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SERMONS.

SERMONS

ON THE

NEW BIRTH OF MAN'S NATURE.

BY

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, A. M.

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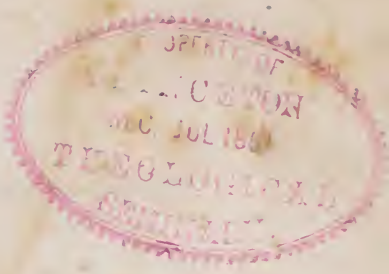

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SERMON I.

THE MYSTERY OF HUMANITY.

1 Corinthians, xi. 7.

"Man is the image and glory of God."

No object in the Universe presents greater diversities, nor is there any respecting which assertions more contradictory can be made, than man. His strength and weakness, his glory and vileness, his wisdom and folly, have been the familiar topics of his own observation, and have not been passed unnoticed by the Divine Word. Look at him as he came from his Maker's hand, and how wonderful was his nature. God's last and greatest work, designed to bear rule in this inferior creation, the very image and glory of God, on whom the name of *the Creature* is bestowed in Holy Writ as indicating His mastery over the surrounding world. But look at him as he is at present, and we see him subject to sickness, pain, and death; the sport of those powers, over which he was intended to bear sway, and which he imagines himself able to direct. "Man is but a thing of naught, his time passeth away like a shadow." Let us meditate somewhat on this contrast of power and weakness, and it will lead us to the further thought, wherein is man's true glory, and how his ori-

ginal purpose of setting forth his Maker's image, may again be exhibited in the world.

Now man's weakness may be seen if we look at him as an individual, or if we look at him as a race. His individual weakness is shown by the contrast between his doings and himself. For "wise men also die and perish together as well as the ignorant and foolish, and leave their riches for others." What can be a greater mockery of mortal attempts? The Pyramids have survived from the earliest ages, but the very dust of their founders has been scattered to the winds. Or if we turn from individuals to the race at large, whatever profit man's intellect has derived from the accumulated experience of ages, not less rapid and resistless is the increase of misery and sin. Even in so favoured a country as that which we inhabit, how fearful is the swelling of that augmenting tide of life, which often threatens to carry all before it. How wide a chasm gapes between wealth and poverty; how deep the antipathy between necessity and abundance, which is thinly covered over by the solemn plausibilities of life. How vain the expedients by which theorists attempt to give all an equal interest in the preservation of public order, and thus to secure wealth against the impatience of want. For the accumulation of riches, and the increase of inventions produce no real augmentation in the happiness of mankind. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness—these do not grow as society advances, and learning is increased. Rather do these graces adorn a simpler age of society, and a ruder state. The progress of society goes on heaping up a mass of misery, which no charity is able to pene-

trate and dissolve. And its worst feature is, that guilt assumes a more malignant intensity, as it ferments amidst the putrid mass of a corrupt community, so that the necessary evils of man's lot are increased tenfold by his voluntary sins. For every one of those thronging multitudes, for whom art and commerce afford sustenance and employment, is the reproduction of that ancient type of fallen humanity, on which all the children of Adam have successively been built. Each goes on, therefore, to add something to that mass of crime which forms the connatural inheritance of his race. He was born in fallen Adam's image, how can he escape it? How can he get beyond that limit of his being, which his first forefather has fixed? In every race of animals there are modifications, but the normal type of the class cannot be overspread. Adam must still reproduce himself in those who are born his children. And thus, notwithstanding all the varied contrivances of skill and artifice, is there a perpetual propagation of misery and guilt. So that we may still say with Pascal, "What a chimera is man! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, yet a helpless worm of the earth—endowed with all truth, yet the very sink of uncertainty and error—the pride and refuse of the Universe."

Now, if man's weakness be that he inherits the corrupt nature of his fallen parent, the strength of humanity must be looked for in some quarter which this far-reaching pollution has been unable to affect. And where shall this be found? In man natural it cannot be found anywhere. One man there has been, how-

ever, in whom were gifts above nature. "What is man," asks the Psalmist, "that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, Thou crownest him with glory and honour, Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." "But now we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." In this perfect example of the human family, in this Pattern Man, through whom the purpose of man's being was completely exhibited, in whom first of the children of Adam, the Father was well pleased, do we see humanity invested with all that strength and glory which was its intended portion and original right. How did these things pertain to it? Because in the Person of that Great Head of our race there entered into Adam's line the very Being in whose image Adam had at first been made; and thus was man's original form remodelled through the presence of his Maker. From that infinite source of self-existent Godhead, the cause and principle of all things, there issued the Eternal Son, and without ceasing to be one with the Father, to whom by the law of His being He is indissolubly united, He entered into Adam's line, He took flesh of the Virgin Mary His Mother, and to the perfection of His divine, added the completeness of human being. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." In *His* Person, therefore, did those gifts of grace and glory, which had been originally

bestowed upon the family of man, attain their full perfection. The traces, which had faintly indicated their presence, had hitherto but mocked the vileness of that being by whom these glorious ornaments had been lost. But they now shone forth again in their proper lustre, because the image of God was perfectly restored through the union between humanity and Himself. For the eternal Son, who was by nature God's true and perfect image, in whom the Father's perfections were completely reflected, who was the full and entire participator of them all, had, by taking man's being, rendered *it* also the reflection and earthly image of God.

So that in His Person alone has the text its perfect fulfilment; in Christ is man truly and completely the image and glory of God. "God," says an ancient writer, "becoming a righteous man, interceded with God for man who was unrighteous." In Him, as the Head and Pattern of the human family, its whole kindred has been advanced. He has come into it, as some adopted member of a nobler lineage, in whom the whole stock of an inferior progeny has been advanced. But then His union with those whose nature He has taken must be real, and not imaginary; actual, and not pretended —in order that they too may share the blessings which He has introduced. He did not take our nature that by the mere external show and fictitious supposition of resemblance, He might increase the misery of our actual defects. His object was to effect such real union between Himself and His brethren, that the Apostle could declare that "as He is, so are we in this world." If He, when He took man's nature, was "the first-born of every creature," "the beginning of the creation of

God," His purpose was that we might be made partakers of the Divine nature, "having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust." This is the effect of putting "on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The words imply, not merely that He must take our human nature, but that we too must take His. All renewed men have given up humanity to Him, to bear it as their Head and Chief, that they may take it back again of Him, in that purified and exalted form which He conferred upon it.

Now the nature of that union whereby we must be engrafted into the humanity of the second Adam, is as mysterious as that whereby we inherit the qualities of the first. As we know not how the old Adam is reproduced in each of his descendants, why his properties of body and mind reappear in them, why lust, and anger, and selfishness are found on every soil and under every sky, because these are the characteristics which, after his fall, pertained to that ancient type in which man had been originally formed, so neither can we understand the manner of that influence whereby God the Holy Ghost mercifully fashions the brethren of the new Adam into the blessed image of their Head. "For we all, reflecting like a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But though the manner of this renewal is secret, yet so much is revealed, that as its principle is to join Adam's children to that new and purified example of humanity, the Man Christ Jesus, so the instrument which God's wisdom has been pleased to adopt, is the system of Sacraments. The

object is that Christ's manhood, like that of the first Adam, should be the quickening seed of His earthly brethren. Therefore did God pre-appoint men "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." "For as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." And the very purpose both of Baptism and of the Holy Eucharist is, that the sanctified humanity of the Son of Man may penetrate and leaven the defiled humanity of His brethren.

This is a divine work, and can only be brought about by divine means. But it is a real work, which must truly be effected, if we would profit by that sacrifice which the great Head of our being offered for our redemption, and by that gift which He bestows for the renewal of our souls. "For we are members of His body," says St. Paul, "of His flesh, and of His bones. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Now this oneness with Christ, this living through His present influence—our Lord sets forth as the result of that holy ordinance of the Eucharist, whereby is consummated that union which in Baptism is commenced—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink." The Capharnaites, to whom these words were spoken, supposed that our Lord's sacred body was to be broken into morsels, and eaten as ma-

terial food by men. And the same error does our Church deny under the title of transubstantiation. But that which Christ designed was such real participation of His sanctified humanity, that we may be as truly bound to the new, as by nature we were to the first Adam. And this is to be brought about, not by the carnal devouring of His material flesh, but by sacramental participation of His ascended humanity. Thus is He in us, and we in Him—He the real seed of life, the quickening principle of a new nature, who has first taken our common being that He might die for our sins, and then gives it us back sanctified in Himself.

And now, then, we may see, in conclusion, how the weakness of man may be reconciled with his strength. In himself, as heir of his fallen parent, as representing the first Adam, his weakness is incurable, his depravity unredeemed. But look at him as humanity has been renewed in Christ, and those great things, which were originally designed to be his birthright, are again restored. "For the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." Well, then, may man be the image and glory of God, since He who is God himself, has condescended to take the burden of humanity upon Him. And this shows as well the inward life which may be expected of Christians, as the outward objects which deserve their consideration. Their inward life is not to be fashioned merely on the rule of a decorous morality; it is not enou h for them to be decent, peaceful, orderly, inoffensive; their birthright is, that they are "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." With such exceeding great and pre-

cious promises, what may not be expected even from the children of a fallen sire! The Christian graces, therefore, the affections and desires of the new man, which were perfectly exhibited in the great Head of our race, should in like manner be manifest in all His brethren. "Be renewed," says the Apostle, "in the spirit of your mind. And put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Not only those deadly sins which shut men out from grace, and against which, therefore, we pray continually in the Litany, but even those sins of infirmity, which cleave so closely to fallen man, should be perpetually mortified. The habit of supposing such sins irresistible, the contented subjection to irritability, covetousness, worldly-mindedness, distracting thoughts in prayer—all these things are inconsistent with that complete renewal of man's nature, which should be the daily work of those in whom Christ is being formed anew. Let us first form an high estimate of that actual gift which is bestowed through Sacramental union with the Lord's body, and we shall more deeply appreciate that change of life, which may be expected from ourselves. To be much in prayer, to commune with God publicly and in private, to hold intercourse with Him through His word—these will be natural consequences of appreciating that great change which he has effected in humanity at large, by the taking it into God.

And this may remind us, likewise, what public services are most worthy of man's thought, and correspond most truly with the nobility of His being. Men are wont to esteem highly the founders of states, and the

benefactors of their kind. But the institutions of men, and the schemes of beneficence, are at best but transitory. They are more honourable, doubtless, than that which looks to private ends, or is limited to individual advantage. But would men aim at that which has relation to the highest ends of life, and set forth its noblest distinction, let them see what the true Pattern of man's race, the real image and glory of God, thinks worthy of attention. This it is which gives so much dignity to the office of the Christian ministry, and so much importance to all its accessories. For it is the discharge of that office on earth and among men, which the Great Head of humanity is perpetually discharging at His Father's right hand, in the heaven of heavens. And this, too, gives its moment to that common worship, in which it is your office, as Christian laymen, to join. The collective supplication of all Christian people is their continual means of approach to the throne of God. He who has taken our nature is, at such seasons, present among them. And therefore should all the external circumstances of worship correspond to that highest function, wherein mortals can be engaged.

For man's most enduring honour is to bear part in those sacred ends, for which the One Perfect Image of God sacrificed His life. The ends of private magnificence, even the works of public liberality, are a kind of mockery of those who raise them. They last, but their builders pass away. Other generations will inhabit the palaces which this has builded: its senate-houses will be the arena where another race will urge on the petty contentions of their transitory day. Those whose toil has reared them, they will profit no longer. But the

prayers which shall ascend from every fresh house of God—they will blend, doubtless, with those aspirations which Christ's unembodied servants will forever offer; seeing that through the communion of saints the whole family in heaven and earth is united together. Thus may man's works gain a dignity which this world cannot give, and a durability which it cannot take away. Those who are bound together in Christ, have part already in that house not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens. To them even this world's objects are ennobled, and especially those members of their Lord, who have part in His glory. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

SERMON II.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF HUMANITY.

St. John, xvii. 19.

"For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Some passages of Holy Writ stand out with peculiar prominence, even in its sacred volume. Such is that declaration in Isaiah's prophecy, in which the mediatorial character of Our Lord's offering is set forth. Other parts of the Old Testament lead us to this truth: the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah alone asserts it. In like manner may we refer to the Gospel of St. John, as containing the only full declaration of those great truths respecting Our Lord's nature and offices, to which the Epistles of St. Paul make perpetual allusion. That Christ is forever with the people of His love, that the ordinances of His grace are an actual engrafting into Himself, that by Church union we mean not the compacting of an external framework, but the real diffusion of a spiritual presence—all these leading truths of the Gospel it was reserved for the last survivor of the Apostles, to set forth with such fulness as might render them a light to the Church even to the end of time. Hence the explanation of the spiritual effects of Baptism in

his third, and of the inward benefits of the Holy Communion in his sixth chapter.

But none of these passages come up in interest to that which supplies our text. In other places Our Lord speaks to man, in this does He address Himself to God. In these wonderful verses we have His own summary of the purposes which he designed to effect for the people of His love. He speaks as the Church's head, as our intercessor, He explains more at length that which on Calvary He was to perfect and perform, we have the Church's charter from *His* lips who created it, we have the nature of those gifts which he left to man. This chapter, therefore, turns upon the greatness of that privilege, which was bestowed upon man's nature through the Incarnation of the Son of God, and upon the reality of that consequent union with Himself, which He bestows upon His brethren the sons of Adam, through the Sacramental ordinances of His grace.

A subject surely as deep as it is glorious. For it is built on that which was truly the labour of a God. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they might also be sanctified through, or by the truth." The points here set forth are, first, that Our Lord's human nature was to be sanctified; and secondly, that the end of His work was the sanctification of ours. Let us take these things in order. In order that Our Lord's Manhood might become the sanctifying principle of the Church, it was needful that itself must first be sanctified. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Plain it is that of His *Humanity* Our Lord here speaks. He was God as well as man; with the perfectness of both natures their actual union interfered not. But it was His human nature

only which could be sanctified. The Godhead admits not of further purity; it *is* purity itself. It is light *from* light: the truth itself which cannot be obscured. Therefore that which was sanctified was that human nature, which, though pure, was yet capable of greater perfection. For there flowed into it those unspeakable gifts of grace and glory, which it derived from its supernatural union with the Deity of Christ. From the first it had been free from sin by virtue of that presence of Godhead, by which the imperfectness of our nature was corrected. For to Christ alone are the words of the Book of Wisdom applicable—"being good I came into a body undefiled."

Now this human being, which the Son of God associated to His own in the Virgin's womb—this "perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting"—was the subject of that wonderful discipline, whereby through the sufferings of His worldly life, was perfected the Incarnate nature of the Son of God. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And this task was now accomplished; the hour was come: "I have finished," He says, "the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

And this leads us to the second point which the text declares, the end, *i. e.* of this stupendous example of humiliation and love. It is expressly stated to have reference to ourselves. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself that they might also be sanctified by the truth." And so says St. Paul, that "Christ is of God made unto *us* wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and re-

demption." He is made unto us redemption. For He it is who hath "made peace through the blood of His cross." In His own words, He gave "His life a ransom instead of many."

On this topic do the Apostles dwell at large. They prove to the Jew, whose confidence was in the merit of his ceremonial rites, and to the philosopher whose hope rested in his moral uprightness, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." For the first step towards man's recovery was to bring him back from his lost estate, and therefore, says the Apostle, Christ is "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood—for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." And this is declared to have been an especial object, as well as of His Incarnation as of his life of trial; "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

But this is not all. For St. Paul tells us, that He is made unto us not redemption but *sanctification* also. And the text teaches us how this likewise is attained. There is a further meaning and significance in His satisfaction for sin, when it is discerned not to be a bare technical fulfilling of certain arbitrary requirements of judicial exactness, but to have a direct connexion with the future estate of those whom He has thus redeemed, to be a step in the great work of bringing many sons unto salvation. "For their sakes," then, He says, "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." And this sanctifying truth the preceding

verse had declared to be that Divine Word which was Incarnate in Himself. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." For "the Word of God Most High is the fountain of wisdom."

Now this implies somewhat further, consequent on that satisfaction for the sins of man, which our Lord completed on the altar of the cross. For "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." It is this second work, then—this result of His sufferings, which Our Lord declares in the text to be effected through the sanctifying of His Human Being. His purified humanity is set forth as the principle, whereby the renewal of our defiled humanity is to be effected.

And on this subject does He enlarge in the residue of the Chapter before us. He prays for all believers "that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us." "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." For "there is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The unity of the Church arises not, as is thought by worldly men, from the accidental arrangements of external government; it is not built upon caprice, it is not dictated by convenience, it is not enforced by enactment; it is the simple expression of that organic law, whereby to be joined to the Humanity of Christ Our Lord, is the source of all Gospel graces. For since the natural body of Christ is one, one likewise must be His Body Mystical. For all His people "grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ, from whom the

whole body fitly joined together, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in love."

And this union with Christ is not merely imitative, visionary, metaphorical; it is not only that we feel in our minds as though we put ourselves under His guidance, and took part with Him; but there is a real action of Christ's purified upon our impure humanity through the power of the Holy Ghost. Hence is He styled that new Adam, from whom we have as true descent as from our natural parent. For "the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

This may seem a deep subject—beyond our reach, unfitted for our meditations—but in truth it is only the touching upon one of those mysteries, which, being forced upon us by our nature, is open to the reflection of us all. Such is our common descent from our first parent—our inheriting corruption: its diffusion through our bodies and our souls. Do we understand the cause and manner of this transmission? It mocks all our efforts. The sage meditates on it in vain. Do we question its truth? Nay, our children prove, our catechism confesses it. Now such is the relation of Christians to the Second Adam. It is a true and actual engrafting into the humanity of Christ. In all who are made members of Christ, as we confess to be by our baptism, is there implanted a renewed nature, as by natural birth is transmitted fallen humanity.

And this work does the text set forth as the purpose of Our Lord's life of humiliation. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." The Word—that native principle of divine

life—first fashioned to itself a perfect medium of sanctifying power in its own humanity, that so "we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust." Thus may men recover that image of God, in which our first parent was created. The very purpose of the Gospel covenant was to give it back. The New Man was to bestow in its perfection whatsoever the first Adam had lost. As real as our union with the one, must be our communion with the other.

And this it is, brethren, which the prevalent unbelief of the present day especially forgets. Men who would be shocked if the reality of Our Lord's atonement were questioned, do not perceive that the reality of our *union* with Him is just as fundamental a verity of the Gospel. If the one of these can be got rid of as a strong expression, a metaphor, a figure of speech, why not the other? But if Our Lord, as we know, truly died for us through His man's nature, why do we doubt that we are as truly united to Him, as Scripture declares, through the power of the Holy Ghost? Yea, rather does not the one of these doctrines illustrate and enforce the other? The death of Christ ceases to be a solitary fact, founded upon arbitrary enactment, and it takes its place as part of that mighty plan which bears a just proportion to our Fall and our Creation.

Now the means whereby Christ's human nature acts upon ours is confessedly by Sacraments. In these there is a sort of external machinery, there are outward elements, there are means which our hands handle, and our lips receive, the use whereof can be subjected to man's laws, and made matter of Church regulation.

And hence some persons have lost sight of the interior nature of these blessed ordinances; their secret significance, as the means whereby we are united to the Incarnate Word, has been forgotten; their real worth has not been estimated; and they have been treated as a mere outward sign, which it was as safe to despise as to reverence. What we want then is, to discern that Our Lord's humanity is the vital principle of life in all His people. This truth once appreciated, the use and importance of all those means whereby we are actually united to Him, will at once be manifest. We shall no longer look upon the ordinances of His grace as an artificial framework, which may sometimes further the spiritual action of our own minds, and sometimes impede it, but we shall recognize His nearness to us in those living means whereby He dispenses Himself; and what is outward will be kindled into reality by His inward presence. This is the true work of faith; of that eye of the soul, whereby we discover in things outward what is spiritual and unseen. Thus it is, as the Apostle expresses it, that we discern the Lord's Body.

We speak not of course of any carnal presence, nor as though outward elements, such as water, or bread, or wine, were so far changed as that they could work effects beyond nature, but we tell you of the doctrine of grace as depending on the sanctification of Our Lord's humanity, and we testify the blessedness of being united to Him, who is the Head of our renewed Being. The gifts of grace were in a degree bestowed upon the Jew, and possibly upon the Heathen. But when God became man, they were poured out in a common stream, and in more abundant measure. This was first given

to Him who might claim it of right, that from Him it might be conveyed to us, who can claim it only of bounty. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

And now, brethren, to make one practical remark, respecting the nature of that obedience which may be expected from Christians. It stands not, observe, on mere natural duty, on calculation or policy, it does not rest even on those better feelings of the heart which arise from the recollection of past services—no, Christian obedience is the produce of that real union with Christ Our Lord, whereby "as He is, so are we in this world." Those who truly possess it have so reflected like a glass the glory of the Lord, that they are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Its necessary condition, therefore, must be such lively faith in the truth of things unseen, as may realize the greatness of our election.

And here how much are we all wanting, how imperfect our sense of things divine; we do not feel how closely we are pressed upon by the unseen world and its abiding realities. When we kneel in prayer to present our common offering, how little do we discern the great High Priest, who by virtue of His body which was slain, is at that moment pleading for us in the heaven of heavens. How little do we estimate the peculiar efficacy which is thus given to our collective prayers! How little do we appreciate the peculiar advantage which is thus given to those who are members of Christ! How imperfect, therefore, our gratitude, how cold our devotion, how feeble our love! How little

do we carry out with us into the world at large the consciousness of our high fellowship!

Were it otherwise, the members of Christ could never conform themselves as they do to this world's manners. Men would take note of us, that we had been with Jesus. We should not hear of covetous, worldly, self-indulgent, sensual Christians. "Shall I take the members of Christ," exclaims the fervent Apostle, "and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." Surely, brethren, there must be a deep failing in the faith of the Christian world, or there would not be so deep a degeneracy in its practice. The love of Christ is not now-a-days that burning consciousness of nearness to Him, which induced men to sacrifice every thing, and themselves first of all, in the service of the Gospel. That which lives will have voice and utterance, and if we are conscious of participation in the one glorious family of the Elect, we shall give no dubious tokens of our sympathy.

SERMON III.

THE RE-CREATION OF MAN.

II. Corinthians, v. 17.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

The text is one of those wonderful sayings, whereby the Gospel at once meets the wants, and surpasses the hopes of mankind. For does not every thoughtful man feel the burden of our old nature? Does not the infirmity of men's acts perpetually mock the ardour of their expectations? "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." How welcome then the intimation, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." That which is announced to us is no mere improvement, no exaltation or enhancement of existing qualities; it is the reconstruction, not the amendment of humanity; its ancient principles are to be fundamentally recast; and a new creation is to be substituted for the old one. Thus is the thing bestowed after which collective humanity had been yearning—"the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." To effect this work was the great object of Christ's coming; in His own person He accomplished that

which could never have been attained by the temporary palliatives of Jewish law, and built up a new creation out of the ruins of the old one. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *the new creation:* and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and on the Israel of God."

Let us consider, first, what this new creation is; secondly, how it was to be effected.

I. It is a re-creation of man's nature. The new race, therefore, consists still of the same individual beings, who constituted the old one. The family of Adam has not been superseded by any fresh progeny. The world's possessors have not been succeeded by new ones, but have been themselves reformed. "*You* hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Now, it is impossible to estimate such a re-creation as this, unless the original composition of man be borne in mind; and it be considered what was the ancient structure on which this fresh constitution of humanity has been engrafted.

What then was man's original creation? What do we discern in each individual of the race? We find him to unite certain complicated endowments of mind to a certain curious organization of body. Both the one and the other of these is inherited by each individual, through inherence in that common race, whose nature he partakes. That such is the case with his body was never denied: that the same thing is true respecting his mind can scarcely be disputed. For to say nothing of that wonderful regularity which may be discerned in the actings of mind, when looked at in

the mass, do we not perceive in individual cases the clearest marks of hereditary descent? What else is the cause of that transmitted corruption which attaches itself to the mind as well as to the body? Many a man, who knows nothing of his original parentage, to whom the very name of his first father Adam is wholly unknown, yet gives proof that he is linked by inevitable sequence to the primary possessor of our being. Did not death reign, from Adam to Moses, "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression?" And were it not for this identity of nature, what ground should we have for trusting to that judgment of reason, which we are compelled to accept as the arbiter of our thoughts? Let it be understood that reason is a public gift, common to the race of which we are individual members, that it is not the mere produce of our single caprice, but a portion of that inheritance, which was bestowed by the Creator on our collective nature, and its claim to authority depends on His sanction who gave, and not merely on ours, who employ it.

But are these endowments of mind, and this structure of body, the whole of man? Does each individual consist only of a certain quantity measured out of the mass of humanity, as an hour is a portion measured out of a day? Is there not some simple, single, indivisible principle, which discriminates every one of us from every other partaker of our common being? This it is, surely, which we mean when we appeal to our own consciousness, when we speak of ourselves; it is something different from that outward frame of which our senses take cognizance, as well from those inward facul-

ties which our mind employs. The nature, indeed, of this ultimate gift of Personality it were idle to ask, since to investigate it is plainly beyond the reach of our powers of analysis; but so much we may see, that it is intimately connected with man's responsibility, and is the very seat of that mysterious principle which we call the *Will*. For why has every man to stand before the bar of God's judgment as an individual essence, distinct from aught besides in the boundless universe, but because each one is the responsible cause of his deeds? Yet how could he be responsible for them, had it not been the pleasure of the Almighty to call beings into existence who were so far endowed with a divine attribute, that to each of them was given that spontaneous power of will, which rendered him the principle of his own actions? That such a power has been entrusted to man, our own conscience, the education of our children, and our mode of dealing with one another, is a sufficient witness. And this power, with all that belongs to its exercise, is plainly individual in its nature; our future reckoning for its employment will be wholly irrespective of all other beings; it is liable indeed, to be influenced, and is conscious of the suasion of external motives, but the responsibility of the ultimate decision lies within itself; it is an inseparable adjunct of ourselves, and can never be detached from our personality. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

When we speak, therefore, of those distinctive conditions, whereby each individual is marked out as a

separate man, the thing referred to is that ultimate principle of personality, with which the power to *will* is indissolubly united. This it is which makes each one a separate Being, and involves the awful consequences of an individual judgment. Unless we possessed individual personality, we could not answer apart; unless we were endowed with power to *will*, we could not be required to answer at all. The last distinguishes us from "horse and mule, which have no understanding; whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle, lest they fall upon thee." The first introduces us as indivisible essences into that boundless universe, wherein we stand in the presence of our Maker and of one another. We should not be self-conscious beings but for the one, nor accountable beings, but for the other.

Now it could not be this principle of our personal being which was re-created in the new birth of the Gospel, for otherwise those who were admitted into the kingdom of God would not have been the self-same individuals, who had existed in the carnal estate of nature. To appeal to them as conscious of having undergone a change, which had altered their state, was to imply that the principle of consciousness itself remained unaltered. Yet such is the mode of address, which is continually employed by the Apostles. "Remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh—that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Words like these imply the permanency of

that ultimate principle of consciousness, by which this re-creation of the moral world could be appreciated. Though the change, therefore, must of necessity exercise mighty influence over the will of man, must give new opportunities, new thoughts, new powers of judging, new motives and impulses; yet there must still remain so much, as goes to make up man's personal responsibility; the individual must remain, though his nature was altered. Such is the Apostle's way of expressing the matter; he speaks of the will as helped, influenced, delivered from the infirmities which beset it, but still as a principle which retained the power of choice, and which involved the responsibility therefore of those by whom it was possessed. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye do not do the things which ye would." But what is the remedy of this state of imbecility? "Walk in the Spirit, and then ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh." For unless there were such power of choice as to make the decision man's own, to deal with him as a responsible being were a mockery. "Woe to him that saith to the wood, awake; to the dumb stone, arise." Were not man in some sense the cause of his actions, what meaning were there in admonition and appeal? And since the Apostles refer to this principle of consciousness as unchanged, amidst that momentous alteration of which it is the spectator, it must be the other part of man's being which is the subject of re-creation—those powers and faculties, which make up his collective nature, and are the common property of his race.

The conclusion, then, is that man's constitution con-

sists of two main parts—the one those powers, properties, and organs, which are the common portion of the race, and for the employment whereof each man is responsible; the other the principle of individuality itself, the separate essence which is cut off by the law of consciousness from all other beings. In this last lies the ultimate power of will, because to it attaches the obligation of responsibility. The last is the personality of man, the first his nature. The last survives every change; the first it is which is capable of re-creation. In its renewal consisted that wondrous alteration which is witnessed by the text. The new creation in Christ Jesus was that reconstruction of all its principles, which implied the re-casting of everything in man's nature, except what was bound up with the indestructible identity of the heirs of immortality. "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

II. But in what manner was this great work effected? This is the next subject of inquiry. Now the text is built upon the fact, that in Christ was man's nature reconstructed. As in Adam all died, so in Christ are all made alive. Thus was it God's pleasure to adopt the same course in man's renewal, which had been chosen in his creation. For the Almighty could have framed all of us out of the dust by the separate *fiat* of His forming will; investing us with those capacities of mind, and those organs of body, which we inherit from a common sire. But such was not His will. He embodied in one model those qualities which He bestowed upon our race, and ordained the wondrous law of natural descent, as our method of inheriting them. And a corresponding course has it pleased him to adopt, re-

specting that new nature which He has given to mankind. For here, too, is the second Adam set forth as the Head and model of the regenerate race; and the law of Sacramental union ordained, as the method by which this higher nature should be communicated. Thus is the Son of Man, as Himself declares, the new "beginning of the creation of God." The common stream of humanity had been defiled and vitiated through the sinfulness of those through whom it had descended: it was poured, therefore, into His Manhood, as into an incorruptible fountain, that it might flow forth again with greater purity and lustre than when at first it was declared to be "very good."

Man's nature, therefore, was truly re-created in Him who was "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." And through participation in that renewed and perfect being is the principle of holiness extended to all His members. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." That purity which belonged by nature to His spotless Person is communicated by grace to all His brethren, through the putting on that "new man, which after God is created unto righteousness and true holiness." Thus is the re-creation of humanity a real work, which in His sacred Person was once for all effected. For "of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

And now to consider the consequences which this truth involves.

1st. It shows in the first place, that however mysterious the system of Sacramental grace, it is yet in strict analogy with the system of nature. The ground on

which the reality of Sacraments is often questioned, is the want of consonance between the apparent act and its hidden efficacy. The washing of water, the partaking of visible elements, appear to have no relevance except to the body; that a spiritual influence should accompany means so simple, that men should be truly re-created through the due reception of Baptism; that their new nature should be really fed in the Holy Eucharist, are abhorrent to the imagination. That such results are possible, no one who believes in a Divine Being can of course deny: but they seem so improbable, that men find it easier to give a figurative interpretation to those scriptural statements in which such truths are taught, than to yield a literal belief to that which the course of nature opposes. Not that they deny to these ordinances an instructive efficacy, which renders them a beneficial lesson to the mind, but they think it impossible that virtue can be so indissolubly bound up with these ordinances themselves (however rightly received), that they can be of use, except so far as the intellectual nature is competent to understand them. Their value is supposed to be referrible to the power of God's grace, working according to that common and usual course, whereby He addresses Himself by words or symbols to the reason and affections of men: not to any mysterious efficacy, which is bound up with the appointed instruments whereby the Sacraments are administered. The Church, indeed, encourages the hope that God will in mercy make up for the involuntary loss of those who are of necessity debarred the due participation of Sacraments; but how many are there who would feel no kind of anxiety

whether those words and that matter were employed, without which can ensue no valid baptism; or to whom it would seem a question of absolute indifference whether the want of authority in the administrator, the alteration of the words of consecration, or the omission of any other essential circumstance, rendered nugatory the offering of the Holy Eucharist. Such persons, it is plain, do not believe that "the outward and visible sign" is "a means whereby we receive" God's grace, "and a pledge to assure us thereof." What they look to in reality is either the intellectual working of their own minds, or such influence as is exercised by the Parent Spirit of the Universe on their own spirits, irrespective of those Sacramental means, whereby we participate in Our Lord's Mediation.

That such is their real meaning, is readily detected by their feeling respecting infant Baptism. For here is a case, in which the recipient's understanding is unable to take any present part in the work which is performed; the whole act is on the side of God: if any benefit accrue, therefore, it must depend entirely on the efficacy of those means which God has ordained for the world's renewal. The persons in question, therefore, deny that infants receive any present benefit from Baptism; their only reason for retaining this usage is either ancient custom, or the expectation of prospective advantages; they cannot believe that any real re-creation takes place in unconscious receivers through that holy rite: what is not effected through the open channel of the intellect they absolutely disavow. And hence may be understood what is their real meaning, even when they profess to value Sacramental ordinances.

What they truly mean is, to admit them as external instruments of instruction: their efficacy as the true channel of grace is wholly denied. For so soon as a case can be found in which the co-operation of man can be altogether eliminated from the action, they maintain that it is impossible to suppose it valuable; plainly, therefore, it is to the efficacy of the transaction on the human mind, not to the actual transmission of a Divine gift, that their attention is directed.

Now to this whole series of objections, the truth which is set forth in the text affords a complete reply. For it shows the Sacramental system to be but the counterpart of that which is followed in the order of God's natural Providence; and no reason, therefore, can be adduced for denying the one, since we are compelled by the course of events to acknowledge the other. For is not the propagation of those natural qualities, which come by birth, every whit as extraordinary as the transmission of those Divine graces which come by regeneration? Take the case of such intellectual endowments as may be plainly shown to be an hereditary gift, by their re-appearance in those who are near of kin. Can we at all understand how such qualities are transmitted? Water, it is said, or bread and wine, have no natural aptitude to convey heavenly blessings. It is irrational, therefore, to expect them to be the channel of an influence, which is beyond their powers. But of what materials are our bodies constructed? They consist but of such ingredients as earth, and air, and water supply. In the bones and muscles, and nerves of a child, no other substances can be detected. Now what aptitude have these agents

to convey intellectual gifts? When helpless infancy, therefore, is launched forth upon the troublous waves of life, what reason have we to expect that the unconscious being, who lies before us, will ever be competent to read the mysteries of nature, and extend the immortal limits of thought? Still more would the same difficulty press upon us, if we could, with propriety, carry the inquiry further, and trace up the existence of man into its embryo state. For those intellectual gifts, by which men master the external world, the faculty by which we estimate the relations of time and space, and thus pass beyond the "flaming bounds" of the material universe, are not a portion of that individual essence on which our separate responsibility is dependent: they belong, plainly, to our common being, they are a part of that collective nature, which is the general inheritance of man. What right, then, have we to expect such endowments in the unconscious infant who lies before us? How can he have received them through that material propagation which binds him to his race? What aptitude have the inert elements of which he is composed to transmit such qualities? Our only reason for supposing it is, that his outward organization assigns him to Adam's race, and therefore we *believe* that by some unknown law of transmission, his intellectual capacities will turn out to be fashioned upon the model of his parent. Such natural *faith* rides triumphant over all the difficulties of the case before us. The infant gives, as yet, no sign of understanding; nothing binds him to his parent but a physical and material derivation: there exists no show of relationship between him and his parents'

mind: the parts of which he consists, are the gross, dull, unconscious elements, which float around us in the air, or which we tread under our feet; and yet we assume as certain, that the course of a few years will see the gradual development of an intellectual power; and this power must come through the channel of its parents, since it is a power common to our race at large, and is the reproduction of that original type in which humanity was moulded.

Now, if natural faith can justify such assumptions, what reason have we for rejecting that faith which is supernatural? Why should that birth, which is from above, be disbelieved, if the law of earthly transmission is so readily admitted? Men tell us that it is impossible to believe St. Paul's statement, that salvation—a gift which implies the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of nature—is bestowed "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And how, then, can they believe that intellectual gifts are transmitted by material propagation? Is it incredible that the properties of the new nature—love, purity, meekness—should be infused, as the Church declares, "by the laver of regeneration in baptism," and yet credible that the qualities of the old nature—imagination, genius, taste—should be implanted in the womb? It is said, perhaps, that these and similar endowments were bound up in the nature of Adam and are therefore transmitted along with his outward form by some unknown law of concomitance. And is it not the very doctrine which the text declares, that the graces of a spiritual life were in like manner bound up in the nature of the second Adam, and are therefore trans-

mitted, in a manner equally inexplicable, to those who by the new birth of baptism are made members of Christ? For the transmission of such gifts through Sacramental ordinances is not an abstract association of sensible elements and spiritual powers. The benefit of baptism is not a vague, general, unlimited one; it is not an arbitrary mean, whereby the Spirit of God works upon men. What gives their character both to Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, is that they are revealed to be the appointed means of membership in Christ: that thus is transmitted the nature of the New, as by birth that of the old Adam. In Baptism is this higher nature first implanted: for "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." In the Lord's Supper is the new being of man replenished: "this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." For "we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Is the Sacramental system then maintained to be antecedently improbable: the same objection might be advanced against the course of nature. Now, as on the testimony of experience we admit the one, so on the testimony of revelation must we receive the other. "The first man Adam was made a living soul:" of this truth observation yields continual proof, and Scripture testifies to the corresponding assurance; "the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." As the natural qualities are transmitted to those who by physical organization are united to the one, so are the graces of a new life communicated to those who hold "the Head, from which the whole body by joints and bands has

nourishment ministered." If there has been a real re-creation of man's nature; a true reconstruction of his ancient being; and this renewal began in the divine Son of Man, that from Him it might be transmitted to all His members; some means must be provided, whereby we hold to Christ, even as by the course of nature we hold to Adam. That Sacraments should be ordained as the medium of such union—that outward elements should be the channel through which the new Head extends His life-giving Presence through the line of His children, instead of contradicting, is accordant to that natural system, whereby we inherit the inward qualities as well as outward organization of our earthly sire.

