he have said? We know. *I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld me.*

Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us. Now some have questioned whether these Jews were not utterly wrong in summoning the Ark into a scene of war and bloodshed. But the contrary seems very clear. In that battle of Hormah of which I was speaking just now, after Moses had said, *Go not up*, we are told that the people would presumptuously go up: *Nevertheless*, it expressly adds, *Nevertheless the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.* This surely proves that had Moses led the people, the Ark would have been carried out to the battle. So the army was but here acting on its ancient traditions.

And how often, my Sisters, have we summoned our True Ark, that Ark, made of the shittim wood of immortality, and overlaid with the gold of the love of Calvary! How often have we called on that, to deliver us from our enemies! And may I not say, How often it *has* so delivered us! That would be sad beyond all sadness, if each of you

could not call to mind signal examples of this: times when you might have said, *Nevertheless my feet had almost gone: my treadings had well-nigh slipt*; and He, Who in His own dear Form held up Peter on the water, has, under the similitude of Bread and Wine, held up you! Right or wrong in the Israelites of old, we know what is our duty with regard to our mystical Ark. No place so mean, no spot so lowly, that the LORD of Heaven and earth thinks scorn to enter it. Think, in a Christian land, how few are the rooms in which at some time or other it has not been! And that is a neglected house indeed which the Eternal Word has never, in His Humanity and Divinity both, entered into and blessed!

As to this Oratory, my Sisters, how often, when we have had a difficulty to struggle through, or a battle to fight, in common, have we sent with all speed to the Heavenly Shiloh for our glorious Ark, knowing that we should fare better for the advent of so great a Guest! But then there is this terrible question for us,—for each of us, and for us all in common: have we ever so sent for it as the Israelites here,—still cleaving to our sins, still worshipping (look on further and you see they did) some Ashtaroth of our own heart's desire, and yet trusting to that? By what hands it was brought to the camp at Eben-ezer, you know: by those of Hophni and Phinehas: hands reeking with sacrilege and impurity. And do we not know, my Sisters, that

with us also, as that wise officer told the Samaritans, with us also, there have been offences against the LORD? What coldness, when the LORD of Love drew nigh! What want of perfect forgiveness to others, when He That has forgiven us the ten thousand talents approached! How much of impurity, when the Immaculate Lamb, He That is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, was received! And if His mercy has kept us from gross sacrilege, yet oh! my Sisters, who can say how many spiritual defeats we have known after, and because of, half worthy Communions!

But notice the misbelief in which those elders spoke. *Let us send for it, that when it comes, it may save us out of the hands of our enemies.* No. GOD had once, by His own strong right hand and His mighty arm, delivered His people, they contributing no whit to His work: when they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Now, let the Ark be with them never so much, it cannot fight for them. It may assist them to fight for themselves: but they must be fellow-workers with GOD.

And so the analogy holds true yet. Of Baptism it might truly be said, that when it comes, it may deliver us from the hands of our enemies:—not, in any accurate sense, of the Holy Eucharist. No: it may fill us with strength, it may fire us with love, it may give us power to go upon the lion and adder: it may be the cause, and source, and spring

of glorious victories, of noble efforts in GOD'S service,—it may enable you, my Sisters, when called Home, to carry with you to your Divine Husband, without one soil or crease or blemish on its petals, the Lily of Chastity: nay, in a certain sense, if you should lay down your lives in His service, the Rose of Martyrdom. These things it may work *in* you; but not *for* you. That dear LORD will have you yourselves labour and fight; remembering that which He spake by His Apostle: *If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.*

And when the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. Ah me! how different was that time, when the Truer Ark first came into the LORD'S camp! That little terrified band—the connection of the great new gift with the fearful unknown curse, when after the sop Satan entered into the traitor. If blessing and comfort, such as never yet, on the one hand: sacrilege beyond all example of past ages on the other. No shout of victory then, so that the earth rang again:—No: *The kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation,*—only the trembling voices that asked, *Master, is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* No triumph on the part of the Leader in that great battle; but those fearfulest of words, *That thou doest, do quickly.* No triumph on the part of the followers; but only a strife among them which

should be counted greatest. That was the way in which the Ark of the LORD first came into the Army of the Church ; thenceforward never more to leave it, but on two occasions. The one, past : the Friday and Saturday of our LORD'S Passion, when, the tradition of the Church is, that there was no celebration ; and perhaps (for it is one of the hardest of the questions of theology) *could* not have been one : the other, future : the three days and a half in which the dead bodies of the two witnesses shall lie unburied, when the last spark of the Church is, for the time, crushed out, before the LORD'S Advent.

But whatever might have been in the camp of the Church then on that sad night, do you not imagine that the spiritual Philistines perceived that their dominion was coming to an end ? What must they have felt when they beheld the Great High Priest preparing to enter into the Most Holy Place, and, when He had offered the Sacrifice of Calvary for Himself, leaving the Sacrifice of the Altar for them that should come after ! Did they not feel the great succour that was about to be bestowed on the human race ? Did they not, think you, say, and that most truly : *GOD is come into the camp ? And they said, Woe unto us, for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.* What is that, but : *Neither is there any nation which hath its gods drawing so near to them as the LORD our GOD is to us ?*

Well, my Sisters, if there is any one house which ought to feel this strength, to make the best return for this love, and to acknowledge also (for so every privilege must always have) this danger, it is here. You, and none else, form that house. I trust, if it be GOD'S will, that after our brief separation from each other, we shall return to that system which for so many years we had: our Celebration, which is, as S. Cyril somewhere says, the golden key which unlocks every day; and that more and more your Holy Communions, and the hours you spend before the Blessed Sacrament, may tell upon you, may make you more and more that which you ought to be; so full of love, so self-denying, so pure, so holy, that the best periods of the Religious Life should be again represented in you. But remember this; this will be done by the Blessed Sacrament, or it will not be done at all. So receiving, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

The mediæval commentators have yet one, and that a sadder interpretation of the story. They see in the ark, the grace bestowed in Baptism. They see it sent forth, invoked, leant upon, in carrying on our great battle with the world. They see the high hopes, the full certainty, with which the conflict is commenced. Finally, in the evening of life, they see the enemy victorious, the Christian soldier defeated, the ark lost, baptismal grace

overwhelmed, the harvest past, the summer ended, the man not saved.

But I would rather see, dear Sisters, that grace strong in you, to do, in the midst of a miserable and naughty world, the mighty acts which the ark did in the land of the Philistines : many a Dagon overthrown ; wherever it goes, that grace testified to by victories of love and faith. And then, at last, that ark brought back to the true Canaan, and, in the time of the Eternal Harvest, lodged safely in the Heavenly Beth-Shemesh ; for Beth-Shemesh is, by interpretation, the dwelling of the sun. Oh, happy Sister, when the work of her baptismal grace shall there be for ever saved from her spiritual foes ; when the reapers, which are the Angels, shall welcome it to the barley-field of glory ; when the sun shall be no more her light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light to her ; but, in the Beatific Vision, the LORD shall be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning shall be ended !

And now, &c.

X.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”—LEV. x. 1, 2.

[*Feast of Corpus Christi, 1863.*]

THIS day, my Sisters, reminds me—ought to remind me, ought to remind us all—if of the privileges, so most surely also of the dangers, of our Daily Sacrifice.

The question is this (and the longer we are together, the more I feel it, for myself and for you), I, so consecrating, you so receiving, the Body and Blood of Calvary, what reply are we making to so great a gift?

And this also: What things are we allowing ourselves to do, which are utterly unworthy of those who so eat of That Body and drink of That Blood?

Is it not the one thing to be prayed against, out of all other things, that we should shut our eyes to this: that we should be content with a profession, and deny the substance of it?

My Sisters, I have a difficulty which I will give you in the words of a dear servant of GOD, though not a Saint, from whom came the institution of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, who, as you know,

teach in schools, educate boys for the reception of Holy Orders, and the like. And thus he says, word for word: "If I tell you that, with all the privileges you have, all the Sacraments, all the helps, I sometimes wonder that you, on the whole, make no more way, surely you might well retort on me, and say: Whatever privilege we have, you also; whatever Sacraments, you too; and can you so condemn us? And he says, so humbly, Be it so: what then? All, and more than all, you say of me is true; but what will that profit you? All, oh! how much more than you know of, or can fancy, may be my condemnation; but what will that avail *you*?"

My Sisters, I always think of what that good Priest there says, whenever, more especially, I wish to lay down to you what you must do, if you would be true, and honest, and good Sisters. Think that all said, and know that all thought; that I, that all Priests, to some extent, condemn ourselves. But, nevertheless, there is the same right in what we say, there is the same reality in our arguments.

And what does the strange fire mean in the text? Undoubtedly, in one sense, the strange fire consumed the burnt-offering, as any other fire would have done. Undoubtedly, any one of you may, outwardly, and for a certain time, do GOD service, only to be distinguished by Him, not by those around you, from the true, deep service of Saints.

Well : and what are questions, of such infinite magnitude to all, what are they to you, who, when you speak in the course of the day, speak with the lips which the Precious Blood of your dear LORD has so lately touched? Who, when you do anything, do it with those hands by which the Sacred Body of the same LORD has been so lately handled. Who, when you hear any provoking speech, and therefore reply to it hastily, hear it with those ears through which those dear words have so often come to your souls : “ I absolve thee from all thy sins.”

And what then is offering strange fire? If you offer that poor, half-lighted fire, miserably and lazily, dragging through its sacrifice, just doing what you ought, and not a whit more, just doing your own duty in your own place, and that with as little trouble as you can take ; and, then never for one moment undertaking the duty of an over-worked or tired Sister : I take it that *that* is strange fire. So, if whatever you do, is done for any but one reason, then that other reason, let it be what it may, is strange fire too. And this is, perhaps, the commonest fault (I am not especially speaking of you, but of all sisterhoods), to see things left undone by another, by her own fault, and to leave it so. “ Am I my sister’s keeper? ”

My Sisters : sometimes this kind of thought does make me very sad. I look at the bright parts of what you do, and GOD knows, I thank

Him, and take courage. But if I were to take the darker parts by themselves, what then? Look at it in this way. Think, each of you, what you would, as I was partly saying the other day, have said ten years ago, had it then been revealed to you how constantly you would now receive. My Sisters: remember this. That infinite love, that marvellous power, cannot be lost. I go to a poor woman, living in the world, toiling for her daily bread, making only the general profession of trying to be GOD'S servant, with countless hindrances to draw her back, and remind her that she receives three times in the year the LORD'S Body and Blood. How should I, how should you, speak to such a one, if we knew that she ever neglected her prayers, if we knew that she ever lost her temper, if we knew that she was hasty and impatient with her children, disobedient to her husband, unneighbourly to those around her? And for her once, each of you receive that same Food of Angels one hundred times. Now, during this Octave (what time better?) try and ask yourselves, each, how far you are acting up to that wonderful gift of GOD. Your receiving that dear LORD, your visiting that dear King: are you acting up to what the privilege, even in its lowest sense, infers? much more, how are you carrying out all the strength that Sacrament of all strength gives you?

My Sisters: you are offering your sacrifice to GOD with some fire or other. There is but One

that is utterly pure, utterly holy, utterly heavenly. But, as S. Bernard says, that may be mixed also with other fire. It may be that pure love of which, in the New Testament, S. John stands forth the unrivalled pattern; it may be, the LORD much, and some inferior motives a little, as S. John Mark, that, in time of great trouble and weariness departed; it may be, the LORD a little, and ourselves much, as Jehu, when he destroyed Baal; it may be a false fire, an utterly truthless imitation of zeal, as—why, says the same preacher, need I quote such crimes? But call to mind how loving, how hoping and believing the best, that Saint was, how much he saw of work, how much he knew of difficulty; and then listen how he speaks: he, indeed to a brotherhood; but I am sure the lesson is no less true for you.

“Think, then, what you have professed, think what you do. In little things, say you, or in great things? And I make answer: In both: in great, because in little. If the LORD and Satan contend about one small duty in your hearts, that small duty is indeed increased. Be real; know that, as the wise man saith, for *all* these things GOD will bring thee into judgment. Remember what thou hast received; look forward to that which thou owest; hear that voice of most just upbraiding always sounding in your ears, *Who hath required this at your hands?* and then see whether there are not weights to be cast away, pet indulgences

to be forsaken, very clinging temptations to be torn of."

So he says, and on this the last of all our great festivals this year, O my Sisters ! how would I not say it to you ?

And so, with reference to this day, and to yourselves, my Sisters ; take these two thoughts for your warning :

The one : the fire shall *ever* be burning upon the altar.

The other : remember the fate of strange fire.

And GOD give you grace, each of you, to offer herself, wholly, perfectly, heartily, on that Altar, of which the first victim was the Spotless Lamb on Mount Calvary.

And now, &c.

XI.

"And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther ? and it shalt be granted thee ; and what is thy request ? and it shalt be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request."—ESTHER vii. 2, 3.

[*Fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1863.*]

As you probably know, neither the word GOD nor LORD occurs in the whole book of Esther. Yet I

do not know any Old Testament story so setting forth the whole of Evangelical truth. If we look for the Incarnation, I have already spoken of it to you in that verse : *As the Word went out of the King's mouth, they covered Haman's face* : in the same way that, the very moment that the Eternal WORD proceeded from the FATHER, Satan's death-warrant was signed. If we seek the Blessed Passion, and its marvellous enigma of death destroyed by death, we see Haman setting up the huge gallows for Mordecai, and himself hanged thereon. If you would find the Resurrection, you are told how *on that night could not the King sleep*. If you would read of the Ascension, it was well told you last Holy Thursday, how *the King, our own royal Ahasuerus, returned out of the palace garden, this world, the outskirt, as it were, and precincts of His Heavenly Palace, to the place of the banquet of wine*, of the everlasting and glorious marriage Feast.