2ndly. But it may be objected: the impress of Adam is visible, that of Christ is not apparent. The faculties which we inherit of the one cannot be doubted; a spiritual likeness to the other is often wanting. If the efficacy of Sacraments be so real, if they truly convey graces to the soul, why is not their influence more apparent? Why do the vices of the old man disgrace the progeny of the new one? This is the second objection which is commonly adduced against the Sacramental system, and to this likewise the considerations which have been adduced afford a reply.

The objection alleged is drawn from the deficiencies of Christians. Let it be admitted that no inherent improbability attaches to the theory of Sacramental grace, that it is exactly consonant to the analogy of nature; that we may receive, therefore, in their simple and natural sense, those Scriptural testimonies which assure us that by Sacraments men are members of the new Adam; yet why is it not found to be so in fact?

Why does so little difference prevail between the baptized and the unbaptized: between those who partake and those who reject that spiritual manna which comes down from heaven? It was not so when in the wilderness men eat angels' food. Why then is the true manna so inoperative?

Now this objection makes it necessary to recall to your thoughts what it is which by the new creation in Christ is really altered. The responsibility of man has been shown to remain such as it was: his separate consciousness, his individual being continues; that which has been re-made is the common nature, the instrument and agent of our will, which we receive as the inheritance of our original parent. True, the will of man is in a measure affected by this common being, with which it is so intimately allied; its impulses are in no slight degree modified by the proximity of that on which it so nearly borders; the gift of grace which is bestowed upon us reaches to our whole nature; but the man himself, the individual still survives, he is still a responsible agent, the power of choice or refusal still lies within himself, he does not cease to be a single essence standing alone in the creation of God. Were it otherwise, he could not be called upon hereafter for a separate account, neither could he be addressed at present as a spontaneous agent. When we speak of him therefore as new-born in baptism, we never imply that his old responsibility is lost, that the power to *will* has been taken away from him; these things are still the necessary condition of his immortal being; they are liable to influence, but not to coercion.

What is received, therefore, through the divine ordi-

nances of God's grace, is not any such power as does away with the accountableness of mankind, but such a gift only as places man in a higher sphere of responsibility, gives him more to use, a more precious treasure for which to account. He who had received one talent possessed the same power to use it rightly as he to whom ten had been entrusted. Had it been otherwise, how could he have deserved blame as an unprofitable servant? Supposing then that the divine blessings of the new creation were not more frequently improved than the natural blessings of the old one, it would not follow that the gifts themselves were not weighty and great. Let it be remembered only that the re-creation of man's race is the reconstruction of those common endowments which belong to his general nature, that it leaves his personal responsibility in some sort untouched, and such a result must, in a measure, be expected. And yet it cannot be denied that the new birth of man's race has, on the whole, produced a wonderful renovation. The advance of Christ's Church has been a continual leavening of the lump of corrupt nature. The old principles of heathen degeneracy have been continually melting away under the renewing influence of the Gospel. No doubt this would have been more completely the case, if a true faith had always been accompanied by a consistent practice. But that the contrary result would arise was predicted in Holy Writ. We are plainly taught that the old man of our carnal nature will maintain his place even in the Church of God. Nay, as time goes on, it is declared that the enmity of Satan's servants will become more virulent. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and

being deceived." And as want of practice weakens faith, so does want of faith weaken practice. How many in these days would respond more duly to the privileges of their spiritual birth, if the prevalence of sins within the Church did not provoke the unbelieving inquiry, "what good can this birthright do me?" Hence do men grow up in ignorance of those blessings to which themselves were admitted in childhood, because the fruits of the new creation are not exhibited in the general improvement of the age. Thus is the principle of their own life unimproved; they discern not the reality of that spiritual food, by which their riper years might be strengthened; the privileges of the Church continue to be regarded as only a form, a figure, a name; the true means of union with Christ are unknown; the actual re-creation of man's collective race is interpreted into a poetical expression for that natural alteration, which change of objects produces in the individual mind; and men go on to entail upon another generati n that inheritance of unbelief, which the degeneracy of their fathers inflicted upon themselves. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." When will men awaken to the truth, that the new creation in Christ is a real work, which should have a true influence on the bodies and spirits of mankind? When will they be persuaded that the coming of the Son of God in the flesh was *in fact*, a new "beginning of the creation of God?" Then will the slow progress of that hallowing "leaven," which was "hid" in human nature, be referred not to its own weakness, but to the inveteracy of man's unbelief, and to the obduracy of his corrupt affections. Let the ill

be properly appreciated, let the remedy be plainly taught, and the painful spectacle would not be so often seen, of an earnestness which but impedes men's efforts at amendment, and of a zeal which but involves them in more fatal errors.

One further conclusion does this subject suggest; the distinction between two processes, which are often confounded—conversion, namely, and regeneration. There has been no greater impediment than this confusion to a due appreciation of the nature of either. Men have spoken of conversion as though it were another form of regeneration: of regeneration, as though conversion were implied as its necessary result. Whereas the two processes, though intimately allied, are essentially distinct. Conversion is that change or turning in man's individual being, whereby his will is altered, and in place of the love of sin comes the love of holiness. Whatever influence external motives or inward suasion may exercise upon the mind, yet the change is that of the mind itself. "Turn Thou us, O Good Lord, and so shall we be turned." That power comes only from God, that His Spirit bloweth where it listeth, that His preventing grace is the only reforming principle in the moral universe—all this is freely admitted by those who yet vindicate for humanity the mysterious possession of a responsible nature—the possession, that is, of a *will* by which grace may either be refused or accepted. How these two principles are to be harmonized, is among the secrets which philosophy has not been able to explore —that the two principles co-exist is amongst the simplest dictates of Revelation and of conscience. Conversion, then, is that change whereby the heart, which

once turned away from God, is turned back towards Him. It is the alteration which befalls man's responsible principle; the turning of his will; the change of that invisible being, which each individual refers to, when he speaks of himself. It was a process, which belonged to the Jewish as well as to the Christian covenant; and under the law of nature itself it was not unknown. It was man's obedience to God's impulse.

Regeneration, on the other hand, is the specific gift of the Gospel. It is that new birth of humanity, of which prophets had obscurely spoken, and which was bestowed in the fulness of time through *His* coming, who was the true heir of the household of God. Therefore is it spoken of in Holy Writ as the collective attribute of that spiritual kingdom, wherein all the members of Christ are made participants of a nobler being. "*The* Regeneration" is said to be the time, "when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory." And *our* regeneration is in like manner connected in Holy Scripture with the washing of Baptism, because in that ordinance men enter into the first possession of those gifts, which extend to all His members from the mystic Head. In these two places only of Holy Writ does the word occur; and it has plain reference to that re-creation of man's common nature, which was wrought in Christ. Regeneration, therefore, is essential to Christian conversion, because that alteration of heart, whereby every individual obeys the Gospel, derives its impulse from the divine renewal of humanity at large. But it depends on man's obedience to this impulse, whether the conversion of his individual will affords a true response to the opportunities of his position. For as regenera-

tion is the re-creation of man's common nature, so is conversion the acquiescence of each single heart in the perfect law of the Divine will. Through Sacraments is the common nature regenerated, because through them is the secret working of that Almighty Power, by which the world must be renewed, even as it was at first created: but the law of man's individual responsibility has its place likewise in that mighty work, whereby the children of earth may become meet to be the children of heaven.

SERMON IV.

ADVENT.

St. Matt. xxi. 5.

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."

Thus does the Church introduce that season of Advent, which begins to-day. This is part of to-day's Gospel; the description of Christ's entering into Jerusalem, when He was seen among men. It suits therefore with the circumstances of the present time, when we recall Christ's first coming in the flesh, and make preparation for His second coming to judgment. The word Advent means coming. Who is it, brethren, who comes? Christ Our Lord comes: He comes three ways: at this season did He come first in the flesh; by the ordinances of His Church He comes yearly to preach repentance; and with the Archangel's trump will He come finally to judgment. "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."

This, brethren, is why the Church begins her new year before the year of nature is concluded. For the Church's services begin again to-day. Look in the Prayer Book, and you will see that to-day we begin with "the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels to be used throughout the year." So, too, do we begin our Sunday

Lessons with the first chapter of Isaiah's prophecy. Thus have we finished the series of the past year's services. They are over—whether for good or evil: whether we have frequented or despised, have reverenced or profaned them. They will come back to us no more: they are with the dead: their effect remains, but themselves are past. And yet the year of nature is not finished. The sun has yet to sink lower—the days have to grow yet more short. Winter, with all its icy chilliness, is but beginning to visit us from its dwelling in the north. Why then does the Church make her division at this season; and begin beforehand her yearly course? The reason is, that what she watches for is not the rising of the sun of nature, but the rising of the sun of grace. You can but reap in harvest, you can but sow in seed-time; only when the soil is ripe for it, can the harrow work the land, or the plough turn up the furrow; but the soil of man's heart requires a different husbandry; the Church's crop does not depend upon the course of this world, but upon the presence of Christ.

Let me notice, then, First—What is the great event which fixes the Church's seasons; and Secondly—Why the year should thus be ruled by it.

I. The Church's seasons are a continual witness to one thing—God manifest in the flesh. Those who regard them cannot fail to have this truth brought keenly before them: those who fail to notice them lose this yearly warning respecting the cause of their salvation. Brethren, I have met, and that in this land, with persons who did not know who Christ was: I soon found that they made but little count of Christmas-Day.

Again, I have met with those who did not know what good was effected by Christ's death: I found that they never observed Good-Friday. If men kept these days as days of religious worship, they could not fail to enter into the events, of which these days tell us. They would see the importance of Christ's Birth into the world, when they remembered what it is, of which Christmas-Day reminds us. We were all one man's sons, as the children of Jacob expressed it, all one family, relations to one another, because sprung from one father, Adam, and wherever you went over the world, you still found the same race, descended from the same parent. This great family is what is called mankind. And it had been originally placed here to serve God and be happy. It had not only received authority over the earth, and all the animals that inhabit it, but it had been created in God's image, to render Him service and praise. All those evils which bring misery with them, pain, sickness, poverty, death, were as yet unknown. "For God made not death," says the Book of Wisdom, "neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living." What happiness, then, was there not in store for the children of Adam? There would have been none of this hard bondage—the never-ending still-beginning toil of country life—wherein "all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Rest, contentment, peace, tranquillity—these things would have given men a happiness, which few at present have leisure to seek in them, and which those who have leisure do not find. And why do they not find it? Why is not rest and peace the same blessing which

they were first meant to be? Because of sin. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Leisure and rest only make bad men more unhappy and more sinful. For this great family of mankind, by letting sin in among them, let in misery. And thus were pain, misery, guilt, and death spread abroad among all Adam's descendants—these evil companions followed men wherever they went—cities were filled with them, they broke in on the tranquillity of villages—no cottage so mean, no palace so shining, no farm so solitary, no street so thronged, but these curses were found there.

This was the universal condition of Adam's children eighteen hundred and fifty years ago. But then came an alteration. There was born one of this family, who differed from all the rest. He was a man, brethren, as you and I are; He was a woman's son, but then He was God also. Now, to be man, made Him like us; but to be God, made Him other than us. A common man is no better than his brethren, but the God-man was better. And by reason of this difference between us and Him, was He able to redeem us from death. That punishment, which we all deserved—God was pleased to let Him bear it in our stead. "He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This one pure, good, and divine man, undertook the whole burthen of those offences, of which all His brethren had been guilty. And not only did he bear our sins, but for those who are joined to Him He mends that man's nature, which He stooped so mercifully to share with ourselves. Let foul water flow into a pure cistern, and when it has stood awhile it will flow forth clear and bright, and be as good to look through as the blue of

heaven. Now so it was when Christ took man's nature into the Godhead. For Christ was God *from* God; He was God before the worlds began; and into this pure and glorious nature He took our weak and polluted nature; He made it clean because it was held in Himself, who could not be defiled; and therefore he gives it out again to us clear and bright—to be joined to Him is to be joined to a fountain, where manhood has been cleansed and purified, and from which, therefore, it may flow forth for the sanctification of soul and body to all mankind.

This is the peculiar benefit which we get by Sacraments; their advantage is, that in them the purified nature of Christ the God-man is communicated to all devout, faithful, and penitent communicants, in order that they also may be made pure. This is declared by Our Lord Himself to have been a purpose of His life here below. "For their sakes," He says, "I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." And it is only through the atonement which this God-man has made, and through the renewed nature which He gives to those who are joined to Him, that we can have any right to draw near to God, or that our prayers can be accepted. For we are all heirs to that defiled nature which had spread over all the earth when Christ came into it. How can our prayers, therefore, be good enough for God to hear, or our efforts strong enough to work our amendment?

Many persons have a notion that religion means merely that they should encourage good thoughts in their minds, that they should intend what is right, and, so far as they can, do it; and they hope that Christ, who is so merciful, and in whose name they believe,

will accept and forgive them. Religion, they say, is a personal concern, and so they think nothing necessary but to cast themselves upon Christ, by the personal action of their own thoughts. Now this is a good thing to do, but it should not be put instead of those actions of Christ Our Lord, whereby He mercifully unites us to Himself. It is our part of the work, it is that which is done in our own minds; therefore it would be worth nothing unless something was truly done by Christ outside of us; unless He had appointed means, namely, the Holy Sacraments, whereby He came to meet us, and gave us actual union with Himself. This union, I say, He gives to every devout and penitent believer in His Holy Sacraments. For in His Holy Sacraments He bestows that blessing upon every worthy communicant, which He bestowed upon man's nature at large, when He joined it to the Godhead. This was the great work, which was done eighteen hundred and fifty years ago. Before that time Adam's family consisted only of common men; since that time it has consisted besides of the God-man and His brethren. Now this God-man and His brethren make up what is called the Church. The God-man is the Head of it: His brethren are its members. For God "hath made Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." All the purity, peace, and happiness which belong to Christians, the glory whereby they are marked off from other men, their calm hope in this world, their exalted portion in the world to come—all these things flow into them only through their union with that God-man, who is the Church's Head, the Saviour of the Body.

II. And was not this great event well fitted to give its character to the Church's year? Ought not all seasons of our life to bear marks of it? Can there be things more important either in this world or the world to come? Does it not affect all classes, every age, all nations of the earth? Look at the laws of the land. They bear the name of the King or Queen, by whose authority they were sanctioned: and they are remembered by the year of the Prince's reign in which they were agreed upon. Who is it brethren, who reigns over His Church to the end of time? Is it not He, whom the text brings before us, saying, "Fear not, daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh." The text refers to ancient prophecy, which sets forth the nature of those blessings, which the King of saints confers upon His people. "Say ye to the daughter of Sion, Behold thy salvation cometh." He it is on whose presence *our* salvation also is dependent—the present King over all His saints: and should not therefore His Advent, His coming in the flesh, be still and ever remembered in the grateful worship of all His servants? Does He reign above our Advocate—and shall He not be known upon earth, and the years be called by His name?

And for this, brethren, we have the further reason, that to remember His *first* coming in the flesh, is a help towards remembering His *second* coming as our Judge. "This same Jesus, which is taken away from you into heaven, shall *so* come, even as ye have seen Him go into heaven." He will come with the same body, which He took of Adam's race, with the same mind which He shared with ourselves, to execute that

final judgment which has been put into His hands. So that Advent is the forerunner of doom. Every return of it should remind us of that last return, when His coming shall no longer wear the humility of a servant's form, or be the mere recollection of an unseen ruler—of that time when He cometh in clouds with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of doom.

Surely each Advent preaches preparation against that last and most fearful summons. For then will the Parable have its fulfilment, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." Then will His entrance be attended, not merely by such chance crowds as followed Him into Jerusalem, but by the whole army of His servants who have lived since time began. Then will He be guarded, not merely by a few poor fishermen, as once when He rode "upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," but by angels and archangels and all the hosts of heaven, encircling Him as though with a sea of fire. Then will those, His faithful servants, who once waited upon His humble steps, shine among them as the stars for ever and ever. Oh what a glorious and fearful entrance will that be, when the heavens shall pass away before Him with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat! For then shall every eye see Him, and they also, which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. And *must* not you or I be there? *Must* not we keep that last Advent? Then let us prepare betimes for Our Lord's return, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping.

SERMON V.

THE GREAT EXAMPLE.

ROMANS XIII. 14.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

THUS closes the Apostle's exhortation to a life of holiness. This is the summing up of what he desired. It is read to-day,* being Advent Sunday, that we may remember the rule of conduct, which we should follow during the coming year. Let us first look at the Apostle's exhortations: and then, secondly, inquire through what means they are to take effect.

I. What the Apostle recommends is a life of perfection. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another has fulfilled the law." He does not desire merely our escape from punishment, he wishes us to fulfil the law. Its whole contents are gathered together in what may be expected from a Christian. It is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To seek always to benefit others as naturally as we benefit ourselves, to do to others exactly as we should wish to be done by, to live in perfect peace, affection,

* Preached on the first Sunday in Advent.

openness, sincerity with all men—what can be better or more desirable than this? What can more contribute to our present peace, as well as to our future happiness? Look at a friendly, kind, simple-hearted man—you may see the calmness of his mind in the tranquillity of his countenance. And then, as connected with this, and as contributing to it, the Apostle calls men to that mastery over their bodily appetites, without which such peace of mind, and such fairness towards others, can never be secured. For a man's good conduct towards his neighbours cannot be reckoned on, unless he possesses such self-denial as to have mastery over himself. Mere good-nature may lead a man to wish well towards others, but self-denial also is needed before he will put himself out of the way for their sakes. The Christian, therefore, must not "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" *i. e.* he must not suppose that his body's appetite is the first thing which is to be regarded. On the contrary, his body is to be brought into subjection: it must be the servant of his soul: his corrupt appetite must be restrained: he must mortify his members, which are upon the earth, and follow the guidance of his higher nature. Our very reason tells us that this is the right course. It says that our body should be under subjection to our mind. And this is part of the Apostle's advice. The law of love towards our brethren: the law of purity in ourselves. Kindness and forbearance towards others: command over ourselves. And what can be better and happier than such a life? Is it not free from abundant evils, by which a sinful and sensual course is beset? To say nothing of its leading to health and prosperity, has it not the

advantage of a good conscience, and of the favour of God? Can anything be more material to us than to feel inwardly the approval of our own minds, and to secure the approbation of that Supreme Judge, who beholds all our actions? The Apostle's advice, then, is what our own judgment must admit to be wise.

But perhaps a man says, it is good advice, certainly, but hard to follow. But has no one ever followed it? You will say, perhaps, that not the best men whom you meet with follow it completely. This perfect mastery over themselves—this entire thought for others—is what none attain to. But has no one acted up perfectly to this rule? Has there been no example among men of perfect self-command and unlimited charity? Yes, surely one such example has been set. And if one such example has been set, why should not every body else follow it? And such an example has been set by the Head and Leader of the Christian body, whom on that account we are expressly commanded to follow, and who is everywhere set forth as the model for our imitation. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving as an example, that ye should follow His steps." Therefore He says, "take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Now what can we do better than follow in such steps? "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." What can God and man more fitly require of us than this? Here is the Head and Pattern of our race, possessing a man's nature as we do; since He trod this path, what better can we

do than follow Him? "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed Him." And therefore was He looked upon with perfect favour by Almighty God. When He entered upon His ministry there came forth those divine words, which testified to the completeness of His service. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the same testimony was repeated on the mount of Transfiguration. So that here we see the utmost which is required of men. In Him was fulfilled God's statement by the prophet: He is "Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." And therefore, if we would secure God's favour, and act according to the judgment of man's reason, we have but to follow the example which He has set forth. We cannot say that imperfection is inconceivable, because here it has been exhibited. Here is the Head of the Christian family, the pattern of mankind: what have we to do, but what He has done? We see how our common nature should be treated: we see the path opened: we discern the obedience which we ought to render: we know how we should behave towards God and towards one another. The perfection and model of man's life was shown us in Him, who therefore is called the Son of Man; and no more is required of any one than to follow it. This is the rule which we are to take; let us act as He has done, and we shall conform perfectly to those lessons of love and self-denial which the Apostles set forth. Here is the example of that good life which is recommended to us: here is the perfection of manhood exhibited for our imitation.

II. So much, then, for the Apostle's recommenda-

tions: let us consider, secondly, by what means they are to be obeyed. How are we to imitate Christ Our Lord? By what means are we to copy this perfect pattern which is proposed for our imitation? True, we must all confess that in the Son of Man, in Jesus of Nazareth, is set forth the very pattern of man's nature, the very example and model of what man ought to be —we see in Him the one only instance of a human being, who from His youth deserved truly to be in favour with God and men. But how can we imitate so perfect an example? How can this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus? Now before we can properly answer this question, we must ask how such a mind came to be in Him. Was He, to begin with, just like one of us? Was He a mere man, brethren, like you and like me? If He had no more to begin than we have, then no doubt we might come, in the end, to be such an one as He was. No one is there among us but might become a king, or an emperor, because kings and emperors, to begin with, have often been such as ourselves. But with Christ Our Lord it was otherwise. He was not, to begin with, such only as ourselves. A man indeed He was, as we are, but not a man only. He was also God over all, blessed for ever. And that which enabled Him to set forth man's nature in its perfectness, was that nature of Godhead which He descended to unite to it.

At the season which we are now approaching, had that mystery its completion, whereof notice had before been given to his Virgin Mother: "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that Holy Thing,

which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." When Elijah's sacrifice was consumed on Horeb, why did it kindle into flame, while the altars of Baal's priests were silent and untouched? Was there any difference in the materials which Elijah had employed: had he not used stones and wood as they had? The difference was that the fire of God came down upon it. And that which rendered the Son of Man so unlike all other of Adam's children was, that in His person God Himself took up His dwelling among men. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Through virtue, then, of that indwelling Godhead, which was one with it, did manhood also become perfect. Thus was the perfect pattern exhibited of our lower nature. Thus was there found one, whose meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. Thus was the human will so perfectly resigned to the divine will, that He could say with complete resignation, "nevertheless, not My will, but thine be done."

This finished example, then, of what man should seek after, was not attained through the mere perfection of the powers of nature, but because a greater power than nature was bestowed upon it from above. This was that birth from above, that power above nature, which came down into our race in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ Our Lord, just as fire came down on Elijah's sacrifice, that so God's grace and pardon might extend itself from Him and all His brethren. This was the tidings of great joy, which the angel declared should be to all people. For by virtue

of that perfect obedience of which His Manhood was rendered capable, did e Hfirst make satisfaction on the cross for all His brethren—for us His fellow descendants from fallen Adam; and then, secondly, did He bestow that union with Himself, by which our nature also may be kindled into obedience. In Him has appeared that grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

And this answers the question, how are we to imitate Christ. If that perfect love, and that unfailing obedience, whereby He made manhood so lovely, whereby He rendered to His Father such perfect honour, had been attained by Him merely through human powers, then might human powers enable us to imitate it. But since it was a divine power which first kindled such grace in man's nature, by a divine power only can it be maintained. That movement which was given to our common nature in Him, must reach on to us. He had it through personal union with Godhead; we must have it through union with Him by sanctification and grace.

Now this is the purpose for which Holy Sacraments have been given to us. They are the means whereby that movement, which was given to our nature at large when Christ took manhood, may be extended to you and me for our individual welfare. When St. Paul reminds the Galatians of their calling in Christ, he speaks to them as "my little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." And so must it be with each one of us. The act whereby Christ joins Himself to every believer is as truly a birth from above, it is as really the bestowing a new and

divine life, as was His miraculous conception in the Virgin's womb. When Christ took our nature this work was done once for all, on behalf of all mankind; when Christ gives Himself to each single believer it is done separately for his individual benefit. But it depends upon the same gracious power: that which gives to each of us a new birth into grace, is Christ bestowing Himself upon us by actual union, even as He gave Himself to the open world by that miraculous birth of which this season of Advent reminds us. Some persons look upon the new birth into Christ as depending only on their inward feelings, and as wrought entirely by meditation within their own minds. Inward feeling is necessary, but it cannot have its full effect unless Christ truly comes to us from without, with that same divine power, with which He appeared of old time on the mount or in the temple.

Do you ask, then, how it is that we can follow that perfect pattern which is given to us in Christ? How we can attain to that holy and happy state, of which the one true man has set the example? We can do it only if that divine power, which made His obedience to be above that of nature, is present also for the renewal of ourselves. Now of this truth it is that the text reminds us. For it sums up the directions to a holy life by setting forth its means. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." How can we *put on* Christ? By that real union with Him, which is bestowed in Sacraments on those who with faith and repentance seek Him indeed. For this is no mere *show* of union, no bare *imitation* of His holy life, no mere bearing His name or

accepting His allegiance—on those who *thus* come to Him in holy ordinances, does He bestow that actual union, whereby they become "members of His body; of His flesh, and of His bones." Thus is He Himself, in whom was once exhibited the perfection of man's nature, born over again in all His brethren. Oh blessed union, oh divine gift, whereby the sinful children of fallen Adam "may be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust."

For this benefit, brethren, many of you are to-day, I trust, seeking. You are about to approach the Lord's table, that thereby you may put on Christ Our Lord. You feel, you cannot but feel, how hard it is to follow Christ. His perfect pattern, His divine excellence, all the graces and purity of His spotless obedience, we can admire, but we cannot imitate. And yet we must imitate His example, if we would have part in the ransom which He has provided for our salvation. For "he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Let us seek, then, to be renewed by that inward power, whereby we likewise may be fashioned after the pattern of Himself. Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood." Let us drink deep of the fountain of life, that we likewise may be quickened and live. We cannot imitate, unless we are one with Him; nor follow, unless we are renewed by Him; nor serve, unless we are sustained by Him. Let Him be our life, our peace, our hope, our all.

SERMON VI.

THE GOSPEL A REALITY.

ROMANS xv. 8.

"I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

THE importance of Holy Scripture is taught us in to-day's* Collect and to-day's Epistle. And yet it is brought forward in a way which leads especially to the subject of this present season—the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh,—"the promises made unto the fathers,"—all those hopes and anticipations which filled up the Old Testament, had their completion when the Son of God put on the garment of our nature—when He was "made of a woman, made under the law." Let us look, brethren, at Holy Scripture to-day in this light; let us consider how it had its completion in Christ.

And first, let it be observed what a peculiarity there is in the scriptural way of teaching truth. What is the part of Holy Writ to which men in general look first for instruction? Plainly, I suppose the Gospels. This is sufficiently shown surely by our calling the whole Bible by the name of the Gospel. We naturally think

* Preached on the Second Sunday in Advent, 1848.

of that which attracts most attention. Now of what are the Gospels composed? If men had been employed to give instruction to their brethren, it is likely that they would have put together a Book, formed after the model of Solomon's Proverbs. Two most instructive books are found in the Apocrypha—Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus—and both of them resemble the Proverbs. They contain advice what men ought to do: you find in them rules for different conditions and states of life, for different ages and circumstances. But what a contrast is offered by the Gospels. What is their subject? The first verse of St. Mark may tell you: "the beginning of the Gospel, or good tidings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." They are all about Him—His origin, birth, education, ministry, death, and resurrection—these make up the Gospels; and such instructions as they contain come in by the way, and are all built upon the words and doings of Christ our Saviour. It is clear that the main purpose of the Gospels is to make known Christ; our duty and happiness is always spoken of as depending upon our standing rightly with Him: let His nature, actions, character, and instructions be properly received, and accepted with living faith, and we have what is essential both for this world, and the world to come. The instructions which we have from Holy Scripture, the things which we are called on to believe, are not about ourselves, but about Him; we must listen to Him of course with reverence and obedience, we must do His will, if we would profit by His coming, but on Himself, on His nature and excellence depends all which we are to learn concerning Him.

2ndly—We see this then in the Gospels: and now

turn your thoughts to the Creed or Belief. Every time you join in the Church's service, you are called upon to declare your belief in the Creed. And those who cannot join in the Church's service, would do well to use the Creed in their private prayers as an act of Faith in God. You may see how much is made of it, because it is that which is required of those who are first received into the Church by Baptism. Before children are admitted by Baptism to the privilege of being Christians, those who bring them must promise for them that they shall receive the Articles of the Christian Faith. This promise refers, of course, to the education which they are about to have; it is a promise by those who bring them to be baptized, that they shall be brought up as Christians. Now, that which is required on this head in the way of belief, is that they should receive the Creed. The like use is ordered to be made of the Creed, when the Minister visits the sick: "I shall rehearse to you," he is ordered to say, "the Articles of our Faith, that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should or no." The importance, therefore, of the Creed is shown by what happens at the beginning of life, and by what happens at the end of it. And what is the Creed made up of? Does it tell us chiefly about those things which we get by Christ? No doubt it mentions them. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting." Those things which we gain by Christ's coming are found at the end of the Creed. But the main part of it—its largest portion—all its first and chief statements refer to Our Lord's nature in itself,

and to the being and character of the other Persons in the Ever-Blessed and undivided Trinity. The salvation of mankind through Christ's death, the atonement which is thus provided for sinners, the sanctification of soul and body through the gifts of grace—all these things followed from Christ's life and death for us—they constitute our main privilege in this world, and our hope in the world to come—but it is Christ Himself, His character and actions, which are stated as the very foundation of belief, and basis of our salvation.

Such are some of the circumstances, which must strike every one, in the manner wherein we are taught both by Scripture, and by the Creed. The first thing which is brought before us is not how we are to be saved, but what are those things which are to save us. Now, what are we to gather from the manner in which instruction is thus conveyed to us? It shows, surely, that our salvation does not depend only on what goes on within us, but also on what goes on without us. By what goes on within us, is meant, of course, our own feelings, desires, thoughts, and actions. We all know of what moment these things are. They make up ourselves, as it were: they separate us from the rest of God's creatures. We can easily see what effect they will have upon our future happiness. This is a point of which our own conscience assures us. A man who is neglecting God, who never prays earnestly, who lives in open excess or secret lust, who hates and injures others, knows well in his inner heart that it is not all right with him; he feels that he has a sickness in his heart, which must in the end overtake and destroy him. Such a man hardly wants the preacher's words to re-

mind him, "be sure your sin will find you out." His own conscience is always teaching him the same truth. Now this is what is meant by that part of religion, which is within a man. It is that which depends on the calling forth his own feelings to tell him the importance of being saved, and his own conscience to tell him whether he is walking with God. But the way in which Scripture teaches us, and the manner in which the Creed teaches us, show that besides this, we must consider those things which are without us. Christ Our Lord has truly come into the world: He really brings us certain blessings: we need to take account of them, and make use of them.

Let us take an example. Suppose a man fancied himself ill, but was not. When his friends visited him, they would say, the man's sickness is only in his own fancy; he thinks himself ill, and is not. His cure must come entirely from within. If we can get him to suppose he is well, he will be so. In such a case his friends would try, probably, to keep up his spirits; and as soon as they had persuaded him to think himself well, he would be so. For his sickness lay only in his own thoughts. But suppose the same friends to visit one who was really sick. Let the man be struggling with some deadly disorder, which shook his body, and threatened his life. It would be vain then to say to the man, "fancy yourself well, and you will be so." Why would this case differ from the other? Because there would be some real sickness which would need to be removed; some actual enemy would have entered into the little kingdom of the man's life, and must be got rid of before he could be in safety. And, therefore, if some wise

physician drew near, some one who had true mastery over life and death, he would apply powerful remedies, such as could drive out death from the man's body, and restore the empire of life.

You see the difference between a case in which the cure is to come entirely from within, and one in which it must come to us in the first instance from without. Now which case is ours? Are we suffering from a fancied sickness, or a real one? Are sin and death only supposed, or are they true enemies? Have they not entered into the house of our life, and got possession of it? Do not men feel their presence always and everywhere? Do they not cleave to men at home and in the field, in the secret chamber as the open market-place? Do they not obstruct our prayers to God, as well as defile our intercourse with our neighbours? Surely these are real evils, which we cannot get rid of, without applying to that Great Physician, who only is able to cure our souls. And this it is which makes the acts and nature of Christ Our Lord of such moment to us. We could have no cure for these evils, unless those things had been truly done outside of us, which the continual course of the Church's year calls upon us to believe. It were useless for us to look for inward healing, unless the One Great Physician, who alone can cure, mercifully drew near to help us. And this is what He began to do by His birth, what He went on to do by His death, and does still by His intercession in Heaven, and His presence in the ordinances of the Gospel. That which is required, then, as the foundation of our faith, is that Christ our Lord should be truly doing, and have truly done for us, those things, which

Scripture sets forth and the Creed reveals. Our disease is real, so must be our cure: we want some actual help, we must come to Him to find it.

This is the great thing which is going on in heaven and earth. Worldly people have their eyes fixed on a thousand other objects. Some are asking what kings are in danger, what new states are likely to rise up and gain power among the nations. Men of business are considering how they may lay out their money to the best account, so as to have the largest return. Some of you probably are planning how to improve your lands, so that they may yield a larger return. Others are considering what they shall do when they are a few years older, what employment they shall follow, what master they shall serve. But all this time the one only real, lasting, and important work is going on in the midst of us unseen—God's great controversy with mankind, and Christ's work of intercession and grace, by which He is saving from the fallen world those whom by grace and faith He truly joins to Him. This is the one great reality; and it depends on the truth of those past actions of Christ, which this season of Advent brings before us, and of those things which He continues to do through the ordinances of His grace. At this time did the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, come down from heaven to earth for our salvation, and take part in man's nature, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. Through that manhood which He took, was He able to die, and rise again for us. And now that He has gone up into Heaven, He truly offers up the prayers of all his servants, and He is truly present with us in His Church's worship, wherein we have

assurance of meeting Him as our Saviour. And He truly feeds us with that precious food of His Body and Blood, which, by taking our nature, He has made the means of our soul's nourishment. These are the things which Holy Scripture and the Creed set before us: things, the importance of which depends on their truth; which are not brought about by ourselves, though our life depends upon them.

And what is meant by a living faith in them? We do an act of faith every time that with a true heart we declare we are convinced of them. When you repeated the Creed to-day, if you meant what you said—if you felt that these things were true, and were prepared to do and suffer for them—then you made an act of faith. And you can make an act of faith every time you say your prayers, by repeating the Creed with earnestness and sincerity. But to have a living faith, it is needful that all our acts should be acts of faith. The whole man, both in soul and body, must be fashioned on this principle. We must live like persons who always saw Christ to be present, and always believed accordingly. If we went into a King's palace, and saw him before us, what decency, respect, carefulness, would there be in our words and actions. The real believer is always in the presence of God. Christ Our Lord, who has mercifully taken our nature to be a satisfaction for our sins, is ever near and before him. And especially when he enters into the King's courts, into Christ's place of peculiar presence, it is with such love, reverence, and devotion, as shows that his faith is real. You may see when he comes here, that he truly discerns that gracious Master, who has mercifully done so much for his

sake. The thought of Christ's nearness to him has all his heart. There are no wandering looks, no idle thoughts—Christ is near. The sayings of Scripture are true sayings; and He who promised His presence to men of old time has bestowed it upon Christians.

SERMON VII.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

St. John, iv. 10.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

Such words spoke our Lord to the woman of Samaria. What she wanted, was to quench the thirst of that sultry climate. She had betaken herself to the neighbouring well of the Patriarch Jacob. For how else could she gain what was necessary to life? As a well were useless unless there were hidden waters, so without a well, thirst could not be satisfied. Now, through the method of supplying the body's wants, did Our Lord instruct her respecting the replenishment of the soul. For what is it which all men require but salvation? How can we get it but from Him? He is the true well-head, the source, the fountain, to whom alone we must betake ourselves amidst the painful wilderness of life. We must come like Israel of old, who "drank of that rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." Thus, "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Let us meditate then, by God's help, upon this topic:

First, How is Christ the well of life? Secondly, How can we drink of Him?

I. Now Christ is the well of life, because in Him those original perfections on which life depends, have their dwelling in the world. A wonderful saying it seemed to this woman of Sychar, when she found a stranger sitting upon Jacob's well, that in His Person was a "well of water, springing up into everlasting life," at which alone the spiritual thirst of all men could be satisfied. For she knew not what had befallen that other daughter of Eve, to whom it was said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." This was that "gift of God," of which Our Lord declares that she was ignorant. She knew indeed, what all may know if they please, that in God alone is the principle of life; that all perfection must have its root in Him; that as He is the Author of our being, so is He the very source and spring from which holiness and happiness have their origin. For "all things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." And this is not more true of that power which gives existence to the body, than of that holiness, which is the life of the soul. For God alone, as Jeremiah expresses it, is "the fountain of living waters."

But how should this fountain have its dwelling in a man? How should a son of Adam be the reservoir which should hold it? How should others come to Him to drink? How could He bestow such a gift on those who believed on Him, that out of their "belly should

flow rivers of living water?" This it was, which surprised her. For to be the natural dwelling-place of divine life, to reflect the perfections of his Maker—this was man's original purpose indeed, but it had been lost by the sin of our first Parent. Ever since that time, man has been no natural dwelling-place of divine life. Neither could this blessing be again restored, till He who was God as well as man came to dwell in our flesh, and through the greatness of His divine power, corrected the weakness of our nature, and extinguished its guilt.

Now this the Samaritan woman knew not. She was not aware what a gift had been bestowed upon our common nature, in the sacred person of that stranger, whom she chanced to meet. She understood not that the common being which she and we possess, had undergone as great a change in Him whom she saw before her, as it did in our first parents through their original offence. For He whom she beheld, was in the same condition in which Adam was before the Fall. No sin had ever defiled His pure nature. There had flowed into Him those gifts of holiness and grace, which have their origin in God. This made Him that well, at which all men must quench the thirst of their souls. Before the Patriarch Jacob had opened the earth, the men of Sychem would vainly have sought water in that dry region. And unless the Holy Ghost had sanctified man's nature in the Virgin's womb, men had sought in vain for that spiritual replenishment, which is offered to them in Christ. Jacob's well was a reservoir at which those waters which flow from the abysses of the earth might truly be found: and so is the Virgin-born

the receptacle and well-head of those gifts of grace, which issue perpetually from the throne of God. Therefore was He, whom she found sitting there in the simple majesty of His unattended state, the true Saviour of the world. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

To this man, then, brethren, let us seek for health; for though our nature be as corrupt as the river of Egypt after Moses' curse, yet in Him is there purity to heal it. His sanctified manhood is that life-giving stream of which Ezekiel spoke: "These waters issue out towards the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea; which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." The sea is man's nature at large, which this stream of grace, Christ Jesus Our Lord, is able to purify. That which rendered Him this fountain of life to His defiled brethren, was that Personal Oneness with Godhead, through which His sacrifice on the cross sufficed for the salvation of a world. The same cause which made His death so precious for the redemption of mankind, made His life so effectual for their purification. So that from Him proceeds that gift of spiritual life, by which all His servants are quickened. And in Him are fulfilled the Psalmist's words, "With Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light."

II. The true well of life then is the Man Christ Jesus. Through Him must we drink of those sanctifying waters, which issue from the throne of God. But how are we to drink of Him? If He were God only, the

sole way in which we could receive His infinite perfections, would be through those inward thoughts, by which we can meditate upon God. How else than by your thoughts can you hold intercourse *naturally* with Him who created you? He speaks to men's thoughts in a thousand ways, as they sit in the house, and as they walk in the field. God, we all know, is very near us. And as He speaks to us, we can speak to Him. But He who was sitting on Jacob's well, was not merely God. Had He been God only, how should the woman of Samaria have seen and addressed Him? He was a man, as well as God. And that He was man, was the very reason why He is the well-head, through whom divine graces flow into us. For we also are men. So that He is the means through which those things which have their origin in God are communicated to our nature. They had their first dwelling in Him, to whom they belonged by right, that they might afterwards be bestowed on us, to whom they are given by favour.

We read this in many passages of Holy Scripture. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He *given* to the Son," that is, to the Man Christ Jesus, "to have life in Himself." And God "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." He is "the Head, from whom all the body, by joints and bands" has "nourishment ministered." And "of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." It is no other, then, than He who was found sitting there at the sultry hour of noon, who is Himself that well of life, from which the children of men must draw all quickening virtue. As all light dwells in the sun, so in the Sun of righteousness whom this woman beheld,

dwelt all the graces of which any of the children of men can be possessed. That life of the Spirit which each man receives in his degree, dwelt without measure in Him, as in its fountain. All light, grace, holiness, which have been or can be manifest among Adam's children, were gathered together as in their source and centre in the Holy Child Jesus.

Now what wonder would it have stirred in this woman's bosom, had she known how near she was by bodily presence to that very fount of life, in which the holiness of Godhead had its personal dwelling. What would she have said, could she have fully understood His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth! How would she have cast herself at His feet—how would she have besought His favour—how inseparably would she have waited on His steps—what would have parted her from His presence—how could she have expressed her love, honour, admiration, and reverence! Brethren, He was not more near to her, than He will be to every believing worshipper in that holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to which to-day you are invited. For do you ask how you are to drink of this well of life, the Man Christ Jesus? In the first place you must believe on Him. "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." For "he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." And "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on His name."

But observe the effect of belief in Him. Will it not lead in you to the same practical results, which it pro-

duced in this Samaritan? She believed that water was to be found in Jacob's well. The consequence was, that she came there to seek it. Her belief was only natural belief, no doubt, and there was good ground for it: but because it was a true belief, it led on to action. And the same will be the effect of our belief, if we have as strong a faith in things divine, as she had in things earthly. She did not remain in the city; but being persuaded that water was to be had, she came to fetch it. Have we as firm a belief that in the God-man, whom she found awaiting her, there truly dwells the life of our souls? Do we count as certainly to obtain heavenly gifts from union with Him, as she did to fill her vessel with the earthly element? If we do, we shall come with not less faithful earnestness to seek Him.

Now the mean whereby we may hold intercourse with the Son of Man, is expressly declared in Holy Writ to be that heavenly Feast, wherein He gives Himself to His servants. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." The Capharnaites, to whom these words were originally spoken, supposed that by some strange transmutation, Our Lord's sacred body would be cut into morsels, and eaten as natural food by men. But the divine banquet of the Holy Communion, to which they refer, has another signification. It is that heavenly and spiritual union with the Son of Man, whereby He gives us to drink of

that well of life, which he brought down from above for the healing of a world. Thus does He open to us that "spring shut up," that "fountain sealed," whereby those who have first been washed in the blood of the Lamb, may afterwards drink of the never-failing waters of His Spirit. This exhaustless blessing flows forth from the throne of God, for the benefit of sinners. And this gift is offered to the faithful in the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. No doubt it is an awful and sacred gift: no doubt none should draw near to this sacred fountain carelessly. Happy those who, when they come, discern from the first the reality of their Master's presence. Happy those, who have not waited like this woman to put away their sins, till they suddenly feel the awful eye of Him who can detect them. For this is no common feast, no trivial ordinance. Therefore let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For by these means does whole Christ give Himself to His people. And yet how can men who need grace turn away from these healing waters? Did not even the Samaritans flock to their heavenly guest? Did not they beseech Him to tarry with them? Oh, entreat Him to dwell in *your* hearts! Make preparation for Him by mortifying every sin which He hates. You know not whether His gracious presence may be again vouchsafed. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

SERMON VIII.

CHRISTMAS.

St. Matthew, viii. 16, 17.

[Preached in York Minster, before the Judges of Assize, December 19, 1847.]

"He cast out the spirits with His Word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

These are some of the acts of Him, whom at this season the Church commends to your memory. For His Advent is again come round, the rapid months have brought you back to it, the Royal Child is once more to be remembered, the Baptist's errand has been again fulfilled. Let us approach Him with the fitting preparation of reverence and love, remembering that Eastern Kings came from far to seek Him, but that He was first found by the humble shepherds of his native Jewry.

Now there is an obvious difficulty in the application which the text contains of Isaiah's prophecy. Do these words refer only to the mercifulness of Our Lord's actions? Is this all which is designed, when He is said to have borne our griefs and carried our sorrows? Did He merely remove them as the physician does his pa-

tient's ills, or as Elisha did the leprosy of Naaman? If this were all, we might well ask, in the first instance, what benefit it is to *us?* These miracles have long ceased: this healing power has long since been suspended. And it has left us as subject as before to the maladies of life: do not diseases still distress, accidents alarm, death await us? Why should we deck our Churches yearly with their Christmas honours, if it had been so transient a blessing which was bestowed upon our race?

Again, this view of the nature of Our Lord's blessings corresponds not to that which ancient prophecy declared of His approach. For is not His coming the middle point of the world's history; which all the events of ancient days were continually showing forth? In Him we have the woman's seed, who was to restore what was forfeited by the Fall. He is the rod which was to arise out of the stem of Jesse, on which the Spirit of the Lord should rest. He was to grow up as a branch out of the dry ground of man's fallen nature. Why all this preparation, if it was to end in such transient exercise of healing virtue as favoured men of old had possessed?

And again, how far is this from satisfying the religious wants of man's nature? Where is that reconciliation with God, of which we stand in need? How is the weakness of our will to be remedied? What atonement is there for our past neglects? How can we have "access with boldness" through the faith of Him, merely because He once showed himself pitiful to objects of distress?

Once more, we might appeal to the general consent

of all nations, which have ever witnessed that it was only through the condescension of the Godhead that we could hope for the elevation of humanity. A God must descend that man may be exalted. This has been the secret meaning of all mythologies, which have still proclaimed, though in uncertain and faltering voice, that which is set forth fully and clearly in the Advent services of the Church.

We must seek, then, for some deeper meaning for St. Matthew's words. We must inquire what is that principle which led to Our Lord's acts of compassion. And we shall find that they are the result of that real union between God and man, which at once fulfils the declarations of Scripture and satisfies the requirements of our nature. And this is no fond inquiry, but a fundamental truth of the Gospel. For "it is necessary to everlasting salvation that we believe rightly the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man." Now what does this statement of the Creed imply? In the fulness of time, the Second Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance, that as He had at first made man out of the dust of the earth, so He might re-make him out of the fallen elements of his frail mortality. Thus did He Himself become the new Adam, the second man, the pattern and type of mortality, the first-begotten from the dead, the first-born of every creature, that in bringing many sons unto glory, the Captain of their salvation might be made perfect through sufferings.

Thus was the Eternal Son exhibited in the flesh as

the model and centre of man's nature, even as prophecy had declared in ancient days that when He stooped to mingle with creation, He should be the beginning of God's works. For we must not fancy of Him as a mere common man, as a single grain out of the garner of mortality, seeing that in Him not this individual or that, but manhood itself was taken into God. Thus as He was by right the representative of Godhead, and shared in its whole glorious nature, as He was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, so did He by choice become the representative of mankind, "for the first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven."

Now from this brief statement it follows at once why Our Lord's miracles, when in the flesh, were a real fulfilment of that which had been spoken in ancient days concerning His nature. For their characteristic is, that that in them human sympathy was perfectly divested of human weakness. They show such absolute lordship over the powers of nature, as might have sufficed to empty the whole ocean of material suffering. He who fed thousands, why could He not banish all want? He who healed men by His thought, why could not He avert every sickness? Doubtless He would have done so, but that the stopping these outlets of natural calamity would have only increased the more intense malignity of moral woe. There will be no more pain, when there is no more sin. To natural sympathy then, Our Lord gave its proper weight: He could shed a tear near the grave of Bethany, and show pity at the gates of Nain;—these concessions He made to the sinless affections of our common nature; but they interfered

not with those other qualities, which personal union with Deity communicated to His man's soul. For justice also and holiness are attributes of God, to them we may adapt the words of our greatest English writer, and say that their "seat is the Bosom of God, their voice the harmony of the world, that all things in heaven and earth do them homage." These, then, must find their expression in the acts of Him, who knew what was in man; and what so wonderful as that their entire possession should have interfered not one whit with the perfection of sympathy for human sorrows? How hard is it for men to attemper these conflicting principles, even in that moderate degree in which they are present in our hearts? We know that justice has its place on the tribunal, that it is the reflexion of God's rule among the children of men, that its office is to deter from transgression, and its sanction the awful realities of our final doom. But how difficult to divest it of such harshness as either does or seems to militate against our entire fellow-feeling for mankind." In one only bosom has it had its perfect abode, and that the only perfect pattern of all sympathy among men. In Him alone the thronging offices of individual affection interfered not with those larger views of universal love, of which man's collective race was the object. For as man, He was the Captain of our salvation, the one perfect model of our being; He gave the full example of a life of grace, before in death He made satisfaction for His brethren.

And herein lies the wonderful depth of Our Lord's sympathy for the afflictions of men. "We have not an High Priest, which cannot be touched with a feeling

of our infirmities." Are men in pain or grief, in fear or loneliness; does the thought of sin overpower, or the dread of death confound them—here then is one, who to all the attributes of a God, unites all the compassion of a brother.

And it is not immaterial to observe one circumstance in Him, who is said to have borne our *sicknesses*. Yet from what we read in the Evangelists, we should conclude that Our Lord, though He died the death, yet did not share the sicknesses of mankind. The reason is, probably, that what He took was our *common* nature, with all that belongs to the completeness of man's being. Of this, death is a general property, whereas sickness is a peculiar accident of individual men. Indeed it follows commonly, either from some deficiency in their original composition, or from some irregularity in the habits of their life, and therefore seems to have been inapplicable to one in whom humanity dwelt in its perfection. Yet even men's sicknesses He might be said to bear, for in death they are summed up; the great catastrophe of man's life contains all the lesser forms which prognosticate it; or, at all events, He felt for men's sicknesses as one who by perfect sympathy was one with themselves. He truly "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Such signs have we of that real union between man and God, of which this holy season reminds us. Thus did it please the Father, that He should do that great work on which depends not only the atonement for men's sins, but the gift of holiness. For this it is which the sanctification of Our Lord's human nature obtains

for His brethren. "For their sakes," He says, "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." This it was which Our Lord's birth into the world bestowed upon us. Because Adam's sin had lost the image of God for himself and his children, Our Lord set it forth again in the temple of His own humanity, that in Him there might be a true fountain of life to the sons of men. Therefore it is said by St. Paul of all Christians, "ye have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him." And "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

This is the great gift of which Holy Scripture is so full; which was first bestowed in its completeness upon Him who was the Son of God by nature, that afterwards it might in its measure be partaken by us, who are His children only by adoption and grace. For "as He is, so are we in this world." On this it is that the whole constitution of the Church of Christ is built, which would have no place in God's world had not the Son of God taken manhood into personal union with Himself. For there would have been no atonement for sins had He not said, "sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." And there would have been no Christian graces, had not our nature received "the gift of God," in one who has perfect fellowship with His brethren. And there had been no Church, had He not allowed us by real union to be members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones. And there would have been no Sacraments, had it not

pleased Him that our vile bodies should be made clean through His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood.

With reason, then, is the whole series of the Church's year built on the memory of those events on which depends her existence. Most fitly is the course of her services devoted to the setting forth of His Incarnation in the flesh. Thus do we begin our year with Advent; we celebrate at this season the birth of Christ; we pass on to His circumcision, when He became obedient to the law; to Epiphany, when He was manifest to the Gentiles. Then comes the memory of His sufferings in Lent: on Good Friday, His death. Next, Easter-Day, when He rose again for our justification: and the season of Pentecost, when, ascending up into heaven, He gave us back His own presence through the power of the Holy Ghost. Such are some of the means by which the great mercies of Christ Our Lord are perpetually commemorated.

And now let us notice, in conclusion, some of those practical consequences which the subject suggests.

First, it sets forth what is the peculiar importance of the means of grace. On this subject men are often wanting in clear and definite conceptions. Some are disposed to look on them as a charm; others perceiving them to be applied through external observances, are ready to neglect them as trivial and insignificant. Of course, when looked at in themselves, they are wholly worthless. What can be the value of a few words of prayer from the mouth of a weak and erring mortal? What table is spread so cheaply and simply as the Lord's; or how can the natural element of water wash

away sin? The thing which gives significance to these else idle forms, is the Incarnation of Christ; and they are indeed worthless, except so far as they minister to union with Him. And thus viewed, there is in them a deep and holy mystery, such as all the world's wealth could not buy, nor its opposition destroy. For what gives to these things their value is, that Christ Our Lord, in His own gracious Person, has re-consecrated humanity, and that the outward ordinances of His grace are the means whereby He receives men into inward communion.

What is the gift therefore of Baptism, but that in it we are ingrafted into the new man; and have thus the gift of a divine life, as from the first man we had our life which was natural? But for this, how could there be Christian education? Is not the education of the young built on the principle of training them to God's service? Yet are they not heirs of a corrupt nature? How could we call them then to a better course, unless we supposed them partakers of the gift of grace? What reason have we to suppose that such grace has been given except it be in Baptism? "Else were your children unclean," says St. Paul, "but now are they holy." "For as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And this gift St. Paul especially declares to be bestowed in Holy Baptism, "for by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body." It is through that hallowed influence therefore which flows forth from His humanity upon all His brethren, that this ordinance of the Gospel is so blest.

And the same may be said of the Holy Eucharist.

It is because "then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us," that the Lord's Supper is indeed an "heavenly feast." For in it Our crucified Lord by heavenly agency bestows upon us Himself; "My flesh," He says, "is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Let Christ's Incarnation be forgotten, let that crucified and now glorious body be lost sight of, in which He still actually intercedes for us in the Father's presence, and all these things, instead of living channels of His grace, would become dead figures. But as the winter's day comes in cold and gloomy till the glorious sun lights it up with his beams, so does the warmth and life of all outward means depend on that Sun of righteousness, who at this season arose upon the earth. "*The Word was made flesh:*" there, brethren, is your comfort.

And this, too, is what gives its true dignity to that weak nature of man, which He deigned to unite indissolubly with Himself. For now God is man and man is God. And the honours of the first-born Son overflow into all His brethren. On this depends that care for man's life which is characteristic of Christian countries. For man is God's image, which Christ Our Lord condescended to adopt. Hence Christian charity, too, has its root; for we are members one of another. Its Christmas bounty is not merely dictated by the tale of want; but the great event of the time calls for proofs of our fellow feeling with our brethren.

Finally, I would observe that in this act of Our Lord's is a warning what inward purity of life may be expected from Christians. Did He thus sanctify His human Being, that it might be the source of sanctifica-

tion for all His brethren, and can men live in riot and excess, in impurity and uncleanness? Is this what the Holy Apostles set forth as the fitting consequence of the Advent of Christ? "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Do we deck our Churches with their Christmas gifts, in His honour who is again made known among us, and shall He find our hearts all unprepared for His coming? Shall there be envy among brethren, and hatred among neighbours, and all the accursed passions which were the produce of the Fall? Nay, brethren, let us not thus make preparation for Christ. But let love and peace be shed abroad in our hearts by that blessed Spirit of peace, through whom Christ incarnate vouchsafes to visit us. Let us gather in thought round the cradle of Our Lord while we now approach His Holy Table, and while we marvel at that fulness of grace which was His natural portion, let us pray that His grace may now and evermore be made perfect in our weakness.

SERMON IX.

THE EXALTATION OF NATURE.

St. John, i. 9.

[Preached on Christmas Day.]

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

These words of our Gospel might seem to mean—that which is perfectly certain—that from God alone comes all light to all who are born into the world. Yet their real signification reaches much further. They mean that the true light, by which men are enlightened, was coming into the world. "The true light, which lighteth every man, cometh into the world." So that two things, not one, are here taught us about Christ Our Lord. Not only His is nature declared, whereby before all time He was the fountain of light, but likewise that coming in the flesh, whereby this day is distinguished. For on this day were made known "good tidings of great joy to all people," when "a light" was set forth "to lighten the Gentiles," and to be "the glory of Thy people Israel."

Let us look at the text, then, in this view, as being the true declaration of Christmas blessings; as showing

not only what Christ was by nature, but also what He became by grace. He *was* the light of man's being by nature, because it was no robbery in Him to claim equality with God: He *came* into the world when He "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The text thus divides itself naturally into two parts—first, How was Christ the light of man's nature? and secondly, How did he come into the world?

I. Now Christ is the light of nature by virtue of His Godhead. It belongs to Godhead to be the final source of power, glory, and truth. When we inquire about any thing or any substance, our custom is to ask what is its source. For there it is commonly gathered together in its strength. Where is it that the waters have their storehouse? "God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He seas." From their resting-place in the great deep are waters sucked up into the clouds, or soak into the earth. But their storehouse is the sea: they slumber in its unknown depths; their mighty billows lash its rocky shores: the sea is the home of waters, their fountain and strength. And so is it again with the light of day. Its source is in the sun. Thence come the beams of light: when this glorious orb climbs up the heaven, we have clear day. Whatever enlightens us, reminds us of its presence; and the aim of every earthly light is to be a mimic sun. For to this our thoughts still return, as being the natural lord of day. Now what the sun is to the light, and ocean to the waters, their source, fountain, storehouse, home—the same do

grace, truth, and wisdom, find in God. For "the Word of God Most High is the fountain of wisdom." "She is the breath of the power of God."

From this only source has the inner nature its illumination. Whatever knowledge or purity is found in the world we must trace back to Him. "We may speak much," says the writer of Ecclesiasticus, "and yet come short; wherefore in sum He is all!" For how did man get reason, save because God gave it? Now He who gave, must Himself possess it. He who gives it out to the children of men, must have it in store in His own Being. The fountain will be discovered by observing from what quarter flow the streams. And so says Holy Scripture: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." This is what the Psalmist's thoughts turned on: "With Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light shall we see light." God, says Jeremiah, is "the fountain of living waters." And all this, therefore, is true of Christ, because He is by nature God. He is God *from* God, Light *from* light, Very God *from* very God. As the Father hath life in Himself, so Christ, according to His Godhead, is the natural source of light and knowledge.

When we read that God hath given to the Son to have life in Himself, this refers especially to Christ according to His man's nature. Look at Him as God, and He stands in no need of receiving that as a gift, which belonged to Him by nature. For Christ is by nature God the Son. A son, by the order of nature, is like his father. If the father be a man, it is nothing unusual, but the order of nature, for the son to be a man likewise. So it is here, as the Father is God, so

is the Son. And therefore do those things which belong to Godhead belong to Him. He Himself renews the nature of the beings which He has created. As the Word of God was peculiarly engaged in the work of man's creation, so from Him comes that divine power and grace, whereby men are re-created to holiness.

II. But this leads on to the second part of the text: how this true light came into the world. The Light is God the Word: Very God of very God: one with the Father: partaking with the Father of that glory which belonged to them before all worlds: but how did this light come into the world? In one sense it had never left the world: for such a thing as conscience there had always been, and conscience is God the Word speaking to our hearts. Therefore is it said by St. John that the life is the light of men. How then could it come into the world? It came into the world by taking its place among the world's inhabitants: this ancient and original light clothed itself in a fleshly covering, and was a man among mortals. "He did show Himself upon earth, and conversed with men." This was the manner in which the light came into the world.

This is the great miracle which to-day reveals. "He was in the world" before, "and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." And yet in His former dwelling among men, "He left not Himself altogether without witness." He spoke before in conscience or by reason; thus was He God the Enlightener. But now was He undertaking a new office. He came in that fleshly nature into which He had infused the glory of God, that so He might communicate it to His brethren.

What can be so great a mystery as this? We think much and justly of Our Lord's death for sinners. We remember how He shed His precious blood upon the Cross for our salvation. We read of those long agonies which He underwent for us in the Garden, when He bore the burthen of a guilty world. But all these wonders depend on the truth of His nature. If He had not been a man, how could He have appeared for His fellows? To take our nature, to be one of us, to have a common interest with men—this lay at the root of all He did for them. He took that flesh and blood which you and I have inherited from Adam our forefather; He took such a soul as He has given to us, He sanctified what thus He put on; and by this means He made it the beginning of purity and life to all other men. There was light before the sun was made. Light had its dwelling, we know not how, in God's heaven; it floated about as pleased Him, in the boundless sea of His unsearchable dominion; but so soon as the sun was made, it was gathered into this glorious orb, that thence it might issue forth to enlighten mankind. Still does the sun go forth as a bridegroom from his chamber.

Now, as light has its dwelling in the sun, so is the man's nature, which was taken by Christ, the seat of all grace and holiness. He bade them dwell there, that thence they might issue forth into all those who are united to Him. And this was that coming of light into the world, of which the text informs us. It took place when grace and holiness came down from their native seat in the bosom of God, and took up their dwelling in a son of Adam. Was not this a real coming into the world. Before, these things had belonged to the hea-

venly state; they belonged now to the earthly. Before, the very angels had not possessed them in perfection; and now they were possessed perfectly by a man. And this man was the Man Christ Jesus. This man was born to-day. Well, then, may we keep Christmas-tide with reverent worship, and affectionate interest, and joyful love, and humble thankfulness. For our glorious brother is born. Our common nature is exalted. Our being is made higher than the angels. God is become man, and man God.

Brethren, I fear there are those who either keep not at all this holy feast, or keep it but as a day of vulgar mirth, and ungodly idleness. Oh, how little do such men understand the real happiness of their nature! How little do they see what it is which separates them from the beasts! What a fearful abuse of that nature, which has been made higher than the angels! What a wide gap is there in man's being! It reaches up to the very throne of God—this is its highest step. It reaches down to the very pit of hell—this is its lowest degradation. The Head and new Father of our race—He who was born this day—in Him is it exalted—those who live in sin and lust, and so do Satan's work, that they may share Satan's portion—in them is it degraded. Which family will you join? Will you take service with Him who was born to-day? Will you have a Christian name, a Christian life, a Christian end? I hope you will. I entreat you to do so. Oh, it is easy to *say* this. Natural feeling compels it. But He who was born into the world to-day, that He might give Himself a sacrifice for His brethren, did much more than *say* this. See, He sanctified His man's nature,

that it might be the seed of grace to all other of Adam's children. He brought down into it the holiness of Godhead, that His purified body might sanctify ours which is impure.

And this is what He offers to all devout and penitent worshippers in His Holy Sacraments. Some men think little of these holy ordinances, and why? Because they do not perceive the full amount of that gift, which was bestowed upon man's nature by the birth of Christ. If they knew the gift of God, and who it is who feeds them with His flesh and blood in the Holy Communion, they would ask of Him, and He would give them that holier and purer nature, which dwelt in Himself. To understand and believe what was done to-day, is to see why such signal blessings are to be found at the Lord's table. For what happens there, is that through outward elements of bread and wine, that hallowed nature, which Christ made pure and perfect, is given for the spiritual renewal of the sons of men. Do you see, then the greatness of this gift? Do you see how man's being was altered? Do you see that by the birth of to-day there was a regeneration of man's nature? And can you think little of those means, whereby this gift may spread into yourselves, and fill you with all those blessings, which Christ has bestowed upon your common nature? For Christ was born into the world to-day. But He is born in each man by sanctification and grace. "My little children," writes St. Paul to the Galatians, "of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you."

And how is Christ formed in you? You cannot make Him for yourselves? He is no image made by

hands, or thought, or feeling. He comes to you from without, through the ordinances of His grace, in His Holy Sacraments. Thus do you spiritually receive your Maker. Every earnest and repentant spirit, which opens the ready door of faith, shall surely receive this heavenly visitant. Come, then, I beseech you, and let this be indeed a Christmas day to every one of you. Let Christ, who was born into manhood to-day, be born anew in each one of your hearts. Receive Him who gave Himself once in the virgin's womb, that He might give Himself perpetually on the altar. Draw near in faith, and lift up your hearts with your hands unto God in the heavens.

SERMON X.

LENT.

DANIEL x. 2, 3.

"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth . . . till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

THUS does the Prophet describe a season, in which God was pleased to visit him by His especial power. "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God," the angel told him, "thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." It was not without result, therefore, that he cut off an interval of time from the distractions of ordinary life. A lesson this, the more instructive, because Daniel was a layman, and busied in worldly cares.

In this bustling age, men are apt to find excuses for declining the force of Scriptural warnings. If David "fasted and lay in sackcloth," it was in the freedom of barbarous times. If St. Paul was "in fastings often," he was an Apostle, who needed to keep no terms with the world, because he had devoted himself to a missionary life. If Cornelius was accepted, when he had

prayed with fasting to the ninth hour, he was a heathen. If Our Lord hungered in the wilderness, He was more than man. But what shall be said of Daniel, the inhabitant of a court, the descendant of kings, on whom lay the affairs of the province of Babylon, when we find him devoting weeks to self-denial, prayer, and intercourse with God? This was no Jewish form: it was not superseded therefore by the purer worship of the Church of Christ. It shows in what manner holy men have found it expedient to break in upon that concupiscence of the flesh, which needs at times to be unusually checked, that so the spiritual nature may assert usual supremacy. Thus may we retire for a season with Christ into the mountain, that we may return to mix better in the intercourse of men.

The practice is sanctioned by St. Paul, 1 *Cor.* vii. 5, a passage on which Bishop Taylor grounds this observation (*Holy Living and Dying*, p. 12): "Let him that is most busied set apart some solemn time every year, in which, quitting all worldly business, he may attend wholly to fasting and prayer, and the dressing of his soul by confessions, meditations, and attendance upon God: that he may make up his accounts, renew his vows, make amends for his carelessness, and retire back again, from whence levity, and the vanities of the world, or the opportunity of temptations, or the distraction of secular affairs have carried him."

Now two dangers, though not its necessary result, seem not unlikely to arise from such a practice. The one, that there seems too much of human choice in men's selecting such seasons of voluntary self-restraint. The other, that such especial consecration of ourselves to

religious duties may lead to formality, or to spiritual pride. These evils do not spring necessarily from this practice, more than from any other use of the means of grace, but Satan might build such temptations upon them. No doubt it was to obviate this that our Church has in her wisdom enjoined the use of the present season, and based it moreover on the more especial imitation of the example of Christ. In this manner the temptation to pride is obviated, for none can be puffed up at rendering obedience to a common precept: and the sacred pattern which she sets before us is fitted to absorb any lower thoughts, by which men might otherwise be molested.

Such is the nature of this season of Lent, to which all Church-people are enjoined in one way or another to pay attention; to which many already pay regard; and which I am persuaded will be still more heeded, in proportion as men feel more deeply the evangelic doctrines of the need of repentance, grace, and union with Christ Our Lord. For although it be true that the clergy are bound by a solemn additional vow to render obedience to the Church's laws, so that carelessness in them would be more heinous guilt, yet the general promises of Baptism plainly require of men such Christian improvement of the means of grace, as opportunity offers. The practical question then is, what use we can each make of this period of Lent; how can we extract from it those benefits, for which Daniel was glad to sacrifice the comforts of his ordinary life?

First, then, it is the Church's time of revival. If duly used, there is none, in which we might hope to

see a larger harvest of immortal souls. Is not the world in common too strong for us? Do not we find its allurements too enticing to be resisted? Is it not in vain often that Christ's ministers raise their warning voice, and tell men of the fleeting nature of all transitory joys? Of what signal benefit then might it be, if men were accustomed for this season, at all events, to hold themselves dispensed from the ordinary calls of pleasure, and to open their hearts to the impression and prospect of things divine.

In truth, it is probably because they will not use such salutary intervals, that God's Providence often deals with men by His afflictive dispensations. Many a man, who will not give his ordinary employments this interruption, is mercifully interrupted by that chastening hand which would save him from utter perdition. "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged." How many fits of sickness have been sent in mercy on those, whose hours of health they would never give to God. The enforced meditations of the sleepless night and painful day have been God's merciful provision for securing those occasions of thought, which men's carelessness would not render. How many bereavements have been designed to disgust men with those worldly comforts, which, in scenes of cheerfulness, they would never sacrifice. The bereaved parent, the widowed partner, are thus taught how insipid are earthly joys. Happy if then thus they learn to hold intercourse with Christ their Saviour, to taste the sweetness of prayer, to take delight in sharing His portion—if they truly wean themselves from the transitory objects, from which

God's chastening hand was designed to recall them. For "when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Now it is that such heavy and afflicting remedies may not be needed, that we call men to turn betimes to the service of God. "Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord." What is there in truth so appalling to any believing mind, as the uninterrupted prosperity of a careless sinner? He has no checks, because God allows him to nourish his heart against the day of slaughter. What hope is there then for his escape? Unless some fearful visitation calls him to repentance, unless he is made a monument of the present judgments of the Almighty, there must await him the more awful vengeance of eternal fire. He dies decently, it may be, and is buried. He has himself no particular alarm, neither is anything permitted to awaken his dormant conscience. His body sleeps in honour, perhaps, with his brethren. But where is the man himself—the immortal, unalterable spirit? In hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torment. If there be any hope of arousing men from so dangerous a state, it must be by the return of seasons, when the Church takes account, as it were, of her careless children, and calls them by her warning voice to flee from the wrath to come.

And this is the more needed, because the early admission of men by Baptism to the privileges of the Church, leaves many unvisited by any especial call to repentance. Having been partakers of that regenerating gift on which all obedience must of course be founded, they suppose that all is done. They have grown up

careless and worldly. Yet there comes no further call to them. There is no peculiar attempt for their conversion and recovery. They have wandered from the fold: but none is in condition or has opportunity to urge their return. If they were Heathen we should send missionaries to convert them: if they were children we should send ministers to baptize them; but Christians as they are, what means is there to employ, though they are in truth in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Now Lent, duly used, might be of signal benefit to such persons: a missionary season within the Church, when her earnest sons deplored their own sins, and peculiar efforts were employed for the conversion of her wanderers.

Looking at the season of Lent in this light, how valuable is its peculiar connexion with the sufferings of Christ. First we have this season of forty days, during which we recall His fasting in the desert: and then come the memorable incidents of His stupendous passion. How deeply might the Holy Week, which ends this season, impress on us the truths which His death recalls. His entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: His two successive visits to it on the following days: on Wednesday His betrayal: His agony and the Institution of the Holy Eucharist on Thursday: His death on Friday: on Saturday His resting in the grave: then His triumph over death, ere he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Surely it is not in vain that this especial season is set forth for reviving the Church's love, and gathering new sons into her ancient bosom, when it thus brings before us in such lively colours the earthly career of her great Leader. When

can the evil of sin be so deeply felt as in the contemplation of Christ's sacrifice? When can the fearful end of the sinner be so fully anticipated, as when we gaze upon the price of his release? What so likely to affect men's minds, as to exhibit these truths as things acted before their eyes, and whereby their own hearts should be riven?

But besides the effect of such seasons in gathering new members into the number of Christ's earnest people, their effect would be great in increasing the devotion of those who already serve God. And this we all want. We must all feel the force of temptation. Those who least dread, have most reason to fear it. How salutary is it therefore to be yearly called to examine our state, and by fresh penitence and prayer to draw near to God. The importance of such a practice can hardly he overrated. But in what especial acts shall it be embodied? "Thy people turn to Thee," says our Church at the commencement of Lent, "in weeping, fasting, and praying." Especial repentance, additional prayers, fasting—these are the three acts which she enjoins, whereby we may answer on our part to that quickening grace which is to revive and renew us.

Actual fasting is a means of deadness to the world and of preparation for prayer, the effect whereof none can estimate but those who try it, but which the example of all holy men recorded in Scripture is surely sufficient to recommend. But because want of usage makes it strange to most persons in this day, and to many want of strength may render it impossible, therefore we have in the text a kind of fasting which all might imitate. Those who cannot renounce the neces-

saries, might renounce the delicacies of life. "In those days," says Daniel, "I ate no pleasant meat." But to most persons, some actual diminution in the quantity of food, or some change in the kind of it, would probably be found the best preparation for a season of meditation and of prayer. To this the Apostle refers, when he speaks approvingly to the Corinthians of men's giving themselves for a time to prayer and fasting.

But such self-denial should be attended by peculiar acts of devotion. Men should set apart some few minutes from the bustle and heat of every day, above that which they usually give to prayer, when with increased zeal they should seek God's mercy for themselves and their brethren. Why should not men retire at mid-day, or before their daily meal, and give some quater of an hour to solitary meditation on Christ's sufferings, on the evil of sin, on death and judgment? For want of teaching, many know neither the nature nor importance of meditation. Their subject should be fixed beforehand. The general tenor of their thoughts should be arranged. They should allot some specified time to it. Suppose their subject to be the remembrance of their own death. Let them consider how certain it is—how soon and sudden it may be—then let them realize its consequences, and see whether they are prepared for its approach. Such a subject daily proposed to the mind could hardly fail, by God's blessing, to make it serious.

And further, to pass to the importance of prayer. In it we have the soul's utterance of its wants to God. And especially should we value, at this season, all those occasions for public prayer when Christ our Lord meets

us more immediately in His Sanctuary. How precious to the humbled spirit, when self-denial and meditation have done their work, to enter into God's courts and find there the reality of Our Lord's promise, that where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst. How soothing at such a time to be assured of that real presence of Christ Our Saviour, which He bestows in that life-giving ordinance of the Holy Eucharist, wherein He communicates Himself. Yea, Lord, though the world despise, and the unbelieving neglect Thee, yet be Thy promise fulfilled to the little flock of Thy faithful worshippers.

And now, if it seem to some that our circumstances scarce need that humiliation and sorrow of heart which was not unnatural in the exile of Babylon, I would say, in fine, that never surely was the Church more fitly called to similar complaint. Each year, indeed, we hear the words, "Let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet; let the Priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar." And is there not a cause? Is it nothing that in our very land should grow up thousands who neither fear God nor regard men? That open sins should be so prevalent in a Christian land; that ignorance should be so rife; crime so increasing? Is it nothing that the wealth and numbers of our great towns should increase so much more rapidly than the means of grace and the opportunities of worship? Is not the chasm increasing between the different ranks of society, which may soon swallow up all our blessings? Are there not many by whom God is habitually neglected—are there not numbers among us for whom

Christ has died in vain? Can we hear this without grief; can we speak of it without tears? Is mirth and joy a fitting feeling, while God is dishonoured, and man lost? Look at every great city, and how many will you find who enters God's House—who seem to be as wanting in the thought of God as the beasts of the field. Look at those who cultivate your fields: are they not immortal beings? Is not each one of them made for heaven or hell? Must he not answer for himself before Almighty God as much as if he were a prince or an emperor? How many of them are there of whom Christ's ministers know nothing; what habits of prayer do they possess; what hope have they of reward; what fear of punishment? Even on God's day of rest, they have no heart to serve God, no remembrance of His laws. Surely, surely, it is enough to make a wise man weep, to see them thus "go down like a beast to the slaughter, or like a fool to the correction of the stocks."

Again—a not less afflicting thought—is not the Church, the very Bride of Christ, rent by division and disputes? Are not the minds even of good men full of suspicion, unkindness, and jealousy? Is there not bitterness even among brethren? "It was not an open enemy that did me this dishonour, neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me." "We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the House of God as friends." Surely it is thus that we should look at all those divisions, by which the inward peace of Christ's Church is torn and wounded. Such evils can only be remedied by humility, meekness, forbearance and prayer. And those may best hope to heal them, who have thrice a week opportunity of suppli-

cating in the Church's words, that if so be they have "enemies and slanderers," God may "forgive and turn their hearts." Surely there is true might in a devout man's prayers. For Christ Our Lord hears them; and in His hand are all hearts: He can bend our brother's will, He can purify our own hearts. Even at the beginning of our supplication He will come forth to help us.

SERMON XI.

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.

REVELATIONS ii. 4.

[Preached in Lent.]

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love."

WHETHER this part of the Book of Revelations has a deep and prophetic meaning, need not now be considered. It would certainly not be unnatural to attach to it some further signification than meets the incurious ear. But its plain, immediate, personal lesson, is applicable to the present time, and sufficient for the present occasion. That lesson is the danger of religious declension. Let us first consider the nature of this evil and the risk of it; and we may then see readily enough how displeasing it must be to God, and how dangerous to the souls of men. Finally, it may be observed that the present season is designed as an especial guard against it.

The text, then, sets forth the danger of falling away from Grace. There is such a thing as to addict ourselves to God's service, and yet afterwards to fall back from Him. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst

of the seven golden candlesticks: I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The state complained of is not total alienation from God, a life of open sin, avowed worldly-mindedness—but the abandonment of that love of God by which the soul was once possessed, and which formerly bound it to its Saviour.