But to-day, my Sisters, let us see another Evangelical parable, and that connected with the same banquet. If it is a lovely, it is also a terrible lesson, as you will presently perceive. For it is not here as if only the sweetness of that most Heavenly Feast of the Holy Eucharist were set forth, as it is in the manna ; nor its descent from Heaven, as there ; nor its marvellous adaptation to all necessities, its miraculous supply to all persons. No ; nor here do we read so much of its strength in over-

throwing Satan and all his hosts, as when it appears in the cake of barley bread that tumbled into the host of Midian, and overthrew the tent. No ; nor here have we the healing nature of this most heavenly medicine, as when it is set forth by the meal that healed the death in the pot. But we have a lesson, nevertheless, that is not in any of those other stories.

And first, we have the King and His own beloved Bride at this banquet. In some faint, in some poor way, I hope, my Sisters, that you understand both the banquet, and the Presence of the King. But then notice that it is the *banquet which Esther had prepared*. How can it be said that *you* make the Feast, when it is He from first to last, when He gives His Body to be the Corn of the Mighty, His Blood to be the Wine that blossoms into Virgins ! True, He gives you Himself ; but then you offer and present to Him yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. Therefore it is called Esther's Banquet.

And do you think of such a feast, such a royal Feast, the Husband and the Bride together, in the Palace of Shushan, which by interpretation is *Lilies* ; in the banqueting-room which opened out in the garden ?—a garden, as we see from the month, in all its spring beauty. Do you think of such a feast as the perfect realisation of all delight ? Ah me ! There is something else.

Think of that terrible fear that all this while was at Esther's heart; the tremendous danger that threatened, not her only, but all her people. Already the gallows were set up for Mordecai, already the date of the massacre was fixed, already the posts were hurrying out on horseback, on mules, camels, and young dromedaries, through the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the great empire; and with all that load of anxiety in her heart, and with all that imminence of peril to her people, Esther approaches the banquet.

Ah! my Sisters, and can you come in any other way? *In the midst of life we are in death.* Where is there greater abundance, greater freshness, greater sweetness, of Life than here? And where, too, is there greater danger? Only remember what is said about the savour of life unto life, and the savour of death unto death. Every day of your lives, my Sisters, you are in the Presence of that Word made Flesh. On most days your hands handle, your lips receive Him. Now those hands, are they always occupied in such work, and only such work, as befits what has been thus hallowed? We know how the hands of the Jewish High Priest were anointed with the holy oil. But what was that oil to that which your hands, again and again and again, have handled? And then those lips. You know what the Bride says: *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.* That petition is to you answered in a way infinitely

beyond what the Synagogue could ever have dreamt of. But then comes the danger, the great, the tremendous, the horrible danger. *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?* My Sisters, I see you kneeling around me morning after morning; to one after another I give that most Sacred Body which suffered on Calvary, that most precious Blood which dropped from the pierced Hands and Feet, and the Wounded Side. All the following day, will those lips, will those hands act worthily of their, if I may so say, morning dedication of them? All: always: in whatever trials and difficulties? And if not, then——

It seems hard and cruel to put the matter so; does it? But, can there be the comfort, and help, and victory, without the danger and risk also? You may as well ask whether there can be the victor's reward without the soldier's danger first.

And now notice something further.

This banquet was not only made sorrowful because of the danger; it was actually prepared as the means of averting that danger. Now, my Sisters, I dare not say that the Blessed Sacrament was instituted as the great safeguard, as the chiefest help, as the dearest armour against sin. Why not? Because, as the greatest Saints have taught, the Incarnation itself was not intended for that end. They have believed, and would lead us to believe, that, if man had not fallen, our dear LORD would still have been Incarnate. Who has

words to express the wonderful magnificence of such a plan, to make man one with GOD? But man *has* fallen; and therefore one great end, both of the Incarnation and of the Blessed Eucharist, is the reversal of that original danger, is the removal of that original poison.

But still Esther's feast is no unreal type of the Blessed Eucharist, for this reason also. Hers was made only and solely to counteract Haman's attack. And your most glorious Feast, if not instituted only for that end, still does work it out, still is your best armour, still is your surest safeguard.

And if you try to realise so far the danger as well as the help, go a step further yet. We saw the King and the Queen sitting down together at the banquet of wine. They, two, in that paradise of Pleasure; they, two, communing with each other, and none else. You know better. You *know* that Haman was there.

And now, see the terrible meaning as regards yourselves. You come here to that Festival, you desire to be alone with that King, you wish and hope that it may be, *So they two went on together*. But who else is at your side? Who, the nearer you would be to your LORD, creeps in to tempt and lie in wait for you? Esther would be all her LORD'S; would be alone with Him; would say, *Thy Loving-kindness is better than the life itself; my lips shall praise Thee*. And then, as Satan presenting

himself among the sons of GOD, as Satan standing to resist Joshua the high priest, so here, *The adversary and the enemy is this wicked Haman.*

What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? And, perhaps, my Sisters, I could put that question into words for you, for each of you. Whatever it is, whatever, in your most earnest times of prayer, you could make it, still, still that Haman will intrude himself even at the highest of all Banquets; even at the nearest and dearest of all intercommunion, Queen Esther's answer,—the King's question,—oh, how they resemble the truth of every faithful soul's prayers now! *Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.* Presume! to touch what is none of his! Presume! to snatch the so dearly ransomed lamb from the Shepherd! Presume! to step in between the Bride and the Bridegroom Who paid no less a price for her than that of His own blood!

And then lastly, my Sisters, see this. That banquet wrought out, so to speak, the salvation of the Jews. But not at once; but not in and by itself. That law of the Medes and Persians, which to us seems so utterly unaccountable, what a wonderful type it sets us of the Christian struggle! Esther prevailed at the banquet, but to what end, and how far? Not so that she and her people should at once be in safety,—no. But so (and that is exactly, my Sisters, your case; but so) that they

should have a right to fight for their lives, and that the King should be on their side.

Infinite help, infinite comfort, infinite power, from the Blessed Sacrament, *but*, help to those who feel they stand in need of assistance; *but*, comfort to those who know that they need consolation; *but*, power to those that own miserable weakness.

And now, &c.

XII.

“When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee.”—PROV. xxiii. 1.

[*Maundy Thursday, 1864.*]

A CERTAIN man made a great Feast, and bade many. And was there ever such a time chosen for the institution of so glorious a banquet? With all the agony of that night full in His view, with the Coronation, and Scourging, and Crucifixion clearly in His eyes, still it was, *With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.* And so, with Hands already prescient of the nails, He Himself consecrated Himself to be man's Food.

Now, if ever, my Sisters, on this most holy night, you are bound to listen to Solomon's advice in the text (and a greater than Solomon is here). You can hardly, I think, help sometimes feeling

almost terrified when you think of the countless times that you have received the daily manna. Look at it in this way. In one month you, most of you, receive it as often as many a humble, patient follower of our LORD may have been able to receive it in the whole course of life ; that is, the amount of Sacramental Grace which carries them safely through an evil world, from first to last, is supplied to you in thirty days. These things ought to make you very earnest in finding out to what purpose you receive this Grace, and how you show its effect. As each of you, in her turn, takes her watch in the oratory during the silence and darkness of this night,—while your thoughts go with Him to Gethsemane, while you follow the band of men and officers from the Eastern gate of the city, through the valley of Kedron, and up the slope of the Mount of Olives, try with all your powers of self-examination to judge yourselves, whether the traitor's kiss then given has ever, in any degree, been repeated in this oratory. *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?*

Betrayed He still may be, betrayed He still daily is, by those lips which receive Him unworthily. If, fresh from that most blessed touch, they allow themselves to utter words of unkindness, or anger, or equivocation, or frivolity,—*betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?* It those hands in which for one moment the LORD

of Life vouchsafes to lie, are engaged in any work, are employed on any act, not becoming a Sister, is not that the embrace of Judas? That kiss, infamous to all eyes, was but given once. But here, where it may be again and again,—shall I not well say that you have need, on this sad night, to search and examine yourselves about this? There is, I know (I should be unthankful not to confess it), much to be thankful for as regards your Communion. This, perhaps, above all; that the frequency of them only seems to make them more dear to you. I know that for any of you to be purposely deprived but once of That Body, and That Blood, would be a most bitter penance. But still, and I say it with all love, it is impossible, as Maundy Thursday brings another year of Sacraments to its end,—it is impossible not sometimes to fear for the account which all of us in this House must one day give in as regards this very privilege. *What do ye more than others?* You have promised, my Sisters, to do more, much more; you have assistance given you to do more, much more; and both for promise and for assistance you will one day have to answer.

Well, but then, here is the comfort. This Ruler with Whom you are to sit down, is Ruler of your hearts too. Only ask Him, and He Who invites, will enable: He Who gives the Wedding, will give also the Wedding garment. We come back again to the same thing, prayer. “And therefore it is,” as

a Doctor of the Church says, “that you may, and ought to, put your trust all the more in this Bridegroom. To be allowed to love Him, you, sinful creature; you, full of infirmities; you, compassed about with guilt; you, poor, weak, trembling one, allowed not only to kiss His feet, but to be taken to His dear Arms here, in a measure,—hereafter, perfectly, eternally, beatifically! Would not that be marvellous, beyond all marvels? *Who is a GOD like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?* But what, when this love is not only allowed, no, nor praised only, but commanded? See what comes from Calvary! Hear;”—I am still continuing the passage I have been quoting;—“hear, O Sister, what He must of a necessity expect of thee. Doubly, nay trebly bound art thou to Him,—does He find that love? Tell me;”—and now, my Sisters, in quoting these words, I do not want you to tell *me*, but I do want you to tell yourselves;—“in the last night and day what time you gave to Him:—Pass the hours of sleep; pass, if you will, the hours of food and recreation. Those excepted, other hours,—did every one of you think of Him the dearest, Him the loveliest, Him the best, even once?”

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[*The M.S. left unfinished.*]

XIII.

“Behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—S. MARK xiv. 41.

[*October 1863.*]

I HAVE thought, my Sisters, that dearly privileged as we are, daily to celebrate the greatest and most blessed of all Sacraments, it would not be without its profit if to-night we begin, and on succeeding Sundays continue, to go through the office itself of that Sacrament, as so many and many a mediæval bishop or priest has done,—more especially in a religious house. For here is our great danger; here is what we shall most terribly have to answer when we stand before GOD’S Judgment Seat: HOW it is, that, day by day, we have been endeavouring to live, while day by day we have been approaching the Altar: how all those hundred, all those thousand Communions, then passed for ever, have helped us forward: or how they will hang like a tremendous millstone round our neck to drag us deeper into perdition.

We must not shut our eyes to this: that the perpetual familiarity with the most terrible action that man can undertake, blessed as in itself it is, most blessed as, in its effects, it may be, may also tend to blunt our feelings as to its danger. That has always struck me very much, as showing how use does deaden feeling, even in a Saint, that which is told of Moses on Mount Sinai. First, think of the

thunderings and lightnings, or rather bickering fires, and the thick cloud upon the mount; the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and waxing louder and louder, so that all the people in the camp trembled; and so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: and then of his going up, the daysman between his people and their GOD, into the thick darkness. And yet, some few hours after, we find him so little impressed with a scene, the like to which there never was before, and will never be till the LORD'S Second Coming, that he actually reasons against doing as he is commanded: tries to excuse himself, as a child that wished to spare himself trouble might do with an earthly parent. Did those verses never strike you? *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people lest they break through,* and the rest of the commandment. And yet: Moses, to spare himself the trouble, said, *The people cannot come up;* and gives the reason too, *For Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.*

And now, what of ourselves? The GOD of GOD, Begotten of the FATHER before all worlds, becomes in a certain sense incarnate in the hands of His priests. He Who once poured forth His Blood on the Cross, pours it forth daily on our Altars. It is the Sacrifice of Calvary over again: the same Priest, the same Victim: only the method of the offering different. On Calvary He offered Himself in His

Blood by a natural death, which was the separation of the Soul from the Body : on the Altar, He, now impassible and glorious, offers Himself by an unbloody and mystical death. On the Cross He offered His death then present ; on the Altar He offers His death accomplished and consummated. He offered Himself on the Cross as a Sacrifice of Redemption, by which He merited for man all the graces that He shall ever bestow on His elect, or ever would bestow on them that shall be lost : He offers Himself in our churches as a Sacrifice of Application, by which He bestows those merits on the soul.

“ And what, then, is *His* Majesty ? ” S. Bernard cries out, “ for the extension of Whose glory and worship the Son of GOD vouchsafes mystically to die every day on innumerable Altars ! They tell of a certain saint that, in the ardour of his love, he wished that he had the power of creating Seraphim eternally to praise GOD. But thou, O priest, dost infinitely more. Thou, after a certain sort, dost call into being, not a world of angels, but the very and Eternal and Consubstantial SON of GOD, and that in the very action, at the immediate point of His work, whereby He most entirely and infinitely honoured Him Whom it was His whole life-work to glorify, His and our FATHER.” So S. Bernard.

And further, my Sisters, in that Sacrifice of the Cross our dear LORD fulfilled, as it were, His destiny : laid down that life which He had received

for the very purpose of laying it down. But now, after having so dearly bought the many mansions for us, after having by His infinite humiliation acquired the right, as Man, to sit at the right hand of the FATHER, here on the Altar He seems for a while to despoil Himself of that glory and of that majesty: the Lamb, as it had been slain, comes, not, as in that marvellous picture,* to be worshipped by all the orders of the angelic hierarchy, but to be slain once more sacramentally; to be offered without suffering, to be partaken without being divided, to be consumed without being destroyed. As one of the Greek Fathers says so sublimely, "This Sacrifice is the one column that supports the fabric of a tottering world."