But we must not suppose, that an alteration of *feelings* is all which is intended. Love is strong as death: feelings are uncertain and precarious as the dreams of infancy. Love strengthens by exercise: feelings are deadened by familiarity with that which excites them. Love directs the actings of the whole man: but men often entertain feelings which are contradicted by their conduct. Good feelings, therefore, are a desirable thing, and assist in many ways our religious course, but neither does their excitement show us to be good, nor their lack of excitement show us to be evil. No man is good save by being one with Christ, and when the love of Christ rules within him. And the love of Christ is such a permanent, abiding principle of affection and affiance in His holy will, as shall lead us to make it the perpetual rule of our thoughts, words, and actions. It must regulate not only the external actions of our lives, but the inward actions of our hearts. It is a hidden rule, which none but ourselves and God's Spirit are privy too; nay, we ourselves may mistake ourselves, and God's Spirit only cannot be deceived.

For He is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." Such is that love of Christ which men may have, and then leave, and which gives occasion, therefore, to Our Lord's warning, "remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

Let us dwell shortly on the nature of this decline and the causes of it. The words of the text refer to those who are not openly ungodly men. The caution is to such as by habit and profession, and general desire, and popular thought, are servants of God. And if there be one such person who thinks that to himself such a warning is needless, to him we say plainly, "thou art the man." Thou art he, to whom this caution is signally applicable. For "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." But probably no one doubts that the warning is of importance for all of us. The only question to ask is, how this danger arises. My brethren, it must come from the secret loosening of those ties which bind us to Christ our Lord, and thus are the means through which His Spirit flows forth into us. For since the soul's life is from Him, if He cease to quicken, we cease to live. Let the sun withdraw his quickening rays, and the world of nature languishes. Let Christ Our Lord withdraw His power, and an equal deadness will possess the world of grace.

The decay of man's spirit, therefore, must come from those secret declinings, whereby we cease to hold on to Him. Such are the neglect of prayer, the failure of watchfulness and self-denial. These are rather to be mentioned than the neglect of those outward means, whereby Christ joins us to Himself, because to forego them is an open and avowed act, about which none can

deceive themselves; but to use them without inward earnestness and relish is the most natural manner in which spiritual sloth assaults the heart. This is why sloth is spoken of as the last and most dangerous of those "*deadly* sins," against which we have just besought God in the words of our Litany. The man gains the habit, as it were, of using his eyes without seeing; he comes to Church, but does not inwardly apprehend Christ's presence; he comes to the altar, but does not discern the Lord's Body; he uses words of prayer in private, but his heart is not there—such are some of the steps by which spiritual sloth benumbs the soul, and builds up a wall between man and his Saviour.

Now, if the only difference was a deficiency in the acuteness of his feelings, this might be traced to bodily causes; it might be a grief, but could not be a sin. Sometimes, no doubt, the unseen world presses upon us with unwonted power, the gift of tears and fervency is more largely dispensed, and the soul can cast itself with unusual earnestness upon God. The possession of such feelings is to be desired: the want of them is no proof that men are fallen from grace. Their want may be supplied by greater humility, seriousness, faith and obedience: let us only truly realize the presence and power of Christ our Saviour, and whatever be the temporary intensity of the spiritual frame, we may address ourselves to Him through those means whereby we know that He gives Himself, and say, "I will not let Thee go except thou bless me." This is the very mystery of Our Lord's Incarnation, that having joined Himself to our nature, He has appointed means of

grace whereby we may be assured, if we come sincerely, that we are joined to Him, and therefore cannot lose His presence. Our spirits are not required to raise themselves by their own inward buoyancy to the great Spirit of the Universe—a reach too high for man's weakness, and which, in the hour of our dejection, we could hardly attempt—but "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." To Him we may come even in our hour of sorrow, and cast ourselves upon Him, as one who has experienced our weakness, and is acquainted with our griefs.

The case, then, of which we speak is not that of the man who faints from weakness, is assaulted by doubts, or cast down by dejection—such a man may and must betake himself to his present Saviour; and the humility of the broken heart will never be despised. What we speak of is the case of those who feel no such perplexity, in whom the benumbing influence of sin has extinguished, or at least deadened, the sense of want; who live tolerably well satisfied with their state, but without any living perception of the reality of Christ's gifts, or any fervent desire of His presence. Is such considered to be an unusual case? Alas! it is fearfully common. And whence does it arise? There may be many causes: but none perhaps are more usual than success in the world, an easy course of prosperity, unbroken health, a lively sense of pleasure, and the society of worldly friends. These things make up what is called a prosperous lot in this world; and unless for the signal grace of God, they are enough in themselves to ruin a man's soul.

For how easily does worldly success occupy the

heart. How apt it is to conjure up gaudy visions, which fill a man's imagination and possess his soul. He dwells upon his schemes, he enlarges to himself upon the enlarging amount of his possessions; by this step perhaps his family will be provided for, thus will he attain the distinction which he covets: so he goes on, such thoughts follow him to the House of God; in his closet they build up a wall between him and Christ; prayer is of little moment to him, the unseen world is not present to his thoughts—where his treasure is, there will his heart be also. In like manner does worldly society and the love of pleasure take possession of the heart. "She that liveth in pleasure," says the Apostle, "is dead while she liveth." It besots the heart, the strictness of the Gospel rule becomes distasteful, prayer, self-denial, watchfulness, become wearisome, are neglected or forgotten.

Or again, to take a quite different instance; a bitter, censorious, and uncharitable temper, has a similar effect in deadening the soul. It destroys that affectionate, loving, simple affiance, whereby we should hold intercourse with Christ Our Lord. Uncharitable words or unkind feelings are like a rankling sore, which disable the soul, when it should move forth in love to its Saviour. Yet this temper often arises in men, who are little conscious of their own defects: even religion is in danger of degenerating into party spirit, and the very service of God may in this way become the hindrance to its own success.

These are some examples of that danger under which we all lie, of going backward in our spiritual course. The cause of all such evils is the neglect of a due use

of God's grace: the remedy of them must be a more earnest love, and a greater watchfulness. Yet it cannot be doubted that they grievously displease God, and that men's souls therefore are fearfully perilled by them. For the very purpose of our being is that we should be fitted here for God's service. And why did Christ Our Lord take our nature, save that we should put on His? His purified and exalted manhood was designed to be the renewing leaven of our defiled and sensual humanity. This is the very object of the Church of Christ, in which those who are born heirs of sin are new-born into the fellowship of their Saviour, that the pure, the heavenly, the spiritual seed may quicken that which is earthly and grovelling. Why else are there Sacraments wherein we may be made one with Christ, and prayers whereby we may maintain our perpetual alliance with Him? And what can more offend Him than that the love of this world should so besot us, that this our glorious portion should be hidden from our eyes?

Thus is the Spirit grieved and quenched. No outward force can overpower it. It is proof against all assaults to separate men from God. But inward unfaithfulness can estrange it. When Our Great Head was in the flesh, the sharpest assaults of Satan were made upon Him in vain. For since there was no weakness within, they were of necessity only external attacks. Therefore every weapon of Satan rebounded from His invincible armour. But with us, how poor, weak, timid, worthless a temptation is often fatal to our peace! The reason is, that we have an inward enemy. The grace of God indeed has been bestowed on all those who have been elected into His Church. Were it not for this, there

would be no basis on which to build a Christian education. But then concupiscence is not eradicated. And therefore it is that Satan possesses so much power to hurt. And thereby is the very object of man's being defeated, and the merciful purposes of Christ our Saviour are brought to naught.

Now it is with an especial view of guarding against this danger that the present season is set apart. From a feeling of the perpetual risk which we run from Satan's assaults, and from our own weakness, the Church yearly calls us to examine our estate towards God and man, and to set apart this season for a serious survey of our condition, and an earnest attempt after a closer walk with God. The need of especial times for reflection and self-denial, is apparent from the examples of all holy men. No man has ever made a great ascent towards God, who has not used every means of guarding against his heart's deceitfulness. True it is that such seasons may be used unprofitable, or even made an evil: we may think their observance an excuse for greater worldliness at other times, or we may be proud of ourselves, because we use this season of humiliation more devoutly than others. This is like the conduct of those who suppose that to serve God on the Lord's day, is an excuse for serving Satan during the week. But the fitting and natural use of such a season is that to which the Church exhorts us, that by devoting a part of the year to God's peculiar service, we may be strengthened to serve Him more fervently all the rest.

And such a practice is more especially needed in the present day, when the Church and the world are so blended together, that the Church cannot make rules

or devise expedients for the better discharge of her work, unless they are approved and ordered by the rulers of the world. Now this time of Lent is the only public usage which remains to her as a peculiar means either of testifying against the unconverted, or of arousing the forgetful to renewed devotion. Something is done in that Commination Service, which is her solemn appeal to God against the waywardness of her children. But when we look upon the vast crowds of Heathen Christians, who not only fill our prisons, but throng our market places, we see that some more especial means are needed for their conversion. It is vain to speak to them in Church, where they never come to listen. The Church needs to go to seek them amidst the loathsome haunts of misery and sin, and to testify to them of the wrath to come. Heaven and Hell, Salvation and Judgment, need to be preached by Missionaries in the lanes and alleys of our cities, as much as on the lonely shores of Gentile barbarism.

For these ends our present system has hardly made sufficient provision. And the decent, orderly, undeviating rule, which is adapted rather to build up the believer than to convert the careless, is not unlikely also to be even injurious to those who have a more earnest view of things. When all goes on in a smooth and equal manner, there is nothing to cast men upon first principles, and to make them take serious account of their state. Some interruption then of their ordinary condition is peculiarly needed. The usual habits of life may thus be broken up. Men may have time to ask themselves where their heart is fixed, and to take measure of those eternal things, which are so commonly

forgotten. They may open their hearts perhaps to God, and be shocked at observing that year has passed after year, while they have done so little for His service, have been so little weaned from the world, have made so little advance in the love of His will. The very breaking off from worldly cares and thoughts—the renouncing of pleasures—a self-denying and restrained life, will be great helps towards such an examination. They will not of themselves indeed raise the soul to heaven; for this God's grace only can effect, but the sacrifice will be more easily kindled into a flame, if the fuel be first dried and prepared for it.

Now with a view of effecting this object, men should have an especial rule of life at the present season, by which, so far as may be, they should regulate themselves; they should cut off something from their common indulgences, and give themselves to a serious examination of their inward state. The daily use of some of the Penitential Psalms might be superadded to their common devotions, and might be made to have special reference to their past sins, and to the work wherein they are occupied. To go into particulars would be more fitting as a matter of private advice than of public recommendation. Of course any such attempt would be found burthensome by those who are contented with the easy, careless, popular religion which is prevalent among men. But after all, time is short, eternity is long.

And there is this peculiar advantage in the present season of self-examination and of self-denial, that it connects itself with the great principles of man's renovation. For the Church's time of revival is not built

upon grounds of reason or philosophy, but upon the imitation of Christ. Our strength is in His oneness with us, who, by the Sacraments of His grace vouchsafes to bestow His hallowed nature as the consecrating principle of ours. It is the characteristic of Lent that its observance is associated with the fellowship of His sufferings, and the remembrance of His death. Our time of repentance has been assigned to those days wherein He was preparing for His trial, that our joy may be reserved for the seasons which commemorate His triumph. Blessed is their portion who are conformed to the likeness of His death, that they may be also to the likeness of His resurrection. To them it is no unnatural and forced compliance with an outward rule to look on Lent as a season of mourning, because their Lord's actions have cast their shadow upon all the years of His Church's existence. Thus does the death of the Head of our race minister to the life of His members. The world could not be meant to be a mere scene of mirth, which was to Him a place of mourning; and that season cannot be indifferent to us, which was marked by His agony. Surely if this feeling is ever lost, it will be a sign that the Church has lost her first love. Let us seek to have our part in Our Saviour's sorrows, that we may be partakers also of his joy.

SERMON XII.

PALM SUNDAY.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 8.

"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

WE are come near to that season, when those mighty things happened, of which the Epistle reminds us. It tells of the voluntary humiliation of the Son of God. Now this week it was, that His humiliation was completed.

Let us consider wherein it lay. It had three several stages. It consisted of Our Lord's Incarnation, His servitude, and His death. The first of these was by far the greatest of all. For that Our Lord should become man, was a far greater descent, than that when He was man He should suffer contempt and death. Contempt and death are man's natural portion; but to be conjoined to weak manhood is not natural to God. Therefore, to descend from the glory of heaven, to unite the native majesty of His inconceivable Godhead to the infirmity of human flesh, was a far wider step than that other from the manger at Bethlehem to the cross. This service Our Lord mercifully undertook, that He

might bring the glory and excellence of Godhead, and leaven therewith the whole lump of man's defiled being. All holiness must come from God, as well as all knowledge; and the only channel through which they come, is that man's nature of Christ Our Lord which He took, that He who was one with the Father, might be one also with us. This is the true Jacob's ladder, whereby heaven and earth are joined together.

And in this act we have the greatest instance of Our Lord's condescension, because it was the humiliation (if we may so express it) of His Godhead. The Godhead itself was so far humbled as to be one with our flesh. Whatever glory could be ascribed to Christ, when He came into this lower world; if all the earth had greeted Him as its head, if all mankind had bowed the knee before Him, had admitted His rule, had obeyed His commandments—still it would not the less have been a humbling of His divine nature, that it should in any wise have been associated to our flesh. The event, then, which was revealed to the Blessed Virgin in the hour of the Annunciation, which that feast recalls to our thoughts, was the greatest of all acts of Our Lord's humiliation. The first step from heaven to earth was greater than any by which it was succeeded. *He was made man.*

And now comes the second step—Our Lord's servitude. When He made Himself of no reputation, it was by taking upon Him the form of a servant. He did not come in the pomp of worldly magnificence, clothing Himself with whatever glory belongs to this earth which He had made, He was not born into an house which possessed ancient wealth or present authority,

but a lowly roof sheltered His cradle, and His Body was laid in an ordinary grave. And as this was the case in the first stage of His life, and in its last one, so in all which went between. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

And not only did the men whom He had made reject Him, but He seldom exercised His power even over the creatures, of whose existence He was the only cause. Though air and earth owed their being to Him, yet He consented to live upon their bounty, as though He were one of their common pensioners. Certain women who followed Him out of Galilee, "ministered unto Him of their substance." The wonderworking power, which He exerted so freely for the conviction of others, was never exerted for His own support. He employed no guard, though His effectual voice could at any moment have summoned twelve legions of angels to His aid. Wherefore should this be so? That Our Lord might put on the perfectness of that man's nature, which he shared with ourselves. "It became Him, by whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Had He called in the succour of that external power, of which He was never deprived, His man's being would not have trodden the perfect road of humanity. One effect indeed His Godhead must needs possess: through the union of that Divine perfection, of which He could not be destitute, manhood was in Him alone free from the weakness, and therefore from the sinfulness, which in all other cases belongs to it. But He did not resort to His divine power to ward off those assaults of pain, or

hunger, or temptation, by which His manhood was attacked. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And since He chose to tread the path of man's life in its completeness, it made little difference what path He chose. The paths of life, it is true, seem to us to be far removed—but they all meet in the grave. One man has wealth, honour, health: sickness, want, and forgetfulness, are allotted to another: but both must die. Death is the grand leveller. Men who owned the widest fields, take no more room than their neighbours in the grave. Not to a divine Being, a Being who is eternal, to whom a thousand years are as one day, how infinitely insignificant must be such shortlived distinctions. All talents are valuable no doubt, if men use them for God's glory and their neighbours' good; but in themselves how infinitely insignificant they are. It was but a small thing, therefore, that He who stooped so wonderfully to be a man, should have stooped low enough to be a man of griefs. He took our common nature in its most usual form. He was a man of the people. Nay, He was poorest among the poor. He had not where to lay His head. His taking manhood at all was the humbling of His Divine nature, and as man He further stooped to be beholden to His brethren. "He took upon Him the form of a servant."

And yet there was one step more of humiliation, which is recorded in the text. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." "He hid not His face from shame and spitting." "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." He was doomed by unjust judgment to a cruel and disgraceful

death. He shared the portion of malefactors, as though He had been participator in their transgressions. This was the crowning act of all: the last stage in the history of His condescension. That He should have allowed His soul to be separated from His body, should have submitted to that awful and mysterious process which awaits us all, when the succours of reason fail, and the light of life burns down into its socket, and man's spirit is torn away from the body, we know not how nor whither—this surely was the completion of Our Lord's abasement. It was not in itself no doubt so wonderful that He should die, as it was that He should be born: it was but the following up of that which His taking our nature at all had commenced; yet it was the last act in this wonderful descent: its crowning mystery: it put the finish to His human actions: "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Such, brethren, is the three-fold stage of Our Lord's humiliation: the steps by which He trod His way from the glory of heaven to the abasement of the Cross. And have we, for whom all this was done, no interest in it? Is it nothing to you and me that such acts should have been performed? Are we not deeply concerned in drawing from it its due effect? It might almost be thought not, from the indifference with which too many Christians see the return of the solemn season, when these great events had their completion. For the Church's year is fixed by those great events, which befell the Son of Man. Its times are settled, not by reference to your concerns or mine, but they depend on Him, in whom only the whole race of man is interested.

From His birth into the world do they follow Him to His grave, and then attend Him to His glory. Thus it is that all the Sundays of the year are appointed. They are the weekly memory of Our Lord's resurrection from the dead. The Jews kept the seventh day, because on it God rested from His work of Creation: we keep Sunday, because Christ rested from that still greater work, whereby He re-created the world.

And more especially does this come out at the present season. For the Great or Holy Week of the Christian year is before us. In this week every thing tells us of Our Lord's actions. We know every day what He was doing: each day leads on to that great deed, which was completed on Good Friday. Now my fear is, that Christians make not enough of this. In some countries and places they do; but they do not among us. Why do I say so? Because if they did, it would of necessity leaven their words and thoughts. If some dear friend were ill at a distant place, would he not occupy your thoughts? When news came from the place where he was, would you not find time to attend to it? You would intermit your business, however material, that you might listen to it.

Now, if men had the same interest in the doings of Christ, they could not choose but give attention to them likewise. We should not need to ask you to come and take part here in our Easter services, as though it were a benefit to ourselves. Every day this week the Church bids us to hold worship here, evening as well as morning: every day we set forth what Christ Our Lord was doing or suffering in those periods which divide this last week. And have you no heart to take interest in

these events? What I desire is, that your souls might go along with this season. For to-day did Our Blessed Master hold His triumphant entrance into the city of Jerusalem, where he was so speedily to suffer. Palm Sunday we call it, because with branches of palms men heralded His approach. Thus did He come in triumph into the temple, as a sign of that more glorious entrance into the world, which will be witnessed by all men in His last descent. But, now, it was not the Judge who was coming to doom, but the victim who was coming to suffer. He was brought in triumph to the temple, the true Paschal Lamb, who had appeared after so many years of waiting—the real offering for sins, the real food of His people. Those who attend upon Him every year on Palm Sunday, will be more prepared to wait on Him in that last awful progress, when those who are ready will go in with Him to the marriage ere the door is shut.

But then it must be a true waiting on the Son of man. What is the way of waiting on Him? Those who wait on kings adorn their bodies; but those who wait on the King of kings must adorn their souls. They must wash them from those sins by which their service would be polluted, and themselves rendered unclean. They must wash them by repentance, confession, absolution, self-denial, fasting, and tears, in that blood of the true Lamb of God, which only takes away the sins of the world. For by these healing remedies do we profit by that Blood of sprinkling, which at this season was shed for the salvation of mankind.

This is what I would entreat of you at the present

season. I would call you to a close reckoning with your own hearts. Number up your secret sins. First confess them to Almighty God. If they still seem so black and dangerous that you need further assurance of their pardon, then seek the aid of Christ's ministers. But at all events take account this week with your own hearts. Join yourself in spirit to Christ your Lord. Separate yourselves, as far as you can, from the vain world. Seek your Lord in this His house of prayer. Here you will find the more especial presence of Him who was crucified. You will hear of his acts and sufferings: every thing will tell of Him, who *was* your sacrifice, who is to be your judge. And finally, brethren, let those who desire to be one with Christ, seek Him at this season at His holy table. Let them come now, if they are prepared: at all events let them come on Sunday next, and keep this true Passover. The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, offers Himself to be food of souls. By eating His flesh may you be made one with Him. Thus may you most fully share in all those divine gifts, which He bestowed when He took our nature. Oh that you would seek after Him, whom truly to know is eternal life.

SERMON XIII.

GOOD FRIDAY.

St. Matthew, xxvii. 54.

"When the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Such were the natural thoughts even of uninstructed bystanders, when they beheld those wonderful events which happened at this season. It was mid-day, that is, about the sixth hour: and "there was darkness over all the earth unto the ninth hour." "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened." Such a shock was given to universal nature as might be expected to attend the sufferings of its King. When a man dies, his house is shut up, his friends are clothed in mourning, all that belonged to him witnesses to the mighty reverse which has befallen its owner. Earth, and all that is in it, had been made for man's inhabitation: it is his dwelling, his possession, his field of labour, enterprize and discovery. "Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, and Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. All sheep

and oxen; yea, and the beasts of the field." Such sympathy of universal nature might be expected, therefore, to attend the sufferings of the true Heir and Head of man's race. When the first-born fell in Egypt there was a great cry made, because there was not an house where there was not one dead. And when the first-born of mankind fell by a cruel and untimely stroke; when the common Representative and Head of Adam's children was taken out of the world, reason was that the whole visible creation should suffer with its King.

For this is the manner in which we should regard those sufferings of Our Lord, which to-day recalls. They were not an ordinary case of death: the close of life to one however distinguished: it was not merely that the greatest, wisest, holiest man who ever lived, expired amidst insults and agonies—no, what happened to-day was the endurance of those sufferings of which all mankind were deserving, the actual supporting of that common load of evil, which all the sins of all the innumerable tribes of men had heaped together. "He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

Would you see the wide difference between this event, and all others which could ever befall; consider why death is to be feared by ordinary mortals. Death is awful for two reasons: first, for what we leave—secondly, for what we meet. To be torn away from the well-known scenes to which we are accustomed; from the friends, objects, enjoyments, habits, and pursuits of life, is a violent, and therefore fearful change. What shock can be so rude, as that whereby body and soul are rent

asunder? And then comes the thought, what lies beyond? What unknown and awful circumstances may await us in that new state of existence, into which we pass so helpless and unaware. For there lies before us in its immensity the unseen world, and we know not how or where we shall enter upon it; what will be our thoughts and feelings, our knowledge and expectations, when we wake up to the discovery of its wonders. One moment we are in this world, with all its busy, fleeting cares—and the next we are amidst the dread unchangeableness of eternity. And this thought renders death awful to any reflecting mind.

But with Christ Our Lord it was wholly otherwise. For neither was death the unwilling rending asunder of His being; nor was the state in which it landed Him unknown. On the contrary, He Himself, when His work was over, dismissed His spirit. "No man taketh My life from Me," He says, "but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Nor yet was the unseen world hidden from His sight. He could discern its secrets even when He hung upon the cross. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." For "I go to My Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God." So that those things which make death appalling could be no horror to Him. It was not the mere surrender of life, but the circumstances under which He surrendered it, which tried the constancy of the Son of Man. In them lay that cup of bitterness, to drink which He came into the world. They were the sufferings whereby the Captain of our salvation was made perfect.

Now, to estimate these we must consider two things:

first, their natural effect, had any other endured them: secondly, their peculiar intensity, when supported by the great Head and representative of mankind. Their natural effect is plain enough from the circumstances, which this week brings before us. For His death was one which was not more tormenting to the body than humiliating to the mind. It was the death of traitors and malefactors—beyond all others, lingering, public and degraded. It exposed Him, in His very hour of agony, to the desertion of friends and the contempt of enemies. The tribes of men were of one mind in His rejection: God's people and the Heathen were for once agreed: the bitterness of the Jews was aided by the violence of the Gentiles.

Yet were these things but the outward circumstances of that trial, which had a deeper and hidden root in the inner nature of the perfect victim. For these were things which might have been undergone by others of mankind. There were others in the same condemnation, and that justly, receiving the due reward of their deeds. But the circumstance which gave its intensity to the sufferings of the Son of Man, was shared by no other of His creatures. Its cause was the common nature, which He had taken, that so He might be the great proxy for mankind—He had willed to be the Son of Man, the heir and representative of people of our general nature, on whom pressed that collective burthen, which all the countless families of men had united to produce. Every child of Adam is doomed to death. And what is death? It is the final severing of soul and body, when those causes which are continually besieging our life, gain such head that they can no longer be combated. Take your own

cases, brethren. This year, it may be, you have suffered from sickness. Last year, perhaps, your body was tried by want. Before that, your soul was racked by sorrow. The loss of friends may have melted, or the unkindness of enemies torn your hearts. By such anguish of soul, by such wastings of body, is the life of man undermined and worn out. They make up that load of suffering and infirmity, under which the strength of nature gradually sinks. And then comes death, when the light of our being has wasted away, when the silver cord at last is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken. These several events, then, are so many parts of death: those which you have gone through are portions which make it up, stages which lead to it: death is but the gathering together and summing up of those many blows, which pain and suffering have already aimed at the citadel of your life. And that which happens to you happens to all men: death in each is but the summing up of those miseries, to which life is heir, their common meeting, their result; when at last the cup overflows, which had severally received them. And what, therefore, is death at large, the sentence passed upon our first parents, by which their whole race must finally be overtaken, but the sum of all griefs, by which the children of men have ever been oppressed, either in body or in soul? It is the result of all the sufferings of all the men who ever lived or ever shall live, till the angel's trumpet cuts short the world's being; the common receptacle in which all the miseries of humanity find their issue. Alas, how many they are! How vast that mass of human suffering, which has its ever-increasing source in human crime! How

innumerable the ills of the body, how much more terrible the ills of the mind! Our great Poet has represented Adam as foreseeing that load of suffering which was about to visit his race.

"Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark:
A lazar-house it seemed: wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased: all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heartsick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, cholic pangs,
Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moonstruck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums,
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans, despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born."

"This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith." Now, add all this together, and you make up what was set before our first parents under the name of death. For all these are but its preparatory portions. "All rivers run into the sea," and death is that ocean, in which the countless sorrows and pangs of all the children of men are gathered together. For all those things which make part of the separation of soul and body, are included in that general name, by which their separation is expressed.

And now then you may better understand this wonderful event, that the son of God tasted death for every man. For thereby hath He "borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows." Had He of whom this is spoken been a common man, one out of the million, it might have been meant only that He took His single part in the burthen, wherewith all are oppressed. But what benefit had this been to His fellows? When Christ, then, bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, it was not as an individual in the countless multitude, He did not receive His share, as does every child of Adam—no, He bore the burthen alone, and of the people was none with Him. He became the representative and proxy of mankind, who took upon His single self the accumulated burden of man's offences. "For the transgression of my people was the stroke on *Him*." "He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

When He grappled therefore with death, it was not under that harmless form, which the mere act of escaping from the ills of life might lead us to think of—the enemy whom He encountered was that king of terrors, whom the sins of every generation of mankind had armed against themselves and their children. It was not simple death—the bare ceasing to be a living man—but death bearing in its foul entrails all the pains, and miseries, and griefs, of which sin had been the cause, and of which destruction is the consequence, to which the great Son of Man opposed Himself, as its only capable antagonist. As all sickness, and woe, and ill is in truth a part of death and included in it, so being raised up to overcome death, as its single subduer, He grasped at once in His mighty outspread arms the whole mass of its hateful and deadly materials.

Here, then, you see the nature of that burden which none but the Son of God would have been sufficient to

endure. It was the result of that constitution of His being which made Him also, the true Son of man, the common heir of humanity. And we have an imperfect view of His sufferings, unless we feel that every burden by which our individual being is oppressed was truly borne in its intensity by Him. Be it sickness, pain, want, desertion—all these are but the materials which make up death, and He who drank down the whole cup of God's anger, who sustained it all in the garden and on the cross, was not unconscious surely of every ingredient of His draught of bitterness.

Thus was He made sin for us who knew no sin. Sorrow and sin are of necessity so joined, that where the last is, the first cannot be avoided; and He who took upon Himself our nature in its actual completeness, submitted to be the object of that wrath, which we had engendered. To partake indeed in our sin was impossible; though tempted in all points, He was without sin; but the heir of man's nature took it in such perfect wise, that He inherited all those fearful consequences, from which sin cannot be dissevered. For He was so perfectly man, that whatever belongs to manhood finds in Him its expression.

This may be seen in His freedom from those conditions which distinguish any peculiar nation. Our Lord vouchsafed to be born among the Jews. He had no earthly instruction save in their learning. And yet He rose above any low prejudices which had settled upon their nation. When the Samaritan woman sought Him, or the Roman centurion, they found a heart which was not limited by the narrow bounds of Jewish charity. And in like manner, His words in Holy Scripture are

so large and universal, that in all ages can all tribes of men find satisfaction for the necessities of the heart. Now even so was it with that awful burthen of grief, which the true heir of humanity was contented to support. He bore the common burthen of all men, and none will there be to the very end of time whose individual grief was not laid in that hour of agony on the Almighty victim.

How this might be, it is not given to us fully to explore. Two things there are, the perfection of His man's nature, and the greatness of His sympathy, which combined to produce it. For He was no common man, He did not share the usual birth of mortals: He had formed for Himself a Body through the agency of God the Holy Ghost, out of the materials of man's nature, and in the Virgin's womb became the second Adam, in whom manhood was set forth more perfectly than in Adam the first. Who can tell what mighty power of suffering might be enshrined in this perfect example of our nature; how far its common relation to all mankind might take in at once the consequence of all men's transgressions? And who, then, can estimate the unknown agonies of His passion and His death? Add to this that greatness of love, of which His nature was the basis, and which left not out one member of that common humanity, which He vouchsafed to partake. And then think, brethren, whether it was less than reason that heaven and earth should sympathize in their turn with the sufferings of such a victim. Well might the sun be darkened, the rocks be rent, when the one representative of the world's inhabitants was achieving this mighty victory in their behalf. When He bore

that load of grief to which our sins contributed—of which our sorrows were a part—which was swelled even by the carelessness of those many dwellers in this land, who think their farm or their merchandize better worth regarding than this great event.

Oh, brethren, it was not always so; there were those in former times, who were not less moved than the centurion by this spectacle. Of old time in the Christian Church, men passed these days in mourning and silence: they communed with their own hearts and were still. This day, especially, and to-morrow, when Our Lord rested in the grave, whole nations were wont to keep the Sabbath in holy dread and reverent admiration. They bethought them of their own interest in that great work, which the Son of Man was at this season effecting. They could not feast and rejoice, when the one common Head of their race was being lifted up upon the cross before their eyes. They rather chose to ponder His acts, to recount their blessed deeds by which He had effected their forgiveness, to count over His wounds, to tell the circumstances of His passion.

And surely it was a blessed custom: it spoke a genuine love to Him, the least particular of whose sorrows should not be indifferent to those whom He died to save. Therefore did men love to recount and dwell upon those single acts of suffering, which together made up that mighty expiation. They sat sorrowing themselves before their Master's cross. Brethren, let us do so likewise. Let us retire somewhat to-day from the busy world, and meditate on the passion of Our Great Deliverer. Thus let us learn greater hatred for those sins, which have covered the earth with such a flood of evils.

Oh, Lord Jesus,

By the virtue of Thy holy prayer, which Thou three times prayedst:

By Thy fearful dread of death,

By all that unknown labour and torment, which Thou sufferedst all that night,

By Thy great meekness, which did not refuse to be comforted by an angel;

In all times comfort us.

By Thy thirst and tasting of gall and vinegar, grant us to taste the sweetness of Thy spirit.

By that piteous cry, in the which Thou commendedst Thy soul to Thy Father,

Our souls be commended to Thee.

By the bitterness of Thy death, and the intolerable pain, wherewith Thy heart brake;

By the opening of Thy side with a spear, and the flowing out of Thy most precious blood,

Smite through, good Lord, my heart with the spear of Thy Godly love.

SERMON XIV.

EASTER.

I. Corinthians, xv. 22.

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

With these words does our Church welcome the return of Easter. Thus does she remind us that Christ is the new Adam of man's race. From Him it takes fresh growth: like our first father, He is its origin and root.

Let us view this truth in its source and its consequences. It is Christ our Lord by whom we are thus quickened. It is Christ, and not the Eternal Father, of whom we speak. True, He is one with the Father: the Eternal Word, by whom all things were created. In this character therefore is He the Maker of mankind. But that of which we now speak is something distinct from the work of creation. We refer to the work which He wrought through His human nature. Whatsoever He did, was wrought by One who was also God: this unity could never be divided; yet, inasmuch as in His one person there were ever present two natures, human and divine, He could work now through

one, and now through the other. And however the two natures were in their operations united, they were diverse in their effects. Go create unnumbered worlds, to exist before the days of ancient Abraham, to forgive sins, to heal sicknesses, to discern the secrets of the heart, these were the proper functions of that *Divine* nature, which belonged to the Son of God. Through its energy could He walk the sea: by its glory was He transfigured on the mountain. But to hunger and thirst, to sit weary by Jacob's well, to weep for kindred griefs, to be sorrowful under mental agonies, to sink under the cross, to suffer, faint, and die—these were the human properties of the Man of sorrows. Of these things Godhead in itself, so to say, is incapable. They belong to a lower nature. They pertain to those who have been moulded from the earth.

Now it is by virtue of this last nature that Our Lord has become a new head to man's race. Here is no question of creation: it is not the raising of a new stock out of the parent ground: the work is achieved *by* man and *for* man: for "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." No words can prove more clearly than those of the Apostle, that it was by the power of His *humanity* that our Master triumphed. He gave a new root to man's being, but it was through the virtue of that real manhood, whereby He lived among us.

And now let us consider, Secondly, what is meant by this humanity of Christ. We mean that He possesses the true nature of a man, save that His body is glorified. A *man* He still is, both in body and soul, but so penetrated are both by that Godhead, from

which they can never be separate, that both of them are raised to a height of surpassing glory. In the mount of Transfiguration this glory showed itself in somewhat of its proper character. His very disciples looked with terror at the brightness of that countenance, in which mercy and compassion had their usual seat. After His resurrection, likewise, did He walk forth with somewhat of that awe, with which His glorified manhood was properly invested. When He entered therefore into their closed assembly—when He stood on the tranquil beach, near which they had returned to their ancient occupations—when he ascended finally on high, they saw the outskirts of His glorified nature. This it was, which when the Apostle of the Gentiles beheld, as he journeyed over the sultry sands towards Damascus, he was blinded during three days by a radiance above the brightness of the sun. Before this, as we read in the book of Revelations, the beloved Apostle St. John fell down as though dead.

Such was the awful majesty of that human nature of Our Lord, which all His true servants will finally resemble. For "He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like unto His glorious body." And we know "that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Yet is this but the outside and shell of that inner glory, which dwells in the hidden temple of His soul. Even when He was upon earth God's spirit dwelt in Him without measure. Those perfections, which have since discovered themselves in His outward form, were truly enlightening the tabernacle of His inward spirit. And, therefore, when

the third day arrived, after He had offered Himself without spot to God, He woke up again, to take to Him His great power and reign. It was as when clouds have hidden the sun in the heavens: but let winds chase them away, and the lord of day looks forth in his strength. So did Christ rise with the earliest morning, as though the powers of heaven were impatient of that delay which bound Him to the dust. Then did He go forth, the true bridegroom out of His chamber, rejoicing as a giant to run His course. His body, too, had in one sense been sown in dishonour, but it was raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it was raised in power. The tomb could not hold: the stone could not restrain Him. He rose, but with our nature, to lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men.

And from this stock was to be the growth of a new race. The glorified nature of Our Lord was a root from which, as surely as from our first parent, was there to be a line transmitted. Let us see, then, what it is to die in Adam, that we may understand more clearly what it is to live in Christ. Now of Adam we know that his nature is truly in us. We are literally bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. He begat a son in his own image: that image was obviously inherent. For we are one with our parents: they with those who gave them birth: and thus are we one with our most distant ancestors. A virtual continuity exists between our bodies and those of our forefathers; and even our spirits seem in some respects to be a part of their being. For are there not habits of mind, which descend from a parent to his offspring; and whence

were these, save from some growth out of a common existence? And hence is derived that wide-spread taint, which we call original sin.

For not only are we born to that displeasure with which Almighty God regards those who have been withdrawn from His service, but we inherit likewise, that close-clinging corruption, which spreads through the nature of man, and weakens his efforts. And these it is, which involve that second death, which is the appointed portion of the finally impenitent. This death is quite different from that mere separation of soul and body which is appointed to all men. It means the loss of union with God—the loss of His likeness—the deprivation of that perfect endowment with which Adam was created—the forfeiture of that close intimacy with their Maker, which was maintained in our first parents by the eating of the Tree of Life, which stood in the midst of the Paradise of God. For since Almighty God is the true source of all excellence, from which flows everything perfect, as the rays of light issue from the sun, in whose presence is the fulness of joy, at whose right hand there are treasures for evermore—therefore to lose Him is to lose everything. It is to be cast forth upon the blank, cold, wretched world of nature, without comfort and without stay. And this is that second death, of which the incalculable horrors of hell are the last result, but of which separation from God is the real principle. And this fearful effect began at once with Adam's fall, except so far as by the promise of a Redeemer it was held in check, and there was set forth a promise that those who had died in the first Adam should live in the second.

And now, then, to consider what is this living in Christ Our Lord. It is that He is the true counterpart of our first parents. It is, that as truly as we hold of the one, so truly must we hold of the other.* That as our human nature, the body we now inhabit, and in some measure, even the soul we now possess, are in truth portions of that original being with which Adam was invested, so truly must the humanity of Christ penetrate and possess our whole selves. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How perfect, observe, is the contrast; as though there were not one point of difference between our dependence on the one and on the other. We must be affected by Our Lord's nature—we must be leavened by it—nay, as out of Adam, so must we be formed out of Him. "My little children," says St. Paul, "of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you."

Now here, surely, is a great mystery. Some have been used to think of it as though it aimed merely at a resemblance and conformity to Christ, as though it were but a strong way of enforcing the duties of faith and obedience. But is this the manner in which we are one with Adam? Is it only by teaching and imitation that we follow him? Are we not bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh? Our sin does not come merely by following his steps, but by sharing his corruption: it will not suffice, then, to imitate, unless we are *one* with Christ. What else than a real union can support the

* It is not designed to oppose the received opinion that man's Personality is in each case an immediate creation. See the remarks on Creatianism and Traducianism, in "The Doctrine of the Incarnation," p. 41, second edition.

weight of the Apostle's argument? As the first man was made a living soul, is not the second made a quickening spirit? Unless there be some actual influence which lives within us, whereby the effects of the fall are to be counteracted, even as its guilt is to be done away, what is there, like that which destroyed us in Adam, to quicken us in Christ?

It follows, then, that there must be some real and not figurative union with Our Lord, and also that this Union must depend on the truth of His humanity. For it is in His character of the Second Man that He is set over against the first. Therefore did He rise today in the perfection of man's nature, and not cast off those garments of mortality which He had worn for us.

And this may explain why Holy Scripture dwells so much, as it clearly does, on the benefits which men receive by that ordinance of Baptism which grafts them into the body of Christ. "For by one spirit," says St. Paul, "are we all baptized into one body." The reason is, that Baptism, by joining men to Christ, even as their first birth joined them to Adam, gives them share in that new nature, which has been gained for humanity by Christ. As our first birth made us one with Adam, what but our birth by Baptism makes us one with Christ? This does not interfere, observe, with the necessity of conversion for those who after Baptism have wandered from God, it does not imply that the heart must not be changed, or that Christ must not grow up in men by the gradual work of the regenerating spirit. But all these depend on our union with Christ: it lies at the bottom of them: they could not begin if we were not one with Him: by birth

natural we have naught but the old nature, which is corrupt as well as guilty: what ground were there to commence the work of grace, unless as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all were made alive?

But the present occasion leads us to think of another Sacrament: of those continual means whereby union with Christ is in grown years to be maintained and strengthened. This blessed ordinance is described by our Lord Himself, in words than which none can more clearly set forth that close union, by which we are united to Him. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Here again is a great mystery, akin to that before described, whereby we were first made members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones. I refer not to any carnal presence of Our Lord; to any *material* alteration of those outward elements which are appointed as the means of union with Him. Bread, and the cup of blessing St. Paul calls them, and bread and wine they doubtless are. Yet does Our Lord's humanity make them its medium of intercourse with the faithful and devout communicant, so that the worthy worshipper, truly and not in figure, receives his Maker. What says the Catechism? The inward part or thing signified in this holy feast is "the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." So that we must conclude that this union with Christ is real, and not a figure; that though mysterious, it is yet certain: though its manner unknown, yet its truth questionless. Do men ask its degree, or method, we

cannot answer: enough that as we are *one* with Adam, we must be *one* with Christ.

Remember, lastly, that awful and mysterious as is this gift, it is not more awful than necessary. An awful thing it is, doubtless, to be one with Christ; to bear about us His hallowed nature; to have so precious a gift for which to account. How pure should be our hearts, how lively our faith, how warm our devotion, since it is to the God-man, Christ Our Lord, that we are thus united? To receive Him, to have Him as our visitant—how unspeakable, yet how awful a blessing. "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof." How well becomes it that we should strive after a perfect conformity of mind and temper with Him our Head. And yet it is not less necessary than it is overwhelming. For unless we are found in Christ, what have we in this world or the next upon which to depend? What present comfort have we, what future hope, what expectation of a glorious resurrection, what guard against life's temptations, what stay in the hour of death? How could we lay our friends in the earth, as at any moment we may be called to do, did we not hope that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive? How could we ourselves lie down tranquilly in the dust, did we not believe that through Christ our Head there was an Easter Day for every one of us? In this feeling, then, let the devout and penitent draw near to the Lord's table, and earnestly believe in Him who gives Himself as the food of souls.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION MAN'S RECONCILIATION.

ROMANS iv. 25.

[Preached on Easter Day.]

"Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

IN these words is the event of to-day set forth as a cause of man's justification. Not only is Our Lord's death declared to have been a cause of man's forgiveness, but his acceptance with God is built also upon the fact of the resurrection. Christ "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." To explain this it will be necessary to consider, first, what is here meant by man's justification; and secondly, what was done towards that work by the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

I. Now what is here meant by man's justification? It plainly means that general change, whereby those who are under God's wrath are admitted to His favour. The original state of man was one, in which such a change was not required. For by creation man was at

one with Him who made him. God saw every thing which He had made, and behold it was very good. But when man's sin had separated him from God, he needed to be reconciled to his offended Maker. Hence the necessity of some mode of Atonement, or atonement, as it is commonly called, whereby God and man might be reunited. God was alienated from man, because He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; man was alienated from God, because he had lost that delight in God's laws, that relish for His service, that sense of His favour, which made up the image of the Creator, as it was originally reflected in man's heart. For thus it was that God had made man at first; like a clear mirror which gave back his maker's glory, and so set forth the brightness which it was formed to reflect. That which is needed, then, for the acceptance or salvation of mankind, is some method, whereby God may again be reconciled to man, and man to God. Such a method has God mercifully provided in that Son of His love, "by whom we have now received the atonement." And His work of mercy in time past is not more essential to man's acceptance, than His work of mercy in time to come: "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life."

The nature of this process may be seen in the well-known Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal's situation sets forth not unfitly the condition of mankind. When the Prodigal wakes up to a consciousness of his state, when he sees the vile condition to which he has reduced himself—that he is herding with un-

clean animals instead of enjoying the purity of his father's courts; that his food is the foul refuse allotted to beasts, in place of that to which he was heir by birth—what is all this but a description of man's feelings when he first discerns the misery of sin, and the unspeakable evil of losing his heavenly birthright? And what can he bring to his Father except the humility of a contrite spirit, which is conscious of its own absolute helplessness and incurable abasement? This feeling, then, and his subsequent acceptance, is all which the Parable sets forth. But suppose that besides this it had gone on to tell us that the Prodigal Son had incurred great debts: suppose that besides wasting his substance he had incurred heavy obligations: by whom could these debts be discharged; how could he get rid of what he owed, and thus be put into a condition for going freely to his Father? Now this is truly man's estate as regards God. He has a heavy debt of sin: he is burthened already by past transgressions, and for these it is that the Son of God's love made atonement on the bloody cross. God "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Whom God hath set forth . . . . for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

This is the first part of Christ's work, whereby God is reconciled to man. Thus is that load of guilt done away, which forbade our acceptance. Its removal is the first step to at-onement, since but for this saving sacrifice the whole generation of men had been for ever sunk into the pit of destruction. But when this price is paid, there is still something needed for man's accept-

ance. God may be reconciled to man, but how is man reconciled to God? The Prodigal's debts may be discharged; but what is there to bring him to his Father's feet in the humility of a profound repentance? Here is a work, which is as needful as aught else to man's acceptance; yet which none but the great Mediator between God and man is able to effect.

For the very curse of man in his present state is that his heart is alienated from God. Suppose I address myself to some of those many persons in this land, who neglect Church, despise God's Sacraments, forget His laws. I reason with them on their sin and folly; but their common answer in reality is, that they have no taste for such matters; they like better the employments and objects of the world; God and His kingdom, and His service, and Christ's acts of love, and the sanctifying influence of His renewing spirit, are a dull, unattractive thing, which find no answer in their hearts. What they need, then, is some power, which may quicken their inner man to more healthy action. Without this, they cannot be truly at one with God. There can be no real acceptance, because, though God is willing to be reconciled to them, by reason of that infinite ransom which has been provided for the redemption of all men through the Son of His love, yet are they on their part, unwilling to be reconciled to God. The ambassadors of Christ have still need, therefore, to come, praying men in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. And here it is, then, that the text takes us up, and shows how the salvation of mankind is brought about through the resurrection of the Son of God. To complete our acceptance—that men may be fully re-

conciled to their heavenly Father—that the work wrought upon the Cross in expiation, may be followed up by the work of renewal wrought in every living member of the Son of God, did our Lord not only die for our sins, but rose again for our justification.

II. Now what has this to do with Christ's resurrection? This was the second thing to be spoken of. You have seen that our acceptance depends on the reconciliation of God to men; and that this was effected through the sacrifice on the Cross. But it depends also on our reconciliation to God. How is this owing to Our Lord's resurrection? For the reason which has already been mentioned; because the difficulty which is here to be overcome, is a difficulty which lies in man himself, and must be cured, not by an outward act, which is wrought for you, but by an inward act, which must be wrought within you. Suppose a careless man to be asked why he is not reconciled to God. The answer cannot be that God is wanting in goodness; there is no deficiency in that infinite and unmeasurable love which gave Christ Our Lord to the Cross for our redemption, but man's evil heart refuses to yield to such influences—"they will not come unto Me, that they may have life." Men know that it is their interest to be saved—they cannot disguise from themselves that no happiness is to be found except in God's service—they know that at the last day they shall have to render account of all their actions—but though they know all this, they cannot feel it, they have little love to God—they take little pleasure in His service—they can no more give Him their hearts than they could

relish some food which their taste refused, or some person to whom they had a natural antipathy.

Alas! how often do we see this in the world. We may speak to men ever so kindly; we may show them that what we are anxious for is their own life. We may explain to them that the thing proposed is the true dignity and happiness of man's nature; and yet they turn away as though they were asked for some unreasonable favour, and despise Him in whom their life is, and whose are all their ways. You might as well speak to "the deaf adder, which stoppeth his ears, which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." Now whence this folly? Are the men we speak of without natural understanding? Have they not senses, reason, memory, forethought? Yes, in this world's affairs they show no failing. But they want a spiritual taste, a sense and feeling for things divine; the flesh rules in them, the spirit is dead in their bosoms; they want faith, and love, and godly fear.

And how are these things to be produced? Where are such excellences to be found? There is no market where you can buy them. They do not grow among the spices of the east; out of the mines of the west you cannot dig them. When Adam fell, they were forfeited once and for ever by man's nature. They retreated to their parent seat in the bosom of God. And thence only can they be obtained. These precious gifts came back in their completeness to that single child of Adam, whose birth was the signal of peace on earth, and goodwill to men. His cradle was adorned by those precious gifts which the wise men of the East presented; but more precious by far were those divine

graces of which He was Himself the possessor. For from that divine nature of the Son of God, which He could not abandon, there flowed into His man's nature such abundant treasures of purity and goodness, as rendered it the true life of the world. As God created the sun to rule in the sky, and made it the source of light to all men, so the man Christ Jesus was made the centre and source of all life to all generations of mankind.

Now the first effect of this was that holy walk and conduct, that divine teaching, that spotless example, which He displayed during His earthly pilgrimage. In Him alone of the children of Adam was the Father well pleased. Then came that death upon the cross, whereby He made atonement for all transgressions. But when this task was completed, was His work performed? Had He no more to do in the process of man's salvation? He had; for He still continued to be that source from which all grace must flow into the inner nature of His brethren. He had accomplished His service on the cross, He had finished the work which was given him to do. But might he cast off the raiment of His humanity, as if its purposes were altogether fulfilled? Then how could we have gained that inward grace, of which His mediation was the only channel? Since the very thing we need is that renewing influence by which our will is to be brought into union with the will of God, the continual presence of such a Divine helper is as necessary to us as that one sacrifice which He offered for us on the bloody tree.

Nothing shall now be said about Our Lord's continual intercession for us in heaven, though for this, too, His

resurrection was needed; what is before us is this, that our salvation depends as plainly on that influence upon our inner man, which Christ was raised from the dead to exercise, as it does on that satisfaction for our sins which He died to offer. Without the last our debt to God could not be discharged: without the first we could have no heart to profit by God's mercy. We need Christ within us, reconciling us to God, as much as Christ without us, by whom God is reconciled to us. This is a part of the truth of His mediation. His man's nature is the seed of grace to ours. Through it does the Holy Ghost, which dwelt in fulness in His sanctified manhood, extend its influence to our sinful being. Christ, as man, is the head of all the Christian Body: of that Body all devout Christians are members. Now, it is from the Head that all the body, by joints and bands, has nourishment ministered.

This is why all the ordinances of the Gospel are important: this is the especial reason why we invite you to Holy Sacraments. Their efficacy depends, not only on what you do in them, but much more on what is done by Christ; without sincerity on your part they are no doubt unprofitable, but their power comes from the presence of Christ Our Lord. Christian men are in a different case from those who lived before Christ, because they are not to ask for spiritual blessings directly from God the Father; they are to ask for every thing through Christ, who is man as well as God. This is our signal privilege: this is why we have access with confidence through the faith of Him. A new and living way has been opened to us through the Godman, Christ Jesus.

Now, to the opening of this way Our Lord's resurrection was plainly necessary. For this access depends on the truth of Our Lord's manhood. We have such confidence in approaching God, as follows from knowing that our nature has place in heaven. A real work continues to be truly done on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. And through Our Lord's manhood does God the Holy Ghost visit every member of the Church of God. What a mysterious visitant is this, what an awful presence: how greatly does it increase the guilt of those who despise the blessings of the Gospel. But to those who desire to be saved, who cherish the renewing influence of His heavenly presence, what greater joy than this, what truer comfort? To be assured that through Christ's real influence on all His members that heavenly gift is truly bestowed upon us, whereby we may be made one with God.

Our own feelings are at best but an uncertain stay. They may suffice in the days of health and vigour; while the sunshine of life cheers our path. But when the night comes on, when our pulse beats slowly and our spirits fail, we need something more enduring. And then comes in the assurance which is built upon Christ's real presence with all the true members of His spiritual body: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." To how many has Our Lord's merciful presence brought this true comfort? How many fainting hearts have been revived by this His real influence in the ordinances of His love. Thus has "His glorious resurrection" ministered as surely as His bloody death to the accept-

ance of mankind. Without it, the price might indeed have been paid for our pardon, but how could we have been living members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones? Whence could the whole body by joints and bands have nourishment ministered?

Therefore did the Lord of Glory reunite in His mercy that human soul, and that wounded body, whereby He had suffered in the garden and on the cross. From neither had His Godhead ever been separate; not when His soul visited the dwelling of the spirits departed, nor when pious hands laid His body in the earth. But on this day He reunited to one another these instruments of His passion and His death. But those things which He had borne in humiliation and agony, were raised to-day in glory and power. For now He took to Him His great power and reigned: He returned again to His ancient habitation: His lower nature was now exalted; the manhood received those accessions, which belonged to that, which had been taken into God. He had been delivered for our offences; to-day He was raised again for our justification.

SERMON XVI.

GOD THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE.

[Ascension-Day.]

St. John, xvi. 25.

"These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father."

The present season prescribes the subjects, which should exercise our thoughts. Those forty days are ended, in which the mysterious secrets of His coming kingdom were imparted to Our Lord's Apostles. This day did He ascend above all heavens, that He might bestow upon others that gift of grace, the first fruit whereof humanity had already received in His Incarnation. By this means was the understanding of man enlightened, and his will reformed. For these two make up the constitution of human beings, and though in the end probably united, yet to our imperfect capacity they present the two main divisions, under which we may consider the operations of the Most High. And of these two, the text leads us to consider more particularly the work of God in enlightening the understand-

ing. How was this part of our nature affected by the glorification of Christ? How came His resurrection and ascent into heaven to give man such enlarged knowledge, that the doubtful teaching of parables should yield to the clear vision of God? How was it connected with that gift of the Holy Ghost, which was declared of ancient days to be the spirit of *knowledge*, and of the fear of the Lord?

With a view of answering these questions, let us consider, first, what is the source of knowledge, and, secondly, what the medium through which we receive it. Now the source of all knowledge is plainly God. Its secret fount is the fathomless abyss of His unsearchable being. Such is the direct assurance of Scripture: such is the conclusion to which men are led by the intimations of nature. For every man possesses a certain gift of understanding. It shows itself in the sports of children, as well as in their studies. Grown men it guides in the pursuits of business; it makes them judges of truth and error. "Blessed are the peacemakers," or, "honesty is the best policy"—these are common sayings to which every heart assents, and which each man can confirm from the scanty stock of his own experience.

But wherein lies that common store of understanding, which displays itself in these consentient judgments of mankind? For we do not make this wisdom, but find it. We come to it, as to a light which enlightens every man's nature, and which none, whom God has endued with the common prerogatives of humanity, can reject. It is a part of a world of realities, into which each generation gradually finds its way: so soon as such

things are stated, men cannot choose but acquiesce in them: they remain as a beacon to other minds, by which they will be accepted as freely as by our own; we drink of the great ocean of truth, as every following race of men must drink of it.

Our wisdom, then, is no individual possession, but a specimen of the general properties of our nature. But in what example of our race shall we find this common gift in its perfection? We read, that "Solomon was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol." How came he to possess wisdom in such completeness? Why did the intellectual gifts of the race centre in him? For the cause of this we must ascend from him to his Maker. We must refer back to the giver of those common endowments, which have been bestowed on humanity at large. "*God* gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand which is on the sea-shore." "For there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, or who hath given understanding to the heart?" "It is God our Maker, who teacheth us more than the beasts of the field, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven." "For to a man that is good in His sight, God giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy." All these things come from the "Father of lights," and *Himself* is the fountain whence they spring. "For with Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light shall we see light."

And this wisdom which He has been pleased to impart, is bound by nature, as itself affirms, to His adora-

ble being. For "the Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old." "Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." It is this parent knowledge which, going forth from the Ancient of Days, enlightens the short-lived children of time, and kindles the spark of wisdom in their several bosoms. "In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men."

II. Let us come, then, to the second question, What is the medium through which this gift is partaken? Two ways there are, whereby we receive it. For two systems have severally been introduced by the old and new creation: the first dependent on the law of nature, the second on the law of grace. The first looks to that inward intercourse with the Creative Spirit of the Universe, which is maintained by every derived spirit, when it casts itself upon the principle of its higher nature, and communes in secret with the Parent of its thoughts. The second rests on that new mean of union, whereby heaven and earth have been joined together —the mediation of Christ. These two are the channels of intercourse between man and God—the inward searchings of the human spirit, or the supernatual apprehensiveness of faith—the imitation of the first man, or sacramental union with the Second—the following of Adam, or membership in Christ.

For the religion of nature is in itself no denial of God: rather it is God's voice witnessing to the higher origin of the beings whom He has created. It shows "the work of the law written in men's hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the

mean while accusing or else excusing one another." It formed a large part of human knowledge even while the original revelation was still fresh, and among those who were favoured by anticipations of the coming Redeemer. For even the Jew, though it was the ordained privilege of his nation that through its public ritual the ladder was let down beforehand, whereby the Son of Man has since bridged over the gulf between earth and heaven; —even he was taught by his weekly Sabbath to look chiefly to that first creation, wherein Jehovah revealed Himself as "God of the spirits of all flesh." Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment . . . . but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight."

And if this was the feeling of the Israelite, how much more of those heathen nations, whose best prayer to the mercy of their unknown Creator was, "despise not the works of Thine own hands." Yet was this the portion of the great mass of the world's inhabitants, till four thousand years had told their course. Their sole intercourse with God was through that law of creation, whereby all spirits are bound to the Parent Spirit, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." Thus only could they "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." And how faltering were the footsteps with which men sought the source of all good. "They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish

heart was darkened." "The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

Such was man's condition till the fullness of time brought in those events of which this holy season reminds us. For then did the mediation of the God-man provide a new mean of intercourse between earth and heaven; the mighty void was bridged over, and the law of grace came in to help the law of nature. And how was this effected? What was that reversal of man's separation from God, which for more than eighteen centuries has been yearly commemorated? Because man could not attain to his Creator, the Creator mercifully condescended to man's nature. In the Person of the Eternal Son, the co-equal participator of Godhead, did God mercifully take our nature, and thus consecrate it a temple for Himself.

Thus did spiritual power enter into manhood, and enrich it with divine endowments of holiness and knowledge. As the Old Testament had declared man's duty to his Creator, so did the New reveal that new law of grace, whereby only he could perform it. "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In the Gospels and Epistles are those wonderful steps set forth, whereby this new means of intercourse is provided. When grace is spoken of in the Gospels, it refers in every instance to that New Head of man's race, in whom the blessings of the new covenant were first centred, that afterwards they might be distributed from Him to His brethren. The Gospels contain no statement that any specific gift of grace was bestowed by God upon mankind at large, beyond those dealings of divine love, which were either due to the

general mercy of the Creator, or were an anticipation of the great event of this season; because till that work was completed, which the Gospels record, the great gift of grace could not be enjoyed. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The only four occasions, therefore, in which grace is spoken of by the Evangelists, refer to those personal endowments, with which the New Head of man's race was enriched during the period of His earthly pilgrimage. These gifts He doubtless received in their fullness, by that wondrous act whereby the manhood was taken into God. But the whole course of His earthly being was a perpetual exaltation of His human through its oneness with His divine nature. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him."

Now this it is which the Gospels set forth. They describe the consecration of that hallowed spring of purity and wisdom, which was speedily to flow forth for the healing of the nations. They trace to their head those divine waters of the river of life, which issued out from the Sanctuary. And what is the peculiar lesson of the Acts and the Epistles? The spreading forth of that gift of grace, whereby Sacraments derive their efficacy—by which the Universal Church everywhere and in every age is replenished. "These waters go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." For when Christ Our Lord "ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." That same gift of grace which He had received because He was human, He now bestowed because He was divine·

Therefore was peace extended like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. When Our crucified Lord had entered into His glory, when He had come again by that higher medium of an unseen presence, which He maintains through the communion of the Holy Ghost, He bestowed that gift upon His brethren by the birth of the Spirit, which by personal oneness with Godhead had been the natural portion of His own sinless flesh. For "of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Thus was the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the fellowship of the Spirit, bestowed on the collective Church. Is the God-man by propriety of nature truly one with the Father? yet are all His brethren actually one with Him by adoption and grace. No sooner, therefore, was the Head of mankind "by the right hand of God exalted," and had "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," than we read respecting the members of His mystic body, that "great grace was upon them all."

And thus is it, therefore, that divine *knowledge* is communicated through the Mediator to the children of men. As the mysteries of His Father's kingdom lay open to Him by natural oneness, so does He impart them by supernatural grace to His servants. For "no man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." That which belonged to Him by the intuition of nature has been communicated to us by the inspiration of grace. No more, therefore, did He declare to His disciples in the text, "shall I speak unto you in parables, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." Hitherto His instruction had been veiled in earthly

language: He had employed the proverbs of speech, and the parables of men. For what is all earthly language but a condescension to the weakness of embodied spirits, who are restricted to the poverty of external symbols of intercourse, and cannot come into contact with the naked truth of realities themselves? "For we know in part, and we prophecy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Yet some foretaste and prelibation of this more perfect gift of an heavenly vision was promised even in this lower world, to those whose appointed portion was to "have the mind of Christ." For how could the mysteries of God's kingdom be altogether unknown to those, whom He would "show plainly of the Father?" Such thoughts must in their nature transcend anything which sentences could express, or words could utter, "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." In this manner, then, is that intercourse with God, which was lost by Adam's sin, restored by Christ's obedience; and the law of grace takes place of the law of nature. To be a member by birth of the family of man, to possess the mysterious gift of a spiritual being, is to have the wonderful power of holding intercourse by thought with the Father of all being, whose presence is perpetually with His whole creation; but to be reborn by Baptism into the Church of Christ, to be made a spiritual member of our Incarnate Head—this is to have "a new and living way consecrated for us

through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," and to be admitted by Mediation to fellowship in that "grace and truth," which by nature had their dwelling in Him. Such is that blessed means of union with the source of all wisdom, which was opened to us at this season by the exaltation of the Son of Man.

And how, then, can we best extend that gift of knowledge, which is plainly the most valuable possession of mankind? The question is sometimes asked, whether religious or secular knowledge is most important; which is most truly useful to the children of men. There is a means, indeed, of rendering even secular knowledge subservient to a hallowed end, by viewing it as a manifestation of God's ways in the government of His creatures. But look at it in itself, detached from those higher relations by which it may be ennobled, and can we doubt its inferiority to those exalted thoughts, which lead us upward to the throne of God? Would you elevate the character of a nation, would you free a whole generation from the sordid and debasing chains of appetite, you must not build on those principles of a corrupted humanity, whereby alone nature can ascend to God—a better road is opened, a nobler message is proclaimed; "that which we have heard and seen declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

And as these considerations show that Christian training is what alone does justice to the capacities of man, so does it suggest the nature of that training, which alone can properly be called Christian. For Christianity is the doctrine of grace. It is a substitu-

tion of the system of Mediation for the system of nature. It is built upon the truth that all heavenly gifts were first received by the manhood of the Church's Incarnate Head, that from Him they might flow forth into all its members. Thus are divine blessings received by His servants through Sacramental grace, because they pertained to Him by oneness of nature. And hence we see how close is the union between a Christian education, and all those means of grace, whereby we maintain our union with the Lord's Mystic Body. For what are prayers and Sacraments but "the joints and bands" by which the whole body of the Church "has nourishment ministered."

Is it alledged, then, that the Church's system of education interferes with the full development of the intellectual faculties of men, that daily devotions, and a lengthened service, and full attention to the doctrinal teaching of our Holy Mother, abstract too much of that time which is required for the increasing demands of a cultivated age; we answer that too great prominence *cannot* be given to the highest of all sources of knowledge, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding." And further, to seek this gift in devotion as well as study, in holy ordinances as well as private thought, is the very course to which those great events conduct, of which this season reminds us. For this is that road of intercourse with God, which our one Mediator has provided. What can be more necessary, then, than those Gospel ordinances, whereby we drink of that well of grace, which has been opened for us in His Incarnate Nature? How can knowledge flow forth to us

from the native source of unapproachable Godhead, save through union with Him, in whom alone the streams descend which water the earth?

Let no man, therefore, who professes to value the gifts of grace, neglect those Sacraments whereby the members of Christ are engrafted into His Body. Let none think those hours wasted, which hear the hymn of praise or prayer for pardon resound within the Church's consecrated walls. For shall we go back from Mediation to nature: having begun in the spirit, shall we be made perfect by the flesh? Were we devoted in baptism to Christ, that to the old Adam and to the principles of our carnal being, we may owe the attainments of our after-life? Shall we be always satisfied with the doubtful parables of this imperfect state, and not hold onward to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? It was well in Heathen times to grope about by the uncertain light of natural reason, while as yet the Day-spring had not risen on the benighted world. But alas for those who would still trust to the strivings of their individual faith, now that the highway of grace has been opened to the nations. For there is no truth save in God, nor any approach to God except in Christ; nor any union with Christ, except through the fellowship of the Gospel.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST THE CHANNEL OF GRACE.

[Whitsunday.]

St. John i. 16.

"Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

The gift of God's grace is ever set forth as the great blessing of the Gospel. By natural Providence does the Father of all sustain us: we look to His watchful care for our protection; for the advantages of food and raiment we are indebted to His bounty. But, when leaving the necessities of our bodies, we think of the necessities of our souls; when we rise above the order of nature to that world of unseen realities, which is ever around us; the grand characteristic of our being is the possession of grace. Now what is this grace which God bestows, and what is the channel through which it is dispensed? These are the two questions, which shall be proposed to you to-day.

In its literal sense grace means favour. And since favour is, or ought to be, the result of desert, therefore in things earthly the term grace is rather applied to those whose character conciliates favour, than to those who entertain it. Hence does grace of body imply those

external qualities which win favour. This is its common sense in the languages of classical antiquity. In Holy Scripture however the word is not limited to the graces of the body, but implies all those qualities which conciliate esteem. It was not only because he was well favoured, but by virtue of Joseph's whole character, that he found grace in the sight of his master the Egyptian. The favour or grace of man, then, depends not so much on the party which entertains, as on the party which deserves it: its source lies in the excellence of the graceful object, more than in the original stock of kindness, of which the beholder may be possessed. For though man be a free agent, so that he can choose which impulses it is his will to follow, yet they must be impulses which make part of his nature, and his nature is to favour those whose character calls forth his love. For man has no power of creating what is foreign to himself: he cannot go out of himself and render his neighbours other than they are: and therefore he cannot feel favour except towards those who either are, or are supposed to be, fit objects of his preference.

But with God it is wholly different. The favour of God has not its source in the excellence of the finite beings who attract, but in the boundless excellence of the Infinite Being who possesses it. For "He is good and kind to the unthankful and to the evil." Therefore only is divine grace exhaustless, because it is sovereign as the Majesty, and boundless as the Infinity of God. It has its fountain in those unsearchable stores of the divine love, which were the original cause of all existence. When this love moved forth from the inscrutable repose of its eternal existence, its will was to

call into being heaven and earth. To this act nothing outward contributed by any external persuasion: "the Lord hath made all things for Himself:" God's Will, like His Word, was the creative cause of all things. "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

And so, too, when the object was to renew the souls whom He had made, it was still God's love, which was the only beginning of their recovery. For "God commended His love to us, in that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Of His own will begat He us by the Word of Life." So that God's grace is wholly other than the grace of man: it has its root in His own nature, it is a producing cause of goodness in those whom His mercy favours. Its fountain is that unfathomable ocean of love, which is stored up in His Infinite Being. Thence it issues to bring into existence the objects which it desires. "In all ages entering into holy souls, it maketh them to be sons of God and prophets." It comes forth like the sun's light for the renewal of the world. Thus *creative* is that love of God which is the principle of grace. It is Himself in action, going forth through that most precious attribute of His nature, to effect the work which it is His pleasure to perform. For "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Such then is the nature of grace—God Himself working through His highest Attribute—the love of God in action.

But, secondly, what is the channel through which it is bestowed upon mankind? How do we receive the gifts of grace? We receive them only through the mediation of Christ. "There is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved." And when

we speak of Christ, we speak not merely of the Second Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, but of Him who was truly "born of the virgin, of her substance;"—of that "One Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." In Him alone, and through Him, does the creative love of God find its way to mortals. Those who are "without Christ," are also "without God in the world." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And thus has it been God's will to adopt the same rule in the kingdom of Grace, which He had before adopted in the kingdom of the nature. For are not all of us children of that first man, who was created of the dust? Have not life, and reason, and sense, flowed into us in some unknown and wonderful manner, through our inheritance of that nature, of which he was the first possessor? It might have been God's pleasure to create every man by a separate exercise of His power; to make each man's being wholly irrespective of the being of his brethren. But such has not been His will. In Adam were all those qualities of mind and body gathered together, which from him have descended to his progeny. And therefore has that corruption, which in him entered into our race, extended itself to all men.

Now the selfsame law which was adopted in respect to the first head of our race, has been exerted in respect of the Second. For "the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." And, therefore, as corruption found its way into us through the one, so does grace through the other. We are men only by inheriting the nature of the first, we are renewed men only by inheriting the grace of the Second. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall

all be made alive." This is that law of mediation, whereby the gift of God's grace—the exercise, that is, of His creative love—is bestowed upon His creatures.

That such is the course of God's grace is plainly set forth in Scripture. We read little of its influence in the Old Testament: what we read is connected commonly with those typical rites of Jewish Service, which prepared the way for the Son of Man. But what do we find respecting it in the Gospels? Even here the notices of its effect are not frequent, and they have no reference to any gift bestowed by Almighty God upon His creatures in general. They relate in every case to that mysterious process, whereby Our Lord's Manhood was consecrated to be the new Head to His brethren. All that is said of grace in the Gospels is, that it was poured, as into a fountain, into the manhood of the Son of God, that from Him it might afterwards be distributed to His members. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon Him." "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

In this manner was Our Lord prepared to be, according to His Manhood, "the first-born of every creature; the beginning of the creation of God." This rendered Him the Second Adam; from whom, as from a fresh origin, should flow into humanity a higher life. For "of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Whatever influence is exercised by the divine love upon man—the presence of that life-giving principle of grace, which is as mighty for the renewal of the soul, as was once the creative Word for the production of the body—all comes through spiritual union with that new Head

of our race, by whom the transmitted sin of our first parents is corrected. The various steps through which this wonderful work was accomplished, are set before us in the Acts and in the Epistles. As the Gospels describe to us the consecration of Our Lord's humanity, so do the following parts of Scripture show how it became the channel of grace. St. John has related to us Our Lord's declaration that He had sanctified His man's nature for the sake of His brethren. St. Matthew has informed us of the honour which awaited it after His resurrection: "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." But the further course which was to be chosen by the divine grace is recorded in the Acts and the Epistles: its transmission, namely, from the ascended Son of Man to His earthly kindred. "When he ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

Thus did the Great Heir of humanity obtain spiritual wealth for His younger brethren. This was the very office which He undertook to discharge, through that mission of the Holy Ghost, of which His own exaltation was the necessary condition. No sooner was the New Head of man's race made perfect, than the gift of grace flowed forth from Him into "the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Immediately, therefore, do we hear respecting the Christian community (that which before we never read of), "great grace was upon them all." This was brought to pass through the agency of the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the blessed Trinity, through whom the God-man fulfilled His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." This mission and

influence of the Holy Ghost must not be looked at as something independent of the Mediation of Christ; on the contrary, the coming of the Holy Ghost was the immediate result of Christ's Mediation, and was specially designed to give it efficacy.

For what means that promise of the Son of Man, to which the Apostles perpetually refer, that He would be with them always to the end of the world? What is it to be "in Christ," to "be found in Him," to be "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones?" These oft repeated expressions cannot be a mere empty figure; such great words cannot mean nothing. Why is our relation to Christ set against our relation to Adam, unless as we are truly akin to the one, so are we also really associated to the other? What means the death of the flesh, and the resurrection of our inner nature, and the being "risen with Christ," and the present "quickening of our mortal bodies," save that "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness?" All these passages testify to this great truth, that there exists an order of grace, as well as an order of nature, and that every Christian has part in the one, as every man has part in the other.

The one of these, the order of nature, began when the first man was created of the dust of the ground; but the other began when the manhood was taken into God, by the miraculous conception of the second Adam. The one is perpetuated as often as by natural birth new individuals are added to the family of man; but the order of grace is perpetuated as often as members are added to the Body of Christ by the new birth of

Baptism. For "as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ." The one, then, is heavenly, spiritual, unseen; the other depends on that material extension of the race of man, which is earthly in its nature and its ends. The one is that fleshly nature of the old man, which we inherit from Adam; the other is that spiritual nature of the new man, which results from union with Christ. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye do not do the things that ye would."

Now, since these two principles, like Rebecca's offspring, are struggling in the soul and body of every Christian, the one must need to be nourished and strengthened as well as the other. As our life is sustained according to the order of nature by those simple elements which our corrupt will so constantly perverts; so do we need the quickening influence of that heavenly food, which may quicken our spirits according to the order of grace. And what is this spiritual food? Our Lord tells us in that sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, wherein He spoke prophetically of the Holy Eucharist. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you; for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." "This is the bread that came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." Look at it, indeed, according to the order of nature, and Our Lord's body is in heaven, where it will keep its place till He comes to judge all men at the day of doom. But look at it according to the order of grace, and His Manhood is truly present, through the power of the Holy Ghost, as the sustaining

principle of ours. "For My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." So that the order of grace is a real interference of the Second Adam in the life of man, through that actual communication of Himself, which He bestows in holy ordinances. In His person did grace have its fountain, when by true oneness with Godhead, its uncontaminated purity was present in perfection here below. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And from the same source does the text teach us that it perpetually issues forth into all following generations of mankind: for "of His fulness have *all we* received, and grace for grace."

And thus may be seen, brethren, how the whole blessed Trinity takes part in the recovery of mankind. For from the Father's love did that grace originate, which was the beginning of man's salvation. And it was the infinite love of God the Son, whereby He was prompted to sanctify our nature by taking it into Himself. And it was the love of God the Holy Ghost, which moved this third Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity to undertake that office of joining the members of Christ to their Head, which gives such peculiar efficacy to the Sacraments of His grace. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. And so, too, in the Holy Communion, "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

And this action of the three Persons in the Holy and Undivided Trinity, is perpetually set before us in the Doxology or Blessing of the Christian Church. "May there be with you," says the Apostle, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the com-

munion of the Holy Ghost." The love of God—the ultimate and original principle of the world's recovery. The communion or fellowship of the Holy Ghost—this is that hallowed influence, which diffuses itself through the Church of God, animating it as the soul does the body, and thus quickening into life the element, which it combines. But "the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ" —because in Him is the beginning of that new creation, which from Him is imparted to His brethren in the world. He is the Head from whom all the body by joints and bands, has nourishment ministered. For it is the Son alone who became Incarnate, and not the Father or the Holy Ghost. So that out of Him grows that course of grace, which is opposed to the course of nature; that higher life which is opposed to the inheritance of the first Adam. For "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

In this great work does the whole Blessed Trinity co-operate—the Father by His original will, the Holy Ghost as the acting principle, both when the Son took our nature by Incarnation, and when we are impregnated with His by regeneration and grace. For "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit, that dwelleth in you." But that into which we are actually engrafted, that whereof it may be truly said, according to the course of grace, we are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, is that Second Person in the undivided Trinity, who has vouchsafed to become the New Head of man's race. Therefore do we read ever of the grace of Christ; never of the grace of the Spirit.

For this gift of grace is a real gift, whereby men through supernatural influence receive their Maker. The work of mediation is the true entrance into this lower world, of that higher being, whereby heaven and earth are enjoined together. It is the reality of that Jacob's ladder, which in dim vision the Patriarch beheld. When this truth was made known to the later watchers at Bethlehem, it was no longer as a vision of the night, but as an actual fact, which changed the condition of mankind. For thus does grace find its way from heaven to earth; and those who were by nature the children of the first, became by new birth members of the Second Adam.

And now let us mark in conclusion one practical consequence of this wondrous mystery. Christ is truly present in His servants. They live, yet not they, but Christ liveth in them. The whole Church of the redeemed is filled with that power of the Holy Ghost, which once had its habitation in our Master's earthly frame. Therefore should it all be like one holy temple, consecrated by the presence of that hallowed being, whose dwelling is among the children of clay. Therefore should every individual heart, each single body, be purified like that hallowed humanity of the Son of God, whereof every Christian is a member. Therefore should our thoughts, works, and actions, be cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. For "as He is so are we in this world." "Beloved now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is."