Now, my Sisters, can I speak too often, can I speak too earnestly, about the holiness which such a Sacrifice requires in us all? In one sense, of course, it ought to be more necessary in a Priest than even in a Sister: inasmuch as it is undoubtedly a greater thing, holding the eternal WORD in mortal hands, to stand as the mediator between GOD and human nature; as S. Chrysostom says: "It is a greater thing, putting this most Divine incense on the censer to stand between the living and the dead, that the plague may be stayed: to bestow all the graces which GOD Himself can give, and to offer the noblest Sacrifice that humanity can present: it is a greater thing this than even the eat-

* Van Eyck's Adoration of the Immaculate Lamb.

ing that Flesh, and drinking that Blood, however often the blessing may come." But then, the Priest has an excuse, which others have not. The Church has always held that he may and must sometimes celebrate in a state in which for one not a Priest to receive would be a mortal sin : because he has no right to deprive of the Bread of Angels those whom it is his business to feed therewith. It is as of old time : if the children of Israel are in fear and danger, and having the sentence of death in themselves, he must, whether perfect or not, approach the Heavenly Ahasuerus ; *and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law ; and if I perish, I perish.* But on others there is no such necessity. They can, if they so will, be *purified*, as Hezekiah speaks, *according to the purification of the sanctuary*, before they receive Him, Who, when *the earth is weak, and all the inhabitants thereof, bears up the pillars of it ;* when they join in that privilege at which, as S. Augustine says, Heaven is astonished, earth marvels, man trembles, the angels venerate, the devil shudders. S. Laurence Justiniani, preaching in some convent, tells the Sisters there, that the hearts of those who communicate once a month or less, may be compared to an inn, where, if a great king takes up his abode just now and then for a night, he is satisfied with what is necessary, without looking for splendour ; while those who communicate almost daily, are rather like the same prince's ordinary dwellings, in which,

since they were built for that very use, he may naturally expect that they should in all points be conformable to their destination.

They tell a story of Blessed Juan d'Avila, the apostle of Andalusia, that he was once assisting at Mass where the priest was evidently thinking of anything rather than of the work he had in hand; going through the service hurriedly and irreverently; and that, stepping up behind him, the saint whispered into his ear, "Do not thus treat Him Whom you are holding: He has not deserved it:" and that the priest, struck to the heart, as soon as he was in the sacristy, asked to make a general confession, and ever after led an earnest life. Ah, my Sisters, are there not times when it would be well if to some of you, ay, to *all* of you, as you hold for one second the Bread of Angels in your hand, it could be whispered, "Do not thus treat Him Whom you are holding: He has not deserved it?" What! if that Victim held so then in your hands, should one day rise up in judgment against you? There *will* be such a thing as the wrath of the LAMB; and to whom so terrible as to them that unworthily behold Him every day on their altars?

That was well said by a saint of old time, "You, who hold the spotless LAMB in your hands, hold as much as you love:" that is, His strength to you, His value to you, His help to you, is to be measured by your love to Him. What, my Sisters! And will you remain weak, when you hold the

Source of all strength?—poor, when you have in your hand the Giver of all riches?—unloving, when He is there, Who not only gives, but *is* love? It was with a holy boldness, that a mediæval saint, speaking of this heavenly manna, said: “I dare to affirm that GOD, who is omnipotent, *could* not give more: that GOD, who is all-wise, knows not how to give more: that GOD, who is all-rich, has nothing more that He can give. Oh, what ought to be the confidence of the receiver, when such is the goodness of the Giver!”

There is a story of a sister in some convent, who was allowed to receive daily. And her one thought, her one safeguard, her one buckler against sin, was this, and this only: “I have received to-day: I shall receive to-morrow.” My Sisters, all of you to a certain extent, some of you almost to the same extent, might take that safeguard on your lips,—might you not? You *know* you might.

My Sisters, did you ever connect, in your own minds, these two clauses? JESUS, *knowing that the FATHER had given all things into His hands,—began to wash His disciples’ feet.* If that Power, given to Him as Man, led to that humility, what ought not the power given here, whether to Priest or Sisters, of handling, of tasting, of living on, the Bread of Life, to work, in wonders of humility? I am not afraid about you, that you might shrink from undergoing the—or what the world would call so—the greatest humiliation; but how of the

every day giving place, how of the poor, little, paltry misunderstandings, that every sisterhood has felt so sadly : that every priest, who has written at all on the subject, has treated of so earnestly ?

Thus, this evening, we have thought a little about the preparation for the great Sacrifice. If it please GOD to spare us to the next, we will, as He may help us, begin the consideration of the Sacrifice itself.

This only I desire to remind you : what is the gratitude you owe to GOD for the privilege you enjoy of receiving it as you do ? You know that there are no Sisters in England who can receive it as you do : who have it dwelling with them, abiding with them, hallowing them ; unless in some Roman Catholic Sisterhoods. But then, compared even with them, is not this a blessing ? to have that glorious Chalice which they are so unhappily denied : that Chalice, to deny which to any one, S. Thomas (for he lived before that miserable change) calls spiritual adultery ; because, what our dear LORD joined together, man has separated ? But I am not speaking to blame others, but to warn you. We are all of us too apt to forget this glorious privilege, what it is. Perhaps the best way of realising it is to remember what we should have thought of the happiness of those who had it, before we had it ourselves. Dearest Sisters, on the whole I am well satisfied with your efforts ; I see the strength of the Blessed Sacrament in what you do for GOD.

But can I say, can you, any of you, say, that altogether you are living and conversing, treating each other, obedient, gentle, loving, as they should be who receive the Immaculate Lamb almost daily? Judge yourselves by that rule. This day the SON of GOD has touched me, dwelt in me, mingled Himself with me. To-morrow He will do the same thing. When I come to-morrow to receive Him, when I stretch out my hand to receive His Body, can I say that that hand has, since it touched Him last, done nothing to offend Him? When that Body touches my lips, can I say that these lips, since He touched them last, have spoken no idle word? I do not wish to put a difficulty in your way of receiving Him, as I should do in any Sisterhood but this; I mean, where the Sisters were, from year's end to year's end, always in the oratory, and able to communicate. It is not so with you. Some of you, by to-morrow night, may be fifty miles off, and never see the Blessed Sacrament again for a month. Therefore you not only may, but ought to feed upon it while you can.

But then, O my Sisters, how carefully! Think of these three things which you may say:—

I call myself the Lamb's Bride.

When at home I receive His Body and Blood daily.

Any day, I might be called to go forth to almost certain death; and some day, in all probability, my Priest, in telling me to go to this or that place,

will pronounce, though he knows it not, my death-warrant.

And ought you not, my Sisters, to be Saints? If, hereafter, you do not approach at least to that title, how can you hope to be saved at all?

GOD grant me so to speak, you so to hear, that you may be my hope and joy and crown of rejoicing: if it shall please GOD that I attain the lowest place in the Kingdom of Heaven, that you may be my glory and my joy!

And now, &c.



XIV.

“Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—S. MARK xiv. 41.

HAVING last Sunday seen what manner of preparation they must make, what manner of persons they ought to be, who would take a share in the great Sacrifice of the Church, now let us in thought assist at it, as in a few short hours, GOD helping us, we shall in deed.

And, as with our dear LORD, the great High Priest, so let us suppose the earthly Priest made ready for the new Oblation he is about to offer. Let him have assumed the amice, the type of that helmet in which our LORD, as a Man of war, went forth to fight with the old dragon; that crown wherein, as a King, He reigned from the Tree;

that mitre wherewith, as a good High Priest, He went to make oblation for the sins of the world. Let him have put on the alb, even as the LORD was arrayed with the white robe, the mute symbol of His innocence. Let him have been girt, as the LORD was, with the girdle of purity; let him have taken the maniple, type, on the one hand, of those cords which bound the Hands that were afterwards to break the fetters of our damnation: on the other, that he himself has, and wishes for, no higher glory than being the servant of the Crucified. But, if he serves well here, he shall reign gloriously there; therefore he would also assume the stole, type of the glistening raiment of the eternal marriage-feast. And then, lastly, even as the LORD bare the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, the Priest must array himself in the chasuble before he goes to the Altar.

And so now at last the drama opens (for a drama it is from beginning to end): JESUS CHRIST, as S. Paul says, evidently set forth crucified before us. The Priest kneels before the Altar; the Great High Priest, the Altar of His Passion now full before Him, is kneeling in Gethsemane. The visible chalice is before the eyes of the one, yet partly concealed; that invisible chalice is in the mind of the Incarnate WORD, as He says, *O My FATHER, if this chalice may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.*

And as for Him, so for us, the Sacrifice begins with prayer. The Collect is, in our mouths, what

the supplication of Gethsemane was in His. I say, in *our* mouths, my Sisters; but I cannot say so truly, unless you make it your own by the *Amen*. Many a time have I been intending to speak to you about the failure of almost all of you here; that, instead of taking it on your lips with all your heart and soul, you either do not say it at all, or almost inaudibly. As one of the mediæval preachers, speaking on this very subject, says: "This is not the way to imitate the saints; if I, in that collect, am setting forth the prayer of the LORD, do not you, by your silence, symbolise the sleep of the three apostles."

And then, as they tell us, because we cannot ask GOD for things acceptable in His sight, and because *ye know not what ye should pray for as ye ought*,—therefore the lections of the Epistle and Gospel that follow the Collect. And since *faith cometh by hearing*, the Creed rightly takes that place. It was a very fine mediæval custom, that as soon as the priest had intoned, *I believe in One GOD*, all the knights who might be present drew their swords, in order to signify their readiness, if need were, to die for the faith.

And thus far is the prelude to the Sacrifice; and now we begin to enter more deeply into the mystery and inmost shrine of the Passion. The Priest removes the veil, and exposes the chalice; even as in His more immediate entrance on His sufferings, the SON of GOD was despoiled of His

raiment, and poured forth His most precious Blood under the scourge. And, as you see the Priest move backwards and forwards to the credence, to the Altar, to the credence again, to the Altar once more,—what is that but the hurrying backwards and forwards of the spotless LAMB to Annas, to Caiaphas, to Pontius Pilate, to Herod, to Pontius Pilate again, to the Prætorium, to the Judgment Seat? And this, I think, you are bound to remember,—you who have so much hurry, and so little time for especial prayer, in your going out to cottage nursing. *You* are hurried; was not *He*? You have every possible earthly hindrance; if we look at His human nature, so also had not He?

And now, then, how are we to provide the Lamb for the burnt-offering?

With this prayer the Priest lays the oblations on the Altar:—this or the like; for there is many a different version of the same text; there is many a different melody of the same harmony.

“Accept, HOLY FATHER, Almighty and Eternal GOD, this unspotted Sacrifice, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, the Living and True GOD, for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences; and for all here present: and also for all faithful Christians, both living and departed, that both to me and to them it may avail unto everlasting life.”

In that, or in the like words, he prays. But what, my Sisters, *is* the unspotted Sacrifice? Cer-

tainly, in the first place, the Bread, under whatever form it may appear. And did you never think of this, in looking over some wide landscape towards the middle of July, the fields white already unto harvest? that part of what was now ripening, as of the earth, earthy, might, in process of time, undergo that glorious transmutation: and become the Corn of the mighty, the LORD from Heaven?—reaped perhaps, thrashed perhaps, stored perhaps, ground and baked perhaps, by hands that little knew to what it would be changed: how glorious a thing is that same reaping,—that same gathering in! That is one meaning. But are not yourselves another? As S. Ignatius said: “I am God’s wheat; and I cannot be fit for the Master’s board till I shall have been ground by the teeth of lions.”

“Here we offer and present unto Thee, O LORD, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice.” If all who so draw near, Sisters, how much the most! *Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.* So, in that offertory, each of you should say for yourselves; *Silver and gold have I none: you who have taken the vow of poverty can have none; but therefore are your gifts less acceptable?*

Of such tortures I can hardly bear to speak. But, my Sisters, realise to yourselves what the Roman world was in S. Agatha’s time. Christianity had just so far prevailed that it was then

beginning to be believed that the associations of Christian virgins and widows, which we now call Sisterhoods, were, at all events, folly beyond all folly, madness beyond all madness (that of course), but religious, like the vestal virgins, not immoral, as they said at first. I never, I think, spoke to you on that subject before. The vestal virgins had, for their occupation, to keep in the fire, the perpetual fire of the goddess Vesta; they were bound by a vow of chastity: and if, which they say only happened once, that vow was broken, the perjured woman was buried alive. But what further? They were to be beautiful, what we should now call taking ladies of the highest rank. And if any accident that destroyed their beauty happened to them, they were pensioned off. Only with this exception; and there you see how there was a remainder of truth even in the worst superstition—that old age was no hindrance. S. Agatha, then, of one of the highest families of Sicily, young, very lovely, was brought before the prætor, and professed herself, in her own language, the virgin of CHRIST. Numidius Varro inquired of his assessors what that meant; they explained to him that as the vestal virgins were dedicated to the immortal and ever blessed gods, so this girl was in like manner dedicated to the Crucified Malefactor of Judæa. Most of you, I daresay, have read the details of her martyrdom; but, unless you catch the point of it, you do not see the aim of the per-

secutor. First trying the scourge, and the rack, and the prison, and having tried them in vain, then he resolved to remove her from her rank among the vestal virgins, as he thought, by maiming her and disfiguring her: and therefore it was, from a double refinement of cruelty, that he invented a till then unheard-of torture, and commanded that her breasts should be cut off.