SERMON XVIII.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

II. Corinthians, iv. 5.

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

These words are a sort of epitome of the Gospel. To preach Christ the Lord, to set Him forth as the object of men's affections, and cause of their salvation, as the channel through whom all gifts are bestowed by God on man, and through whom all prayers ascend from man to the Almighty—this is its sum and substance. Let us endeavour to realize, in the first place, what the truth is which is here delivered; and secondly, let us consider how it is permitted to men to contribute by their ministry or service to so great a blessing.

Now what is it to preach Christ? It is to set Him forth as the means of man's reconciliation with God, as the channel of renewed intercourse between man and his maker, as the corrector of the fall, the conqueror of Satan, the Second Adam of redeemed Humanity, through whom those gifts of grace and glory, which were lost by our first parent, have been abundantly replaced. Why was such a restoration needed? Restoration implies that something has been lost. And the purpose

for which man was created was in truth destroyed by that sin, which not only lost us Paradise, but lost that intercourse with God, in which lies the happiness of heaven itself. For the basis of all religion lies in the conviction that in God alone is the original fountain of purity and happiness. The law of man's creation was that he should be the mean whereby these perfections should be exhibited upon earth. Therefore was he created in God's image, that the excellencies of his Maker might be reflected in his earthly clay. Of this privilege did sin deprive him. The perfect image of God was broken and defaced. Thereby was that intercourse lost, by which the Almighty might have been exhibited among His creatures. His best and last work, that which was meant to represent and set Him forth below, to rule over the inferior creation as His delegate, which is still called in Scripture "the creature," because His Maker's type and example among material beings, was by sin degraded to the level of the beasts.

Now by what means could this evil be remedied? How could men be restored to their lost estate? How could that approach to God be given back, of which sin had robbed them? They had no power of themselves to fly to God, because communion with God was the very gift which they had forfeited. Therefore did God come mercifully to *them;* holiness and wisdom did not disdain to care for sin and weakness. In the Person of the co-equal Son, the Second of the Blessed and consubstantial Three, did the Godhead conjoin itself to man's nature, never to be divided.

This is "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." "God was in Christ reconciling to Himself

the world." In His Person were all those gifts restored to humanity, which by the fall had been lost. As an ancient writer expresses it, "God made man in His own image, in that same image in which man was afterwards made God." Whereas man's race had wholly lost its original birthright, there was given back to it in the Person of the Godman, a still larger measure of those blessings which made up its primal inheritance. Those divine graces which have their dwelling in the bosom of God—love, purity, light, knowledge—all these which had been so long strangers to the world, were in Him perfectly exhibited. Of these endowments the first consequence was that sacrifice of Himself for man's race, whereby He made peace for His brethren. He their Head, presented the only perfect offering which could ever be presented on behalf of man, when he offered Himself as a "ransom instead of many." And thence comes that office of perpetual intercession, whereby He pleads for those, in whose stead He suffered, and through the virtue of His effectual service gives efficacy to their prayers.

All this the Gospel sets forth as the means of union between God and man. The object of religion being to reconcile the creature to the Creator, to restore the likeness of God which had been lost, the Gospel proclaimed that this work could not be effected by man's own efforts, but through union with this Divine Head, who had thus as Mediator united Himself to our race. Herein the Gospel stood alone. The schools of ancient philosophy taught men that they were to save themselves. By self-denial, self-resolution, effort, understanding, contemplation—they were to build up a stair which should lead them from earth to heaven. What said the Gospel?

"God" is "manifest in the flesh." God Himself has come down among men. In the Person of the Word, God is man, and man God. Through this pure and perfect member of man's family must all His imperfect and impure brethren be exalted. They must be found in Him, who is their peace. He is the door, the way, the truth, and the life. He is the one Mediator, or middle term, between God and man. His man's nature is the channel of all heavenly gifts. "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." We cannot speak too lowly of man's nature, looked at in itself: we cannot speak too highly of man's nature, as restored in that Captain of our Salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings.

And these blessings it was the merciful purpose of the one Mediator to bestow upon His brethren. For "of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace." Those heavenly graces which have their well-head and fountain in His humanity, are ever since distributed as the life-giving principle of spiritual illumination among all His brethren. This was the very purpose of His earthly course; "for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." His goodness felt abridged of its full triumph, if that perfection, with which in His sacred Person Humanity was enriched, was not in its measure communicated to His human kindred. Thus hath "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in our hearts," thus have we "the mind of Christ," thus are we "made partakers of the Divine image, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust."

Here then is the main truth of the Gospel—the renewal of fallen nature in that Divine Man, from whom the gifts of pardon and grace are transmitted to His brethren. But how, secondly, does man's ministry conduce to this great work. "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." We possess, *i. e.*, no secret whereby either we or you can of ourselves be re-united to God: in Christ only was this ancient birthright of man's race reclaimed, either for the one or the other. But what need of our service in this hallowed work? The thing required is, that Adam's children may be joined to that new man Jesus Christ, in whom nature was restored: how is this work performed, and how does man's ministry conduce to it? Now to effect this work is the whole object and meaning of the Christian ministry, which was originally ordained, and is still continued for no other purpose, than that through its instrumentality those who are partakers by birth of the fallen nature of the first Adam, may, by regeneration and grace, be made partakers of the renewed nature of the Second. For it pleased Him who appointed natural birth to be the means of transmitting that life which we have from our earthly parent, to appoint the system of Church offices, *i. e.*, common worship and Sacraments, as the means whereby we might partake the renewed nature of our Heavenly Head, the Man Christ Jesus.

There are persons who suppose that they can be joined to God by the mere exercise of their thoughts. We sit at home, they say, we let our minds travel towards God, we feel no particular need of public

worship or Church ordinances, we use them at times, but we can do as well without them, and therefore we do not require the service of Christian ministers, inasmuch as we can hold intercourse with God by ourselves. God is a Spirit, and this is the natural way in which a spiritual substance, like our own souls, should hold communion with Him. Yes, brethren, this *is* the natural way in which man may approach his Maker, and if we could be saved by *nature*, this were all, doubtless, which could be required. But then by the course of nature there shall no flesh be saved. Adam *might* have been, because his nature was pure; we *cannot* be, because our nature is polluted. Our first parent might hold communion with his Maker by that direct intercourse which was provided by his inward thoughts. But his fallen descendants cannot regain this privilege without such real union with their new Head, as the ordinances of grace have been appointed to supply. The root of all holy contemplation, the ground of intercourse with God, is that living communion with the Second Adam, whereby the gifts, which in His sacred Person He bestowed upon humanity at large, may become their individual portion.

Do men think little, then, of the system of sacraments? Do they suppose that they can come to Christ as well by themselves? They forget that the efficacy of these ordinances depends not only on the earnestness with which men approach God, but on the reality of those gifts which Christ bestows upon His brethren. For what gives moment to these ordinances is, that they are the appointed means whereby the Head of man's race joins Himself to His brethren. They are the

"joints and bands," whereby the whole body has nourishment ministered. This is a divine and supernatural work: supernatural, therefore, and divine must be the means through which it is effected. And these means are declared in the express words of Scripture to be the Sacraments of grace. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." And again, "we being many are one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." And again, Our Lord says in St. John's Gospel, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." He spoke not of course of natural efficacy, or a carnal banquet, but of that spiritual participation of His flesh and blood, which is bestowed on those who "discern the Lord's body." It is because He is the only channel through whom fallen man can commune with the Father, that those Sacramental ordinances whereby we are "found in Him" are essential to our welfare.

And hence is the ministry of men required. Instruction might be had from books or private study; but the circumstance which renders the ministry of men indispensable is the necessity of that union with the body of Christ, whereby we participate in the new nature which He has bestowed upon humanity. "For He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." By this means are the children of the first Adam rescued from the debasement of the fall, and grafted one after another into the body of the Second. This is the work of God's

spirit, using as His instrument the hands of men. For "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body."

Does it seem strange that so momentous a work as man's spiritual recovery should be brought about through means so simple as the washing of water, or the consecrated elements of bread and wine? I answer, that our birth into the new man is throughout strange and supernatural; it is not that natural intercourse which our first parent possessed with the author of his being. What wonder, then, that the means by which it is effected should be strange and mysterious? How marvellous is that earthly derivation which connects us with Adam: how singular is it that all his descendants should be the perpetual reproduction of his fallen being. We see this, and therefore believe it. And shall we be surprised if the law of our union with the second Adam is equally mysterious? "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

One difference there is, however, between the law of natural descent, and the law of spiritual union, between the bond which attaches us to the first man, and that which connects us with the second, namely, that the last is not like the first, independent of our will. Our union with Adam is natural, as we did not bring it about, so we cannot end it: our union with Christ is supernatural, but it is in our power to break it off by unbelief or by sin. Its maintenance depends upon those acts of Christ, whereby He joins Himself to us in Sacraments; but it depends also upon our faith and love. Therefore should all Christian men co-operate in that work, for which the Christian ministry was ordained. For by all acts of common worship do men

maintain their part in that body of Christ, to which in Sacraments they are specially admitted.

But though this work requires the participation of the individuals who would profit by it, yet is it a *common* work and needs the intervention of those who have *common* authority. For men cannot apply Christ's merits to themselves by their private will, unless He first applies His merits to them from without by His public ministry. Else would the first movement towards their recovery be internal and spontaneous, as the Pelagians teach, instead of resting on that efficacy of the New Head of our race, which implies the existence of a Church, and the influence of an external Saviour. Hence the need of Sacramental rites, and of the perpetual sacrifice, and of a ministry of reconciliation, and of an earthly absolution. All these depend upon the truth that the Intercession of the one great High Priest is a *reality* which we cannot appropriate to ourselves by the mere exercise of our thoughts, but which He must bestow upon us through some actual channel of intervention. Let us have but a deep sense of the greatness of that loss which was entailed upon us by the fall, of the immensity of that interval which separates us from God, and of the absolute necessity of *His* gracious interference, through whom only we are re-united to our offended Creator, and we shall be in no danger of supposing that we can dispense with those means whereby He joins us to Himself. The value of the Christian ministry must stand or fall according as men value the mediation of Christ. To deem highly of the means of grace is to attach great weight to the presence and efficacy of the New Head of humanity.

And this is the true mode of holding communion with the unseen world; it is the real imparting of God's nature, the antidote to the fall, the "feast of fat things well refined," to which prophets and kings looked forth with rapturous expectation.

SERMON XIX.

THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM.

[Preached before the University of Oxford, March 10th, 1850.]

I. St. John, iv. 2, 3.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come."

Here is a statement brought before us of the utmost moment—how we are to discriminate between God's Spirit and that which is opposed to Him, between Christ and Anti-Christ, between truth and error. Its importance is enhanced by its place, amidst the latest portions of Scripture; and by the earnestness with which the warning is repeated by the holy Apostle. He returns to it in the seventh verse of his second Epistle: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Anti-Christ."

Now though this passage found its immediate fulfilment in the heresies of the early age, yet those who appreciate the depth of Holy Scripture will not suppose

that its meaning was thereby exhausted. For the first heresies by which the Gospel was opposed, did but indicate what was the natural course of error; and thus show in what manner human passion must always come into collision with Divine truth. The same phenomena must perpetually recur, so long as man's nature is corrupt, and God's counsels are unalterable. So that the general principle which is here laid down will be found applicable in every age. For the Apostle enounces it as an universal truth, that the main opposition to the Gospel, the principle which deserves to be called Anti-Christian, that which is the Anti-Christ itself, is to be found here—in the denial that the work effected by the Son of God has been effected through His taking our flesh. Let us consider then, first, what is the exact nature of that truth, which the Apostle declares to be essential—"every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." This will lead us to inquire, secondly, what that error is by which it is contradicted. And thus we shall be able, in conclusion, to appreciate the nature and extent of their opposition.

Now the doctrine insisted upon by the Apostle, may be said in one word, to be that of *Mediation*. He is not speaking to persons who were ignorant that such a being had existed as Our Lord Jesus Christ, or that through His instrumentality advantages had been bestowed upon men. But he dwells on the point that it was through the taking our flesh that these benefits were conferred by the Son of God. They resulted, that is, from the fact that He became truly a middle person between us and the Father. For on this rests not only

the sacrifice offered upon the cross, but that whole work of Atonement, whereby man is reconciled to God. When mankind fell, in their first father Adam, no mean was left for their recovery save through their Second Head, Jesus Christ. In the fulness of time there came forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, wherein the ancient purity of man's being was again exhibited. Into this new heir and representative of manhood did the Godhead pour all the divine gifts, which can have been originally designed to be the portion of the human family. In Him were all graces concentrated, which could render the creature acceptable in the eyes of the Creator. Thus was Christ fitted not only to be the one sacrifice for sin—the only perfect offering which should ever be presented to the Father, but likewise to be the sole Mediator, the only channel, through whom divine gifts should be bestowed upon men. They came from God to Him by unity of nature, they come from Him to His brethren by sanctification and grace. Thus did Our Lord render His own humanity the true medium for communicating that renewed nature, which should leaven the whole mass of corrupted mortality, and declare Mediation to be the great law of the Gospel kingdom, the central fact in the economy of grace. The spiritual manna, whereby the new Israel is sustained in its weary journey through the wilderness of life—what is it but that very Body which He endued with life-giving energy by the taking of the manhood into God? This is that great truth of the actual Mediation of the God-man, which ancient heresy robbed of its reality, but which the Apostle declares to be characteristic of the Gospel. We may sum it up in St. Paul's

words: "as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly:" the process, namely, which has its end in the resurrection of saints, has its beginning in the regeneration of sinners.

II. And can this truth possibly be gainsayed? Is there any principle which can be arrayed against it? Is it not so suited to the wants of man, as to convey its evidence in itself? How comes it then to be in theory but partially admitted among ourselves; and to be almost universally disallowed in act? For whatever may be the language of our Public Offices, yet silent Churches, deserted altars, infrequent Eucharists, are but too plain a witness to the national unbelief. The counteracting system must appeal surely to some principle of our nature, and be built upon some law, which we are compelled to admit. And so it doubtless is: for if the principle of mediation be our revealed mode of intercourse with God, yet is there another channel, which the very constitution of our being forbids us to neglect. This compound being, compacted of soul and body, has in it two distinct principles, and while the one supplies our means of holding converse with our brethren, our relation to God depends upon the other. For the external frame, which enables us to play our part in the delusive pageant of life, is not really ourselves. And the hidden principle, which witnesses by intuitive consciousness in each man's bosom, claims natural kindred with the Most High. For it is still the image of that parent Spirit, which has never been wholly expunged from the minds which it created.

Hence arises the feeling, of which men are naturally possessed, that the inward spirit can address itself by

immediate resort to the Supreme Mind. Whether man walks abroad to meditate in the lonely valley, or whether conscience opposes itself to temptation amidst the throng of life—in either case his thoughts arise to the Being who created him, with a confidence that no medium of intercourse can increase the closeness of that relation, whereby the mind tends towards its parent source. And especially when he enters into some majestic temple, which the piety of early times has reared to the unseen God, and hears "the pealing organ blow, to the full-voiced quire below:" then does his heart swell within him, "all heaven" rises up before his eyes, and he feels a strong conviction that enthusiasm, mystery, divine communion, are not things which are forbidden to the mere worshipper of nature: seeing that they ally themselves with those modes of access with Himself, which the Highest has left open to every being, in whom remain traces of the Divine Mind.

III. Such, brethren, are the two systems of opinion which we have to contrast: that which the Apostle declares to be the truth of God, and that which he stigmatizes as the Spirit of Anti-christ. And these two we may term respectively the Sacramental and Anti-sacramental systems of religion. For since the doctrine of Our Lord's Mediation is founded upon His taking our flesh: since its primary law is the re-creation in His person of our common nature, the entrance of divine graces into humanity in its Head and Chief;—therefore some medium is required, by which those things, which were stored up in Him, may be distributed to His brethren. To speak of the Head as the fountain of grace, is to assume the existence of streams, by which

it may be transmitted to His members. Now this function is so plainly assigned to Sacraments, that nothing else can be alleged to supply their place. If union with Christ be union with His manhood, it is clearly through those means, whereby we become members of His Body that we are united to Himself. Now it is explicitly revealed that we are "*baptized* into one body," and that "those who are *baptized* into Christ, have put on Christ." And what perpetuates our union, save that participation in His flesh and blood, which is not less distinctively declared to be the means whereby we continue to be one body in Himself?

On these means of union are built all those affections and sympathies, which ripen into the fulness of the divine life. Prayer, praise, the converse of the thoughts; public worship or private meditation—all these are means of intercourse with Christ, which have their origin in the Christian's oneness with the Church's Head. Not that communion with Christ is confined to the occasions of Sacramental approach; but they supply the principle, on which all the other ordinances of grace are dependent. For that real union must underlie them all, whereby men are truly, and not only in name united in Christ. And this union has its being through that Sacramental relation, whereby we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones, And as this is the Sacramental, so that which is opposed to it may be called the Anti-sacramental system. For its characteristic is the assertion of such immediate union between the creature and the Creator, that no link is needed to unite them. The Unembodied Power, the Merciful One regarded only according to His

Divine nature, is supposed to be so near to each man's spirit, that each man's thoughts need only to travel forth in order to find Him. To what purpose then were priest, or altar, or Sacrament—nay, to what purpose the mediating humanity of the Son of God Himself, since that which is desired is attained without them.

Neither let it be supposed that the contrariety between these two systems is a mere technical distinction; resulting from certain arbitrary rules, which have been observed in the dispensation of divine blessings. To suppose that artificial restraints had been imposed on the free course of that spiritual life, which is the principle of man's recovery, would be intolerable to earnest minds. Our short-sighted wisdom could not indeed have prescribed limits beforehand to the divine counsels; but it is not forbidden us to meditate on the actions of Supreme Goodness, and to observe the light which they throw on the great cause of all things—the nature of God Himself. Now this may be seen especially in the case before us. For what is all religion but the reaching forth of the finite after the infinite, the supplying of those wants, which our higher nature renders us competent to feel, but which our lower nature renders us incompetent to satisfy?

For there is a double nature in man. His finite being is bounded by the conditions of time, and place, and circumstance. These assign his individual position in the world of being. But then he is conscious of another mode of existence. The unlimited combination of his thoughts opens a vista into the infinite. They can find satisfaction in nothing, which is less unbounded than themselves. So that the thoughts which

range at large through the unseen and eternal, lead us up to God Himself, as the only centre and end of the beings whom He has created.

Now in what manner can the limited be brought into relation with the unlimited? How can the finite become one with the Infinite? Is this a process which is confined to man's intellect alone? Is a privilege allowed to the superior part of his being, which his inferior nature does not share? What were this but the error of the Gnostics; and how singular to recognize the ancient delusion among those who smile at the fanciful shape in which their own opinions were formerly drest? For what was the alleged opposition between matter and God, but the idea that in the limitations of our finite being lay the origin of evil, and that to escape from them was to enter at once upon a higher mode of existence. And this is identical with the thought, that though our complex nature is bound down to earth by the law of its material being, yet that in the mind we have an open door, which enables us at once to enter into communion with God. If this were so, then would the alienation, which has separated man from God, be attributable, not to the perverseness of his will, but to the conditions of his nature. It would seem as though the pure spirit, which could range unchecked through the regions of the infinite, were contaminated by its imprisonment in those material frames, which gave to its several portions an individual life and separate consciouness. So that the material structure would be the true cause of debasement, and man would be separated from his Maker by the accident of isolation, and not by the malignity of sin.

Such is the necessary result of denying that Sacramental system which is built upon the notion of Our Lord's humanity. For it is to imply that a channel of intercourse exists already; and where can such a thing be looked for, save in that portion of our nature which retains the most lively traces of the Image of God? And this erroneous estimate of man's nature leads to an analogous misconception respecting the nature of God. A false Anthropology finds its complement in a false Theology. For if the limitation of his being is the secret of man's weakness, God's excellence must consist in His exemption from the like defect. So that mere infinity would be supposed to be the characteristic of God. And thus would those Moral Attributes be lost sight of, which rest upon His Personal existence as the Only Good. And we should be precipitated into that abyss of Pantheism, in which the heresies of modern times will finally result.

Thus does the identity between ancient and recent error render the Apostle's warning against the one no less applicable to the other. And as the error is the same, so is the principle which is opposed to it the same also. Is it asked how can things which are wholly diverse be brought into relation with one another, how can the finite become one with the Infinite? the answer is given in one word, through the Incarnation of Christ. Let us confess only "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," and however far we may be from comprehending this mystery, we cannot choose but believe it. For was not this the very work which was effected by "the taking of the manhood into God?" Were not the finite and the infinite bound together by that personal exist-

ence, whereby man and God were united in the instant of His taking our flesh? Thus did Deity become capable, in the human nature of the Word, of sympathizing with human sorrows; and manhood became capable of being the seed of grace, through its being taken into God. The one was able to participate through its inferior nature in the weakness of limited humanity; the other through its alliance with a superior nature was endued with heavenly efficacy. Thus did Our Lord's humanity become that very source of life, which is distributed through Sacraments as the life of His brethren: the Infinite Head communicates Himself through these channels to His finite brethren: God is in Christ reconciling to Himself the world: so that the efficacy of these ordinances depends wholly upon our estimate of Him, with whom they ally us: and to accept His Mediation as a truth is to receive that Sacramental system, whereby He is come in the flesh as the re-creator of mankind.

Here let us pause for a moment to observe the utter futility of that common notion, that the casual perusal of Holy Scripture will enable men to appreciate the mysteries of God's kingdom. True, the word of God, when studied with that aid which is supplied by His Church's teaching, is the very mirror which reflects the secrets of the divine will. But here we have a point of primary importance; in what manner, namely, man is brought into relation with God; and nothing is more common than to hear men decide it by appealing to some detached words of Holy Writ. Whereas it has been shown that elementary as this question is, direct as is its relation to all the practical affairs of life, its

settlement involves the deepest of all considerations; it implies an inquiry into the nature of man, and into the nature of God, which leads into the most mysterious secrets of Theology.

IV. To such an inquiry the present time is too brief to do justice; it will be sufficient to observe the practical conclusion which the text suggests—the absolute contrariety, namely, between those two systems which have been opposed to one another. The Sarcamental and Anti-sacramental systems are two different religions, and to rest our hope of salvation on the one, is to say anathema to the other. Such is plainly the force of the Apostle's words. To affirm the doctrine of Mediation and to deny it—to assert the reality of those things, which the Son of God effected by coming in the flesh, and to call their reality into question—are as much opposed as light and darkness, as truth and error. The discrepancy may pass unobserved for a time, as at the commencement of the Arian struggle, that dispute was at times evaded by an ambiguous phraseology; but it is a fundamental question, on which rests the Church's life or death, and which, when once discerned, must of necessity be decided. Nothing is more hateful than to raise unnecessary contentions in the Church of Christ. But "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak—a time of war and a time of peace." And it was the Apostle of love who taught us that every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is a deceiver and an Anti-christ.

For take the case of the Sacrament of Baptism. In this ordinance of the Gospel a natural emblem of puri-

fication was invested with supernatural force. The washing of the body must always have seemed typical of the inward ablution of the mind. But Baptism received a new meaning, when it was no longer "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." Thus did it find an analogy in that new world on which Noah entered through the deluge waters: for "we are buried with Him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised again by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." In Baptism, that is, we partake of that hallowed nature, which entered into the line of humanity in the New Head of our race, that from Him it might be communicated to all His brethren. Thus does the recreation, which began in Him, extend to His members. For Christ, according to His manhood, is "the first-born of every creature, the beginning of the creation of God." And into us also there is a new life infused by supernatural process, which is the spring of our new being. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." The Apostle's words are too weighty, surely, to be resolved into a mere figure of speech: if we are really to be saved, we need a *real*, and not a metaphorical regeneration. Yet how shall it be obtained, save through the extension of that divine power, which became one with manhood, in the miraculous instant of Our Lord's conception? In this manner is the finite reconstructed by the Infinite. And thus is a true work effected in Holy Baptism, whereby heaven and earth

are brought into union; Christ is truly born again in all His members; and the seed of the corrupt is superseded by that of the regenerate Adam.

Such is the Sacramental theory; now take the opposite one. And by the opposite one is not meant only the theory of those who reject Baptism; for the parties who employ it as it was employed by Jews or Heathen, are not less really opposed to its Christian signification, as our means of union with the manhood of Christ. For the use of Baptism may be retained as a harmless concession to custom, or as an indulgence in the taste for acted services, or as a graceful adoption of ancient manners, or as a sign or seal of past acts and future expectations; but unless it be believed to be the real means of union with the manhood of Christ, it can only be a superfluous and unnecessary action. And on this supposition, the movement whereby a child who is born in the corrupt image of his parents, is refashioned after the perfect image of God, cannot have an external source in that re-creation of nature, which began in the Incarnation of Christ, but must have an internal one in that rectification of the child's nature, which has its beginning in his individual mind. Men may seek a further cause of this movement in God's immediate influence on the minds of His creatures (they may assume that in some cases there is an arbitrary gift of prevenient grace); but such a theory leads directly to Fatalism, because it implies that those renewing gifts, without which corrupt nature cannot be restored, are bestowed only on those whom the Almighty, by arbitrary selection, impels to use them. And yet to attribute capability of action to every child, but to suppose that it

waxes effectual through that grace of God, which He bestows on those whom He discerns will use it, is not less distinctly allied to the Pelagian heresy. For to rest the efficacy of Baptism, in this manner, on foreseen obedience, is to suppose that God's grace can be purchased by human merit.

But whether men's denial of the doctrine of Baptismal grace be rested on Fatalism or on Pelagianism, it is equally incompatible with the Mediation of Christ. For in either case Baptism is of no real efficacy. It is not the mean through which a supernatural work is done, but the sign by which a natural work is represented. There is no engrafting into the nature of Christ; but the mere eliciting of those principles of the child's nature which belong to its original stock. That fundamental Article of the Creed, the doctrine of "one Baptism for the remission of sins," is contradicted. The office of Our Lord's manhood is superseded. So far as regards practice, there is a virtual denial that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

And is not this system absolutely incompatible with that which was before exhibited? Are they not two different religions? If we adopt one, must we not discard the other? Can we confess Christ's Mediation, and also deny it? Allow the one, and the Sacramental system is a groundless superstition: allow the other, and the Anti-Sacramental system is a presumptuous unbelief.

The same contrast might be exhibited in respect to the Holy Eucharist. If Our Lord's intercession as man be a real act, whereby we participate through that perpetual oblation, wherein we show the Lord's death till

He come, then should this service be the very centre of our worship, and the basis of our prayers. We should look upon it as our continual means of participating in that divine nature, which mercifully submitted to the conditions of humanity, in order that the finite might be pervaded by the Infinite. Is such a thing impossible? Then has not God become man: then is Christianity a dream, and the Doctrine of the Cross a fable. For if nature can save us, then is it an idolatry to rest on grace; but if we can only be saved by grace, then to rest on nature is an infidel delusion.

Which of these systems, brethren, shall be adopted by ourselves? I ask not as if the question were doubtful, but because the Church looks to this place, and to this congregation, to show that they are ready to testify to the truth by their deeds. For why have you a faculty of theology, and a local government, and institutions which are independent of the popular voice, and associations which bind you to past times, save that in you the Church should have a rallying-point in moments of trial, and a safeguard against the sudden movements of popular caprice? "For if thou altogether holdeth thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to Israel from another place; but thou and thy Father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come into authority, for such a time as this?" It can never be expected, indeed, that a Rationalistic religion will want supporters, when unchecked scope is given to that lawlessness of the human will, which not even the strongest coercion could master. Yet there is a majesty in truth, which is strong enough finally to prevail. Especially

when such an appeal addresses itself to the young, whose truthfulness is guaranteed by the independence of their age, as well as by the hereditary integrity of our nation.

For the principles which have been set before you will come into collision not now only nor once, but during those long years, when it will be yours to guide the public sentiment, and give utterance to the public voice. Provide yourselves then, I beseech you, with true principles of action, that when you have entered upon the arena of middle life, you may not be compelled to rescind your judgment, and retrace your steps. Yet think not that such principles are to be gained only by intellectual culture, or that to admit the irrefragable conclusions of logic is an Evangelical belief. Among the most telling arguments against Sacramental grace is the experience of ungodly men, who having sinned against it by riot in their youth, sin against it by incredulity in their age. For with our moral as with our intellectual opportunities, those who are the last to use are commonly the first to disparage them. Who so ready to undervalue that incomparable discipline, which the poets, historians, and philosophers of ancient time supply to the understanding, as those whose self-will or idleness has shrunk from sustaining it? Nor is it unnatural that men should desire to charge their defects upon their circumstances, rather than on themselves. Especially is this the case in the things of the Spirit: for what argument so sways with men as their own consciousness, and what so probable, therefore, as that ungodliness should engender unbelief? Inquire why men deny Sacramental grace, you will find the common

reason to be that they have themselves misused it. Having cut themselves off from Christ's presence by deadly sins, and impatient of so tedious a mode of reconcilement as confession, repentance, and amendment, they seek some shorter road of approach to God. And such they fancy themselves to possess in that excitement of feeling, which brings them into natural relation with their Maker. And they forget that the thing which they despise is the Mediation of Christ and His true presence with His people. For these depend on that coming in the flesh, which has its effect through those Sacramental ordinances which they have slighted. Thus do they shut their eyes to the true Sun of righteousness, and walk in the light of their fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled.

So close is the alliance between a pure life and a right creed. Would you be fitted then to engage safely in the contentions of the world; to maintain the ancient institutions of your country, and to vindicate the real dignity of man, your present self-denial, purity, and faith, must be the true husbandry which will precede so honourable an harvest. Do not wait for a new place, or fresh associates, or a riper age; but live *now* in purity of heart, if you would not loose the power of appreciating truth in time to come. For truth comes only from that Infinite Source, whose presence must be anticipated by grace in this life, if we would possess His full fruition in life everlasting."

SERMON XX.

CHURCH UNION.

St. John, xv. 5.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches."

This is almost the only parable, if such it may at all be termed, in St. John's Gospel. The last surviving Apostle was too much charged with the realities of Our Lord's teaching, or his hearers were too well prepared for the strong meat of the Gospel, to make it needful that he should linger in similitudes. Therefore we should expect a peculiar measure of reality in the parable before us.

Each of Our Lord's examples has its leading feature. The parable of the leaven describes the unseen and silent manner in which the faith of Christ spread from one to another, till it had infected the whole Pagan world. The parable of the growing crop describes the gradual increase which it maintained from generation to generation. The parable of the sower shows its origin in God's word. The mustard seed is emblematic of the rapidity of its growth. But what this parable appears to teach is, that the principle of *growth* is its principle of extension. It has some inward law of life in it. The parts cannot increase save by being united to the

whole, and the extension of the whole depends on the life of the members.

This is what we mean by speaking of a thing as an organized being. A crowd of men is equally a crowd, whether some are added, or some are taken away from it, but a man's body is imperfect if it loses certain limbs, and the limbs have no life when severed from the body. A field is made by throwing smaller fields together, but a tree must have that gradual development which can bring forth strength and shape out of the constituent rudiments of its nature. The reason is, that there lies hid in it a secret principle of connexion, which we call its life, on the endurance whereof its growth is dependent. It may have dead branches indeed, which need to be cut out and burned. But so long as this principle of connection lasts, it will continue to extend itself. What this secret of life is, we can only dscover by discerning its effect in the living branches; there is no severing between the trunk and them: the life flourishes in them, and they flourish through its influence; the law of their growth is the uniting principle of all organized bodies.

Now such a principle, this parable declares, is to be found in the Church of Christ, in the Gospel kingdom. It is not a mere heap of different men, or different societies—there is in it such oneness as comes from the presence of a common life; and that life acting through its different parts, and quickening its various members. Such is the lesson which the Holy Ghost deemed material enough to be set forth by the last oracle of inspired Scripture.

Let us turn then to the history of God's will. How was it that He dealt with men in early times? We find nothing of this sort existing among the patriarchs. Their religion was the solitary worship of unconnected hearths, if not of separate individuals. There must always be personal religion; but among them, as among those at present who are unacquainted with the fulness and freedom of the Gospel, there was nothing else than personal religion. At length came the Jewish Covenant. This bound men, no doubt, in a national union; but it was a gift only to a single people, and it depended only on carnal ordinances. Something was wanting, which might at once be as wide as the family of man, and might contain in it such a living principle, that all the better part of man's nature might be quickened by it into growth.

Where was this principle to be found? In God only is life. From Him it first proceeded, and He only can give it back when it has been lost. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." Now it might have pleased Him to bestow His gifts separately upon mankind, through the private intercommunion of the Holy Ghost with the individual spirits of men. This appears to have been done in Patriarchal times: this may be done for what we know at present. But this was not what it pleased the wisdom of God to do in the promulgation of the Gospel. For as by one man entered death, by one came also justification. For when the fulness of time was come, it pleased God to send forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The Church of Christ began with the Incarnation of the

Son of God. The race of man was lost. His stock was hopelessly corrupted. Therefore did God bestow upon human nature a new life, when Deity took up its dwelling in it; that through the efficacy of that sanctified humanity, the principle of holiness might spread as freely as the leprosy of sin. When St. John, therefore, describes the doctrine of the Incarnation, he says, that the true light, which lighteth every man, *i. e.* the Word or Wisdom of God, was coming into the world. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This was the mystery of Our blessed Lord's taking that manhood, which He joined to His Deity, never again to be divided. And with it He first wrought that satisfaction on the cross, in which His humanity supplied the victim which was offered for our sins. For "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Nor yet was this all His work. "He not only died for our sins, but rose again for our justification." This risen humanity of the Son of God became the source of all holiness and enlightenment for all His brethren. Whatsoever he gained, He gained for their sakes, that the holiness which had been so perfectly enshrined in the temple of *His* human body, might flow from Him, as from a living source, into all who were united to Him. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. And having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." And therefore, says Our Lord, speaking of the purification of His human nature through the dis-

cipline of His earthly life, "for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Hence it is, then, that all Christians are described as so really united to the Son of God, that to Him and them one common name is applicable. The truth, indeed, of each man's separate existence, is asserted by that doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the judgment to come, which witnesses that we shall stand singly before the tribunal of Christ to give an account of our deeds. Would God that we remembered this more constantly. Would God that we felt the truth which Scripture declares, that all shall be judged before men and angels "according to their works." But this individual responsibility, this single consciousness, this separate life or death of our soul, is not inconsistent with our having a place in that great family of God's elect, which we call the Church of the Redeemed. Now this place we have through our union with the human nature of the Second Adam, just as our place in God's natural creation is through union with the first. And by reason of the reality of this union does Christ speak of all Christians as one in Himself, and St. Paul declares that the promises which were made to Abraham's spiritual progeny were in truth fulfilled in Christ. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Thus closely is Christ Our Lord identified with His people. For "we are members of His body," says St. Paul, "of His flesh, and of His bones. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and concerning the Church." Our

Lord's humanity, indeed, has its place in heaven, where it "ever liveth to make intercession for us;" "but through that power of the Holy Ghost, first bestowed at Pentecost, and still acting through all the ordinances of the Church of God, its spiritual presence is more near and real than are the material objects of this visible world.

Therefore does our Church witness that Christ is present with us "after an heavenly and spiritual manner." This is what He Himself sets forth as the peculiar consequence of His Ascension. "What and if ye shall see the Son of God ascend up where He was before. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." By virtue of His place in heaven, and of that divine influence which He there exercises through the power of the Holy Ghost, does He bestow upon men that reality of union, whereby they are engrafted into Himself. When He took leave of this lower and visible state, "I will not leave you comfortless," were His words, "I will come unto you." For "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." And therefore would the Holy Ghost "instruct the world in righteousness," "because I go to My Father," and according to the flesh ye see Me no more. So real is the union of Christians with Christ their head—thus is it a truth and no figure, that He suffers in His members upon earth, that in their trials He is persecuted, that their life is hid in Him, that He makes His abode in them, that He "is the head over all things to His Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

And hence arises that truth of the oneness of Christ's

Church, which we declare to be a fundamental doctrine of the Christian revelation by repeating it in the Creed. "I believe in *one* Catholic and Apostolic Church." This *oneness* is not a mere technical, artificial contrivance suggested by the advantages of order and the blessings of concord, it does not result from such accidental arrangements as lead the people of Great Britain to obey a single sceptre, or the European nations to use common letters, it flows of necessity from the nature of that union which we have together in the Church. Our union is because we are members of that body of Christ which is common to us all. Had there been many Adams, the families of men had been unrelated and distinct. But now hath God "made of one blood all nations of the earth." Therefore that wonderful accordance and sympathy which unites East and West in a common bond. And so is it with the higher nature of those who are born into the Church of Christ. For it was His mission "to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad."

In this fact, therefore, we have an exact fulfilment of the parable before us. The parable indeed has been delivered to us as the most striking statement of the actual truth. Christ's servants are bound together by a real principle of life. This life results from the influence of that human nature which he took for our sakes. Though He has ascended on high, yet is He truly with us by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is like the sun in heaven, which retains its place in the firmament, and yet is present on earth through the effluence of its beams. Not that Christ's Sacramental presence is to be accounted for by those ordinary laws,

which explain the force and operation of distant bodies —that it is a mere emanation from some material source: the supernatural oneness, which He bestows upon His people, is a real mean whereby *whole Christ* gives Himself to men. Thus is the Father's power present among us. He seeks to reconcile all men to Himself through the Son of His love. God's kingdom is in truth set up among men. That which Daniel discerned is come to pass. What Joel spoke of is accomplished. "It shall come to pass in the last days," saith God, "that I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh." This is the mystery of the Christian covenant. Here is the fulness and freedom of the Gospel. It is bound no longer to tribe or lineage, to profession or speech; it is no more dispensed by favoured selection to individual worshippers or single households; the Sun of Righteousness hath arisen with healing in His wings; the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared; God commandeth all men every where to repent; His temple doors stand open; all may come in and worship; we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh.

And now to turn shortly to the practical results of this wonderful truth. We see in it as well the sacredness, as the necessity of Gospel ordinances. They are not a mere dead framework, a technical system of artificial helps, which may be cleared away like rubbish so soon as their work is done. This was true, indeed, of the Jewish system, though it had been appointed by God Himself, but God forbid that the ministration of

death should be compared to the ministration of the Spirit. When we speak of Christian ordinances, we may use St. Paul's words, for we are "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," because to every one that believeth, it is "the power of God unto salvation." By reason of this power, is there a true influence in public worship, in Sacraments a true presence of Christ, His human nature becomes the real source ef grace to all His brethren, for His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. And this should especially impress upon us the sacredness of our Christian calling. What kind of life is to be required of those who are truly members of the Lord's Body? How well does our Catechism direct the first lispings of the infant tongue, heartily to "thank our heavenly Father," for having by Baptism "called us to this state of salvation," and to pray God to give us His grace that we may "continue in the same unto our life's end. Now the sort of life which may be expected of Christians, depends on the nature of that union, by which they are engrafted into Christ. What they want is not the bare performance of certain duties—an ordinary routine of harmless existence—they are engrafted into Christ, and as He is, so are they in this world. The low notion which many entertain of the ordinances of the Christian covenant ranges well enough with their low standard of Christian obedience. Love cannot flourish without faith; great gifts will be the natural ground of great watchfulness. This is what the Apostle sets forth as the especial motive to Christian purity. "Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." And this principle we may

apply to all the graces of the Christian character, which will be produced only through that influence of God's Spirit, by which Christ Our Lord works mightily through all His living members. For "every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

There can be no vigour without life, nor life without growth, nor growth unless we discern our participation in Christ Our Lord. His strength must be ours; our life hid in Him: "I have prayed for thee, and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

SERMON XXI.

THE PRIVILEGE OF WORSHIP.

HEBREWS X. 19.

"Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

THE restoration of the privilege of worship was one main part of that re-creation of mankind, which was effected in Christ. For man had been created to be the High Priest of this visible world. Heaven and earth are for ever rendering service to God. Their order, beauty, and magnificence, reflect their Maker's glory. But it remained for man to interpret the unconscious homage of these silent worshippers. How strikingly was this task performed by the Psalmist! "Praise the Lord upon earth ye dragons and all deeps: fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, fulfilling His word. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars: beasts and all cattle, worms and feathered fowls." Thus was all creation called on to co-operate with that heir and ruler of the world, who is emphatically called "the creature" in Holy Writ, as having been put in authority over its other inhabitants.

Such was the religion of nature, while the two earliest representatives of the human race performed their ap-

pointed functions; and offered up "themselves, their souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which was their reasonable service." But this exalted office was forfeited by the fall. For when the high priest of nature abandoned his duty, he renounced his rights. He became conscious at once of his degradation. "That God heareth not sinners," is written on man's conscience as with a pen of fire. For "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord." Therefore did the heir of creation hide himself from his Maker's sight. He had been made a little lower than the angels, that he might hold immediate intercourse with the Being, in whose likeness he had been formed; but now he betook himself to the dark covert of the forest, like the beasts. That his ancient privilege might be restored, it was necessary that his ancient nature should be revived; that he should be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus."

Two points, then, shall be set before you: first, by what means was this privilege regained for collective humanity: secondly, how does each individual secure his single share in the common exaltation.

I. The privilege of worship, which was lost in Adam, was given back in Christ. His taking our nature was that second birth whereby humanity was re-formed; He became "the beginning of the creation of God." Because the natural man had lost his right to draw near to God, it was given back for the benefit of the collective universe through that man who was above nature. Through Him were allayed those groans and pangs with

which the whole creation had travailed. Therefore when angels announced His approach, it was to secure "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." Both these objects were accomplished when God could once more receive pure worship from the representative of His creatures. Once more could the Highest look with satisfaction into this lower world and say, "this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now, as this right was regained when the manhood was taken into God, so the whole course of Our Lord's doings, His life, death, and perpetual advocacy, supply the means of its exercise. The heir of man's nature—in His pilgrimage through this lower world, He offered to God that perfect obedience which is due from the creature to the Creator. Since God is the fountain of excellence, the first condition of rendering to Him perfect service is to be like Himself. It was the very crime, therefore, of the heathen that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. By whom then could this service be adequately rendered, but by Him who was at once "the image of the invisible God," and "the first-born of every creature?" Such was Our Lord's declaration of His earthly course, when, as the Church's Head, He addressed Himself to the Father: "I have glorified Thee on earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And then followed that signal act of obedience, wherein "He gave His life a ransom instead of many." For this, too, was the voluntary performance of that office, for the sake whereof He had been "made a little lower than the angels." "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself:

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And when this work of advocacy had been completed on earth, its further course and full consummation was transferred to heaven. For He did not lay aside the trappings of humanity, nor relinquish that participation, which He had vouchsafed to man's nature. As in Him it had been pure from sin, from the first moment that He had borne it; so had He perfected it, that it might endure that exaltation, to which it was admitted. His lower nature had been "crowned through the suffering of death with glory and honour." Therefore did He entreat that exaltation for it as a gift, which His higher being participated by nature. "Now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Thus is humanity at large admitted, in the person of its great High Priest, into the immediate presence of the Creator. God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." For His advocacy for our race is not abandoned, but exalted. He is still the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The Son of Man "ever liveth to make intercession for us." It was not that He gained us re-admission by the sacrifice of His life, and then left us, as of old, to render service to God through our individual excellence; He who took our nature still bears it; in Him alone is our approach to the Father; our acceptance is as members of Him; He continues to be "Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." If the privilege of worship be restored, and humanity as of old has access to God, it is that "this man, because He

continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." For He has offered "one perpetual sacrifice for sins." In this wise, then, has access to the Creator been given back, and man has again become High Priest in behalf of the universe of God. The privilege has been restored in the Second Adam, which was forfeited in the first. For His advocacy for mankind still continues: the season of its humiliation is past, but its validity remains.

II. But how does each man participate in the right, to which humanity at large has thus been re-admitted? How does every one share in that privilege of worship, which was regained for mankind by the true Heir of the race? Only through that "Head over all things to the Church," who "is the Saviour of the Body." "In Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." But if this be so, what was the condition of men who lived before the Son of God was manifest in the flesh? Was prayer for them a prohibited service? Was there no permission to draw near to God? How could there be such permission save through the advocacy of Christ? "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." And again, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." It was a general truth, surely, which St. Peter set forth, when he declared that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." It resulted from that state of alienation into which mankind had fallen, and from the absolute necessity that grace should be bestowed from without for their recovery. "For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Not one." Therefore "God commended His love to us, in that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The race of man was spiritually dead, and that life should flow into it was essential to its revival. But this blessing was not absolutely withheld during those long years of preparation, while as yet it was not fully manifest. In the world of grace as in that of nature it was first twilight and then dawn, before the Sun of Righteousness shone forth in His glory. But only through Christ, as He was manifest in hope and promise, could the prayers of men, even in that age, be accepted. There was no other mean of drawing near to God. Holy men looked to that victory which should be gained by the expected seed of the woman, when they exclaimed with dying Jacob, "I have waited for Thy Salvation, O Lord." "I do not look forward to the redemption by Sampson or Gideon," so are the words paraphrased by an ancient Jewish Targum, "but to the redemption through Thy *Word*."

And this hope had been bestowed upon the family of man, so soon as the privilege of nature had been forfeited. One moment indeed there was, in which it seemed that man's race was altogether lost, in which Satan's object seemed to be consummated, in which there seemed to be a failure in God's purpose of mercy—the interval, namely, between man's fall and the promise of his regeneration. For during that interval man was like the fallen angels themselves, without right or title to draw near to the God whom he had offended. There was none to speak on his behalf, for he who had fallen was himself the High Priest of nature, whose office was to draw near to God as the head of creation. From

what quarter, therefore, could he look for help, since the universe around him had participated in the ruin, which himself had caused? We read, therefore, of no prayer from man to God in that gloomy interval. Most like it was to another awful moment, which once again will shed its lurid gloom over the world, that moment which will be lighted up with the flame of a perishing universe, when the day of grace will be past, and the hour of Judgment be come. As the day of grace will then be over, so was there a like awful interval before it began. And as in that day men will call on rocks and mountains to hide them, because the day of grace is past, so was it, likewise, before the day of grace arrived. Therefore did Adam and his wife hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden.

And this it is which renders probable that which Scripture has not expressly declared, that sacrifice was not a human contrivance, but a divine appointment. If the reaching forth towards God had originated on the side of man, to offer sacrifice of his possessions might have been suggested by the feeling of his own mind. But since he had no right to draw near to God, since that road of intercourse which existed by nature had been closed upon him; since it was only through God's mercy in Christ that the door was re-opened, and that man obtained a second chance; therefore the mean of approach by which his hope and devotion was expressed, could hardly have been adopted except by his Maker's sanction. To offer sacrifices was to express a hope through Christ, which hope was only built upon the promise. Perhaps in the acceptance of Abel's offering,

while that of Cain was rejected, we see an early instance that man cannot attain to God's favour, save through participation in Christ. This was assuredly the lesson which the whole Jewish ritual was intended to teach. And how is it at present, now that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, now that His advocacy has been exalted from earth to heaven, and that He has achieved that victory, on which depends our salvation. For "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." It must still therefore be His effectual intercession for mankind, to which only we trust. Without it the fallen race of man could not draw near to God. If our prayers are to be effectual, if we are allowed to offer them, if our services are pleasing, and our persons accepted, it can only be through the continual pleading of that perfect Intercessor, in whom was restored the forfeited privilege of nature.

And herein lies one peculiar value of those holy mysteries which are the appointed means of joining us to Christ. These ordinances may be looked at on the one side as respects their *sacramental* efficacy, as they are the means whereby divine gifts are bestowed by God. But they possess also a *sacrificial* character, because in them we participate in that perpetual offering of Christ Our Lord, through which the privilege of worship is restored to the creation. For what is meant by individual participation in Christ, but that by some mysterious law of the divine economy, His members have part in that public intercession, which the true High Priest is forever discharging for the whole Church of His elect, at His Father's right hand? Unless they

are found in Him, unless they are members of His Body, how can they participate in the great work, by which their ascended Head restores the forfeited privileges of humanity? To this it is that men are admitted by baptism, whereby they are allowed to take full part in that worship, from which even the children of Christians are by nature aliens; and therefore does the Apostle rest its efficacy on "the resurrection of Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto Him."

And as men are first admitted to this exalted service by their baptism, so is it a peculiar effect of the Holy Communion to continue and maintain it. For "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Distinct, then, from its sacramental influence as a means of grace, is that sacrificial efficacy, whereby the Holy Eucharist is our mean for maintaining the privilege of worship. It rests upon that great truth of our ascended Lord's perpetual Intercession, which is the grand charter of His Church. "We have access with confidence through the faith of Him." Now, that which He does above in the one heavenly temple gives efficacy to the services, whereby through the ministry of His earthly priests He is exhibited to God. What they offer is no fresh Christ, no new victim, no additional sacrifice; "by one sacrifice He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." It is only through that "one sacrifice of Himself, once offered," that their service is effectual. And since when he had offered one perpetual sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, there-

fore that which passes in the heavenly temple, gives efficacy to the service of our earthly altars. This it must be which our Church intends, when she censures those sacrifices of masses, in which she understands that some new victim was thought to be created. Whereas it is Christ alone—the one perfect Head of Adam's race—Christ who has ascended into heaven—who is even at the right hand of God—whose slain humanity is the thing of value in the Christian sacrifice. He is not presented, therefore, below as a fresh victim, but by His own effectual Priesthood in the heaven of heavens. Though the earthly ministration be a real sacrifice, yet it is not calculated to add anything to the value of His offering; it is only the means whereby the work is participated. Ever since it was transferred from these lower courts to the heavenly temple, it has been the one sole sacrifice of value, which man's race could present to God; He who presents it is the true High Priest of collective humanity, the real heir of man's race, who effects that end for which Adam was created, and truly intercedes on behalf of the universe of God. Those who minister in His earthly courts cannot add, therefore, to the value of what He has effected: when they offer the Christian sacrifice, the sole reason why that which they do is important, is because by their act men participate in that work of intercession, which the Great High Priest is discharging for the whole Church of the Elect; so that things done on earth are one with those which are done in heaven.

And this may lead us, in conclusion, to estimate the real evil of undervaluing the Church's collective sacrifice; and especially its crowning act, that holy Eucha-

rist, whereby "we show forth the Lord's death till He come." The main error of all such neglect is, that it throws us back from the law of grace to the law of nature. And therefore it robs us of that true mode of access, which the Priesthood of Christ alone secures. For in Him alone has man become again the high priest of creation. And how, then, can we reclaim our forfeited inheritance, save by maintaining our oneness with that Head, through whom only we receive it? That Christians may pray always, and everywhere, is the very gift which has been bestowed upon them as members of Christ. But this right of access has been restored only in Him, in whose public acts, therefore, it is essential that they should participate. "Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.*"

For man's lost inheritance has not simply been given back; it has been exchanged in truth for a higher honour. If the Gospel had but restored man's birthright, then might men draw near to God when they would and how, and one mode of worship were as available as another. And that such is the case, is an opinion which not unreasonably commends itself to the natural mind, seeing that this was indeed by nature man's access to God. We walk forth, men say, under the vault of heaven, and how can we pay a better service to Him, to whom at such moments we seem nearest in thought? Those who trust, therefore, to natural reason, suppose, not strangely, that thus may the Creator be best approached. But in Christ Our Lord has there been a path laid open, which is not only beside,

but above nature. He has Himself taken our being, that in Him might be a better and fuller approach to God. This is that "new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." It was a painful path, marked with the blood of Him who first trod it; its first steps led up the hill of Calvary, though its last scaled the sky. But now is it a path of peace, and joy, and holy hope, to all who in true faith follow the steps of their ascended Lord. For they plead His perpetual sacrifice, they neither need nor find other victim; "by one sacrifice He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

SERMON XXII.

THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

I. Timothy, ii. 5.

"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The doctrine of a Mediator holds a leading place in the re-creation of mankind. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." The meaning plainly of this doctrine is, that under the Gospel covenant, the God-man, Jesus Christ Our Lord, is the sole channel through which God and Man are brought into connexion. Whatever God bestows upon man, whatever man offers to God, passes through this medium.

Such a system was not unknown under the Jewish covenant. The law was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." The people said unto Moses, "speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And therefore the promise made to Moses was, that thy brother "shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Thus in God's dealings with men was

Moses a mediator between Jehovah and the children of Israel. On the other hand, as respects man's dealings with God, Aaron was their appointed mediator. For he "was taken from among men in things pertaining to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." But now a new Mediator has been substituted both for the one and for the other. "There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." Let us consider the function which Our Lord has mercifully undertaken to discharge, and then how He executes it.

I. To be the middle party, through whom God communicates with man, and man with his Maker, is to be at once the channel of gifts, and the medium of petitions. That which man owes to God, in the widest sense of which the term is capable, is service. Praise, prayer, offering, sacrifice, "the calves of our lips," our hearts' devotion—what are all these but individual parts of that general surrender of himself to God, which is the Christian's habitual purpose. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." But these things are not effectual in themselves: they avail only through the intercession of that new Head of our race, in whom all His true members are accepted. If we draw near, it is because we have "an High Priest over the house of God;" we have "boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

But this head shall not be enlarged upon, because it was treated in the last sermon: let us look to the other

side of the Mediator's office; that He is the channel through whom gifts are bestowed by God on His creatures. Now this is plainly implied, when we say that through Christ alone are God and man brought into connexion. The common mercies of nature—life, health, preservation, sustenance—are of course bestowed upon Christians as they are upon others—they come from the general mercy of the Creator; but the blessings of the Gospel—the blessings of the new covenant—those which concern that new creation, by which it was God's purpose to redress the evils of the fall—these are not bestowed according to the law of nature, but through that system of Mediation, which has been substituted in its place. So that the functions both of Aaron and of Moses are now wholly absorbed in the Mediation of Christ. He is not only the High Priest of man's nature, but through Him alone are "good gifts" bestowed upon man. The gifts of grace, the great gift of the Gospel, come through Him only who has purchased them by His blood.

II. And now then, secondly, how does Our Lord execute this office? He discharges it through His man's nature: the Mediator between God and man is the *man* Christ Jesus. Holy Scripture teaches us in what manner this was done. When man lost his connexion with God through the fall, when his participation in heavenly gifts was thus dammed up and obstructed—it was God's good pleasure to restore in yet larger measure, through the new Head of his race, those gifts which had been forfeited in the old one. "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath

abounded unto many." Thus did the Second Adam become the fountain of grace, from which the collective seed of His brethren was to be replenished. In His man's nature were gathered together all heavenly gifts, that from that great deep they might overflow into the whole generation of His kindred. He is "the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands has nourishment ministered." And "of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." For "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Now it was the very principle of Our Lord's earthly course, that when manhood was in His person taken into God, it was endued with that life-giving power by gift, which pertained to Deity by nature. For "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. And having made peace by the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." Here is described the process of man's regeneration. It had its origin in God's love, the ultimate source of all spiritual recovery. Its further course was the sanctification of the humanity of the Word, through personal oneness with Deity. And then followed the communication of the same gifts from the Church's Head to His believing brethren. For God "hath made Him Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." One part of this work is set forth in the Gospels, where grace, which is God's love in action, is spoken of only as it was communicated to that man's nature of the Eternal Son, which became its earthly receptacle. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." Of any other gift of grace we

hear nothing in the Gospels: that which is there set forth is, how "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." But when this part of the Gospel mystery had been completed, and the sanctified humanity of the Son was to return to mankind through the agency of the blessed Spirit, we read that "great grace was upon them all." For from Him, as "the beginning of the creation of God," was the like gift bestowed upon others. As "the first man Adam was made a living soul, so was the last Adam made a quickening spirit." Thus was the law of Mediation fulfilled; and as our natural life, and all the faculties of earthly being were transmitted through descent from our first parent, so were all graces of the Spirit, and the whole blessed seed of heavenly gifts bestowed upon mankind, through inherence in the second.

And now let us pass on to consider some of the effects of this momentous doctrine. First, it shows us the reality of that great change, which has been wrought by Christ Our Lord in the condition of mankind. For He has not only undertaken the office of Mediator, but become one. The work of redemption was a real work, by which all the relations of heaven and earth were permanently altered. God looks otherwise than He did on man's race, and man is otherwise circumstanced than He was towards God's nature. "We know," it is said, "that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth." What opening had there been, then, for man's recovery, but that "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Thus does man become the object of God's approval; a child of Adam becomes

that well-beloved Son in whom God is well pleased, His brethren share that honour which has been merited by the true Joseph, their filthy garments are exchanged for the purity of His spotless apparel, "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not *imputing to them their trespasses*." And as there is here a change in God's estimate of man, so is there a real alteration in man's nature. For this nature has been so far exalted in Him, as to be already made capable of royal honour. Already has God "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Already are men said to be "buried with Christ in Baptism," to be "crucified with Him," to be "risen with Christ," to partake, that is, even in this world of His gifts of grace, that in the next they may be prepared to partake His glory. All these things flow from that real change, whereby God and man have been set at one together. The manhood of Our Lord, as ancient writers express it, is the bridge whereby the gulf between heaven and earth has been spanned over. Thus have men become comrades with God's higher servants; the true Jacob's ladder is set up; and "the angels of God ascend and descend on the Son of Man." All this follows from the reality of that Mediation, which the Son of God did not refuse to undertake. He did not merely undertake the part or discharge the functions of man, but became one. He truly entered into the line of Adam's race, that He might sanctify humanity in Himself. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same." "When He cometh into the world He saith, sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." And we share, there-

fore, the honour which has been conferred on Him, in that "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth."

Again, another conclusion to which this subject conducts us, concerns that principle of faith, which is spoken of in Scripture as the cardinal point of the Christian's duty. Faith is defined, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to be "the realizing things hoped for, the putting to the proof things not seen." Christian faith s the application of this principle to the realities of the Gospel. And since by the Gospel is meant the law of Christ's Mediation; since its essential feature is that what was lost in Adam, is given back through Christ, therefore its crowning characteristic is, that it involves a personal reliance; it is a belief not in Christianity, but in Christ. The blessings which Christianity has introduced into the world are various and important. Its moral law is the purest which has ever been proclaimed to mankind. It first taught the lesson of universal philanthropy. Its views of man's nature are deep and comprehensive. These considerations are sufficient to secure the admiration of reflecting men; but they have nothing to do with saving faith; for they are a belief not in Christ, but in Christianity. Saving faith is a belief in Him, whom "God hath set forth to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." It is a personal affiance, which realizes those acts of Christ our Lord, whereby He mediates between man and the Father.

Now it is not to our present purpose to consider the

whole nature of this principle of faith, to observe that it implies the action of the will as well as of the reason, and is only genuine when it works by love. All this follows from the personal nature of its object: it is belief in Him whom we are to imitate; and it springs therefore from that implanted principle of divine grace, which is the beginning of all human improvement. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But our present purpose is not with the character of saving faith, but with its object. It is faith in Christ. It is belief in His Mediation. It is to accept Him as the only meritorious sacrifice for man's transgressions. It is to believe that God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

But the work of Christ's Meditation was not completed in that mighty crisis of the world's destiny, which closed His earthly ministry. That which was "finished" on the cross was the immolation of the victim, not its efficacy. He who took our nature ever liveth in that nature to make intercession for us. Would we believe then in the Mediation of Christ, we must see in Him our continual Advocate with the Father. Faith in Christ is to discern that no prayers can ascend under the Gospel covenant from man to God, save what our Great High Priest presents upon the heavenly altar. To look on man's ancient privilege of prayer as given back, to suppose that we could approach God when we chose and how, independently of that office of intercession which the Head of the Church is for ever maintaining for all its members, would be to renounce dependence

on the Mediation of Christ, and therefore to abandon that saving faith, of which the God-man is the personal object. Such would be the result if we lost sight of that peculiar efficacy which belongs to the Church's public service, and forgot that our inherence in Christ's body was the very condition which gave virtue to our private devotion.

But further, as faith in Christ's mediation is to trust in His sacrifice as the sole ground of pardon, and in His Intercession as the sole mean whereby the Father can be approached, so is it to believe that through Him alone are all gifts of grace bestowed by God upon His creatures. As saving faith must mount up to heaven in its hour of supplication, and discern the Son of Man standing where St. Stephen beheld Him, so must it realize the truth that all gifts of grace were gathered together in His man's nature, that from Him they might issue, as from an unfailing source, for the salvation of His brethren. This is that smitten Rock which was exhibited in type to the sons of Jacob, that from its riven side might flow forth the imperishable stream which refreshes the true Israel. This present work, then, of His man's nature; its present influence as the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanliness—saving faith must realize and discern. And what is it to discern it? It is to perceive and confess that those gifts of grace which few will deny to be necessary, are not only bestowed by God, are not only to be asked of Christ, but that they are given through Our Lord's Mediation, through the intervention of that nature which He took that He might be one with us—that they are bestowed through the manhood of the Incar-

nate Son—that this is the channel through which they are communicated—that as through Him alone we can approach God, so through Him alone does God bestow Himself upon the faithful.

And how is the manhood of Christ the channel for communicating graces? This is no natural process; it is not founded on that law of man's being, whereby his mind is like an open door, fitted for communicating with other spiritual intelligences. Our means of communicating with Christ's manhood can be gathered only from God's revealed will. And here two main occasions are disclosed, wherein the sanctified humanity of the Son of Man is communicated to His brethren. For "as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ," says St. Paul, "have put on Christ." And again, "we are buried with Him by *Baptism* into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." This is the first step in that spiritual work, whereby the Blessed Comforter was to bring Christ back to His people. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

And as baptism is declared in Holy Writ to be the commencement of this union, so is the Lord's Supper set forth as the occasion wherein it is increased and strengthened. "We being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." Its very purpose is to supply the true manna, whereof the food of earthly Israel was but a sign—the real sustenance of God's spiritual people throughout all their wanderings in this worldly wilderness. "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man

eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." It belongs, then, to saving faith to discern this side likewise of Our Lord's Mediation, to perceive that He is that Second Adam, from whom are derived the blessings of grace, as from our first parent proceed the gifts of nature. To speak of Christ Our Lord as though He had effected His work upon the cross, in order that we might afterwards draw near of ourselves to God, is to leave out of account that intervention of our Great Head, which is not less necessary as the channel of grace than as the mean of supplication. All this, of course, is a spiritual and not a material work. His humanity is not communicated like that of our earthly parent, by birth, but through that divine efficacy, whereby the Holy Ghost renews the bodies and souls of those whom He inhabits. But it is not less a real work, whereby the whole nature of man must be renewed even in this present world, even as their carnal bodies will be refashioned on the day of the resurrection. And to lose sight of it, would be so far forth to overlook the reality of Our Lord's Mediation, to fail to discern "the Lord's Body," and to expect those gifts according to the law of nature, which can only be found according to the law of grace. And this were to substitute faith in Christianity for faith in Christ.

For saving faith is not to know what Our Lord has done for humanity, to recognize the excellence of His system or the holiness of His life. It is not the cold assent of the critical spectator, who approves the wisdom with which the Gospel is designed, and admires

its appeals to the sympathies of mankind. The Christian's faith is that which lays hold on Christ as *his* Saviour, through that true work of Mediation, whereby the law of grace has been substituted for the law of nature. It looks to the God-man as the sole sacrifice for all transgressions. It trusts to His Intercession as the alone mode of access to the Father. It looks, finally, to Him, as having centred in His own humanity those gifts of grace, which are the unfailing source of regeneration to mankind. Those heavenly treasures which the Creator may in the first instance have designed to bestow directly and individually upon men, are now given only through the humanity of that Second Adam, through whom alone we can draw near to God. "There is one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." Through Him alone do all prayers ascend from man to God, through Him are all spiritual gifts bestowed by God upon His creatures.

All this must true faith realize and accept. It must look to Christ as a personal Mediator, and from His man's nature accept the gifts which shall regenerate ours. It must seek to discern the Lord's Body. It must wait upon Him in the ordinances of His love, with firm persuasion that from Him there issues sufficient grace for the salvation of a world. This is the effect of that grace of faith, of which the practical attainment is so main a part of our Church's continual teaching. But it is well that we should meditate at times on the principle itself, that we should remember what that principle implies, from which flow all the practical graces of the Christian character. For it is no idle form of words, no heartless principle of reason-

ing, nor yet any mere appeal to the feelings of mankind: it is the real acceptance of a living gift: the gift of Christ's Mediation and the renewal of man by God's grace.

SERMON XXIII.

OLD AND NEW REASON.

I. St. John, v. 19, 20.

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true: and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ."

No statements of Scripture are more distinct than those which testify, that without divine guidance it is impossible to understand the truths of the Gospel. "The anointing which we have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is true, and is no lie." Nor is this saying peculiar to the beloved Apostle, whose meditative disposition might be expected to dwell on the original and intuitive depths of the Gospel: the same truth is witnessed by the inspired pupil of the schools of Tarsus, in whom the powers of illustration and argument were more predominant. He, too, tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Now to this truth the world makes great objection. You require us, it is said, to accept men's testimony because they are spiritual, when we have no proof that they are spiritual except their testimony. If there were any recognized, ascertainable criterion of the spiritual mind, we should readily admit its dictates; but those who claim its possession refuse to abide by any tangible test of their pretensions. If inward consciousness were any proof to a man's self, it would plainly be no proof to his neighbors. And how often are men themselves deceived. Our Lord tells us that those who persecuted His Church would think they did "God service," and St. Paul witnesses to the sincerity with which he believed that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." The same thing is proved by experience; whether we look to the common affairs of daily life, or to the opinions of those stronger thinkers, whose names are recorded by history. How many men whose aspect and demeanour show that they enjoy the world as much as their neighbours, lay claim to a spirituality which rests only on their own professions. Yet whom do they deceive but themselves? Though spirituality may not admit of any positive test, yet there is sufficient negative proof for the condemnation of such claimants. For are they not as shrewd in business as their neighbours? Are they less indulgent to themselves than other men? Does not the self-complacency of their countenances show that they have pampered their minds, rather than chastised their bodies? Yet such men claim a superiority to the ordinary class of persons, which has no basis except in their own conceit. And what has time witnessed respecting

those bolder claimants, who have gained for a season the confidence of their fellows? Have not the private intimations of God to his individual spirit, been the plea of every enthusiast from Montanus to Swedenborg? If any such claims avail, why are the pretensions of these men to be rejected? If such testimony is to go for anything, it must in its very nature be independent of all appeal, because it professes to be the immediate voice of Him, who cannot be in error. So that Scripture itself would be superseded by such an interpretation of its pages, and Our Lord's own commission would be overthrown by those who thus understand Him.

Such is the tenor of the common argument: and hence it is concluded that the Scriptural appeals to a higher principle of judgment, are not to be taken in their plain and natural sense; that however good in theory, they afford no practical guidance in the conduct of life.

But is there no way, then, of stating this doctrine, which may reconcile the assertions of Scripture with the experience of mankind? Such a course we must seek after; and with a view of discovering it, let us inquire on what ground stands the authority of natural reason, and whether it may not be assailed by the same objections, which are brought against that higher faculty of judgment, to which revelation refers. For on what do we rest the cogency of natural reason? Is it the acuteness of the individual who employs it? It is by individuals that reason must be exercised. But if it be held responsible for all the errors to which their use of it may give birth, the old reason which we have by nature will not escape better than that new reason which

rests on Revelation. For has not it also entangled men in contradictions innumerable? Was not the delusion of the Alchymists as strange as that of the Mormons? If Swedenborg be an example of the uncertainty of inspiration, is not Mesmer a warning of the weakness of reason? So that if contradictions show the inutility of every principle, against which they may be alleged, this natural faculty likewise must be relinquished as useless; and we should prove by argument, that by argument nothing can be proved. Now since the mind revolts from such universal scepticism, let us consider what safeguards may be found in the case of natural reason, and whether a corresponding principle may not guide us in that higher sphere, which is the object of our search. Neglect such cautions, and we cannot trust even to the old reason of man: employ them, and we shall not be involved in contradictions by the new reason of the Gospel.

Now what gives its security to natural reason? Its safeguard is that common sense, which corrects the aberrations of individual eccentricity. There is a certain limited field, indeed, in which men may employ such logical deduction and scientific accuracy, as may guarantee the relations between their premises and their results. But the great mass of human affairs does not admit of being adjusted with so much accuracy. And in respect of them, there prevails a certain average, predominant conviction, whereby those false judgments, which would otherwise find currency even in worldly matters, are removed and exploded. This is called *common* sense, not by reason of its homely humble character, but rather in testimony of its higher origin, as

something truly connatural to mankind at large, and as grounded in the primeval constitution of his general nature. For whence does this judgment arise? How comes it to be superior to the wisdom of individuals? Why do the keenest and most searching intellects acknowledge its control? Why do those who are most distinguished from their brethren by the powers of analysis and reflection—who have deeply scrutinized the secrets of their own minds—ever recognise the common conviction of their race as a fixed foundation, on which to build their judgments? Why is common consent the basis of the profoundest ethical philosophy? This, surely, is to recognize something sacred in the consentient judgment of mankind. Yet on what is its sanctity dependent? How can the voice of the people be the voice of God? For men do not make truth, but find it.

Those original relations, which lie in the nature of things, are independent of their judgments. Neither may reason, like the physical constituents of the earth, be increased by material aggregation. Add up the collected faculties of a whole tribe of animals, and they would not make that of a man. The one could not be formed out of the other by any system of multiplication. There is a difference in kind, which could not be compensated by the addition of parts. And so is it with mankind. The value of its decision does not lie in the concurrence of many wills. What we seek after is the voice of humanity itself; the collective sentiments of the race; that which makes itself felt, whether men will or no, amidst the caprices of individuals; that which underlies all single judgments, and supplies the antecedent basis, which they are compelled to acknowledge.

This judgment is valuable, because in truth it is the judgment of man's Maker, the impress which has been left upon our common being by its original Author; and we share in it, because we are each "the offspring of him that was first made of the earth." Since every one of us is a member of that original family, which the Almighty was pleased to create in His own image, that inherent wisdom which remains to us, as a part of our common nature, is truly "the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty." We cannot doubt its decisions, because it is God Himself, speaking to us through that nature which He has formed: "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

If common reason were not built upon this principle, we might be disposed to distrust its verdict; yet unless we could trust it, what is there in heaven or on earth, which we should be able to believe? Such an assurance, therefore, is a means of authenticating those primary convictions, which act before inquiry, and which thus land us in the results, by which they are themselves confirmed. For on that intuitive judgment, which is God's voice speaking through the common nature of our race, depends in truth the whole of our knowledge. How else can we be sure that our senses are trust-worthy informants, and convey true intimations respecting the external world? Or to take a case of still greater moment, what else assures us of the existence of that Infinite and Absolute Being, who is the real Parent of our thoughts? These two convictions must have their commencement somewhere, and whence can it be, save in that intuitive conviction of our race, from which they cannot be eradicated? And the result

to which they lead supplies the explanation of their own origin. For it assures us of the existence of that Being, from whom they were implanted in the general family of His children. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." And then follow all those other truths, which are the natural result of our dependence on that common Author, in whose image man was formed. Hence arises the conviction that the world is held in the hands of Infinite Power; that in this Absolute and Final Being, all those traces of moral excellence, which are written in our hearts, find their perfection; that to Him is due the tribute of our thoughts and actions;—whatever belongs to conscience and the higher being of man, and the natural feelings of responsibility, has this origin. It is the consequence of that common nature, which speaks through the intuitions of the heart, and which can give proof of its authority by appealing to that original creation, whereby God "made of one blood all nations of the earth." Thus does God first kindle our apprehension through the intuitive perceptions of each single being, and then discover to us that our intuitions are well-founded, by showing them to be based on that common nature, which is the reflex image of its Maker.

Hence it is, then, that natural reason is entitled to regard. Weak as it is, when the expression of individual caprice, it is irresistible so long as it is built on the common principles of our nature. In the first case it is uncertain and self-contradictory, because the voice of man—in the second it is fixed and consentient, as being the voice of God. This is not the time to inquire how we are to discriminate these two forms of natural

judgment, or by what means the one is in practice to be distinguished from the other. The present inquiry looks to a higher object. From nature we ascend to grace, from the first Adam to the Second, from old to new reason, aud here too it may be seen that no real confidence can be placed in our conclusions, unless we build them upon the principles of that new creation, which it was the especial end of the Gospel to bestow.

For what is meant by the Gospel? It was the coming in of God's kingdom, the re-creation of man's nature in Jesus Christ, the institution of a new family, in which all the members of Christ have their corporate life, as the children of men derive their natural being from the old Adam. For Christ Jesus was truly the New Head of humanity, the fresh "beginning of the creation of God," from whom all its principles took that new growth, which pertains to their higher nature. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold all things are become new." Now along with the affections and will of man, there must be an alteration likewise in his capacities for knowledge. It would be no new creation, no fresh being bestowed upon mankind, unless from "the first-born of every creature" there flowed a higher judgment into the nature, which He vouchsafed to partake. Do we appeal then to the decision of natural reason—we are not referring to the judgment of this individual or that, all such sentences must needs share the infirmity of the being who promulges them, but we are building on that common verdict of nature, which is God's impress upon our souls. And in like manner when we speak of *new reason*, of the higher faculty of a divine perception, of

the spiritual judgment of renewed humanity, what is meant is "no private interpretation" of Holy Writ, no individual claim to an inspired judgment, but that Divine voice of the re-created nature, which tells us of those higher mysteries, which the blessed Spirit has communicated to the family of regenerate man. "We speak wisdom," says the Apostle, "among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

What is sought, then, is the judgment of the regenerate race, that higher principle which was claimed for himself and his brethren by the inspired Apostle: "we have the mind of Christ." Now this wisdom is too vast to be apprehended by those faculties which man received by creation. "The first man knew her not perfectly, no more shall the last find her out. For her thoughts are more than the sea, and her counsels profounder than the great deep." "For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard His word?" Is this gift, then, denied to the children of men? Has wisdom never revealed itself among them? Has there not been one child of Adam

"in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?" Yes, there has. For "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and *truth*." Thus was there manifest among us "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." In Him was set forth the perfection of man's nature, free from all those evils which had been entailed upon it by the sin of its first possessor. Therefore did it reflect perfectly the likeness of its Creator, because He who clothed Himself with it was truly "the image of God." In His Person was the gift of a superior reason bestowed upon mankind; and that blessing which Adam had impaired by sin, was given back in a higher than its original perfection in Christ Jesus. "He is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness," because He is "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And "we beheld His glory," says the beloved Apostle, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." For not only did He possess that divine vision to which all the secrets of the heavenly world lay exposed, but in Him alone was there a perfect expression of that human intuition, which discerns the true nature and purposes of this. So that real faith not only acts on those new views of things, which He revealed by His insight into the unseen state, but likewise apprehends those new relations of things present, which His conduct exhibited. To "have the mind of Christ," is not only to enter into the secrets of the kingdom of God, but it is to have that practical character by which they are appreciated. It teaches that to be "meek and

lowly in heart" is true honour, and that to forgive an injury is more noble than to avenge it.