And yet, she said, I shall not be less, but more beautiful in the eyes of my Heavenly Bridegroom.

The bread, yet bread, is on the Altar: and the Priest, not, as yet, daring to lift up his eyes to Heaven, has said that prayer, fixing them on the ground.

Now, then, we draw nearer in love, and therefore in boldness. Now he pours the wine into the chalice, and adds the water. Why? In the first place, because our dear LORD did so Himself. The Jews, always in their ordinary banquets, mixed a little water with their wine: first, therefore, naturally, as a custom, and then by tradition, as a law, they did so in the Passover. And the Church, therefore, received it from the Synagogue. And it is remarkable (though, through the negligence of that sad last century, the custom has very much been disused in England), yet, up to that time, it was always usual, often commanded, always allowed to have been intended. The Scotch Church has never dropped it: and the mystical meaning is twofold.

First, the Consubstantial Union of our dear

LORD'S Divinity with His Humanity; and next, the union of the people with Him.

Ah! my Sisters! what is the power of His Love! Look at this. Take a bowl of fowl water, pour into it a spoonful of pure water; does it become clean: perceptibly cleaner? Take a bowl of pure water, infuse into it a little fowl water; what then? The whole is defiled. Or, take, if you will, the case of a man who is suffering from pain in every member of his body. Relieve one finger from that pain. Has he any the more ease? On the other hand, if a man is in perfect rest and ease, then let one finger be in agony—does not the whole body suffer? Read that for yourselves in the 2d chapter of Haggai; the same teaching.

And yet one drop of our LORD'S blood, and the accumulated guilt of the whole world is washed away. And it is not *one* drop. He is now *Bone of our bone, and Flesh of our flesh*; and therefore the Priest, while he mixes the wine and water at the credence, may well pray!

“O GOD, who hast wonderfully created the dignity of Human Nature, and yet more wonderfully redeemed it, grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may merit to become partakers of His Divinity, who vouchsafed to be made Partaker of our humanity: JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who, with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, liveth and reigneth, ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.”

And now, therefore, as I once said before, the oblation of the chalice stands on grounds quite different from that of the paten. Now the Priest, knowing that the Great High Priest and the people have been joined together in One Nature, may venture to lift up his eyes to heaven, while he says, "We offer to Thee, O LORD, the chalice of Salvation ; beseeching Thy Mercy that it may ascend before Thy Divine Majesty as a sacrifice of a sweet savour for our salvation, and that of the whole world." And with respect to this, S. Bonaventura speaking to a religious house, tells us something further.

We are offering that which is to be turned into the Blood of our LORD. What is the Blood, but the whole Passion, but the whole life-long suffering also, of Him, the spotless Victim? So, following after Him, they, the Martyrs first, then the confessors, and the Virgins, have made an oblation of themselves also. Water, indeed, compared with that Wine : but still such as the true Vine vouchsafes to accept.

There we must end for to-night, having taken the next great step, having left nothing further than this, to see how, actually and really, *the Son of Man* shall be *betrayed into the hands of sinners*.

(From a Sermon preached on All Saints' Day.)

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IT falls out not ill, that the stage of the Liturgy at which we left off last time is so knit together with this day's remembrances. "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church" first, "militant here on earth;" and that is the old rule; then, resting from their labours. You know, my Sisters, that the early Church prayed, even as the Eastern Church to this day does, for the greatest of departed Saints: nay, even for the Mother of GOD herself. Far enough they from any idea of a place of penal suffering: in all those lovely prayers about the green pastures of the Saints, the still waters of the heavenly river, the tabernacles of shade and refreshment, the portal of the celestial temple, the antepast of the marriage feast; and who shall tell, who shall venture even to guess, how near they are with us in the truest, the veriest, the realest communion of Saints? Depend on it, there is a depth of meaning, beyond aught that we shall ever fathom in this world, in that saying of the LORD'S, *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, till that day when I drink it new with you in my FATHER'S Kingdom.* Whether that refers to the fellowship, the blessed fellowship, we now have with Him in the chalice, or to some even yet more glorious mystery, which we must wait till the Resur-

rection shall explain, we shall not know in this world. Oh, my Sisters, GOD give us some day to learn in that!

XV.

“Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—S. MARK xiv. 41.

THE last time I spoke to you, my Sisters, it fell out well that the great festival of the multitude that no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, should have been the day in which we had to consider that part of the Communion Office where we unite ourselves with all the company of heaven in the glorious *Ter Sanctus*.

But before we go on, I will say a word on another matter connected with this.

Of all the precious offerings that Saints and saintly men have cast into the treasury of the Church, I know of few more precious than the vast number of prefaces to the *Ter Sanctus*, now almost all disused. In the early ages of the Church, every Sunday and every festival had its own proper preface as regularly as its own Collect: the poor remains of the Spanish Church have them to this day. Rome cut them down to eleven; and we, as you know, have reduced those eleven to five, or rather to six, for there is a proper preface to the Corona-

tion Office. I will give you an example of this ; only it is necessary to listen attentively, for every word tells. The first shall be for Thursday in the octave of Easter.

“It is very meet and right, very salutary and convenient, that we should render thanks, utter praise, offer vows, and meditate on Thy gifts, Almighty FATHER, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who, having now completed His most victorious Passion, offered to Thee the spoils of war in the redemption of His purchased people. His immutable Divinity knew no battle : His assumed humanity won the victory. Thus was the devil scorned, when flesh was overcome by flesh : so that Satan should be baffled, after its fall, by that humanity which, before its fall, he himself had overcome. Then that foul ravisher was utterly trampled down, when sin, in which he confided, was destroyed by the similitude of sinful flesh. Which victory, O LORD, added nothing to the power of the winner, but bestowed dignity on the won. For immutability cannot experience loss, nor plenitude acquire fulness. Not that the LORD of heaven needed the possession of earth, but that this world, a portion of Thy kingdom, might set forth His praises, Whose riches it could not increase. Behold, then, O FATHER, the love of Thine Only-Begotten SON towards us :—the abyss of a Creator cannot be fathomed by a creature. That He might restore Thee that which was Thine, He

assumed that which was not His. Thus He set forth to us Thy invisible glory by His own visible Majesty. He taught us what was Thine excellency in the heavens, Thy power in the waters, Thy wisdom in the earth, Thy virtue in the abysses, Thy brightness in the angels, Thy will in the patriarchs, Thy dignity in the prophets, Thy sublimity in the evangelists, Thy love in the apostles, the authority of Thy commandments, the loveliness of Thy temples, the joy of Thy burnt-offerings, the happiness of Thy servants, the zeal of Thy disciples, the worship of Thy ministers: what is Thy respect to the miserable, Thy love to the little ones, Thy hatred of idols, Thy favour to the saints, Thy terrors to the lost, Thy pardon to them that confess, Thy splendour in Baptism, Thy sweetness in the Eucharist. Therefore with Angels," &c.

The other, because it is appropriate to a House like this:—

“It is meet and just, sufficiently worthy and salutary, that we should give thanks always and praise to Thee, O LORD, heavenly FATHER. . . . Through JESUS CHRIST our LORD: by Whose grace, after that He had been born of Mary, Virgin of Virgins, the weaker sex becomes mighty, frailty is turned into victory. So that, in that which introduced the facility of sin, should be bestowed the happiness of victory: that that which merited the punishment, should obtain the crown; merited in

the head, received in the progeny. And now let feminine nature, once deceived and in the transgression, gird itself for the battle and conquer: while a frail and delicate body, yielding to no torments, but entire victor over them, gives occasion, thousand times, of misery to that most ancient enemy. Wherefore, LORD, while Thou thus prostratest the elate adversary, Thou consolest Thy redeemed people. Divine love gave her audacity, and turned the sentence of her Judge into the confession of her GOD; so that she, having conquered the world, now reigneth with Thee for ever: Therefore with Angels," &c.

With such and so many preparations, the Church approaches this most august Sacrament; and yet there is one thing more. As the LORD, on His way up Calvary, fell three times beneath the weight of His Cross, so He falls, as it were, beneath the weight of our sins yet once more in the Prayer of humble access, *We do not presume*, &c. And then, finally, the Priest, rising from that, is with the LORD on Calvary. Think then that it is not the unveiling of the chalice that you see, but the LORD Himself, for the third time stripped of His raiment, and bleeding at every pore; not the preparation of the Host, but the soldiers arranging their nails and hammer; not the fingers of the Priest that lay on the paten the pure white wafer, so soon to become the Corn of the Mighty, but the hands of the executioners extending on the Cross the white and

virginal Body of the LAMB of GOD : that you hear, not the breaking of the Bread, but the hammer which, by its sound, fulfils old Simeon's prophecy to the Blessed Virgin Mary : *yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.*

Now is about to be fulfilled that which is written by Haggai : *Yet a little while, and the Desire of all nations shall come ; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.* And must we not tremble, as we prepare ourselves for Him ? *But who may abide the day of His coming ; and who shall stand when He appeareth ?*

Then the Priest, renewing with all his power his actual and present intention of consecrating the Body and Blood of CHRIST, proceeds for the last time to pray over the creatures of bread and wine : bread and wine even now after the order of Melchizedech's sacrifice, and in a moment to be changed into that Sacrifice, the one Pearl of great price : that we, receiving them, may be partakers of the Body and Blood of the Beloved SON, *Who, in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread ; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, This is My Body.* Now, then, farewell for a while to sight and sense : all here is in the realm of faith. She only can pierce the cloud : can draw near into the thick darkness where GOD is. As a saintly writer says, Now thou art about, O priest, to pass through the nine orders of the celestial hierarchy, and seek

the Eternal and Consubstantial WORD in the bosom of the FATHER : that *Word by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not anything made that was made*: asking Him to violate the laws of that nature which He Himself established, and to substitute Himself for the material gifts.

Took bread. And here, as S. Bonaventura says, “if the priest had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, surely his hand would refuse to fulfil his office: to lift that which will in a few moments become his Creator, and his Saviour, and his Judge.” And what if there should be among those who are assisting some unconscious Judas,—some Sister who, when she receives that Bread of Angels, will of a verity be betraying the Son of Man with a kiss,—who will presently go out, and with those very lips utter some angry word, some provoking thing, some light sentence: with those very lips to which the petition has just been granted, *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.* It is not for the Priest, in that moment, to think of any human creature, however dear—of any earthly matter, however unspeakably important; but it is for you, my Sisters, as each moment brings you nearer the miracle of miracles, if you have fallen (there is now no time for formal repentance, but) to *love*—there is always time for that!

And when He had given thanks. And if He so gave thanks, if He, GOD of GOD, Light of light,

very GOD of very GOD, gave thanks to His FATHER and our FATHER, to His GOD and our GOD, for this His help to us, His dear help, His chief help : what words have we that we can express our thanks by? *When He had given thanks :* That He had gone through those thirty-three years of misery on earth ; that He had endured all evil, as well as done all good ; that He had suffered what none else suffered, as well as performed what none else had performed : and that, for our sakes. Ah ! it is said by a mediæval saint : after that, in the great, in the dear moment, in the most precious moment of His life for us, He gave thanks. And what, my Sisters, of you ? I firmly believe that sometimes, let the work have been what it may have been, you have tried (sometimes you have succeeded) to give thanks. Sometimes, I leave it to your own consciences how often, but—

He blessed.

And shall that Blessing, passing through the mouths of the priests of eighteen hundred years, be less powerful now ?

And brake.

Why?—to teach His own true lambs of His dear sufferings,—of the parting of His most holy soul from His most pure body ;—or that, thus broken, He might teach His suppliants to imitate the bold humility and trust which said,—*Truth, LORD ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the children's table.*

And gave.

To whom? To His FATHER, from Whom He had received all things? No, indeed.

To His disciples, to whom He had given all things, up to that time, His own powers of healing bodily diseases, His own more precious gift of Absolution. Now He gave them this; this, not only for themselves, but for their hands to pass on. And oh, my Sisters! think:—if it had pleased Him, of His infinite goodness, *once*, and only once, in inaugurating the apostolic succession, to give the Source—His own Body, His own Blood: what infinite love, what infinite power, should we have seen in such a gift! Ah me! and what should we have thought of them who received it? how they must have been struck dumb with amazement! how they must have, so to speak, fainted under such a load of tremendous benefit! Imagine the Gift bestowed once, and once for all; realise that; and then see that the marvellous gift is given no more to them than to us; nay, the miracle spreading as the faith spreads, not so much to them as to us!

Take, eat.

It is enough; the hour is come; and the Son of Man shall be given into the hands of sinners.

Take, eat: but—is it to be as the sacrament of life, dearest Sisters, especially to you? or that of— I will not end the sentence.

THIS IS MY BODY.

And now, says an early Saint, are you on earth or in heaven? are you with angels or among men? There is the ransom of every sinner; there is the peace of all the world; there is a Sacrifice, to which you must add the sacrifice of yourselves, if you will ever be accepted before the heavenly throne.

And now, as another Doctor says—go, my Sisters, and keep your miserable little jealousies, your poor, petty, wretched distractions, your unworthy difficulties and misunderstandings; go, and keep any thought that is at variance with that one thought of that one love; go: and vowed, pledged, sworn to Him, give secret hiding in your heart to His enemies; go, and let that ring, His golden pledge, be on a hand that ever commits one deed not for Him; let that veil cover a head which indulges any thought wherein His enemies will rejoice; let that cross touch a breast which harbours any hankering after what is not His, hang over a heart which beats for any beside Him. You have heard the sentence, *Take, eat; This is My Body*. Go, and allow these things, my Sisters, if you can!

XVI.

“It is enough ; the hour is come : behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—S. MARK xiv. 41.

AND that, when I last spoke to you of the Blessed Sacrament, had just been fulfilled. The Angels and Archangels, the Thrones and Dominions see their Prince, see the King of Glory obedient to the word of a sinful Priest. The words had been said, “*This is my Body.*” And we may well take up that text in another sense : “*There was no time like that, before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened to the voice of a man : for the LORD fought for Israel.*”

And, behold, the Blood of Calvary is flowing into the chalice. *For this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.* As David says, where we so poorly read : *My cup shall be full* :—“My ravishing chalice, how glorious it is !” And then : *Do this in remembrance of Me.* As a mediæval Saint cries out, “And that all the command, after such a gift ? Is that all the return Thou askest for such a humiliation ? What cross mightest Thou not have enjoined us to take up in return for Thine own ! what hard lot mightest Thou not have laid on us in remembrance of Thy sad and sorrowful life ! And this all ! this so gentle, so loving, so easy a precept, *Do this in remembrance of Me.* But to remember Thee, we must forget ourselves ;

and if, in this tremendous moment, when the heavens have opened, that the HOLY GHOST may come down, and make that which was bread Thy True Body, and that which was wine Thy Very Blood: if we cannot forget ourselves now, how can we profess even the coldest, poorest, dearest love to Thee?"

And then, as He showed that love in dying that He might be the LORD of the quick as well as the dead, then is the time in which, in almost all ancient liturgies, either verbally or mentally, supplication was made for the departed. You, my Sisters, each after your own reception, as the Priest after his, can have no better object of prayer, nothing that can more unite you with Him Who is the LORD of quick and dead. The order usually given in religious houses as to praying for the departed is this: first, for departed sisters of the same house: then, relations: then, those who may, in life, have annoyed or hurt us: then, for benefactors: then, for any one specially commended to us: then, for those who have none to pray for them: then, for those of whom there is no memory on earth.

And now, while the Priest is preparing himself with those words, LORD, *I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and Thy servant shall be healed*, to receive the Body and Blood of his LORD, you too are waiting, as Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre.

As the actual death on Calvary did but send forth our LORD alive from the tomb, so the mystical death on the Altar is but to send Him forth to you the Source of your spiritual life : *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

I have told you how S. Thomas of Villanova used to say that if a Priest realised what he did in Consecration, he would for terror be unable to proceed. And if you realised that, in stretching out your hands for those holy mysteries, you were about to touch, not the hem of His garment, like the Syro-phœnician, but that very Body of which it was said to S. Mary, *Touch Me not*, I think that your arms would fall powerless at your sides ; and I am sure that those hands, so hallowed, would never commit the least sin, however venial, never write an idle word, never go idly about their work.

And when one thinks of the chalice, how can one fail to grieve for that rejection of half His gift? You know, my Sisters, hardly ever here, here, before the very mercy-seat of love—have I ever said, will I ever say, anything controversial. But yet one cannot but feel deep sorrow for those servants of our dear LORD in later times who would have given anything, sacrificed all, to receive that Most Precious Blood, and were not able. I do think with veneration on that holy Bishop of Exeter, nearly six hundred years ago, who, when the custom was received for the first time by the

English Church, in a provincial council, said, "You may depose me as a schismatic, you may burn me as a heretic; but Bishop while I am, I will never deprive my flock committed to my charge of that which our LORD died on Calvary to give them." And while that true Bishop lived (and he lived many years), Devonshire and Cornwall were still privileged to taste of the chalice. What especial grace the chalice apart from the paten, or the paten apart from the chalice, may be to us, who would be presumptuous enough to say? But it is not without its significance, that in that first prophecy of Isaiah's about Antichrist, when he describes the Church as mustering her hosts to the last dreadful fight between herself and the Lawless One, somewhere in her ranks, *There shall be a crying for wine in her streets.*

One matter-of-fact remark. You know that many think—some of you may have thought—that it is more reverent to receive the chalice from the Priest than to take it in your hands. The history of this matter is this: For some six hundred years the chalice was received as we now receive it; then the idea began that the laity should not touch it. So, in some cases, our LORD'S Blood was given in a spoon; in some, imbibed through a tube. But the objection was to touching it at all. They would have made no difference between contact with the hands or the lips. That is a mere invention of the last twenty years. Through the feeling of a possible

danger of accident, the early mediæval Church discouraged the laity from touching it *at all*. The custom of which I have spoken is not a whit more reverent, and is far more dangerous than the primitive custom.

But now, there is the deep, the terrible thought. You have received those Heavenly Mysteries—

“ Ecce panis angelorum,
Factus cibus viatorum.”

Now think, how, for better for worse, you are not what you were when you entered the Oratory. Ah me! Suppose that, like Confirmation, this Blessed Sacrament could only be received once. That once in your life you were to touch that Body; once in your life you were to taste that Blood: only think, not only what preparation you would have made,—but what time for thanks you would have taken after! Think, how differently you would have looked on the hands that had held that Body; how differently you would have felt as to the lips that had tasted that Blood! And shall the greater love cause the less return?

The more Sacraments, the less love? The more giving Himself to you, the less giving yourselves to Him?

XVII.

“Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—S. MARK xiv. 41.

AND NOW we are coming to the end of the Great Sacrifice. And see how that end begins,—with the oblation of ourselves.

“Here we offer unto Thee, O LORD, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.”

Every one in a most true sense. You in the truest sense of all,—you, whose lives are in His hands, not in your own,—you, whose souls you ought more especially to have committed to His keeping.

See how the servant follows the Master. We have offered the Immaculate LAMB; we have not only commemorated, but renewed, all His Sacrifice on Calvary: and now you yourselves—in one sense, *His* own of His own; in another, *your* own of your own—offer yourselves, in some poor imitation of that of which He Himself made oblation.

So that prayer, so that sacrifice of yourselves, naturally follows that one Oblation once offered. The words of that prayer, as we now have it, are not so old; the sense is as old as Christianity itself. Because He for us,—therefore we *for* and *with* Him.

But then, the great hymn of praise with which we end, that *is* old ; that, words as well as sense. And when do we know, of a surety, that it was first repeated? We must look back to some hundred and fifty years after our dear LORD'S Ascension ; we must see the fire kindled, the stake erected, the Bishop bound to it,—S. Polycarp, the disciple of S. Ignatius, which latter was the little child whom our LORD set in the midst of the Disciples,—S. Polycarp, who himself had seen and conversed with S. John ;—we must hear him, when asked to deny his LORD, reply, “ Eighty and six years He hath been a good Master to me ; and what hath He done that I should forsake Him now ? ” and then go on, even in the midst of the flames, with the *Gloria in Excelsis*, as we at this day say it.

Glory be to GOD on high. Even though here, He, in His great humiliation, conceals His Divinity under the form of Bread and Wine, *on high* still ; on high, as He was during the greatest humiliation of His Passion.

“ The SON of GOD, proceeding forth,
 Yet leaving not His FATHER'S side,
 And going to His work on earth,
 Had reach'd at length life's eventide.”

On high, that where He is, there we also ; on high, that you, my Sisters, who have only the same kind of work as He,—often so (not only difficult, not only wearying), but so low, so mean, so degrading, as the world would call it,—may look for that

glory on high too : *That where I am, there ye may be also.*

Little, low, mean things ! I have often felt, my Sisters, that you must have thought it so easy for me to speak to you about your work among the sick abroad, among the children here at home :— only, in a general way, conceiving what it is,— how (what the world would call) low, mean, wretched. Often have I wished to say something on that point. But now, some few lines of S. Thomas de Villa Nova, which I only lately met with, will speak much better than I. Thus he writes :—

“And so, my daughter in CHRIST, you think that I cannot realise the littleness, the meanness, the disgustingness of your labours among the sick. Suppose I could not—what then? *This* then : that it would be *my* loss ; that I should lose the privilege of sympathy—not you the benefit of prayer ; mine, such as it is ; all Priests’, who, in that respect, are on a par with me. But you are, I think, mistaken. No Priest, worthy of the name, but would try to realise all those little, mean, miserable offices, which he himself, being sick, has needed—(oh, what a blessing it is for a Bishop to have been previously sick !)—and to translate them to your work. You have thought,” he continues, “that I have rested in generals ; that I have said to myself, ‘So much fatigue, so much labour, so much trouble, and then an end.’ You

are mistaken. I have reckoned all your work, and I have seen, the lower the ministry, the more the work is to be shrunk from, the higher reward at that judgment; the higher the seat at that banquet." Then he also goes on to say: "Did you ever try to realise how low, in the world's eyes, is the patient ministry of the Sacrament of Penitence?" And, my Sisters, remember this: how an evil world reviles, hates, abhors, loathes it, because it must probe into those sins which outward modesty will not have spoken of, any more than the sufferings and remedies of the sick-room could be exposed to others.

We talk of humiliation. Do you remember to what humiliation *He* has subjected Himself?—His gift to us of Himself under the forms of Bread and Wine?

One thing more. That *Gloria in Excelsis* might give matter for a hundred sermons; but we are now drawing so near to the great Festival, that of one thing only more here must I speak.

We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. What is that great glory? Is it not man's salvation? Then why not, "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great mercy?" For this reason: Then, in her ecstasy of love, then in the fulness of her self-devotion, the Church thinks of her redemption, not so much as it affects her salvation, but His glory. There we have the highest of all lessons; there we have the dearest of all truths. The two

must, of a verity, be one and the same ; but the more we love Him, the more we shall forget our happiness in His victory. That it is to which all the highest aspirations of the Saints have stretched. His glory first ; then our salvation, because of that. My Sisters, we probably shall never attain to that : only, it is well to keep the dearest, highest wish before our eyes.

That is not essential to salvation ; but this *is* essential,—to try daily more and more to prepare ourselves for His appearing at His Advent ; so to try, that, as His Apostle said, so may we be able to say, *We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is !*

APPENDIX.

XVIII.

“ And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land.”—JOSHUA v. 12.

[*All Saints' Night*, 1856.]

AND it is because those blessed ones with GOD, whom we this day keep in memory, are no longer fed with the Manna that was their support through the wilderness of this world, but are feasting on the True Corn and Wine of the Heavenly Canaan, that the text suits the festival. It suits them, and it suits us also; it suits the wayfarers in the desert, it suits the dwellers by the River of the Water of Life; it tells us of their blessedness, but it speaks also of our safety; it points out their country, but it also comforts us as concerning our way.

It is true comfort indeed. For this is the first thing, my dearest Sisters, that is here written for our consolation: that they never had any other kind of support and strength than that which you have. The same Manna that fed them, feeds you. And yet is there more comfort in that, or more danger? In the first place, that most Blessed Manna which every morning comes down for us here from Heaven, that Meat in the strength of which all those Saints walked through the wilder-

ness of this world, till they came to Horeb, the Mount of GOD : that little Cake which never fails nor wastes, which being received is not consumed, which being eaten is not destroyed. That, most chiefly and principally ; but that is not all. The manna of GOD'S pardon which you also so frequently are blessed with, that great and wonderful power which binds earth and heaven so closely together, which opens that blessed kingdom to all sinners who truly repent and turn to their dear LORD. Is there not strength and courage in this also ? And joined together with this, your consciences, dearest Sisters, bear me record—I am sure that they do—that you are not allowed to fall into any temptation without being told of it, without being warned against it ; no, nor yet without suffering for it. Then there is the manna of our daily Psalms and Prayers ; the same they had ; the self-same words that they took, each morning and night on their lips, we take on ours ; the self-same prayers that went up from them like incense, ascend also from our little Oratory.

Think of them now, the great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the LAMB, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; think of them, how they came out of great tribulation, how their robes, like yours, needed cleansing, how, like you, they fell seven times a day, and then rose again ; think of the wilderness wherein they walked, the same

through which you are walking, and then ask yourselves—it is a question that must be asked with all your heart and strength—why you should be satisfied with anything less than their strength; why, as the ladder set upon the earth, the top whereof reaches to Heaven, you should not be as near the Throne of GOD as they.

The manna ceased. And if the Scripture ended there, we should be of all men most miserable. Yet cease it will. Sacraments, faith, hope—yes, and in its first and most proper sense, prayer itself—will cease. *The manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land.* A most wonderful expression: so admirably true of those that have gone before us, if GOD will but grant that in us also it may be fulfilled! What was the old corn, on which the whole human race was at first fed? Why, surely the state of innocence in Paradise, and the Vision of GOD Himself. Then, but not till then,—then, but not till after the manna of sacraments, and prayers, and psalms ceased, those happy and glorious ones were restored to that state of innocence, and to that Beatific Vision—a restoration, I know, far more glorious than the original condition. The earthly Paradise, with its four rivers that were parted from the one head,—what was it but the faintest type of the Heavenly Garden of Eden? It disappears from us, that dear word *Paradise*, very, very soon; it re-appears in a moment of such distress and misery as the world

had never seen before ; no, nor ever shall again. LORD, *remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.* In misery and agony, our Head and Chief pointed it out to us ; hanging on the Cross, He first spake to us of the old corn of the land : through misery and distress we must go forward towards it, He going with us as our companion, Who was the first, from the watchtower of the Cross, to behold that goodly land for us.