But was this gift exhibited in its perfection in the new Head of our race, and yet no provision made for communicating it to His members? Was our race exalted in Him, that it might be more depressed in His brethren? Is He not "made *unto us* wisdom?" If He was "the beginning of the creation of God," do not the very words imply that there must be some to follow Him? And so St. Paul expressly teaches, speaking of the Church as "His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." For as the ends of Adam's being would not have been complete, unless a progeny had followed him; so likewise the object of Christ's Incarnation would have been frustrated, unless He had seen "His seed;" unless in their growth He had seen "of the travail of His soul," and been "satisfied." And what else could be the meaning of Our Lord's declaration, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world?" Why should He tell His disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you?" He plainly taught that the higher wisdom, which had dwelt in the hallowed temple of His own humanity, should be bestowed as the means of insight and obedience on those, whom He associated as members to Himself. For this was the very work which God the Holy Ghost so mercifully vouchsafed to discharge, when He became the medium through which the Manhood of the Ascended Son was present with His people. "The Spirit shall guide you into all truth;" "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

Now the nature of this gift will lead of itself to a perception of the channel through which Our Lord imparts it. It is that endowment which Our Lord bestowed upon His Apostles, when He "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." It is the same power, whereby He afterwards opened the heart of Lydia, "that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." It was the very gift which He promised to His servants, "even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Without this guidance, therefore, the written declarations of truth would be an unprofitable study. They would be as unfruitful as would the phenomena of the visible world, if no faculties of observation, no powers of inference, were implanted in us by nature. As the gifts of natural intuition are needful for the comprehension of things earthly, so to comprehend things heavenly, we need the gifts of divine intuition. With the one endowment was our race provided through the first creation; the re-creation of mankind in Christ was the commencement of the second. Natural reason tells us of the existence of God; but to understand God in Christ is the gift of the Gospel. Reason may teach the unity of the Creator; but the deeper truth of the Blessed Trinity, and of that diversity of Persons, which opens a way to the scheme of man's redemption, belongs to the higher faculty of divine illumination. Reason suggests the spiritual nature of the Great Cause of all; but the truth that God has become Incarnate,

is appreciated only through the guidance of that "Holy Ghost," without which "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord."

It was the practical appreciation of these and such truths of the Gospel, which Our Lord promised to His Disciples, as the result of His continual presence with them by spiritual power. Is it asked then, as a fact, how these things have been maintained in the world? Not merely by individual argument, though individuals have often argued for them with earnestness and force, but by that higher testimony of the collective body of the Church, which has a different and higher claim to regard. For in things sacred the Church's judgment has the same weight, which the common consent of men possesses in things profane. As the one discovers the law of God's natural guidance, so the law of His spiritual guidance is indicated by the other. Therefore have the Creeds, by which the true interpretation of Holy Scripture has ever been maintained, had their authority not from private wit, but from the Church's testimony. Is it asked what were taken in the earliest times to be the fundamental truths, which were revealed in Scripture—the answer is supplied by the Apostles' Creed, as being the belief which in the first age of the Church was required at Baptism. Do we advance further to the period when Arian subtilty beguiled the Church? The Creed of Nice is the bulwark which was raised against it. That which is called the Creed of St. Athanasius contains in like manner the truth, which the universal Church in her most numerous Councils opposed to the perversities of Nestorius and of Eutyches. Had these errors been opposed only

by private reasoners, something plausible might no doubt have been produced on the one side, as well as on the other. The case would have resembled one of those private arguments, by which the most certain truths of natural morality may be assaulted. Against such dangers we refer always to that common consent of mankind, which supplies the only barrier against eccentricity. And if the great truths of Scripture are assailed, our appeal must be in like manner to that common feeling of the whole Christian family, which is as plainly the voice of our New Head, as natural reason is that of the original Creator. For a new creation implies a new reason; the gift of a higher faculty follows of necessity from the renewal of the powers of man: and in respect therefore of things sacred, there must of necessity be an appeal to the common consent of regenerate nature.

This, then, is the security whereby the gift of a higher reason may be guarded from those absurdities, which the judgment of the world imputes to it. The *new reason* of God's unseen kingdom is not more vague, uncertain, and self-contradictory, than that old reason, whereby the children of men administer this. Is the Gospel rule capable of abuse, so is that of nature. The one has its laws, and its criterion, as well as the other. Each may be employed by individuals at their will; but in neither can any individual lay claim to authority. For that which one man advances may be disputed by another. Let the wisest and best individual give his interpretation of the words of Scripture, let him be Saint or Martyr, Bishop or Reformer, and however deep be his insight into revealed truth, he may be matched

by some opponent of equal pretensions. So is it plainly respecting things natural; we have no safeguard against the discrepancy of the greatest minds: and experience witnesses that it may be so likewise respecting things divine. And as such fallacious use of reason may often delude whole parties and families of men, so may large and weighty portions of the Christian world be misled in their judgments. There is no promise that national Churches shall enjoy an immunity from religious error, any more than common reason guarantees nations from natural mistakes. And yet the body is in each instance rather to be trusted than the individual —at least in those cases, which do not imply logical deduction and scientific reasoning, but which are an appeal to such intuitive judgments as rest on the deep convictions of the natural or the regenerate heart. Lot indeed served God alone in a reprobate city, and Athanasius stood fast amidst an Arianizing world, but these are both extreme case; whereof the one does not prove that truth was lost to the Church, nor the other that conscience was extinguished in the world. If the men of Sodom were "sinners before the Lord exceedingly," it was not because they had been born without conscience, but because they had stifled it by their crimes: if Athanasius stood alone, it was only till fuller explanation could enlighten the Church respecting the real nature of his protest. Such instances then do not disprove the truth of that general rule, which leads us to appeal from individual caprice to national judgments. For in so doing we are approximating to that universal law of common consent, which is the ultimate appeal. For this has been shown to be the

voice of God, speaking through the very constitution of that nature, which Himself has formed. And if this could mislead, what could remain to guide us? To what could we trust, if not to the original principles which our Maker has laid down as the very framework of our thoughts?

Now, as it is a part of natural piety to trust to God's voice, speaking through the constitution of our minds, so to trace His guiding hand, as seen in the direction of the common Body of His Church, is the direct mandate of His sovereign will. For is it not His assurance to the Universal Church that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it?" Is not His Church guaranteed therefore from such fundamental error, as would be fatal to its being? If the existence of conscience be a sort of virtual promise from the Maker of our being that the intuitions of universal nature cannot deceive, are not those declarations, whereby Christ Our Lord has promised His perpetual Presence to the collective body of His Church, an assurance of equal certainty, that it will never finally become apostate? As we rest, then, in one case on the consent of man, as showing the deep principles of humanity, so in the other do we appeal to the common testimony of the regenerate mind, as exhibiting those principles which originated in the new creation. And as the natural judgment will not justify individuals in overstepping their allotted province, but shows itself in the consentient acting of the principles by which mankind is governed, so must the judgment of the Church be collected according to those laws, and in conformity to those maxims, which were appointed for its guidance by Him who founded it.

The Church's judgment will ever be expressed in accordance with the rules of its constitution, and through the ordained organs by which its voice is expressed. In their unity will the great mass of the lay voice concur. What had been Our Lord's meaning in telling men to refer a disputed point to the Church's adjudication, unless it had possessed an organization through which to speak, and officers through whom to decide? When the Apostle says "we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God," or when he refers the settlement of a difficult question to the time when they were "gathered together with the power of the Lord Jesus," he plainly looks to the Church of Christ as a body which, like other bodies, could give utterance to its will. For "He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole Body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body, unto the edifying of itself in love."

The higher reason then to which Scripture refers,

and its reference to spiritual guidance, is no vague admission of an uncertain and self-contradictory principle —no idle concession to individual conceit. It is but the necessary result of that renewal of man's nature, which must be accompanied by higher faculties as well as by improved affections. It is built upon that re-creation of humanity in the Son of God, whereby our nature was made participant of heavenly blessings. From Him, as "the beginning of the creation of God," was a higher rule of judgment bestowed upon His brethren. This rule, like the law of natural reason, is capable of abuse; it provides no criterion of truth unless its principles of interpretation are regarded; but when duly used, it is the parent of a better knowledge than the children of this world can possess. For "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding." Through Him, the one Mediator between God and man, come all the blessings of the regenerate being. As the faculties of nature were bestowed as an immediate gift by the Creator, so the new reason of re-created nature is the gift of Christ Our Lord to His brethren. "For of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace."

Now from this truth follow two practical conclusions —one applicable to those who minister in the kingdom of God; the other to all its members. It should never be forgotten that none can claim that supernatural guidance which is an especial promise of the Gospel covenant, unless they are members of that Body of Christ, which is the dwelling-place of His Spirit. If "the Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true," it is because "we are

in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ." We cannot limit indeed that abundant stream of God's mercy, which may far overflow the channel, through which He usually bestows it. But none can *claim* this gift, who are not members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones. And this union is not obtained through the uncertain medium of such private will, as partakes rather of the waywardness of individual caprice; it has its authorized and established course through that Sacramental action of God the Holy Ghost, whereby men are engrafted into the Body of their Incarnate Saviour. It does not belong to every one therefore to claim this gift, merely because his fancy witnesses that he possesses it: it is the Church's gift, just as natural reason is the endowment of the human family; and as men possess the earthly power through true descent from the family of the first Adam; so it is only through real union with the Incarnate Son. and through genuine sympathy with His Body mysti, cal, that men can possess the higher power of the spiritual understanding.

Again, another caution regards those whose office is to minister the Gospel. Their claim to teach must be ever limited "by the proportion of faith." When they profess to explain the oracles of God, what right have they to prefer their individual caprice to that teaching of the Holy Ghost, whereby the common body of the Church is withheld from fundamental error? If men teach what is contrary to that public testimony, into which the Church has been guided by the Spirit, neither station nor ability will exempt them from the reproach of opposing the Gospel. When the Prayer-Book therefore preaches

one thing, and the Sermon another, when one language is used at the font, and another in the pulpit—this is not because the teaching of the Spirit is defective, but because the reason of man is fallacious. Would "the Priest's lips keep knowledge," he must recognize the authority of that public guidance, without which there can be no fixed interpretation of Scripture, and no lasting agreement among men.

SERMON XXIV.

PREDESTINATION.

DANIEL vii. 13, 14.

"I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

THUS long beforehand was the Prophet instructed respecting the certainty of those events, which must be fulfilled in their season. For "known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." Nor were these great things known to Him only, as to an indifferent spectator; they were the objects of His counsel, the effects of His mercy: "He hath determined the times before appointed." And His appointments affect the individual destiny of men: "we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of Him, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." The Holy Scriptures are distinct in their assurance that man's fortunes are in this wise bound up with the pre-arrangements of God. "Whom

He did foreknow, He also did predestinate." And those who are thus pre-appointed are declared to be chosen or elected by Almighty God, through the free exercise of His sovereign will. Jacob was the object of His choice rather than Esau, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand; not of works, but of Him that calleth." Those who are thus favoured are spoken of as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." And since this doctrine is so plainly revealed in Scripture, it is neither safe nor reverent to abstract from it our thoughts. Not safe, because any Scriptural doctrine, which is habitually suppressed (as by many persons is the doctrine of God's predestination), will certainly force itself again into notice, and perhaps disturb "the proportion of faith;" —not reverent, because it is presumptuous in man to esteem God's words indifferent or injurious; and to suppose that no importance can attach to truths, which were deemed weighty and practical by inspired Apostles. Does not St. Paul tell the Thessalonian Christians, "we give thanks to God always for you all—knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God?" Did he not feel himself "bound to give thanks alway to God, because God" had "from the beginning chosen" them "unto salvation?" Why were things true at Thessalonica, which are false or dangerous among ourselves—and how venture we to suppress a matter, which the Apostle of the Gentiles felt himself "*bound*" to declare?

Let us, then, in the first place inquire what has led many to deny, or at least admit, this truth; and secondly, what is its due extent and meaning.

I. Predestination and election have often been objected to, because supposed inconsistent with the responsibility of man. Predestination has been understood by many to mean, that previous to man's birth or even to the world's existence a decree was passed by Almighty God, by which some persons were inevitably fated to salvation; the residue of the world, by their omission from this favoured number, being doomed with equal certainty to everlasting ruin. Those who have thus stated the matter have not been content to affirm it as a fact, involved in a manner to us unknown by some inevitable necessity; still less have they been willing to refer it to any supernatural foresight of men's future actions: it has been brought forward as a *decree*, as a sentence passed on men spontaneously by their Maker before their birth, the unchecked supremacy of His irresistible will, whereby the larger part of His intelligent creatures has been consigned to endless misery, without opportunity of trial or possibility of escape. Such a view of things has been defended, on the ground that it is eminently humbling to man, and peculiarly conducive to God's glory. How far this is true abstractedly it is needless to ask, and whether it may not puff up those who are, or think themselves, God's elected favourites: the first question respects its accordance with Holy Writ, and whether it really rests on inspired authority.

Does this view of things then consist with the words of Our Lord? Does it accord with His gracious expressions of regret at the sight of Jerusalem? "When He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the

prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Or again, take the words of the Almighty by His ancient prophet. "If the wicked will turn from all his sins, that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?" It were needless to multiply passages, since these are but a specimen of the general language of Holy Writ. And can it be conceived that the Being, from whom such promises proceed, by His own decree precludes those to whom they are addressed, from the possibility of accepting them? Is not the very supposition an insult to his character? Can the God of truth declare His anxiety for men's repentance, while at the same time He Himself renders their repentance impossible? "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" And would not such a state of things be inconsistent with the responsibility of man, as well as derogatory to the truth of his Maker? For by blame is meant the censure which is past on those who *might* do well, but do otherwise. It cannot attach therefore to involuntary offences. With man's power to will, the sinfulness of his transgressions must be abandoned. So that the accountableness of man—a truth witnessed by his own consciousness—is overthrown by the same system, by which the truth of Holy Scripture is invalidated.

It is not of course denied that the creation of responsible agents involves an inscrutable mystery,

such as our present capacities are unable to explore. For since free agency implies the power of willing amiss, as well as the power of willing rightly, it would seem that if men had been created under a law, which forbad the possibility of failing, there could not in the nature of the case have been such a thing as responsibility. What indeed is the exact nature of that power of evil, which appears in this way to be essential to the existence of excellence: why Infinite Love ordained that the world should exist, since there can be such a thing as a being of whom Infinite Wisdom has declared that it were "good for him that he had never been born"—these are questions with which religion is not really concerned, and which philosophy has never been able to settle. But that "God will have all men to be saved," is not a mere dictate of philosophy: it is a statement of revealed religion, which is fast bound to the truth of Him who "cannot lie." "Hath He said, and shall He not do it; or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Every man *can* do what he *can;* and Scripture plainly declares, that every one who does what he can will be saved. We may confidently say, therefore, with Bishop Taylor, "our faith concerning God must be, as Himself hath revealed and described His own excellencies." "But he that believes God to be cruel or unmerciful, or a rejoicer in the unavoidable damnation of the greater part of mankind, or that He speaks one thing and privately means another, thinks evil thoughts concerning God, and such as for which we should hate a man, and therefore are great enemies of faith."* It would be contrary to natural

* Taylor's "Holy Living," cap. i. s. 1.

piety to believe the promises of Scripture to be a mockery; it would be a denial of human responsibility and of divine truth.

But how can we give full weight to the unquestionable statements of the Apostle, while we guard against violating natural piety, and insulting the majesty of God? What is required is such an interpretation as may allow them due importance, and yet respect the analogy of Scripture. It has too often happened that those who have fixed their eyes on God's general promises have shut them to the assurances of an individual predestination, forgetting that no explanation can be satisfactory, which does not do ample justice to the one statement, without detracting from the other. Now what are the exact conditions of the case before us; what is the precise statement of Scripture respecting the divine Predestination? Three especial terms are employed by St. Paul in its expression: foreknowledge, predestination, election. The first of these may be recognized without difficulty; for all who believe in God, attribute to Him the power of universal foresight. Such a condition, therefore, is assigned to the divine nature, by those who never question the responsibility of men. How His unlimited knowledge of future contingencies is compatible with the unbiassed freedom of inferior agents, is a difficulty of philosophy rather than of religion. It is enough for our present purpose, that to admit the existence of a God is to acknowledge a Being to subsist, before whom the map of the future is as plainly spread out, as the present or the past before created intelligences. And considering that time and space are kindred ideas, which have their birth within

ourselves, and are forced upon us by the laws of our limited existence, there can be no ground for wonder that as the Being of the Incomprehensible One cannot be bounded by space, so the element of time should not interfere with the infinite *presentiality* of eternity.

The foreknowledge of God then presents no difficulty, because it does not limit the responsibility of His creatures. It concerns God and not man. It results from that exemption from the law of time, which renders the Eternal One a spectator of the future: its cause is the divine infinity, not the absence of human free-agency. But it is otherwise with Predestination. This has plainly man for its object. It is the pre-appointment or previous settlement of man's destiny. And Election in like manner is the choosing of certain men out of the vast mass of Adam's descendants. The only remaining question, therefore, in this case respects the thing to which persons are chosen; and for what it is that they are appointed. Are they pre-appointed to final salvation? Does the election single out those who will ultimately be the children of glory, so that none who are excluded from the favoured number need seek to be admitted—all who are within it are sure of heaven? Or is the pre-appointment to some immediate advantages, by which man's state indeed may be greatly altered, but which do not ensure future happiness, unless present opportunities shall be duly improved? In the first place, human responsibility is plainly at an end, because where no risk is, there can be no trial: the second alternative pre-supposes an individual election as much as the other, but addresses men as still requiring exertion, because still liable to failure. Which

of these is the language of Holy Writ? Predestination is twice spoken of by St. Paul: in both cases it is connected with a peculiar relation to that Second Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, who became the Head of man's race, that He might bestow a new character upon all its members. "Whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Again, God "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." In the only two passages* then in which Predestination is spoken of in Holy Scripture, its simple reference to man's salvation is qualified by the consideration, that it is an appointment to membership in that new family, which has been substituted for the original race of man. And as man's individual responsibility is left wholly untouched, when it is said that he possesses that fallen nature which he has from Adam; so it does not appear why his responsibility should be destroyed by the possession of that renewed nature, of which Christ was the founder. Exclude the element of time, which is irrelevant to the dealings of the Almighty, and the decrees of God respecting the fallen or the renewed family of man, would leave the responsibility of each equally unaffected.

Again, if from Predestination we turn to Election, here we find nothing in the terms themselves, which excludes the idea of responsibility. It does not seem that men are chosen to final salvation, but chosen to that state of which final salvation is the fitting issue. No words of Holy Scripture, perhaps, are stronger than

* Romans, viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 5, 11.

those in which St. Paul tells the Thessalonians that God hath "from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." What more is wanted, it may be said, than this? Almighty God elects men by arbitrary decree to that course of conduct, of which eternal life is the necessary result. But if the effects of this appointment were irrespective of the responsibility of its objects, then would the disobedience of those who reject God's will be referrible to the same law with the obedience of those who serve Him. For unless something besides God's appointment be supposed to concur in the salvation of the one, there remains nothing but God's appointment to which we may attribute the destruction of the other. Now this is inconsistent with the language of Scripture. God is said to "endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." There is no such thing as an election to unholiness. Those who are "ordained to condemnation" are such as by their own act "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And those who are chosen, are still required to make their "calling and election sure." So that we may confidently declare that "God hath commanded no man to do wickedly, neither hath He given any man license to sin."

The statements of Holy Writ, therefore, do not involve any conclusions which interfere with the responsibility of mankind. And yet it cannot be doubted that an Election of individuals to the privileges of the Gospel, and their Predestination to membership in Christ, will to many seem insufficient to support the weight of the Apostle's words. Their judgment is

built, not without reason, on the general tone of his language. It is certainly an irreverent evasion of the force of Scripture, to suppose that some common-place event or change could be all which was designed by its most grave and serious expressions. This is a common fault in men's interpretation of God's Word. It is the natural result of their disbelief in that unseen kingdom of grace which is round about them. How can its secrets be revealed to embodied beings, except through the medium of images, drawn from the visible creation? If these are dealt with only as figures of speech, the reality of things spiritual cannot be appreciated. When men hear of "union with Christ," of His being "present" in His Church to the end of the world, that Christians are "risen with" Him, that He must be "formed" within them, that they are "members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones"—how many explain away these wondrous expressions, by which the mystery of the new creation is set forth, as though they were in truth flowers of rhetoric, which mean nothing? They had rather suppose that an Apostle could use great words, which himself did not comprehend, than believe that God can do great things, which pass their own comprehension. St. Paul's language they attribute to a temper, which loved exaggerated expressions, because their own temper inclines them to deny that there can be reality in the mysteries of God. Such an error should be carefully avoided in the interpretation of Scripture. We must find some object adequate to support the weight of those fervent expressions, in which the Apostle speaks of Predestination, and of our Election in Christ. These are plainly

no trivial blessings: they must make some momentous difference in the condition of mankind, and be worthy to be set forth as among the great gifts of the Gospel. No explanation of their meaning can be satisfactory, which does not recognize their importance, and tally with that place which is assigned them in the counsels of God.

And here then we must turn back to the text. What is it which met the eyes of the wondering Seer, to whom the mighty vision of the future days was unfolded? While he was instructed respecting the temporal fortunes of the world, while the transitory forms of earthly power passed before him like a majestic dream, he was admitted also to the sight of heavenly objects, and a greater than the empires of this world was presented to his gaze. "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Its delegated founder was to be the heir of humanity itself, "one like the Son of Man," who was presented before "the Ancient of days," as the true representative of His creatures. All this looks to some momentous series of events, whereby the collective history of man's race was deeply affected. The dominion of the Son of Man, the "Kingdom of God" is exhibited as truly influencing the destiny of all mankind, and as the great event in the world's history. It is introduced as consequent on those achievements by which the world's temporal condition has been most widely altered: but these are supposed to be of inferior moment and less durable effect. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom that which shall not pass away." Let us consider, then, the nature of

the great *thing*, which was thus foreshown in the counsels of God, and whether it was not an adequate object for those mighty *words*, in which the divine doings are expressed by the Apostle.

What then is the *thing*, of which the Apostle wrote to the Christians of Rome, as being "the power of God unto salvation?" What was that "Kingdom of God," which on his first entrance into the Capital of the world, he "expounded and testified both out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening?" That which had so much altered the situation of the world, which formed the grand era in its history, was the introduction of the system of Mediation: the re-creation of humanity in Jesus Christ." "Circumcision and uncircumcision," the old distinctions between the favoured and unfavoured nations, "availed no more, but the new Creation in Jesus Christ." Now to appreciate this new system, it is necessary to bear in mind what was the old one, in which man had previously been placed. What was the law of man's original creation? When the Almighty had built up the frame of this wondrous universe, He placed a crown upon His works, by giving His own image to a being, who should be its delegated Lord. "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing, that moveth upon the earth." This was the

charter of man's inheritance: thus did he become a *Microcosm*, a little universe, because the Image of Him, by whom this vast universe was constructed. And therefore it is from relation to this parent Being, that all those excellencies are derived, of which man is possessed. What are imagination, genius, taste, but a portion of that inheritance, which was bestowed upon him, because he was by nature the image of his Creator? Hence the feeling that our minds have a natural power of holding intercourse in thought with their Maker—a feeling which led even a heathen to those words, which were sanctioned by the Apostle, "for we are also His offspring." This conviction, by which under the guidance of natural piety men were led to address themselves in prayer to their invisible Creator, was not man's own invention; it was the relic of that real intercourse, of which man's creation in his Maker's image was the cause. Spirits would seem to have a natural relation to one another: certainly such a relation obtains between human intelligence, and that Original Intelligence, who is the parent of our thoughts; in whom "was life, and the life was the light of men."

Such, then, was man's condition by nature. And if Adam had stood fast in his original estate, this door of nature would have provided immediate access to God. The creature would, no doubt, have tended more and more to his Creator. But when this access was lost by man's sin, it pleased God to give a new door of approach. There was a moment, indeed, when man seemed altogether shut out from his Maker, when he hid himself from God's presence in the midst of the trees of the garden. This was the only period when

fallen nature was altogether unalleviated by divine mercy; and had this period continued, the race of man had doubtless perished in its birth. But no sooner had man fallen, than a Second Adam was promised; a new Head to man's race; a fresh "beginning of the creation of God." On Him did those who preceded His coming depend in expectation, as all subsequent generations have built their hopes upon the reality of His presence. For "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Thus was the new Adam a more perfect "image of the invisible God," a better "first-born of every creature;" the Virgin's Son more than supplied that loss, which humanity had received through the first Eve. And henceforth were all blessings to flow into manhood through this channel. There was "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." His humanity became the new fountain, in which all divine gifts were gathered together; that thence they might flow forth, like the rivers of Eden, to water the whole earth. As all nature, therefore, was gathered together in the first man, so all grace in the Second. The endowments of reason, the properties of understanding — these we possess through inherence in that line of the old man, of whose organization we are severally types. And those spiritual qualities, the possessions of our higher nature, are in like manner handed down through that line of the New Man, which is the basis of spiritual life. And as the law of carnal propagation is our mean of dependence on the one, so are we bound to the other by that Sacramental system, through which the humanity of

the Incarnate Son transmits itself to His brethren. For "the first man was made a living soul, the last Adam is made a quickening spirit."

Such, then, is the *Thing* which is set forth as the scheme of Mediation. And is it not of sufficient moment to support the weight of the Apostle's words? Look at it in its relation to the Almighty. Does it not display the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? If the old creation exhibited them so wonderfully, are they not still more manifest in the new? If to create a world was great, was it not greater to renew it? The wonders of the first are enlarged upon in the divine words of ancient Scripture: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the corner-stone thereof: when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And still more must we adore the Creator's workmanship, when we pass from the material works of God to His rational creatures. For take all the attainments of human genius —the inspiration of the poet, the profound meditation of the philosopher, the artist's conception of beauty, the orator's control over the mind—are not these all expressions of that original constitution of nature, which it received from its Maker's hand? Are they not his workmanship, who "set the world in" man's "heart?" Must not all, therefore, have been present to His divine thought, when out of the lifeless clay He formed this

image of Himself? Do they not declare the glory of Him, "who hath put wisdom in the inward parts," and "given understanding to the heart." Now, if this natural creation manifested His glory, is it not still more manifested in the new birth of the Gospel? If the gifts of intellect magnify their Author, much more the gifts of grace. The kingdom of nature has its mysteries; its deep and large designs call forth the admiration of earthly spectators. But it is "by the Church" that "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places" is "known the manifold wisdom of God." These noblest counsels of the Almighty depend on "the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus Our Lord." If His wisdom was shown in Adam His disobedient creature, much more in that "well-beloved Son, in whom" He was "well pleased." As the policy of those who have reared earthly monarchies has been illustrated by the success of their designs, as worldly history testifies to the sagacity of those who founded the commonwealth of Greece, or fostered the youthful ascendancy of Rome, so it is only through its re-creation in Christ Jesus that humanity at large ceases to be an enigma, and can give full scope to the endowments of which it is possessed. Thus only is the end of man's being accomplished. "Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, accord-

ing to the good pleasure of His will, *to the praise of the glory of His grace*, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved."

And as this is a work which holds a great place in the counsels of God, so if we look to the condition of man, we see reason enough in the importance attached to it. For what wider diversity is there in the condition of mortals, than that some of them are appointed to be heirs, while others remain altogether strangers to that covenant of grace, which has been bestowed upon mankind? No doubt both in the one case and the other, men will be judged according to their opportunities: the Christian will have a stricter account to render, for "to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." But his position is plainly one of signal advantage. "Prophets and kings," said Our Lord, "have desired to see those things, which ye see, and have not seen them." But to what can men attribute such distinction, save to that free grace of God, which worketh according to the counsel of His own will? What else gives men a place in the Church of the redeemed, to which so many millions of mankind are not admitted? To be born of a royal line is an earthly distinction: it is described usually as one of those gifts of fortune, which is appointed for few; but far higher is the privilege of that divine birthright, to which all the members of Christ have been elected. For why did not their birth precede that re-creation of man's race, of which the Son of God Himself became the model and Head? Why is not their lot cast in those populous regions of the earth, where no Sacraments extend the line of His renewed race? Are not

these special and peculiar gifts of election, worthy of an especial thankfulness from those who are favoured beyond so many of the family of man? We may well apply the words of Moses to the members of the spiritual Israel; "ask now of the days which are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?" "Hath God essayed to go take Him a nation out of the midst of another nation—according to all that the Lord your God did for you before your eyes?" Surely such special acts of mercy deserve that special admiration, with which the Apostle contemplates the election of the children of God. For this is a favour, towards which no effort on their part in the slightest degree co-operates: the gift is wholly antecedent to their faith, love, obedience, gratitude—in the great mass of men who are elected by baptism into the Church of Christ, their will is not required even to consent to the deed: as by birth they were children of the old, so by new birth do they become members of the Second Adam: they find themselves "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

These mighty results of election into Christ are infinitely enhanced, if we consider how it operates in respect of the enemies of man's safety. Men would appreciate better the importance of that new creation in Christ, to which they are freely chosen through admission into His Body, if they understood those dangers, by which they are still hemmed in, and that power

of evil, which they have to encounter. Satan and his angels are no unreal foes; they have truly power to oppose our salvation: the world of evil has a real existence, and cannot be conquered save through the power of the cross. For to what do men trust, that they have so little sense of the perils of their state? Is it to the freedom of their will? But was not Adam foiled in the perfectness of his innocence? And how then can his weaker children expect to resist? One champion only has conquered for us, as well as Himself; we must be found in Him, if we would be in safety; we must partake His nature, if we would share His victory. This is the very hope of God's calling, "which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places," "and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

This gift then we cannot estimate, unless we appreciate our danger. The enemies of our souls have access to the house of our life. A world of evil is arrayed against us. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." It is when we discern this danger, that we feel how great is the blessedness of that safeguard, which the great Head of the renewed race extends to all his children. "My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Nothing, then, shows more clearly how

suitable are those earnest words, wherein the Apostle sets forth the blessings bestowed on God's elected people, than the external dangers against which they find a safeguard in the presence of Him, who has triumphed over their common foe. Did He wrestle with Satan in the days of His humiliation? Did He triumph over that enemy in the wilderness, at the garden, and on the cross? And shall He not prevail likewise in all His servants? Shall not those who have been chosen to be members of Himself be kept likewise from assaults, which no power on their part could otherwise resist? Thus is there a path provided, wherein those who are joined to Christ, may follow Him, if they will, from earth to heaven. Their course is guarded through the wilderness of this world, as Israel's of old through the fiery waste. This it is which our Article expresses, describing the safety which is afforded to Christ's servants, through their union with Him in whom only is life. It sets forth the several stages of man's pilgrimage; the very resting place, the shelter, the guidance, by which only he can accomplish that dangerous march. "Predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen *in Christ* out of mankind, and to bring them *by Christ* to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made

like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity." Such is the glorious course, which the mercy of the Most Highest has provided for those who "go from strength to strength;" who in their journey draw water out of the wells of salvation, till before the God of gods they appear in Zion. This is the pre destined or pre-appointed path from the Egypt of this world to the Canaan of rest. This is the road along which all God's people must travel. To be in Christ is their security. Thus are they guarded against the perils of the waste. Its fiery serpents shall not bite, its drought appal, its heat oppress them. This road has God Himself prepared for their safety.

And is not the blessing which is thus provided sufficient to support the weight of the Apostle's words? The object of God's foreknowledge is the journey of His servants along that narrow way which He has appointed as the path to glory. Against its dangers He has pre-ordained one especial means of safety—to be members in that mystic Body, which is partaker of the hallowed nature of His Incarnate Son. Into this blessed Unity His own merciful goodness elects mankind. Thus do they become "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." For this is God's host: His Church and family: the great company of those who travel to Zion. No doubt there are single pilgrims, who are aided by the mercy of their heavenly King; but His especial pre-appointment respects that new Israel, which a greater than Moses is leading to the heavenly Canaan. The choice and will of all men lay open from everlast-

ing to His infinite knowledge, but His purpose and ordination concerned that Gospel kingdom, into which men are admitted by actual union with the Son of His love. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." It is the Head, therefore, and heir of humanity, who is the true object of the predestination of God. For Him it is that a kingdom is appointed, He is that "Son of Man," who was "brought near to the Ancient of days," when dominion and glory was pre-ordained for Him. And the predestination of His brethren, like their other gifts, they share only as they are one with Him. They partake of the privilege of the race, in that they are admitted to partnership with their Elder Brother. As God gave mankind dominion over this lower world, when He gave to Adam empire over the beasts, so He gave His servants safety from the powers of ill, when He assigned a spiritual empire to the Second Adam. Thus is the race looked at in its Head. Its safety is ascertained by His ascendancy. Its permanence is secured by His perpetual presence. Already is it looked at as holy, because found in Him. Thus is the new Israel admitted to that favour, of which their earthly forefathers were typically possessed. Because they are looked at in their Head, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Already, therefore, is the Church exalted in its Lord. God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Already is it "the holy Church," because the ointment which was poured upon its Head, has flowed down even to

its lowest members. And as these signs of grace and glory, so too the predestined design which contemplated His exaltation must needs be partaken by all His members. And this is the true predestination of God's people. It embraces the whole family of the redeemed, because its object is that Head, from whom they cannot be dissevered. Its law is their inherence in His mystic Body. It was recognized, finally, in those wondrous words which in the last hours of His humiliation He addressed to the Father: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

The statements which have been made will lead us to two conclusions—first, how the responsibility of man can be combined with God's predestination; secondly, by what means due weight can be attached to the Scriptural notices of this important subject.

First—The responsibility of man depends, of course, on his personal existence; but the promises of God refer to the re-creation of his common nature, which was wrought by the Incarnation of Christ. For man consists of two main parts; the one his individual being, with which Will and Consciousness are intimately associated, and in which lies his personal responsibility; the other those general powers and qualities, which he inherits from his kind. Now, though the gift of grace extends to the modifying of the will, yet it was more especially this common nature which was re-created in Christ. And it was the renewal of this general line of humanity, which was pre-determined by the special

appointment of the Almighty. The predestinating decree of God was that the line of Adam should be renewed in Christ. It extends itself to all men, so far as they partake of that new nature which was thus introduced into the world; just as all men by inheritance from the first Adam are subject to the natural Providence of God. But as the decrees of nature leave that responsibility untouched, to which man's consciousness witnesses, so likewise do the decrees of grace. If Adam's nature had been handed down in greater purity, the responsibility of individuals would still have existed, though a different field would have been afforded for its actions. And so is it under that Gospel system, which is founded on the Mediation of Christ. The gifts of grace have exalted the nature of man, but not extinguished his personality: they have altered his opportunities, but left his responsibility untouched.

Again, we may see how due weight is to be assigned to those statements of Holy Scripture, which treat of the benefits bestowed by Predestination, and of the blessedness of the elect. The true manner of doing justice to such expressions, is to attach adequate importance to the re-creation of man's nature in Christ. The words of Scripture will never be undervalued, so long as the *thing* which God mercifully effected through the Mediation of Christ, is properly appreciated. If men believe that the line of Adam was renewed in Christ, that a higher nature was introduced into the world, that the being of God's intelligent creatures was re-constructed, that all blessings flow into the redeemed family through inherence in the Head and founder of their race—they cannot suppose that the words in

which this change is expressed are exaggerated, because no words can exaggerate a change, which the very conception of mortals is not competent to grasp. What may be appointed for others it is not needful to ask, or how He who is just as well as holy, will deal with those whose opportunities are different, and their law diverse. But we cannot over-estimate the importance of that change, which has made the one main alteration in the history of mankind. We are assured that not the greatest of those who were born of women, is equal in privilege to the least member of the kingdom of Christ. To forget this distinction then is to fall into inevitable confusion, because it is to lose the clue, which guides us in unravelling man's whole history.

And hence it may be understood how men, who called themselves Christians, could fall into so fatal an error as to deny that responsibility, to which their own consciousness could not choose but witness. It was surely a strange boldness that men should despise at once this individual witness, and also that consentient testimony which the voice of fifteen centuries declared itself to have received from the Apostles. If men trusted to God's voice speaking in themselves, did it not witness to their own accountableness; if they trusted to the same voice speaking through others, how could they be indifferent to what all Christians attested to be the recorded mind of the Spirit? It is not a sufficient explanation of this phenomenon to refer it to the rashness and irreverence of an individual innovator. There must have been something in the temper of the age, which prepared men to receive Calvin's words. And such there plainly was. In the convulsive moments of

that great crisis, men were looking round for some fresh basis, on which to found the privileges of the Gospel; they were impatient for a new law of Church union, and for a communion which should be independent of Sacramental oneness with the Body of Christ. Such they fancied themselves to have found. The events which followed have sufficiently proved the vanity of their thought; it is now seen that those who reject the appointed means of oneness with Christ, will soon cast off all dependence on His Mediation. The followers of Calvin, in every case in which the development of their principles has been unchecked, have moved forward into the more consistent heresy of Socinus. But it was not the intention of the Genevese Reformers to deny Christ's work, or to undervalue the election of His servants. What means remained open to them, by which to explain the law of God's predestination? Since they would not recognize the importance of those common blessings which are bestowed through membership in the Church of Christ, they were compelled to transfer the Apostle's words to the individual condition of mankind. Man's separate responsibility was crushed under the weight of those expressions, which were designed to set forth God's great work in the pre-appointment of His Church, and the consecration of its Head. Such were the effects of rejecting what is plainly spoken respecting the common union of the family of Christ, and of their real oneness with their Incarnate Lord. And as this was the cause of error, so must the contrary course be its remedy. Would we appreciate and do justice to these lofty words? Would we reverence duly

the predestination of God, and be thankful for our election in Christ Jesus—then must we appreciate the import of the Church's blessings, and know the value of being members in our risen Lord. Let communion with Christ be felt to be a real gift, let our inherence in His Body be accepted as a true oneness, let the recreation of man's race be allowed to have been in deed, and not only in figure, effected by the coming of the Second Adam, and that course of blessings, which is consequent on these mighty facts, will most naturally be expressed in lofty words. Has man's race been truly born anew in its Head? Is this new creation truly extended through the ordinances of grace to His earthly members? Have all Christians such a glorious heritage for which to account? Are they guarded by such an unseen helper against the foes which encircle their path? Can they seek for help against their own weakness? Is this law fated to continue to the end of the world? May all take advantage of it? Will God be always on our side, so long as we are found in Christ? And is there not ground then to exclaim, in the earnest words of the great Apostle, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against

us?" "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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OCT 27 '71
NOV 29 '71
JAN 5 '72
FEB 5 '72
MAR 8 '72
APR 7 '72