And into that land, from that time to this, they have entered ; the manna, from that time to this, has for them been ceasing ; they have eaten of the old corn, the countless host of the Saints whom we this day keep in mind. It ceased then : but, mark you, it never ceased before. As long as they needed it, it gave them strength : as long they needed it, it wrought them deliverance : it fell about them every morning : it never failed them nor forsook them. Bear witness all those mighty acts which they did for GOD : they who said, with the Three Holy Children, “ If it be so, our GOD Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. BUT IF NOT, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” They who, if they laid not down their lives for CHRIST, spent them in His service ; who had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of

bonds and imprisonment : they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; of whom the world was not worthy. They who, for His love, forsook all the haunts and society of men, and tabernacled in the dens and caves of the earth ; the hermits who forsook all and followed Him. Then a great multitude of Bishops and Priests, who in their days were valiant for the truth, and came to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty. Then the company of righteous kings, who have changed the crown of earthly glory for the diadem of eternal blessedness ; and righteous warriors, who, falling in a good cause, though not for the Faith, have obtained their lot and their portion with the martyrs. And then those in whom you are more especially interested, the spotless Brides of the Immaculate Lamb, the flowers of their King, the lilies among Whom He feedeth Who, as they followed Him more closely here, so now follow Him whithersoever He goeth : whether, to the glory of having fixed all their affections and desires on Him, renouncing all earthly love for His sake, they added that of dying for Him, and thus doubly served Him,—or whether they trod but in that road in which you desire to tread,—your dear elder Sisters in a common faith and a common reward, spectators now of that cause in which they themselves once contended.

Very dear they ought to be to you : very dear—doubt it not, but believe it earnestly—you are to them. For this we must remember, there is but one merciful and faithful High Priest Who can perfectly sympathise with all of us. His blessed servants, that kept His law here, and have now sat down with Him at His Marriage Supper, must of necessity sympathise each best with those whose earthly course was most like their own. But this we know, that they all ate the same spiritual meat; that they all drank the same spiritual drink; that they were fed with manna all through the desert, and do now eat of the old corn of the good land, the land that floweth with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands.

My Sisters, what a blessed warfare ought this of ours to be, notwithstanding all its hardships—what a happy journey this ought to be, notwithstanding all its difficulties, when we think of those whom this day sets before us! There is not one of us who has not a special interest in this festival; there is not one of us who has not some dear one in the green pastures of Paradise: none of us are so unhappy as not, among the great multitude which no man can number, to have some blessed one more especially interested in us! This festival is as the hill of Pisgah, whence we may get a glance, beyond the Jordan of Death, of all that goodly land, as Moses had. And notice this, that he saw but one city in it, the City of Palm-trees. And this

New Jerusalem at which we are thus to look is the true City of Palm-trees—they are *clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*

It may be that when this Festival returns again, the rest of us may have to remember some one among ourselves. GOD give us all grace—GOD especially give grace to whomever He shall call first—to be able to say, *I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith:* that in the day that the manna ceases for him here, he may eat the old corn of the land there, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake: to whom, &c.

XIX.

“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High GOD?”—MICAH vi. 6.

[1st Sunday in Lent, 1857.]

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We heard last night, we shall hear many a night, how those words are again and again repeated, in every possible combination, with so many varying emphases. We heard also, in connection with them, the peculiar character which CHRIST'S servants must bear in this season: *in all things approving ourselves the ministers of GOD.* And what a character that is! The title, more especially appropriated to His more peculiar servants, is here bestowed on all *ministers* of CHRIST, with their appointed work to do for Him; and that, not in

one thing, but in all things ; and that, not merely as a state of existence, not merely being the ministers of CHRIST, but approving ourselves as such, to Him, to those around us,—yes, and to those evil spirits with whom we are in daily contact, and whose one aim is this, to withdraw us from the service of that dear Master, to work His dishonour by us, instead of His glory. And that you, my dear Sisters, are bound more especially to approve yourselves so, you know as well as I can tell you. Your consciences would say that to each of you, better than any words of mine could do. *Therefore, seeing we have received this ministry, as we have received grace, we faint not.*

Now, in speaking to any Sisterhood of their Lent duties, and their Lent strength, I should speak, before all things, of the Food that is to carry them the forty days and forty nights of their pilgrimage through that wilderness, till they come to the true mountain of GOD at Easter ; to that mountain in which the LORD of Hosts will indeed make a feast of fat things, in which He will destroy the covering of sorrow spread over all nations ; in which He will swallow up death in victory. And so, but under rather a different aspect, I will speak to you. Let us try to answer the question which the text asks : *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High GOD?* of your coming before Him here, where He is present to your senses as well as to your faith, where He is really and truly in

the midst of the two or three; where the same Body which is surrounded with everlasting glory, and on the Right Hand of the FATHER, is now also present to you. How you spend those hours, my dear Sisters, cannot but be a very turning-point in your Lent life. If you allow your thoughts to wander, if you knowingly and willingly permit your affections to be cold, that becomes indeed a grievous hindrance which ought to have been a wonderful help; the things which should have been for your wealth being turned into an occasion of falling,—the savour of death unto death, instead of life unto life.

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD? And the first answer is necessarily a grievous one. You *must* come before Him with weakness and pollution, with the sad, sad consciousness of how far you are below that mark which you have fixed for yourselves; with the remembrance of so many falls, with the sense of so much weakness. This is all that, of yourselves, you have to bring to Him: so hindered, you go to Him, Who came, and comes still, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: so weak, you go to the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting FATHER: so at war, you kneel in His Presence who is the Prince of Peace: so polluted, you draw near to Him Whose Blood, there veiled under the form of wine, cleanseth from all sin. You cannot go otherwise: the higher lives you are leading, you

feel this the more. *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh*, said S. Paul, *dwelleth no good thing*; and if he said so, and so cried out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* how much more must we do so?

And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three. I hope they do: of all times, then most. Faith and Hope must go along with you into the Sacramental Presence of your crucified LORD; it is reserved for the Blessed Ones whom He has taken out of the world,—it will be reserved, it is my earnest prayer, some day for all of you—to draw near to Him with love alone, when faith and hope shall have come to their happy end, their dissolution, at the exact moment in which they shall have been satisfied. Faith first; and I do not mean that external faith only in the truth of the Sacrament; the faith which believes that when our LORD said, *This is My Body*, He did not mean, *This is not My Body*, but something else: when He said, *This is My Blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins*, He did not mean that that Blood was only shed on Mount Calvary, and not poured forth again and again for our pardon and strengthening: that would worship Him, veiled as He is, with the same worship, due only to GOD, with which the Apostles worshipped Him when He stood among them in His own glorified Presence, and said, *Peace be unto you*. I mean, not the faith which owns Him to be *the LORD and the GOD*, but which acknowledges

Him *your* LORD and *your* GOD : which derives strength, and feels to derive strength from His Presence : like the opal, which they say drinks in the sunlight when exposed to it, and then gives back that light in the darkness of the night. I mean that faith which will not hear the word *cannot* : which rejoices to make any effort for His sake, however difficult, and the more difficult, the more rejoices : which looks into your own hearts, sees the work that is most needed to be done,—it may be to overcome carelessness, it may be to triumph over temper, it may be to set a watch over the tongue, it may be to do battle with discontent ;—and then, in His strength, resolves that this shall be done. Is it that you doubt whether He can, or that you doubt whether He will ? that you are apt to question His power or His love ? That is the faith I mean : that is the faith with the beginnings of which you must approach Him, and which must by Him be kindled into fuller and fresher being.

And this also, by means of the same faith, ought to be to you a matter of joy. When we know, as Isaiah said, that *this day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy* : when of all truth that the world hates, this is that or next to that which it hates the most,—that the Body which hung on the Cross, is in its very substance on the Altar ; that the Blood which poured forth on Mount Calvary was not more truly there than in the Chalice : when men speak great swelling words

against this so great mystery, fearful even to the Angels themselves, and deny and ridicule the last and best gift that even our LORD's love could bestow on man, it is something for our love to show its belief in His word : so far as we can to make reparation for those who thus dishonour the LORD ignorantly in unbelief : something, if they do in point of fact say, *Away with Him! away with Him! not this Man : how can this Man give us His flesh to eat?* To answer, not to them, but to Him who sees the heart : to answer, not in a noisy crowd, but in the silence of our own Oratory : " We have seen and are sure, that this, this which we see with our eyes, is indeed the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world."

And Hope must go with Faith. At all times ; but most of all when you come unto the LORD, and bow yourselves before the Most High GOD thus. Sadly as we fail in faith, most sadly as we offend against love, I do not know but that perhaps we are more content to come short in hope than in any other grace. We do not realise so much that we must have it, or we must perish. We do not lay to heart that which is written,—*we are saved by Hope.* True, faith takes hold of the promises in a general way : but hope directs them to ourselves ; faith tells you, when you kneel here, of the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and then before you : but hope puts in that little word *my*, so dear, so strengthening, so precious.

The LORD is *my* strength and *my* song, and is become *my* salvation. Thomas answered and said unto Him, *my* LORD, and *my* GOD. I know nothing more profitable for each of you, so apt to be discouraged as you all are, as every one is—GOD knows I speak for myself—than to make an act of hope while you are thus with your LORD: not to underrate any difficulties you may have, in which there is no courage: not to shut your eyes against them, in which there is no wisdom; but to take them as they are, to give them their full proportion, and yet to say, Who art thou—not only, O mountain, but—O *great* mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. Yes: I do not think that he would go far wrong who should call hope a greater grace than faith: I am sure it is rarer. Notice how S. Paul teaches us in the Epistle for last week: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.* If love is the greatest, and he puts it last, then that which comes in the place next to that must be greater than that which goes before. It is a climax: *Faith, Hope, Charity*, the ladder set upon the earth, and the top reaching to Heaven; Hope therefore is a higher step than Faith. And observe this too: S. Paul tells us there may be true faith without true love: *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* But he nowhere says so of Hope. He nowhere tells us, *Though I have all hope, so that*

I can long, as mine, for that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and have no charity. You all have need to try for this grace especially, my dear Sisters : remember, therefore, that He before Whom you kneel, is the GOD of Hope.

And then, Love. And that would lead us rather, at that time, to look away from ourselves, from our own sins, from our own infirmities, and to look to Him only Who came to put away one, and to heal the other. To ourselves there are times when we must look : when, *I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord*—sad times, but necessary ; but not then. It is natural, so to speak, that then He should occupy all our thoughts—not necessarily in prayer, but also in meditation. *That*, the most difficult of all Christian practices, harder than prayer, harder than self-examination,—so hard sometimes it is to think at all, so hard as it always is not to let our thoughts wander—how can we ever practise so well as then ? If, from the very skirt of the LORD'S robe, there went out such virtue that the woman, diseased for twelve years, was in a moment healed of her infirmity, how shall there not, from His own Presence, go forth power to sanctify and guard our thoughts, when they try to fix themselves on Him ; when they dwell on His miracles, or His parables, or when, like S. Peter, we gird ourselves for the effort, and plunge into the deep sea of His Passion?—*Look unto Me, and be ye healed*: He said

it on the Cross. *Look unto Me, and be ye healed:* He says it still, on the Altar. This is your privilege ; and, with your privilege, your danger. I can only point you to Him : I can only try to lead you to Him : He must draw you, He must speak to your heart. Oh that he may do that, both this Lent, and for ever !

And now, &c.

XX.

“ Boaz begat Obed of Ruth.”—S. MATT. I. 5.

[*S. Margaret's: 15th Sunday after Trinity, being also the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1861.*]

I HAVE spoken to you twice, if not three times, of Ruth : and therefore we may seem to have exhausted her principal types. But,—*gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost ;* and so this evening let us throw together what remains, and learn the meaning of the HOLY GHOST in them. The more fitly that of the Blessed Sacrament, I shall speak in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament ; of the earthly and historical, before the truer and celestial, Boaz ; and of Ruth, to you, my Sisters, who will every day, I trust, be better and better antitypes of her who, a Moabitess by birth, came into the line of the ancestors of our LORD.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. So said a daughter of Ruth, a thousand and three hundred years after

her time : so said Naomi just before, *I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty.* So then, Ruth, an alien in a strange land, poor, despised, forsaken, though not forsaking : so then she comes before us.

Look into your own hearts, my Sisters, and then look around you. Are they not poor of all grace, needing strength, needing wisdom, wanting in themselves everything that can enable you to run with patience the race that is set before you ? to win the crown which the LORD hath prepared for them that love Him ; to learn in the highest sense, what Ruth's name is by interpretation, *satisfied* ; as it is written, *When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.* What remedy, then, for this ? What, but that which was tried so happily in the fields of Bethlehem, the House of Bread, three thousand years and more ago ?

She went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and her hap was to light upon a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. Now notice,—for these types require close attention. Boaz, you observe, was already Ruth's kinsman ; yet not her kinsman by blood,—it was by marriage. Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, was the daughter-in-law of Elimelech, and to him Boaz was kinsman. Now, of every faithful Ruth that comes for grace to the True Boaz, is not that true also ? *for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* I have shown you before now, how beautifully this is

taught in the Canticles : *I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse* ; sister first, because that dear LORD, in that personal union of the manhood with the Godhead, made our flesh the sister of His Divinity. And so the Church in the same book, only there speaking as before the Incarnation, prays that it might be : *O that Thou wert as my Brother*. But He *is* our Brother now by the right of Incarnation. Not naturally, nor yet from the beginning of time ; but when that message came to the Blessed of Women, of which you were singing at Vespers, then indeed He joined that nature to His own, which He will never lay down again. And now you see not only why Boaz was the kinsman of Ruth, but also her kinsman, not by birth, but by marriage.

And now, who was Boaz ? It is a short description of him ; but it suffices. *A mighty man of wealth*. Put these two together. *Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head*. Think how He dwelt among the poor, chose His friends among the poor, tabernacled in poor cottages, depended on poor fishermen, had nothing, or scarcely anything to do with the rich, save in His death. And then try to realise the boundless wealth laid up in Him. The stores of grace renewed every morning, like the universal dew. The love which every one of His servants needs every moment ; the joy which can yet gladden the myriads of His afflicted servants ; the

peace which keeps so many hearts at rest in a world of war. A mighty man of wealth indeed ! Think, too, of all that He vouchsafes to accept from His Church, which, being His own, does but return to Him again, as it is written, *Into the place whence the rivers came, thither they return again.* Think of the treasures of self-denial daily offered to Him Who pleased not Himself : think of the wonders, to go to lower ground, of art, laid at His feet, Who praised the poor widow that cast the two mites into the treasury ! And then lastly, think of the countless multitudes of ransomed souls who in that day will be His true riches, each worth innumerable worlds, each the pearl, for joy whereof that Merchant-man went and sold all that He had, and bought the field of this earth, and won the ground to Himself. Now then, Ruth is gleaning in the field. Now this may be taken very prettily as your Sister drew it in her little book,* of the different graces derived from Him of Whose fulness have we all received. But there is a higher meaning, and one which more admirably suits the context yet (you know, my Sisters, that I do not teach you these things out of my own head ; this lesson was, I believe, first given to the Church by S. Peter Chrysologus, in the fifth century). Boaz says to Ruth, *Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them ; have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee ?* So observe ; the

* "Text Emblems."

ears that were reaped, and so finally gathered into the garner, and the ears that Ruth gleaned were all of one. What does this mean? Why, it contains a wonderful mystery. Look back to that first Eucharist. Our LORD then took of His own Flesh, the glorious and self-sufficient Corn of the world, and gave to the twelve. But the Body of which He gave, *that* was to fall as a field of wheat before the cruel sickle. That which hung on the Cross, that which lay in the grave, was one with that which they had eaten: the gleaned Corn and the reaped Corn were all one. You, my Sisters, gleaned in Boaz's field to-day; and, though it is eighteen hundred years ago since the ploughers ploughed upon His back, and made long furrows, since those wicked reapers cut off the living Wheat,—you this morning received that same Body which then hung on the Cross of shame; which then rose from the tomb of rest; which then ascended into the Heaven of glory. Could anything be lovelier than this: the corn so reaped, and the corn so gleaned, both one: the Flesh so glorified as to sit on the Throne, the Flesh so humbled as to take on itself the appearance of Bread, to be both the same? Yes, one thing is yet more beautiful. *Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?* Yes, lay the force on that word *thee*. Me indeed (it is as if He said) they touched; on Me they laid hands; Me they bound; Me, in that doleful night, they dragged to Caiaphas and Annas, to Herod

and Pilate ; Me they clothed with a purple robe and mocked with a crown of thorns ; Me they raised on the Cross, and they pierced My side with the spear. But it shall not be so, O my elect one, with thee. Have I not prayed long ago (and shall I pray and not be heard?) : *Deliver my Darling from the power of the dog? Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?* Touch thee, indeed, in one sense they may, as they touched My Martyrs, them that walk with Me in white, for they are worthy ; as they touched My Confessors, whose light affliction, which was but for a moment, worked for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; as they touched My Virgins, who sing the new song before Me now ; as they touched (for I know My own lambs by name, when I lead them out), as they touched My Thekla, when they cast her into the den of lions ; as they touched My Lucy, when she suffered those till then unheard-of tortures ; as they touched My Faith, when they stretched her over the burning fiery furnace ; as they touched My Christina, when she gave up her body to their scourges ; as they touched My Agnes, when they dragged her into the house of infamy. But, not touch thee so as to rend thee from Me ; not touch thee so as to lessen thy right in Me ; not touch thee, except that, the ruder the laying on of their hands, the more cruel their insults, the dearer, the more precious My Elect, the whiter My Dove, the more

glorious in Mine Eyes now, as some day in the eyes of men and angels, My Bride. *Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?*

And there, my Sisters, must be your comfort; you know that you carry about with you no charm against temporal danger and earthly death. But the higher and holier charm, that neither danger nor death can hurt you, that you *do* carry about; for if you did not, of all miserable creatures you would be the most miserable. These things are your LORD'S servants. The word *My* in the text shows as much. And to this end He gave them leave to touch Himself, when they said, *Come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.* To this end He tasted of death, that they might never have power to touch you; that you might never be able to taste of death for yourselves.

Now let us follow Ruth to her then home. *She gleaned in the fields till evening, and beat out that she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.* Now almost all those who have written on this story, are agreed that here was a miraculous multiplication of the corn. Making every allowance for the greater, the far greater fruitfulness of the land that flowed with milk and honey, when compared with ours, it seems certain that, in order naturally to have produced an ephah, there must have been half a cartload at least of straw. Therefore He Who afterwards multiplied the oil and the meal, He Who before had miraculously equalised

the gleanings of the manna gatherers, so that when they came to mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack, He here caused each ear to pour forth triple or quadruple its ordinary grain. Doubtless, in part, to reward his servant's faith; but can we doubt that there is also a far more glorious meaning hidden in the wonder? Does it not tell you of the multiplication of graces which the Corn of the Mighty shall bring forth in you? What! that, to the eye, humble wafer perform such miracles of love and courage and fortitude as we know it does? nerve women, nerve girls, to endure frightful deaths and horrible tortures, and more horrible shame,—ay, and after all, it may be the harder, keep them firm in a life-long self-denial, and in the resolute renunciation of the earthly things which by nature are dearest to a woman? It is so indeed, and you know what the hymn you so often say teaches us;—

“ Et si sensus deficit,
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit.”

That is what the ephah teaches you; and see that you remember it in your deeds. It is no stinted gleanings of that Sacramental Wheat which your LORD gives you here; but what, if the produce in grace, instead of being miraculously great, were beyond all comparison little? That you are all unhappy if you are deprived of that Body and

Blood, I know very well, and rejoice to know it; but that is not all. "Here we offer unto Thee" not only Thyself under the form of Bread and Wine: when, as S. Thomas so beautifully says in his great Sequence—

" In the new King's new libation,
 In the new law's new oblation,
 Ends the ancient Paschal rite.
 Ancient forms new substance chaseth,
 Types and shadows truth displaceth,
 Day dispels the gloom of night."

We offer that most assuredly, but is that all? "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O LORD, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee!" GOD find it and receive it in each of you!

And now one thing more, not indeed of yourselves, but of your LORD. Ruth shall now cease to be the type of each virgin soul; and be hers alone, whose Nativity we celebrate to-day, the Virgin of Virgins, the Mother of GOD. Think of that night scene on the threshing-floor. There, as from a husband, and yet in unspotted purity, Ruth asks the staff of life, and Boaz metes into her veil six measures of barley. Then think of that day in Nazareth; Mary, Virgin before, and in, and after childbirth, receives the true Bread of Life, the Bread that cometh down from Heaven, receives and contains It in the veil of her body. Ruth asks it not for herself, but for Naomi; Mary receives It, not for herself, but for the world. Ruth's fair fame

would stand ill with scandalous tongues if the thing were publicly told : *Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.* Mary must suffer in the same way : *Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.* And indeed we are apt to forget the courage as well as the faith of that reply, *Behold the handmaid of the LORD : be it unto me according to thy word :* when she knew that, unless GOD in some marvellous way interposed on her behalf, the birth of the Divine Child must have been followed by the stoning of the Virgin Mother.

And now, in a few short words, the end. *Then went Boaz up to the gate.* So our truer Boaz ; but not to sit down there. Through the gate He passed, up the Hill beyond, even as far as the summit of Calvary, and there, and there only He found repose. *This shall be My Rest for ever : here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.* There it was that, after all His weary course of years, He won to Himself each faithful Ruth ; there, that He wrote the long letter of love, of which we heard this morning ; there, that He engraved you, each of you, on the palms of His Hands ; there, that He opened that cave in the Eternal Rock for every trembling dove. Bought, my Sisters, at such a price, loved at such a cost, won with such a battle, how much, how much more daily, will you strive to show yourselves His ?

And now, &c.

XXI.

“Thus were the things that belonged unto the sacrifices of the LORD accomplished in that day, that they might hold the Passover.”—I ESDRAS i. 17.

[*Festival of S. Denys, 1863.*]

AND it is even because the things that belong to the sacrifices of the LORD were in them accomplished, that we celebrate these festivals of Saints. Sometimes it is, that the short, sharp sacrifice of martyrdom was completed, and the victor has gone up, like Elijah, by a whirlwind to Heaven. Sometimes, that the life-long oblation of self is at length concluded, and the confessor has heard the :
“Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” Sometimes, that the lily has long enough been buffeted by the storms and waves of a tempestuous world, and is now transplanted into the gardens of everlasting spring. But in all, the text holds good. *Thus were the things that belonged unto the sacrifices of the LORD accomplished in that day.*

We keep to-day the feast of one of the greatest of Apostolic Bishops, the founder of the first-born, and on the whole the greatest, of the Churches of the West. His legend is a curious example of the innocent way with which fables have so got mixed up with the lives of the Saints. Painted, to signify by what death he glorified God, as holding his head in his hands, the representation was naturally

taken as of a physical fact ; and hence the fable of his having carried his head three miles. It would be a grievous thing if we were called upon to believe that the greater part of Church legends, whether beautiful or grotesque, were only pious frauds. Take an example. A holy man founds a monastery, and dedicates it to S. Mary. His first need is to find water for his followers. He prays to be guided to it ; goes out, discovers a clear spring. In after years, he will say to a disciple, “ Here it was that S. Mary showed me where to find our fountain.” After he has served his generation and fallen on sleep, that disciple in his turn will tell, “ Ah ! here it was that S. Mary showed the spring to our dear father.” The next generation will have it, “ Here it was that S. Mary appeared to our blessed founder, and gave him the spring.” And the next, “ Here it was, that S. Mary appearing to S. —, touched the rock, and the stream gushed forth.” The miracle is perfect ; yet not one wilful deceit in the whole course of its formation.

That they might keep the Passover. The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. The King goes in to see the guests, and He beholds one arrayed in the victorious purple of martyrdom, and another in the golden vestments of confessorship, and another in the snow-white garments of chastity. Then begins the everlasting Passover, the new song, and the melody of the instrument of ten strings—

“The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast.”

Then does the Lamb as it had been slain, Victim once as well as Priest, King now and ever, receive the adoration of the four Living Creatures and the four and twenty elders, involving and embracing all with the inexpressible joy of the Beatific Vision. It is well said then, *that they might keep the passover.*

For what matter to those that have now sat down to the Banquet, all those sufferings that we daily read in the Martyrology? In comparison with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, what were even the agonies endured by S. Lawrence, or S. Vincent, or S. Erasmus, or S. Agatha, or S. Blandina, save light afflictions that were but for a moment? The shattering of the poor earthen pitcher, that the imprisoned light might more gloriously shine forth: the hinder part of the vessel broken by the violence of the waves, and the liberated prisoners escaping safely to the unknown land: the mantle of Elijah dropping from him, while with the chariot of fire and horses of fire he goes up to glory.

My Sisters, neither can we ever hope to keep that passover till the things which belong to the sacrifices of the LORD are accomplished. What are they? The Synagogue will teach us; for this it was ordained; this is its office, as it is written in the hymn you so often sing—

“Et antiquum documentum,
Novo cedit ritui.”

The lamb, the bitter herbs, the loins girt, the staff in hand, the banished leaven : and any one of these wanting will shut us out from the Marriage Supper.

And of that Mystic Lamb, my Sisters, you do again and again eat. Here He vouchsafes to dwell as in His own home ; and either most terrible witness against, or most glorious evidence for each of you, will those hours that you kneel in His Presence some day bear. How often does that live Coal from off the Altar touch your lips ? how often, with S. John, do you see with your eyes, and handle with your hands, the Word of Life ? How often have you to say, as S. Thomas does—

“Taste and touch, and vision in Thee are deceived,
But the hearing only may be well believed ;
I believe whatever GOD’S own Son averred,
Nothing can be truer than Truth’s very word.”

If, then, this Lamb feeds you with His own Flesh, if this Pelican of Mercy-gives you to drink of His own Blood, it is your parts and duties to see that the things belonging to the sacrifice of the LORD are accomplished in you. And first, of the bitter herbs. What are they but earnest self-examination, and true-hearted confession, and the little self-denials of every day, in all Christians ? But, in you, they are also the sacrifices entailed by the harder life you have taken up, the obedience

to your rule, the silence, the confinement, the work, at home; and then, abroad, the isolation, and suffering, and fatigue, and watching; and, after all, finding that your labour is received as a debt, not accepted as a free gift. And in those things remember the promise of the Good Samaritan. To all He gives the two pence, the Chalice and the Paten; from all He exacts a certain usury at which they are to be laid out; to you He says, *Whatever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.* Oh! most happy repayment, when labour undergone in the service of Lazarus shall be rewarded by rest in the bosom of Abraham. When the darkness of a vigil by the bed of death shall be recompensed where the LORD GOD doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; when ministrations to the sick shall find an end in that land where *the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick.*

Then, the leaven. Now that, my Sisters, has a most especial reference as regards you. For see what leaven is. Nothing in itself poisonous or harmful, only the decay and corruption of the most necessary of GOD'S temporal gifts. Just as I have so often said, how each of you in yourselves have to begin over and over and over again, so here we may learn that communities are liable to the same declension, and therefore must be reminded of the same duty. Take an example. The end of the twelfth century was a dark and foul period in the

Church. The ecclesiastics were so utterly worldly and impure, the laity so horribly bloodthirsty and blasphemous, that no wonder the coming of Antichrist was believed at hand. GOD then raised up two marvellous Saints,—Francis, to teach the merit of poverty; Dominic, to shew that learning must be subjected to the service of the Cross. Both agreed in this: We will have no property; we will beg each day; on each day's begging we will live; if GOD gives us enough, well; if not, *whether we live, we live unto the LORD, or whether we die, we die unto the LORD*; in the meantime, everywhere and everywhen, we will preach CHRIST crucified.

For a generation, the fervour of those Orders was marvellous. The wonderful conversions, the reconciliation of enemies, the bringing of the most impure to perfect purity, put one in mind rather of S. Peter's sermons, than of anything else. And that first generation gave us the Dies Iræ; how marvellously Thomas of Celano, its author, must have realised the Judgment, who need tell? And that thirteenth century was perhaps, on the whole, the most glorious of the Church. It gave us the Angelic Doctor, S. Thomas Aquinas, the Doctor of Christian Life; it gave us the Seraphic Doctor, S. Bonaventura, the Doctor of Christian Love; it gave us Hugh of S. Victor, the Doctor of Christian Mysticism; it gave us Adam of S. Victor, the greatest Christian poet of all time. Pass three hundred years. And we find those Franciscans—

what? A set of jovial, popular, well-fed beggars despised and yet liked, first-rate boon companions; and that all. We find those Dominicans chiefly engaged in the Inquisition. Ah me! how was the fine gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! GOD undoubtedly raised reformers; but the glory of the second house never equalled the glory of the former. Take another instance. If there is one pattern of a Virgin Saint since the Church passed from her period of persecution, it is the dear spiritual daughter of S. Francis, S. Clare. Pass four hundred years; and in a reform of the Clarissines in Holland, we find the rule forbidding sins as not uncommon, among them, which GOD forbid your Sisters should meet with in the purlieus of Crown Street!

Good need, then, that we beware of leaven. We know how a little want of discipline soon degenerates into a downright breach of it; and so on and on till the whole lump becomes utterly lawless. And remember who that is, that is spoken of by S. Paul as *the Lawless One*.

Your loins girt. And that bears reference to the inward purity of which the vow of chastity is also the outward sign. And lastly, your staff in your hands. It is well said; for what is that staff? What but the Cross that He first took, and that you must take up after Him? The staff, so far like that to which Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is compared, that it *may* run into the hand and pierce it, even

as the nails pierced His most Blessed Hands ; but which is never so sure a support as when it hurts most ; never so trustworthy a friend as when it goes most against flesh and blood ; never so full of our Leader's virtue as when it best recalls (and how infinitely small that best is !) our Leader's pain. And so, my Sisters, if you can take all these things into your heart of hearts, then would these verses—and GOD grant they may—be applicable to you :—

- “ One to another, hear them speak,
 The patient virgins wise,—
 ‘ Surely He is not far to seek ;’
 ‘ All night we watch and rise.’
 ‘ The days are evil looking back,
 The coming days are dim ;
 Yet count we not His promise slack,
 But watch and wait for Him.’
- “ ‘ We weep, because the night is long ;
 We laugh, for day shall rise ;
 We sing a slow, contented song,
 And knock at Paradise.
 Weeping, we hold Him fast Who wept
 For us, we hold Him fast ;
 And will not let Him go, except
 He bless us first or last.
- “ ‘ Weeping, we hold Him fast to-night ;
 We will not let Him go
 Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,
 And summer smite the snow.
 Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
 Shall coo the livelong day :
 Then shall He say, Arise, My love,
 My fair one, come away.’ ” *

* Christina Rossetti.

And taking up that Cross as the Saint of this day, and the Saints of all days took it up, then you will understand in their full meaning those glorious verses :—

“ Against the threats
Of malice, or of sorcery, or that power,
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,—
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt ;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled.
Yea, even that, which mischief means most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory :
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness.”*

And now, &c.

SERMON XXII.

A PLAIN INSTRUCTION ON THE DOCTRINE OF SACRIFICE.

“ As they were eating, JESUS took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my Body.”—S. MATT. xxvi. 26.

[*Preached at Sackville College to the Pensioners on Maundy Thursday.*]

THIS day, though coming in the midst of so sad a week, has always been thought different in its sorrow from the other days. Therefore, in old times, it was the custom that on the morning of Maundy Thursday the bells should ring merrily, and the churches should be arrayed in their gayest, because it was on this day that the greatest gift was given

* Milton's "Comus."

to man which he ever received. For, as you all know, it was on this night, and about this very hour, that our LORD JESUS gave for the first time His Body to be our food, and His Blood to be our drink. *So man did eat Angels' food: for He sent them meat enough.*

Now let me try and explain this great Sacrament as clearly as I am able; that we may be the more ready, with full assurance of faith, to receive it on this Easter Day, which is drawing nigh. I say on Easter Day, for Good Friday is not the proper day on which to celebrate it, except in case of necessity.

We must always remember that the Holy Communion is made up of two parts. It is something which we offer to GOD, and it is something which GOD gives to us. That is, it is a sacrifice, and it is a feast.

Let us now see what the word Sacrifice means. A sacrifice is anything offered to GOD, which has the power of turning away His anger from us. Now, in one sense, there never was, and there never can be, but one true Sacrifice, namely, the death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. That was the only thing which, in and by itself, has the power of removing GOD's anger from us. But it has pleased GOD, both before and since that great Sacrifice, to appoint certain offerings, which, because of that offering, and getting all their virtue from it, have the power of making Him well pleased, and are therefore real sacrifices.

What these sacrifices generally were among the Jews, you know. Bullocks, and goats, and lambs, and doves, and pigeons, were thus offered. But what I want you more particularly to notice now is, that bread and wine were sometimes, under the law of the Jews, also sacrificed.

And this was the case before the Law. We read that when Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the four kings, he was met by Melchisedec, king of Salem. And it is said, *Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine; and he was the Priest of the Most High GOD.* Now this shows for what purpose he brought them forth; namely, to sacrifice them; else why should it have been added, that he was a Priest?

Let us see an example or two from the books of Moses. *This is the offering which Aaron and his sons shall offer unto the LORD on the day wherein he is anointed: the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour.* An ephah was something more than seven gallons of our dry measure; and the tenth part of this was so to be sacrificed. *In a pan,* we further read, *it shall be made with oil, and when it is thus baken, thou shalt bring it in.*

Now, next I will read you about offerings which any person might make at any time. The first of these was simply of fine flour, with oil and frankincense poured thereon. The second was the same, baked in a pan. And the third differed only by being baked in a frying-pan.

Now, these things may serve to show you how great a mistake it is to think that there can be no sacrifice except those of living creatures; none except bloody sacrifices. You see that, in Jewish times, flour, cakes, and bread were as true sacrifices as bullocks or goats. In other places, we find green ears of corn sacrificed: and in another, leavened bread: that is, such bread as the Jews ate every day. And in like manner—and this I wish you to notice very particularly—wine was sacrificed.

There is another mistake into which people are apt to fall—that a thing cannot be sacrificed unless it is burnt, or in some other way destroyed. Now, the greater part of the Jewish sacrifices were partly burnt, partly eaten. But some were not burnt at all: what is called in the Bible a wave-offering was not burnt. The priest took the shoulder of the slaughtered animal, and waved it before the LORD; it was sacrificed by being waved; and then it was eaten. The scape-goat was neither eaten nor destroyed. This was a goat brought to the door of the Temple, on the great day of atonement. The High Priest confessed over it all the transgressions of the children of Israel, laying his hands on the head of the goat, and then it was sent away into the wilderness. And, again, the shew-bread consisted of certain cakes offered to GOD, by lying a week in the Tabernacle, and then eaten.

You see, therefore, these two things,—a sacrifice

may be just as well of bread as of anything else : it may be offered to GOD only by being laid before Him ; and it may be altogether eaten.

Now, that is just what our sacrifice is. The Priest takes bread and wine, and offers them to GOD, by laying them on the Altar. This he does in the prayer for the Church-Militant, when he says,—“ We beseech Thee to accept our alms and *oblations*,” that is, sacrifice—namely, this sacrifice of bread and wine. And this bread and wine you will notice, is, *at that time*, only bread and wine—nothing more and nothing less. So that, if we stopped there, our sacrifice would be as good as the Jews’, but no better. They offered bread and wine in faith of the SAVIOUR, Who was to come ; we offer bread and wine in faith of the SAVIOUR, Who has come.

But we go on. This bread and wine still lies on the Altar while the Priest proceeds. And you all know that when the Priest pronounces those words, *This is My Body, This is My Blood*, then truly and really and properly the bread is changed into our Lord’s Flesh, and the wine into His life-giving Blood. We know not, and do not venture to ask, *how* this is done. It is sufficient for us that our LORD, as at this very time, told us it was so, and should be so ; and therefore, unless we choose to make Him a liar we must believe that it is so.

And this we offer to GOD in that prayer, “ We

beseech Thee to accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." We are not to think—nobody, I hope, does think—that our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross was not full and perfect,—that He has left anything to us to do to make it more perfect. No. We offer to GOD this Sacrifice in dependence upon that, just as the Jews did : but ours is better than theirs, by how much our LORD'S Flesh and Blood are more precious than the blood of bulls and of goats.

This is as plain an explanation as I can make of the manner in which the Holy Communion is a Sacrifice. And therefore it is that the Church of GOD has always most earnestly prayed at the time of the Communion for all sorts and conditions of men, remembering that it is written, *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

Now, I will give you an example of this. I will read you part of a prayer made by S. James, the LORD'S brother, for the time of Communion ; or, if not made by him, made by those who had lived with him, and remembered the words he used to employ. The prayer is this :—

“We, then, miserable sinners, remembering the sufferings of JESUS CHRIST, His Cross, His Death, His Resurrection on the third day, His Ascension into Heaven, His sitting down at the right hand of Thee, His GOD and FATHER, His glorious and

terrible coming again, when He shall come with glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to render to every man according to his works, we offer to Thee, LORD, this unbloody sacrifice,"—that is, this sacrifice in which no blood is shed, as it was in those of the Jews,—“beseeching Thee not to visit us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities, but according to Thy gentleness and mercy, to give us those heavenly and eternal gifts of Thine, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.” So far, you see, they pray for themselves. But they go on to pray for others also.

“Remember, LORD, our fathers and brethren, the bishops and clergy that are in the whole world, who rightly divide the word of truth. Remember, LORD, all Christians who are travelling by land or by water, who are in strange lands, who are in bonds, and prisons, and bitter slavery.” You see how beautifully particular they are in mentioning all cases. “Remember, LORD, those that are in sickness and in sorrow, that they may quickly be healed and saved. Remember, LORD, to give us fair weather, gentle showers, abundance of fruits, for the eyes of all wait upon Thee, O GOD, and Thou givest them their meat in due season.” And so the prayer goes on, showing us how and for what we should pray. And at last, thinking not only of those who are still living with us in the

flesh, but of those who are gone before us, it ends : “Remember, O GOD, of the spirits of all flesh, those whom we have mentioned, and those whom we have not mentioned, from righteous Abel until this day : give them rest in the land of the living, in Thy kingdom, in the delight of Paradise, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; whence sorrow and sighing shall flee away, where the light of Thy Countenance always shines ; and let the end of our own life be Christian and without sin, when Thou wilt and as Thou wilt, only without shame and offence.”

So, you see, they used to pray of old time ; and so should we pray now, whenever the great Christian Sacrifice is offered up to GOD. But I said that Holy Communion was a feast as well as a sacrifice, and of that I must still say a few words.

I have not occasion to warn you of the danger of turning away from it, for you all, I believe, know how grievous dishonour that is to GOD, and how fearfully dangerous to your own souls. But it is véry necessary to warn you how to receive it, how dreadful it is to take it, if there is any one thing which you know to be a sin, and which yet you are not determined to give up ; if you have any hatred or malice in your hearts ; if you are not determined that, whatever you may have been doing in times past, now, at least, by GOD’S help, you will act as His true servants, as those whom

He has redeemed by His most precious Blood. Consider : it is almost certain that this will be the last Easter Communion which some one among you—it may be more than one—will ever receive. How should you feel on your death-bed, in the remembrance that the last time this great Festival came round to you, instead of using it as the means of increasing your salvation, you had, as far as in you lay, increased your condemnation?

On the other hand, remember, that if you come now to receive the LORD'S Body and Blood as He would have you come—as being indeed wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, but looking to receive from Him comfort, and joy, and riches, and light, and covering ; taking this as the medicine for all the sicknesses of your souls, as the strength for all the remaining days of your pilgrimage, as that gift than which you can receive nothing greater, nay, even than which GOD can give nothing greater,—coming in faith, and love, and hope : then indeed this will have been a blessed Easter for you.

So GOD grant it may be ; and His peace, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds, through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

NOTE TO SERMON VI.

THE leading idea in this discourse was taken from a sermon of Vieyra's, preached apparently before the court of Portugal. It closes with the following prayer:—

“O LORD, Who, on the burning throne of Thy most sovereign love, art perfect unity, and perfect union : Who, in all Thy works, hast shown the efficacy and sweetness of Thine omnipotence by uniting the most opposite extremes : Who, in the works of creation, didst unite extremes so distant as body and spirit ; in the works of redemption, extremes so distant as GOD and man : in the works of justification, extremes so disproportionate as nature and grace : By the grace, and efficacy, and sweetness of this omnipotent mystery, overcome the repugnance of our affections, melt the hardness of our hearts, break the resistance of our wills, and crush the rebellion of our vain and mistaken judgments. Rule, cast down, subject, and lay at Thy feet all that may hinder the true concord and union of this Thy kingdom [*community*] : so that, united, we may defend it ; united, we may preserve it ; united, we may obtain therein the increase and felicity which Thou hast promised it ; and lastly, that, united, we may so serve and receive Thee in this ineffable mystery, that, ever maintaining entire and perfect unity in Thee, and among ourselves, we may always praise Thee on earth by the union of grace, and receive Thine eternal fruition in heaven by the union of glory. To Whom, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.”

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